

The Ahmadiyya

GAZETTE

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August-September 2012

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AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

*Muslims who believe in the Messiah,
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani^{ra}*

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}



Above: Zoe Lofgren presenting Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} a gift. **Below:** House Minority Leader, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (left) and Congressman Brad Sherman welcoming Hazoor^{aba} to Capitol



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} at Capitol Hill, Washington DC

An educational and spiritual monthly publication

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA



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Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radhi allahu 'anhu (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyada hullah ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah strengthen him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhana wa ta'ala (Holy and Exalted)

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Al-Qur'an

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ
وَحَسَنَ أَوْلِيَكَ رَفِيقًا ۝

And whoso obeys Allah and this Messenger *of His* shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs, and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these. (4:70)

Commentary:

The particle *ma'* denotes concomitance of two or more persons in one place or at one time; or in position, rank or status. It also implies the sense of assistance as in 9:40 (Mufradat). The particle has been used at several places in the Qur'an in the sense of *fi* meaning "among" (3:194 & 4:147).

The verse is important as it describes all the venues of spiritual progress open to Muslims. All the four spiritual ranks -- the Prophets; the Truthful; the Martyrs and the Righteous -- can now be obtained only by following the Holy Prophet. This is an honor reserved for the Holy Prophet alone. No other Prophet shares it with him. The inference is further supported by the verse which speaks of the Prophets generally and says: '*And those who believe in Allah and His Messengers, they are the Truthful and the Martyrs in the presence of their Lord* (57:20). When read together these two verses signify that, whereas the followers of the other Prophets could only attain the rank of the Truthful, the Martyrs, and the Righteous and no higher, the followers of the Holy Prophet can rise to the rank of a Prophet also. The Bahr al-Muhit (Vol. iii, p. 287) quotes Al-Raghib as saying: "God has divided the believers into four classes in this verse, and has appointed for them four stages, some of which are lower than the others, and He has exhorted true believers not to remain behind any of these stages." And adds that "Prophethood is of two kinds, general, and special. The special Prophethood, viz., the Law-bearing Prophethood, is now unattainable; but the general Prophethood continues to be attained."

Al-Hadith

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهَ مَا لَمْ يُؤْمَرْ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَإِذَا أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلَا سَمْعَ وَلَا طَاعَةَ -

Hadhrat 'Abdullah^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "A Muslim is obligated to hear and obey whether he likes it or not, except when he is commanded to do a sinful thing. Therefore, when he is commanded to do a sinful thing then there is no obligation (for him) to hear or to obey."

(Abu Dawud kitabul jihad - bab fitta'ata, Tirmidhi abwab faḍa'ilul jihad babal ata'ata li makhluq ma'siyatil Khaliq, Ibni Majah bab ta'atal imam)

عَنْ عَلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعَثَ جَيْشًا وَ أَمَرَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَجُلًا وَ أَمَرَهُمْ أَنْ يَسْمَعُوا لَهُ، وَ يُطِيعُوا - فَأَجَحَ نَارًا وَ أَمَرَهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتَحُوا فِيهَا قَابِي قَوْمٍ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا، فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: لَوْ دَخَلُوا فِيهَا لَمْ يَزَالُوا فِيهَا وَ قَالَ: لَا طَاعَةَ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ -

Hadhrat 'Ali^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah sent an army on an expedition and appointed a person as their Commander and ordered them to listen and obey him. He (the Commander) ignited a fire and ordered the people to jump into it. Some people refused to jump into the fire. They said, "We ran away from the fire, but others were ready to jump into it. This news reached the Holy Prophet^{saw} who observed: 'Had they jumped into the fire, they would have remained in the fire forever. There is no obligation to obey (the order that comprises) disobedience to Allah. Obedience to a leader is only in good matters."

(Abu Dawud kitabul jihad - bab fitta'ata)

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{AS}

Devotion to the Holy Prophet^{saw}

In our estimation, there is no greater testimony than the testimony of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. My heart trembles when I hear that any person who is confronted with a decision of the Holy Prophet^{saw} does not accept it and turns away from it.

[Itmamul Hujjah, Roohani Khazain, Vol. 8, p. 293]

The Muslims are a people who are ready to lay down their lives to uphold the honour of their Holy Prophet^{saw}. They would prefer to die rather than endure the disgrace that they should make peace and become friends with such people who are occupied day and night with abusing the Holy Prophet^{saw} and mention his name with contempt in their books, journals, and announcements and use vile language with reference to him. Such persons are not the well-wishers even of their own people, for they create numberless difficulties for them. I tell you truly that it is possible for us to make peace with the serpents of the jungle and the wild beasts of the forests, but we cannot make peace with those who do not refrain from speaking ill of God's Prophets and who consider that abuse and vituperation mean victory. True victory is that which comes from heaven.

[Article attached to Chashma Ma'rifat, Roohani Khazain, Vol. 23, p. 385-386]

The insults that have been offered to Islam and the Holy Prophet^{saw}, the attacks that have been made against Divine Law and the apostasies and heresies that have become widespread, cannot be matched in any other age. Is it not true that in a short while in India alone a hundred thousand people have become Christians, and more than sixty million books have been published in opposition to Islam, and people belonging to high families have lost their religion, and those who used to describe themselves as the descendants of the Holy Prophet^{saw} have put on the garment of Christianity and have become his enemies, and numberless books full of vile abuse of the Holy Prophet^{saw} have been published? My heart cries out with tears that if these people had murdered my children before my eyes, and had cut to pieces my sincere friends, and had killed me with great humiliation, and had possessed themselves of all my property, I would not have been so pained and my heart would not have been so hurt as it has been pained and hurt by the insults offered to the Holy Prophet^{saw}.

[Ayena-i-Kamalat-i-Islam, Roohani Khazain, Vol. 5, pp. 51-52]

True Victory of the Holy Prophet^{saw}

The community of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) had developed such unity and spiritual oneness that through the spirit of Islamic brotherhood, they had all become like the limbs of one body. The rays of the light of Prophethood had so coloured their daily lives and their overt and covert conduct, that they had become the reflections of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. This great miracle of inner change, through which great idol worshippers became sincere worshippers of God and those who were sunk in the world every moment established such strong relationship with God that they shed their blood like water in His cause, was the result of their spending their lives in full sincerity in the company of the true and perfect Prophet^{saw}.

[Fateh Islam, Roohani Khazain, Vol. 3, pp. 21-22]

Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, on June 29, 2012 on the occasion of Jalsa Salana USA - 2012

Shermeen Butt

After the recitation of *Surah Al-Fatihah*, Hazoor^{aba} began the sermon by expressing praise to Allah Almighty at the inauguration of *Jalsa Salana* USA and expressed his participation for the second time at the *Jalsa Salana* in USA. Hazoor^{aba} said that the annual conventions held in different countries around the world were initially inaugurated by the Promised Messiah^{as}. The purpose of these conventions is that the participants gain the blessings that will lead them to a better life in this world and in the Hereafter. These blessings can only be reaped by attaining a truly high standard of *Taqwa* in our lives. The Promised Messiah^{as} expected that each and every participant of *Jalsa* shall attain this high standard of *Taqwa* in his or her life and expressed his intense dislike towards those participants who did not take any measures to attain this standard of *Taqwa*. Thus, these conventions are a source of great blessings, and for a true Ahmadi, these should also instill a sense of fear, such that Allah Almighty has provided him yet again with an opportunity to gain nearness to Him, to revive his faith, to amass the blessings associated with this auspicious occasion. However, these blessings can only be attained by continuous efforts in progress in *Taqwa* lest he should slip downwards. If an Ahmadi truly understands the blessings of *Jalsa* and then makes every effort to receive these blessings, and accumulates the transformations that each annual convention bring about in him, then he will progress towards a new standard in *Taqwa* each year, which will eventually lead him to the point where the Promised Messiah^{as} wished to see us. Thus, we must focus towards that desire of the Promised Messiah^{as}) that he held in his heart, which he expressed in these words: Pay attention towards your afterlife, rather than focusing on this world. He emphasized that one must inculcate *Taqwa* in his heart. What is *Taqwa*? *Taqwa* means that one must fulfill the obligations and duties towards Allah Almighty and towards his fellow human beings with a fear of His displeasure in one's heart.

Among the duties and obligations towards Allah Almighty, the first and foremost is His worship, and among the acts of worship, the first and foremost is the performance of *Salat*. The Holy Prophet^{saw} says that *Salat* is the essence of worship. Hazoor^{aba} said that he had elaborated on the importance of *Salat* in his previous Friday sermon. Thus, those who did not listen to that sermon, should listen to it and set their minimal standards of worship accordingly. Hazoor^{aba} said that participants in this *Jalsa* should pay special attention to the offering of *Salat*, more specifically to offering *Salat* in congregation. During these days of *Jalsa*, pray to Allah Almighty that He may enable everyone to implement regular offering of *Salat* in their lives in the most excellent manner. Hazoor^{aba} wished to elaborate that for the convenience of those who travel a fair distance to arrive at *Jalsa*, the *namaz* are combined and this is allowed by *Shariah*. However, in your homes, there is no excuse to offer combined *salat*. In some households, it appears that *namaz* is being combined on a regular basis because when the children are asked how many *namaz* they offer at home, their response is three as opposed to five. The Holy Qur'an has made five *Namaz* compulsory. The Holy Prophet^{saw} explained the timings of the five *Salat* and taught us how to offer these five *Salat* as well. The Promised Messiah^{as} has diverted our attention towards this important commandment repeatedly, and Hazoor^{aba} elaborated on this in his previous sermon. Hazoor^{aba} said that the five *Salat* are the fundamental requirement. We should also inculcate a habit of offering *nawafil*. Many of us will offer *Tahajjud* prayers during the days of *Jalsa*, however we should make every effort to continue these efforts even after *Jalsa* is over. The weaknesses in our obligatory acts of worship are strengthened with

the performance of *Nawafil* prayers, and *Tahajjud* constitutes a major part of *nawafil* prayers. The Promised Messiah^{as} has drawn our attention towards the offering of *Tahajjud* frequently. He says that members of this *Jama'at* should revive the tradition of offering *Tahajjud* in their lives. If not more, offer only two *rakats*, so that one may obtain the opportunity to supplicate. The supplications offered at the time of *Tahajjud* have a special significance, because they are offered with a true zeal and passion of the heart. He said that unless and until an intense emotion and fervor is not inculcated in the supplication, one will not be able to leave the warmth of his bed. This intensity in supplication will demonstrate that an individual is willing to sacrifice his sleep to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Thus, waking up at this time itself arouses an emotion in the heart which in turn gives rise to an intensity and zeal in supplication. And this energy becomes the reason for acceptance of that supplication. Thus the act of waking up to offer these *nawafil* prayers will in itself bring about a revolutionary change in the individual's life. In today's world, people have different priorities, due to which they go to bed late at night. *Tahajjud* is in reality a great way to re-evaluate one's spiritual condition and bring about a positive change in the spiritual condition of an individual.

After the primary obligations towards Allah Almighty, a *Momin* must perform his duties towards his fellow brethren. Without making any mention of a person's caste, creed, nationality, God Almighty and His Messenger^{saw} have repeatedly reminded man of his duties towards fellow human beings. A *Momin* has even more rights over another *Momin*, therefore these must be performed. In this context, the Promised Messiah^{as} has drawn the attention of the participants of *Jalsa Salana* towards the performance of duties and obligations towards fellow human beings as part of the objectives of this auspicious occasion. He says that one should inculcate tenderness and sympathy for others in one's heart, and this should not be limited to *Jalsa Salana* but should be carried forward into our daily lives. Hazoor^{aba} said that it has come into his observation that brothers stop talking to each other over trivial matters, and sometimes, remain in this state for years, and these conflicts continue to create fissures in other relationships as well, sometimes resulting in breaking up of family units and ultimately leading to divorces. There was a time when we used to say that the family units are experiencing unrest in the Western countries due to their liberal attitudes and the percentage of divorces is very high in these countries. Husbands and wives do not look after the sensitivities of emotions in their relationships and the small conflicts escalate to major animosities, reason being that trust is lost slowly and steadily and the result is divorce.

Hazoor^{aba} said that this is a moment of great reflection for Ahmadi households as well, as the unrest within these households is on the rise, resulting in divorces. Hazoor^{aba} said that he receives the reports from different areas about divorces, and in some cases, the percentages of divorce are very high. An Ahmadi must be in control of his or her emotions in every aspect of his or her life. Thus, during this *Jalsa*, pay special attention to this issue; try to make amends, and then stick to these amendments beyond the days of *Jalsa*. We must remember that we have taken the *Bai'at* of obedience at the hands of the Promised Messiah^{as} and taken the oath of treading the path of *Taqwa*. If we forget, then we will neither be loyal to our pledge of *Bai'at* nor will we derive any benefit from the blessings of *Jalsa*. During *Jalsa*, many chants and slogans are raised about the auspiciousness of this occasion, but the blessings can only be reaped by gaining in *Taqwa*, by obeying the commandments of God and His Messenger, by fulfilling the pledge of *Bai'at* to the Promised Messiah^{as}. Otherwise we will not reap the benefits of this blessed occasion at all.

The Promised Messiah^{as} says that this *Jalsa* is not a worldly fun fair; therefore we must try to reap the actual benefits of this occasion. Hazoor^{aba} shed light on the objectives of *Jalsa Salana* as described in the writings of the Promised Messiah^{as}. By following his instructions, every Ahmadi can become a Godly person, and this is the objective of the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

The Promised Messiah^{as} says: You have taken the pledge of *Bai'at* and affirmed your faith in me as *Hakam* and *Adal*. After this affirmation, if you have any doubts in my actions, then you must re-evaluate your faith in me. The faith that is full of doubts has no significance whatsoever. But if you have declared your faith

that this is indeed the Promised Reformer, and is *Hakam* and *Adal*, then you must surrender your actions before him and esteem his decisions as final, so that you are counted among those who hold in high regard the words of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. The attestation of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, who is *Hakam* and *Adal*, will suffice in your favor. We are indeed privileged to believe in this Reformer who has clearly explained everything that the Holy Prophet^{saw} has instructed before us so that there is no excuse for anyone to say that he did not understand a certain issue/instruction, etc. An Ahmadi, who performs *Bai 'at*, must understand his responsibilities. Worldly desires and priorities distance him from his pledge and his pledge becomes insignificant. During the days of *Jalsa*, every Ahmadi should evaluate his condition in this context.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has instructed the members of his *Jama'at* in the following words: God Almighty has established this community, and has shown millions of signs to prove its truthfulness. The true purpose is that this community is akin to that of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. Those who enter this community must remember that they are entering the Community of the likes of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, therefore I advise them to shun their attire of worldly lustre so that they can divert their complete attention towards God Almighty.

Khilafat is another promise that has been given to this community, therefore, we should strive to maintain the standards set forth by the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. One generation should instill the desire of submitting one's will to that of Allah in the next generation. If this does not happen, then we will not be able to witness that community of righteous people as mentioned by the Promised Messiah^{as}. Nay, on the contrary, we shall spiral down the abyss of darkness instead. Therefore, we must strive hard in this regard.

The Promised Messiah^{as} further elucidates: Where there is a special demeanor during the remembrance of Allah by my followers, there should be a special loving bond amongst members well.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has elaborated upon the fulfillment of our obligations towards our fellow brethren. If we implement his instructions in our lives, then we can bring about a spiritual revolution within a matter of few years. He states that my belief is that sympathy towards humanity is incomplete till one prays fervently for his enemy and vacates his heart of all rancor towards him. Hazoor^{aba} said that how many amongst us widen thus the circle of our supplications. *Jama'at* can eradicate all issues if we implement in actuality this teaching. God Almighty will also cast a glance of special Mercy when we begin to supplicate for all of humanity with a big heart. This Divine glance will become a source of betterment for us in this world and in the next.

The Promised Messiah^{as} says that you are indeed fortunate that Allah Almighty gave you that judgment to accept the Reformer of the age. If He did not bestow this special favor on you, then just as others engage in foul abuse with their language, you would have been among them as well. Do not think that we are Muslims. Islam is a blessing. Value it, and be grateful. Thus, being a Muslim or Ahmadi just by name is of no value. How can we value this favor? Islam means that one must obey the commandments of Allah Almighty in their entirety and the sum of all this is the true and complete obedience of Allah Almighty. A Muslim is one who submits his entire existence before God Almighty.

God promises that whoever gives precedence to the commandments of God above all else, then God removes his fears and anxieties. The Promised Messiah^{as} says that we must not become content that we have become Ahmadi, but continue to strive and progress in our moral condition.

Hazoor^{aba} read an extensive extract from the writings of the Promised Messiah^{as} emphasizing the importance of fulfilling the obligations towards Allah and towards His creation. We must implement these practices in our lives. It is a favor bestowed on us by the Promised Messiah^{as} that he inaugurated this event of *Jal-sa*, where we are exposed to a unique environment which is conducive to our moral uplift and strengthening of faith. Another important aspect to remember is that we must raise our standards of educating ourselves and

gaining knowledge. In the world today, the greater focus is on gaining worldly education as opposed to religious knowledge. The Promised Messiah^{as} states that in order to bring about a true transformation and increasing in your *Taqwa* and purity, one must increase in religious knowledge and this knowledge can only be gained through the Promised Messiah^{as} who has left a treasure trove of gems for us to read. Most of the books have been translated into English and therefore you should try to read those books or abstracts. Those who can read Urdu should read the books in Urdu. Whatever the Promised Messiah^{as} has written is in fact the commentary of the Holy Qur'an. In this day and age, the greatest knowledge of the Holy Qur'an was bestowed on the Promised Messiah^{as}. The Promised Messiah^{as} says that the Qur'an is a living and lustrous book. (The Promised Messiah^{as} says), "I advise all those who are affiliated to me that without acting on the commandments recorded in the Holy Qur'an, there is no spirituality in one's life. I desire that through practical demonstration, the distinction of Islam should be revealed to the world. Therefore recite the Qur'an and try to understand the philosophies explained in it."

According to the statements of the Promised Messiah^{as}, it is our duty to recite and understand the beautiful teachings of the Qur'an and implement them in practice, and then convey them to the world. At this time, the biggest tool available to us for *Tabligh* is the Holy Qur'an. Hazoor^{aba} emphasized that none amongst us should feel any kind of inferiority complex in using the Qur'an as a *Tabligh* tool in face of all the propaganda by the media. By studying this Divine Book, we can answer the allegations of the critics, which is the responsibility of every Ahmadi, so that we can convey the true message of Islam.

The Promised Messiah^{as} says that pledge of *Bai'at* should instill a new life in an individual such that it transforms him/her completely. He should remain steadfast in face of any opposition. He must not feel that trials are difficult, but in fact he should consider them an opportunity to gain the pleasure of God.

Hazoor^{aba} said that we must make every effort to practice these instructions so that we can bring about a transformation within ourselves such that God is pleased with us. Therefore, during the *Jalsa* days, we must derive maximum benefit, and assess our conditions in context of what the Promised Messiah^{as} wished to see us in. This is how we can gain the blessings of *Jalsa*, otherwise, this will also become a worldly celebration for us. Hazoor^{aba} reminded each Ahmadi to pay special attention to their surroundings as this is important for security purposes. Duty holders should pay special attention towards offering *Salat*. All participants should focus on the remembrance of Allah, which is a great objective of *Jalsa*. May Allah enable us all to do so.

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Mas'ud Ansari^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "The best-versed in the recitation of the Qur'an from among the congregation should lead the Prayer. Should they be all equal in that respect, then the one who is best-versed of them in the *Sunnah*. Should they be all equal in that respect, then the one of them who migrated earliest than others. And, should they be all equal in that respect then the oldest of them in age. No one should lead the Prayer in the jurisdiction of the other person, nor occupy the dignifying seat of the other person in his house, without his permission."

(*Muslim kitabussalat bab man ahaqu bil amamati*)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "If people realized the beneficence of calling the *Adhan* and standing in the first row for Prayer and then if they could secure these privileges only through drawing lots they would draw lots for them."

(*Bukhari kitabul adhan bab al-istiham fil adhan*)

THE PATH TO PEACE – JUST RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS

(KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY

**HADHRAT MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD,
KHALIFATUL MASIH V^{aba}**

on June 27, 2012 in

Gold Room, Rayburn Building, Capitol Hill, USA)

On 27th June 2012, a historic event took place at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), Khalifatul Masih V, Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah^(as) and Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, addressed leading congressmen, senators, ambassadors, White House and State Department Staff, NGO leaders, religious leaders, professors, policy advisors, bureaucrats, members of the Diplomatic Corps, representatives of think-tanks and the Pentagon and journalists from the media. The meeting, the first of its kind, gave the opportunity to some of the most influential leaders in the United States, including Honourable Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic Leader in the House of Representatives, to hear first-hand Islam's message on world peace. Following the event, His Holiness was given a tour of the Capitol Hill building, before being escorted to the House of Representatives where a Resolution was introduced in honour of his visit to the United States. The introductory paragraph of the Resolution stated:

“Welcoming His Holiness, Ha-

dhrrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, to Washington, DC, and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, nonviolence, human rights, religious freedom and democracy.”

Senator Robert Casey (US-PA) welcomed His Holiness to the United States and said that he was greatly appreciative at having the opportunity to meet with him. He said: *“Your Holiness, I want to thank you for your great leadership and your commitment to peace, tolerance and justice.”* The first Muslim Congressman, Keith Ellison (US MN-5) said that the United States was *“honoured by the presence of His Holiness”* and he said that under the leadership of its Khalifa, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was proving to be a *“true blessing for the people of the United States.”* Congressman Brad Sherman (US CA-27) said that he would be introducing the Congressional Resolution

welcoming His Holiness to the United States in the House of Representatives immediately after the event. He also said that His Holiness was *“a model of tolerance for the entire world.”* Katrina Lantos Swett, Chairwoman of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) said that she felt the entire room was filled with a *“special blessing and undoubtedly it is a reflection of the blessing His Holiness brings to the Capitol.”* She went on to speak about and condemn the continued persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in various countries. Congressman Frank Wolf (VA-10) welcomed Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba) to the United States and said that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at was ever ready to support all human rights efforts. Congressman Mike Honda (CA-15) spoke about his pleasure at meeting His Holiness privately the evening before at the Baitur Rahman Mosque. He said that he hoped that Ahmadis remained forever safe in the United States so that they could continue to propagate their message of peace. Thereafter, Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) presented a copy of the Special Congressional Resolution to His Holiness.

Democratic Leader, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi said she was proud that such a bipartisan welcome had been given to Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba). She said the leadership of Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was characterised by “*wisdom and compassion*.” She further said that despite facing grave persecution, “His Holiness has refused to turn to bitterness or vengeance.” The full list of attendees at the Capitol Hill event reads as follows:

1. U.S. Senator Robert Casey, Sr. (Democrat Pennsylvania)
2. U.S. Senator John Cornyn (Republican Texas)
3. Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (Democrat California)
4. U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison (Democrat Minnesota)
5. U.S. Congressman Bradley Sherman (Democrat California)
6. U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf (Republican Virginia)
7. U.S. Congressman Michael Honda (Democrat California)
8. U.S. Congressman Timothy Murphy (Republican Pennsylvania)
9. U.S. Congresswoman Jeannette Schmidt (Republican Ohio)
10. U.S. Congresswoman Janice Hahn (Democrat California)
11. U.S. Congresswoman Janice Schakowsky (Democrat Illinois)
12. U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier (Democrat California)
13. U.S. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (Democrat California)
14. U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (Democrat Texas)
15. U.S. Congressman Gary Peters (Democrat Michigan)
16. U.S. Congressman Thomas Petri (Republican Wisconsin)
17. U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff (Democrat California)
18. U.S. Congressman Michael Capuano (Democrat Massachusetts)
19. U.S. Congressman Howard Berman (Democrat California)
20. U.S. Congresswoman Judy Chu (Democrat California)
21. U.S. Congressman André Carson (Democrat Indiana)
22. U.S. Congresswoman Laura Richardson (Democrat California)
23. U.S. Congressman Lloyd Poe (Republican Texas)
24. U.S. Congressman Barney Frank (Democrat Massachusetts)
25. U.S. Congressman Bruce Braley (Democrat Iowa)
26. U.S. Congressman Dennis Kucinich (Democrat Ohio)
27. U.S. Congressman Trent Franks (Republican Arizona)
28. U.S. Congressman Chris Murphy (Democrat Connecticut)
29. U.S. Congressman Hank Johnson (Democrat Georgia)
30. U.S. Congressman James Clyburn (Democrat South Carolina)
31. His Excellency Bockari Kortu Stevens, Ambassador of Sierra Leone to the United States
32. Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, Chairwoman, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
33. Hon. Tim Kaine, Former Governor of Virginia
34. Amb. Susan Burk, Special Representative of President Barack Obama for Nuclear Nonproliferation
35. Amb. Suzan Johnson Cook, U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom
36. Hon. Khaled Aljalalma, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United States
37. Rev. Monsignor Jean-Francois Lantheaume, First Counselor (Deputy Chief of Mission), The Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See to the United States
38. Ms. Sara Al-Ojaili, Public Affairs/Liaison Officer, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States
39. Mr. Salim Al Kindie, First Secretary, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States
40. Ms. Fozia Fayyaz, Embassy of Pakistan to the United States
41. Hon. Saida Zaid, Counselor, Embassy of Morocco to the United States
42. Hon. Nabeel Munir, Minister-IV (Security Council), Pakistan Permanent Mission to the United Nations
43. Hon. Josef Renggli, Minister-Counselor, Embassy of Switzerland to the United States
44. Hon. Alyssa Ayres, Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia, U.S. Department of State
45. Amb. Karl Inderfurth, Senior Adviser and Wadhvani Chair in U.S.-India Policy Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies
46. Hon. Donald A. Camp, Senior Associate, Center for Strategic and International Studies
47. Amb. Jackie Wolcott, Executive Director, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
48. Dr. Azizah al-Hibri, Commissioner, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

49. Mr. Isaiah Leggett, County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland
50. Ms. Victoria Alvarado, Director, Office of International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State
51. Dr. Imad Dean Ahmad, Director, Minaret of Freedom Institute
52. Dr. Zainab Alwani, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, Howard University School of Divinity
53. Ms. Deborah L. Benedict, Associate Counsel, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security
54. Ms. Lora Berg, Senior Adviser to Special Representative to Muslim Communities, U.S. Department of State
55. Dr. Charles Butterworth, Professor (Emeritus) of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park
56. Father John Crossin, Executive Director for Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
57. Major (Ret.) Franz Gayl, Senior Science Adviser, U.S. Marine Corps.
58. Dr. Sue Gurawadena-Vaughn, Director of International Religious Freedom and South East Asia Programs, Freedom House
59. Mr. Frank Jannuzi, Head of Washington Office, Amnesty International USA
60. Mr. T. Kumar, International Advocacy Director, Amnesty International USA
61. George Leventhal, Member of the Montgomery County Council
62. Mr. Amer Latif, Visiting Fellow, Wadhvani Chair in U.S.-India Policy Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies
63. Mr. Tim Lenderking, Director of Pakistan Desk Office, U.S. State Department
64. Mr. Jalal Malik, International Affairs Officer, U.S. Army National Guard
65. Mr. Naveed Malik, Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State
66. Ms. Dalia Mogahed, Senior Analyst and Executive Director, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies
67. Mr. Paul Monteiro, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement
68. Major General David Quantock, United States Army Provost General
69. Ms. Tina Ramirez, Director of International and Government Relations, The Becket Fund
70. Rabbi David Saperstein, Director and Counsel, Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism
71. Chaplain, Brigadier General Alphonse Stephenson, Director of the National Guard Bureau Office of the Chaplain
72. Mr. Knox Thames, Director of Policy and Research, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
73. Mr. Eric Treene, Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice
74. Dr. Hassan Abbas, Professor, Regional and Analytical Studies Department, National Defense University
75. Mr. Malik Siraj Akbar, Reagan-Fascell Fellow, National Endowment of Democracy
76. Mr. Matthew K. Asada, Congressional Fellow to Rep. Gary Peters
77. Ms. Stacy Burdett, Director of Government and National Affairs, Anti-Defamation League
78. Ms. Elizabeth Cassidy, Deputy Director for Policy and Research, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
79. Ms. Aimee Chiu, Director of Media, Communication, and Public Relations, American Islamic Congress
80. Mr. Cornelius Cremin, Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Acting Deputy Director and Foreign Affairs Officer for Pakistan
81. Mr. Sadanand Dhume, Resident Fellow, American Enterprise Institute
82. Dr. Richard Gathro, Dean of Nyack College, Washington D.C.
83. Mr. Joe Grieboski, Chairman, The Institute on Religion and Public Policy
84. Ms. Sarah Grieboski, The Institute on Religion and Public Policy
85. Dr. Max Gross, Adjunct Professor, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University
86. Dr. Riaz Haider, Clinical Professor of Medicine, George Washington University
87. Ms. Huma Haque, Assistant Director, South Asia Center, Atlantic Council
88. Mr. Jay Kansara, Associate Director, Hindu American Foundation
89. Mr. Hamid Khan, Senior Pro-

- gram Officer, Rule of Law Center, U.S. Institute for Peace
90. Ms. Valerie Kirkpatrick, Associate for Refugees and U.S. Advocacy, Human Rights Watch
91. Mr. Alex Kronemer, Unity Productions
92. Mr. Paul Liben, Executive Writer, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
93. Ms. Amy Lillis, Foreign Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State
94. Mr. Graham Mason, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Allyson Schwartz
95. Ms. Lauren Markoe, Religion News Service
96. Mr. Dan Merica, CNN.com
97. Mr. Joseph V. Montville, Senior Associate, Merrimack College Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations
98. Mr. Aaron Myers, Program Officer, Freedom House
99. Ms. Attia Nasar, Regional Coordinating Officer, U.S. Department of State
100. Ms. Melanie Nezer, Senior Director, US Policy and Advocacy, HIAS
101. Dr. Elliott Parris, Bowie State University
102. Mr. John Pinna, Director of Government and International Relations, American Islamic Congress
103. Mr. Arif Rafiq, Adjunct Scholar, Middle East Institute
104. Ms. Maya Rajaratnam, Amnesty International
105. Ms. Rachel Sauer, Foreign Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State
106. Dr. Jerome Schiele, Dean of College of Professional Studies, Bowie State University
107. Ms. Samantha Schnitzer, Staff, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
108. Dr. Mary Hope Schwoebel, Senior Program Officer, Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding, U.S. Institute for Peace
109. Ms. Sarah Schlesinger, International and Government Relations Associate, The Becket Fund
110. Dr. Frank Sellin, Kyrgystan Desk Officer, U.S. Department of State
111. Ms. Anna-Lee Stangl, Christian Solidarity Worldwide
112. Ms. Kalinda Stephenson, Professional Staff, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
113. Mr. Jordan Tama, Lead Democratic Staffer, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
114. Mr. Shaun Tandon, AFP
115. Dr. Wilhelmus Valkenberg, Professor of Religion and Culture, The Catholic University of America
116. Mr. Anthony Vance, Director of External Affairs, Bahá'ís of the United States
117. Mr. Jihad Saleh Williams, Government Affairs Representative, Islamic Relief USA
118. Ms. Amelia Wang, Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Judy Chu
119. Ms. Moh Sharma, Legislative Fellow to Congresswoman Judy Chu
- lim Community, at 10:40am. The transcript of this historic address is presented below:

Address by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), Khalifatul Masih V, worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community at Capitol Hill, Washington DC, USA

“Bismillah-ir Rahman-ir Rahim – In the name of Allah, the Gracious, Ever Merciful.

All distinguished guests – *As-salamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahe Wa Barakatohu* – Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Before proceeding, I would like to first of all take this opportunity to thank you all for taking the time to come and listen to what I have to say. I have been requested to speak about a subject that is extremely vast and wide ranging. It has many different aspects and therefore, it is not possible for me to cover all of them in the short time available. The subject that I have been asked to speak about is the establishment of world peace. Certainly, this is the most vital and pressing issue facing the world today. However, as the time is limited, I will only briefly give the Islamic viewpoint on the establishment of peace through just and equal relations between nations.

The truth is that peace and justice are inseparable – you cannot have one without the other. Certainly, this principle is something that all wise and intelligent people understand. Leaving aside those people who are determined to create disorder in the world, no one can ever claim that in any society, country or even

The keynote address was delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^(aba), Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Mus-

the entire world, that there can be disorder or a lack of peace where justice and fair dealing exist. Nevertheless, we find in many parts of the world that disorder and a lack of peace are prevalent. Such disorder is visible both internally within countries, and externally in terms of the relations between various nations. Such disorder and strife exists even though all governments claim to make policies that are based on justice. All claim that the establishment of peace is their primary objective. Yet, in general, there is little doubt that restlessness and anxiety is increasing in the world, and so disorder is spreading. This clearly proves that somewhere along the line, the requirements of justice are not being fulfilled. Therefore, there is an urgent need to try and end inequality, wherever and whenever it exists. Thus, as the worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I would like to make a few observations about the need for, and the ways to achieve peace based on justice.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is purely a religious community. It is our firm belief that the Messiah and Reformer who was destined to appear in this age and enlighten the world as to Islam's true teachings has indeed arrived. We believe that the Founder of our Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^(as), was that very Promised Messiah and Reformer, and thus we have accepted him. He pressed upon his followers to act and propagate the real and true teachings of Islam that are based on the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, everything that I will say in relation to establishing peace, and in relation to conducting just international relations, will be based on Qur'anic teachings.

In relation to achieving world peace, all of you regularly express your opinions, and indeed make great efforts. Your creative and intelligent minds allow you to present great ideas, plans and indeed a vision of peace. Thus, this issue does not require me to speak from a worldly or political perspective, but instead my entire focus will be based on how to establish peace based on religion. For this purpose I shall, as I have earlier said, present some very important guidelines based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

It is important to always remember that human knowledge and intellect is not perfect, but is in fact limited. Thus, when making decisions or forming thoughts often certain factors enter human minds, which can cloud judgement and lead to a person trying to fulfil his own rights. Ultimately, this can lead to an unjust outcome and decision being made. God's Law, however, is perfect and so no vested interests or unfair provisions exist. This is because God only desires for the good and betterment of His Creation and therefore, His Law is based entirely on justice. The day the people of the world come to recognise and understand this crucial point will be the day that the foundation for true and everlasting peace will be laid. Otherwise, we continue to find that although efforts are endlessly made to establish world peace, yet they are unable to provide any worthwhile results.

After the conclusion of the

First World War, the leaders of certain countries desired for good and peaceful relations between all nations in future. Thus, in an effort to achieve world peace the League of Nations was formed. Its principal aim was to maintain world peace and to prevent future wars from breaking out. Unfortunately, the rules of the League and the resolutions it passed had certain flaws and weaknesses and so they did not properly protect the rights of *all* peoples and *all* nations equally. Consequently, as a result of the inequalities that existed, long-term peace could not prevail. The efforts of the League failed and this led directly to World War II.

We are all aware of the unparalleled destruction and devastation that ensued, where around 75 million people globally lost their lives, many of who were innocent civilians. That war should have been more than enough to open the eyes of the world. It should have been a means to developing wise policies that granted all parties their due rights, based on justice, and thus prove to be a means of establishing peace in the world. The world's governments at the time did endeavour to some extent to try and establish peace, and hence the United Nations was established. However, it soon became quite apparent that the noble and overarching objective underpinning the United Nations could not be fulfilled. Indeed, today certain governments quite openly make statements that prove its failure.

What does Islam say in relation to international relations that are based on justice, and so a means of establishing peace? In the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty has made it clear that whilst our nationalities or ethnic backgrounds act as a means of

identity, they do not entitle or validate any form of superiority of any kind.

The Qur'an, thus, makes clear that all people are born equal. Furthermore, in the final sermon ever delivered by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw), he instructed all Muslims to always remember that an Arab is not superior to a non-Arab and nor is a non-Arab superior to an Arab. He taught that a white person is not superior to a black person and nor is a black person superior to a white person. Thus, it is a clear teaching of Islam that the people of all nationalities and all races are equal. It is also made clear that all people should be granted equal rights without any discrimination or prejudice. This is the key and golden principle that lays the foundation for harmony between different groups and nations, and for the establishment of peace.

However, today we find that there is division and separation between powerful and weaker nations. For example, in the United Nations we find that there is a distinction made between certain countries. Thus, in the Security Council there are some permanent members and some non-permanent members. This division has proved to be an internal source of anxiety and frustration and thus we regularly hear reports of certain countries protesting against this inequality. Islam teaches absolute justice and equality in all matters and so we find another very crucial guideline in Chapter 5, Verse 3 of the Holy Qur'an. In this verse it states that to fully comply with the requirements of justice, it is necessary to treat even those people, who go beyond all limits in their hatred and enmity, with fairness and equity. The Qur'an

teaches that wherever and whoever counsels you towards goodness and virtue, you should accept it, and wherever and whoever counsels you towards sinful or unjust behaviour, you should reject it.

A question that naturally arises is that what is the standard of justice required by Islam? In Chapter 4, Verse 136, the Holy Qur'an states that even if you have to testify against yourself, or your parents or your most loved ones, then you must do so in order to uphold justice and to uphold the truth. Powerful and rich countries should not usurp the rights of the poor and weaker countries in an effort to preserve their own rights, and nor should they deal with the poorer nations in an unjust fashion. On the other hand, the poor and weaker nations should not seek to inflict harm on the powerful or wealthy nations whenever the opportunity arises. Instead, both sides should endeavour to fully abide by the principles of justice. Indeed, this is a matter of crucial importance in maintaining peaceful relations between countries.

Another requirement for peace between nations based on justice is given in Chapter 15, Verse 89 of the Holy Qur'an where it states that no party should ever look enviously at the resources and wealth of others. Similarly, no country should seek to unjustly appropriate or take over the resources of another country on the false pretext of trying to assist or support them. Thus, on the basis of

providing technical expertise, governments should not take advantage of other nations by making unjust trade deals or contracts. Similarly, on the basis of providing expertise or assistance, governments should not try to take control of the natural resources or assets of the developing nations. Where less educated people or governments need to be taught how to properly utilise their natural resources, then this should be done.

Then, nations and governments should always seek to serve and help those less fortunate. However, such service should not be rendered with an aim of achieving national or political benefits or as a means to fulfil vested interests. We find that in the past six or seven decades the United Nations has launched many programmes or foundations aiming to help the poor countries to progress. Towards this effort they have explored the natural resources of the developing nations. However, despite these efforts, none of the poorer countries have reached the stage or level of the developed nations. One reason for this is certainly wide-ranging corruption by many of the governments of those underdeveloped countries. With regret though I must say that despite this, as a means to further their own interests, the developed nations have continued to deal with such governments. Trade deals, international aid and business contracts have continued to be processed. As a result, the frustrations and restlessness of the poor and deprived segments of society have continued to increase and this has led to rebellion and internal disorder within those countries. The poor people of the developing countries have become so frustrated that they have turned against not only their own

leaders, but also the big powers as well. This has played into the hands of the extremist groups, who have taken advantage of the frustrations, and so have been able to encourage such people towards joining their groups and supporting their hate-filled ideology. The ultimate result of this has been that the peace of the world has been destroyed.

Thus, Islam has drawn our attention to various means for peace. It requires absolute justice. It requires truthful testimony to always be given. It requires that our glances are not cast enviously in the direction of the wealth of others. It requires that the developed nations put aside their vested interests, and instead help and serve the less developed and poorer nations with a truly selfless attitude and spirit. If all of these factors are observed, then true peace will be established.

If despite all these aforementioned measures any country transgresses all limits and attacks another country, and seeks to unjustly take control of its resources, then other countries should certainly take measures to stop such cruelty – but they should always act with justice when doing so.

The circumstances for taking action, based on Islamic teachings are detailed in the Qur'an, in Chapter 49. It teaches that when two nations are in dispute and this leads to war, then other governments should strongly counsel them towards dialogue and diplomacy so that they can come to an agreement and reconciliation on the basis of a negotiated settlement. If, however, one of the parties does not accept the terms of agreement and wages war, then other countries

should unite together and fight to stop that aggressor. When the aggressive nation is defeated and agrees to mutual negotiation, then all parties should work towards an agreement that leads to long-standing peace and reconciliation. Harsh and unjust conditions should not be enforced that leads to the hands of any nation being tied, because in the long-term that will lead to restlessness, which will ferment and spread. The result of such restlessness will be further disorder.

In circumstances where a third-party government seeks to bring about reconciliation between two parties, then it should act with sincerity and total impartiality. This impartiality should remain even if one of the parties speaks against it. Therefore, the third-party should display no anger in such circumstances, it should seek no revenge, nor should it act in an unfair manner. All parties should be afforded their due rights.

Thus, for the requirements of justice to be fulfilled, it is essential that the countries that are negotiating a settlement should themselves not seek to fulfil their own personal interests, nor try to derive benefit unduly from either country. They should not interfere unjustly or pressure either of the parties unfairly. The natural resources of any country should not be taken advantage of. Unnecessary and unfair restrictions should not be placed upon such countries, because this is neither

just and nor can it ever prove to be a source of improving relations between countries.

Due to time constraints, I have only very briefly mentioned these points. In short, if we desire for peace to be established in the world, then we must leave aside our personal and national interests for the greater good and instead we must establish mutual relations that are based entirely on justice. Otherwise, some of you might agree with me that due to alliances, blocs may be formed in future – or I can even say they *have* started forming – and it is not unlikely that disorder will continue to increase in the world, which will ultimately lead to a huge destruction. The effects of such devastation and warfare will surely last for many generations. Therefore, the United States, as the world's largest power, should play its role in acting with true justice and with such good intentions, as I have described. If it does so then the world will always remember with great admiration your great efforts. It is my prayer that this becomes a reality. Thank you very much. Thank you again.

According our tradition, at the end of the function we normally perform a silent prayer. Thus, I will perform the silent prayer and the Ahmadiis will follow me. All of you, our guests, can pray in your own way.”

References

1. Ch. 49:V, 14
2. Ch. 49,V. 10

AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE ADDRESS GIVEN BY HADHRAT MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD, KHALIFATUL MASIH V^{aba} AT THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL HILL

A Grand Manifestation of the Prophecy: *‘You have been helped with prestige’*”

Anwer Mahmood Khan , Los Angeles, California, USA

Although the United States achieved independence on July 4, 1776, its spiritual birth took place on June 27, 2012, when for the first time, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} came to the chambers of the United States Congress (Capitol Hill) and introduced its members to the unfaltering relationship between justice and the establishment of world peace in the light of the teachings of the Holy Qur’an, and concluded his session with a collective silent prayer. The event drew some 140 special dignitaries, including 30 members of United States Congress, ambassadors, senior government officials and thought leaders.

I had the distinct honor to be among those in attendance at this event, and this article seeks to capture some of my impressions of the various linkages between the event and an important revelation given to both Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and the Promised Messiah^{as}:

نُصِرْتَ بِالرُّعْبِ

“You have been helped with prestige.”

I begin with some vital background on the subject revelation. Hadhrat Abu Huraira^{ra} states that once Prophet Muhammad explained that he had been given six distinctions over and above all the other prophets. The second distinction among these was:

نُصِرْتَ بِالرُّعْبِ

“You have been helped with prestige” (Sahih Muslim, Kitab-al-Masajid).

“Prestige” in this revelation refers to an aura of support or majesty bestowed by Allah. This second distinction of Prophet Muhammad^{saw} was apparent in many instances throughout his life.

For example, once a Bedouin from outside Mecca approached Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and complained to him about some money that was owed to him by Abu Jahl, one of Prophet Muhammad^{saw}’s^{saw} most virulent opponents. Those who observed

the Bedouin’s request did not think that Prophet Muhammad^{saw} would be willing to directly intercede and confront Abu Jahl. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to correct an injustice to an oppressed Bedouin and readily accompanied him to Abu Jahl’s home. When he knocked on the door, Abu Jahl was startled to see Prophet Muhammad^{saw} standing in front of him—the very person he had been pursuing for so long. Prophet Muhammad mentioned about the loan due to the Bedouin and demanded its immediate payment. Abu Jahl, startled by the request, immediately acquiesced and paid the money without incident. Later, when Abu Jahl was among the other chiefs of Mecca, they reproved him for being so weak and self-contradictory in the face of his sworn enemy. Abu Jahl responded that anyone in his position would have done the same for when he saw Prophet Muhammad^{saw} standing at the door, he also saw two wild camels standing on either side of him ready to attack him. Abu Jahl was so awe-struck by their appearance that he knew he could not refuse the request of the Prophet Muhammad^{saw}.

Indeed, Allah had crafted a miraculous sign to preserve Prophet Muhammad's prestige in the face of his bitterest opponent. (Khalifatul Masih II, *Life of Muhammad*, pp. 20-21).

The distinction of the Prophet Muhammad^{saw} that he would be helped with prestige was also specially granted to his servant and true and ardent devotee, the Promised Messiah^{as}. The Promised Messiah^{as} twice received precisely the same revelation—with some variations in the wording—once in 1883 and once in 1906.

In 1883, he received the following variation:

نُصِرْتَ بِالرُّعْبِ وَأُحْيِيَتْ بِالصِّدْقِ أَيُّهَا
الصِّدِّيقُ - نُصِرْتَ وَقَالُوا لَأَتَّ حِينَ مَنَاصٍ

"You have been helped with prestige and have been brought to life with truth, O truthful one. You have been helped and your opponents said: 'No way of escape is left.'" (Tadhkirah, 2009, p. 83).

In 1906, he received the following variation:

نُصِرْتَ بِالرُّعْبِ - وَقَالُوا لَأَتَّ حِينَ مَنَاصٍ

"You have been helped with prestige and they said: 'There is no way of escape left.'" (Tadhkirah, 2009, p. 882).

The above revelations have been manifested several times during the life of the Promised Messiah^{as}, be it during his public debates, court appearance or writing experiences—as well as during the lives of the Promised Messiah's^{as} successors in Ahmadiyyat. Indeed, many Ahmadi Muslims have witnessed and written about these manifestations.

But a truly unique and unprecedented manifestation of the prophecy took place on June 27, 2012, when Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} visited Capitol Hill, headquarters of the United States Congress, and for the first time, met with United States lawmakers to present to them Qur'anic teachings on justice and the establishment of world peace.

I narrate some examples that demonstrate how Allah, with his majesty, bestowed prestige on Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}.

When Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, accompanied by some 40 members of the Community, first arrived at the Rayburn Building, and having passed through security, entered the corridor, we witnessed the first manifestation of Allah's help, when visitors and staffers, busy with their own affairs and there for their own reasons, caught sight of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} lined up on either side of him as if they had been waiting especially to welcome him. Every camera was turned towards him and captured his magnetic personality, though none of the passersby knew who he was or why he had come.

Another glimpse of Allah's help became manifest when Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} first entered the Rayburn Gold Room—a prestigious venue in the United States House of Representative building—where approximately 140 special dignitaries, including 30 members of U.S. Congress, ambassadors,

senior government officials and thought leaders, stood up and welcomed Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} with a resounding applause.

United States Congressman Brad Sherman, one of the members of the United States Congress who had received and met Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} before the event, took the podium and presented Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} with a special United States flag that once had flown over the United States Capitol building. He presented the historic relic to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, along with a certificate of its authenticity.

United States Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, another member of United States Congress in attendance, took the podium and presented Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} with a rare special bi-partisan United States Congressional resolution, introduced on that very day and signed by 22 members of the United States Congress, recognizing Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} for his leadership, courage and various contributions in advancing human rights and welfare for all people throughout the world.

In a spontaneous moment to begin her prepared remarks about the worldwide persecution of Ahmadi Muslims, Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, Chairperson of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom—a vital non-partisan government commission—observed:

"I have to say that there is a particular sense of blessing that seems to rest on this brimming room today, and I am sure that it is due in part to the wonderful spirit of goodwill, the warm hearts and a sense of optimism and love of the participants, but Your Holiness, it is undoubtedly a reflection of the blessing that you

bring to the capital, and so we are so honored and so grateful for you being here today.”

United States Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, the keynote speaker from United States Congress, commended Khalifatul Masih V thus:

“It is an honor to be in the same room with you ... Though a man of humble beginnings, your leadership has made you a figure of global prominence. You started as a teacher and now you’re a guide for millions of Muslims worldwide. You worked to help farmers in Ghana and now you are a force across borders and an asset to the developing world. You were persecuted for your beliefs, jailed for your faith, exiled from your homeland but refused to turn to bitterness and vengeance. You’re a leader with wisdom and compassion and a champion of non-violence and respect among faiths.”

After the various remarks by several other members of United States Congress, when Khalifatul Masih V stood up to deliver his address, the entire audience stood on their feet out of respect—yet another manifestation of the special prestige given to him on this special day.

During his address, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} stressed the importance of justice in establishing world peace and presented Islam’s teachings and insight from the Holy Qur’an, outlining the steps that the Holy Qur’an has clearly explained for the path to peace. Members of the audience listened carefully and attentively, and many took notes during the address. United States Democratic Leader Pelosi stepped off the stage and took a seat in the front row of the audience to have a better listen and view of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}. Of significant note,

most of the 30 members of United States Congress stayed for the entire duration of the event and Khalifatul Masih V’s^{aba} address, despite the fact that United States Congress was in session during the very hour of the event. Many seasoned public officials in the audience would later comment that in all their years attending events in Washington D.C., they had never seen more than 10 members of United States Congress ever come to such an event, let alone stay for its entire duration. Yet again, this was but another example of the prestige given to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}.

After Khalifatul Masih V concluded his address, he led the entire audience in a special collective silent prayer. Then the audience stood up for a third time, bursting with applause. These are the very same lawmakers who rarely, if ever, give standing ovations to even the President of the United States. Clearly, Allah’s decree had possessed their hearts as well. Indeed, there appeared to be an electric current running through the room—undoubtedly spurred by a heavenly prestige that was consistently and inevitably manifesting itself throughout the morning. I later described the scene through a line of poetry that I penned after the event: *“How can I express the details of this awe-inspiring scene? / My pen is incapable and my sentiments are overwhelmed with splendor.”*

After the formal session, Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} received a guided tour of the United States

Capitol, ending with a visit to the gallery of the United States House of Representatives, where a live Congressional session was in progress. While Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} sat in the gallery, United States Congressman Sherman took to the main floor of the United States House of Representatives and formally introduced Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, drawing attention to his presence in the gallery and officially noting his welcome and the special U.S. Congressional resolution for the official recorded proceedings of United States Congress.

During this time, my son, Amjad Mahmood Khan, grandson of the late Maulana Abdul Malik Khan, was sitting next to Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} and provided some briefing on the issues being discussed during the live Congressional session. This brought back memories of my grandfather, Hadhrat Maulana Zulfikar Ali Khan Gohar, who some nine decades earlier had discharged the duty of briefing Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} at the historic “Wembley Conference” in London in 1924.

After Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V’s^{aba} address, I was descending the staircase when one of the special dignitaries in attendance told me that he found Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V’s^{aba} address to be “pure gospel.” When I heard these words, I immediately reflected on the historic event of 1896, when the Promised Messiah^{as} presented his seminal essay, *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*, at the Conference of World Religions. After that event, an American publication, *Spiritual Journal* (Boston), had characterized the lecture as “pure gospel” in its review. When I began to reflect upon this similarity further, I realized that

both Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V's^{aba} address and the Promised Messiah's^{as} essay shared one common feature: they stressed Islam's true teachings without ever mentioning or criticizing any other faith tradition. Here then was yet another striking example of heavenly prestige.

Another special dignitary commented to me: "*Congress desperately needed this lecture [by Khalifatul Masih].*"

Another United States Congressman in attendance, Andre Carson, who is the second Muslim to hold Congressional office, was overheard saying: "*I have never seen another Muslim leader who is both so humble and yet so masterful in speech.*"

The deluge of excitement and goodwill in the room on this blessed day was certainly a fulfillment of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II's^{ra} prayer:

هرگام پر فرشتوں کا لشکر ہو ساتھ ساتھ

هرملک میں تمہاری حفاظت خدا کرے

"*At every step, a large host of angels may accompany you / In every country, Allah may protect and safeguard you.*"

Those special dignitaries present in the room who possessed judgment and discernment felt their hearts affected by the occasion and by the extraordinary reverence engendered by Khalifatul Masih V's^{aba} blessed presence, which compelled them to express their welcome and their praise of him in every possible manner.

In fact, at this time, we witnessed and observed two living signs from Allah:

اِنِّي مَعَكَ يَا مَسْرُور

"O Masroor, I am with you"

And:

نُصِرْتَ بِالرُّعْبِ

"You have been helped with prestige"

Independent of my impressions of the event and the link to the prophecy "*You have been helped with prestige*", Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V's^{aba} himself commented to me a few days after the event that when he was busy preparing to go to United States Capitol Hill, Allah drew his attention to this revelation on that very morning, and he prayed that Allah fulfill the revelation in his favor.

Indeed, Allah fulfilled Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V's^{aba} prayer in a most grand and profound manner. Through the power of Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA), now the entire world—and not just those present in the Rayburn Gold Room on June 27, 2012—witnessed this transformative event and were able to testify to the truth of the revelation: "*You have been helped with prestige*".

Alhamdolillah summa
Alhamdolillah.

All praise belongs to Allah alone.

*An Urdu version of this article first appeared in the weekly newspaper, *Al Fazl International*, August 3, 2012

HADITH

Hadhat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that he had not seen anyone consult his Companions more than the Messenger^{saw} of Allah.

(*Tirmidhi abwab fada'ilul jihad bab ma ja' fil mashwarah*)

Hadhrat Ibnul Ghanam Al-Ash'ari^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said to Hadhrat Abu Bakr^{ra} and Hadhrat 'Umar^{ra}: "When both of you give an identical opinion, then I do not go against you."

(*Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, p 227/4*)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "If someone consults you, give him the best advice. If you do not, you are dishonest to that person."

(*Musnad Imamul A'zam kitabul adab*)

Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates that a person asked the Holy Prophet^{saw} for advice. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "Do things after proper reflection and planning. If you feel that the outcome of the task will be beneficial then do it. However, if you have some reservation about the outcome, then withhold yourself from it."

(*Mishkat babul hadhar wattani fil umur*)

Hadhrat Abu Dharr^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said to me: "O Abu Dharr! Nothing is wiser than good thinking and good planning. There is no virtue like abstaining from sins and nothing generates (greater) love than good conduct."

(*Baihaqi fisha'bul iman ba hawa-ah Mishkat babul hadhar wattani fil umur*)

64th JALSA SALANA, USA HELD AT PENNSYLVANIA FARM SHOW COMPLEX HARRISBURG, PA On June 29-30 and July 1, 2012

Report by: Habibullah S. Bajwa

Jalsa Site Preparation

Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, *Ameer Jama'at* Ahmadiyya USA, appointed Wasim Haider *Afsar Jalsa Salana*, Mirza Naseer Ehsan Ahmad *Afsar Jalsa Gah* and Rizwan Ahmad Alladin *Afsar Khidmat-e-Khalq* well in advance. They set up teams of *Naib Afsran*, *Nazimeen* and *Muavineen* for the preparation of *Jalsa* and discharging the responsibilities of various *Nizamats*. The designated area of Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex was covered with colorful painting, banners and flags for beautifying the landscape, reception, transportation, accommodation, security and *Langar Khana* areas. Quotations of the Promised Messiah's^{as} were displayed on beautiful banners.

Jalsa Salana Program

A program committee comprising Dr. Zaheer Bajwa, Maulana Azhar Haneef and Mirza Naseer Ehsan Ahmad under the chairmanship of *Ameer* USA, deliberated and chalked out a program for the *Jalsa*. The topics and speakers were carefully selected and approved. *Ameer Sahib* approved a program for *Lajna Jalsa* proceedings. A beautiful brochure with names of speakers and topics of speeches was printed.

Registration

All members of the *Jama'at*

were required to register on line for *Jalsa* using Internet. Identity Cards with a barcode and magnetic strip with appropriate information was set up to be scanned. It helped with the security check up. Registration booths were set up on both men and ladies sides.

Jalsa Gah

This year *Jalsa* arrangements were made at Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex. Hotels required for accommodating guests were at convenience location from the *Jalsa Gah*. The *Jalsa* facility, with its prime location and central air conditioning, offered two big halls and a few conference rooms. The venue for the main *Jalsa Gah*, both for men and women, was in the big halls situated a walking distance apart. Arrangements for direct TV transmission of *Jalsa* proceedings for the combined session were in place via MTA.

Physical Arrangements

The physical arrangements for *Jalsa Gah* started much earlier. Colored curtains were set up and offices, stalls were built for smooth running of the *Jalsa* event. For the convenience offices for Registra-

tion, Information, Reception Accommodation, Media & Press and *Hazri Nigrani* were at *Jalsa* Site. Similarly desks for Transportation and Humanity First and stalls and offices for Exhibition, Books, *Langar Khana*, *Rishta Nata*, *MKA*, *Khidmate Khalq*, *Tehrike Jadid*, First Aid/ Homeopathy were inside the main *Jalsa Gah*.

MTA set up its studio at the back of the stage. MTA interview booth was on right hand side on the stage. The background screen displayed 64th *Jalsa Salana* USA 2012, *Kalma Tayyaba*, Monogram of "Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA" and photo of *Khana Kaaba*. The rostrum had the same logo of the *Jama'at*. Banners bearing quotations of the Promised Messiah^{as} along with English translation were on the side walls and colorful flags were displayed at *Jalsa* site

Arrival of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} in USA

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} arrived at Chicago at 2:20 PM on June 16, 2012. He had a very busy schedule. After visiting various *Jama'ats* and participating in important programs he reached Baitur Rahman Mosque situated in Silver Spring Maryland on June 20, 2012 at 8:20 PM. From his arrival till his departure to Pennsylvania for *Jalsa* he remained extremely busy from early

morning to late night. He had family *Mulaqats*, meetings with government officials and dignitaries, meetings with students, *Lajna*, *Ameen* programs and programs with children were some of his engagements. In the afternoon of June 28, 2012 Hazoor^{aba} moved to Pennsylvania for participation in the Jalsa.

Waqfe Nau Program:

The National *Waqfe Nau* department used to arrange their programs during *Jalsa*. This year due to Hadhrat Khalifatula Masih V^{aba} arrival in USA the department arranged the following programs with Hazoor^{aba} at Baitur Rahman Mosque before Jalsa Salana:

(a)

Program with Waqfeen-e-Nau 10- 12 age group

On June 22, 2012 evening (8:40-9:20 PM) a program for *Waqfeen-e-Nau* (Boys and Girls) 10-12 age group held at Baitur Rahman Mosque with Hazoor^{aba}. 54 *Waqfeen* and *Waqfat* participated. The program started with the recitation of Holy Qur'an by Khalid Husain with Urdu translation by Hisham Hamad and English translation by Barkat Adil. Mirza Ghulam Haseeb presented a Hadith. After that Hamza Obaidullah recited a poem of the Promised Messiah^{as} in his melodious voice. Sammar Padder presented the English translation of the poem. Zaron Ahmad read an extract from "*Haqiqatul Wahi*" in English. Nashita Khandakir delivered a speech on "Blessings of *Waqfe Nau*". The last item was a presentation of 20 attributes of Allah in Arabic with English translation in a chorus by following four children:

Husna Mirza, Aafia Chaudhry,

Soha Malik and Alisha Bhatti.

At the end Hazoor^{aba} distributed pens and chocolates.

(b)

Program with Waqfat-e-Nau Over 12

On June 23, 2012 evening (9:00-9:45 PM) a program was set up with Hazoor^{aba} for *Waqfate Nau* over 12 years. 82 *Waqfat* participated. The program started with the recitation of Holy Qur'an by Maryam Zakria. Nuzhat Daya read Urdu translation and Fariha Amjad presented English translation. A Hadith with English translation was presented by Saadia Nowal. Amatul Jamil Sadaf recited a poem of the Promised Messiah^{as} with English translation by Labeeba Chaudhry. Bushra Salim read extracts from the two books of the Promised Messiah^{as} named *Dafeul Bala* and *Haqiqatul Wahi*. A group of girls including Aeysha Salim, Madiha Qureshi, Atiqa Nasir, Aesha Khan and Sania Ahmad presented a program on "Second advent of the Promised Messiah^{as} according to Qur'an and Bible".

At the end Hazoor^{aba} distributed pens and chocolates in the *Waqfat*.

(c)

Program with Waqfeen-e-Nau Over 12

On June 24, 2012 evening (8:45-9:45 PM) a program was set up with Hazoor^{aba} for *Waqfeen-e-Nau* over 12 years. 134 *Waqfeen Nau* participated. The program started with the

recitation of Holy Qur'an by Syed Owais Ahmad. Moazzam Saqib read the Urdu translation and Abshar Khandkar presented English translation. A Hadith with English translation was presented by Danial Zakria. Husain Ahmad presented Urdu translation of the Hadith. Aqeel Akbar recited a poem of Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} and Ehtesham Chaudhry read its English translation. Sarmad Bhatti presented an extract from the *Malfoozat* of the Promised Messiah^{as}. After that Irmaghan Ahmad presented an important point from the sermon of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} delivered on October 15, 2010. Hashr Bukhari, Omar Ahmad, Danial Qureshi and Dabir Khan presented the history of Ahmadiyyat in pictorial form exhibited on the screen. At the end Safwan Akbar recited a few verses from the *Qaseeda* of the Promised Messiah^{as} with English translation. Hazoor^{aba} distributed pens and chocolates in the *Waqfeen Nau*. All *Waqfeen* were honored to have a group photo with Hazoor^{aba}.

Examining Jalsa Site

In the evening of June 28, 2012 Hazoor^{aba} visited Jalsa Site and met with *Afsaran*, *Naib Afsaran* and *Nazimeen* and examined the final preparation. His visit encouraged and motivated volunteers. In his address Hazoor^{aba} reminded volunteers to be punctual in praying during their duty and pray at the appointed time. He instructed to show patience during *Jalsa* and treat all guests of the Promised Messiah^{as} equally with love and Islamic brotherhood. He also advised to cooperate in smooth running of *Jalsa* program.

Flag Hoisting Ceremony

Following tradition Hazoor^{aba}

performed the Flag Hoisting ceremony on Friday June 29, 2012 at 1:00 PM and led silent prayer. Hazoor^{aba} hoisted *Alme* Ahmadiyyat and Dr. Zaheer Ahmad Bajwa *Na'ib Ameer* hoisted flag of USA.

Jumu'ah and Asr Prayers

Lunch was served after *Jumu'ah* and *Asr* prayers. Hazoor^{aba} delivered Friday Sermon and led *Jumu'ah* and *Asr* Prayer. In his sermon Hazoor^{aba} said that all annual gatherings are on the footsteps of *Jalsa* set up by the Promised Messiah^{as}. The main purpose of *Jalsa* is to develop mutual brotherhood, spirituality and righteousness. The Promised Messiah^{as} always emphasized on discharging the rights of Allah and His Creature. Allah's right is to worship Him wholeheartedly and pray five times at the appointed time. The volunteer prayers and *Tahajjud* Prayer help in acceptance, he added. A real *Momin* pays attention towards the rights of human beings. Hazoor^{aba} advised to treat each other and family members very nicely with a spirit of sympathy and tolerance. Hazoor^{aba} diverted our attention towards the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, reading the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} and participation in *Tabligh* activities. Hazoor^{aba} said that *Tabligh* will help in removing misunderstandings about Islam and its founder. Hazoor^{aba} also advised all volunteers to pray in congregation and at the appointed time even during their assigned duties.

Ameen Programs at Jalsa Gah

Hazoor^{aba} honored two *Ameen* programs. The first *Ameen* program was in the evening of June 29, 2012. Hazoor^{aba} arrived at the *Jalsa Gah* at 8:40 PM and listened to one verse of the Holy Qur'an from each child. 47

children participated. The second *Ameen* program was on June 30, 2012 in which 45 children participated.

Exhibition

Col. Fazal Ahmad, *Nazim* exhibition, arranged the exhibition that attracted a large number of guests. The two central themes of the exhibition were:

- 1) Reform of the Self
- 2) Service to Humanity

The source of inspiration of the first theme was drawn from the two famous books of the Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, namely, *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* and *Kisht-e-Nooh*. The exhibits in this category displayed succinct extracts drawn from these landmark writings along with relevant photographs to reinforce the spiritual content of the guiding principles of reforming the human soul. One could not walk away from these displays without being deeply affected by the message of the Promised Messiah^{as} with regard to one's connection with the Almighty Allah and one's obligations to society established through the ten conditions of *Bai'at* or the Pledge. The displays on Service to Humanity were further subdivided into three categories of Muslims for Peace, Muslims for Life and Humanity First. The walk through the extensive exhibition introduced the visitor to the profoundly invigorating spiritual reform brought about by the teachings of the Great *Imam* of the Age, Hadhrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah^{as} and the

humble services and sacrifices rendered by Ahmadiis under the blessed directions of Ahmadiyya *Khilafat*.

Announcement Booth

An Announcement Booth was set up at right hand side of the stage. Dr. Khalid Ata and his team announced schedules of important events from time to time.

Accommodation

Jama'at reserved hotels close to *Jalsa* site. Many Ahmadiis stayed in hotels. *Nizam* Accommodation also arranged rooms for non-Ahmadi guests.

Book Stall

Muhammad Ahmad Nasir with his team set up bookstall and made necessary arrangements. For *Jalsa Salana USA 2012* books worth of \$ 18,000.00 were sold (\$ 8,000.00 less than last year's sale). The main focus of the team was to introduce its website: www.amibookstore.us

to members of *Jama'at* so that they can purchase books throughout the year at the same rate without shipping charges. For the first time the website as the cash register was utilized which helped in record keeping.

Special Events

Auxiliaries of the *Jama'at* held their meetings. Ahmadiyya Medical Association, Lawyer Association, Scientists Association and Engineers and Architecture Association held their professional meetings to discuss their achievements and future planning.

Humanity First USA:

Humanity first USA held its meeting along with Ahmadiyya Medical Association on Saturday at 2:30

PM. The attendance was 100.

Department of Rishta Nata

On Friday evening the department of *Rishta Nata* arranged an introductory program for interested *Jama'at* members to find matches for their children at the Banquet Hall. More than 126 girls and boys were introduced by their parents.

Mushaira

After *Isha* Prayer a *Mushaira* was organized by MAALA (Mid-Atlantic Association for Literature Appreciation) with the collaboration of *Jalsa* organizers held on Friday in the banquet hall. 16 well-known Urdu poets of North America participated and presented their poems. One of them was a non-Ahmadi guests who arrived from Maryland. 200 gents and more than 80 ladies attended.

Khidmat-e-Khalq Report:

As always, the planning started well in advance. The first step was Volunteer recruitment. The planning phase and volunteer recruitment went well. A brief report is as under:

Khidmat-e-Khalq Departments:

- 1) Office of Central command center for *Khidmate Khalq*, responsible for communicating with other offices of *Jalsa Salana* and internally between *Khidmate Khalq* departments
30 *Khuddam* helped in this department for 12 days (Bait-ur-Rehman, Ohio, Chicago)
- 2) *Hifazat-e-Khas* - Responsible for inner security of Khalifatul Masih. 50 *Khuddam* helped in this department

- 3) Parking & Traffic- 20 *Khuddam* helped in this department
- 4) Exterior and Interior Security- Outside and Indoor Mosque security- 50 *Khuddam* helped in this department. Overall 180 *Khuddam* helped in various departments of *Khidmate Khalq* for 12+ days.

Dinner for Guests:

In the evening of June 30, 2012 a *Tablighi* dinner was arranged by National *Tabligh* Department. All guests who attended *Jalsa* and Ahmadi dignitaries from the USA and outside were invitees. Hazoor^{aba} also attended it. *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya USA started Ahmadiyya Humanitarian Award from last year. This award is given to a well known personality who exhibited remarkable services to humanity. This year Tina Ramirez, Director of Government Relations was selected for this award. She received this award from Hazoor^{aba}. 260 Guests participated.

Tahajjud and Salat Arrangements

During *Jalsa* Hazoor^{aba} led *Zuhar-Asr* and *Maghrib-Isha* Prayers at the *Jalsa Gah*. On Saturday *Tahajjud* and *Fajr* Prayers were led by Maulana Inamul Haq Kausar. On Sunday *Tahajjud* was led by Ahmad Kosi of Ghana and *Fajr* Prayer and *Darse Hadith* was delivered by Maulana Shamshad Ahmad Nasir. The attendance at *Tahajjud* and *Fajr* time was

around 200 (men and women) on both days.

Opening Session Friday afternoon-June 29, 2012

Presided over by
**Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, Ameer,
Jama'at Ahmadiyya USA**

The session started with recitation from the Holy Qur'an by Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary followed by its English translation by Abdur Raqeeb Wali. Mansoor Rafique recited a poem of the Promised Messiah^{as} in his melodious voice. The English translation was read out by Jalal Latif.

Ameer Sahib said in his opening remarks that we gathered here for a *Jalsa* that is as Hazoor^{aba} mentioned in his sermon is not an ordinary *Jalsa*. It is a spiritual gathering. Allah promised to the Promised Messiah^{as} that His blessing and mercy would be on such a gathering. The Holy Qur'an is a blessing for all mankind. The verse *Khatamun-Nabiyyeen* of the Holy Qur'an provided great tidings to the Holy Prophet^{saw}. He had no male issue but would be granted rightly guided individuals and a prophet as his spiritual progeny. The Promise Messiah^{as} is the most important of his progeny. We should pray for the blessing and mercy of Allah as He promised. After that *Ameer Sahib* invited the first speaker of the session.

Maulana Azhar Haneef

was the first speaker. His topic was "Mercy and Grace: The Principle Attributes of Allah". The speaker stated the significance of *Bismillah* and meanings of *Al-Rahman*. He

mentioned that a whole chapter of the Holy Qur'an is on His attribute of *Rahman*. Allah repeatedly explained His favors in that chapter and asked that which of the favor is to be denied. The speaker said that the Holy Prophet^{saw} always praised Allah and remembered His bounties that were only due to His mercy and grace. He said that the Holy Prophet^{saw} adopted attributes of Allah in the full extent and set up a model for us. As followers of the Holy Prophet^{saw} we should also adopt the beautiful attributes of Allah and express them through our words and deeds. Referring to Qur'anic verses the speaker elaborated on the meanings of *Rahman*. He said that Allah entitled the Holy Prophet^{saw} as Merciful for mankind and told that he^{saw} exhibited this attribute throughout his life. The speaker in his concluding remarks said that the slogan "Love For All Hatred For None" is the gist of Islam as it includes all attributes of Allah. The speech ended at 5:35 PM.

Dr. Faheem Younus was the second speaker. His topic was "Ahmadiyyat: A Community Raised for Peace on the Earth". The speaker recited verse (13:29) of the Holy Qur'an meaning that it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort. Now the choice between violence and peace is a challenge for the world. The Global peace index of 158 countries brings US at number 88 whereas our neighbor in Canada stands at number 4 in that list. We have 188 noble laureates in medicine but are not healers for the sick. We have more prisoners than any other countries and the rate of suicide is increasing. Many countries including the US could not distinguish between peace and pleasure and are confused in differentiating them. Ahmadiyyat

accepted the challenge of developing peace in the world. It is because we accepted the Promised Messiah^{as} with whom the establishment of peace is linked. The scriptures forecasted that peace is bound with the second advent of the Messiah and we are the followers of the Messiah of this age. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that the religion inculcating no universal brotherhood is no religion at all. We are to develop world peace. Our *Khalifa* is urging us in that direction. We are distributing pamphlets for peace and Hazoor^{aba} is writing letters to the world leaders to step forward in developing peace. But if the world does not follow the Promised Messiah^{as} with whom peace is bound how the peace could be established. Ahmadi in response to severe persecution and a large number of martyrdoms pray for the opponents and showing no violence, the speaker said in his concluding remarks.

Waseem Malik was the 3rd speaker of the session. His topic was: "Simple Life Style". The speaker expressed the significance of the simple life style. He recited verse (25:68) of the Holy Qur'an that asked a believer to adopt a simple life and be moderate in spending whereas commonly people either spend lavishly or become miserly. He narrated incidents of the simple life style of the Holy Prophet^{saw} during his life time. Even at the time when he conquered Mecca he had nothing to eat but some dry bread and vinegar. The speaker also mentioned incidents about

the simplicity of the Promised Messiah^{as} and his companions. When Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} launched *Tehrike Jadid* scheme he suggested only a one dish service at lunch or dinner time. He strictly acted upon it. Once, when he noted that more than one dish was being served he left the table without eating, the speaker said in his concluding words.

Ameer Sahib in his remarks asked members to keep busy in praying during *Jalsa* and asked them to reflect upon the teachings of the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet^{saw} through their actions. He requested them to pray for the volunteers, all participants, the missionaries and the Khalifatul Masih^{aba}.

**Saturday June 30, 2012-
Morning Session:
Presided by Dr. Naseem
Rahmatullah, Naib Ameer**

The session started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Zainulabdeen and Tariq Sharif read English translation. Salman Ahmad Jehlumi recited a poem and Haji Zulwaqar Yaqub read its English translation.

Basyir Rodney spoke on "Harmonizing words and Deed: A Quality of Righteous". He recited verse (61:3) of the Holy Qur'an meaning 'Why do you say what you do not do'. He said that harmonizing words and deeds is the quality of the righteous. A believer is expected to follow the true teaching of Islam in words and spirit and to maintain the quality of integrity. If the deeds are not according to the saying of a believer it is a sign of hypocrisy. As Allah watches our action a believer must avoid hypocrisy. A believer is

bound to speak only clear and true words in all dealings. In this regard he quoted references of the Holy Qur'an and New Testament and from the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, the Promised Messiah^{as} his *Khulafas* and Shakespeare. He mentioned three signs of the hypocrite as stated by the Holy Prophet^{saw} who prohibited believers to exhibit hypocrisy. As an Ahmadi we must follow the example of our Holy Prophet^{saw} and his true lover the Promised Messiah^{as} who arrived to establish true teachings of Islam. At the end he quoted an extract from the writing of the Promised Messiah^{as} saying that as a community we must exhibit true teaching of Islam from our words and deeds that would be a sign of truthfulness of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Dr. **Waseem Syed** spoke about "Khilafate Ahmadiyyat: The "Second Manifestation" of Divine Power. The speaker elaborated on the meanings of *Al-Qadir* that is an attribute of Allah. Allah possesses full power to do a thing. Expressing the significance of his topic he quoted a reference from "*Al-Wasiyyat*" a book of the Promised Messiah^{as} where instead of using *Khilafat* the Promised Messiah^{as} used *Qudrate-Sania* for *Khilafat* meaning Second Manifestation. The Promised Messiah^{as} defined the function and power of *Khilafat* in that book. The speaker mentioned incidents and trials during the time of all *Khafatul Masih*. In all times of turbulences Allah helped and safeguarded His *Khalifa* and his *Jama'at* through clear manifestation. The speaker mentioned that during all trials and turbulence *Al-Qadir* Allah supported and *Jama'at* progressed with fast speed. Recently, Hadhrat *Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}* wrote letters to various heads of states and asked

them to play their role in establishing global peace. According to scriptures, peace is bound with the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as} and the Promised Messiah^{as} himself proclaimed that he arrived to establish peace under the banner of Islam. Now it is our responsibility to understand the intention of Allah *Al-Qadir* and endeavor to promote global peace under the shield of *Khilafat*.

Falahuddin Shams spoke about "Abrogation of the Holy Qur'an: Setting the Record Straight". There is a misunderstanding about the abrogation of some commands and verses of the Holy Qur'an. Starting from 500 to 5 verses considered abrogated during different periods. All scholars were well known and reputed who presented their point of views about abrogation. Shah Waliullah Mohaddas Dehlavi was the last one who suggested that 5 verses abrogated. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was also of the same view. It was the Promised Messiah^{as} who claimed that no verse of the Holy Qur'an is abrogated. He added that not even a dot or iota of the Holy Qur'an has been changed as Allah promised that He revealed the Holy Qur'an and He Himself will protect it (Ref. Holy Qur'an 15:10). The speaker said that confusion developed by misunderstanding some verses that are "*Mutashabhaat*" and "*Biyyanaat*". He recited specific verses in support of his point of view. He also presented references from *Baraheene Ahmad-iyya*, a book of the Promised Messiah^{as} to prove it.

Address of Hazoor^{aba} from Lajna Jalsa Gah

Hazoor^{aba} reached *Lajna Jalsa Gah* at 12:15 PM. After recitation of the Holy Qur'an, reciting a poem and their translations, Educational Awards Ceremony held. Twenty three members who achieved distinction positions received educational awards. Six educational awards were given under the *Nazarat Talim Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya* Pakistan program.

Hazoor's addressed *Lajna* which was shown on a large screen in Gents Jalsa Gah as well. Hazoor referred his address of 2008 that he delivered in *Lajna Jalsa Gah*. He said that in his address he advised to inculcate special attributes that distinguish Ahmadi which are essential for spirituality. Hazoor said that at that time he reminded to fulfill the pledge of Initiation and the responsibilities as Ahmadi. Just Initiation and believing in the Promised Messiah^{as} are not enough. The Promised Messiah^{as} reminded us to fulfill the pledge of initiation to our full ability and follow his instructions. Hazoor^{aba} said that his instructions are not only for those who attend *Jalsa* but also for every member of the *Jama'at* and every one is responsible to act upon them. He added that due to MTA and the Internet nobody has any excuse of not being benefitted from my sermons and addresses. He reminded again to fulfill pledges and to do *Istaghfar* that would help in developing spirituality and nearness to Allah. We have to follow the commands of the Holy Qur'an and the instructions of the Holy Prophet^{saw} in all walks of life. Hazoor^{aba} said that we have to fulfill our pledges in discharging the rights of Allah and the rights of human beings.

Everyone must pray five prayers with full devotion regularly and at the appointed time. Hazoor^{aba} advised to adopt *Purdah* and referred to the quotation of the Promised Messiah^{as} on this subject. Hazoor^{aba} mentioned that he received letters from parents about their children going astray from religion. He said that it is better to attach yourself with Allah by fulfilling His rights. It is also important to follow the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and provide training to your children accordingly for the success in this world and hereafter. The address ended at 1:50 PM.

**Saturday June 30, 2012-
Afternoon Session:
Presided by Dr. Ahsanullah
Zafar Ameer Jama'at USA**

The session started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Maulana Zafar Sarwar and the English translation was done by Saleem Mohaimin. Asad Chaudhry recited a poem and Basir Asad read its English translation.

The first speaker was **Hasan Hakeem** and his topic was "Introduction to Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA". The speaker said that he accepted Ahmadiyya Muslim community in 1967 and his own experience would count to express his point of view. The American culture influences everyone. Living in this culture the Ahmadiyya Community has to develop its own culture for which a change is needed in our lifestyle. Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq^{ra} arrived in USA in 1920 and through his practice he influenced people. He delivered a message of international brotherhood. He announced that the Messiah who is awaited arrived and people must ac-

cept him. He started to publish a magazine "Muslim Sunrise" that was very popular. At his time many American embraced Islam. Islam means peace and it has no relation with terrorism and extremism.

After the first speech Amjad Mahmood Khan, National Secretary Public Relation introduced and invited guest speakers.

The first guest speaker was **Linda Thompson**, Mayor of Harrisburg. She welcomed Hazoor and all participants of *Jalsa*. She appreciated Hazoor^{aba} for spreading the true teaching of Islam and in serving humanity. She quoted a saying of the Holy Prophet^{saw} that like for your brother that which you like for yourself.

After that for the information of the audience clippings of the historic visit and address of Hazoor^{aba} at Capitol Hill was shown on the large screens.

The 2nd guest speaker was **Dr. Paula Sanders**, The Dean of Postgraduate Studies at Rice University. She said that for mutual understanding and coexistence is needed. According to a Qur'anic verse Islam does not allow compulsion in religious matters. The verse has di been interpreted differently by different scholars. It provides protection for people of different religions and faith living under Islamic governments. Practically, six interpretations have been provided. The best interpretation must be selected for mutual understanding peace-

ful existence the speaker concluded.

The third guest speaker was **Tina Ramirez** Director of Government Relations, who worked as the religious advisor for different Muslim countries. She thanked the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for considering her for the recipient of the Annual Ahmadiyya Humanitarian Award scheduled that evening. She visited Indonesia after the tragic incident in 2008. She visited different Muslim countries for religious freedom and requested the US government to stop such laws that interfere in religious freedom in Muslim countries which is now becoming an international issue.

The fourth and last guest speaker was **Paul Monterio**, the Associate Director White House Office of Public Engagement. He said we help Americans who are in need of health, education and immigration issues that are of national importance. He visited this *Jalsa* because the AMC works to help suffering humanity worldwide. He appreciated and thanked the AMC.

**Sunday July 1, 2012 Morning
Session:
Presided by:
Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar,
Ameer Jama'at USA**

The session started with recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Mubasher Hafeez and Aleem Abdur Rehman read its English translation. An Urdu poem of the Promised Messiah^{as} was recited by Kaleem Bhatti and Ahmad Nooruddin read the English translation.

Nasirullah Ahmad was the first speaker who talked on "The

Holy Prophet's Love for Service and Servants of Humanity". He recited verse (3:111) of the Holy Qur'an meaning "You are the best people raised for the good of mankind". He said that from an early age the Holy Prophet^{saw} devoted his life for serving mankind. Such services continued till his last breath. When he married, his wealthy wife offered her whole wealth. He freed slaves and distributed wealth among the poor and needy members of the society. He advised to help the needy, meet with a smiling face and talk to children with good manners. The speaker mentioned some incidents of the Holy Prophet^{saw} and his treatment with human being. In this age the Promised Messiah^{as} who was a true lover and servant of the Holy Prophet^{saw} followed the footsteps of his master. He advised us to be kind to mankind and never use abusive language for others.

Dr. Mansoor Qureshi was the second speaker and his topic was Service to Humanity-A Prequisite for Being the 'Best People'. The speaker recited verse (3:111) of the Holy Qur'an meaning "You are the best people raised for the good of mankind". He said that Islam commanded us to fulfill the rights of Allah and the rights of His Creature. The Holy Prophet^{saw} through his exemplary life advised his companions to fulfill these rights.

The speaker narrated a *Hadith-e-Qudsi* showing that Allah loves those who love and take care of His creatures. He also mentioned an incident of the battle of Tabuk exhibiting the sacrifice of Muslims over their brethren. Allah entitled Holy Prophet^{saw} Mercy for all mankind and he remained merciful throughout his whole life. He always advised his compan-

ions to exhibit mercy for not only mankind but all creature of Allah. The Promised Messiah^{as} repeatedly asked to serve humanity on a priority basis. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is serving suffering humanity by establishing hospitals, schools and helps the needy sufferers within the limited resources, the speaker concluded.

Sahibzada Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad was the last speaker of the session. The topic of his speech was: "Zikre Habib: Regard for the less Fortunate". The speaker recited the last part of a verse of the Holy Qur'an (3:31) meaning that Allah is most Compassionate to His servants. The Promised Messiah^{as} said, "We have two purposes- the True Love of Allah and Serving His Creature". He asked his followers to serve others with love and dignity. The Promised Messiah^{as} himself followed this principle. Sometimes he let his servant ride the horse and walked himself. The speaker narrated an incident. Once a poor man, Mian Nizamudin^{ra} who was sitting closer to the Promised Messiah^{as} was neglected by some people, he took care of him by sharing his meal and eating with him in the same bowl. He served poor patients by providing medicines and helping them even if they interfere with him during important writings. The speaker referred to the writing of the Promised Messiah^{as} for being kind to mankind and merciful to humanity. Sympathy for others is a great tool for preaching and pleases Allah. Allah favors

those who help his creature and dislikes the arrogant.

Concluding Address of Hazoor^{aba}

Hazoor^{aba} arrived at *Jasa Gah* at 12:05 PM. The meeting started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Hafiz Mubarik Ahmad Kakoi. Tariq Sharif presented English translation. Bilal Raja recited a poem of the Promised Messiah^{as} in his melodious voice and Omar Sharif read its English translation.

Educational Awards: After Tilawat and poem the Educational Award Ceremony held. Eight students who obtained prominent positions received awards from Hazoor^{aba}. Similarly under *Nazarte Talim Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya* Pakistan program 3 students received awards from Hazoor^{aba}.

Alme In'ami: Hazoor^{aba} awarded *Alme In'ami* and certificates to the top *Majalis* of *Ansarullah*, *Kuddamul Ahmadiyya* and *Atfalua Ahmadiyya* USA due to their overall activities and achievements.

Hazoor's^{aba} concluding address started at 1:00 PM. Hazoor^{aba} said that USA is one of the important country where the message of the Promised Messiah^{as} reached during his life time. He briefly mentioned the incident of Alexander Dowie and his miserable end. Hazoor^{aba} referred to an article published in a news paper of Chicago on June 3, 1903. The paper published photos of the Promised Messiah^{as} and Alexander Dowie side by side. That historic incident not only enhances faith of every Ahmadi but also reminds to fulfill the pledge of doing *Tabligh* as well. Otherwise we would not be fulfilling the purpose

and goal of the Promised Messiah^{aba}. Everyone has to convey the message of Islam to all people living in the country, he added. The words and deeds of an Ahmadi must coincide. He advised to develop a special relation with Allah and take care of the moral and spiritual training of your children. Hazoor^{aba} mentioned the financial crises that made life miserable. Hazoor^{aba} said if you develop a relation with Allah all crises would be dissolved. Ahmadis have to prefer their faith over worldly affairs, without that no progress could be achieved.

Mentioning the acceptance of prayers, Hazoor^{aba} said that by becoming friends of Allah prayers would be accepted and all prosperity and progress would be achieved. He quoted extracts of the Promised Messiah^{as} and advised to pay special concentration and attention in prayers. Always be careful about the rights of humanity, Hazoor^{aba} concluded. The address ended at 2:00 PM with silent prayer.

The total attendance of the *Jalsa* was 11,436. On men side the number was 6050 and on ladies side 5380 attended. In this blessed *Jalsa* besides the members of USA representatives of 33 countries participated.

SUPPORT HUMANITY FIRST

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Bakrah Nufai' Al-Harith^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "The time has turned a full circle to its condition, as Allah had created the earth and heaven. The year has twelve months in it, four of which are sacred months. Three of these are consecutive, i.e., *Dhul Qa'dah*, *Dhul Hijjah*, *Muharram* and the fourth is the *Rajab* of the *Mudar* tribe (i.e., occurring between *Jamadi* and *Sha'ban*). Then he^{sa} said, 'O People! What month is it?' We replied, 'Allah and His Messenger^{saw} know the best.' He^{saw} remained silent for a while. We thought that probably he would give another name to the month. Then he^{saw} said, 'Is it not *Dhul Hijjah*?' We replied, 'Yes.' He^{saw} asked, 'Which city is it?' We replied, 'Allah and His Messenger^{saw} know the best.' He^{saw} remained silent for a while. We thought that probably he would give it another name. Then he^{sa} said, 'Is it not the sacred city (of Mecca)?' We replied, 'Yes.' Then he^{saw} asked, 'What day is it?' We replied, 'Allah and His Messenger^{saw} know the best.' He remained silent for a while. We thought that he would give it another name. Then he^{saw} said, 'Is it not the Day of the Sacrifice?' We replied, 'Yes.' Then he^{saw} said, 'On this day, your lives, your goods, and your honor are sacred for you just as this day of yours, in this city of yours, and in this month of yours, is sacred. O People! Soon, you will meet your Lord. He will ask you about your

deeds. Beware! Do not again become disbelievers, when I pass away, that you start killing each other. Beware! Those who are here, listening (to me), should convey (my message) to those who are not here. It is just possible that those to whom you convey the message have a more retentive memory than those who are now listening.' Then he^{saw} said, 'Did I convey Allah's Message?' 'Did I convey Allah's Message?' We said, 'Yes.' Then he^{saw} said, 'O Allah! Bear witness.' "

(Muslim kitabul qisamah bab taghliz tahrim addima' wal i'rad wal amwal)

Hadhrat Ibn 'Umar^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "Do not be jealous of one another, and do not raise prices to harm one another. Do not keep grudges against one another and do not shun one another. Do not strike a deal on top of a deal made by your brother. Become servants of Allah and brothers to one another. A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. A Muslim does not oppress another Muslim, does not humiliate another Muslim, and does not degrade another Muslim. Pointing to his chest, said, 'Righteousness is here.' He repeated these words thrice. Then he said, 'It is unfortunate enough for a man that he views his Muslim brother scornfully. Every Muslim's blood, wealth, and honour are unlawful for another Muslim (and are sacred).' "

(Muslim kitabul hir walsilah bab tahrim zulmul muslim wa khadhlah)

OPENING ADDRESS BY DR. AHSANULLAH ZAFAR, AMEER JAMA'AT USA AT JALSA SALANA USA - 2012

Transcribed by: Mansura Minhas

Now we are together as Ahmadis, as followers of Masih-e-Mau'ood^{as} and that is where the grace and the strength of this gathering is. As Hadhrat Sahib pointed out in his *Khutba* earlier, we do not take this gathering as a 'Mela' or an ordinary worldly pleasure of interactions and retreat. This is a spiritual event and it carries with it the blessings which were promised to Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} by *Allah Ta'ala*. We should keep that in mind. This is all a time for prayers, from beginning to end. This is all a matter of attracting Allah's Grace and Mercy upon us by the fact that we are doing it.

Fourteen hundred years ago, God revealed his mind to Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw}. He revealed the Qur'an so that the benefit of that goes for all times. In the blessings which were mentioned over there in the verse which is the verse of *Khatamun-Nabiyyeen*. And the verses really describe how the allegation is handled that *Rasulullah^{saw}* does not have any male progeny and Allah goes on to say, he does not have male progeny but he is the *Khatamun-Nabiyyeen*, which means that all that are rightly guided by him, by the teachings given to him by Allah, they are his progeny. And in that progeny, the brightest star, the most important individual is Masih Mau'ood^{as}, according to all the prophecies which were made.

It is great to have male progeny but to have a prophet is the apex of all blessings and that is what Masih-Mau'ood's^{as} coming signifies to all mankind. The rest do not pay as much attention to it but as Ahmadis we do and we hope and we pray for Allah's Grace and Blessings on us and *Insha Allah*, He will do that. And I urge everyone to keep that in mind as we walk around, meet different people. That is what is happening and please in your hearts and your minds, keep on praying to Allah for blessings for yourself, for each other and especially for our children. That is a crucial component of what lies in the very near future for us even. So you keep that in mind and with that now I will turn to the regular program.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW MISSIONARIES IN THE USA

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} has graciously appointed the following graduates of the *Jamia Ahmadiyya* Canada as missionaries to the USA:

1. Adnan Ahmed
2. Muhammad Moman Rana
3. Sheikh Ahmad Salman Khurshid
4. Salman Tariq
5. Matiullah Muhammad Joyia

**Ahsanullah Zafar,
Ameer Jama'at USA**

MERCY AND GRACE: THE PRINCIPLE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

Maulana Azhar Haneef, Na'ib Ameer Jama'at USA

Transcribed by: Mansura Minhas

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ
لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ، وَرَسُولُهُ،
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Most respected *Ameer Jama'at* Ahmadiyya, my dear brothers and sisters in faith and all those guests who have graced us with your presence in this annual gathering. Greetings of peace. *Assalamo Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatohu.*

The Holy Qur'an makes two firm declarations. First as the sole God of the Heavens and Earth and all creation is Allah Almighty and second that He is the Lord of Grace and the Lord of Mercy. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

“He is Allah and there is no God beside Him, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Gracious, the Merciful”.

Having made these two firm declarations, we still find throughout the ages, man always falls prey to doubts and denial. About one or both of these declarations, the Arabs at the time of Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} were no different. They acknowledged Allah as a deity but they had a strong aversion to the name *Ar-Rahman*, as they believed all the beneficence and bounties of this earth flowed through the idols which they

carved with their own human hands. These doubts and these denials persist even today. Recently, the Pew Research Center asked people the following question ‘I never doubt the existence of God’ and asked them to respond. Then they compared the responses along generational lines and they found that the current generation, born since 1981 and known as the Millennial generation showed a marked, significant difference from previous generation and a definite trend towards disbelief.

Only 68% of the current generation of youth said that they had no doubt in the existence of God. That figure is down from the typical 89; almost 90% which means that almost one third of the current generation of youth in our nation are either agnostic or atheist.

The Pew Center also reports that the Millennial are less affiliated with any religion. They don't go to worship services as much as their parents and elders. They embrace non-conditional scientific views such as evolution, as the best explanation for the beginning of life and in general they say they are more focused on self than society. This is the ultimate ‘me’ generation and God for most doesn't fit in their equation of life. Why is

that, is the basic question we should be asking ourselves because we speak about a generation, we are all involved in it, in one form or fashion.

There are probably several causes but one overriding factor is that we live in an age now which pollutes the minds of youth more than ever before through a constant barrage and weight of attack on God and religion. Allah warned that this would be the age of loss. In the Holy Qur'an, He says ‘*Wal-Asr*’ -by the fleeting time or by the passing of generations, ‘Surely man will be in a state of loss’. And this generation is losing faith fast. Popular television shows, prominent media personalities, late night talk show hosts, Hollywood blockbuster films and a plethora of websites and You Tube channels mock, ridicule, lambast and lampoon God, religion and the faithful. And I'm sure most of us have seen or heard or know about all these things that have been happening during this day and age- mocking religion.

Nothing, absolutely nothing is considered taboo and mind you, I'm not referring to Islamophobia or the attack on Islam and Muslims. The Christians will even attack Christians, a Jew attacks a Jew. There is no holds barred in this day and age. This phenomenon now has an ill adverse effect on the innocent, the ignorant and the easily impressionable; especially the leaders of youth exposed to all of this wave of attack. But most significantly

when you speak about religion, we find now that there are many individuals and groups in America and elsewhere that are more proactively spreading an anti-God and anti-religion message. For example, an atheist group called “Freedom from Religion”; they are direct about what they stand for- freedom from religion. That means us, that means our faith. They want to make America free from everything we stand for and everything we believe in because they believe it’s wrong. They claim that religion is a man-made myth and that God’s holy word promotes injustice, oppression of women, war and slavery.

As one highly very controversial billboard right here in Harrisburg recently proclaimed. They claimed that Bible was the reason Africans were enslaved and brought to America. The British scientist, author and atheist Richard Dawkins sums up the view about God in his article “Time To Stand Up”. He writes “Notwithstanding bitter sectarian hatreds over the centuries, all too obviously still going strong, Judaism, Islam and Christianity have much in common despite the New Testament watering down and other reformist tendencies. All three pay historic allegiance to the same violent and vindictive God of warfare”. None of the Abrahamic faith is spared in this sweeping comment. But is there any truth in this statement that is the question. All one has to do is read the scriptures to find that the answer is an emphatic no, without any contradiction they attest and affirm that God is a Lord of grace, compassion, kindness, love and mercy. For example, in Psalm 145 (Old Testament), we read “The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord

is good to all and His compassion is over all that He has made”.

Now if you hadn’t known this came from the Bible, and you heard the translation, you would have thought this is quoted out of the Holy Qur’an, “the Lord is Gracious and Merciful”. The New Testament proclaims God’s Graciousness by stating “He that is God makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and he sends his rain on the just and the unjust. These two quotes actually show a quality of why we know God is so Gracious. If we were God, in God’s place and people denied our creations, whatever they may be, we would take that person to court the next day. God is very slow, in giving man a chance to reform himself and rectify his views and to put himself back in line with truth.

Again the New Testament, very simply put, in first Episcopal John, states; this is often a quote of Christianity “God is love”. These are just a few quotations from the Jewish and Christian scriptures that declare the idea in the beginning – God’s unconditional Grace and unparalleled Mercy.

The Holy Qur’an, the final, complete revelation from God Almighty gives the fullest explanation to this theme. The opening chapter Surah *Al-Fatiha* doesn’t begin with a history of creation, nor a genealogy of a chosen or holy people, or a narrative of a lineage in the early life of the Prophet of God. It commences with the verse “In the name of Allah, the Gracious,

the Merciful”, and right from the beginning directs our attention to the Divine Being who comprises all perfect attributes, of which the two primary ones are *Rahman* (Grace) and *Raheem* (Mercy). This particular verse occurs more than any other verse in the Holy Qur’an and it is at the head of every single chapter of the Holy Qur’an except for one, which is merely a continuation of the previous chapter. Thus ‘*Bismillah hir Rahman nira Raheem*’ emphasizes to whoever picks up the Holy Qur’an that every single letter, every single word, every single verse and chapter of the Holy Qur’an is no more than a manifestation of *Ar-Rahman* and *Ar-Raheem*, God’s Grace and Mercy to mankind.

Bismillah hir Rahman nira Raheem is such a profound expression that in one *Hadith*, Hadhrat Jabir^{ra} is reported to have said when *Bismillah hir Rahman nira Raheem* was revealed, the clouds gave way by moving to the East, the winds ceased blowing, the ocean became calm and the creatures prepared themselves to listen. The Satanic forces propelled with fires from the heaven and Allah^{swt} swearing alone by His honor declared ‘anyone who says this name of mine upon anything, I will surely impart blessings in that name’. It is written in “*Fatah-e-Shaam*” (The Conquest of Syria) that Heraclius, the Roman emperor wrote to Hadhrat Omar^{ra}, the second Caliph of Islam that “I’ve been suffering from a headache for a very long time which doesn’t abate even for a moment. So please send me some medicine for this”. Hadhrat Omar^{ra} sent him an old, beat-up and worn cap, which on the head of Heraclius would immediately relieve the headache and when it was removed, the headache returned. Heraclius was very surprised at this and he started searching through the cap and

discovered a small slip of paper hidden inside, on which *Bismillah hir-Rahman nir Raheem* was written. On this he exclaimed, “*Subhan Allah*-Holy is God, what a great name through whose blessing God granted me cure”.

In another incident, the great general of Islam Hadhrat Khalid Bin Waleed^{ra} was once approached by a Zoroastrian who asked him to show a sign to prove that Islam is a true religion and at that point Hadhrat Khalid bin Waleed^{ra} asked him to bring the most potent, deadliest poison in his land. He then proceeded to drink the poison and after it had no effect in consuming it, the Zoroastrian was so impressed and asked him how it was possible and he said ‘before I drank that poison I pronounced the name of Allah- *Bismillah hir Rahman nir Raheem* and it had no effect’. As a result of which the man immediately recited the *Kalima* and became a Muslim. Now I say that with a tad bit of caution. As they say, some things you should not try at home and I don’t mean it in that sense that this is a magic charm or spell. Khalid bin Waleed^{ra} was a man who did not fear death. He was the man in fact that on the point of his death he wept bitterly because he said I want to be a *Shahed*, I want to give my life in God’s way. He didn’t fear death, he wanted to embrace death. What he feared from his heart and soul was God Almighty and he loved God from his heart and soul and when he said *Bismillah hir Rahman nir Raheem*, it wasn’t like some magic spell or incantation, it was a man who believed heart and soul that life and death is in the hands of God and no other. It is the Grace of God and God can give and God can take. If I pronounce this, this poison cannot harm me and he

was secure.

If you tried this at home or in front of anyone who demands a sign of the proof of Islam and from our hearts and souls we say that formula of *Bismillah hir-Rahman nir Raheem*, and I’m sure God with His Grace and Mercy will show miraculous signs to us as well. Hadhrat Masih Mau’ood^{as} commenting on the attribute of *Ar-Rahman* said, “The Sun, the moon, water and air all have been created for the benefit of mankind by virtue of the divine attribute of *Grace-Rahmaniyat* and no one can claim that they have been created in a consequence of any action or effort on our part or as a reward for his conduct or effort or piety or righteousness”.

We also find in the Holy Qur’an that an entire chapter has been named *Ar-Rahman* in which Allah^{swt}, He enumerates the many bounties and blessings which He bestows on man, including as I said, the gift of the Holy Qur’an, life itself, speech which separates us from lower animals, the perfect laws that govern the universe and prevent it from being destroyed in a moment and the ecosystem and on and on and each time he recites these favors over and over again in the Holy Qur’an, he repeats “Which then of the favors of your Lord would you dare deny”.

Brothers and sisters, this is exactly what we should share with those who reject God or who fall prey to doubts about His existence and His Supreme Providence and who consider Him vengeful and vindictive. You ask

then which of the countless favors of God that are raining down from heavens, are spreading forth in this earth, are you going to deny. Are you saying these are the product of blind chance and evolution or do you not see hand of a Gracious God behind all of them including the very life that we have all been given. Based on this, every single morning the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, when he would rise up, he would pray ‘O Allah! Whatever I’ve received or whatever anyone of your creation has received is from you, the Lord who is One without partners. So for you, O Lord is all Praise and for you O Lord is all Thanks’. May Allah grant us the capacity to ever remain grateful for the favors which He showers upon all of us, including the favor of attending these blessed *Jalsas* and gatherings.

Recall if you may, how Hadhrat Masih Mau’ood^{as} would articulate his sense of gratitude ‘I was a humble, weak, poor man being fed from the crumbs of my master’s table and now I’m feeding the entire world’. This is the feeding of the world that we are enjoying in this *Langar* in this *Jalsa* in this beautiful gathering, carpeted floors, with all these facilities is an answer to the prayers and the sign of the Grace of God in our very lives. But it is not just that we receive the Grace, we must also reflect and share the Grace that is given to us.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} states “Just as the machine comes alive when it is connected with electric currents, people can at once perceive that some mighty force is working through it. So is the case with those who attain the union with God. The truth is that God being all spirit, His relationship with man can be expressed only through the reflection of His attributes in man”.

That is to say, in short, we must plug in to our Creator and light up with His image and His beautiful attributes and show people in this age of doubt and in this age of denial that God exists by looking at those who have connected to God and if we cannot do so, all the rest is nothing but rhetoric, debate and dialogue. It would amount to nothing. This is the sign of the Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. He was Abdullah, one who reflected greater amount of God's attributes but most important, he reflected Grace and Mercy in all of his dealings with mankind and led the ignorant, disobedient Arabs of his time from darkness to light.

Allah says if we can do so, if we can learn to assimilate His attributes into our lives, He promised to show special Grace He calls *Rahimiyat*. He says in the Holy Qur'an:

"My Mercy encompasses all things". As the Bible said, "He shows." He gives special Mercy to those 'who are God-fearing and righteous'. Again He says "Barely the Mercy of God encompasses all things and it is near to all those who do good". In this case he uses the word "*Mohsin*", those who are performing acts of *Ihsan* or kindness. And lastly He says "And God is Merciful towards the believers". Again the special grace of Mercy- *Rahimiyat* is for those who do good deeds earning God's nearness, pleasure, mercy. We know from this that Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} was sent with this special quality. Allah says "That we have sent you as a Mercy for all mankind". In his expression of this, the third *Khalifa*, he mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} was a mercy that had no bounds. He said "Those who claim that they follow the footsteps of Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw}" and that is all of us "should

also be declared as in the Holy Book, the Qur'an, a mercy for all mankind. We are also to reflect this special mercy in our dealings. He says "That's why it is written in the book "You are the best of people who have been raised for the benefit of mankind'. He says, it ??? from this all the teachings of the Holy Qur'an are for the good of mankind. I repeat again, he says 'for the good of all mankind' and not only for the good of the Muslims.

If you read the Holy Qur'an from beginning to the end, you will find that every single teaching concerning man in the Qur'an is for the good of all mankind. From beginning to end, there is not a single verse in the Holy Book which differentiates in the worldly affairs between a Muslim and one who is not a Muslim. So everyone who finds peace in this great book comes to the conclusion that the *Rahmat*, mercy of Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw} and the *Rahmat* of the Holy Qur'an that he brought from Allah is really meant for human beings. It is not only for those who believe in Islam or believe in Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, it is for all mankind.

Brothers and sisters, he concludes by challenging us in his saying, especially in this day and age when the ideology of the terrorist extremist, the one who wants to take the life of the (so called) infidel, the non-believer who wants to conquer our nation and destroy the Western concept of life and has forgotten that the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, he

was the one that invited the Christians to his mosque for prayers. He was the one who stood up when the funeral passed by, when someone said that's a Jew who is going by, he said "Was he not a human being"? That was enough for him to know that he deserved the respect of standing when the funeral passed by. This is the blessing he refers to and he concludes by saying 'His followers won the hearts of those in the beginning of our history with love and affection, with a sense of service to them'.

I am sure that other speakers in this *Jalsa* will speak about how to serve mankind through Islam in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. The third *Khalifa* said "Allah demands from us" Allah demands from us, Americans, the Western world demands something from us right now and that is if we want to win the hearts of people in this age; you have to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and those early companions. He said "That is why always declare the gist in these few verses, the gist of the teachings of Islam is Love for All, Hatred for None. This is not a motto, this is not a slogan, this is not a ploy to market who we are. This is a sense of being a manifestation of *Raheem* and *Rahman*, the two greatest and primary attributes of God Almighty and if we do so, then Love for All becomes a living testimony of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, of the Holy Qur'an of Islam and those who say God is a God of hate will say no He is a God of love and my life and my way and my dealings is a greatest testimony, as was the Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and his companions. 'May God help you in winning the hearts in this way as showed to us by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. *Ameen*.

AHMADIYYAT: A COMMUNITY RAISED FOR PEACE ON EARTH

Dr. Faheem Younus

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ
لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ،
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ
اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ٥

This is the story of a new born, fearful and hungry seagull. This little seagull was born on the ledge of a mountain and he was sitting next to a big ocean. He was born the day prior and he already saw that his parents, the two elder seagulls had already taken his two brothers and sisters and they were all flying. But this little kid, he was very afraid. He looked down from the mountain, from the ledge where he was sitting and the ocean appeared to him miles deep. And he knew that his wings are not going to support his weight and if he were to jump, he is going to perish. However, he had a conundrum. There was no food left on the ledge and he had a choice, a tough choice to make—jump and risk his life or die of hunger on the ledge. And the first day he chose, there was a little hole in the mountain and he would just go and hide inside the hole.

The world today faces a similar choice, a tough choice between violence and peace. Just look at it, politically, individually, socially; we are all facing that choice. And I would say, I believe that Ahmadiyyat is the only community that can help the world take that plunge towards peace. If you look at Global Peace Index, which was released every year. Last year they said 158 countries were analyzed. Look at this way, as if 158 people are running a race. You know where were we? As Americans we were number 88. That's not too good, if 158 people are running and you are number 88. Canada, our next door neighbor, they were number 4. And I'm not telling you who was number one. Suffice it to say, Global Peace Index said that if the world was just 25% more peaceful last year, it would have saved us \$ 2 trillion. That is enough money to make about a million small hospitals, about a million schools. Can you imagine the impact?

Just look at our social condition in the United States. We are talking about peace. Our country has won 88 Nobel Prizes in Medicine. We are like the healers of the world, yet if you look at the most prescribed medicine here in America, it is

Hydrocodone, Vicodin. It's an addicting pain medication. We are hurting. We are arguably the freest nation on earth, yet we are home to more prisoners than any other country on earth. We account for less than 5% of world population, yet we are home to 25% prisoners of the world. It's almost like we go out and snatch these seagulls who are already flying and put them on the ledge. We are obsessed with safety. We live in a culture of car seats, seat belts, home alarms, insurances and yet every hour two Americans are murdered. And for every murder, there are two people who commit suicide. That's mind boggling, we kill ourselves more than others.

So this situation cannot be maintained for too long. Just like that seagull, the clock is ticking. We cannot stay in this status quo for too long. And as the seagull, the 24 hours pass by. He is new born and looking around he sees his parents flying, he sees these other birds, his brothers and sisters diving in the ocean, catching the fish. And he is hungry, he has eaten every possible morsel of food on that ledge and there is nothing left. He even ate a little bit of the egg shell from where he had hatched a day ago. Now it's almost like eating a part of himself, now talk about suicide.

And that is exactly the reason, why Khalifatul Masih is leading Ahmadiyyat, leading you and I, leading

this community towards world peace. That is why Khalifatul Masih is flying high, asking people and urging you to distribute these flyers. Look familiar? We as Ahmadis here in America, we distributed more than half a million Muslims for Peace flyers. That is who we are. That is why there is a Peace Conference, a Peace Award, that is why Hazoor is writing letters to world leaders to jump off this ledge and for God's sake do something for world peace.

You might be a little skeptical. We are a small community, we are not politically powerful, we don't own governments. How are we going to bring world peace? I'll reverse the question. I'll say, if not us, who will, who can? Name me another Muslim community in this world that is united at one hand? Who is more likely to bring world peace, the grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, who says all the churches in the Arabian peninsula should be destroyed or Khalifatul Masih who gives us a teaching of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} saying, "My countrymen, a religion which does not inculcate universal compassion is no religion at all. Our God has never discriminated between one people and another". Who is more likely to bring world peace? The newly elected leader in Egypt who is already anxious to implement his version of *Shariah* Law or Khalifatul Masih who is declaring over and over again that we are not interested in seeking any political control. Who is more likely to bring world peace? The confused governments in the West which still cannot figure out what is peace and what is pleasure. We in the West, we sometimes think our pleasures are peace. That's not the way it is. It's Khalifatul Masih who is reminding us of the verse of the Holy Qur'an that I

recited in the beginning:

"Those who believe and those whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Ay! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort". (13:29)

And that is the reason why no Holy Book proclaims peace or world peace will be established by a bunch of people, by a government, by a worldly leader. We all talk of the Second Advent. At least all the Abrahamic faiths, they talk about the second coming of Jesus Christ^{as}, Masih Mau'ood^{as}. And that is precisely the reason why all these scholars, the only time they gain some acceptance is when they align their interpretation of *Jihad*, loyalty, *Shariah* Law, blasphemy, apostasy. When they align up those interpretations with the interpretations of Masih Mau'ood^{as}, they start sounding a little Muslim. However, it is too big of a plunge for them. They are still very afraid. It's a big gulf for them to jump. The seagull was hungry, he was on the ledge, he knew he was not going to survive. In fact, he walked around the mountain thinking there is another way. Maybe I can walk across these mountains and go down and meet my family on the shore. There was no way. Everywhere he went, there was a big gap, a big gulf, he knew he had to plunge.

Ahmadiyyat doesn't just talk about peace. Look at what the world has done to us. The persecution, they have killed us, they have tortured our people,

yet we don't resort to violence. They don't even let us rest in peace. They excavate our graves. And what do we do? What does our Imam tell us? To pray for them. This is a big deal. But still there is a skeptic out there thinking, if Masih Mau'ood^{as} has created this *Jama'at*, then why is there so much suffering in this world. Right? That is a valid question. Why? Why has the whole world not come under the banner of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}?

These are deep questions and we in today's world; we are connected with telephones, emails, texts, tweets. We cannot think analytically anymore. Before I answer the question, let me pose you a question. Listen to it carefully; this is nothing to do with religion. It is a question of logic. A bat and a ball cost \$1.10. The bat costs \$1 more than the ball. What is the price of the ball? Simple answer, anybody? 10cents, 99% of you are thinking. That's the wrong answer. If the ball is 10c, the bat is \$1 that makes the bat 90 cents costlier than the ball not \$1. The ball's price should be 5 cents, and then the bat is \$1. Think about it later on. Just wanted to highlight the point, we cannot figure that out and we have the audacity to ask the question why the world is still at war. But still I would answer that. Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} has answered that. Huzoor says, if you buy a pill of aspirin, you keep it in your pocket and your headache is nor relieved, you cannot blame the pill. You never internalize the pill. Masih Mau'ood^{as} is a physician, he is a spiritual physician. If you don't follow the same lifestyle that the physician tells you, if you don't give up your smoking, you don't control your weight, you don't exercise, you don't take your pills and you

don't go for surgery he may sometimes ask you to go for, there is no chance for cure.

That is the problem for the world. The world doesn't want to change and anyone who did, they get that peace instantly. Just look around, in this *Jama'at*, you will see Arabs and Israelis who are living together in peace. You will see Blacks and Whites who have established peace. You will see the 99% and the 1% living at peace. That is the beauty of this *Jalsa*, that however has internalized the peace has gotten it instantly.

Last week I was meeting a new African American convert. Like a new born, he's a new convert, like a new seagull. I asked him what bothered you the most. He said that when people discriminated against me, that really bothered him because of his ethnicity. I asked him how do you deal with that now and if somebody discriminated against you. He said, 'Brother, I will pray for them because for me to expect all that respect from everybody will mean I'm arrogant'. Here is a new born Ahmadi; he is a new born seagull, already flying high. That is what Ahmadiyyat does to you. And even if you want to look at larger numbers, a hundred years after Jesus (peace be upon him), according to some there were ten thousand Christians in the whole world. Nobody knows the exact numbers. Compare that to us. A hundred years later, we are established in 200 countries, we are millions. *Alhamdulillah*.

However, the logic takes us to the most uncomfortable questions and you knew this would come. If we are going to give peace to the

world and if we are going to fly behind Khalifatul Masih who clearly is the champion of peace today, are we at peace ourselves. Are you at peace, am I at peace? You can only give something that you have yourself in abundance. How can you give something you don't have? How can that seagull who is sitting on the ledge give flying lessons? Doesn't work. We all think we are flying, that is where the problem lies. Nobody feels that they are sitting on the ledge. A hundred years ago, Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} says that once he went to Lahore to try to bring two different groups of Ahmadis together who were cross with each other. And after Hazoor's lecture, each group was saying that the message was for the other group. And Huzoor says, 'That whenever there is a lecture like this, we all should think we are the addressee of that message'.

I will tell you a personal anecdote. A few years ago, after a *Jalsa* speech, a good friend of mine, a parent said that was a great message for the youth. The same evening, a youth came to me and said I hope now the parents understand their responsibility. That's the dichotomy. Nobody believes that he or she is sitting on the ledge. If we are flying high, then how can we be a source of conflict, control and commotion in our homes and *Jama'at*, particularly when Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw} says 'the most hated person in the sight of Allah is the most quarrelsome person'. If we are flying high, how can a husband

and wife yell at each other? How can a father not talk to his son? How can woman stay unhappy and distant from her relatives? How can the *Jama'at* members give each other silent treatment for months, when Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw} says, 'A believer should go and say *Salam* after three days even if he doesn't get *Salam* in return. He is acquitted of his responsibility'. If we are flying high, then why are we not eradicating the malice and grudge from our hearts? How can we avoid eye contact? We are unhappy with someone, we see them in the hallway, we avoid eye contact. If we cannot avoid eye contact, we take out our cell phone and pretend we are playing angry birds. How can we do that when Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} says, 'It is a sign of *Mahdi*, that he will eradicate malice from your hearts'. This is one sign of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood's^{as} truth, which is in our control. How can we from our own behavior create problem to the truth of Masihe Mau'ood^{as} *Nauzu billahe min zalik*.

That seagull, my brothers and sisters, was a new born. He had an excuse not to fly. What is my excuse at the age of 41? What is your excuse? But we do, we all have those excuses for our own malice. The biggest excuse I hear 'I'm an honest person, I don't like to shake hands with everyone, I'm not a politician, I'm not a hypocrite, or it's not my fault'. That's a combination of excuses. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih^{aba} said, "Those excuses are nothing but a pretense of self-righteousness. Hazoor said 'the worst form of arrogance is the feeling of self righteousness'. The real issue is that an arrogant person can

never make peace. You will have to kill your ego; you will have to take the plunge to make a tough choice. As Hazoor says, 'have the trembling humility of the liar or a guilty person even when you are the truthful'. That is the key to peace making. And then there is the fear of falling down. We all have a fear: it's going to reduce my stature, people will not respect me anymore, I will lose respect, I will somehow be boycotted by the other person.

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} said 'Do not fear the curses the world might heap on you, be afraid of the curse that comes from God'. Let us not pretend my dear brothers and sisters, that we are happy. We are not happy. We are unhappy with someone, believe me, your heart is carrying a burden. Malice, grudge, anger, these are negative feelings. They do not make you happy.

So when the seagull was really hungry, he was not happy. Finally he saw, he was trying to get the attention of his parents, and nobody was looking at him. So finally his mother looked at him, his mother picked a small fish from the ocean and she flew towards him on the ledge. He started flapping his wings. She came close to him. She didn't land on the ledge, just came close. He leaned forward. Brothers and sisters, just like our *Imam* is here, our *Imam* is asking us to jump off that ledge of malice, grudge, hatred and we must lean forward. Why are we worried about Global Peace Index, which country stood first there. Think of ourselves, what if there was an individual Peace Index of this *Jalsa Gah*, right here. What if all men were lumped together, all women were lumped together, boys and girls. Would you be number one on that list? That is the question.

See we all love to talk about Iraq, Israel, Syria and Egypt. But it all starts from the person. Where will we all be on that list? That is the question. We must make peace with each other, not for a worldly gain, not for a report but for the pleasure of *Allah Ta'ala*. Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} says 'Allah is not dependent upon any report. He sees and hears for himself'. This message, my dear brothers and sisters, is applicable to you; it's applicable to me, individually. Let's not deflect this responsibility. Let us disengage ourselves from playing angry birds on the phone during this *Jalsa*, for a change. And let us take up the challenge of being the hungry spiritual bird, the hungry bird, those who are hungry for peace making with each other because our *Imam* is flying high. There are thousands and thousands of Ahmadis who have already flown away with him. You and I, we don't want to remain on the ledge. So we must seek forgiveness, we must give forgiveness at this *Jalsa*. Don't wait.

The last question is why? Why should we do it? It's a risky thing, everybody likes to stay in status quo, everybody likes to stay safe. Who would like to do it? I'll closer with three reasons.

Number one, it's the true Islamic thing to do. Hadhrat Muhammad^{saw} said 'The who initiates peacemaking will enter paradise five hundred years ago'. Once there was a conflict between *Imam* Hasan^{ra} and Hadhrat *Imam* Hussain^{ra} and it was

Hadhrat *Imam* Hussain's^{ra} fault, who was the younger one. The next day somebody saw Hadhrat *Imam* Hasan^{ra} running towards Hadhrat *Imam* Hussain^{ra} and people said why are you running towards him. He said I want to apologize. They said but he is the younger brother and it's his fault. Hadhrat *Imam* Hussain^{ra} said I don't want him to get ahead of me in the afterlife. That is the spirit, my brothers and sisters.

The second reason, someone comes to us with an apology, we must accept that apology, we must forgive. That's a very Islamic and Ahmadi thing to do. Hadhrat Masih-Mau'ood^{as} says 'Someone who is not willing to forgive the guilty is a spiteful person and he is not from my *Jama'at*'. But the biggest reason to seek that apology, to make peace is that you are the spiritual birds of Masihe Mau'ood^{as}, you are not born to stay on the ledge. Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} decades ago he said 'Thus we should search for paths which help you fly higher and higher. Allah has made you birds, then why do you, despite being a bird, hide in the caves'. Ahmadiyyat is about a flying bird. Look at the sign behind me; look at this sign one more time. What do you see? A flying bird. It's not a bird on the ledge; we are not born to stay on the ledge, brothers and sisters. So what happened to that seagull? His mother came close enough to the ledge and he just could not control. It was not by design; she didn't want to give him the fish. She just wanted to encourage him like our Khalifatul Masih is doing with us. The seagull couldn't control himself and plunged, he jumped and just as he did, his mother flew away. He started falling down, miles and miles down and that's when terror seized his heart and he kept flapping his wings and the next thing he realizes that he was not

falling any more, he was soaring, he was flying higher and he could feel the wind cutting through his wings.

That is the reality, my brothers and sisters, you too, me too, we all can fly. We are the followers of Masih Mau'ood^{as} and in the words of Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra}, 'According to the Qur'an, a believers is not just required to fly by himself, but that he should help others to fly. The Qur'an has not made you like a parrot or sparrow, but the Qur'an has made you like an airplane, help others fly as well'. O spiritual birds of the *Jama'at* of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}, some of you, not all of you, but for how long will you remain on the ledge of rancor, malice, grudge and anger. Take the plunge toward making that apology at this *Jalsa*. Mothers, daughters and sisters, jump to apologize to the family members you are not on talking terms with. Fathers, brothers and sons, embrace each other. If somebody has disappointed you, you still can take the plunge. Office holders and *Jama'at* members, there is no room for malice, grudge and anger between us. We are made like this; we cannot remain on the ledge. Please stop your brothers and sisters during this *Jalsa*, stop them in the hallways, stop them in the parking lot, call them, tell them you want to reach out to them, tell them you want to seek forgiveness, tell them you want to apologize, tell them you want to make peace, tell them you want to fly and be the first one.

May we all become the flying birds of peace and peacemaking within our *Jama'at* and our families. May we all proudly fly behind Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih, this worldwide effort establish peace. May we prove ourselves worthy of the title of the speech 'Ahmadiyyat: A Community Raised to establish Peace on Earth'. *Jazak Allah*.

HISTORIC MIDWEST REGION VISIT OF HADHRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V^{aba}

Muhammad Ahmad Sec. Isha'at Jama'at Detroit

By the Grace of Allah, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} graced the Mid-west region this year as part of his US trip. Hazoor^{aba} arrived at the Chicago airport on Saturday, June 16th and later travelled to Columbus on June 18th by road. On his way, Hazoor^{aba} first visited the Dayton *Jama'at* and inaugurated and prayed at the *masjid*. The same evening Hazoor^{aba} arrived in Columbus. The next morning on Tuesday, June 19th Hazoor^{aba} received a warm welcome by Detroit and Columbus *Jama'ats* gathered outside Baitun Nasir. Separate teams of *Nasirat* and *Atfal* from Detroit and Columbus recited *Tiranas* upon Hazoor^{aba's} arrival. Despite extreme hot weather, the young and the old alike waited patiently to catch a glimpse of Hazoor^{aba}.

The Detroit *Jama'at* started preparations for Hazoor's visit more than a month in advance in collaboration with Columbus *Jama'at*. *Ma-shallah*, the Detroit *Jama'at* was at the forefront and participated in key responsibilities of security, *Ziafat*, hospitality, registration, discipline and many other areas. Many families of the Detroit *Jama'at* were blessed with opportunity to meet with Hazoor^{aba}. Above all, members were able to see Hazoor closely and pray behind him.

Although most *Jama'at* members were busy day and night in the volunteer work, they still felt that these blessed days passed quickly. The whole *Jama'at* felt a spiritual uplifting by being in the company of Hazoor^{aba}.

The Detroit *Jama'at* worked along with the Columbus *Jama'at* in making the historical visit of Hazoor^{aba} a success. These memorable days in the company of the *Khalifa* of the time will be remembered and cherished by the *Jama'at* members for years to come. May Allah reward all the volunteers who took many days off and worked tirelessly to make Hazoor's visit a success. *Ameen*

Hadhrat 'Arfajah^{ra} relates that he heard the Messenger^{saw} of Allah say: "When you are united and have a leader, and if someone tries to destroy your unity or tries to create dissension among you, kill (cut) him (off)."

(Muslim bab hakam min farq amarul muslimin huwa mujtami')

KHILAFAT-E-AHMADIYYA: THE “SECOND MANIFESTATION” OF DIVINE POWER

Dr. Waseem Sayed

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ، وَرَسُولُهُ،
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ تُؤْتِي الْمَلِكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِنْ تَشَاءُ

وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

“Say, ‘O Allah, Lord of sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whomsoever You please; and You take away sovereignty from whomsoever You please. You exalt whomsoever You please and You abase, You humiliate, whomsoever You please. In Your hand is all good. You surely have power to do all things.’”

In the year 628, almost one thousand, four hundred years ago, just after the signing of *Sul’h Hudai-biya*, described by Allah as a “*fathan mubeena*” – a manifest victory, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} sent envoys to different capitals of the world, each with a letter inviting the rulers to accept Islam.

Khusro the Second, one of the

most powerful and wealthy emperors of ancient Iran, read this letter and tore it to pieces...

Upon learning of this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} declared:

“What Khusro has done to our letter; God will do to his Empire.”

History records that the Holy Prophet’s^{saw} words were fulfilled to the letter.

Brothers and Sisters, I have been directed to explain how *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya* is the manifestation of God’s Power and why I have mentioned this historic account of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} will become clear shortly.

First, however, consider the significance of a word from the Qur’anic verse I recited - *Qadeer*.

The word “*Qadeer*” is derived from the Arabic root: *Qaaf, daal ray*. *Qadeer* is the intensive form of *Qadir* and means, very powerful, most powerful, having or possessing full power – what He wishes becomes decreed and no one, and nothing can oppose or frustrate His Decree.

The word “*Qudrat*” is also derived from this same root. Consider, then, that in “*Al-Wasiyyat*,” in his book “The

Will,” the Promised Messiah^{as} refers to himself as the physical embodiment of *Al-Qadir* – that is to say, the personification of Allah’s Power.

The Promised Messiah^{as} further uses the phrase “*Qudrat-e-Saanya*” to describe and explain *Khilafat*. He does not use the word “*Khilafat*,” and the question is why?

To understand this we need to turn to the famous vision of “The red drops.”

In this vision Allah signed a document with red ink and people always emphasize that in the process some red drops miraculously appeared on his shirt. But I think it is much more important for us to consider the nature of the document that Allah had signed.

What Was That Document?

The answer is in the Promised Messiah’s^{as} own words describing the vision. He says:

“I had written certain divine decrees (*Qazaa’o Qadr*) with my own hand setting out **future events** and presented the paper to Allah, the All-Powerful. He dipped His pen in red ink and first flicked it in my direction and with the red ink that remained at the point of the pen, He put His signature to the document.”

Thus, the desires and wishes and purpose of the Promised Messiah^{as} quite literally became the Decrees of God Almighty Himself.

Now we can see why the Promised Messiah^{as} used the term, “*Qudrat-e-Saaniya*.” He used it deliberately and decidedly in stead of *Khilafat*. He wanted to tell us what is meant by the term “*Khilafat* on the Pattern of Prophethood,” the term used by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} when he foretold that *Khilafat* would re-emerge in Islam.

Such *Khilafat*, the Promised Messiah^{as} tells us, is a Second Manifestation of the Power and Might of Allah. Allah, Who is *Al-Qadir* – Who can do whatever He wishes and Whose every wish becomes a Decree that no one and nothing can oppose or frustrate!

How beautifully the Promised Messiah^{as} has captured this in the following Urdu couplet:

*Qudrat say apnee zaat ka daya haiy
Haq suboot, iss bay nishan kee
chehra numayee yahee tou haiy;*

*Jiss baat ko kahay keh karoon gaa
yeh main zaroor, taltee naheen woh
baat, khudayee yahee tou haiy!*

Translation: Allah provides proof of His own Existence by Manifesting His Might and Power; this is how we see the Countenance, the Face of the Invisible God. Whatever He determines to carry out; that thing can not be prevented from occurring or coming into being – this is what being God means!

Thus, the Promised Messiah^{as} specifically used the phrase “*Qudrat-e-Saaniya*” instead of “*Khilafat*” because the *Khalifa* now embodies the Power of Allah.

Let me now describe this phe-

nomenon as it unfolded in *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*.

During the *Khilafat* of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I^{ra}, Hazoor^{ra} faced intense opposition, the greatest, perhaps, came from a very powerful faction of individuals from within the *Jama'at*.

But the man whom Allah had bestowed the Holy Robe of the *Khilafat*, though advanced in age, was fearless, and absolutely confident and certain and convinced of his own stature as a *Khalifa* established by God Almighty Himself.

Addressing these people he said emphatically, “Nobody is going to make you a *khalifa* in my lifetime and nobody is going to elect you *Khalifa* even after me. After me, only he will be *Khalifa* who is placed by God and the one who would come after me would treat you in the way God wishes you to be treated.”

Then Hazoor^{ra} added with great passion, “Listen, my prayers are heard in Heaven, and my Master and my God acts even before my prayers are heard.”

He did not mince his words. He went on to make his point absolutely crystal clear, “Any quarrel with me is a quarrel with God. Forsake your sordid thinking and repent.”

The end of that faction who stood in opposition to the *Khalifa* established by God is known to us all. In fact, as with Khusro the Second of Iran, their

name is largely alive only because the *Jama'at* mentions them!

During *Khilafat-e-Saaniya*, the *Ahrar* rose up in opposition and declared their aim was to destroy the *Jama'at*, to demolish it brick by brick quite literally! And while the *Ahrar* were Muslims, they also had the support of certain Hindu factions and some British government officials. Three different and powerful factions had joined forces, but look how such worldly powers were no match for the Power of God, the *Al-Qadir*, supporting the *Khalifa* He had established!

At the height of their power in 1934, when they were ready to celebrate the accomplishment of their deadly goals, the man wearing the Holy Robe of *Khilafat* declared with full, unshakeable confidence and utter certainty, “I see the ground slipping from under the feet of the enemy. I see their imminent defeat.”

And soon the *Ahrar* were no more. They had disintegrated. They had disappeared from the face of the earth! Today they are forgotten. Google their name and you will find only a whisper.

Indeed, as with Khusro the Second, the Emperor of Iran, their name is alive only because the *Jama'at* mentions them!

Now we come to the time of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IIIth. With regard to him, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih the Second^{ra} had promised, “I now convey this glad tiding to whomever will be appointed as Khalifatul Masih IIIth – that when he will be established, believing in God, if any government dares to clash with him, they will be pulverized.”

At the time of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih III^{rh}, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, who was an extremely talented politician, who was also adept at using the power of his office, decided to oppose and try to frustrate the aims and objectives of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*.

But look at the Power of God, the *Al-Qadir*, behind the *Khalifa*! See how it manifested in support of the man Allah had now bestowed the Holy Robe of *Khilafat*.

Bhutto did indeed succeed in pushing through the constitutional amendment declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims for the purposes of the Constitution, but look at the terrible consequences he met with.

It is related that Hazoor^{rh} had once been shown a document in which this man had written regarding Ahmadi Muslim military officers that, "They will be wasted out." In response, *Hazoor* declared, "Ahmadis will not be wasted out but he will be wasted out in every sense of the word."

Google Bhutto and see how fully these words of the *Khalifa* became the Decree of God, executed ironically by Bhutto's own handpicked General.

Now when we come to the time of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{rh}, it is important to understand how powerful this General was, because now he would try his hand at opposing and trying to frustrate the *Khalifa* established by Allah! Not only had General Zia taken over the government of Pakistan and executed Bhutto, but even America felt it could not do without his support.

In 1984, this man promulgated

the now infamous Ordinance XX to legalize and indeed, institutionalize, the persecution of Ahmadis living in Pakistan. He went on to hatch a plot to try to arrest Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{rh} but Allah frustrated and rendered futile his machinations and Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{rh} safely migrated out of the country.

But look at the Power of God, the *Al-Qadir*. Look how He manifested His support for the man He had now chosen to wear the Blessed Robe of *Khilafat*!

As the persecution of the Ahmadis continued, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{rh} warned Gen Zia to stop and issued a *mubahila* challenge to him. His response was only to escalate the persecution thus indicating his acceptance of the *mubahila* challenge.

Hazoor soon declared, "I swear by God that when our Lord comes to assist us, there shall be no one there who will help you. When God's decree will shatter you into pieces, all traces of your identity shall be wiped out, and the world shall forever remember you with disgrace and disgust."

The statement made by the *Khalifa* would soon manifest itself as a Decree of Allah. Within days, Zia was blown out of the sky and people, as Hazoor declared, only remember him in disgrace and disgust.

Let me now come to the

events unfolding before our own eyes. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} has recently sent letters to many heads of State:

To President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hazoor wrote, "the Third World War looms almost certainly before us."

To Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Hazoor wrote, "If such a war occurs, it will result in a chain reaction of human destruction."

To President Barack Obama, Hazoor wrote, "rather than focusing on the *progress* of the world ... we [must] increase our efforts to *save* the world from this destruction."

These are ominous words and the writing of such letters to the Heads of State is a most significant event - these are letters coming from *that* person who has *that* same Power, that same God, the *Al-Qadir*, supporting him Who is the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, Who had established the 1st four *Khulafa* of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}, Who had established the *Khulafa-e-Rashideen* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}.

There is a message here for the world and also for us, the members of the *Jama'at* of the Promised Messiah^{as}. We need to pay close attention to what this event signifies.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has told us what is the purpose of our Community and we need to reflect on this as we reflect on the significance of these letters.

"God Almighty desires to draw all those who live in various habitations of the world, be it Europe or Asia,

and who have virtuous nature, to the Unity of God and unite His servants under one Faith.”

This is the holy mission of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the *Ghulamay Sadiq* - the Truest and Most Sincere servant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad - *sallallahu alaihay wasallam* - may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him! And this is the work which his *Khulafa* are continuing to carry out, and we have a duty to assist in these blessed endeavors.

The only way to prevent the catastrophe that Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} is warning the world about again and again, is for the world to come under the shield of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*; and we have to play our role in taking this message to one and all.

Do not think we are weak - we are doing this at the behest of that same All-Powerful, that same *Al-Qadir* God Who promulgated as His decree the document written by the Promised Messiah^{as} in the vision of the Red Drops. We are doing this at the command of that same Allah Who fulfilled the prophecy of Prophet Muhammad^{saw} regarding Khusro fourteen hundred years ago.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has foretold of a huge and bright victory for Islam. He writes:

“Do not think that God will let you go to waste. You are the seed which the Hand of God has sown in the earth. God says that this seed will grow and flourish and its branches will spread in all directions and it will become a huge tree.”

The destiny of the world is now tied up with the purposes and objec-

tives assigned by God to Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, and these are being furthered now by his *Khulafa*.

The welfare of the world lies in accepting and obeying and attaching firmly to this Divine bounty that Allah has bestowed upon the world after a long lapse of some fourteen centuries. Now the value and *Qadr* of a country or a nation or a people - or, for that matter, any one, or the whole world, will be based on its valuing of the Mission of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*.

In summary, what I wish to submit is that we must understand the true import and value of this *Qudrat-e-Saanya* - this Second Manifestation of Allah's Power. We must try and comprehend the Power and Might and design and intent of Allah - that is conveyed in these words when they are used to describe *Khilafat!*

The Promised Messiah was told that now all those who take shelter in his house alone shall be saved. How powerful-ly he says:

Sidq say mayree taraf aayo, issee main khair haiy; hain darinday har taraf main aafeeyat ka hoon hisar!

Translation: Come to me, in full sincerity, take shelter in me, there is certainly an abundance of good in this alone; Wild beasts are roaming all around, I alone am the citadel of security.

Wa-akhiro dawana anil hamdo lil-lahay rabbil aal-ameen!

HADITH

Hadhrat ‘A’ishah^{ra} relates that after migration to Medina, there was a night when the Messenger^{saw} of Allah was unable to sleep. He^{saw} said: "Would that some pious person was guarding me tonight. She^{ra} said that at the same time they heard the tinkling noise of armament. He^{saw} asked, 'Who is this?' The person outside replied: 'I am Sa‘d bin Abi Waqqas.' The Messenger^{sa} of Allah asked: 'Why did you come?' Sa‘d bin Abi Waqqas said: 'I felt, in my heart, fear for the Messenger^{saw} of Allah. Therefore, I have come to guard him-^{sa}.' The Messenger^{saw} of Allah prayed for him and went to sleep. "

(Tirmidhi abwabul manaqib, manaqib Sa‘d bin Abi Waqqas^{ra})

Hadhrat Mu‘adh^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{sa} of Allah sent Mu‘adh^{ra} (as the ruler) to Yemen, he asked him: "How will you make decisions? He said: 'I will decide according to the Book of Allah.' He^{saw} said, 'If there is no (clear) commandment in the Holy Qur’an regarding the matter?' He said: 'I will decide according to the *Sunnah* of the Messenger^{saw} of Allah. He^{saw} said: 'If it is not in the *Sunnah* of the Messenger^{saw} of Allah?' He replied, 'Then, I will decide according to my own judgment.' He^{saw} said, 'All Praise belongs to Allah, Who has made the messenger of the Messenger^{saw} of Allah consistent with what pleases him^{sa}! "

(Tirmidhi abwabul ahkam bab fil qa-di kaifa yaqdi)

HARMONIZING WORD AND DEED: A QUALITY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Basyir Rodney

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ أَفَأَشْرِكُوا بِرَبِّكَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

3. O ye who believe! why do you say what you do not do?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

4. Most hateful is it in the sight of Allāh that you say what you do not do.

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

The Holy Qur'an exhorts the believers to harmonize our words and deeds, or in other words: to 'practice what we preach' (61:3-4). This act of "harmonizing word and deed" is indeed a quality of the righteous.

The eternal *Jihad* or struggle of the righteous is to strive to sincerely practice noble ideals and to completely synchronize one's heart, mind, words and deeds with these ideals. It is this state that the Holy Qur'an is referring to in this verse. The state in which we work to avoid "*Li ma taqoloona*" (We say), *maa* (what), *laa-tafaloon* (what we do not do). Allah goes on to say that it is most hateful to him (*Kabur makatan indallah*) that we *Li ma taqoloona*' (We say), *maa* (what), *laatafaloon* (what we do not do).

Harmonizing word and deed or "practicing what one preaches" is indeed a high moral quality that has been displayed in the lives of the righteous. As 21st century people who are striving for the establishment of righteousness and piety, we must confront the question; how do I bring into alignment or harmony my own words and deeds?

In order to begin to understand the hallmarks of the *mutaqqeen* or righteous people, we must examine the life of the Prophets. In the Jewish, Christian, Islamic and other Theistic (God-centered) traditions, we agree that the Prophets were the most righteous. In the Islamic tradition we believe that there has never been any misalignment between the words of the Prophets and the deeds of the Prophets.

Whatever Allah told them to speak they spoke and whatever Allah told them to do they did. So it is on this common basis of the Prophetic tradition that we can discuss the hallmarks of the righteous. When we examine the life of the Prophets they are found to reflect the appropriate indicators of righteousness. So how can the prophets help us to bring our words and deeds into alignment? What lessons can we draw from them and their (*sahaba/tabii'n*) righteous companions?

In Islam we believe that more than 124,000 prophets have been sent to the earth. The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} of Arabia who came to the world some 600 years after Hadhrat Isa or Jesus Christ^{as} represents the *Khatam-ul Anbiyya* (The Seal) of the Prophets - or the ideal personification of Prophethood.

One main element of harmonizing words and deeds that has been demonstrated to us by the Prophets - is the attribute of truthfulness. Truthfulness is a key plank upon which all right and morally virtuous action is

based. The attribute of truthfulness is such that it encompasses both word and deed. So when we look at the Prophets and their closest companions we can observe that they were committed to a life of truthfulness.

The Holy Qur'an gives many examples of the link between truthfulness and aligning words and deeds. It explains that:

Believers should practice (*koo loo kaulan sadeedan*) speak a straightforward word - saying what one truly means (33:71; 4:10);

Believers should speak a gentle word (*koo loo Kaulan Layeenan*) conveying the truth with sensitivity (20:45)

To avoid doing things for outward 'show' without inner spirit (*ala thena hum yu rauoon*) (107:5-7); and to remember at all times that Allah judges what is in our minds, i.e., thoughts and intentions - He is well aware of what we do (*ta mahuona aleem*) (2:285).

In the *Injil* or the Gospels of Jesus Christ, Hadhrat Isa^{as} as we Muslims call him, taught his companions that: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach." (Matt. 23:2-3).

In fact one of the proofs of a Prophet that is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an is that he lives a truthful life even before the call comes to make him a Prophet. In the Islamic tradition Prophets are the hallmark of truth. It says of the Holy Prophet^{saw} that when the Meccans doubted him his first argument was

- (1) I have lived a whole lifetime among you and you never doubted me in anything. In fact you gave me the name - Al Amin (the trustworthy). How can I be a liar now.
- (2) I have never lied to you about man so why should I now lie to you about God. So truthfulness in word and character is the golden rule of Prophethood - thus it is the Golden rule of the righteous.

So as we strive to be righteous we must give due RIGHTS to our obligation both to ourselves and to our God. We must work to practice what we preach. Our hands must not take what belongs to others; our tongues must not be abusive of others; our words must be gentle and uplifting. Our feet must not take us to places to which we do not belong.

It is difficult for us human beings to see every instance in which we are not being true. And in a society where we have allowances for things such as "a little white lie" or a "fib". Sometimes we "bend" or "stretch" the truth". A bill collector calls and we say "tell them I'm not home". Or a promise to visit a friend or return a phone call is never fulfilled because we get too busy. These behaviors compromise our ability to practice what we preach. Over time they chip away at our resolve. As Ahmadi Muslims in particular, the advice of our *Khulafa* is that care must be taken to abide by our *Bai'at* pledge. The fourth condition of *baiat* for joining the Ahmadiyya Community, says that we pledge to refrain from Falsehood. Truthfulness should become an abiding hallmark for us, as it was for the Prophets and their companions before us.

Another plank of harmonizing words and deeds is the recognition and understanding of human nature in relation to spiritual growth. By understanding spiritual growth, we mean that those on the path of the *mutaqqi* (righteous) knows that quickness to judge or to use one individual's failings to describe an entire community is also a type of falsehood. It is dangerous both for the accuser and the accused.

The human nature here is the recognition that spiritual growth comes through stages. It takes time. All of us do not travel on this journey in the same way. Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} has guided us to the recognition that the human spirit grows through the *nafs-e-Amarah* (the animal stage), the *nafs-e-lawama* (the moral stage)

and the *nafs-e-mutmainah* (the spiritual stage). Human beings are at different stages of this journey. So we as a believing people must be mindful that when human beings fail, we do not rush to judge or condemn. Instead we are confident that the message of truth will take root in their heart. We also know that the failing is that of an individual - not his or her entire group.

The righteous are required to speak a gentle word and to be patient. So they recognize that one of their practices must be to preach the message, demonstrate the example and allow for the individual growth to take place. Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} the Messiah of these latter days reminds us in his Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam that "not every evil needs to be fought."

Hadhrat Isa bin Maryam^{as} would say that we should take the plank out of our eye before we try to remove the speck from a brother's. Since Allah is ever watchful and mindful of what we do, we work to show by example the behaviors that we want to see in our society.

A case that was presented before the Holy Prophet^{saw} and his companions was that of one of the Bedouin that visited Medina one day. He needed to relieve himself so he went to the corner of the mosque and urinated against the wall. The *Sahaba* or companions of the Holy Prophet^{saw} who were there became very upset. A few of them stood up with the intention to put the man out of the mosque. The Holy Prophet^{saw} stopped them. When the man was finished, he asked for water and washed the spot himself.

Similarly Hadhrat Yaqub (Jacob)^{as} when he was told that his son Joseph had been killed by wolves. He did not believe the story. But rather than chide the other older sons for losing their brother in such a manner, he responded that "sweet patience is required of me."

In order to exercise the right of truth and justice, Muslims must be careful not to let the fault of one person, faction or small group be used to describe the whole group or community.

In today's society it is not uncommon to speak in generalizations and stereotypes. In a culture of late night TV talk shows and media pundits, generalizations against whole groups of people abound. We describe all Democrats one way, or all Republicans one way. We frequently hear all religious people being painted with one broad brush. We hear Muslims being described as one thing. Christians another. To bolster the generalization one example or case is cited. Often the example is extreme and is linked to one individual who in no real way represents the group. The Holy Qur'an teaches us that this type of fault finding is dangerous to a community and nation.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} admonished the Muslims that they should not speak ill of each other or of any community. He said do not speak ill of a people. They are likely to become as you perceive. "A person who condemns the nation on account of an evil from which it is alleged to suffer is the one who gives currency to the evil. To denounce people as vicious, makes them vicious." (Way of the Seekers)

Oftentimes we see a fault in a parent, brother, sister, friend or neighbor. Sometimes unfortunately we see this fault among a few of our members. When we observe this fault some of us take it and project it unto the entire community. Qur'anic justice requires us to sharpen our view - look at the truth of a situation and do not become a fault finder. A great sin that we miss when we do this is that we condemn the truth of our Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and his Messiah and Mahdi^{as}.

At this point you may say to me- why is this so? How could my identifying someone's fault be perceived as an attack against the Holy Prophet^{saw}. I submit to you as Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} reminded us, that if we project the idea that the community of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} founded through Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} is devoid of truth then *nauzi billahi* (I seek refuge in Allah) that means that these Prophets failed. They failed in their mission to draw people closer to Allah; they failed in their mission to establish a community of truthful and righteous people; they would have failed in their mission to establish good in the world. It would further imply

that their coming made no difference, that the world would be the same if not better off without them. Falsehood is now victorious. Indeed this is not so and can never be so. We must be careful therefore not to tarnish the face of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and his righteous *Sahaba*. In this case we would be less than truthful.

In these latter days, by Allah *Ta'ala's* Grace, the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at* has worked tirelessly in this Prophetic tradition of harmonizing word and deed. We strive to practice what we preach all across the world and in the more than 190 countries in which we find ourselves established. Indeed we are a small community but because we cling to the Messiah and *Mahdi* and his *Khulafa* (successors), we find that we spread the good influence beyond our size.

We are, and continuously strive to be truthful in our words and deeds. In the face of much suspicion against Muslims and outright persecution directed directly at us in some places, the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at* works to promote interfaith cooperation. We strive for delivering the message of Islam.

We do not condemn or generalize based on one individual or group. We do not repay cynicism and suspicion with enmity. In fact, we spread the message of Love for All, Hatred for None. In these gatherings around the world, people of all nationalities and religious persuasions join together to remember God and to learn to live with their fellow human beings.

In fact these attributes find themselves strongly mentioned in a Chapter of the Holy Qur'an called *Al 'Asr* - this name *Al-Asr* has been translated as "the time" "time through the ages" or "the fleeting time". It describes man as being in a state of loss or *Khuser* except for those who believe and do good works, those who are truthful and those who exhort one another to be patient. Truthfulness, good deeds and patience are the positive attributes that are mentioned here to describe the believers. The Qur'an therefore makes a direct link between the past, present and future righteous people and the attributes of truthfulness, patience and good works.

The present *Khalifa* of the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at* has most recently reminded us that: "We should abide by the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. In this we should influence each other and vanquish the outsiders with the weapon of truth. Traditional weaponry eliminates life whereas the weapon of truth which is activated with our good practices infuses life. Today each Ahmadi should use this weapon. May we be able to use this spiritual means to gather the pious-natured in the world who are seekers of the truth and raise high walls of truth which no satanic force can bring down. May the light of the truth of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, which is a reflection of the light of God, continue to spread in the world and may the world gather under the banner of the Holy Prophet^{saw}" (Friday Sermon, September 9, 2011).

HADITH

Hadhrat Hasan bin 'Ali^{ra} bin Abu Rafi'a^{ra} relates that Abu Rafi'a^{ra} told him that the *Quraish* sent him (as their ambassador) to the Messenger^{saw} of Allah. When I saw the Messenger^{saw} of Allah, Islam penetrated into my heart. He said: "O Messenger^{sa} of Allah! By Allah, I will never return to them. The Messenger^{sa} of Allah said: I do not violate an agreement and I do not hold an ambassador. Rather, you go back. If the feelings you have right now (about Islam), remain the same (when you return home), then you can come back.' He^{ra} says: 'So, I went back and later came back to the Holy Prophet^{saw} and accepted Islam.' "

(*Abu- Dawud kitabul jiha-d bab fil imam yastajin bih fil 'ahud*)

SIMPLE LIFESTYLE: A WAY TO PEACE AND SECURITY

Wasim Malik

وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ
وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٧﴾
إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Honorable Chairman and guests of
Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}:

Money! In its pursuit, alliances have been formed, coalitions have been dissolved, and wars have been waged. In its pursuit, nations and civilizations have risen and fallen.

I have just recited verses 27 and 28 from Chapter 17 of Holy Qur'an. These verses set the context for my talk on maintaining a simple lifestyle as a way to achieving peace and security. Holy Qur'an states:

"And give thou to the kinsman his due, and to the poor and the wayfarer, and squander not thy wealth extravagantly. Verily, the extravagant are brothers of satans, and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord."

Allah commands us in the Holy Qur'an to use part of our wealth for the welfare of others and reminds us not to be extravagant and wasteful. Allah warns us that wealth spent in frivolous pursuits invites the Devil's company.

Dear brothers, recently, on a Chinese TV Show – kind of like "The Bachelorette" of China – female contestants were interviewing potential

suitors. One suitor offered a contestant a ride on his motorcycle to which she curtly replied, "I'd rather cry in a BMW car than laugh on the backseat of a motorcycle."

Her comment set off waves of alarm in China, where the prevailing culture is getting increasingly immersed in materialism – valued even higher than love and happiness. One hears the echoes of her offensive but honest remarks all around us.

Do some of us not believe that happiness is intimately intertwined with what we own, what we consume, and how we live? We should ask ourselves whether we live in a culture steeped in consumerism and if it impacts our lives.

According to newstrategist.com, the average American has \$34 in his/her wallet but spends \$69 a day. Ralph Nader, the perennial presidential candidate, refers to this "shop till you drop" lifestyle as the 11th commandment, because it seems to be such an ordained part of our culture. We'll talk about this more in a little bit – but first, a pop quiz for the audience:

How many dollars does half the world live on?

\$10? ... \$5?...

The answer is less than \$2 per day.

This is just something to keep in mind when you're pondering over whether or not to buy the \$2 scone to go with your \$4 caramel macchiato at Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts. Incidentally, the average American spends almost \$2000 per year on coffee.

Meanwhile, 33% of all children in the world under five suffer from malnutrition, with roughly 30,000 dying of preventable diseases every day.

According to the most recent figures from the United Nations Human Development Report:

- In 2005, the wealthiest 20% of the world accounted for 77% of total private consumption, the poorest fifth just 1.5%.
- Total U.S. consumer debt is \$2.5 trillion
U.S. credit card debt is more than \$750 billion.
Now let's consider how we are spending our money. Well...
- Cosmetics sales in the United States are at 8 billion dollars
- Perfume sales in Europe and the United States? 12 billion dollars
Alcohol sales in Europe: 105 billion dollars

Again, alcohol sales in Europe: 105 billion dollars, against this, sadly though, according to CIA World Fact Book, the annual budget of Liberia is just a paltry \$1.6 billion dollars.

I don't want to overwhelm you

with statistics, but these numbers tell us that billions are living on the periphery, desperately looking for work and access to the material comfort they see on the American television (shows).

So there's the snapshot of our world's "haves" and "have-nots." Now, take a minute and reflect on all the expenses in your life. While doing this self-introspection, consider the negative consequences of this lifestyle.

In Chapter 25 Verse 68, Allah says:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾

"And those, who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but adopt a moderate position in the middle."

Islam's excellent principle of moderation is cogently underscored. It should be clear that Allah does not prohibit us from using money on ourselves, so long as we do so in moderation. The Qur'an advocates neither asceticism nor hedonism.

Rampant consumerism has become such an integral part of our culture that it actually has a name – "new consumerism", according to former Harvard University Professor Juliet Schor. Its defining feature is that the masses now want those things that were once associated with the fabulously rich. Well that's good, you might say, level the playing field so we all have the opportunity to buy what we want. This might work in a society where income levels are comparable. But in this country – where the top 1 percent owns more than the

bottom 90 percent – this is not only psychologically unhealthy but financially perilous, because tremendous income inequality exists.

Then, there are the emotional consequences. A study of 1,700 married couples, published October 2011 in the Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy, found, that materialism was associated with spouses having lower levels of responsiveness and less emotional maturity, and less marriage stability.

Let us be clear, avarice, the desire for more, can, to a certain extent, serve as a motivation for hard work. But the tipping point is when people start using material possessions to satiate their emotional and psychological needs and when wealth becomes the primary measure of one's worth. We're not talking about eating a pint of ice cream after a bad day at the office. We're talking about materialism and avarice that knows no bound – when enough is never enough!

But this pales into insignificance when compared with the most disastrous consequences of this preoccupation – the spiritual and economic consequences.

The Holy Qur'an warns us of the dangers of this obsession. In Chapter 102, *Sura Al-Takathur*, Verses 2-5, it says, "Mutual rivalry in seeking increase in worldly possessions diverts you from God, till you reach the graves. Nay! You will soon come to know the Truth. Nay again! You will soon come to know."

This stern Qur'anic warning comes not once, but twice, in these verses. These verses reveal one of the most common of human flaws – the relentless pursuit of wealth, position and prestige as it overshadows the pursuit of piety.

How does Islam guide us in the matters of lifestyle? The Holy Qur'an enjoins believers to spend neither extravagantly nor niggardly, but to take a moderate course. Again, the great wisdom of Islam is in its advocacy of moderation.

The Holy Qur'an in *Surah Al-Baqarah* defines the righteous as, "*Wa Yoqeemu Nasalaata Wa Mimma Razaqnaa Hum Yunfe Qoon*," "as those who observe Prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them."

The precondition for piety not only involves prayers but also financial sacrifice in the cause of Allah for the welfare of the individual and the community.

The teachings of the Holy Qur'an are embodied in the life of our master, the Holy Prophet of Islam, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa^{saw}, and I would like to share a few incidences of the simplicity and austerity with which he lived his life.

Once Hadhrat Umar^{ra} came to visit him and found the Holy Prophet^{saw} lying on a spread made of palm leaves. When the Holy Prophet^{saw} sat up, there were visible marks left by palm leaves on his bare back. Hadhrat Umar^{ra} became overwhelmed with emotion and said, "The kings have luxurious cushions and decorated, comfortable beds. Why should you not have comfortable living?" The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} replied, "No, Umar. I am like a traveler in the

desert who lies down to briefly rest under a tree. He gets up soon and starts off on his journey.”

One day Prophet Muhammad^{saw} came home and asked if there was anything to eat. There was nothing except some bread and vinegar. He partook of those and said, “What a good thing is the vinegar!”

The Holy Prophet^{saw} said that moderation in expenditure is half economy. He also said that those who remain content during adversity will find refuge with Allah. With a great insight, he admonished that if a man owns even a valley full of gold, he would still wish for another valley.

It is evident from the sacred dictates of the Holy Prophet^{saw} that his whole life was devoid of any formality. In the matter of dress he never had any ceremonial preference. His normal dress consisted of a shirt, a loin cloth and a sheet.

The Promised Messiah also wrote that the less a person is occupied with [worldly] struggle the more satisfied and fulfilled he would be.

The Promised Messiah's^{as} sensitivity for the feelings of others and his simple lifestyle devoid of any extravagance and lavish formality is epitomized in the following example. 'Once, the Promised Messiah^{as} was sitting on the roof of the Masjid Mubarak, Qadian, awaiting the arrival of some guests with whom he was to have a meal. One very poor Ahmadi friend, Mian Nizam Din Sahib of Ludhiana, wearing ragged clothes, was also sitting there at a short distance. In the meantime, some well-to-do, respected guests arrived and sat near the Promised Messiah^{as}. To make room for each of them, Mian Nizam Din Sahib had to move further back and

he did so until he reached the place where shoes were kept. When the meal was brought, the Promised Messiah^{as} who had observed the whole scene, took a plate of food and addressing him said, 'Come, Mian Nizam Din you and I will eat together inside,' meaning his chamber next to the mosque. At that Mian Nizam Din Sahib's joy knew no bounds, and those who had sat near the Promised Messiah^{as}, pushing Mian Nizam Din Sahib farther away, were duly mortified.

In the early days of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II^{ra} refocused the community on living a simple life, both for spiritual growth and for helping the causes of the *Jama'at*. His landmark *Tehrike Jadid* Scheme outlined several requirements of a simple lifestyle without proscribing the necessities of life.

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra}, set an excellent example by abiding by all the rules of *Tehrike Jadid* in his household. One of the rules required that everyone should have only one dish at every meal. One day at dinner, one of his wives did not like the dish and requested another one. So there were two dishes on the table. Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} noticed this, and suddenly left without eating the food, because of the violation of that rule.

Our *Khulafa* have provided us excellent insight into how the world functions and how the unfettered desire for wealth would lead to its decline and

dissolution. In his book, *Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues*, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth states,

“In a society where keeping up with the Joneses (neighbors and friends) becomes an obsession, the obsession is largely abetted by advertisements of the latest models of this and that. An introduction is provided to the general public of the luxurious lifestyle of the rich by displaying the latest design of sofas, luxurious chalets fitted with the most modern kitchen and bathroom appliances and gadgets, etc. People with less means available to buy all that they want are willy-nilly turned to false plastic money to fulfill their desires. Obviously, this means that they buy far more than their earnings...

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} has counseled us against getting entrapped in the desire to acquire more to a degree where people invest with unreliable individuals and institutions and end up losing everything. Hazoor^{aba} said the Holy Prophet^{saw} taught us to be always aware of those less fortunate than us rather than covet the wealth of those who are better off than us.

The plummeting of the US and the world economy in 2009 and the economic malaise bears testimony to the trap I just mentioned -- banks over-lending, men over-consuming and over-borrowing.

My brothers, we have so many examples of the companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}, who lived a life of grace and simplicity. I'll mention here just a couple.

Hadhrat Maulana Sher Ali Sahib^{ra} was a companion of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He translated the Holy Qur'an into English, which has been

acknowledged as one of the best translations. He also served as an editor of *Review of Religions*. Once, one of his British admirers decided to visit Qadian to meet him. When he arrived there, he asked a passer-by clad in working-man's clothing where Mr. Sher Ali, the editor of *Review of Religions*, lived. This man took him to Mr. Sher Ali's house and asked him politely to wait. After a few minutes, Hadhrat Maulana Sher Ali Sahib appeared – the same man but dressed in a more formal *Shalwar Qameez*! The British visitor was flabbergasted and could not believe that such a great man lived such a simple and unpretentious life.

In his book titled '*Chund Yaadein* (Some Memories),' Imam Bashir A. Rafique, former *Imam* of the London Fazl Mosque, writes about Hadhrat Chaudhry Zafarulla Khan Sahib^{ra}. He says that he had watched Hadhrat Chuadhry Sahib very closely, and his observation is that Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib, out of his monthly income of thousands of Rupees, would keep only a few hundred for his personal use and the rest of the amount would go to the *Jama'at* or for the assistance of the needy. Hadhrat Chaudhry Sahib would undergo hardship so that he could alleviate the sufferings of others.

Our elders have been exemplars of purposeful lives. Similarly, I have cited above what a worldly life looks like today. There is a stark contrast between materialistic and spiritual lifestyles. Which lifestyle I want to follow is up to me. Will I remember these lessons next time when I am in the shopping mall looking for the latest "IN" Armani Exchange T-shirt? How about those \$150 Air Jordan's

or some latest Nike's? How does the discussion about the coolness of iPhone or iPad rate in your life?

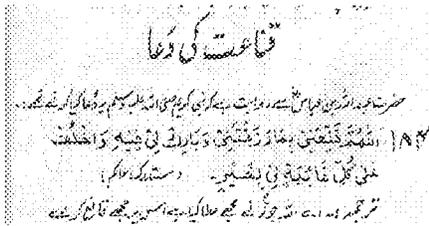
Having listened to my humble submissions, how will tomorrow be different than today for all of us? This question needs an honest answer. And one can only answer this question on his or her own behalf.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} said

If one is righteous, one attains nearness to God. And if one is content, one acquires the highest level of thankfulness.

May Allah enable us to emulate the exemplary practices of the perfect man, our very dear Holy Prophet^{saw}, for that is the only way to achieve peace and contentment, and ensure security in one's life. I will end my submission with this profound prayer of the Holy Prophet (saws): He is reported to have prayed:

My Lord, make me content with what You have given me, and put blessings in it for me, and give me a better replacement for what I don't have. Ameen



*Wa Aakhirodo wa'Aanil
Hamdolillahe Rabil Aalameen*

“Peace Through the Messiah” Flyer Distribution

**Muhammad Ahmad
Sec. Isha'at Jama'at Detroit**

The *Tabligh* Department of the Detroit *Jama'at* kicked-off the “Peace through the Messiah” campaign on July 18th at the 53rd Annual Ann Arbor Art Fair. The “Peace through the Messiah” campaign had been launched on May 22nd in Zion, Illinois as part of a new nation-wide campaign under the guidance of Hadhrat Khalifatul Massih V^{aba}. By the Grace of Allah, the event was a great success. Along with flyer distribution, many *Jama'at* books were distributed during the four day event. The 2012 *Jama'at Tabligh* booth bore a new look. The size of the booth was also double the size of prior years' which provided the opportunity to display large pictures of the Promised Messiah^{as} and the *Khulafa*. This attracted many people to the booth. The passers-by who looked at these pictures inquired about the Promised Messiah^{as}. In one such incident, a non-practicing Muslim stopped by the *Tabligh* booth and stated that he stopped because he saw Hadhrat Khalifatul Massih V^{aba} on CNN in an interview and wanted to know more about the *Jama'at*. People of varying faiths ranging from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Atheism stopped by the *Tabligh* booth. Many lively conversations took place and the visitor showed interest in *Jama'at's* message of peace. May Allah show these seekers of truth the right path and help them recognize the Messiah of the time. Please remember the following volunteers in your prayers. that May Allah reward them for sacrificing their time to make the campaign a success. *Ameen*

ABROGATION OF THE HOLY QUR'AN: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Falahud Din Shams

1. Concept of Abrogation

The concept of abrogation or *Nasikh/Mansookh* is something that generally Muslims have left to the scholars and commentators. It is something of a mystery, too complicated and better left to the academia. Most Muslims do not engage in any discussion in reference to Abrogation. They don't feel that it has any impact on their daily activities or observance of their faith.

It is essential to know about abrogation because it does have an impact how the rest of the world looks at us as well as how certain groups within Islam have taken advantage of this baseless theory.

Going back and looking back at when this notion of abrogation started, it is important to see the historical background and the transition that took place in reference to it over the centuries.

Khwarijis were the first people who started to use the word of abrogation in propagating their case of opposition to the *Khilafat* of Hadhrat Ali^{ra}. However, it was not until a few hundred years later that the use of abrogation of verses of the Holy Qur'an started to expand especially in the time of the Muslim kings who wanted to justify certain actions and not give the impression they were disregarding the *Shariah* or the clear commandments of Allah. Initially, they would get some scholars to find a *Hadith* in favor of

what they wanted to do whether it was authentic or not and in some extreme situation even make up a *Hadith*. Rewards from the kings were too lucrative. Later on, they started the use of abrogation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an to accomplish their objectives.

In addition to this use of abrogation, some scholars and commentators who could not reconcile some verses of the Qur'an began to say that those particular verses were abrogated thus disregarding one verse over the other. According to the research done Mr. Muhammad Asad who has translated the Qur'an in English as well, the scholars used two methods to explain away when they were confused about some verses of the Qur'an and could not explain. One was the theory of abrogation and the other was *Asbab Nazool*.

It was the easy way out for them to say that one verse has replaced the other so it does not have to be reconciled or, *Asbab Nazool*, that the reason for its revelation was for a particular circumstance and that its use was confined to that time or instance and it does not matter any more. There was no unanimity among the upholders of the doctrine of abrogation as to which and how many verses of

the Qur'an were abrogated and if the verse itself was abrogated so it does not need to be recited anymore or only the message contained in the verse was abrogated.

In the time of *Imam* Jalaluddin Sayuti the number of verses alleged to be abrogated was brought down to 500 from a much higher number. *Imam* Sayuti brought this figure down to 21 verses because he could explain and reconcile all the other verses questioned in the past. *Shah* Waliullah Dehilvi provided explanation and understanding of all the verses but was left with 5 verses that he considered abrogated.

So by the 19th century, we were left with only 5 verses which were still subject to debate whether they were abrogated or not.

2. Abrogation Issue Used Currently

Recently, there is another wave of so called scholars of Islam who have initiated the discussion of abrogation of verses of the Holy Qur'an. As in the past, there is a political agenda and justification of their extremist views and objectives that are at the root of these announcements. Credibility of the Holy Qur'an is also at stake.

Most recently in addition to the Wahabi sect, there are the Salafis who have come up with new interpretations to force their extreme views and against establishing good

relations with other religions. They are issuing fatwas that the verses promoting peace, humility and kindness which were revealed in Mecca have been abrogated and the verses in reference to the *Jihad* of sword revealed in Medina have replaced them. Therefore verses such as *La ikraha fiddin* are abrogated and the verses commanding to kill the Christians and Jews which related to the war time should be practiced. This baseless, illogical and meritless *fatwas* are being repeated by some in the US and Western media to show how intolerant Islam is thus promoting the ideas and agenda of the self serving extremist with particular political aims while majority of the Muslims have nothing to do with this type of thinking.

Their concept of this great *Jihad* against other religions is clearly not in line with the commandment of the Holy Qur'an. Allah says in 25:53

So obey not the disbelievers and fight against them by means of it (the Qur'an) a great fight.

The Holy Qur'an has commanded us to do the *Jihad Kabeer* with the help of the Qur'an but in their view the only *Jihad* is with guns and bombs. The other aspect of this new wave of fatwas and interpretation is, for example, promoted by groups like the Taliban in reference to the personal morality issues. They interpret and want to implement the extreme interpretation instead of flexibility preached by Islam. The fact is that their application of these personal morality laws have nothing do with Islam or the practice of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. Just to mention one example, they profess to stone to death the adulterers while there is no mention of it in the Qur'an whatsoever.

Let us review the verse that the proponents of the abrogation theory use to justify their viewpoint. They quote verse 106 of chapter 2 which says:

Whatever Sign (verse) We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than that or the like thereof. Dost thou not know that Allah has the power to do all that He wills?

The fact is that it has been taken out of context. If you read the verses before and after it, it becomes clear that it refers to the replacements of revelation of other faiths. Allah states that He sends another revelation to replace it when He sees the need for it. The verse is referring to the Holy Qur'an which is replacing the Torah and the Gospels and other revealed verses of Allah. There is discussion about Bani Israel in this whole context and therefore it is a clear indication that it is in the context of Past revelations being replaced by the Qur'an.

3. No Foundation for Abrogation

There is absolutely no foundation for the theory of abrogation. When a writer publishes a book, the only person that can abrogate some text from it or replace it with something else is the writer himself, the editor or the publisher. This holds true in the case that the writer's research has made him come up with a different theory or has improved his presentation based on new facts or in some circumstances he may want to

clear up some contradictions in his writing. In other cases such as a Constitution, there are mechanisms within the document how it can be changed such as through amendments.

It would be only Allah Himself or the Holy prophet who could abrogate or replace the words of the Qur'an since Allah was revealing the words and the Holy Prophet Muhammad was communicating it to the world. It is absurd to attribute to Allah that he would change his statements because He is the all-knowing and therefore there can not be any reason to correct the statements made by Him. The same is true about contradictions. Allah cannot have any contradiction in His word. In addition, there is not a single *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet^{saw} mentioning or even having any hint about abrogation of any verse of the Holy Qur'an. There is not even a single *Hadith* that is connected to any of his companions.

On the other hand, there is clear evidence against the theory of abrogation in the document itself, the Holy Qur'an. It was the demand of the opponents of the Holy Prophet^{saw} that he should change certain verses of the Qur'an or at least dilute them in the cause of unity of the nation and as a compromise. Their plan was mischievous and tricky because if the Holy Prophet^{saw} went ahead and changed some verses or abrogated them, the opponents would announce that he is the one writing this book, it is not the word of God. On the other hand, if he would not change it as demanded they would blame him for not making an effort to compromise and unite the nation. Another interesting aspect of it was that they did not say that they would accept the faith if he went

ahead with the changes. They were only doing it as peacemakers and unifiers of the nation.

The Holy Qur'an refers to their demand and the response of the Holy Prophet^{saw} in the following verses:

[68:10] *They wish that thou should compromise so that they may also will compromise.*

[10:16] *And when Our clear Signs are recited unto them, those who look not for the meeting with Us say, 'Bring a Qur'an other than this or change it.' Say, 'It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. Indeed, I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of an awful day.'*

[10:17] *Say, 'If Allah had so willed, I should not have recited it to you nor would He have made it known to you. I have indeed lived among you a whole lifetime before this. Will you not then understand?'*

The Holy Prophet^{saw} has emphatically and in clear terms rejected the theory of abrogation according to this verse. As he stated that it is not for him to change any verse whatsoever for whatever cause or reason. The other point has been made in this verse is that he was known to the people all his life. His character was such that he was known to be *the truthful* so how could he all of a sudden change what Allah had revealed to him because then he would not be considered truthful about what was revealed to him.

4. Holy Qur'an's Testimony Against Abrogation

In essence, the theory of abrogation is totally refuted by the Holy Qur'an and as such the way the vers-

es declare, by the Holy Prophet as well.

As I have mentioned above by the 19th century there were only 5 verses left to be resolved and reconciled. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was not a spiritual teacher or considered to be among the religious Scholars. He was known for the establishment of the Muslim university at Aligarh and thus served the Muslims of India in a great way. He stated that on the grounds of logic there can be no abrogation of any verses of the Holy Qur'an. He also provided his explanation of the 5 verses that Shah Waliullah Dehlevi had left unexplained and proved that there was no contradiction in the Holy Qur'an and therefore no abrogation of any verses.

The interesting development is that the verses being announced as abrogated by the Wahabis or Salafis or the Taliban are none of the 5 verses that were left over in the 19th century. So the scholars and commentators in the history of Islam never considered these verses of *Jihad* to be abrogated. These are being selected based on the political and mischievous goals of some of the extremists to fool the masses of Muslims and take advantage of their emotional devotion to Islam, the Holy Prophet^{saw} and Holy Qur'an.

The five verses which were left over from 500 or 600 and now have been resolved were:

2:181 relates to inheritance issue,

2:241 relates to mainte-

nance of widows and her options,

8:66 relates to equivalency of believers to match the non-believers in battle,

33:53 relates to the commandment in reference to the marriages of the Holy Prophet^{saw},

58:13 relates to charity to be paid before the consultation with the Holy Prophet^{saw}.

Just to give an illustration, without spending the time on all five verses, as to how simple and logical it is to refute the theory of abrogation, let us look at verse 8:66. The Holy Qur'an states in one verse that 20 believers can overtake 200 non-believers in a battle. In the next verse it says that 100 believers can win over an army of 200 non-believers. So the issue is raised that in one instance it is a ratio of 1:10 and the other is 1: 2. Therefore, the proponents of abrogation theory say that the verse with 1:10 ratio is abrogated and the one with 1:2 has replaced it.

The fact is that both verses are giving a true picture. At the time of the first battles of Islam such as at Badr, Muslims could handle twice the number of their opponents. At that time, there were even youngsters 12 and 13 years old going to battle without proper ammunition or mounts. So the ratio of 1:2 was amazing and that is what Allah was referring to. Later on when the Muslim armies were fighting the Romans and the Persians they did overcome the armies which were ten times larger in size. So depending on the circumstances both number were true. There is no contradiction and no need to abrogate or replace

any verse.

Promised Messiah's Total disagreement with Abrogation Theory

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^{as} took a different approach and he presented it such that the theory of abrogation became a non-issue. The discussion on **which** verses and **why** did not need to take place. He announced on the authority of the Holy Qur'an that it was a perfect book, it has no contradictions and if there is something that we cannot explain it is due to the weakness or lack of our understanding. It is the human lack of understanding and confusion which may lead one to theorize that some verse is abrogated. However, if even one verse, or word or even an iota is abrogated then the whole book becomes suspicious and unreliable.

He explained his position solely based on the Holy Qur'an itself. It says:

[15:10] Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.

The protection of the text of the Qur'an is guaranteed by Allah Himself so there cannot be any changes made to it. Then the Holy Qur'an says:

[4:83] Will they not, then, meditate upon the Qur'an? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much disagreement.

This verse provides the argument that since the Holy Qur'an is from Allah, there is no contradiction in it. Conversely, if there are contradictions in it then it cannot be from

Allah.

The Promised Messiah^{as} from the very beginning, in his first book *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya* took the position and proved it with powerful arguments that the Holy Qur'an is the only book which has been preserved and is devoid of any weaknesses, contradictions and moreover, it provides the solutions to confusing matter within itself. He described and heavily relied on the internal explanations of the Holy Qur'an. His powerful argument was that not only it does not have any contradictions but any issues that are raised by the human mind are answered by the Holy Qur'an **within itself**. You do not need to look elsewhere for solving the confusing issues.

The Promised Messiah^{as} announced in the same book *Brahin-i-AhmadiyyaL*

“God Almighty, who knows the secrets of the hearts is witness that if someone is able to point out a defect in the teaching of the Holy Qur'an to the extent of a thousandth part of a particle or is able to point out an excellence in his own book, which is opposed to the teaching of the Qur'an and excels it, we would be prepared to submit ourselves to the penalty of death.” *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya, Roohani Khaza'in*, Vol 1, pp298 sub footnote 2

This is a brilliant argument and by virtue of it the theory of abrogation cannot exist and therefore there was no need to get into detailed discussions about how many and which verses were abrogated.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also explained that some of the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an may not be understood at a certain period of time because of the level of knowledge of human beings at the time. As the time progresses new meanings emerge and the interpretations become clear according to the need of the time. Some verses are ‘*Bayyinaat*’ (clear and straight forward) and some are ‘*Mutashabihat*’ (subject to interpretation). So any confusion at a certain period of time does not make a verse of the Holy Qur'an subject to the theory of abrogation. He explains it in the following quote from his book *Izala Auham*:

“The verities and fine points which foster understanding are always disclosed according to need. New corruptions call for ever fresh meanings, which are full of wisdom. It is obvious that the Holy Qur'an is a miracle in itself, and the greatness of its miracle is that it is comprehensive of unlimited verities but they are manifested at their due time. As the difficulties of the time demand, those hidden insights are disclosed. Look! Secular knowledge, most of which is opposed to the Holy Qur'an and is so misleading, is spreading rapidly. Currently, wonderful changes are being brought about in mathematics, physics and philosophy, Was it not necessary that at such time the door to progress in faith and understanding should also have been opened, so the facilities might become available for repelling every new mischief? Know it for certain then that the door has been opened and God Almighty has determined to disclose the hidden wonders of the Holy Qur'an to the arrogant philosophers of the world. Half-baked *Mullahs*, who are the enemies of Islam, cannot frustrate this

design. If they do not desist from mischief, they will be destroyed and visited by such Divine wrath that will grind them to dust. These fools do not apprehend the [prevailing circumstances. They desire that the Holy Quran should appear as defeated, weak, small and insignificant, but it will now march forward like a champion. It will roar like a lion and devour the entire worldly philosophy and shall demonstrate its own supremacy and fulfill the prophecy: "That He may Cause it to prevail over all religions".

At the end I present you a few verses of the Holy Qur'an:

فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِمَوْقِعِ النُّجُومِ ﴿٧٦﴾

[56:76] Nay, I swear by the shooting of the stars — (stations of revelations of Quran)

وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لِّتَوْعَلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

[56:77] And, indeed, that is a grand oath, if you only knew —

إِنَّهُ تَقْرَانٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾

[56:78] That this is indeed a noble Qur'an

فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

[56:79] In a well-preserved Book,

لَا يَمَسُّهَا إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

[56:80] Which none shall touch except those who are purified.

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

[56:81] It is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

HADITH

Hadhrat Miswar bin Makhrahmah^{ra} narrating the event of the *Hudaibiyyah* Treaty in detail said: "After the Treaty of *Hudaibiyyah* had been written, the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said to his Companions, 'Get up, slaughter the sacrifice and shave your heads.' He said, by Allah, no one got up (to follow his instructions) until after he^{sa} had said this three times. When no one got up he^{saw} stood up and went inside his house to Hadhrat Umm Salamah^{ra} and informed her about the behaviour of the people. Hadhrat Umm Salamah^{ra} said, 'O Messenger^{sa} of Allah! If you would like that to happen then go outside yourself and do not say anything to anyone of them, until after you have slaughtered your sacrificial animal and call your barber and get your hair cut. So he^{saw} got up and went out; he^{sa} did not speak with anyone of them until he^{saw} had slaughtered his sacrifice and called his barber. So when they saw that all of them got up and slaughtered their sacrifices and some of them began shaving each other's heads. Due to the distress and rush to obey, they were nearly killing one another.' "

(Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal 'anil Miswar bin Makhrahmah wa Marwan bin Hakam)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that a man came to the Holy Prophet^{saw} and told him that he was having severe hunger pangs. He^{saw} sent a message

for food to one of his wives. She said, "By Allah, Who has sent you with the truth I do not have anything besides water. Then he^{saw} sent the message to another one. She gave a similar response until all of them had given a similar reply: 'No, by Him Who has sent you by truth, there is nothing with me beside water.' The Holy Prophet^{saw} said, 'Who will host this man tonight?' One of the *Ansar* said, 'Messenger^{saw} of Allah! 'I will.' So he went with the man to his house and told his wife to offer full hospitality to the guest of the Messenger^{saw} of Allah.

Other narration says that he said to his wife, 'Do you have anything with you.' She said, 'Nothing but only which is sufficient for my children's survival.' He told her to allure the children with some thing and when they want to have supper make them to go to asleep; and to extinguish the oil-lamp when our guest come in for dinner. Behave in a way (in the darkness) as if we are also eating. They sat (with the guest for dinner). The guest ate the dinner, while the couple spent the night hungry. In the morning, the *Ansar* visited the Holy Prophet^{saw}, who said, 'Allah was very much pleased with the way in which you both entertained the guest last night.' "

(Muslim kitabul ashribah bab ikramaddaif wa fadl itharah, Bukhari manaqibal ansar)

INTRODUCTION TO AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Hasan Hakeem

Respected *Ameer Sahib*, Honored guests, and Brothers and Sisters: *As-Salaamu 'Alaikum, wa-Rahmatullahi, wa-Barakaatuhu.*

Peace be upon you, and the mercy and the blessings of God.

My name is Hasan Hakeem, but I was born American and raised as a Christian.

It was in the year 1967, that I chose to accept Islam and joined the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which was established by a man from a remote village in India, named Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}. You might ask, "Why would the message of an Indian Muslim resonate with an African-American Christian?"

Of course the reason I accepted Islam and Ahmadiyyat was that I came to recognize its truthfulness. The reason I stayed was that my experience confirmed this belief.

Every movement is built upon belief and action, and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is no different. The founding principles or central ideas of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are enshrined in the 10 Conditions of Initiation, laid down by the Promised Messiah^{as} himself.

The greatest hallmark of our country is its diversity. Our diversity has transformed us into the most powerful nation, both economically and philosophically. As a nation of immigrants, America opened its doors to different people, who brought with them their cultures, creeds and ideas.

This exchange of ideas wove the very fabric of our flag. It defined us as a nation, and the values we are committed to.

There's a very special meaning to being an American. It doesn't matter who you are, or where you come from...as an American, you have a voice. Respect is a right that we are all entitled to, and with it, each of us formed a valuable part of the mosaic we call American culture.

Yet it's ironic that many Americans fear the very diversity which has helped us achieve greatness. Today, many Americans fear Islam. We need to change that.

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq^{ra}

One man who tried to change that was Mufti Muhammad Sadiq^{ra}. He came to this country in 1920 wearing his trademark turban and long flowing robes. But this immigrant was different.

He didn't come here looking for luxuries, economic comforts or business opportunities. He wasn't looking to receive, but to give.

As an Ahmadi Muslim missionary, he came here to share the good news. The news that the Messiah – a man with a

life-giving message of peace – would unite us all in the bonds of brotherhood. It didn't matter who you were or where you came from – Islam had a home for all.

Although his message was eagerly embraced, that same message was feared with suspicion. When he arrived, he was immediately imprisoned and interrogated. One man's intelligence, is another man's ignorance and it's up to us to educate the American people about the truth of Islam.

As millions of American Christians were already expecting the Messiah, Sadiq^{ra} found hundreds of eager converts in his first few months. He established missions here in the United States and planted the seeds of the longest running Muslim magazine – *The Muslim Sunrise*.

Because of its teaching and practice of universal brotherhood, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community attracted many black Americans, who assumed leadership roles within the Movement. During this period, Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq^{ra} became friends with Jamaican born Marcus Garvey, the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, (UNIA).

Marcus Garvey had captured the imagination of millions of black people around the world on the 1920s. In America, hundreds of thousands became dues paying members of the UNIA. Marcus Garvey has the distinction of starting the first extensive movement among black Americans.

His concepts of race pride and self help, as they were embodied in the UNIA, led to the establishment of the largest international racial justice movement in the history of black culture.

In 1923, Dr. Sadiq^{ra} gave five lectures at the UNIA meetings in Detroit. Eventually, he converted forty Garveyites to Ahmadiyyat. The most noteworthy of these converts was a former Christian minister, Reverend Sutton, who was named Sheik Abdus Salaam and was appointed the leader of the Detroit branch of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Ahmadis in America

Since 1920, Ahmadiyyat has left an indelible mark on America. As an African American I stand before you today, humbly, the son of slaves, only knowing that I return to my Lord as nothing more than a handful of dust. As a result of the Ahmadiyya spirit, a battle constantly rages inside me, to serve...to tell America -- the Messiah has come. My African American brothers and sisters -- the sons and daughters of America know that we cannot waste time in this short life on mere mediocrity. We act upon our belief that God will support us in our good works, and preach the message of Islam. Of True Islam, which teaches how to attain peace at the individual and social levels. In preaching the true teachings of Islam, we counter those misguided clerics who use Islam to justify violence and extremism. We wage a peaceful Jihad and a battle for the hearts and minds of the Muslim world and beyond. What are the outcomes of our actions? Each year, thousands of people from around the world join the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Many years

ago, I was one of those people. As I stand before you, I stand witness to the sea of diversity in Islam. I see American Muslims originating from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. I see the diversity of your cultures, your professions, your ideas. You all have a place in my vision and the greater Vision of God. You each are part of a larger picture painted by the Hand of God and each of you has a place in Islam. Each of you has a place in conveying the message of *Peace through the Messiah*. It's time to Wake up America to the beauty of Islam. Wake up America to the difference it has made in your lives. Wake up America to the message of the Messiah.

The long and enduring history of Ahmadiyyat in America cannot and will not be defined, marginalized, and maligned by ignorance, bigotry and hatred. Now is the future for Ahmadiyyat. What say ye Ahmadis -- let us not waste the great blessings of *Khilafat* which affords us the protection, security and confidence that was demonstrated through *Muslims for Loyalty*, *Muslims for Peace*, and *Muslims for Life* -- all were blessed by our *Khalifah*. Now we must deliver with even more passion our message, the same message brought to America by our first missionary in 1920 -- *Peace through the Messiah*. Let us pray that we will prove worthy to the task. God bless us all. God bless America!

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "Avoid suspicion as suspicion is certainly the worst of false tales. Do not look-out for the others' faults. Do not be inquisitive against your brother. Do not be greedy to obtain a good thing by fraud. Do not be jealous. Do not be hostile and indifferent to each other. Become servants of Allah and brothers of one another, as He has commanded you. A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. A Muslim does not transgress, disgrace, or look down upon another Muslim. Then, pointing towards his chest he^{saw} said, 'Righteousness is here. Righteousness is here.' It is a grievous evil that a person disgraces his Muslim brother. A Muslim's blood, honor, and property are unlawful. Certainly, Allah does not care for your outward appearance or your wealth, but looks at your hearts and your deeds.' "

Another narration is: "Do not be jealous of one another. Do not desert (cut your relation with) one another. Do not look-out for the others' faults. Do not be inquisitive against your brother. Do not ruin each other's business deals. Become (live like) pious servants of Allah and the brothers of one another." *(Muslim bab tahrимazzan, Bukhari kitabul adab)*

Hadhrat Jabir^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "No man should stay overnight alone with a woman who is separated from her husband (a divorcee or a widow) unless he is married to her or he is her close relative from whom she need not go into hiding."

(Muslim kitabussalam bab tahrimal khilvatah bil ajnabiyyah)

THE HOLY PROPHET'S^{saw} LOVE FOR SERVICE AND SERVANTS OF HUMANITY

Nasirullah Ahmad

The title of my speech is "The Holy Prophet's^{saw} Love For Service and Servants of Humanity".

In the Holy Qur'an Chapter 3, verse 111 the English translation reads:

"You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin good and forbid evil and believe in Allah."

If and when we go back into the annals of history, we will find that there is no one to be found in the history of mankind that had more love for service and servants of humanity as did the Holy Prophet Mohammed^{saw}, past and present.

When we take a look at his early life, we begin to see signs of love of service for humanity. At the early age of twenty, he joined a society known as 'Hilful Fuzul' whose members were required to take a vow that they would, whenever called upon, help those who were oppressed, whatever tribe they might belong to, and secure to them the enjoyment of their proper rights. So that, even in his early youth, whenever he learned that one man was being oppressed by another, he would espouse the cause of the former and was not satisfied until he had secured for him his just rights.

In the book entitled, *The Holy Prophet Muhammad* by Hadhrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra}, he stated that after the Holy Prophet Mohammed^{saw} married Ha-

dhurat Khadija^{ra}, The first act of Hadhrat Khadija^{ra}, after her marriage with Prophet Mohammed^{saw}, was that she put the whole of her wealth, including her slaves, at the disposal of Mohammed^{saw}, who immediately set all the slaves at liberty, and thus accomplished in his youth that which aged leaders had been unable to accomplish during long lifetimes, to strike a fatal blow at the root of slavery in a town where the institution of slavery was the foundation of the entire social fabric and was indispensable to its working. This shows the Holy Prophet's^{saw} love for service and Servants of Humanity.

As the Holy Prophet Mohammed^{saw} was an orphan, he had a great affinity for the poor, the widowed and the slaves. Hadhrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra} wrote in the book *The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}*, On one occasion during the hot weather when he was passing through a street, he observed a very poor Muslim carrying heavy loads from one place to another. He was very plain of features which were rendered still more unattractive by a heavy coating of perspiration and dust. He bore a melancholy look. The Holy Prophet^{saw} approached him very quietly from the back and, as children sometimes do in fun, he put forward

his hands and covered the labourer's eyes with them, expecting him to guess who he was. The man put back his own hands and feeling over the body of the Prophet^{saw} realized that it was the Holy Prophet^{saw} himself. He probably guessed also that nobody else would show such intimate affection for a man in his condition. Being pleased and encouraged, he pressed against the Holy Prophet's^{saw} body and clasped him to himself from the back rubbing his dust and sweat-covered body against the clothes of the Prophet^{saw}, desiring perhaps to ascertain how far the Prophet would be willing to indulge him. The Prophet went on smiling and did not ask him to desist. When the man had been put in a thoroughly happy mood the Holy Prophet^{saw} said to him: "I possess a slave; do you think anybody will be willing to buy him?" The man realized that probably there was nobody in the whole world save the Holy Prophet^{saw} himself, who would be ready to see any worth in him, and with a melancholy sigh he replied: "O Messenger of Allah! There is nobody in this world who would be prepared to purchase me." The Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "No, No, You must not say that. You are of great worth in the Eyes of God". *-(Sharh al-Sunna)* Such was the Holy Prophet Mohammed's^{saw} love for serving the poor.

The Holy Prophet Mohammed^{saw} showed his love for service through mutual cooperation and service for humanity. The Holy Prophet^{saw} laid great stress upon mutual cooperation.

He not only educated his followers on these lines but he also was the leading figure in this field. People sometimes came and stayed near the Prophet^{saw}, devoting their time to the service of Islam in various ways. He always counseled their relatives to assume the responsibility of providing for their modest requirements. It is reported by Anas that during the time of the Holy Prophet^{saw} two brothers accepted Islam and one of them stayed on with the Holy Prophet^{saw} while the other continued with his normal occupation. The latter, later on, complained to the Holy Prophet^{saw} that his brother was spending his time in idleness. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said: God provides for you also on account of your brother and it behooves you therefore to make provision for him and leave him free to serve the Faith. (*Tirmidhi*)

The Holy Prophet^{saw} never ever liked to relax while his other colleagues were busy in work. During the course of a journey, when the Prophet's^{saw} party arrived at their camping place, his Companions immediately involved themselves with their respective tasks in setting up camp for the night. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said, "You have allotted no task to me. I shall go and collect the wood for cooking." His companions protested and said; "O messenger of Allah, why should you occupy yourself in that way when all of us are here to do whatever may be necessary?" He said: "No, No. It is my duty to do my share of whatever may have to be done," and he collected firewood from the jungle for cooking the food. (*Zurqani*)

When we speak of the Holy Prophet's^{saw} love for service and servants of humanity, it is necessary to acknowledge one of many principles

he lived by, he^{saw} said "the best among you is the one who is best in treatment of his children and family." He^{saw} was the best to his family and a model for all Muslims for all time to come. He was happy and kept his family happy and made them laugh. At home he used to do his own chores and helped his wives when needed.

The Holy Prophet of Islam^{saw} was totally impartial in his dealings with his relations and strangers. He refused a maid servant even for his dearest daughter, Hadhrat Fatima^{ra}, who was overworked and badly needed such a help. However the hospitality and generosity of the Holy Prophet knew no bounds.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} was mindful of and helpful to his neighbors. He always kept himself informed of the needs of his companions to provide assistance to them.

In the book, *Wisdom of The Holy Prophet* by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan^{ra}, it states: Be mindful of your duty to Allah and do not neglect the smallest good you can do, even if it should be no more than pouring water from your bucket into that of one who is thirsty, or meeting your brother with a smiling face.

In return, his companions alike listened carefully to his answers to questions asked by strangers. Always advising his companions to help the needy, he himself always prayed for others and would visit the sick. He used to give better gifts in return when he received any.

Along with attending to the needs of his guests, he accepted invitations from the poor and the rich alike and sat with ordinary people and children to eat and taught them good manners.

In the book entitled *The Seal of The Prophets: His Personality And Character* by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad Khalifatul Masih IVth he states that: The Holy Prophet^{saw} loved no place on earth greater than a mosque. This love in his heart was so intense that it is inconceivable for anyone else to have similar feelings. Once a Bedouin who was not a Muslim came to visit Medina and was lodged in the mosque. In those days and even today in some parts of the world, mosques are used as guest-houses. Being a place of worship, mosques are kept very clean, even shoes are not permitted inside. But this man, out of ignorance, started urinating in the courtyard of the mosque. The Holy Prophet^{saw} and his companions were present in the mosque at that time. Some of the companions rushed towards him to punish him for this offense, but were immediately stopped by the Holy Prophet^{saw}. They were told not to disturb him during the act. When he had finished the Holy Prophet^{saw} asked for a bucket of water and he himself washed that place. Then he turned to his companions and said: "You were not raised by God to cause difficulties for people. Always remember that you were raised to bring relief to mankind".

Once a delegation of Christian leaders from Najraan came to Medina for debating issues of difference between Islam and Christianity. They stayed there for three days. While engaged in a dialogue in the Holy Prophet's^{saw} mosque, the time for their prayers arrived. They asked

permission from the Holy Prophet^{saw} to go out to offer their prayers. The Holy Prophet^{saw}, said that the mosque was also a place of worship and they were welcome to pray there, and they did. In the meantime, some companions reached the mosque and saw the Christians worshipping facing the opposite direction from the *Qiblah* in that Mosque. They moved forward to object this, but he firmly prohibited them from interfering and said: "I have permitted them because this is the house of God, and no man has the right to object to anyone who worships God in a place devoted for the sake of worship."

So much is said about the prevailing hatred between the Muslims and Jews but it was just one-sided during the time of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. Although the Jewish clans in and around Medina vehemently opposed Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, his conduct to them always remained just and humane. Once when he was sitting with his companions, a funeral procession passed nearby and he stood up in respect. Someone pointed out that the corpse belonged to a Jew. He replied: "Was this person not given life by God? Was he not a creation by God? Remember, in things which are common to man, we must show respect, irrespective of one's religion, race or creed". This is the essence of Islam, it was not only taught by word of mouth but was also practiced in every detail.

In the book, *Conditions of Bai'at and Responsibilities of An Ahmadi* written by our beloved *Khalifah* Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, we read condition IX as:

That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only

and shall endeavor towards the beneficence of mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.

Our beloved *Khalifah* Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, continues on to explain that the Promised Messiah^{as} said:

Be kind and merciful to humanity, for all are His creatures. Do not oppress them with your tongue, your hands, or in any other way. Always work for the good of mankind. Never unduly assert yourself with pride over others, even those who are placed under you. Never use abusive language for anyone, even if he abuses you. Be humble in spirit, kind, gentle, and forgiving, sympathetic towards all, and wish them well, so that you may be accepted.... If you are big, have mercy on those who are small and not contempt. If you are wise and well-versed in learning, serve the ignorant with words of wisdom. Never desire to bring disgrace on their lack of knowledge by trying to show off your own learning. If you are rich, instead of treating them with self-centered, disdainful pride, you should serve the poor. (*Kashti-e-Nuh, Roohani Khaza'in*, vol. 19, pp. 11-12)

The Promised Messiah^{as} also said:

"I repeat that those who are beneficial to mankind and are perfect in faith, sincerity, and loyalty will most certainly be saved. Therefore, you should try to develop these qualities in you." (*Malfuzat*, new edition, vol. 4, p. 184)

The Review of Religions 1993, page 33 also refers to the Holy Prophet's^{saw} Love for Service and Servants of Humanity. As a peacemaker he set an example for the world to follow. In regards to the conquest of Mecca, no conqueror has ever offered more generous terms to the conquered, who were his sworn enemies and who harassed and maligned him through his life. Such were the exceptional qualities of head and heart possessed by the Holy Prophet^{saw} of Islam that he established a state based on equality, liberty, and justice in a short time.

Hadhrat *Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}* says, one distinction of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim *Jama'at* is that it takes part in social welfare activities as much as it has the capacity for with the resources available to it. It does as much as it possibly can for the in service of people and/ or humanity, staying within its means, both as individuals and as the *Jama'at*. The members of the *Jama'at* help to fight hunger, treat the poor, help in education and in the marriages of the poor by joining in aid programs under the auspices of the *Jama'at*. This fulfills their pledge of *Bai'at* as they should.

May we never become like those nations and countries which destroy their excess crops rather than help the suffering humanity because they see no political purpose or advantage in helping them. They think that poor people do not accept all their directives and dictates. Such people are kept starved and deprived as a punishment. May Allah enable the Ahmadiyyah Muslim *Jama'at* to serve humanity even more than ever before.

At this time, I want to say that

this service to humanity is being performed at the *Jama'at* level according to its capacity. The sincere members of the *Jama'at* are given the ability by Allah Almighty to serve humanity. They give large sums of money with which service to humanity is provided. With the Grace of Allah, there are doctors and teachers who have dedicated their lives and are serving in Africa, Rabwah, and in Qadian as well. I appeal to every Ahmadi doctor, every Ahmadi teacher, every Ahmadi lawyer, and every Ahmadi who by virtue of his profession can serve humanity in any way, to try to help the poor and the needy. As a reward, Allah the Almighty will increase your wealth and your lives even more. *Insha Allah*, if all of you will provide this service with the intention of fulfilling a pledge to the *Imam* of the Age, then you will see, *Insha Allah*, there will be such a rain of God's blessings and favors that you will not be able to contain them.

In conclusion, when we observe the life of the Holy Prophet Mohammed^{saw}, he has served humanity in every capacity possible. He has been recognized as: philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas; founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad^{saw}. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may ask, is there any man greater than he?

As stated in the beginning of my speech, no human being in all of Allah *Ta'ala*'s creations will be able to duplicate the Love for Service and Servants of Humanity as did the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. All praises due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

FITCHBURG JAMA'AT ACTIVITIES

**Bashir Uddin Mehmud,
Sadr, Fitchburg Jama'at**

1. I attended the area's priest meeting with one of the priests I knew a long time along with Sec *Ta'leem and Local Lajnas*. There were eight participants. I introduced them in detail about Ahmadiyyat the true Islam. All of them were given flyers. I spoke about 15 minutes and answered their questions. The main subject was abortion. I told them the Islamic view point. The next meeting was scheduled on May 8, 2012.
- 2: In the month of May I was invited by the local Unitarian Church to recite Islamic Prayer and demonstrate the Islamic Prayer. On May 6, 2012, *Murabbi Zafar Sarwar Sahib* with our *Jama'at* members attended their service. There were about 25 of their flock with the priest. *Murabbi sahib* recited the prayer and gave a physical demonstration of the Islamic prayer. After the meeting during refreshments we had the chance of interaction, delivered them flyers and answered their questions. We had prepared *Zarda* which they enjoyed. On May 8, 2012, I attended the priest meeting which lasted an hour. Due to the absence of one of their priest the topic of abortion was left to discuss in another meeting.

In the month of May we held the '*Khilafat Day*' meeting.
- 3: In June we had our usual general meeting. The topic was "The Importance of *Jalsa Salana*.."
- 4: MTA VERITIES our weekly program is televised on every Monday & Tuesday. This is thanks to our brother, Syed Sajjid Shah Sahib who delivers us DVDs of different programs.
- 5: The flyer distribution is being done by all *Jama'at* members.
- 6: There are about 10 one on one *Tabligh* contacts.
- 7: There are always two or three or four non-Ahmadis who join us in our *Jumu'ah* Prayer.
8. The local bus had our sign "MUSLIMS FOR LIFE" until May, 2012. It was taken down after 10 months. The original contract was for only 3 months, but it went 7 months over. *Insha'Allah* we will make a different sign.
- 9: We are a small *Jama'at*, but by the Grace of God we are making a difference.
- 10: We also held a *Tabligh* flea market coordinated by our *Tabligh* Sec. Furqan Mehmud Sahib, in June, 2012. Our members distributed flyers, and gave toys and candies to the children. free candies to the children..
- 11: Every Saturday we have separate *Maghrib & Isha* Prayers. Between the prayers we have dinner.

SERVICE TO HUMANITY – A PREREQUISITE FOR BEING THE “BEST PEOPLE”

Dr. Mansoor Qureshi

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ
بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَمَّنْ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا
لَهُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ
الْقَاسِقُونَ ۝

You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin what is good and forbid evil and believe in Allah. And if the People of the Book had believed, it would have surely been better for them. Some of them are believers, but most of them are disobedient. (3:111)

To start the presentation, I will take you back in time into a battlefield. The battle of Yarmook was being fought. Three *Sahaba*, Akrama bin Abu Jahal, Sohail bin Umro, Haris bin Hashim were seriously injured and as a result extremely thirsty and looking for a few drops of water. One *Sahabi* was looking for a relative and came across Akrama bin Abu Jahal. As he was about to give water to Akrama, the thirsty cries of Sohail bin Umro could be heard and Akrama refused to drink and wanted the water to be given to Sohail. This *Sahabi* took the water to Sohail only to hear the cries of Haris bin Hashim. Sohail refused to take a drink and wanted the water to be given to Haris bin Hashim. By the time water could be taken to Haris bin Hashim, he passed away. The *Sahabi* quickly returned to Sohail bin Umro, only to find him dead. He then ran to Akrama bin Abu Jahal and alas he had passed away as well. All three gave up their lives trying to help their fellow brothers.

Who were these people, what made them sacrifice for the others? Where did they come from?

Conditions of Muslims Before Islam

They had emerged from a savage and brutal society in which only the strong would survive and the weak were either eliminated or exploited. The rights of the poor, the orphans, the needy and the minorities were completely disregarded. Indeed, women, like slaves, had no human or legal rights.

When the Arabs of that period fought their battles, they made no distinction between combatants and non-combatants, women and children or the old and disabled. Might was indeed right in those days.

Change Brought About by Islam

In this atmosphere the Holy Prophet of Islam, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa^{saw} appeared and brought with him the word of God, the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Prophet^{saw} presented a complete code of life, a charter to live by. Man was explained the rights of God and the rights of fellow beings, that of humanity.

This religion provided the etiquettes of relationship between man with other men and between man and God. Strong emphasis was laid on relationship between humans and creation of a society of respect and service to humanity.

Qur'anic Teachings About Service to Humanity

Multiple Qur'anic verses guide the followers to help and protect the right of those in need.

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَ
بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ
الْحَبِيبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْحَنْبِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ
وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ
كَانَ مُنْتَحِلًا فَعُوزًا ۝

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and *show* kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbor that is a kinsman and the neighbor that is stranger, and the companion by *your* side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hand possesses. Surely, Allah loves not the proud *and* the boastful. (4:37)

Financial sacrifice has been repeatedly mentioned. Giving *Sadaqah* (voluntary charity) is enjoined by the Holy Qur'an, and its recipients are clearly identified: "The *Sadaqah* are only for the poor and the needy, and those (officials) employed (for its collection and disbursement), and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the freeing of slaves, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer – an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is All-knowing, Wise". (9:60)

The rich are urged to be moderate in personal consumption of food and drink so that they may save money, and spend it on the less fortunate. (7:32)

"And observe Prayer and pay the *Zakat*; and whatever good you send on before you for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah; surely Allah sees all that you do". (2:111)

The Holy Qur'an teaches us to not only treat others justly but it wants us to be gracious and encourages us to excel all standards and treat fellow beings, as if they were our relations.

Allah the Almighty guided the Holy Prophet to set new standards for service to humanity and advised that it is the key to nearness to Allah as well.

He also declared that "One who is not grateful to mankind is not grateful to Allah"

As narrated in a *Hadith-e-Qudsi*

"Allah the Almighty will ask the son of Adam on the Day of Judgment, that I was ill and you did not attend to me. The son of Adam will say, "O my Lord how could I have attended you, as you are the Lord of all the worlds." Allah will say, "Did you not know that so and so my servant was ill and you did not attend him. If you had attended him you would have found me near him. O son of Adam I once requested food from you." The son of Adam will say, "O my Lord how could I give you food, as you are the Lord of all the worlds." Allah will say, "One of my servants was hungry, if you had given him food you would have found me near him. O son of Adam you did not give me a drink when I was thirsty." How could I give you a drink when you are the

Lord of all the worlds? Allah will say that, "One of my servants was thirsty and asked you for a drink. If you had given him a drink, you would have found me near him"

The Holy Prophet's Personal Examples

The Holy Prophet^{saw} had a love of humanity, which was apparent even before he received the Qur'anic teachings. He was showing the signs of being the "Mercy for Mankind" even before the Qur'anic declaration

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ٥

"And We have sent you not but as a mercy for all peoples." (21:108)

The Holy Prophet^{saw} told us that "*al khalqo ayalallah*" People are the family of God Almighty and Allah loves him the most who treats His family with love and compassion.

He did indeed treat humans as if they were the family of his Beloved. While helping an old lady carry her belongings, while visiting those who were sick and in need, while coming from behind and putting his arms around a lonely sweaty *Sahabi* whom no one would want to come near, while forgiving the people of Ta'if as they threw rocks at him, while declaring *La Tasreeba alikumul Yaum* as he was entering Mecca as a victorious general, while trying to free slaves, while taking his last breath and advising Muslims to follow his teachings about protecting the rights of slaves and women.

His actions were closely watched and observed by his followers. They excelled in their relationship with God Almighty but also excelled in their relationships with fellow human beings.

A social atmosphere was created where the rights of fellow beings were respected as if they were the next of kin. Rights of parents, spouses, children, relatives, neighbors, orphans, needy and the wayfarer and so on and so forth. Along with individual relationships the community was held responsible for those who are less fortunate, the prisoners, the orphans, the poor, the needy. A system of *Zakat* and *Sadaqat* was established. This atmosphere of love and service to humanity was not limited to Muslims. People of every cast, creed, color, and religion beliefs were treated with respect

Muslim Society and the Early Muslims

Even after the demise of the Holy Prophet^{saw} the early Muslims followed the same principles. The *Khulafa* and later the just rulers not only served humanity by took pride in service.

They took care of the basic necessities of their people. They provided them with food, water, clothing and shelter as commanded by the Holy Qur'an. They had complete regard for mankind and humanity. Easily accessible courts of law were established. A system of treasury (*bait-ul mal*) helped the common people with allowances. These were available for people of every religion.

Examples of the Rightly Guided Khulafa

Hadhrat Abu Bakr^{ra} used to milk goats for those who could not manage by themselves. Once, after he became the *Khalifa*, a young girl approached and asked if he would continue to milk goats for her. He replied that he would continue to do it despite the fact that he was the leader of the faithful and a *Khalifa*.

Hadhrat Umar^{ra} while doing his routine patrol in the middle of the night saw a camel skin tent. He saw a distraught man sitting outside and some groaning coming from inside the tent. Hadhrat Umar^{ra} asked as to who he was and what was he doing there. "I am from the desert and have come here to ask the *Ameerul Momineen* for help." Hadhrat Umar^{ra} asked about the groaning from inside the tent. The man was reluctant to respond. Ultimately he told him that it was his wife and she was in labor and that he did not have any help. Hadhrat Umar^{ra} immediately went home and asked his wife, Hadhrat Umme Kulthoom^{ra} to join him. They took some provisions with them. His wife went inside to help the lady while Hadhrat Umar^{ra} cooked food for them. Soon the cries of a baby were heard and Hadhrat Umar^{ra}'s wife called out "O *Ameerul Momineen* please give the glad tidings to your friend about the birth of his child" On hearing the words *Ameerul Momineen* this individual became extremely embarrassed but Hadhrat Umar^{ra} comforted him and gave him food to give to his wife. He asked him to come the next day so he could help him.

Muslims took this message and this way of life wherever they went. They established schools, universities, hospitals and institutions to help the community. They excelled in education, agriculture, engineering, building, and scientific advancements.

Their actions promptly earned them the title of the "best people" the *Khair Ummat* as they had excelled in their service of humanity. They were distributing goodness guiding people away from evil. They put this crown on their heads with humbleness. Even opponents and enemies acknowledged it.

Why is Being "Best People" Linked to Service to Humanity

Now I would like to ask a question to the audience. Why is being the "best people" linked to service of humanity? What is so special about it? To explain this I will take you the battle of Khaibar.

The Holy Prophet^{saw} and the Muslims were in front of a fort in Khaiber. It was going to be a tough struggle as the enemy was hiding in this fort. The Holy Prophet^{saw} announced that he would give out his sword in the morning to the one who will ultimately win Khaiber for the Muslims. We can imagine how the *Sahaba* felt that night waiting for the morning and hoping to get that sword. The next morning the Holy Prophet^{saw} asked for Hadhrat Ali^{ra} and blessed him with the sword. Hadhrat Ali^{ra} asked the Holy Prophet^{saw} about what message to deliver to the opponents when he wins Khaiber. The Holy Prophet^{saw} advised him to invite them to Islam so they may be rightly guided. The Prophet explained that even if your efforts help one person along the right path, it would be better than 100 red camels. It will be the best service to humanity. It will be better than all kinds of material help.

Thus in the words of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, the best service would be to help someone attain guidance and earn the love of God and protect them from the eternal punishment and torture both in this world and the hereafter. If we remove an obstacle from the road we prevent someone's suffering from falling. If we provide food to someone who is dying we avoid the suffering of hunger, but if we help someone develop a connection with God Almighty we may help protect them from eternal punishment both in this world and the hereafter. This indeed is the real service of humanity.

Explanation of the Verse

The verse that I recited earlier explains this point very clearly. "You are the Best people raised for the good of mankind". Not only that, "you enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil and you believe in Allah". Thus, service to humanity will attract people to you. They will wonder as to who are these people who are promoting and practicing selfless service to mankind. When they come near you, all they find is goodness (*khair*) and a strong dislike towards evil (*munkar*). This attracts them to you and lets them learn goodness from you. Ultimately they will be guided to goodness in this world and the world to come.

Holy Prophet was also concerned about this type of service to Humanity. He strived to make sure that mankind was attracted to their creator so they can be saved in this world and the hereafter. Holy Quran testifies to his dedicated efforts.

لَعَلَّكَ بِاِنْجَعِ نَفْسِكَ اِلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

Haply you will grieve yourself to death because they believe not. (26:4)

Muslims Forgetting Their Role as Being Best People

Unfortunately, the Muslims started ignoring their religious teachings, they forgot the lessons they had learned. Instead of being helpful to others they start hurting them. They became unjust, violent, and barbaric. Their higher standards started to decline. The brightness of their character started to darken. They were no longer the leaders. They no longer were loved and respected. Instead of the general goodness, they adapted the ways of badness and evil. The rest of the world instead of being attracted to them started feeling repulsion. This condition continued to deteriorate until ultimately they took the crown from their heads and threw it away disrespectfully.

I wonder how would the Holy Prophet^{saw} feel about the condition of these Muslims. The same people who call themselves the devout followers of the Holy Prophet have disregarded most of his teachings. The society he established with his own actions, the people for whom he prayed in the middle of the night, the people for whom he pleaded in front of God Almighty, the *ummat* that he envisioned to be the *Khair ummat* has turned itself into one that is ridiculed and hated.

Dawn of a new era by the Promised Messiah^{as}

However, a new era has now dawned. The Promised Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} has indeed arrived. He presented the true picture of Islam. He has stressed the rights of Allah and rights of human beings. He was concerned about the poor, the needy, travelers, orphans, and humanity at large. He presented the selfless love of humanity once again. In his words:

I proclaim to all Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Aryas, that I have no enemy in the world. I love mankind with the love that a compassionate mother has for her children; even more so. I am only the enemy of the false doctrines which kill truth. Human sympathy is my duty. My principle is to discard falsehood. I reject paganism, wrongdoing, misconduct, injustice and immorality. (Arbaeen, Pt. 1: Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 17, p. 344)

He said that, "My condition is such that even if I am in *Salat* and hear someone in pain, I would rather break my *Salat* to help that person." It is not that he did not love *Salat* but he wanted to show us the importance of service to humanity. He again stressed the importance of *Sadaqat* and giving alms to the needy. He established the divine scheme of *Wasiyyat*, which has a strong component of social service. About the funds collected under this scheme he writes,

"These funds shall also be used to help such orphans, poor and needy people, and new converts as do not have sufficient means of livelihood". (*The Will*)

He was seen up at night attending to his guests, he was seen running after a guest who was leaving unhappy because of someone's mistake, he was seen concerned about the sick and the needy. He was concerned

about the welfare of even his opponents. He repeatedly asked his followers to excel in goodness and the rights of humanity and not only treat mankind with justice but also with *Ihsan* and eventually treat them like a mother treats her child.

Our beloved *Imam* recently drew our attention to the service of mankind. He said,

“*Taqwa* is not attained by only performing worship, by serving the *Jama'at*, by loving God and His Messenger^{saw} and obedience to the Promised Messiah^{as} and *Khilafat*. *Taqwa* is perfected when the rights of parents, wives, husbands, children, friends and relatives are paid, when the rights of members of the *Jama'at* are paid, in fact when the rights of the enemy are paid. We come to the *Jalsa* for spiritual development and while we keep worship and remembrance of God in view here we should also pay attention to mutual love and friendship and sympathy.” (Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}: Friday Sermon in Germany *Jalsa Salana* 2012)

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and Social Service

Under the divinely guided leadership of the *Khulafa*, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has continued to strive for the betterment of mankind. It has paralleled all the activities and services as practiced in the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him).

As mentioned above, based on the directives of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), the best service to humanity is to guide them to the right path. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been striving for this cause from its inception. Its missionaries have been traveling to the corners of the earth to guide mankind to the right path. They have offered tremendous sacrifices in this regard. There were missionaries after missionaries who would leave their homes, their families to live in remote areas to serve. Some left their young brides at home. Some left young children and returned when they were all grown up. Some actually passed away during their years of sacrifice and were not able to return to their homeland.

Volunteers have been going to the poor countries of Africa to help promote education, health and agriculture. One young man described his journey to remote areas in Ghana where there was no water, gas or electricity. He had to sleep on hard floors, and sometimes in the jungle. He lost 25 pounds due to living in difficult conditions but persevered and served the poor needy people to provide education and agricultural services. This young man will be soon among us, our beloved *Imam* Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah strengthen his hands)

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is helping humanity by building and setting up small schools in Africa to the offering of Noble Laureate, Dr. Abdus Salam. He donated his award money to the service of humanity and helped set up an International Center of Theoretical Physics for students of developing countries.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is helping humanity by making small clinics in Africa, to homeopathy clinics world wide, to hospitals like the Noor hospital, the Fazle Omar and the Tahir Heart institute. Thousands upon thousands of deserving people are treated without any prejudice. In fact some of the staunchest enemies of the community come to these hospitals to get their health care. Physicians have been sacrificing and devoting their time for the service of humanity.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is serving humanity by helping the cause of Muslims. By helping to bring about economic reforms in Pakistan by the late Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib, to protecting the rights of Palestinians by Sir Zafarulla Khan Sahib^{ra}. From sacrifices in the Furqan force, to sacrifices for the defense of Pakistan by Akhtar Hussein Malik and Abdul Ali Malik. The second *Khalifa* asked young men to volunteer themselves to sacrifice and join the Furqan force. This was being announced in one village and no one was stepping forward. There was this one old lady whose husband had passed away and she only had

one son. She called out to her son that, “O my son why do not you get up and sacrifice yourselves for this cause.” Upon hearing his mother, this man offered himself for this sacrifice and many others followed suite. Thus the community has been sacrificing everything they have got for the service and betterment of humanity as the need may be.

Whenever financial help was needed for the cause of humanity, for setting up schools or clinics or hospitals, it has been the members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community who have come forward and despite their meager resources offered everything they got. Members have put their needs, their family’s needs behind them and offered sacrifices. There are hundreds of ladies who have offered all their jewelry whenever needed.

The Community has been very careful about the needs of the orphans, widows, sick and the needy both individually and collectively with various funds. There was this poor blind *Hafiz* in the time of Promised Messiah^{as} who went to see a *Hakim* as his hearing started to decline as well. *Hakim* Sahib recommended him to drink lots of milk. *Hafiz* Sahib said that I can get bread from the *Langar Khana* but cannot afford milk. Maulvi Roshan Ali Sahib overheard this discussion. Later that evening someone delivered milk to the house of *Hafiz* Sahib. It was Roshan Ali Sahib who anonymously delivered milk at his house for years.

“*Buyootul Hamd Tehrik*” was launched in Rabwah to build houses for the needy. Members were asked to sacrifice. One boy wrote a letter to the *Khalifa* that my father has passed away and my mother works in some houses to earn Rs. 90. I have Rs.5 for some school supplies, which I would like to donate towards this cause.

More recently, Humanity First has expanded its reach and offered humanitarian services the world over. Serving the disaster victims in Pakistan, USA, Haiti and Japan. Programs like “gift of sight”, “water for life”, “our kids our future”. Setting up temporary operating rooms in Ghana and countries in South America to help those in need. Most recently a ‘Feed the Hungry Campaign’ has been launched as well for the hungry in America.

Service is engrained in our hearts and minds. The department of social service has been established in each Chapter with services like “Blood Donation”, “Feed the Hungry”, “Adopt a Highway”, and “Adopt a Family”, and so on and so forth. Just recently, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community launched the historic ‘Muslims for Life’ campaign and help save over 30,000 lives by getting donations of over 10,000 units of blood all across United States of America.

If we look around us in this *Jalsa Salana*, there are hundreds of volunteers working tirelessly to serve others. From the parking lot in the hot sun, to preparing and serving food, to regularly cleaning toilets, not only do they serve but they take pride in this service.

Our Responsibility

My dear brothers, “*Ummat*” is made up of individuals. We as individuals have to develop the love of humanity. We need to present models of the best individuals. Do we feel comfortable if someone asks our family, our neighbors, our friends, our classmates, and our co-workers about us, about our conduct? We need to start from our immediate surroundings, our homes, our relatives, our community, our neighborhoods, schools, colleges, workplaces, communities and countries. Are they at peace with us? We intend to serve humanity. Are we serving our spouses properly, are we treating our parents with respect, are we dealing with our children with love, or showing brotherhood in our community, are we interacting with our neighbors well? We need to participate in programs for social service. Offer help and support to those around us. Those who can support financially should do so, those who can offer educational services, physical labor, bringing groceries, vacating our chairs for those who are elderly or sick should do so. To be the best people we need to

be the best individuals.

We need to present the true picture of Muslims that the world does not recognize. We need to stand out as individuals who mean no harm, “Who love human beings and are happy to serve them. Our actions will attract everyone towards us. Service and goodness will become a tremendous pull, like that of gravity. When they come near us they will find goodness and no evil. (*tameroon e bil maroofe we tanhaona anil munkar*). They will see us acting and promoting good and repelling evil. Eventually they will be attracted to the ultimate good the Almighty God. *Insha Allah*. This puts a huge responsibility on the shoulders of each one of us. Individually and as communities we will have to develop oasis of goodness. These small islands of goodness can be seen as cities are seen from airplanes at night.

Muslims want to be recognized as the people of Muhammad^{saw}. They all make claims and try to exclude others. This verse puts a condition and gives us criteria to recognize who is the “*Ummat*” of Muhammad^{saw}. Only those could be his *Ummat* who distribute *Khair* (goodness). The stronger your desires to be in the *Ummat* the more *Khair* you distribute. The criteria of Holy Qur’an cannot be wrong. You cannot be the *Ummat* of Muhammad^{saw} and distribute *Shar* (evil). Your claim will be wrong.

My dear brothers and sisters, you are the best people raised for the good of mankind, you enjoy what is good and forbid what is evil and you believe in Allah. Take pride in this, but with humbleness continue to serve humanity.

We will come together and will *Insha Allah* create *Khair Ummat*. (The best people). We will once again put the crowns of *Khair Ummat* on our heads and present to the Promised Messiah^{as} and to the Holy Prophet of Islam Muhammad Mustafa^{saw} and make them proud. May Allah enable us to do so, *Ameen*.

Iftar Dinner and Qur’an Exhibition Held at the Temple B'nai Torah (Jewish Synagogue) in Bellevue, WA

Irfan Chaudhry, President, Seattle Jama’at

The Seattle Chapter of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA and the members of Temple B'nai Torah in Bellevue observed the Muslim fast of Ramadan and the Jewish fast of Tisha B'av on July 29. Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community offered evening congregational Prayers at the Synagogue and shared a presentation on the importance of *Ramadan*. The Holy Qur’an and Torah exhibitions were held.

Notable Aspects of Event:

1. Anwer Khan Sahib delivered an excellent address on the importance of *Ramadan* and fasting in Islam. *Alhamdulillah*, his speech was very well received by the Temple members and led to a great discussion during the dinner hour.
2. A Qur’an exhibition was held using the ***new*** exhibition materials provided by the Headquarters. All were very impressed by the material. It was easy to setup the exhibition. The attendees to the event seemed to find the information useful and interesting.
3. We conducted congregational *Maghrib* Prayer in the Synagogue.

Overall, *Alhamdulillah*, the event was very well received by all who attended and left a very positive impact on our Jewish brothers and sisters. *Insha'Allah* we will organize two other Qur’an exhibitions during *Ramadan* (both to occur at churches in Seattle).

ZiIKR-E-HABIB

COMPASSION FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE

Sahibzada Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad

The Holy Qur'an declares:

“And Allah is most compassionate to his servants” (3:31).

In His infinite mercy and love, Allah raises those persons who manifest His attributes, to guide and exhort mankind to the right path. The perfect image of Divine attributes and the most compassionate of all human beings is indeed our master and our lord Hadhrat Muhammad Rasulullah^{saaw}.

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}, who was the perfect servant and the follower of his perfect master, has shown unconditional love for God's creation. Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} received this revelation multiple times, “I have sent thee as a mercy for all people”.

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq^{ra} a companion of the Promised Messiah^{as} writes that Hazoor^{as} would say. “We have two main principles: to have a true and pure relationship with God and to treat humanity with sympathy and love.”

When we look at the early life of the Promised Messiah^{as}, it is evident how much he cared for the less fortunate around him. While he would spend most of his time studying and reflecting in seclusion, he would ask some of the children in his neighborhood who were not well off, to join him at meal time. Many of these children were orphans and if any of them could not make it for

the meal, Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} would keep aside a portion of the food for the child. The Promised Messiah^{as} consumed very little food and many times he would eat only some roasted corn and give away the rest of his food to the needy.

An acquaintance related an incident when he accompanied the Promised Messiah^{as} to his house at meal time. When they entered the house, another boy was also present to share the meal with Hazoor^{as}. The servant brought out the meal and Hazoor^{as} sat, reading a book whilst he ate. He may have taken only a few bites when he realized that the bread was missing. Hazoor^{as} looked down at the boy, who had snatched the bread away from right in front of Hazoor^{as}. The Promised Messiah^{as} very kindly said to the boy, that it appeared that he wanted to eat this piece of bread too, and so Hazoor^{as} allowed him to finish the whole meal.

The Promised Messiah^{as} would also teach these boys to read and would help them study. He would also encourage them to observe prayers and recite *Durood Sharif*. This illustrates not only, that he had a deep compassion for the poor, but also showed his concern for their spiritual and moral upbringing.

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} always treated his servants and helpers with dignity and respect. Hazrat Hafiz Hamid Ali Sahib^{ra} spent most of his life in service of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He said that the Promised Messiah^{as} never admonished him, even when he was negligent in carrying out his tasks.

Mirza Ismael Baig Sahib would often travel with the Promised Messiah^{as} when he went out of Qadian to take care of the family business on behalf of his father. Mirza Ismael Baig Sahib states that after leaving Qadian, Hazoor^{as} would ask him to ride the horse and Hazoor^{as} would walk alongside. Halfway to Batala they would switch, and Hazoor^{as} would ride the horse and Mirza Ismael Baig Sahib would walk. On the way back from Batala, Hazoor^{as} would again have him ride. Mirza Ismael Sahib said, “I would refuse to ride, saying I was ashamed to do so while Hazoor^{as} was walking. The Promised Messiah's^{as} response was, ‘I was not embarrassed to walk so why do you feel ashamed to ride?’”

Hadhrat Munshi Abdullah Sanori^{as}, a companion of the Promised Messiah^{as} narrated an occasion which showed that the Promised Messiah^{as} had utmost regard for the less privileged of society. One of the notable men in the city of Hoshiarpur, Sheikh Mehr Ali, invited Hazoor^{as} to the wedding ceremony of his son. Sheikh Sahib had made

separate arrangements for the serving of the meals. One arrangement was for the dignitaries and VIPs and the other one was for their servants and escorts. Hazoor^{as} was traveling with his personal attendant, Hafiz Hamid Ali^{ra} and a couple of friends. When the Promised Messiah^{as} came for meals at the special enclosure for the VIPs, his companions would accompany him. Hazoor^{as} stood at the door and first allowed them to enter the room and then walked in behind them. He then had them sit next to him on either side so they felt comfortable. The Promised Messiah^{as} conveyed an explicit message to all the status conscious people within the upper echelon of society, that the dignity and equality of the less privileged must be respected.

We are reminded of another incident of the compassion of the Promised Messiah^{as}. He was sitting on the roof of Masjid Mubarak, Qadian with some guests after Maghrib prayer, waiting for dinner to be served. Mian Nizam Din, a very poor devout Ahmadi with ragged clothes was sitting about four or five persons away from Hazoor^{as}. In the meantime, some more prominent personalities entered and sat down next to the Promised Messiah^{as}, nudging Mian Nizam Din further away from Hazoor^{as}. Eventually Mian Nizam Din was sitting at the back of the Mosque where the shoes were. The Promised Messiah^{as} watched as this scene play out. When the food was served, Hazoor^{as} picked up his plate of food and bread and called to Mian Nizam Din, "Mian Nizam Din come with me, we will both eat inside." Hazoor^{as} and Mian Nizam Din went to a room at the side of the mosque and they both ate from the same

plate. Mian Nizam Din was overjoyed with the honor bestowed upon him and those people who had pushed him to the side, were embarrassed to say the least.

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as} says, "It is immoral not to help your brother when he is in trouble or suffering. If you cannot afford any material help, the least you can do is pray for him."

Once the Promised Messiah^{as} was going for a walk. He was accompanied by a local land officer, Abdul Karim Patwari. Abdul Karim was walking a few steps ahead of Hazoor^{as}. An elderly lady in her 70's stopped him and gave him a letter to read for her. Mr. Abdul Karim scolded her for making the request and continued walking. The Promised Messiah^{as} said, "It hurt me to see this happen. She gave me the letter to read and I explained the contents of it well. The *Patwari* felt sorry, for he had to wait anyway and was deprived of the reward for doing a good deed."

The less fortunate among us are not only those wanting in money or material wealth, but are also those who are ignorant or uneducated, those who are mentally challenged or sick and infirm.

As we study the life of the Promised Messiah^{as}, it is very obvious that his compassion transcended every class, gender, ethnicity, and religion. He exhorted his jamaat to do the same. The Promised Messiah^{as}

writes in *Kashti Nooh*, "Be kind and merciful to humanity, for all are His creatures. Do not oppress them with your tongue or hand or in any other way. Always work for the good of mankind, never unduly assert yourself with pride over others, even those who are placed under you. Never use abusive language for anyone, even though he abuses you. Be humble in spirit, kind and gentle and forgiving, sympathetic towards all and wish them well, so that you should be accepted. If you are big, have mercy for those who are small, not contempt. If you are wise and well versed and learned, serve the ignorant with words of wisdom. Never desire to bring disgrace on their ignorance by trying to show off your knowledge. If you are rich, serve the poor instead of treating them with self-centered, disdainful pride. Beware of the path of destruction."

The definition of compassion is 'a deep feeling for and understanding of misery and suffering and concomitant desire to promote its alleviation.' This definition encompasses all of what we have witnessed throughout the life of Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood^{as}. At the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Qadian was a small town without an infrastructure to speak of. Health care was scarce and there was no physician in the area. Many women from Qadian and the vicinity would come to the Promised Messiah^{as}, asking for medical advice and remedies. Hazoor^{as} learnt oriental medicine from his father and used this knowledge to help the poor.

Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Karim^{ra} writes, "Sometimes, the poor and illiterate would come to the

Promised Messiah's^{as} house seeking medical treatment. They would just knock at the door and shout 'Mirza Sahib open the door'. The Promised Messiah^{as} would immediately respond to their request and listen to their complaints and give them advice and medicine. One day a woman started talking purposelessly about her personal issues without consideration of Hazoor's^{as} time. However, the Promised Messiah^{as} stood there patiently listening to her. He did not hint to her to leave or to stop wasting his time till she voluntarily left. One day a few women brought their sick children to have them checked. The Promised Messiah^{as} needed to write an important article that day. Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Karim^{ra} states "I happened to walk in and saw the Promised Messiah^{as} standing in front of a few boxes of medicines, diligently working and giving away medicines while listening to their problems. This clinic lasted for three hours. I said Hadhrat Sahib, 'This is too much inconvenience for Hazoor and a great deal of precious time has been wasted.' He went on to say that the Promised Messiah^{as} turned to me and replied with cheerful reassurance, 'This is also a religious duty. These are indigent people and there is no hospital in this area. I have stocked up a variety of allopathic and oriental medicines for these people. These medicines are available whenever I need them.' Hazoor^{as} continued to say, 'This indeed is a virtuous deed and a true believer should not become negligent and careless in carrying out these duties.'"

We should pause here to reflect over the accounts which have just been narrated. How did the

Promised Messiah^{as} act and what did he say? Let us look closely at the message he was sent to deliver and the path on which he has lead us. The Promised Messiah^{as} was a man who practiced what he preached.

The Promised Messiah^{as} would stand for hours, patiently listening and comforting the most impoverished of people. The Imam of the time, blessed with divine intellect, was quite at ease conversing with the most illiterate human being. This incident shows us the compassion, the patience, the humility, and the generosity of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Hadhrat Yaqub Ali Arfa-ni^{ra} a prominent companion of the Promised Messiah^{as} cites another example of the compassion the Promised Messiah^{as} had for the less fortunate. There was a young orphan boy in Qadian by name of Faja. He used to live in Mirza Nizam Din's household. The abusive environment and mistreatment caused him to move to the Promised Messiah's^{as} house. Because of the lack of supervision in his upbringing, he had become a very unruly and mischievous boy. One day, he was severely burnt from boiling water. When the Promised Messiah^{as} came to know of the accident and saw the boy, he was quite distressed. The Promised Messiah^{as} immediately started a treatment for his burn. He spared no expense in giving him the best available medical care. The Promised Messiah^{as} himself occasionally participated in his direct care

and would personally supervise all the arrangements. He also visited him and reassured and consoled him. The Promised Messiah^{as} also said that if the boy survived, he would turn out to be good person. The boy recovered and grew up to be a good Ahmadi. Hadhrat Arfani Sahib^{ra} further stated that, "Everyone in Qadian knew this boy. He was an unkempt poor boy, who had a rough and impoverished childhood. He did not have a good family. The Promised Messiah^{as} personally cared for him through his long illness and recovery. Hazoor^{as} also gave special instruction to the members of his own household to care for this young boy and attend to all his needs. In contrast to this noble example, it is not unusual for even family members to lose interest when caring for someone during a prolonged illness.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said, "Sympathy for humanity and kindness is one of the greatest virtues and a powerful medium to receive divine pleasure. However, I see a great weakness in this regard. You look down upon others and ridicule them instead of helping them in their difficulty or caring for them. I am afraid that those who do not treat poor people well, but look down on them might suffer the same misfortune."

Then the Promised Messiah^{as} says, "Those who are blessed with God's favor should not behave arrogantly and trample the poor like savages, but they should thank God for His favors by treating the poor with kindness." (*Malfoozat* vol. 8 102)

Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Karim^{ra} writes, "One day the Promised

Messiah^{as} was going to his own house after *Asr* Prayers. As he was entering through the door into the house, a person approached him and asked for some money in a soft voice. At the time, Hazoor^{as} did not hear him clearly. After he entered the house, he recalled that someone had asked him for help. The Promised Messiah^{as} immediately came out of the house looking for that person, but he had left by then. Hazoor^{as} sent somebody to search for him but he could not be found. After *Maghrib* Prayers, the Promised Messiah^{as} was sitting in the mosque, when that very person showed up. Hazoor^{as} quickly pulled out some money from his pocket and gave it to this needy person.

A few days later, the Promised Messiah^{as} talked about this incident and said, "That day when I did not find that person, I was very perturbed and was worried that it might be because of some weakness in me that I did not pay attention to his request and passed him to go into the house. Thank God that he came back later, otherwise I would have continued to be troubled. I even prayed to Allah to bring him back."

The Promised Messiah^{as} writes in *Kashti Nooh*, "Show mercy to your brethren who are poor, so you too will be received with mercy in Heaven."

We all understand the purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}. We are indeed blessed to accept him as the prophet and Imam of the time. We enjoy reading about his life, his character, and his morals, because we claim to love him. However, there is more. He has wished us to sincerely follow him

and not become just part of the crowd, cheering from the sideline.

Whether we are in school or college or at our place of work, we often discuss the paradigm of creating models, establishing a standard, setting up goals, and achieving those goals to succeed.

In our time, God has sent us a model in the image of the perfect human being, Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa^{saw}. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} is this divine model of moral excellence. The Promised Messiah^{as} established the standards of high morals. He set the goals for his followers and taught us the means to achieve them. Our success and failure lies in the choices we make.

We have to assess our self, affirm our commitment, execute our will, and pray that Allah help us to follow the path of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

SUPPORT

HUMANITY

FIRST

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu- Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "Doomsday will be at the time when two very large groups will cause a fierce war among themselves because of the same claim. Thus, there will appear about thirty *Dajjals* (Antichrists) and each of them will claim to be a Messenger of Allah. Knowledge will disappear. There will be many earthquakes. Time will appear to pass very quickly and disorder will be common. *Al-Haraj*, i.e., massacres will be common. Wealth, among you, will be in such abundance that a wealthy man has to look for one who may accept his charity. Anyone to whom a person will give charity will respond that he has no need for it. People will try to excel one another in building the tallest buildings. A person passing by someone's grave will wish that he had been buried in that grave. The sun will rise from the West, and all the people will believe (embrace Islam). This will be the time when believing will be of no use to a soul if it had not already believed nor had earned goodness through its Faith. Doomsday will arrive so fast that two men who had spread a piece of cloth to bargain the price will not be able to finish the deal or roll the cloth. Doomsday will arrive so fast that the one who is milking his she-camel will not have time to drink the milk. Doomsday will arrive so fast that the one who is fixing his water reservoir will not be able to fill it with water. Doomsday will arrive so fast that the one who has brought a morsel of food close to his mouth will not be able to eat it."

(*Bukhari kitabul fitn bab kharujanna-r*)

CONCLUDING ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V^(aba) at JALSA SALANA USA 2012 AT HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA on 1st July 2012

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta'awwuz* and *Surah Al-Fatihah*, Huzur^(aba) said:

“The United States is one of the countries where the message and introduction of the Promised Messiah^{as} reached during his lifetime. The manner in which this occurred was no ordinary event. In fact, the message of the Promised Messiah^{as} reached the United States as a result of a person called John Alexander Dowie. This despicable man repeatedly used the most hateful and abusive language against the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. He also claimed that very soon the religion of Islam would be wiped off the face of the earth. He was utterly relentless in his abuse and falsehoods. Dowie did not just stop there, but went even further, for he presented himself to the world as prophet of God. The unparalleled sense of honour and love that the Promised Messiah^{as} felt for the Holy Prophet^{saw} and for Islam was such that he could not bear the repeated claims, abuse and profanity uttered by Dowie.

The Promised Messiah^{as} thus said:

“This liar and fraudulent man is a most dangerous enemy of Islam. And so it would be better if an open letter addressed to him is printed and

sent to him and he should be called to take part in a challenge. In the world today, there is no true religion except Islam and it is only in support of Islam that true signs and the blessings of God are manifested. Thus, it is my certain belief that if this liar challenges me then he will suffer a great defeat. Now the time has come whereby he will be fiercely punished for his vast deceit.”

Thus, the Promised Messiah^{as} challenged Alexander Dowie to a ‘*Mubahala*,’ that is a prayer duel. This challenge was published in various newspapers, and the Promised Messiah^{as} repeated his challenge to Dowie again and again. Indeed, news of the Promised Messiah’s challenge was also widely circulated here in the newspapers of the United States, and this is something that the Promised Messiah^{as} himself mentioned in his book *Haqeeqatul Wahi*. When news of the challenge reached Alexander Dowie he was asked to give a reply and so he responded by speaking in the most derogatory terms about Hazrat Masih-e-Maud^{as}.

He said:

“In India, there is a Mohammedan Messiah who keeps on writing to me that Jesus is buried in Kashmir. People ask me why do I not send him the necessary reply? Do you think that I should answer such gnats and flies? If I were to put my foot on them I would crush them to death. The fact is that I merely give them a chance to fly away and survive.”

(Leaves of Healing, 27 December 1903)

The Promised Messiah^{as} said that regardless of whether Dowie accepted his challenge or not, he and his town could not escape the Divine Wrath and so would suffer a great calamity at the hands of God. On 20 June 1903 a well-known Chicago based newspaper featured an article about the Promised Messiah’s challenge. Indeed, the headline was: ‘*Will Dowie escape this challenge?*’ In the article, the pictures of the Promised Messiah and Dowie were placed side by side alongside the following text:

“Mirza says that Dowie is a liar and that he prays to God for Dowie to be destroyed during his lifetime. He also says that the method of determining between a false and a truthful person is to pray to God that the liar amongst them should perish within the lifetime of the truthful one.”

This was the Promised Messiah’s

challenge and the world then witnessed the result, which was exactly as the Promised Messiah^{as} had prophesised. The humiliating decline of Dowie was there for all to see. Whilst at the peak of his powers, and in an effort to demonstrate his strength and holiness, Dowie organised a large conference where he wished to influence the audience with an enchanting and magical display of the powers of his speech. He had planned this great event for many months but when the moment finally arrived and he got up to speak, instead of delivering a powerful address, Dowie's voice suddenly changed and he started making very strange and absurd noises. He could no longer control his tongue and so where he had expected to impress everyone with his style and delivery, instead the very opposite occurred. He was left humiliated as the audience became disgusted and quickly began to leave the gathering. Thus the event in which he planned to show his mastery and powers, instead came to be the beginning of a very humiliating and steep decline. After this event his entire life fell apart. He suffered from paralysis, his wife left him and his children died without ever marrying. Today we find no trace whatsoever of Dowie's progeny anywhere in the world. Within just two years of the prophecy, that person who tried to stand up to the challenge of the Promised Messiah was completely destroyed. The tongue from which flowed the most horrific levels of abuse towards the Holy Prophet was cut once and for all. The only legacy that he left was of disgrace and bitter humiliation.

That was the end faced by Dowie. But what of his challenger, the

Promised Messiah^{as}? Let us see and observe with what glory and magnificence Allah fulfilled His promise to the true servant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, of continuously increasing his spiritual and physical progeny. Indeed, the attendance of all of you here today is clear proof that the Promised Messiah^{as} was, and is, most certainly truthful in his claim. He was the Chosen One of God Almighty and was tasked with establishing the Oneness of God and the spiritual governance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} throughout the world. The reason I have briefly reminded all of you about Dowie's demise is so that it becomes a means of strengthening your faith and conviction. For if you study this incident in depth you will find that it was a truly astonishing manifestation of God's Might and Power. Indeed, this incident that occurred here in the United States compelled a well-known American newspaper to declare and to testify that:

"Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is Great – The Messiah foretold pathetic end of Dowie."

(Sunday Herald, Boston – 23 June 1907)

Thus, this incident should inspire every Ahmadi here in America to constantly increase in his or her faith in the truth of Ahmadiyyat. Not just in Dowie's town but across the entire country nobody ever speaks or remembers him. However, the followers of the person who was

the greatest servant of the Holy Prophet^{saw} – the Promised Messiah and Mahdi – are spread far and wide in various towns and cities across America. And so today, the younger Ahmadi and the coming generations should also strive to strengthen their faith and belief. You should always endeavour to increase the conviction and belief that you hold in your religion. You should strive to make ever greater efforts in the field of *Tabligh*. Otherwise you will be unable to achieve the objective for which this great sign was shown by Allah through the Promised Messiah. If we simply call ourselves Ahmadi or establish Jamaats in various cities, will we fulfil that objective which was the purpose of the advent of the Promised Messiah? Most certainly not! As I have said, you must strengthen your faith in your beliefs and then you must increase your efforts to convey and preach the message of the Promised Messiah^{as}. To be successful in this it is essential that you develop a sincere and personal connection with God Almighty. You must improve the standards of your worship and you must continue to progress spiritually. Ahmadi Muslims must make the world come and follow us, rather than us following the world and becoming its slave. Every Ahmadi therefore must assess whether he himself is truly making complete efforts towards achieving this?

This country is also very fortunate because the first missionary of the Jamaat sent here, was able to take the Bai'at – the pledge of allegiance - directly at the blessed hand of the Promised Messiah^{as} and so had the honour of being his Companion. He was able to learn directly from the Promised Messiah^{as} himself. All of

this proves that Allah the Almighty has cast His special glance particularly in the direction of this nation. It is clear therefore that Allah certainly desires for the people of America to understand and to accept Islam's beautiful teachings. It is for this reason that we find that a large number of local Americans, who do not originate from either India or Pakistan, have come to accept the Imam of the Age, the Promised Messiah^{as}. Certainly, there is great responsibility on the Ahmadis who have come from Pakistan and also on the local American Ahmadis. They should always keep in mind, that Allah has enabled them to accept Ahmadiyyat and He has either sent them to this nation or caused them to be born here, so that they can spread the message of the Holy Prophet^{saw} and Allah's chosen religion to the people of this nation to the very best of their abilities.

In order to achieve this great objective, what are the methods that we need to adopt? As I have said, first and foremost you must establish a bond with Allah. Such a bond is formed through sincere worship. Secondly, you must endeavour to make sure that your every word and deed is conducted with the aim of seeking the pleasure of God. You must train your children and future generations in such a way that they too come to attach themselves to Islam in the same way that iron is drawn towards a magnet. Attaching themselves to the religion is essential so that they are able to truly comprehend what it means to give precedence to their faith over all worldly matters. Remember that as mature adults, if you do not live up to this covenant and do not use your full capabilities and faculties in an effort to prioritise your faith over the world, then you cannot expect your children

and future generations to fully understand what this requires and means.

What I have described are not just mere words, but are actually the attributes which are necessary in order to tread on a path, which according to Islamic terminology, is known as '*Taqwa*' which means a path of righteousness, goodness and piety. Such pious people become deserving of respect and honour in the sight of Allah.

As Allah says in chapter 49, verse 14, that:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

"The most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you."

Thus you should realise and always remember that material wealth, worldly status, owning a large house or an expensive car does not make anyone honourable in the sight of Allah. Such material possessions have been provided to you by Allah as a favour and as a means of comfort and to help you. However they do not make you honourable or better than others. Thus no one should ever feel pride at his worldly and material gains and should never think that he is deserving of more respect and honour than those who have less material wealth. We have all witnessed the results of the financial crisis that has struck the world over the past few years.

Many people who were seemingly extremely wealthy

have been forced into a life of hardship and bankruptcy. Furthermore, the financial system which regulates this country or the Western World, or we can say the whole world, is such that it is very rare that any worldly items that a person claims as his own, are actually really owned by him. A person may claim to be the owner of various possessions, but they have generally been acquired through the use of credit cards or through bank loans. Thus they are actually a means of consuming the purchaser into a life of debt. When this is the reality, should it be a cause of celebration and something to be proud of? To boastfully display possessions that have been obtained through the credit and wealth of others is not intelligence or a sign of wisdom, but rather it is an act of stupidity and ignorance. This therefore is a point of reflection for every person who thinks in a worldly way. All such people should ask themselves what is the true way and spirit that leads to *real* honour and *real* respect.

An Ahmadi Muslim who has accepted the Imam of the Age and who has pledged to remain on a path of righteousness should always keep piety at the forefront of his mind. In this way he can become worthy of true respect in the eyes of Allah. And to become deserving of respect in the sight of Allah is such an honour for a true believer that no other worldly honour can compare to its unparalleled value. All other forms of worldly honours or esteem are completely insignificant in comparison to this. Nonetheless, everyone who comes towards Allah with sincerity and purity, certainly receives Allah's rewards and so he is also conferred worldly honour and respect. There is no doubt that Allah the Almighty is alongside

righteous people every step of the way. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

"Allah is a friend to the righteous".

(Surah Al-Jathiyah, Verse 20)

The Arabic word used for 'friend' here is 'Wali' and this does not refer to any ordinary friendship. Instead the friendship given by Allah is one that has no limits and its meanings are manifold. 'Wali' does not only mean 'friend' but it also means 'The One who loves', 'The Helper', 'The Protector' and 'The Guardian'. In another part of the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَّالِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ۝

'Apart from Allah you neither have any friend or helper'.

(Surah Al-Taubah, Verse 116)

Thus a person cannot progress in his faith without the help and friendship of Allah and nor can he progress in worldly affairs. Those people who are consumed by the glamour and attractions of the world can progress in worldly matters through their efforts. But this is not the way for an Ahmadi, because he has pledged allegiance to the Promised Messiah^{as} and has promised to give precedence to his religion over all worldly matters. Indeed his religious, spiritual and worldly progress is directly linked with him giving precedence to his faith over matters of the world. An Ahmadi must choose between two options that are placed before him. Either he should prevent the powers and material wealth of the world overcoming him

or he should have the pledge he has made to his faith. This is because it is not possible to fulfil your pledge of allegiance by maintaining a pluralistic existence, whereby half of you is inclined and attracted to the world, whilst the other half is inclined towards religion.

Look at how much honour Allah has bestowed upon one who sincerely and wholeheartedly follows the teachings of Islam, whereby in reward for such efforts, Allah becomes the friend of that individual. Allah's friendship is no ordinary friendship. A normal friend may desire and try to fulfil the rights owed to his friend, but sometimes he is powerless to assist to the extent required. Yet Allah is the Best possible Friend because He is the Possessor of All Powers and He encompasses all capabilities. There is no limit to what He can do for His friend.

Here I should clarify one matter. The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained beautifully that when Allah becomes a person's friend, then it is also essential for that individual to fulfil the right of friendship owed to Allah. This is because friendship cannot be one-sided. Thus a person who is a friend of God must also always fulfil his obligations of friendship. In terms of the fulfilment of our prayers, you should bear in mind that sometimes our friends agree to our requests instantly, but at other times they have to be persuaded or may even on occasion reject our requests. Thus if Allah does not accept a prayer in the way

that a person has prayed or if indeed He rejects the prayer outright, it should not lead that person to complain or feel any resentment and believe that he has a right over Allah because He is his friend. In fact even when a prayer is rejected by God, the matter does not end there. Rather, Allah's attribute of being a 'Wali' leads another door to open.

As I said before, one of the meanings of 'Wali' is 'one who loves.' If Allah the Almighty rejects any prayer of His friend, He does so out of the love He holds for that person. This is because Allah knows what will be of no benefit and what will harm that person. But even where Allah rejects a prayer, He bestows upon His friend rewards and blessings in countless other ways. If that prayer is not accepted in this life, it will not be wasted, because Allah will bless the individual and reward him in the life after death. Allah is also the Helper and the Protector. Our friends in the world are not constantly available at all times to help and protect us, whereas God Almighty is always available and Omnipresent. He neither feels tired nor requires any rest. Thus the real Helper and Protector is only He who is present at all times. This is our Lord, and what an excellent friend and helper He is. Who is so wise that he could ever leave this type of friend and helper and go elsewhere?

In terms of providing benefit to a righteous person, Allah the Almighty says:

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مَبْرُكًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ
وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ۝

"And this is a Book which We have sent down; it is full of blessings.

So follow it, and guard against sin that you may be shown mercy.”

(Surah Al-Anaam, Verse 156)

Therefore, it is the task of a true believer that he should not run after the world, but instead he should run towards God Almighty and try to seek His pleasure. It is only then that he will be treading on a path of righteousness. To help achieve this, God Almighty has stated that His Book is perfect, it is complete and encompasses all knowledge of the world. His Book encompasses all rights that man owes to his fellow man and encompasses all standards that are required for attaining the pleasure of God. All forms of human progress are linked to the Qur'an. Worldly progress is linked to the Qur'an. Social progress is linked to the Qur'an. Personal and individual progress is linked to the Qur'an. And most importantly, spiritual progress and forming a connection with God are intrinsically linked to following the path of the Qur'an. If you strive to achieve all of this then you will reach the pinnacle of success. Do not deem only worldly success to be achievements. In fact real successes are those that cater for your life in this world *and* in the next life. Thus search for those real achievements. When you raise yourself to such standards and hold truly pious intentions, and when you strive to adopt Taqwa, then in turn Allah has promised that He will liberate you from your difficulties and suffering.

Allah the Almighty states:

مَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

This means that whoever lives with the Fear of Allah in his heart will be rewarded, as Allah will open ave-

This means that whoever lives with the Fear of Allah in his heart will be rewarded, as Allah will open avenues of ease and comfort for him. This guidance is not limited only to household issues but also covers all problems and matters. Some people become so worried about fulfilling their worldly needs that they give their faith a secondary status or importance. They believe that if they do not strive to fulfil their worldly needs then they will face great hardships in society and will ultimately die hungry. However such people should realise that Allah has promised:

وَيُرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

(Surah Al-Talaq, Verse 4)

This means that Allah will provide for them in a such a way that they cannot even imagine or expect. The Promised Messiah^{as} has said in relation to this:

“Man becomes embroiled in difficulties and problems and has various requirements and needs. To resolve and overcome such issues, the principle that has been taught is to adopt righteousness. The means of attaining salvation from financial and other hardships has been designated as piety.

(Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:)

مَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

وَيُرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

He will make for Him a way out, And He will provide for

him from where he expects not'

For a righteous person God opens up a path of salvation from such difficulties and He provides a means of salvation for him from the provisions of the Unseen and bestows upon him provisions from such avenues that he was not even aware of.”

Then the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

“Now reflect closely that what does man desire in this world? The most prominent desire of man is that he attains comfort and tranquillity and for this Allah has assigned only one means and that is the path of righteousness. In other words this is what is called the path of the Holy Qur'an and this is what is meant by:

الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

'...the right path'.

The Promised Messiah^{as} further says:

“Nobody should make assumptions about the disbelievers who have wealth, property and possessions and who appear to be living a life of luxury and ease, whilst being completely consumed by the world. I say to you truly, that in the eyes of the world, rather in the eyes of the disgraced people and those who look only superficially and not beyond the surface, that whilst they may appear to be happy, in reality they are engulfed in pain and suffering. You have seen the state of such people. I look at their direction and I see that they are completely trapped and restricted in a type of fire, they are in chains and consumed by malice.”

In one place Allah the Almighty mentions another one of the blessings that He has bestowed upon the righteous, which is that He creates ease and comfort in their tasks and efforts. If we look at the state of the world today we see that the large shadow of a terrifying world war is looming over us. The world stands on the brink of a horrific abyss. If the world does not come to desist in its negligence, its transgressions and cruelties then the world will soon become a target and a sign of the Immense Wrath of Allah the Almighty. When such wrath comes to pass then if any person is safe, it will be he who is righteous. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ

"Verily, the righteous will be in a place of security."

(Chapter 44, verse 52)

The Promised Messiah^{as} has referred to this in one of his couplets of poetry:

*"There is a fire and from this fire all those will be saved
Who have love for the God Who is truly All-Powerful and Mighty."*

Thus this is the promise of God. In this era the Promised Messiah^{as} has reassured us about the impending horrific destruction, by informing that those people will be saved who follow a path of righteousness and who hold the fear of Allah. But here it should also be clear that any Muslim who tries to make his own rules, who makes his own definition of *Taqwa*, who produces his own commentary of the commands of the Qur'an and

tries to become an authority based on his own desires cannot become righteous through such acts. The reality is that in every age, Allah has sent Prophets for the reformation of the world. Allah has deemed true righteousness requires a believer to follow and obey His Prophets. Most importantly of course, Allah sent our master and guide, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, about whom Allah has said in chapter 3, verse 32:

فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

Allah asked him to announce: 'that follow me completely and perfectly, then Allah will love you.'

The Holy Prophet^{saw} instructed that a Muslim must convey his *salaam* to his Messiah and they should join his Jamaat. The Holy Prophet^{saw} instructed that obedience to the Messiah was in fact obedience to him. Therefore, to perfectly obey the Promised Messiah^{as}, and to follow his instructions is actually true righteousness. We are most fortunate that we are members of the Jamaat of the Messiah with whom guidance is attached for the entire world. This is not due to any personal quality of the Promised Messiah^{as} himself, but is in fact a result of the fact that he was the true servant and most ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. But we will not be saved from the impending destruction simply by verbally pledging allegiance to Hazrat Masih-e-Maud^{as} and nor will we come to attain peace. We will

not become righteous simply by accepting him in name.

In fact now we have to adopt those paths that the Promised Messiah^{as} has shown us in light of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnat. We must follow those paths which the Promised Messiah^{as} has expected from his followers. What are those things? I shall briefly describe them here. The Promised Messiah says:

"Those stages and overarching objectives cannot be obtained until those special characteristics are developed that Allah desires for this Jamaat. Thus your pledge in the Oneness of God should be of particular beauty. The way in which you bow down and submit before Allah should also have a special beauty. Your remembrance of Allah should have a special beauty and the way in which you fulfil the rights of mankind should bear a special beauty."

In short, first of all you should give heed to worship and there should be a real beauty and distinguishing quality to it. Secondly in the same way you should fulfil the rights of others. If both of these traits develop then the speed of the progress of the Jamaat will increase hundreds of times, *InshaAllah*. But if we assess then unfortunately it becomes clearly evident that many Ahmadis are not fulfilling the rights of worship in the way they should be. There are many amongst you who are not safeguarding your *Namaaz* because you are chasing and serving worldly pursuits and occupations. Even when such people remember that they should offer their prayers, they do so in such a quick and improper manner, as though they just want to free themselves quickly from

an unwanted burden. The Promised Messiah has said that such people offer their *Namaaz* in such a hurried manner that when they do *Sajdah* it is like a chicken that hurriedly pecks at seeds that lie in front of him. This is the state of the obligatory prayers, whilst the *Nawaafil*, that is the voluntary prayers, is seldom seen amongst Ahmadis.

Thus true submission to Allah only develops when Allah is given precedence over all matters. I come now to the rights that are owed to one's brothers and sisters. Here again the standards are not what they ought to be. Every person should fulfil the rights of others. This state cannot be achieved until a person accepts in his heart that rather than striving to uphold his own rights, he will strive to uphold the rights of others. Always remember that Islam's slogan is to fulfil the rights of others. Before someone is compelled to demand his or her right, it is the duty and task of a believer to himself find ways to grant them their due rights.

If you come to develop this way of thinking then the quarrels and fights that exist in your homes, which are due to husbands and wives making demands on each other, will come to an end. Your relationship in society should always establish examples of love and harmony. If the principles I have given are followed then all complaints regarding any office bearers not treating others well or fairly, will naturally come to an end. Any concerns that exist between Pakistanis and non-Pakistanis, between afro American or white American, will all come to an end. The Jamaat will march forward as one towards that destination which no worldly obstacle can hold back, *InshaAllah*.

Regarding the mutual relationships within the Jamaat, the Promised Messiah^{as} has stated:

"Our Jamaat will not flourish until the members display mutual love and compassion. Use all of your strengths and abilities to demonstrate complete compassion and sympathy. Show love to the weak and vulnerable."

The Promised Messiah^{as} further said:

"If forgiveness is not granted and compassion is not shown, then gradually you will be led towards an unwanted demise. A Jamaat is truly formed when others are shown mercy and their faults are overlooked and hidden. When this state develops, they become like the limbs and organs of one body and they care for each other even more than their real brothers."

At another place the Promised Messiah^{as} said:

"The reality is that the members of the Jamaat are not all at the same level and so it should be that the weaker brothers are helped and should be given strength."

How greatly inappropriate is it that there may be two brothers, one who knows how to swim, whilst the other does not and so should the first one try to save him or should he just let him drown? Of course it is his duty to save him from drowning. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an states:

تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ

This means that you should lift the burden of your weaker brothers and assist them in their practical, spiritual and financial weaknesses. No Jamaat can truly be a Jamaat until the powerful come to support and love the weak."

He said:

"Now a new brotherhood and unity has been established amongst you. Previous systems have come to an end. God Almighty has now formed a new Community in which the rich, the poor, the young, the old and indeed people of all types are a part of. Therefore it is the duty of the poor to respect and honour their esteemed brothers. And it is the duty of the wealthy that they should support the poor."

Therefore this is the type of Jamaat that the Promised Messiah^{as} envisaged and it is this type of inclusive Community that ought to be established all over the world. Only when this occurs will we begin to fulfil our potential strength. If we ponder closely over:

تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ

then we will find that we must all come to strive for self-reformation. If a person himself is not pious and does not adopt righteousness, then how will he be able to help others? Thus where in the Holy Qur'an believers have been instructed to help one another in piety, they have also been taught that only when each of them develops piety within themselves will they be capable of helping others. Thus, only when a person

himself is good will he be in a position to help others in this task. All of the Jamaat together has been commanded to adopt righteousness. This is why the Promised Messiah^{as} has said that a poor person should respect a wealthy person and a wealthy person should look after a poor person. Thus in every matter keep in view piety and righteousness. We should look to perform good and noble deeds and through them influence others positively towards good. If you desire to counsel others towards righteous deeds then do not do so arrogantly but instead give consideration to the feelings and self-respect of the other person. In order to enhance the faith of others you should present your own exemplary practical example to them. That is the best way, rather than looking down at those who are weak, in a judgmental fashion, which will no doubt cause them to move even further away.

Certainly this is a vast responsibility that lies on both Jamaat office bearers and all those who wish to serve the Jamaat, whereby in order to enhance the practical and spiritual state of the Jamaat, they must first of all establish their own high moral examples. This should be of particular concern to those people whose ancestors and forefathers accepted Ahmadiyyat long ago. They should not feel proud or arrogant over the fact that they belong to old Ahmadi families, but in fact they should make their own practical and spiritual state such that they become shining examples through which a true and pure spiritual revolution occurs within the Jamaat. Seeing such high standards should also cause a revolution within the wider society, across the nation and indeed around the world.

Another issue that the Promised Messiah^{as} has drawn our attention to is so important that without it religion cannot be learnt and a person cannot even distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Without it, a person cannot become what Allah the Almighty and His Messenger desire. A person cannot come to know what is permitted and what is not permitted. A person cannot come to recognise what righteousness and piety requires. And a person cannot learn what is sinful and evil. That sacred text that guides us about all of these matters and which does not just point us in the right direction, but in fact very clearly opens for us the right path, is of course the Holy Qur'an. It is the final Law-bearing Book of Allah and is filled with a treasure of spiritual and worldly knowledge, so much so that it guides mankind on all matters that any human mind could ever conceive of during any age or period. Drawing attention towards this treasure, the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

“The Holy Qur'an is a living and illuminating Book. I repeatedly counsel all of those who associate themselves with me towards the point that Allah has established this Jamaat as a manifest truth. But one who acts improperly in his practical life, no spiritual light can develop within him. And I desire that through this manifest truth, the beauty of Islam is demonstrated to the world. Allah the Almighty has chosen me for this task and it is for this reason that you

must read the Holy Qur'an profusely, but should never consider it to be mere stories or tales. Instead you should consider it to be a philosophy.”

Therefore, in these developed countries where there is far greater emphasis on worldly success, it is of the utmost importance to read, understand and to act upon the Qur'an. You must convey its message to your fellow countrymen so that they can understand this blessed philosophy and way of life. If this occurs then the world can come to gain true insight into the existence of God Almighty. In this way the acts of an Ahmadi should be the central point of focus for all others so that they can come to learn about the importance of religion. Through this the beautiful teachings of Islam will be shown to the world and the allegations that are raised against it from time to time will all be dispelled. Therefore, it is absolutely essential for an Ahmadi to acquire such knowledge, as without it, his pledge of allegiance cannot be complete. Every Ahmadi should understand the significance of this and alongside reciting the original Arabic text, Ahmadi should read its translation and the commentaries of the Promised Messiah^{as} and his *Khulafa*. Make sure all you learn becomes a permanent feature of your life.

True knowledge is that which brings about a practical revolution in your lives. When this revolution comes about, then the world will also come to learn the reality of this knowledge. The attention of the world is drawn towards such people who act in this way. New avenues of Tabligh are opened. When these avenues open and when the world sees our practical example, it is only then that we can

become those who bring the world under the banner of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. Thus it is imperative that we recognise our status and understand our value. It is our duty to inform the people of the world that the great sign that Allah displayed 110 years ago, in which He displayed His Glorious support and help to the Promised Messiah^{as}, was not only for that time and nor was it a temporary form of assistance. We must make them realise that the proclamations of the American newspapers that, 'Great is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad', was not a temporary result of that single challenge, but that it is the destiny of the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah^{as} to convince the entire world of the great and beautiful teachings of Islam. Can this spiritual revolution come in the world by itself? Certainly not!

In fact we will have to bring about huge changes in our own selves before such a revolution can take effect. In order to bring about such self-reformation, I have mentioned these few points. Thus, every single Ahmadi needs to keep a close eye on his own state and only then will he be able to fulfil the pledge of allegiance that he has made to the true servant of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. What does the Promised Messiah^{as} desire from us? The great anguish and pain with which he held expectations from the members of his Jamaat is clear from his own words, which I shall present to you.

Hazrat Masih-e-Maud^{as} said:

"Remember that our Jamaat is not for that purpose which ordinary people normally live their lives. Nor should you just verbally profess that you are a part of the Jamaat and assume that actions are not required.

This unfortunately, is the case of other Muslims that if you ask them if they are Muslims they say 'Yes, Alhamdulillah we are', yet they do not offer the Prayers and they do not truly honour the sacred places and others signs of Allah. And so I do not desire that you only give mere lip service to your pledges, whilst not taking any practical steps. This is a state of worthlessness and God Almighty is certainly displeased by this. It was this dire state of the world which led Allah to send me for the reformation of the world. Thus, if somebody now comes and enters my Jamaat but does not reform himself and does not strengthen his practical acts and deems his verbal claims enough, it is as if that through his worthlessness he is trying to prove that there was absolutely no need for my advent. Thus, if you wish to prove from your actions that my advent was pointless, then why is there a need to attach yourself to me? If you join with me then you should fulfil the purpose and objective with which I have been sent. And that is that you should display sincerity and loyalty before God. You should act upon the teachings of the Qur'an in the way that the Holy Prophet^{saw} demonstrated through his actions, and indeed his Companions also. Search for what the Holy Qur'an truly desires and act upon it. It is insufficient for God that you verbally make a claim, however your actions are devoid of light or any real effort. Remember, that the Jamaat which God Almighty wishes to establish cannot remain alive

through inaction. This is the glorious Jamaat for which the world has been getting prepared since the time of Hazrat Adam^{as}. There is no Prophet who came in the world who did not inform of this claim. And so therefore honour and respect it. And true honour and respect entails that you prove from your actions that you really are a truthful Community."

(Malfuzat, volume 3, pages 370-371)

And so, O people! Who claim to have taken the Bai'at of the Messiah of the Age, become those who truly discharge the rights of the pledge you have made! Become those who the Promised Messiah^{as} described as the luscious and ever green branches of his blessed tree! Prove true the statement of the Promised Messiah^{as} that you are a truthful Jamaat.

But also remember that this status cannot be obtained very easily and so to achieve this you will have to bring about a revolution in your lives.

Do not merely only raise the slogan of:

نحن انصار الله

That, 'O Messiah of the Age, we are your helpers'.

In fact, prove to the world that you really are fully undertaking to the letter and spirit required of being a Helper of Allah and His Prophet^{saw}.

Prove that for this purpose you are willing to make every single sacrifice required.

If you have made a covenant to sacrifice your life, wealth, time and

honour then first of all you must free yourselves from all worldly considerations and ailments.

Replace them with a spiritual revolution of purity within your hearts.

Prove to the world that you will make the wealth and successes of the material world your slave and your follower, rather than yourself becoming a slave of the material world.

In terms of fulfilling the rights of others, certainly your fellow countrymen have a firm right over you and so you should become fully involved in fulfilling this obligation.

This right they are due is that you must make them aware of the perfect teachings of Islam.

You should strive to bring them under the banner of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and to make your fellow nationals inheritors of the mercy and compassion of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, who was sent as a 'Mercy for all of Mankind.'

You can only do this when you yourselves have insight and knowledge, when you yourselves come to understand the true teachings of Islam, and when you yourselves become recipients of the rewards and blessings of following Islam.

To obtain this state you must first of all establish a connection with Allah. Your relationship with Him must supersede all other relationships.

Pay due attention to your worship of Him.

Prove to the world that in this age the coming of the True Servant of the Holy Prophet^{saw} was not without purpose and was not in vain.

The reality is that the Promised Messiah^{as} came as a means of salvation to save the world from destruction.

Thus come and enter his fort of refuge and security that he has built for us.

Also remember that to obtain a real connection with the Promised Messiah^{as} and to enter his fort of peace and security you must establish an unbreakable bond with the Second Manifestation of Allah's Power, which appeared after the Promised Messiah.

Thus you will only be able to truly enter this spiritual sanctuary when you listen to and obey the Khalifa of the Time and fulfil all pledges that you make with him.

You must listen to what he says and strive to implement every instruction or guidance that the Khalifa gives.

This is because it is *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya* alone that can unite together all the scattered streams of the world and unite them in one direction.

If this occurs then the strength and capabilities of all

people can unify and move towards true righteousness and piety.

And so this Jamaat will come to make the world aware of the true purpose of Creation and lead mankind towards the worship of the One God.

May Allah enable all of you to achieve this.

May this Jalsa come to bring about a spiritual revolution in all of you that is not temporary or short-term but one that is permanent and everlasting.

May the spiritual changes indeed continue through your future generations.

Alongside a spiritual revolution, may Allah continuously bless us by making us forever recipients of the prayers that the Promised Messiah made for his Jamaat.

May Allah always keep you in His safety and protection and may you all return to your homes safely, *Ameen*. Now, join me in silent prayer."

PAY ZAKAT

A REPORT ON JALSA SALANA USA, 2012

Hifza Hayee, National General Secretary

By the Grace of Allah the Almighty *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya USA successfully held their 64th *Jalsa Salana* at Pennsylvania Farm Show complex, Harrisburg. *Jalsa Salana* this year had a special significance and appeal as it was graced with the holy presence of our beloved *Imam*, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{atba}. In spirit this *Jalsa* started on June 16, the day our beloved Hazoor^{atba} arrived in Chicago. On his way to Bait-ur-Rehman Mosque, Maryland Hazoor^{atba} honored a few *Jama'ats* with brief but memorable visits, stopping in Zion, Dayton, Columbus and Pittsburgh. On June 20, 2012, the day Hazoor^{atba} came to Bait-ur-Rehman, there was a magnificent atmosphere of welcome as hundreds of men, women and children from near and far gathered to say Salaam! Many members of the *Jama'at* had the honor of a personal *Mulaqat* with him, which provided the opportunity for members to attach to the *Khalifa* of the time and for Hazoor^{atba} to provide them spiritual guidance.

Friday Afternoon

The formal proceeding of *Jalsa Salana* commenced on June 29, 2012, with the Flag hoisting ceremony upon the arrival of *Hazoor-e-Anwar* at the farm show complex, after which he delivered the Friday sermon, which was televised across the globe via MTA. In his Friday Sermon Hazoor^{atba} reminded the community of the importance of worship of Allah, and man's duty towards Him, and towards fellow human beings. Stressing the importance of *Salat*, *Hazoor-e-*

Anwar said that it is the fundamental requirement and the first and foremost act of worship. He advised to inculcate in our selves, the habit of *nawaffil* and especially *Tahajjud* prayer. He stressed that our initiation of Bait, should not be in name only, rather we should continue to strive to improve our moral condition, and submit ourselves completely to the will of Allah so that He may lift from us our anxieties and fears. After Hazoor's Friday Sermon, which served as the inauguration address of the *Jalsa*, there were excellent speeches from the men's side, relayed to all, beginning with an address from *Ameer Jama'at* USA, Dr Ah-sanullah Zafar. The first day concluded with the chance for many of the women and children to have a brief walk by audience with Hazoor, followed by *Maghrib* and *Isha* Prayers.

Ladies Session on Saturday

The ladies held their own all day program on Saturday presided by Hadhrat Amatus Sabooh Sahiba – wife of Khalifatul Masih V^{atba}. The recitation and translation of Holy Qur'an from *Surah Al-Ibrahim* verses 36-42 and the poem included heartfelt prayers for our children. Then we heard two very inspiring speeches on "My Muslim identity – What I Learned from my Mother" and

"The Seeds of Marital Harmony". The session concluded with another beautiful poem and some announcements.

The arrival of *Hazoor-e-Anwar*, created an atmosphere of awe and grandeur in the arena. The Holy Qur'an from *Surah Al Nur* verses 53 – 57 and moving verses from Promised Messiah's^{as} poem *Hamdo Sana* filled our hearts with love. Hazoor^{atba} then gave medals and certificates to those members, who had qualified for this year's talent awards for outstanding academic performances in various fields of education.

In his address to the ladies Hazoor^{atba} reminded us of the gravity of our responsibilities after taking the pledge of allegiance at the hands of the Promised Messiah^{as}, for which we will be held accountable. Hazoor^{atba} added, "Where on one hand, each Ahmadi must pay attention towards fulfilling his covenant and promises, he must also realize that there is a great need to do *Istaghfar*, which means sincerely seeking forgiveness from Allah. True *Istaghfar* should be conducted whilst keeping in mind that Allah is the most forgiving, most compassionate, and that He bestows His Mercy in the face of true repentance. When forgiveness is sought in this way, then a person is not only granted pardon for his errors but his repentance also becomes a means of spiritual progress. And it is spiritual progress that leads to nearness to Allah".

Hazoor^{atba} impressed upon the women the importance of upholding

their high status in society and of understanding their position in life as Ahmadi women, and to inculcate these values in the future generations. Hazoor stressed, "Only such a woman who's every word and deed is in accordance with the commands of Allah and His Messenger^{saw} can prove to be a guarantor for entry to paradise." Hazoor^{atba} urged the ladies to face the challenges of society boldly, he said, "You must be courageous, and strive to establish your pure values in the face of ridicule and mockery. And you must strive to always implement the laws and teachings of the Qur'an in your daily lives. Only then will you be deemed a true believing woman."

After the heartwarming address of *Hazoor-e-Anwar*, well-organized groups of *Nasirat* and *Lajna* sang beautiful poems that added a spirit of rejuvenation to the whole atmosphere. Hazoor then visited the Children's *Jalsa Gah* where the children also welcomed Hazoor^{atba} with beautiful poems sung in excellent coordination, holding banners designed by these young girls with much effort and love. Then he returned to the men's side for *Salat*.

The last session of the day started in the late afternoon, with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an from Surah *Al-Imran* verses 191 - 196, followed by another beautiful poem of the Promised Messiah^{as}, both telling about the arrival of the Imam calling unto faith. This session included two compelling speeches on the subject of "Why am I an Ahmadi" unfolding the inspiring journeys of two of our dear Ahmadi sisters to Islam Ahmadiyyat, followed by a moving clip from Real Talk: "Why am I an Ahmadi". We then heard a group poem with the re-

frain: "If you ask me my name I say I am Ahmadi", during which the sisters who had accepted Ahmadiyyat most recently came on the stage to be welcomed by all. Hadhrat Apa Jaan gave them each a gift, a token of our appreciation. To close the session *Sadr Lajna* USA, Saliha Malik Sahiba gave a speech on "True Happiness". *Sadr Sahiba* began by dwelling on the complexity of joy with a quote from Kahlil Gibran, 'Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. And the self-same well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears. And how else can it be? The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.'

The *Sadr Sahiba* said that to search for happiness in the attractions of this world is an empty hope, whereas true happiness can only be attained as we come close to God. She reminded everyone, "We are blessed to have accepted this Imam of the Latter Days and have taken the pledge of allegiance at his hand. Our happiness lies in fulfilling that pledge even though the journey may be beset with difficulties and hardships".

The *Sadr Sahiba* concluded by urging everyone forward saying, "our love for *Khilafat* has over spilled in joy and tears during these few days being in Hazoor's company. Let this joy flourish into to real action from now on, in being true to our promise of 'selling ourselves to Allah'. Let us not be those who Allah removes from the list of the obedient and loyal. And let

us pray that we will be those who find True Happiness in this very life of distractions and struggles.

Jalsa Booths

Apart from the program, there were other attractions to *Jalsa Salana*; these included various booths setup for the benefit of our sisters. These booths included First -Aid, Homeopathy, the Bookstall with a variety of *Jama'at* books available for purchase, *Al-Furqan*, *Waqfe-Nau* – to provide guidance to the *Waqfat* and their mothers, AWSA (Ahmadi women scientists association) – a Science Booth where "budding scientists" could observe or conduct experiments, and Youth and *Nasirat* booths that displayed photos and presentations of the activities carried out in various *Majaalis* throughout the year. The Humanity first booth displayed their new campaign: Feed the Hungry Food Drive - an initiative to eradicate Hunger and Wastage of food in America. Members were encouraged to donate towards this Inspirational Scheme. The *Rishta Na'ata* booth was also setup to counsel and help mothers with children of marriageable age.

The Handicraft booth presented an exhibition of arts and crafts, according to our custom. The booth displayed and sold items made especially for the exhibition. Some custom made items from Pakistan were also a part of the huge selection. The booth carried jewelry, clothing, *Burqas*, cushion covers, runners, tea cozies, quilts and *Kaffan* Kits etc. A henna (*mahndi*) art table was also a part of this booth for the members to enjoy. Fund raising also drew a lot of attention at this *Jalsa*, selling pizza, *kulfis*, drinks, *samosas*, *papri chaat*, *faloodeh*, candy/snacks, etc.

Volunteers of Jalsa Salana

Our heartfelt thanks goes to the volunteers of this *Jalsa*, who tirelessly engaged in providing service to the guests of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Whether it was in hospitality, transportation, accommodation, *Ziafat*, Cleaning, maintaining discipline during the sessions and *Salat*, security, or working at various *Jalsa* booths, these dedicated servants of Allah worked around the clock to the maximum of their strength.

Various Events at Jalsa

Keeping the traditions of previous years, a variety of programs were also planned for members of different age groups and various walks of life. There was a youth social on Saturday evening for *Lajna* ages 15 - 25, with a variety of engaging, interactive activities on the theme "Youth Attachment to *Khilafat*". This event offered an opportunity for Youth to discuss with each other on important topics and also get to know their peers from other regions. AWSA (Ahmadi Women Scientists Association) held elections for officers, in a lunch meeting after Friday prayers. The *Jama'at Rishta Na'ata* department held a *Rishta Na'ata* Program for marriageable candidates and their families. The purpose was to provide an atmosphere for families/candidates to introduce themselves within the Islamic traditions of *Purdah*. Our 'new convert' sisters to Islam Ahmadiyyat and some guests were fortunate to get a delightful opportunity to sit and dialogue with Hadhrat *Apa Jaan* on Saturday evening.

Closing Session

The *Jalsa* concluded on Sunday, July 1, 2012, with a joint morning session of thought provoking speeches given on the men's side and relayed to all. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{atba} concluded this auspicious occasion with a powerful address in which Hazoor^{atba} reminded the USA *Jama'at* of the extraordinary signs of the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as} in the History of Ahmadiyyat in America by recounting how Allah protected the Promised Messiah^{as} from Alexander Dowie's boastful and false claims. Hazoor^{atba} reminded us of the importance and the power of prayer, and of reading the Holy Qur'an and integrating it into our lives so that we might continue the work laid down so well by the first Missionary to America, Maulana Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Sahib^{ra}.

Alhamdulillah, this *Jalsa* indeed left a lasting impression on the heart and minds of all the attendees. The main focus remained the blessed presence of our beloved Imam, which resonated emphatically. His audience with the members, the *Ameen* ceremony with our young children, his keynote addresses were the treasures we took away from this *Jalsa*. It is our earnest prayer that May Allah enable us to benefit to the fullest from the bounties and blessings of *Jalsa* USA 2012, *Ameen!*

HADITH

Hadhrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "My followers will pass through conditions similar to the Bani Israel. The similarity will be as a shoe compares with (its pairing) shoe, so much so that if someone in Bani Israel has committed openly an immoral act with his mother, there will be someone in my followers who will do the same thing. Bani Israel were divided into seventy-two sects, my followers will be divided into seventy-three sects. All of them will enter Hell except one sect. They said, 'Which is this sect. O Messenger^{saw} of Allah?' He^{sa} said, '(Who follow) what I am on and my Companions.' "

(Tirmidhi abwabul iman bab iftiraq fi hadhihil ummah, p 89/2, Jama'assaghir, p 110/2 Misri, Ibni Majah kitabal fitn bab iftira-qal umam, p 287

Hadhrat Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "Surely, You will ape the ways of the earlier people, span by span and cubit by cubit, to the extent that if they entered the burrow of an iguana, you would follow them. We said, 'O Messenger^{saw} of Allah! Are you referring to Jews and Christians?' He^{saw} said, 'Who else?' "

(Bukhari kitabal i'tisam wal-sunnah bab qaulannabi^{saw} la-tatba'in min kana qablikum)

ADDRESS BY HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V^{ABA} TO LAJNA ON DAY 2 OF JALSA SALANA USA 2012 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on June 30, 2012

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *T'awwuz* and *Surah Al-Fatihah*, Hazoor^{aba} said:

“With the Grace of Allah, after a period of four years, I today once again have the opportunity to address all of you directly.

When I last addressed you at the USA Jalsa in 2008, I drew your attention to a matter of extreme importance. I spoke to you about something that ought to be the distinguishing feature of all true Muslim men and women, and without which neither can a person progress and nor can his faith be complete.

FULFILLMENT OF PLEDGES AND YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We claim that we are those people who in fulfillment of the instruction of the Holy Prophet^{saw} have, with the Grace of Allah, taken the pledge of allegiance to the *Imam* of the age who was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, and due to this our faith has become complete.

Not only have we accepted Hadhrat Masih-e-Mau'ood^{as} as the Promised Messiah and *Imam Mahdi*, but we have also accepted him as a *Nabi-Ullah*, that is a Prophet of Allah. This title is not something that we have ourselves conferred upon

him, but in fact the Holy Prophet^{saw} himself deemed the Promised Messiah^{as} to be a Prophet. In the Holy Qur'an, Muslims have been commanded to believe in all of the Prophets, because only through this can one's faith be complete and reach its pinnacle.

Thus, we Ahmadis are unique and stand alone as true Muslims because we have accepted and believed in all of the Prophets of Allah, from the time of Hazrat Adam^{as} to the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. However, is this alone enough for our success and salvation?

The answer to this is: **No!**

Indeed, the fact that we are unique reminds us that our responsibilities have increased and if we fail to fulfill them then we will be held to account by Allah. I just mentioned, how at the last Jalsa I attended in 2008, I reminded you about a matter of extreme importance and value. If you remember, the point which I made was that you should always fulfill and stay true to the pledges that you make. You must utilize all of your capabilities in an effort to fulfill the responsibilities that

have been placed upon you by the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet^{saw}.

In this age, you have been counselled and strongly advised again and again towards fulfilling your responsibilities by Hadhrat Masih-e-Mau'ood^{as} and all of his *Khulafa*. Indeed, every Ahmadi, who has pledged his allegiance to the Promised Messiah^{as}, has committed himself to strive wholeheartedly to fulfill the responsibilities placed upon him or her; and has promised to try his utmost to abide by all of the commands of Allah.

After entering the fold of the Promised Messiah^{as}, every Ahmadi man and woman renews and re-commits to this pledge. Yet, if after making this pledge he or she does not pay heed to it, then that person neither travels on a path of righteousness and nor does he understand reality of his faith.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO ALLAH FOR FULFILLMENT OF PLEDGES

Furthermore, it is not simply the case that a person, who breaks his covenant, will be deemed as not righteous and left alone by God Almighty. In fact Allah Almighty says,

إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا

...for the covenant shall be questioned about. (Ch. 17: V. 35)

This means that a time will come when we will be held to account and questioned over the fulfillment of all covenants that we have made. Thus, if you assume that there is nothing wrong in breaking your pledge of *Bai'at* [pledge of allegiance], and that it can cause no harm, then you are entirely mistaken. For, Allah the Almighty has clearly stated that no person shall escape punishment for such negligence, but will ultimately be held to account whether it be in this world or in the life after death.

Every person will be questioned about every one of his pledges; and you should always remember that when Allah questions a person, it is a sign of His anger. Allah's anger is such that it destroys the life of the person who has incurred His Wrath both in this world and in the hereafter. Thus, this is something we should all fear greatly and always seek to avoid.

Upon taking the *Bai'at*, the responsibilities of every Ahmadi increase and so each Ahmadi man or woman should remain constantly focused on fulfilling his or her responsibilities. This is something that I constantly and repeatedly remind Ahmadis of during my speeches and sermons and similarly, I have admonished and counselled the members of Lajna Ima'illah about their roles and responsibilities again and again.

MESSAGE OF THE KHALIFA IS MEANT FOR ALL AHMADIS EVERYWHERE

I should also clarify here, that you should never think that any of my speeches or instructions are limited to

the audience who are sat directly before me. Thus, when I address the Lajna in the UK, Germany or elsewhere, you should not think my words do not apply to you. In fact, whatever I say—no matter where it is said—is addressed to all Ahmadis in every Jama'at.

This has always been the case, and so all of the instructions given by the *Khulafa* who preceded me were also addressed to all Ahmadis. Every Ahmadi who hears the voice of the *Khalifa-e-Waqt* [*Khalifa* of the time] or who comes to read his instructions should consider that he is being directly addressed and instructed.

Alhamdulillah, through the blessing of MTA, Allah the Almighty has reduced the distance between the *Khalifa* and the members of the Jama'at worldwide. Thus, although I may not always be able to see you directly, however all of you can directly see and hear me.

If a person says that because of global time differences, it is difficult for them to hear my sermons or speeches LIVE, then they should know that within a few hours a repeat is broadcast on MTA; and indeed it is repeated a number of times during the week. Apart from this, we now have a wealth of resources available on the internet, whereby all the programs are uploaded and thereafter are available to view 24 hours a day.

In response to feedback, MTA has also recently started an on-demand internet service where all important programs

have been placed. Therefore, no Ahmadi can have any valid excuse through which he or she can say that they were not in a position to find out about a particular instruction; neither can they claim that they missed the sermon of the *Khalifa*, because they were busy with some other engagement.

All of these facilities are a great blessing of Allah, whereby through the modern means of communication, the *Khalifa* and the Jama'at have been brought even closer together. However, if any Ahmadis still do not take benefit from these resources, then it is due to their own weakness and due to the fact that they are not sufficiently concerned about fulfilling their pledge.

Where on one hand, each Ahmadi must pay attention towards fulfilling his covenant and promises; he must also realize that there is a great need to do *Istighfaar*, which means sincerely seeking forgiveness from Allah. True *Istighfaar* should be conducted whilst keeping in mind that Allah is the Most Forgiving, Most Compassionate and in the knowledge that He bestows His Mercy in the face of true repentance. When forgiveness is sought in this way, then a person is not only granted pardon for his errors, but his repentance also becomes a means of spiritual progress. And it is spiritual progress that leads to nearness to Allah.

RECOGNIZING AND UPHOLDING THE HIGH STATUS OF AHMADI WOMEN

I would now like to remind all of

you regarding a very important issue, which is necessary for every Ahmadi—woman or girl—to understand; that they hold a high status and it is their duty to uphold this status. An Ahmadi woman must not only recognize this identity within herself, but must also make the wider society come to realize and understand it. Most importantly, all of you must enlighten your children and instil in them the true stature of Ahmadi women.

This is essential, so that from one generation to the next, the realization continues to burn brightly that the reason we have accepted the Promised Messiah^(as) is so that we can fulfill the commands of Allah and attain His nearness. If this happens, then all Ahmadi women will become a means for the future generations to adopt righteousness, and so the Ahmadi women will become a guarantor and means of developing a close relationship with Allah.

Keeping this very matter in view, Hadhrat Musleh-e-Maud^{ra} repeatedly counselled women towards this point. Therefore, I urge all of you to understand your position. The status that Allah has granted you is one, that no previous religion ever granted and nor has any worldly system, organization or individual ever granted to women, because according to Islam's teaching Allah has granted women the capability of acting as a guarantor for entry into paradise. What a truly unique and distinct honour Islam has conferred on women.

Based on these teachings, a question that naturally arises is whether gaining entry into paradise is such an easy task that Allah has granted every woman a key to the gates of heaven?

The answer is that, most certainly every woman has not been given the key to paradise and not every woman acts as a guarantor leading to heaven.

Indeed, only such a woman whose every word and deed is in accordance with the commands of Allah and His Messenger^(saw) can prove to be a guarantor for entering into paradise. It is those women who are ever concerned and anxious about the moral training of their children and whose own relationships with God are such that they inspire their own children to desire a similar loving bond with Allah.

Their relationship with Allah can be described as a living relationship which is the means to a spiritual life. Those who acquire such a spiritual existence are truly fortunate, because no other people or nation can defeat and overpower it. They are not affected or wrongly influenced by any culture that teaches immodesty or immorality and nor can they ever be compelled to follow any worldly custom that is contrary to the commands of Allah.

To seek legitimate and appropriate benefit from the worldly blessings provided by God is, of course, permitted, but it should never be our sole aim to acquire them. Believing men, women and children are not affected by the glamorous and superficial attractions of the world.

IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ANALYSIS FOR BOTH AHMADI MEN & WOMEN

How many of you can truly

say you are living in such a righteous way? How many of you can honestly say you are giving precedence to your faith over all worldly matters as a means to save yourselves and your children? How many of you are fully striving towards this? The truth is that, you yourselves know the real answers to these questions better than anyone else. Self-analysis, if done properly, is the most effective form of assessment.

Irrespective of assessments by Lajna Ima'illah or by the Jama'at, it is your own assessment that will have the most meaning. Your true spiritual state will itself be proven by your acts and deeds each day and night. This is why the Promised Messiah^{as} has said that, every morning should bear witness that you have spent the night in a righteous way and every single evening should testify that you have spent the day with the fear of Allah constantly in your hearts.

How truly fortunate are those people whose days and nights are spent in this manner.¹

As I just said, proper assessment can only be conducted by each person himself. Neither the Sadr Lajna nor any other Jama'at office bearer can do accurate appraisals.

The Ahmadi men who are listening to what I am saying should not think that this guidance is limited only to women. What I am saying is just as important for men as it is for women. In truth, it is of even greater importance for men, because it is the men of a household who act as an example for others to follow and learn from.

I should also clarify that if the Jama'at's auxiliary organizations or the Jama'at Central Body ever conduct

an assessment of any Ahmadi man or woman, then its purpose is only to remind you. This is because every Ahmadi who respects the system of the Jama'at or *Nizaam-e-Jama'at* desires that none of his weaknesses should ever be exposed and hence he strives to improve himself upon reminder.

The assessments that may be conducted by the Jama'at are only ever conducted at a basic level and can never reach the depths that are ascertained through self-evaluation. It is for this reason, that the Promised Messiah^{as} did not say that the testimony of others should be used to determine if a person is righteous or that the testimony of your *Sadr* should be used. Instead, he taught that it is every night and day that ought to bear witness to a person's character.

In other words, the Promised Messiah^{as} taught that it is the testimony of those Angels who are constantly watching over all of our acts and who are preparing a complete register of our good and bad deeds, upon which we will ultimately be judged. Thus, when this register is ultimately presented before Allah, it should be filled with truly beautiful acts that are a means of pleasing Allah.

Human beings conduct all sorts of acts that on the surface represent something for the eyes of the world, whilst in reality they are something else. However, the reality is that Muslim men and women will only discharge their rights of being a believer when what is within corresponds exactly with what they present externally, and where their every act and deed is done solely to attain the pleasure of Allah.

FULFILLING THE RIGHTS OF ALLAH'S WORSHIP: *SALAT*

Allah has given the important command that the Qur'an should act as the governing principle of our lives. The Holy Prophet^{saw} repeatedly counselled Muslims to abide by this command, and all Muslims have made a pledge with him to fully accept the Holy Qur'an as perfect guidance. All Muslims have pledged that they will forever treat the instructions of the Holy Prophet^{saw} as the code of conduct that will govern their lives.

We do not find it written or narrated anywhere that only certain commands of Allah or His Messenger^{saw} are to be treated as important and as guidance for our lives. In fact, every single command of Allah and His Messenger^{saw} are the governing principles which we must endeavour to implement to the very best of our abilities. Indeed, every single word spoken and every act conducted by the blessed model of the Holy Prophet^{saw} is an example for us to follow.

If you study the life of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, you will find that there was not a single moment when he did not inculcate in his followers the absolute need to always fulfil the rights due to Allah and to His creation. In terms of the rights of Allah, the principal obligation is of course *Salat*. The Holy Prophet^{saw} described *Salat* as the delight of his eyes.

Therefore, by following his blessed model, we should search to acquire this source of comfort for our eyes. The requirements of *Salat* cannot be fulfilled when you rush through your prayers and simply go through the motions. Such inadequate prayers can never prove to be a source of comfort to our eyes. Instead, only those prayers that conducted properly, beautifully and where every movement is filled with complete submission and love for Allah can lead to a state of happiness, contentment, and provide comfort to our eyes.

YOUR CHILDREN WILL BECOME THE DELIGHT OF YOUR EYES ONLY THROUGH THE OBSERVANCE OF *SALAT*

You all know that there is a prayer that we make for our children, which is that: May Allah make them a source of joy and comfort for our eyes. For a believer, his children become a delight for his eyes when they adopt righteousness, if they are healthy and affluent, if they are obedient and serve their parents. Thus, when a person prays to God to be granted children who are pious, truthful, and a source of comfort for their eyes, then in accordance with the example of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, he or she should search for the delight of the eyes that can only be acquired by fulfilling the rights of Allah's worship.

When this happens, then as a result, God Almighty bestows such children who truly prove to be the delight of their parents' eyes and are a source of happiness to them. Therefore, for the moral training of their children, it is essential that women establish and maintain their prayers to the highest

standards. The homes of Ahmadiis should be filled with the love and remembrance of Allah at all times.

As I said in my previous two *Khutbas* [sermons], television programs, the internet, or family outings should never take priority and so prove to be an obstacle preventing our prayers from being offered in the beautiful manner that is required.

Certainly, it is not just women, but also all men who must pay full attention at all times to fulfilling the rights of worship that are due to Allah. If full attention is paid to our prayers, then Allah, the Almighty has promised that as a result your children will indeed become the delight of your eyes.

About the importance of prayers, Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, in *Surah al-Baqarah*:

حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ
الْوَسْطَىٰ وَكُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾

Watch over Prayers, and particularly the middle Prayer, and stand before Allah submissively. (Ch.2: V.239)

This verse means that you must pay attention to your prayers and protect them. It especially reminds us to pay attention to the prayers that come during the course of the day, when most people are busy with their daily routines. Thus, we are reminded that when all worldly desires and interests are left behind and our prayers are safeguarded, then our homes will become filled with Allah's blessings.

We will then come to find that righteousness and goodness will become permanent features in our chil-

dren. When you achieve such high standards, then you will be fulfilling the pledge that you have made to always give precedence to your faith over matters of the world. Allah's generosity is such that He rewards a person more than what he is due in return for all of his good deeds.

Thus, when you safeguard your prayers, because of a desire to follow Allah's commands and you remind your husband and children to also protect their *Salat*, then your prayers will actually come to protect you. They will purify you from sins and errors.

Indeed, Allah has said in *Surah al-'Ankabut*:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil... (Ch.29:V.46).

This means that prayer prevents a person from all forms of indecency and undesirable acts. So, by performing prayers with regularity and in the proper manner, the prayers themselves protect us by preventing us from committing indecent or evil acts. This spiritual shield is not only limited to the individual, but in fact, is a means of protecting the entire household. Allah the Almighty becomes a Friend and Helper to those who worship him with full attention and who discharge the rights of worship.

The meaning of discharging or fulfilling the rights of worship is that we should wor-

ship Allah at all times including times of happiness, comfort and ease. During times of contentment, we should continue to worship Him and remember Him in the proper way. It should not just be that only during times of trial and difficulty we stand on the prayer mat beseeching Allah's help, yet when our circumstances improve we forget Him.

When Allah commands *haafizoo*, then this means that—unlike other religions—worship in Islam, is not one-sided or a one-way process. Thus, where a person protects his prayers, then Allah also safeguards him; and, the manifestation of this protection is witnessed both in this world through Allah's rewards, and also in the hereafter.

What greater blessing can there be for a person in this world, then that his children prove to be a delight of his or her eyes?

OBSERVANCE OF SALAT IS JUST AS IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN AS IT IS FOR MEN

Normally, the subject of importance of safeguarding *Salat* is delivered more often to the men, and because of this, some women mistakenly believe that if weaknesses creep into their prayers, then it does not matter. Certainly men should be one step ahead in protecting their prayers. They have been commanded to perform the five daily prayers in congregation.

However, the observance of prayers is just as important for women as they are for men. Indeed, because women are the main source of moral training for their children, there is a critical need for women to always give prominent attention to their

prayers. Only when a woman protects her prayers can she become a guarantor for her children to enter paradise.

DISPLAYING BELIEFS WITH CONFIDENCE IN A NON-MUSLIM SOCIETY

I would now like to move onto another issue of vast significance. There is a particular need to speak about this issue here, because in this society there are many voices being raised by non-Muslims in opposition to this fundamental Islamic commandment. Unfortunately, many of our Ahmadi girls and women have become influenced by the non-Muslims and so have fallen prey to an inferiority complex.

Therefore, they are not living up to this command or not treating it with the importance it deserves. If any Ahmadi woman for any reason does not give any Islamic teaching its due importance, then it is quite apparent that she is moving away from her faith and breaking the pledge that she made upon doing *Bai'at*.

All of you should realize that the people who bring about revolutionary changes in society have to face certain levels of resistance and certain difficulties before they can achieve real change. All people who wish to revolutionize society become a target of cruelty and oppression from those who are determined to block any change. Therefore, it is only after enduring such opposition with courage and conviction that people are able to reform others and so bring about a positive transformation of society. If they themselves do not immediately come to reap the reward of their efforts, then their children or future generations will certainly come to bear those fruits for which

their parents and forefathers made noble sacrifices.

The worldly people may be utterly resistant to leaving their materialistic aims and objectives and may be determined to keep on a track that harms not only themselves but also the society at large. However, an Ahmadi who pledges to prioritize his faith over the world does not carry out any act due to stubbornness or rigidity, but in fact his every act indeed is conducted with the sole aim of pleasing Allah or at least this is how it should be.

Where Ahmadis have this spirit, then they should be able to display and manifest their beliefs with complete self-confidence and without any inferiority complex whatsoever. What Ahmadis preach and practice are not only things that do not harm the world, but in fact they bring about positive changes and benefits to society. What Ahmadis say and do will always prove to be a means of reforming both today's society and the future generations, because whatever Ahmadis preach or practice are measures that enable mankind to acquire Allah's blessings and pleasure.

THE ISLAMIC COMMANDMENT OF *PARDAH* IS FOR ALL TIMES AND PLACES

After this reminder, I come to speak directly about the Islamic commandment that I have referred to and which is a sign of the magnificence and dignity of a believing woman, and that is the injunction of *pardah*. This Islam-

ic practice was not only for the women who lived 1400 years ago, or only for the women who live in Asia or the third world today, but it is for all Muslim women in all parts of the world and for all times.

In *Surah Al-Nur*, Allah says:

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضُنْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ
وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ
بِخُمْرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُوثِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ
أَوْ آبَاءَ بُعُوثِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَ
بُعُوثِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ
أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ الشَّعْبِ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْأَرْبَابَةِ
مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الْوَالِدِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ
يُظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا
يُضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ
مِنَ زِينَتِهِنَّ ۗ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا
إِنَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۝

This translates as:

And say to the believing women that they restrain their looks and guard their private parts, and that they display not their beauty or embellishment except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-covering over their bosoms, and that they display not their beauty or their embellishment save to their husbands, or to

their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands or their sons or the sons of their husbands or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or women who are their companions, or those that their right hands possess, or such of male attendants as have no desire for women, or young children who have not yet attained knowledge of the hidden parts of women. And that they strike not their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may become known. And turn ye to Allah all together, O believers, that you may prosper. (Ch.24:V.32).

Thus, if you consider yourselves to be among those believers who have pledged to follow the commands of Allah and His Messenger^(saw) and to be amongst those who have taken the *Bai'at* of the Imam of the age, Hadhrat Masih-e-Maud^(as), then certainly this commandment is just as important for you as it was for the Muslim women in the time of the Holy Prophet^(saw). Therefore, as I said, this command is for all Muslim women whichever part of the world they live in.

I should clarify that before giving this command to women Allah has commanded men that they must keep their eyes cast down and must not look at women in an indecent or unchaste way. Thus, Islam has shown no injustice nor is it biased. It should also be absolutely clear that Islam does not require or restrict women to stay confined within the four walls of their home.

EXALTED ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE TIME OF THE HOLY PROPHET^{SAW}

How can this be, when the Holy Prophet^(saw) commanded that half of the faith could be learned from Hazrat 'A'ishah^{ra}.² Certainly, the people of

the world did learn from her. Indeed, it is narrated that Hazrat 'A'ishah^{ra} would address certain gatherings or meetings and that some male companions of the Holy Prophet^(saw) also came and learned about Islam from her.³

Furthermore, during times of battle and warfare, Muslim women fulfilled their duties with great honour and commitment. Some women were assigned nursing duties or other tasks. Indeed, some women even fought during certain battles. It is said about Hazrat Umm-e-Ammaarah^{ra} that in one battle she showed such skill, that men were left astonished at her bravery and proficiency. Only the Holy Prophet^(saw) recognized that it was Umm-e-Ammaarah^{ra} in the battlefield whilst other male companions looked at her in amazement and presumed that it was a young brave man who was fighting, as she had hidden herself from head to toe.

During another war, in an effort to protect the Holy Prophet^(saw), Umm-e-Ammaarah^{ra} carried out tremendous feats of bravery and even suffered severe injuries that perhaps no courageous man could have equalled.⁴ It was because of her devotion that she became blessed and honoured by receiving word of praise from the Holy Prophet^(saw) himself.⁵

“Therefore, all of you must remember that to fulfil the commands of the Holy Qur’an and to protect them is your responsibility.”

Do you wish to acquire the

status of Umm-e-Ammaarah^{ra} only through words? If you believe that this is possible, then you are greatly mistaken.

STRUGGLE AGAINST YOUR PERSONAL DESIRES FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH’S PLEASURE

In order to achieve such a status, you must carry out a struggle against your personal desires and self-interests. You must struggle and face up to the prescription held by certain segments of society about you. You must be courageous and strive to establish your pure values in the face of ridicule and mockery, and you must strive to always implement the laws and teachings of the Qur’an in your daily lives. Only then, will you be deemed a true believing woman.

Today, you should prove that you are not observing *pardah* just because you are in the Jalsa environment, but simply because you desire to seek Allah’s pleasure. You must prove that you do not observe *hijab* and wear suitable, respectable clothing only for Lajna or Jama’at events. Thus, today you must make a renewed pledge that from now on no matter what worldly engagement you have, no matter what taunt or mockery you face, and no matter how harshly people treat you, you will never remove your *hijab* and religious attire.

In fact, you should pledge, that for the sake of following Allah’s commands and for His pleasure, you are going to eliminate all forms of materialism and completely discard the glamour and allure of the world from your lives. Always remember that your *hijab* and religious attire are part of your modesty and dignity and this is why Allah has instructed a believing

woman to observe it.

I sometimes receive complaints or reports that though some Ahmadi girls or women do cover their heads, yet when they go to the mall they wear tight fitting jeans and t-shirts or blouses that barely reach their waist. Remember that such clothing and such immodesty is a mockery of your religion. On many occasions, I have reminded Ahmadis that Allah has not only commanded *pardah* of the face, but has commanded *pardah* of the entire body. This is also clearly evident from the verse of the Holy Qur'an that I have quoted.

Thus, when you go outside of your home, it is necessary that you wear a loose overcoat or a long shawl. Even under the *burqa* coat, you should not wear a t-shirt or a mini-skirt—[rather] a long shawl or *chadar* that covers your entire body. If you fail to follow this, not only is it a violation of *pardah*, but it is also a display of immodesty and the Holy Prophet^{saw} taught that modesty is a part of faith. Indeed on another occasion, he taught that every faith has a special and unique characteristic, and Islam's is modesty. Those who do not observe modesty have been cursed

Therefore, to protect your faith and to become a true model of Islam, you must correct any weakness that exists in what you wear and you must always protect your chastity, because by doing so your faith is protected. It may be that the very minimum acceptable level of *pardah* requires you to only cover your hair and chin. However, if you adopt this form of *pardah*, then you should not wear make-up. Islam does not stop women from working, but such work—that requires a Muslim woman to compromise her sanctity by wearing inappropriate clothing or uniform—is not

permitted.

Certainly, there are Ahmadi women throughout the world, who are working as doctors, teachers, engineers, scientists and in many other professions, and they conduct these careers whilst maintaining the proper standards of modesty and upholding their *hijab*.

INSTRUCTIONS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{as} REGARDING MODESTY AND PARDAH

The Promised Messiah^{as} has said regarding a woman maintaining her modesty and her *pardah*—in light of the verse of the Holy Qur'an that I quoted earlier—he says:

“Direct the believing men to restrain their eyes from looking at women outside the prohibited degrees so openly as to arouse lustful sensations; and to cultivate the habit of guarding their looks. And they should safeguard their private parts at all costs. And, they should safeguard their private parts at all costs. Likewise, they should restrain their ears outside the prohibited degrees. That is, they should not listen to the singing or attractive voices of women outside the prohibited degrees. Nor should they listen to descriptions of their beauty. This is an excellent way of preserving the purity of their looks and hearts.”

Now he talks about the women, he says:

“In the same way, direct believing women that they

should restrain their eyes from looking at men outside the prohibited degrees and should safeguard their ears against listening to the voices of such men. That is, they should not listen to the voices which arouse lustful sensations within them. They should cover up their private parts and should not disclose their beauty to anyone outside the prohibited degrees. They should draw their head coverings across their bosoms, and should thus cover up their heads, and ears, and temples. They should not strike their feet on the ground like dancers. These are directions following which one can safeguard against moral stumbling.”

He says:

“The second method is to turn to God, Almighty and to supplicate him to be safeguarded against stumbling and slipping.”

He says:

“Another direction is: approach not adultery. This means that one should avoid all occasions that might incite one's mind in that direction, and should avoid all the paths that might lead to this vice. He, who indulges in this vice, carries his evil to the extreme. The way of adultery is an evil way, as it obstructs one's progress towards the ultimate goal and is extremely harmful to the achievement of the purpose of life. Those who find no means of marriage should keep themselves chaste through the adoption of other means.”

STRIVE TO ACT UPON ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AND RECOGNIZE YOUR TRUE STATUS

Thus, we find that this life is

paved with stumbling blocks and obstacles every step of the way, but to avoid and emerge from them is the duty of every believing man and woman. If Islam's true teachings were always followed, then the lack of trust that is unfortunately developing between many husbands and wives would not occur. Their homes that are being destroyed simply because each party is not fulfilling the due rights of the other would instead remain safe and happy.

Allah has stated that the sign of a believer is that he does not treat the commands of Allah in the same way that those who are spiritually blind and deaf do. Therefore, it is essential for a believer to constantly strive to fully act upon all Islamic teachings and commands. This is because believers have the ability to understand and possess insight, whilst being deaf or blind to Allah's commands is a sign of the disbelievers.

The spiritual capability of such people reaches an end and they no longer possess the ability or wisdom to listen and to implement pious and righteous teachings. However, all of you who have accepted the Imam of the age—who was the true servant of the Holy Prophet^{saw}—cannot forgo that which is good, and the same applies to Ahmadi men.

Unfortunately, without doubt there has been a serious lack of attention paid to all of this; but I hope and expect that from my reminder today, all of you will pay full attention to this matter and be spiritually rejuvenated, *Insha'Allah*.

I also hope and expect that all Ahmadi women will now come to recognize their true status and gain a deep understanding that there is no value attached to the glamour and

allure of the world, which is purely superficial. All such superficiality will be left behind in this temporary world, while the real and everlasting life is in the hereafter. In that permanent existence, whatever good deeds we have done in this temporary life will bear fruit.

I receive letters from some women and even some girls that for a period of time, they became heavily influenced and affected by the materialistic and superficial elements of the world, but have since come to realize that it was a huge mistake. They write that they have lost whatever they had in this world, and at the same time they incurred the anger of God.

Furthermore, some men and women write with great regret and sorrow about the state of their children. They write with heartfelt anguish that their children have not only moved away from religion, but no longer listen to their parents and are disobedient. Thus, before it is too late and before you become drowned by the materialism of this world, come to completely attach your hearts to Allah.

Join with Him and never let go.

Fulfill Allah's rights of worship and consider each and every instruction of the Qur'an to be vitally important, and act upon them to the best of your abilities. Your outward state should be in accordance with the teachings taught by God, because this will facilitate your well-being both in this world and in the next life.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OLD AND NEW AHMADIS

Those Ahmadi women who come from Pakistan should have an even greater realization of their responsibilities, because Ahmadiyyat has been in your blood for much longer than those who have joined later. Thus, it is their duty to be shining examples for the new converts and the local Ahmadi women. And they should not just be a model for one or two of the commands given by the Qur'an; but rather, they should be an example for every single one of the commands, and thus prove to be a beacon of light guiding all those around them.

To the local Ahmadi women here today, I would like to say that some of you have been Ahmadis for a very long time now, and your children and grand children are also, *Masha'Allah*, Ahmadis. Thus, it is not just the Pakistani origin Ahmadis who should present an example, but all of you should also be models for others.

Similarly, the new converts: Always remember that if older Ahmadis do not develop spiritual and revolutionary changes within themselves, then it should not stop you from doing so. Thus, those who have just joined should become the means for bringing about a spiritual revolution and you should come to symbolize true Islam in all aspects of your lives. Always remember that it is only a person who progresses in piety who is loved by Allah and has a close link with Him. Allah has no relation with the old or new Ahmadis, but with the pious and righteous ones. May Allah enable my words to prove to be a means of improving your standards of righteousness, so that the beautiful

seed of Ahmadiyyat, which is the true Islam, produces flowers of the utmost beauty in our future generations that forever continue to flourish. May Allah enable this to happen, *Amin*. Now, all of you join me in silent prayer.”

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CORRECTION

Please read the verse of the Holy Qur'an (97:2) on page 2 of the July 2012 issue of the Ahmadiyya Gazette as given below. There was a typographical error.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ۚ

PAY ZAKAT

HADITH

Hadhrat 'Amr bin Taghlib^{ra} relates that a lot of goods or prisoners were brought to the Messenger^{saw} of Allah and he distributed them among the people. He gave to some and did not give to others. The news reached him that those who were not given are annoyed with him. So he (first) glorified Allah and praised Him then said, "After this remember, By Allah, sometimes I give to someone but not to another while the one to whom I do not give is more dear to me than the one to whom I give. The fact is that I give to some people because I perceive in their hearts anxiety and panic while I leave those about whom I know what Allah has bestowed of goodness in their hearts and contentment. 'Amr bin Taghlib^{ra} is one of these. Upon this Hadhrat 'Amr bin Taghlib^{ra} said, 'By Allah! I would not love to have the best of the red camel in exchange for these words of the Messenger^{saw} of Allah.' "

(Bukhari kitabul jumu'a bab man qala filkutbah ba'daththana' amma-ba'd)

Hadhrat Salim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar^{ra} relates from his father 'Abdullah bin 'Umar^{ra} that he^{ra} said, "The Messenger^{saw} of Allah used to give me something and I used to say, 'Give it to someone else who is in greater need of it than me. He^{saw} said, 'Take it. When something of this money comes to you, while you have no greed and desire for it; nor have begged it then take it and enrich yourself with it. You may consume it completely if you so desire or give it in charity. And what is not given to you, do not go after it. Hadhrat Salim^{ra} said, 'Therefore, Ibn 'Umar^{ra} never asked anything from anyone nor refused anything given to him.' "

(Bukhari kitabuzzakat, Muslim)

Hadhrat 'Ali^{ra} relates that Fatimah^{ra} complained of what she suffered owing to the use of a grinding mill. In those days, a few slave-girls of the booty were brought to the Holy Prophet^{saw}. She^{ra} went to him^{saw} but did not find him. However, she met Hadhrat 'A'ishah^{ra} and told her (the reason for her visit). When the Holy Prophet^{saw} came out, Hadhrat 'A'ishah^{ra} told him about Fatimah's^{ra} visit. So the Holy Prophet^{saw} visited us when we were lying down on our beds. We began to get up from the beds. The Holy Prophet^{saw} said, "Hold on to your positions and sat down between us so close that I felt the coldness of his^{saw} feet on my chest. Then he^{saw} said: 'Should I not tell you something which is better than what you both had asked? At night when you go to bed, repeat: thirty-four times (*allahu akbar*), thirty-three times (*subhanallah*), and thirty-three times (*alhamdu lillah*). This is better for you both than a servant.' "

(Muslim kitabudhdhikr babattasbih awalannahar wa 'indannaum)

MY MUSLIM IDENTITY – WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY MOTHER

Hawa Owusu Navarro

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ،
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Respected *Sadr Sahiba*, distinguished guests and my dear Lajna and *Nasirat*,

*Assalaamoalaikum wa
Rahmatullahe wa Barakatohu.*

The topic of my speech is “My Muslim Identity – What I Learned From My Mother”, and before I proceed, I would like to thank Allah, Almighty, for the opportunity to share some of my life experiences as a born Ahmadi raised in the U.S. and to speak about my mother, who in so many ways is the reason that I have held on to the rope of Allah.

My mother is someone who is very dear to me, not just because she is my mother, but also because her love for Islam is fierce and passionate. She was born and raised in Ghana, West Africa as part of a strong and active Ahmadi family. As a child, I was enamored by her stories and recollections of her childhood, as she described in great detail her love for *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya, the pleasure she derived from regular involvement in *Jama'at* activities, and the emphasis her parents placed on the remembrance of Allah and truly living the life of an Ahmadi. She has always

been an example to me of what it means to have strength of character and unwavering faith in Allah, and any time I have struggled with something, be it my fears about my performance on an exam, or frustrations with the pressures I felt from my non-Ahmadi friends, her responses have always centered on reliance on Allah for strength, clarity, and direction.

Now, the question of what comprises one's identity is a bit complex, as there are aspects of identity that are unchanging and fixed. A few examples, in my case, are that I am a woman and I am African-American. On the other hand, there are characteristics of our identities that are quite versatile, and have been influenced by the ways we have been raised, where we have lived, and the choices that we have made throughout the course of our lives.

One of the many remarkable qualities of the religion of Islam, and Ahmadiyya in particular, is its universality; meaning that it is relatable and applicable to all the people of this world. It affords us a set of principles and guidelines for how we are to conduct ourselves, regardless of our race, sex, culture, language, level of education and so on.

As Muslims, we are required to believe in the Oneness

of Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Prophets, the Last Day, and Allah's Divine Decree and control over every outcome in the universe. The Five Pillars outline the primary and obligatory acts that we are to engage in, in order to fulfill the practice of Islam, gain nearness to Allah, and purify our souls. In addition, we are blessed with the guidance of the *Sunnah* and *Hadith*, of the Holy Prophet Mohammad^{saaw}, the knowledge brought forth by the Promised Messiah and founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, and the divine institution of *Khilafat*.

In today's day and age, where social ills are rampant, economic conditions are gloomy, and basic morals have taken a back seat to instant gratification and worldly pursuits, it simply is not enough to be a Muslim by name – we must feel Allah's presence in our hearts and remember that it is He who must be at the forefront of our thoughts and actions.

There are three particular lessons that I learned from my mother, quite early in my life, that I feel have been pivotal to my identity as a Muslim. The first is that faith not only encompasses belief, but it also involves one's behavior. The beautiful thing about infancy, toddlerhood and early childhood is that our minds are so open, so ready to receive and interpret the information from our environment. During these periods in life, growth and development is incredibly

rapid, and the possession of relationships with responsive, caring adults is critical to the establishment of values and beliefs.

My mother played a big part in laying the groundwork for my belief in Allah and Ahmadiyyat in that her actions mirrored her verbal assertions about her love for Islam. Some of my earliest memories are filled with the sights and sounds of my parents reading the Qur'an, and offering *Salat* together. Seeing them engaged in prayer instilled a sense that it was a routine that was important to maintain. Even the seemingly simple actions of my mother ceasing whatever activity she was engaged in, in order to offer her prayers at the appointed time, drove home the notion that spending time talking to Allah was more important than a favorite TV program or the continuation of a phone conversation that could be resumed at a later time. "Give what is God's to God. You can always go back to what you were doing afterward", she would frequently say.

Second, is the importance of humility. As a child, curious about the world around me, my mother never missed an opportunity to make reference to the beauty of Allah's creations and His hand in all that we see. In doing this, I developed a sense of how vast the might and power of Allah is. In addition, my mother frequently referenced the *Sunnah* and *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet^{saw}, who embodied the perfect example of modesty and humility. For example, when my siblings and I would get into shouting matches, we would get a reminder that the Holy Prophet^{saw} spoke softly and politely; and I will never forget one particular occasion that I was very thirsty and upon receiving a glass of water, I quickly

gulped everything down in about 2 seconds; right there, I was reminded that the Holy Prophet^{saw} would take three sips at a time and remove the cup from his mouth.

The third lesson emphasized by my mother was the remembrance of Allah and *Taqwa*. My mother always stressed that we, as humans, have a natural inclination to be close to Allah, and without *Taqwa*, the fear of Allah, without an awareness of the activities that we are supposed to engage in and those that are we are supposed to avoid, we will fall victim to the sinful temptations that garner Allah's displeasure.

Altogether, these three lessons helped to shield me from a number of negative influences, as I got older and progressed through my school age years into young adulthood. Faced with the moral issues of American society, I have learned just how pertinent these lessons are; especially the notion of *Taqwa*. My mother often quoted (and still quotes) the well known saying, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything" and it is very much in line with being mindful of Allah's commandments, for if our practice of Islam is wishy washy, we are bound to be wishy washy in our avoidance of sinful behavior.

By the time I entered elementary school, my mother had already ingrained in me a number of things Muslims don't do: we don't eat pork, drink alcohol, smoke, date, go to dances, do drugs, and by the Grace of Allah, I had no problem with this. It

wasn't just that my mother told me I couldn't do these things, she also explained the potential negative outcomes of engaging in such behaviors and activities. And it made sense.

For me, the real tests of my faith occurred when I was in junior high and high school. It was during this time that my classmates began to involve themselves in the behaviors that I had always known I should avoid. I've never smoked in my life but by the time I was in 8th grade I knew the difference between the smell of a cigarette and the smell of marijuana because kids were smoking them in the school bathrooms. All of a sudden people were dating, and they were doing more than just dating, and the school started sanctioning dances, and girls were dressing to impress boys... and I thought I was just supposed to impress my teachers with my good grades and work....

Nevertheless, my mother always brought things back to the basics of Islam, reminding me of my true purpose in this world as a servant of Allah. Anytime I would come home with a story about how "so and so" was dating "so and so", or that my friends were repeatedly asking me if I could attend the upcoming school dance, she would proudly proclaim, "We are Ahmadi Muslims. When you go to school, you tell those friends that you are Ahmadi, you don't date, you don't go to dances...." and so on.

At the time, I was both encouraged and burdened by these proclamations. I knew in my mind that I didn't need to be doing everything that my classmates were doing. But at the same time, I couldn't help but feel a bit weighed down by all of the limitations. I couldn't help feeling like I was *apart* from everyone rather than *a part*

of. And the last thing anyone in their teenage years wants is to feel as though they don't fit in.

Sure, I had my good friends who like me, weren't interested in having a boyfriend or going to parties, and whatnot. I just wanted there to be a time when I could say, "Yes, I can do that". Or "Yes, I can go there". It was hard, constantly fielding questions like, "Why can't you go here? Why can't you do this? Why don't you go out?" And it got to be exhausting and frustrating. I could feel a pull in my heart between wanting to follow the teachings of Islam perfectly without any trouble or hardship, and wanting to be as carefree as my classmates, who seemed totally unaware of the Day of *Qiyamah* that I had always heard about. That day, on which there is no doubt, when we will all be called to answer for our actions in this world, and Chapter 75 verses 21 through 26 of the Holy Qur'an relates,

"Hearken! You love the present life; and you neglect the Hereafter. Some faces on that day will be radiant, looking eagerly towards their Lord; and some faces on that day will be dismal, knowing that a back-breaking calamity will befall them."

Although I faced this struggle, I listened to my mother and strengthened my efforts to gain nearness to Allah and the strength to resist this pull that I felt. I offered my prayers with a rejuvenated fervor, eager to be imbued with the strength and patience to get through high school and *Insha'Allah* attend my dream college, Cornell University. My self-confidence steadily rose and I found it to be easier to brush off the frequent prodding and questioning about my lacking presence in my friend's social activities. I began to feel a peace in my heart, as it gradually became easi-

er for me to put a stop to how much I dwelled on the things I could not partake in. But my trials were not over.

One of the most painful moments for me took place during the latter half of my time in high school, when one of my closest friends, someone I had known since we were both five years old, angrily asked why I never went to clubs with her, and then with a look of disdain and pity, she exclaimed, "You need to get out more". I was utterly shocked. I couldn't believe that someone who had known about my religion and my convictions would talk to me that way. Furthermore, I couldn't understand why she was surprised that I had not changed my mind about staying away from such activities.

I never actually shared this occurrence with mother, but some of the things that she said to me in subsequent months were a testament that Allah listens to prayers. She related an occasion when she was away at a boarding school in Ghana, and that on one evening while she was offering the *Isha* Prayer, some of her roommates came to the room and began to laugh at her and prod her. My mother didn't waver, and when she concluded her prayers and calmly folded her prayer mat, her roommates uttered not one word. After that day, they never bothered her during her prayers, and some of them would even call out to other girls to lower their voices when she prayed. And on another occasion, my mother shared with me a *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet^{saw} that has never left my

mind: "The world is a prison for the believers and a paradise for the non-believers".

Suddenly, everything, *everything* made sense. Why we must not settle into complacency in our worship of Allah. Why we are met with trials and tribulations that test our faith. And why it felt like everyone at my school was having a ball, doing whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted to. I knew then that if I wasn't prepared to guard myself from doing wrong or from people who might steer me from the path of Islam, in any environment or situation, then I ran the chance of losing the rope of Allah. That protection, as my mother has always reminded me, comes from prayer, as well as patience, humility and all the qualities that we are encouraged to embody. And my mother's boarding school story reinforced the notion that being an Ahmadi Muslim is something to be proud of.

By the Grace of Allah, I made it through high school. And I went to Cornell University, and while I was there, I remained mindful of the company I kept, the places I frequented, and the following *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet^{saw}:

"Seek the guidance of thy soul! Seek the guidance of thy soul! Seek the guidance of thy soul! The virtuous deed is one whereby thy soul feels restful and thy heart contented, and the sinful act is one that rankles in thy soul and which contracts thy heart even though the other people endorse it as lawful".

I have known the most peace and contentment in my heart when I have adhered to the teachings of Islam. In combination with the example of my mother's strength, I have grown to be even less affected by the lure of

worldly temptations. And the increasing fortitude of my convictions has allowed me to put more trust in Allah than ever. This trust gave me the strength to stand firm in the wake of more recent questions – in particular, the questioning by my non-Ahmadi friends of my certainty about marrying my husband, last summer, given that we didn't partake in the mainstream forms of getting to know each other like, dating and living together before marriage. By the grace of Allah, I had no problem explaining the Islamic way of selecting a spouse and the foremost qualities we are encouraged to focus on.

It is most unfortunate that things are so backward today, in that moral wrongs are seen as normal and are widely accepted. It is now more than ever that we must stand firm in our faith and hold fast to the rope of Allah. And to the youth who are growing up in these times, I would say to be patient and keep your *Salat* fervent and regular. Some of the people who gave me the hardest times have changed their tune and expressed their regret at not avoiding the social activities that I did – one of whom was my friend who told me that I needed to get out more. Everything that Allah has prescribed for us is for the benefit of our lives in this world and the next.

In conclusion, I pray that May Allah Bless and Strengthen all the Mothers of *Jama'at* Ahmadiyya. May Allah bolster the faith of all members, that we may be protected from sin. And May Allah enable us all to be his unwavering servants, so that on the Day of *Qiyamah* we may stand amongst those who are granted *Jannatul Firdaus*. There is no strength to resist evil, nor any power to do good except through Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. *JazakAllah.*

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Umamah bin Bahli^{ra} relates that (on one occasion), the Messenger^{saw} of Allah asked, "Who will make a pledge to me? Thauban, a freed slave of the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Take a pledge from us.' He^{sa} said, 'Then make a pledge to me that you will not ask for anything from anyone.' Thauban said, 'O Messenger^{saw} of Allah! What will be the reward for this?' He^{sa} said, 'The Heaven.' Hearing this, Thauban made the pledge." "

Hadhrat Abu Umamah^{ra} states that he saw Thauban in Mecca, in a large crowd, while he was riding, his whip would fall down and at times it would fall down on the shoulder of a person, who would pick it up and try to give it to him but he (Thauban) would not take it until after dismounting first and then he would take it.

(Attartib wa Arrahib, p 100/2)

Hadhrat Qabisah bin Mukhariq^{ra} relates that I gave surety for a man that he would pay back the loan taken by him. Then he came to the Messenger^{saw} of Allah and asked help in the matter. He^{saw} said hold on until the charity money comes to us. Then he would order out of it some for him. He then said, "O Qabisah! It is not legal to solicit money except for three people: The one who has taken responsibility to support an afflicted person. He is permitted to solicit money up to the fulfillment of his responsibility and the person who is afflicted with some misfortune which has destroyed his goods. It is lawful for him also to solicit money till he can support a frugal living or he said until he can afford a normal living; the person who is starving due to lack of food and three respected people of the town verify that so and so is starving, he is permitted to solicit money till he can support a frugal living or he said until he can afford a normal living. If anyone other than these three solicits money, he eats that which is unlawful and displeases Allah."

(Muslim kita-buzzakat min tahal laahulmasalah)

Hadhat Hakim bin Hizam^{ra} relates: "I asked the Messenger^{saw} of Allah and he gave me; I asked again and he gave me; I asked again and he gave me and said, 'O Hakim, riches are pleasant and sweet. He who acquires them by the way, they are a source of blessing for him; but they are not blessed for him who seeks them out of greed. He is like one who eats but is not filled. The upper hand is better than the lower.' I said to him, 'O Messenger^{saw} of Allah, by Him Who has sent you with the Truth I shall not ask anyone for anything, after you, till I depart this life.' Abu-Bakr would call Hakim to bestow something upon him, but he would not accept it. Then 'Umar would call him but he would not accept anything. So he ('Umar) said, O congregation of Muslims, 'I call you to bear witness against Hakim that I offer him his share of the spoils that Allah has appointed for him but he refuses to take it.'" Thus Hakim did not take anything from anyone after the Holy Prophet^{saw} till his death. *(Bukhari kitabul wasiyyata bab tavil qauluhu- man ba'd wasiyyata yusi biha)*

THE SEEDS OF MARITAL HARMONY

Dr. Aziza Rahman

Ten years ago, I had the honor to address this gathering for the first time. Perhaps it is a coincidence, but my topic at that time was "Women's Role in Marital Harmony". On being assigned today's topic, my first thought was – 'Oh, good! I won't need to write another speech, that one wasn't bad.' But as I reflected upon this title, 'The seeds of marital harmony', I realized that while the message is basically the same, I would be addressing a different audience, one with a greater number of young people, recently married, or ready for marriage; and also one that is facing challenges and changes in the level of marital harmony in the *Jama'at*; changes that are giving us reason for concern. So today, I would like to address mothers in particular - mothers with grown children, mothers with young children, indeed all those who will be mothers in the future - and speak about a mother's role in planting and cultivating the seeds of marital harmony.

So what are the seeds of marital harmony? In essence, the seeds of marital harmony are the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and *Ahadith* which pertain to marriage. These seeds, when sown in receptive hearts and minds at the right time, will produce love, tenderness and peace of mind, which is how Allah defines marital harmony in the Holy Qur'an. Just as an apple seed that is carefully planted and nurtured produces a tree bearing fruit that contains more seeds which will begin the cycle all over again; so do the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, when properly practiced, produce a

harmonious relationship in marriage, resulting in righteous offspring who will perpetuate this cycle again.

The vital qualities which are required to sustain a good marriage, such as patience, forbearance, kindness, compassion, self-sacrifice, to name but a few, can also be called seeds of marital harmony.

But the most important seed, which encompasses all these others, is mentioned in this verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"O ye people, fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul and of its kind created its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah in Whose name you appeal to each other, and fear Him particularly respecting the ties of kinship. Verily, Allah watches over you."

This verse, which is recited at every marriage ceremony, warns us that the basic prerequisite for marital harmony is found in the words: "*Wata qul Allaha – fear Allah*". In other words, *Taqwa*, righteousness, is the basic foundation of marital harmony.

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} explained in his address to *Lajna Imaillah* at *Jalsa Salana UK* 2011, that *Taqwa* also means fulfillment of *Haquq Al-*

lah, our duty to Allah, which allows us to attain nearness to Him. However, *Haququllah* can only be accomplished if we also fulfill our *Haququl Abad*, duties to fellow human beings, and the most important *Haququl Abad* is the responsibility of husbands and wives to each other. So when husband and wife put the commands of the Holy Qur'an on marriage into practice themselves and create a harmonious home, then the seeds of marital harmony can be sown in their children's hearts, thus enabling them to continue the cycle.

However, if marriage is not based on *Taqwa*, the ensuing lack of harmony between husband and wife affects not only their own lives, but creates a serious consequence for their children. These parents cannot provide a good example, nor the guidance or *Tarbiyyat* needed for a happy marriage. As a result, when the children marry, they are ill-equipped and unable to deal with stressful situations that arise in all marriages from time to time; thus the divorce rate in the *Jama'at* has risen alarmingly over recent years.

We have to acknowledge that marital problems are increasing due primarily to lack of *Taqwa* and lack of *Tarbiyyat* about marriage. Nevertheless, many people try to blame the problems on society. They say "*zamana budal geya hai, kiya karain*" – times have changed, what can we do? True, we live in a society where moral values are the complete antithesis of Islamic teaching. But wasn't that also true in the time

of the Holy Prophet^{saws}? And again, in the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}? In spite of that, their Companions did not allow the 'zamana' or the 'times' to affect their level of obedience to Allah's commands.

Listen to this account of the start of a marriage of a young girl to an older man, who left her comfortable home to live in a small village, as was told to her daughter many years later:

"When your father brought me home, as all his relatives were opposed to the marriage, there was no woman in the house to receive me; only one or two men servants. I had only my maid with me who could not understand their language. It was night time; I felt extremely alone in a strange place and was in tears. There was no one to comfort me, no one to bring any food. There was a wooden bed in the room with a sheet on it. Tired and miserable, I laid down on it and cried myself to sleep."

Would anyone of us put up with such circumstances today, without complaint or indignation? But this young girl did. She had been raised with the seeds of marital harmony implanted in her heart. My dear sisters! This was the beginning of the marriage of *Hadhrat Amman Jan^{fa}* to the Promised Messiah^{as} which is the best example we have in our time of true marital harmony. Similarly, we can look to the examples of our own mothers and grandmothers who overcame many difficulties with patience and prayer.

Instead of blaming society alone for our weaknesses, we have to do more to combat the negative influences around us. There is no doubt that in today's environment, where

TV reality shows openly encourage immorality, where modesty and privacy have been eroded by online social networks, and where children have the means to hide their activities easily from their parents; the task of mothers has become extremely difficult. We have to educate ourselves about the pressures and influences that the children are being exposed to, and build a relationship with them of open communication and trust.

And within this framework we must also take the steps necessary to ensure that we are sowing the seeds of marital harmony in our children's minds.

Like every good farmer, first we have to prepare the ground by instilling love for Allah *Ta'ala* in the hearts of our children when they are very young, making sure that the roots of *Taqwa* are securely established. Then, education about the importance of marriage as a form of worship must begin at an early age. We can emphasize these words of *Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}*:

Our ladies, our girls should always remember that - my first responsibility is to follow the path of righteousness and to have the fear of Allah in my heart. Undertaking marriage for this very purpose is a way to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty and to have pious progeny.

(Address to *Lajna Imaillah*, UK *Jalsa Salana* 2011)

We have to teach, both

sons and daughters, that marriage is just another way to please God. It's not about romance and excitement, it's not about having a beautiful home or having financial security; it's actually all about pleasing Allah by following His commands.

And it is never too early to teach children to pray for themselves with this beautiful Qur'anic prayer for marital harmony:

O Lord! Grant us of our spouses and our children the delight of our eyes, and make us model for the righteous." (25:75)

Next, we must implant the realities of marriage in our children's minds and emphasize all the qualities required to make it work. Our daughters should understand that although Islam allows them to pursue higher education and careers, the main responsibility of home and family has been placed on them by Allah and that they will be answerable to Him for its fulfillment. Marriage is virtually a career in itself; it requires knowledge, training, patience and sacrifice and the results are not immediate. As in nature, where the tastiest apples on a tree do not ripen overnight; it takes time for sweetness to develop in a marital relationship.

Both sons and daughters should be warned that difficulties at the start of marriage are not unusual and that they may be resolved with perseverance. Our daughters, as they are the ones who leave us, should be reminded gently that although they are loved unconditionally in their parent's home, they will have to earn the love and esteem of their new family by showing respect and even by sacrificing some of their own feelings and desires at first. When they do this with

patience and prayer, Allah *Ta'ala* will surely reward them and ease their path to marital harmony.

Here I must emphasize that the need for *Tarbiyyat* is not limited to our daughters only. A common complaint heard these days is that there is a shortage of pious young men in the *Jama'at*. My dear sisters! If this is true, we only have ourselves to blame! Let me give you the gist of how Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IVth described men who treat women badly:

"When we look into their childhood we find that it is the mother who has raised the boys like this. She makes them feel like a god and they become arrogant. These mothers pamper them more and give them preference over girls, accommodate all of their indulgences, and give them all kinds of freedoms, until slowly they turn them into contemptible individuals. Then it is the future wife who has to face the incorrect upbringing by these mothers."

(Address to *Lajna Imaillah* Canada, *Jalsa Salana* 1991)

This is becoming a serious problem in the *Jama'at*; many young men are given so much freedom that they are being drawn into un-Islamic activities, such as dating and the use of drugs and alcohol. We must guard the chastity of our sons in the same way as we guard our daughters; they need to be taught that the principles of *hayaa* and *purdah* apply to them also. Unfortunately, it appears that many fathers are not providing this *Tarbiyyat*; therefore we mothers have to do it.

One of the most important steps in sowing the seeds of marital harmony is to ensure that our sons and

daughters are prepared for and understand the concept of arranged marriages from a very early age, in fact from the preteen years. Listen to their views, but let them know that they have to be married by a certain age, and that their parents will be doing the arranging, with prayers and trust in Allah. Indeed, selecting a suitable spouse for our own children is a test of our own *Taqwa*. We all know that the Holy Prophet^{saw} instructed that piety should be the preferred quality in selecting a mate. And yet, many mothers of marriageable men are still not looking past physical attributes. Have you ever seen an uncut diamond? If you passed by one lying on the ground, you probably wouldn't even notice it; but once cut and polished, it is absolutely dazzling. So look for the potential wife who has that inner beauty which stems from *Taqwa*, which will display itself and dazzle you when she creates a harmonious home for your son.

Another problem today, which we need to address, is that marriages are being delayed. Many young men are making the excuse that they are 'not ready' yet; they have to finish studying, find a job, buy a house, a car, so on and so forth. By this time they are so used to their freedom and become so [demanding] selective that no '*rishta*' appeals to them and they opt to look outside the *Jamaat*. Then there are young women who have graduate degrees or highly-paid careers; they or their parents will not

consider a less educated man, however pious or hardworking, since that would be to marry "beneath" them. Where is our *Taqwa*, if we cannot follow the supreme example of the Holy Prophet^{saw} and Hadhrat Khadijah^{ra}? Did she feel she was marrying beneath her? Did he have his own home or even the means to marry? It was *Taqwa* and piety that placed them together for a marriage that is an example for all times, including today's.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity that mothers have to perpetuate the cycle of marital harmony is when they assume the role of mother-in-law. The Holy Qur'an warns us about ties of kinship, and it is in this role that a mother can make or break the marital harmony of her children; an unkind word, negative criticism or a selfish demand can cause turmoil in her child's marriage. The best mother-in-law is one who regards herself as simply a mother, and always remembers that as she has brought this young woman into her family, she must treat her like a daughter to please Allah. We can learn again from the example of *Hadhrat Amman Jan^{ra}* in this regard. Not only did she treat her daughter-in-laws like her own, but she was very just and upheld their rights. One winter, Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} was having quilts made for everyone in the household, but one of his wives disliked the fabric being used and requested to have her own quilt made. However, as the order had already been sent in, the quilts arrived. *Hadhrat Amman Jan^{ra}* happened to hear her daughter-in-law reproaching her husband because she had asked to have one made of a different material. Instead of scolding her daughter-in-law for reproaching her husband, as many mother-in-laws

might have done, she admonished Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood^{ra} for disregarding his wife's wishes.

We might consider this to be a small matter, but putting the desires of others before the conveniences of one's own children, even when he is the *Khalifa*, is a rare quality in a mother, and it stemmed from Hadhrat *Amman Jan*^{ra}'s desire to please Allah. My dear sisters! There is no doubt that the responsibility of sowing the seeds of marital harmony is neither a light, nor an undemanding one. But Allah *Ta'ala* has laid it on us by placing Paradise under our feet and by equipping us with the qualities required to achieve this goal, in our own lives and our children's. If all of us, mothers of young or grown children or mothers-to-be, examine our own level of *Taqwa* and obedience to Allah's commands and make the necessary change in our hearts and actions, we can surely stem the rising tide of marital problems, with Allah's Grace and Mercy.

We cannot even imagine the blessings that our future generations and the *Jama'at* will reap from the seeds we sow today. Anyone can count the seeds in an apple, but only Allah knows the number of apples in a seed.

Let me end with this prayer:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا
مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ۝

Our Lord, let not our hearts become perverse after You have guided us; and bestow on us mercy from Yourself; surely, You alone are the Bestower. (3: 9)

HADITH

Hadhrat Ibn 'Abbas^{ra} relates that once Hadhrat 'Umar bin Al-Khattab^{ra} travelled towards Syria and when he arrived at *Saragh* the leader of the Muslim forces met him. Hadhrat Abu 'Ubaidah bin Jarrah^{ra} and his other companions told him that an epidemic had broken out in Syria. Ibn 'Abbas^{ra} relates: 'Hadhrat 'Umar^{ra} told me to call in the earlier Emigrants. I called them and he told them that an epidemic had broken out in Syria and took counsel with them but they differed among themselves. Some of them said: 'You have the Companions of the Messenger^{saw} of Allah and many other people with you and we do not see why you should expose them to this epidemic.' He asked them to withdraw and asked me to call the Helpers. So I called them and he took counsel with them and like the Emigrants they followed the course of the Emigrants and differed among themselves as they had differed. So he asked them to withdraw and asked me to call the prominent among the *Quraish* out of those emigrants who were present at the fall of Mecca. So I called them and not any two of them differed in their view. They said: 'We think that you should go back and not lead the people into the epidemic.' So Hadhrat 'Umar^{ra} had it announced that he would start back the next morning. Thus all the Companions came early in the morning. Hadhrat Abu 'Ubaidah bin Jarrah^{ra} said: 'Do you propose to run away from the decree of Allah?' Hadhrat 'Umar^{ra} replied: 'O Abu 'Ubaidah! I wish someone else besides you had said this.' In fact, Hadhrat 'Umar^{ra} did not like to be opposed by him^{ra}. He^{ra} continued: 'Yes, We are running away from the decree of Allah to the decree of Allah, Don't you consider the fact that if you had a herd of camels in the valley and the valley had two sides; one fertile and green and the other dry and barren then if you graze them in the green part would not that be by the decree of Allah, or if you were to graze them in the dry part, would not that be by the decree of Allah?' The narrator says, Then Hadhrat 'Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf^{ra} who had been absent on some errand of his own came back. He^{ra} said: 'I have some knowledge (of the proper mode of conduct in) about such a situation. I heard the Messenger^{saw} of Allah say: 'If you hear of an epidemic in a land then do not enter it, and if you happen to be in a land where an epidemic has appeared, do not run away from it.' On this Hadhrat 'Umar^{ra} praised Allah and returned.' "

(Muslim kitabussalam babatta'un wattirah walkihanah)

Hadhrat Usamah bin Shuraik^{ra} relates that a villager came and said: "O Messenger^{saw} of Allah! Can we treat patients? He^{saw} said: 'Treat your patients as Allah has not created a disease but has created a cure for it. Some know the cure for a disease and there are others who are ignorant of it.' "

(Musnad Ahmad Hadith Usamah bin Shuraik, p 278/4)

WHY I AM AN AHMADI

Dawn Ahmed

Good afternoon dear sisters and friends. My name is Dawn Ahmed and I am very thankful to be here today to speak about why I am an Ahmadi Muslim.

Why I am an Ahmadi Muslim is simply because I chose to do so. I believe that the religion that we choose to practice should always be an informed, conscious decision that we make. It is our God-given right to make the decision about how we choose to worship God and we should always be sure that we are making this conscious decision every day.

We are very fortunate to have freedom of religion in this country, when many other countries persecute Ahmadis and so please pray for the Ahmadis in those countries and celebrate your religious freedom that we enjoy here and be thankful to God each and every day for this religious freedom.

It has been more than ten years now since I've been Ahmadi, but the journey to Ahmadiyyat began many, many years before.

I grew up Catholic and went to Catholic schools until college, but even when I was young, it was difficult for me to believe in Catholic doctrine. However, in high school, I took a religious class that studied comparative religions, which was very interesting to me at the time. One of the ideas that really captivated me was the idea of "One God" being central to most religions. Catholicism and the idea of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which is the fundamental belief of Catholic doctrine did not

make logical sense to me. I questioned this idea throughout the years, but did not have an opportunity to find a logical, rational alternative that made sense to me.

After college, I attended graduate school, and it was after that time that I began a spiritual journey and continued studying different religions and talking to different people about their religions. I had friends that were Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, so it was very easy to learn about the fundamentals of each of these religions, plus I was able to read about them through a book that I had at the time, which was a book on all the major religions of the world. The section on Islam peaked my interest and I began to study Islam, and the more I studied and read and prayed and talked to people who were Muslim, the more I realized that Islam was the right path.

One of the key ideas that really resonated with me was the belief in the 6 Main Articles of Faith. This core, central idea encompassed the key ideas of Islam and really struck a chord with me as they made logical, rational sense and really were very similar to the beliefs that I had started to form upon my journey to a new religion.

I want to discuss the 6 main articles of faith because they hold the key to our religious be-

liefs and they were the key to why I accepted Ahmadiyyat.

There are 6 main articles of faith in Islam:

- To believe in the Oneness of Allah
- To believe in all His Angels
- To believe in all His Books
- To believe in all His Prophets
- To believe in the Day of Resurrection
- To believe in the Decree of Allah

To believe in the Oneness of Allah was very easy for me to accept. The idea of the Trinity, as I stated earlier, was very difficult for me to accept. My fundamental issue with the idea of Trinity, is that if we identify God as being all encompassing, and yet the Trinity identifies 3 "versions" of God? There are millions of people in the world who believe this, and we should always respect their beliefs, but for me, I could not accept the idea of the Trinity. The idea of the Oneness and completeness of Allah makes complete sense -- He is all knowing, all Powerful. This concept is simple in its essence, yet impossible to grasp in its entirety because we can only know and understand a small portion of the nature of Allah's existence.

To believe in all of His Angels, the second article of Faith was a unique and logical explanation of another idea that is central to many Religions and that is the idea of Angels being messengers of God. In Islam, Angels are celestial beings that can also take material form. They are the enforcers and arrangers of the natural laws of the universe. Their main role is to carry out Allah's Will.

To believe in all His Books is the third article of Faith. This is one of the articles that is very unique among religious beliefs. Other religions reject the teachings of other prophets and other religious books. Islam embraces those books and prophets and believes that there is truth written in these religious books. This is not to say that we should believe every single word that is written in those books, because many have been modified or reinterpreted over the years, which alters the original meaning in many of them, but that there are divine truths spoken about in those books. Reading the Holy Qur'an was truly enlightening for me as I found a book that spoke to the beliefs that I held true and provided guidance regarding how to live a spiritual life.

The fourth article of faith is the belief in all the prophets. Holy books from other religions do not recognize the truth held by prophets of other religions. The Holy Quran is unique in this area. The Holy Quran recognizes other prophets from other religions as providing guidance to strengthen the relationship between God and man and to provide guidance for man as part of the community. Logically, this makes sense that there would be many prophets over the years, and that we should hear the wisdom and guidance from these prophets. I remember one time, after I had recently become Ahmadi, someone that is Christian told me that people that didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God and savior would be going to hell. I thought, wow, that's a very exclusionary idea that most of the world would be going to hell, regardless of good deeds and due to their religious beliefs. Does this make sense? It does to a portion of the population, and I am not here to say that they should not hold these be-

liefs. I am simply stating that this is not what I believe and that I believe that there are many prophets from which we can learn to have a stronger association with God.

The fifth article of faith is the belief in the Day of Resurrection and Judgment. On this day, the universe ends and we are judged according to our actions and it is determined by God and no one else, whether we will end up in Heaven or Hell. The idea of Hell is a reformatory hell, which eventually will reform people so that they can end up in Heaven which is the ultimate, final and eternal destination. Logically, this makes sense. There is no one who can ultimately judge us beyond God and God is loving and kind and eventually wants us to end up in Heaven as the final destination.

The sixth and final article of faith is belief in the Divine Decree of Allah. This is a supporting idea of the idea of the Oneness of Allah. He is all knowing, all controlling and the one that rules all. As such, the Divine Decree is all encompassing.

The beauty of these 6 articles of faith is that they are inclusive and not exclusive, rational and not simply a "leap of faith", and very comprehensive in their explanation of God, religion, and the order of the universe.

Beyond these 6 articles of faith, as Ahmadi, we believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of

Qadian to be the Promised Messiah and *Mahdi*^{as}. His advent was foretold by the Prophet Muhammad^{saw}. It was his book, "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam" that truly solidified in my mind that Ahmadiyyat was the true Islam and the one that I should follow.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was brought to this earth to further solidify the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and to provide a message of unity. The following quote is from the September 1904 Review of Religions, in which he explains his claims of being the Messiah and *Mahdi*:

"But the work for which Almighty God has appointed me, my function as the Promised Messiah, is that I should remove the estrangement which has taken place between God and man, and re-establish man's connection of purity and love with his Divine Master. I have been raised that I should put a stop to religious wars and lay the basis of peace, concord and fellow-feeling between men, that I should bring to light the religious truths which have long been hidden from the mortal eye, that I may show true spirituality by dispelling the darkness of passions from before its face, that I may manifest the working of Divine powers within man by prayer or by concentration of attention, and most important of all that I should re-establish the pure and glorious unity of God which is free from every mixture of *shirk*, and which has disappeared from the face of earth. All this will be effected not by my power, but by the mighty power of Him who rules in heaven and earth. I see that on the one hand Almighty God having trained me in His deep knowledge and having made me the recipient of His revelation, has granted me a zeal

for bringing about these reforms, and on the other He has Himself prepared hearts which are ready to accept my words.”

This single paragraph about his role as Messiah and *Mahdi* truly shows the essence of what we should be trying to achieve as Ahmadi Muslims.

When I look around at our community, I see thousands of people who are hard at work bringing these ideas to fruition. The idea of bringing us closer to God to reestablish our relationship with God is something that our community, the mosques and the commitment to *Salat* brings forth into action.

Never before I experienced Ahmadiyyat had I met such a peace loving community that works so hard to live by the teachings that it espouses. We talk about “love for all, hatred for none,” and this idea is one of the beautiful ideas of Ahmadiyyat, again, this idea and practice of being inclusive, and not exclusive. When we look around our community, we have people from all walks of life and we embrace them. This is our role in the carrying out of the guidance provided by the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Insha Allah, you will all leave this *Jalsa* with a recommitment to your faith and to the community and you will spread the word of God through your teachings of Islam and by being a role model within your communities. Pray for your fellow Ahmadi and *Insha Allah*, Ahmadiyyat will spread throughout the world and will show the world the true beauty of Islam.

HADITH

Hadhrat Anas^{ra} relates: Abu Talha said to his wife, Hadhrat Umm Sulaim: "From the weakness in the voice of the Messenger^{saw} of Alla-h I have perceived hunger in him. Do you have anything with you? She said: 'Yes.' She brought out some barley bread. Then she took her headdress and wrapped the bread in a portion of it and concealed it under my cloth. She made me wear (the rest of) it and sent me off to the Messenger^{saw} of Allah. I went with it and found the Messenger^{saw} of Allah sitting in the mosque along with other people. I stood near them and the Messenger^{saw} of Allah asked me: 'Have you been sent by Abu Talha?' I said: 'Yes.' He asked: 'Is it for a meal?' I said: 'Yes.' The Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: 'Get up.' And then began to walk. I walked ahead of them until I came to Abu-Talha's and told him what had happened. He told Umm Sulaim: 'The Messenger^{saw} of Allah has come with people and we do not have anything with which to feed them.' She said: 'Allah and His Messenger^{sa} know best.' Abu Talha walked away until he met the Messenger^{saw} of Allah. So, the Messenger^{saw} of Allah came along with him and both entered. The Messenger^{sa} of Allah said: 'Bring quickly whatever food you have, O Umm Sulaim.' So she brought the bread. The Messenger^{saw} of Allah asked them to break the bread into pieces and then Umm Sulaim squeezed the container of butter over them and made them into morsels. Then the Messenger^{saw} of Allah prayed and blessed it as long as Alla-h desired and then said: 'Permit ten to come in.' So he admitted them; they ate to their fill and went out. Then he^{saw} said: 'Permit ten more to come in.' So he admitted them. They ate to their fill and went out. Then the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: 'Permit ten more to come in.' This went on till all of them had eaten their fill. They were seventy or eighty in all. ' "

According to another narration, They ate ten at a time, till eighty people had eaten. Then, the Holy Prophet^{saw} and the inhabitants of the house ate and still some more was left over.

(Bukhari kitabul manaqib bab 'alama-tinnabuwwah fil Islam)

Hadhrat Ayyub bin Bashir^{ra} refers to a man of the 'Anzah tribe who asked Hadhrat Abu Dharr Ghaffari^{ra}: "Did the Messenger^{saw} of Alla-h shake hands with you when you met him? He (Hadhrat Abu Dharr Ghaffari^{ra}) told him that whenever he met the Messenger^{saw} of Allah, he^{saw} shook hands with him. Once, he (the Holy Prophet^{sa}) sent for me but I was not at home at that time. When I came home, I was told about it. So, I went to see him^{saw}. He^{saw} was on the bed. He^{saw} embraced me. This was my best of the best meeting (with the Holy Prophet^{saw}).' "

(Abu Dawud kitabul adab bab fil musafihah)

WHY I AM AN AHMADI: FROM BELIEF TO SERVICE

Khadija Fouad

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I entered into Islam more than 30 years ago when I read a translation of the Qur'an. The words so touched me that before I had finished *Surah al-Baqarah*, Islam had penetrated deep into my heart.

In 2007, Allah blessed me to be able to make *Hajj*. During that year I also had the opportunity to begin to study the Qur'an in Arabic. As I became able to read the Qur'an directly without a translation, I was struck by its beauty and power. It was clear that this book, this communication between Allah and us, was meant to be practiced in its totality, each and every verse. I found myself disagreeing with my Qur'an teacher when she told us that some verses in the Qur'an had been abrogated.

I was introduced to Ahmadiyyat at the end of 2009 as I was preparing my applications for graduate school. In Ahmadiyyat, I found the embodiment of the realizations that were coming to me in my study of the Qur'an, especially my conviction that there is no abrogation of any part of the Qur'an. As I read the books of the Promised Messiah^{as}, it became clear that he had come with the wis-

dom, the correct interpretation of the Qur'an and the proper way to implement it in our lives in these times. I was grateful that Allah had sent this guidance for us.

Allah gave me signs of the truthfulness of Ahmadiyyat through prayer. As I looked into it, my connection with Allah deepened and I could feel His presence during my prayers.

During the time I was studying Ahmadiyyat, I was in contact with some sisters who were willing to talk with me over the telephone to answer my questions and offer moral support. These included Sister Saliha here in the US and Sister Khalidah in the UK. As I prepared to become an Ahmadi, I worried about the opposition I would face from my friends and family. Sister Saliha told me that I was a strong woman and that I would be able to face the challenges that lay ahead. This gave me the courage I needed to press forward.

I made my *Bai'at* in May of 2010. My family opposed my decision to join the *Jama'at*. My children worried that I had entered a cult. I faced the difficulty of trying to walk the path of Ahmadiyyat alone.

Three short months later, I left for school in Indiana. The Indiana *Jama'at* is very spread

out, so the meetings were a 1 ½ to 2 hour drive from my home. The sisters were all very kind and welcoming whenever I met them, but they all live far away, so I had little contact with them outside of *Lajna* meetings.

I experienced a kind of culture shock as a new Ahmadi. The way the meetings were conducted was different from the meetings of the other Muslims. The terminology was different. Often, I had no idea what anyone was talking about. Most of the sisters were originally from Pakistan, but I knew little of Pakistani culture so that was another culture shock.

Over the course of the year many things became heavy upon me. My belief had not altered but my practices were falling away. Instead of rushing to prayer and looking forward to getting up at night, even the obligatory prayers became heavy on me. I felt keenly my loneliness and isolation.

Sister Khalidah and her family were aware of my situation and they pressed me to attend *Jalsa Salama* UK. I was not sure if I should purchase the ticket. A thousand excuses came to my mind. They extended an invitation to visit their home in Oxford to entice me to come. Finally, I relented and purchased the ticket.

I had put it into my mind that I was traveling to England to repent. I knew that this was silly, because one can repent at any time and in any place as Allah is the Greatest Acceptor of Repentance. But I had gotten

into a rut, spiritually speaking, so I decided to use the trip as an excuse.

One afternoon as I was awakening from a nap, I heard the voice of Allah calling my name. He called me "Catherine", which is the name that my parents had given me when I was born. The meaning of this name is "pure". I understood from this that Allah intended to purify me, and that He would accept my repentance.

My hosts arranged for me to have a meeting with our *Khalifa*^{aba}. I felt that surely such an important person had better things to do than to meet with me, but they insisted. I pressed Sister Khalidah to accompany me in my meeting as I was very nervous.

Once in the meeting, I was indeed nervous, and even told the *Khalifa* that I made Khalidah come with me because I was nervous. He asked me about myself and my studies. I found that he was a kind, sweet man, and really felt a little silly for being nervous. Although on the face of it, the meeting did not seem particularly remarkable, somehow, having met him, it increased my attachment to him. Instead of just having an abstract concept of *Khilafat*, I had a concrete *Khalifa*. After the meeting, we all prayed *Asr* Prayer behind him. It was very dear to me to be able to follow him in prayer.

After the meeting, I left for *Jalsa Salana*.

I couldn't help but compare *Jalsa Salana* to my experiences on Hajj. On Hajj, they told me I was the guest of God, but I did not feel much like a guest. When people ask me about Hajj, I tell them that it was an amazing spiritual experience superimposed on a grueling physical trial. As the

guest of the Promised Messiah^{as}, I truly felt honored and welcome.

The *Jalsa Salana* volunteers saw to our every need, constantly asking if we needed any help or if there was anything they could do for us. The brothers and sisters who served us were always courteous, cheerful, and kind.

One of the brothers told me that he had wished to serve at *Jalsa Salana* since he was a small boy, and how it was a fulfillment of his childhood wish to be able to serve us. Another brother told us how much he enjoyed serving because of the many blessings he received each year. He used his vacation time for *Jalsa*, but his English colleagues could not understand why he would take time off from his job to serve other people. He told me how his family all accepted Ahmadiyyat, except his mother. They continued to pray for her. After 30 years, when he and his brothers had all grown and left home, she had a dream that the *Khalifa* had come to their house. She went to them and told them to *Salaam* him, but he said to her, "Why do you ask them to *Salaam* me? I have come to see you." When she told them her dream, they said, "You know this means you should enter into Ahmadiyyat," and so she did. I thought, *Subhanallah!* 30 years. If they could wait 30 years, then so should I. I needed to be more patient with my family. The culmination of *Jalsa Salana* UK is, of course, the international *Bai'at*.

Allah blessed me at that time to sit next to Sister Saliha. To be a part of that wonderful

cacophony of languages was truly an amazing experience. When I swore my allegiance again, I felt such an attachment to *Khilafat* and to the *Khalifa*^{aba} himself. As I began to beg Allah for forgiveness, tears began streaming down my face. Then we performed *sajdah shukr*. This was the most powerful *sajdah* of my entire life. 29,300 people in unison, swearing allegiance, begging Allah's forgiveness, and then thanking Allah - such a powerful moment! When I came up from the *sajdah*, I felt that Allah had purified me and washed me clean of all of my sins. I turned to Sister Saliha, tears streaming down my face, and tears streaming down hers, and thanked her for her help, support, and encouragement.

After the *Jalsa Salana*, the American delegation had a meeting with our *Khalifa*^{aba}. I left the meeting with a strong conviction that supporting and following and praying for our leaders at all levels from local to regional to national to the *Khalifa* is the key to success.

During *Jalsa Salana* UK I had so many spiritual blessings pour down upon me like rain. I knew that this was the fulfillment of the *Hadith* that the followers of *Imam Mahdi*^{as} would have so many riches. After the *Jalsa Salana*, so many things that had been heavy upon me became light. I was filled with such happiness to be a part of this community, and such a desire to share it with others. I finally felt that I really belonged. I had a new respect for our leadership and wanted to help and support them in any way I could. I had a desire to spend my life working and striving in the path of Allah. I became more patient with my family, and they have dropped their opposition and now accept me as an Ahmadi.

TRUE HAPPINESS

Saliha Malik, Sadr Lajna Imaillah USA

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ۝

“And of men there is he who would sell himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Compassionate to His servants.” (Holy Qur’an 2:208)

Respected *Apa Jan Sahiba*, Honorable Guests and my Dear Sisters, *Assalamo Alaikum!*

I am honored and humbled to be standing here today on such a special occasion, when our beloved Hazoor^{aba} has graced us with his presence and his powerful words. Befitting the occasion, I have chosen to address you this afternoon on the subject of ‘**True Happiness**’.

Happiness is both simple and complex. And no one’s life is completely free of sorrow. The Promised Messiah^{as} has understood the human predicament, he says:

“All things of this world suffer change and alteration. Various tribulations come one’s way. Illnesses attack. Sometimes one’s children die. In short, some difficulty or other, some pain, some sorrow is there. This world is a place of troubles and these things prevent one from sleeping with ease. The more one’s circle of relations widens, the more the sphere of difficulties and tribulations widens... (Essence of Islam Vol. IV)

Often it is the same things in our

lives that bring both the laughter and the tears. For example during our beloved Hazoor’s tour I have seen the intense joy on all our faces. It was such a joy that easily turned into tears.

The poet Kahlil Gibran captures the complexity of joy most beautifully:

‘Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.

And the self same well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.

And how else can it be?

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.’

(From The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran, Speak to Us of Joy)

It is in contrast to the disappointments and the tragedies in our lives that we may understand happiness and joy.

In the pursuit of happiness we might easily be lured to find relief and comfort from our troubles in the distractions the world has to offer. The pleasure seeking hedonistic atmosphere of this society has become a multi-billion dollar monster! People are driven to all kinds of extravagance and indulgence in entertainment, exotic vacations, decadent dining and the acquisition of wealth and all kinds of material advantages and worldly prestige, even at the expense of

others’ rights, comfort and safety.

Apart from the unstoppable momentum of over stimulation and excessive consumption, our times are complicated by an alarming addiction in people to live ‘on line’ in a virtual world, where everything is perfect and amazing in contrast to the daily expectations of an ordinary life. Not to mention the constant invitation to anaesthetize oneself by being lost in fantasy or by completely losing one’s way in the really destructive world of addictions to drugs and alcohol in the attempt to ease one’s pain. But Allah reminds us in the Holy Qur’an:

“And the life of this world is nothing but temporary enjoyment of deceitful things.” 57:21

Indicating that to search for help and relief in these extreme measures will only increase our feelings of emptiness and despair.

The Promised Messiah^{as}, who came at the appointed time to restore and enliven the true teachings of Muhammad^{saw}, has taught us the way to a life of fulfillment and contentment. He says:

“It is impossible for this world, which is being pulled down by the force of base attractions to rise up again, unless an opposing force appears from heaven to reinforce people’s faith and to show them that there is a more substantial and lasting joy in submission to the commandments of God than in the fulfillment of carnal passions and to convince them that transgression is

worse than death. This heavenly light of conviction is granted to man through the "Sun" i.e. the Imam of this age and failure to recognize him amounts to dying a death of ignorance." (How to Be Free From Sin, pages 1&2)

My dear sisters, we are blessed to have accepted this Imam of the Latter Days and taken the pledge of allegiance at his hand. Our happiness lies in fulfilling that pledge even though the journey may be beset with difficulties and hardships.

This teaching of finding true happiness in God is not new to Islam. Louis of Granada, Spain's most popular spiritual writer of the 16th century wrote:

"No creature can enjoy perfect happiness until it attains its ultimate end; that is the last perfection that is due to it according to its nature. Until it arrives at this state it is necessarily restless and discontented, as is anyone who feels a need for that which he yet lacks. Now what is the ultimate end of man, the possession of which constitutes his complete happiness? Undoubtedly it is God, Who is man's first beginning and last end. Moreover, if God alone is man's Last end and true happiness, it is impossible to find true happiness outside of God... The human heart created as it is for God cannot find rest in anything outside God. In Him alone is it content; without Him it is poor and needy." (Printed in Review of Religions, July 1988)

The Promised Messiah^{as} explains that our experience of taking the Pledge of Allegiance is likened to one who faces the trials of migration:

"It will be known that to leave one's own land where one has been living is a very heavy burden and one undergoes a multitude of difficulties in doing so. When a person even leaves his house, he suffers so much. When he has to leave his country, he has to break off ties with all the friends he has known there. He also has to leave behind all the household items such as beds and rugs and bid farewell to his neighbors, the streets, the lanes, the shops - all that he has to leave behind when he has to go to a new country never to return to his old country." (Malfoozat Vol 1 pp2-5)

He has explained to us that "The true meaning of *Bai'at*, (the pledge of Allegiance) is actually to sell yourself..." To leave one's old home of sin and misguidance and return to that pure state where a person can know God, - 'this is what is meant by *Tauba* or repentance.' And this is the purpose of *Bai'at*.

"And of men there is he who would sell himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Compassionate to His servants." (Holy Qur'an 2:208)

We make our promise at every meeting: "I affirm that I shall always be ready to sacrifice my life, property, time and children for the cause of faith and the community..." And we agree to give precedence to our faith over all our worldly concerns.

The Promised Messiah^{as}

says:

"Without perfect certainty no one's relationship with God is duly adjusted. He who is granted certainty flows like water and rushes like the wind towards God. He consumes everything else like fire and, in trials and misfortunes, displays a firmness like that of the earth. Recognition of God renders a person insane in the eyes of the world, but sane and wise in the estimation of God. This drink possesses a sweetness, which renders the whole body sweet; it is a delicious milk, which relieves him who drinks it of all desire for other bounties. It can be achieved only through such prayers as are offered at the risk of one's life. It is not acquired through the sacrifice of another's blood but through true sacrifice of the ego. How difficult is this task. Ah! How difficult!" (Ayyam-us-Sulh, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 14, pp. 244-246)

In the Holy Qur'an Allah assures us that we will not be disappointed if we sincerely and devotedly commit. And in order to succeed, He says:

"... glorify thy Lord with His praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and glorify Him in the hours of the night and at the sides of the day, that thou mayest find true happiness." (20:131)

These are the five times daily prayers, said at the appointed time! And in the hours of the night - *Tahujjid* Prayer - a source of true happiness!

For it is through this diligent observance of prayer that we can hope to change our baser selves and cleanse our selves of every kind of obstacle in our way. Hazoor^{aba} has reminded us

in his recent *Khutba* of 6/15/2012 that without giving full attention to spiritual matters as we do in worldly matters there is no gain.

“The meaning of true prayer is to die. “When prayer is offered in great tribulation so that the soul melts and flows at the threshold of the Divine, that is true prayer and it is God’s way that when such a prayer is offered, He accepts it or responds to it in some other manner.’ (Malfuzat, vol. IV, p. 340)

Fortunate are those who do not offer the prayer in a ceremonial way! Dive deeply into the prayer, seeking help or guidance or blessings. Put all your strength into it and give yourself over to complete submission. Allah listens to those prayers. And never give up or despair! (*Khutba* 6/15/2012)

Hazoor^{aba} reminded us again last week (*Khutba* 6/22/2012) on the matter of guarding our prayers, especially the middle prayer. For many of us that middle prayer is the *Fajr* Prayer. I quote a few lines from Rumi, who captures the *Jihad* of the self needed for *Fajr* Prayer:

“Muhammad says,
‘I come before sunrise
To chain you and drag you off’
It’s amazing, and funny, that you
have to be pulled away
from being tortured, pulled out
into this Spring garden,
but that is the way it is
Almost everyone must be bound
and dragged here
Only a few come on their own.
(From ‘Some Nights Stay up till
Dawn’ by Rumi)

The Holy Prophet ^{saw} said:

“During the last hours of the night, Allah descends close to the earth and asks, ‘Is there someone who supplicates before Me and I shall accept his supplication? Is there anyone who seeks forgiveness and I shall forgive his sins? Is there someone who desires for subsistence and I shall grant him his desires? Is there someone who wishes Me to alleviate his sufferings so I may fulfill his wishes? This is the time when one should take advantage of the nearness of Allah and pray earnestly and humbly before Him. (Bukhari)

Apart from Prayer, Allah has given us extensive guidance in the Holy Qur’an on the ways of worship and serving mankind to seek His pleasure, to be removed from every kind of grief and fear, and to find true happiness. I can only mention very few in the time. Allah says,

“*They fulfill their vow, and fear a day the evil of which is widespread* (76:8)

“*And they feed for love of Him the poor the orphan and the prisoner*” (76:9)

“*So Allah will save them from the evil of that day, and will grant them cheerfulness and happiness.*” (76:12)

We say, “...I shall always adhere to the truth, and shall always be prepared to make every sacrifice for the perpetuation of the Ahmadiyya *Khilafat*.”

My dear Sisters our love

for *Khilafat* has over spilled in joy and tears these few days being in Hazoor’s company. Let this joy flourish into to real action from now on in being true to our promise of ‘selling ourselves to Allah’. Let us not be those who Allah removes from the list of the obedient and loyal (6/22/2012).

Our beloved Hazoor is the living link in the chain that binds us to the Promised Messiah^{as}, that binds us to the Holy Prophet^{saw} and binds us to Allah the Almighty. Listen to his words intently and keep loving obedience to him. And let us pray that we will be those who find true happiness in this very life of distractions and struggles.

I close with the memorable words of the Promised Messiah^{as}, who sold his life to Allah and found true happiness.

“Our paradise is in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have to lay down one’s life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one might have to lose oneself to acquire it. O ye who are bereft! Run to this fountain and it will satisfy you. It is the fountain of life that will save you. What shall I do, and how shall I impress the hearts with this good news, and by beating what drum shall I make the announcement that this is our God, so that people might hear. What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so that they should listen?” (Our Teaching, page 12)

IMPRESSIONS OF SPANISH-SPEAKING PARTICIPANTS OF THE JALSA SALANA USA

Aliya Latif, Spanish Desk

English Translation provided by Sister Alejandra Girón and Sister Terez Varkonyi

(1)

Alejandra Girón

Alhamdulillah I had the chance to attend *Jalsa Salana* USA, 2012. I recommend each person, Muslim or non-Muslim to attend a *Jalsa Salana* of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

One year ago I was a Catholic person but in *Ramadam* of the last year I accepted Islam and made my *Bai'at*. I am thankful to Allah that he gave me an open-minded family, because they have accepted me as an Ahmadi without forcing me to leave my new faith.

This year I had the chance to go with my mother, sister and mother in law, to the *Jalsa* and it was the most amazing time with the women of my family. We had the chance to meet a lot of sisters that offered their love without boundaries. Upon arrival to *Jalsa* we were received with warmth and friendship. I was so happy that my sisters and brothers in religion accepted my family as one of them. I really was able to experience the motto, Love for all and hatred for none.

It was very moving to see how everyone was volunteering, from the youngest to the oldest person, all with happiness and love for his or her *Jama'at*.

Thanks to Allah and *Iman* Ab-

dul Sattar Khan, the delegation of Guatemala had the chance of meeting Hazoor^{aba}. I want to express so much but when I saw him, I was speechless and I felt almost paralyzed. But I wanted to speak so I used all the strength I had and started to answer the questions he asked me. Hazoor^{aba} said to me that I am a strong Ahmadi, and now more than ever I feel the love for my community deep inside my heart.

Jazakallah Hazoor, because you offered many things to my country, Guatemala, and to the needy people here. *Inshallah* one day you can come to see how beautiful our country is and how people are thankful for all the help that they have received from all the projects of Humanity First.

Alhamdulillah, I was able to make my *Fajr* Prayer behind Hazoor. Till this day I don't know how to express, what my heart was feeling in that moment, to hear the sweet recitation of *Surah Al-Fatiha* from the voice of our dearest *Khalifa*, has no words to describe it.

Many things happened at *Jalsa*, I want to say thanks for all the speeches because when I listened to them I thought, "these messages are for all

kinds of people, not only for Muslims". If all the world could live by these statements and these commandments we could live in peace and harmony. *Jalsa Salana* is to share with sisters and brothers in Islam, but we can all become better people by listening to the messages and learning from them.

Jazakallah to all of the beautiful women for their hospitality and for the best time of my life. *Insha Allah*, we members of Guatemala will have the opportunity to receive all of you at *Jalsa* Guatemala. It would be an honor to receive you and with all my heart I say to you, I will try to make you feel at home, as if you were my own father, mother, brother or sister. *Jazakallah* to all of you, because of you in the USA *Jama'at*, my family feels close to and can identify with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. And *Insha Allah* one day they will be Ahmadi as we are. I will pray with all my heart for this, but what I am more happy about is that they are doing *Tabligh* now. Because they can see Islam is peace, and the Ahmadiyya Community is a real community of Allah.

It is great to know that in the world good people still exist, and love others without minding if one is rich or poor, black or white. It is like what Prophet Muhammad^{saw} said "we are all like relatives". I want to say I believe in the Promised Messiah^{as}, and thanks to him we can get to know

each other through *Khilafat* as one family.

Once again *Jazakallah* for everything. We received lots of blessings from Allah, and I will have you all in my daily prayers that Allah keeps you safe and blessed. Thank you for making me feel loved and cared for. I miss all my lovely sisters, but *Insha Allah* we will meet again.

Thank you Allah for everything, without you nothing is possible. I love you with all my heart, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet this great community and to make me one of them. I promise I will do my best to be a good Ahmadi. Now I know that a different world is possible if we follow this example and the right path each day, only for Your love. Please take care of each and every one of our members and their families. You fulfill my heart each and every day. *Ameen*. Allah bless you all.

Alejandra Girón
Guatemala

(2) Gladys Girón

“A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE”

My name is Gladys Girón, I am from Guatemala, and I want to share my *Jalsa* experience:

On a normal workday, my little sister, Alejandra, came to me very excited and told me about an event that was going to be held in her religious community. When she told me about it, she asked me to join her because it would mean a lot to her. This event was going to be held in Penn-

sylvania. I saw the happiness in my sister as she was telling me about going, so I thought: “If God wants, I will go to this event and He will make the journey easy for me”.

That was the first thing that came to my mind despite our family’s financial situation, which has been strained because of the current recession that our country is experiencing. When I went to my family to talk about the event, the desire to attend only increased, but it was almost impossible to imagine. But Thanks to God, the opportunity was given to me without much hardship. And now I want to give a brief description of what I lived through and my wonderful experience at this special event.

The event, organized by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, is called *Jalsa Salana*, which means annual gathering, and Muslim members from all over the world gather together. I never imagined that I would have met so many lovely people and from the first day they made me feel part of the big Ahmadiyya Family.

Many of the female volunteers welcomed us with great happiness and friendliness. Since the first day I experienced not only human affection and warmth but I was also excited to see that we were more than five thousand women present, united in sisterhood, sharing beautiful messages about what guides us to live better - where God is the most important and fundamental

in our lives. Where we leave pride, envy and criticisms, and change all of these for love for humanity; by helping without expecting anything in return, helping the needy, and by being a source of light in our homes. This is the beginning of change since the family is the foundation of our society and by being good examples people around us will learn from us.

Jalsa was also special because we had the chance to meet the leader of the community, Hazoor^{aba}, which I cannot explain in words my emotions the moment we met him. His presence transmitted to us immense peace and illuminated inside of us feelings of love for others, a desire to change and to be better in this society.

Finally I want to thank the hospitality that I was given, so many beautiful details that were arranged for me, making me feel a part of your community and knowing that even though I am not a Muslim you made me feel as one of you.

Once again I want to express that this was an unforgettable experience where I learned a lot and I am grateful for the opportunity that you gave me to participate in such a beautiful event.

Assalamu Alaikum
Gladys Girón
Guatemala

(3) Amparo de Girón

Dear Reader: Thanks to the Grace and Mercy of Allah, I had the pleasure of attending (during six days of July) the *Jalsa Salana* of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which was held in Pennsylvania, United

States, and which is celebrated in different parts of the world, and my impressions of all that I lived in those few days were WONDERFUL. I want to thank each and every person that attended to us in this time. I noticed that at no moment was I forced to become a Muslim, on the contrary, everything was love, sweetness, and brotherhood by each and every member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. I was very honored to meet Hazoor in person, whom with all his love, offered a lot of things for the poor and neediest people of my country.

The experience I had was wonderful. I observed that you Ahmadis are real Lovers of the one and only God, Allah, Creator of the whole world. I, as a Catholic, am thankful that my daughter is following your footsteps in this religion that nothing has to do with all the bad things that are known about the Islamic world. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community only has in its mission LOVE FOR ALL, HATRED FOR NONE, I want to tell everyone that we have to study all the religions of the world so we can make a real judgment about what the love of God and His prophets mean, and Islam also teaches that Mary is a woman of example and purity for all women. Thank you again for everything. God Bless you.

Amparo de Girón
Guatemala

(4)
Margarita Asensio

How did I feel after participating at the *Jalsa*? I would like to share

this experience with you...

My trip was put together in less than an hour, how, you may ask? Only God knows, on the same day, the same time, and the same plane as Alejandra and her family!

Initially I envisioned the trip as an adventure, an opportunity to rest and a change of environment, but I didn't realize the change that was to take place in me.

I have always believed in God, I never doubted His Divine attributes to direct and carry out everything that happens in our lives. I believed in His deep love for all of us, in His constant forgiveness, but I did lose some faith in the ways in which human beings treat one another. The first *Jalsa* day was a little difficult for me because I felt out of place and I felt bad that I was of another religion taking up the place of someone who is Muslim who could be here instead. However, as the hours went by and how you all accepted me I realized that my spontaneous trip was one of the best decisions I have made in a long time.

I learned that love reaches us in different ways, that God shows and transmits to us His message through people, who in some cases do not know us and have never seen us in their lives. But there you all were talking with me and welcoming me, making me feel that I had a place even though I am not a part of the same religion. This is because He respects us and lets

us choose without force, but sometimes lets us reject other human beings. How many times in our lives have we passed by someone without realizing their suffering or pain? How many times are we so consumed by our ego that we do not see that someone is in need of a smile, or a tight grip of the hand to transmit to them the essence of what God used to create us, love. All the messages touched some sensitive parts in me that were hibernating for reasons I can't explain, but I felt them and I was a part of this grand congregation of people together for the same reason, a Superior and High Being that has given us life and provides us each day with thousands of things that we take for granted because they are such a part of our everyday routine of coming and going.

Something that gave me a lot of hope was to see so many young people firmly believing in what they are doing; a long line of children guided by their mothers, already absorbing the essence of serving others; older women giving their testimony of faith to one Supreme Being by making an effort to move in their wheelchairs to participate in the union of prayer for the peace for all humanity and for those unknown people that only God knows if they will ever see again. When I left I gave myself a goal, to try to get involved and help, because I feel that I have reached a point in my life that I want to share, even a little, all the blessings that I have received. I don't know if we all ever reach this point, but for me it has come, I don't want to let it pass, and I think I have enough strength and maturity to do it. For months I have felt this necessity, but I have not found the way. When the Humanity First projects in Guatemala were approved I was delighted,

not only for the people who will benefit, but also for those who have dreams and want to make them realities. A dream that will become aid, will cease to be a dream and evolve into hope for many who are in need. During this visit there were laughs, happiness, and tears as well, but I learned a lot. I have been enriched greatly and now I have friends in different places who pray for me, and because I achieved my goals by making my own dreams into a reality. "I have learned that the happiness in my life consists of giving. I have learned that a hug from an elder person and their blessing is the greatest satisfaction in my life. I have learned that to make someone smile, regardless of age, social class, or nationality, is to give life again to myself. I have learned that the ability to say freely I love you to someone fills me with love, of which I can give more of than before." I have learned many things and I value them like a treasure...

Margarita Asensio
Guatemala

(5)
Terez Varkonyi

Wednesday, June 20, 2012, the *Khalifa* of Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, arrived at Bait-ur-Rahman mosque in Maryland. Even though I live about three hours away from the mosque, I immediately felt the spiritual light of his presence which manifested itself as a sense of peace inside me. Although being far away, at home, I felt so many emotions that Wednesday that I could not control my tears. On MTA I saw the moment of his arrival at the mosque where many followers gathered to welcome him. Children were reciting poems by the Promised Messiah^{as} and

I have never in my life seen or felt so much happiness and hope.

The following Sunday I had the opportunity (a blessing really) to meet the *Khalifa* and be in his presence. It is difficult to express in words the moment when a humble servant is near a man so close to Allah. In the short time that I was with him I could not stop looking at his hands – white, simple, beautiful, blessed hands. That day, at that moment, I understood the significance of *noor*. Not only does it mean light in Arabic, but it also describes the reflection of God's illumination and light. Prophets are the best examples of *noor* – people so close to God that they reflect a part of His magnificent features. This same *noor* I saw and felt in those moments I was with my beloved *Khalifa*. Whatever doubt that was left inside me, consciously or unconsciously, disappeared that day, Alhamdulillah!. That is the power of *noor* – a blessing from God for the believers, to strengthen their faith.

Without a doubt, my faith increased and strengthened after my meeting with Hazoor^{aba} and during *Jalsa Salama* USA, which was blessed with his presence. *Jalsa* itself is three days to develop spiritual knowledge, strengthen our faith in God and his messengers, and partake with our brothers and sisters in Islam. The Promised Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}, said that "you must not rank this convention in the same league as other ordinary human

assemblies." This year was my third *Jalsa* and in my experience there is nothing like it in this world. The intention of all the participants is the same – to attain nearness to Allah. For that reason, as a participant, one feels an immense love between those present and complete devotion for Allah. *Alhumdulillah*, the blessings I have received through *Jalsa* and Hazoor's^{aba} visit have reaffirmed my commitment to the Promised Messiah^{as}, a messenger of God and devoted follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}.

Terez Varkonyi
Philadelphia Jama'at, USA

HADITH

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "The best of days on which the sun rises is Friday: on that day was Adam created, on that day was he admitted to the garden and on that day was he expelled there from."

(*Muslim kitabussalat bab fadl yaymul jumu'a*)

Hadhrat 'Aus bin 'Aus^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "Your best day is Friday, so you should be diligent on that day in invoking blessings on me for your blessings are conveyed to me."

(*Abu Dawud kitabussalat bab tafri' abwabul jumu'a*)

Hadhrat Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri^{ra} relates that the Messenger^{saw} of Allah said: "A bath on Friday is obligatory on every adult."

(*Muslim kitabul jumu'a bab wujub ghushul jumu'a 'ala kulli balighin*)

ATFAL NATIONAL IJTEMA RESULTS 2012

July 13-15, 2012 (Milwaukee)

Ahsan M. Khan

Atfal Taleem (Educational) Competitions

Sitara (ages 7-9)

Recitation of the Holy Quran

1st Sajeel Khan (Baltimore)
2nd Muizz Gill (S. Virginia)
3rd Haroon Mir (Chicago West)

Nazm (Urdu Poem)

1st Sajeel Khan (Baltimore)
2nd Haroon Mir (Chicago West)
3rd Fadil Bajwa (Potomac, MD)

Speech

1st Subhan Ahmad (Chicago West)
2nd Mahid Qureshi (Hartford, CT)
3rd Amjad Ahmad (Chicago West)
3rd Fadil Bajwa (Potomac, MD)

Adhan

1st Amjad Ahmed (Chicago West)
2nd Sajeel Khan (Baltimore)
3rd Waleed Ahmad (Milwaukee)

Spelling Bee

1st Mahid Qureshi (Harford, CT)
2nd Sabahuddin Ahmed (Milwaukee)
3rd Safeer Ahmad (Chicago West)

Essay

1st Daniyal Butt (South Virginia)

Qamar (Ages 10-12)

Recitation of the Holy Quran

1st Hesham Malik (Central Jersey)
2nd Umar Chaudhry (Central Jersey)
2nd Khalid Hussain (Pittsburgh)
3rd Zeerak Ahmad (New York)
3rd Hannan Ahmed (Chicago West)

Memorization of the Holy Quran

1st Hisham Malik (C. Jersey)
2nd Hanaan Ahmed (Chicago West)
3rd Sinaan Younus (Baltimore)

Nazm (Urdu Poem)

1st Umer Ahmed (S. Virginia)
2nd Hannan Ahmad (Chicago West)
2nd Adeel Khan (Harrisburg)
3rd Mamoon Mir (Chicago West)
3rd Hisham Malik (C. Jersey)

Speech

1st Yasir Ameen (Hartford, CT)
2nd Usman Momen (Silcon Valley)
3rd Adnan Ahmad (S. Virginia)

Spelling Bee

1st Hamid Aina (Baltimore)
(Winning word: "Spherical")
2nd Haroon Mir (Chicago West)
3rd Umer Choudhry (C. Virginia)

Essay

1st Zeerak Ahmad (Brooklyn)
2nd Faiq Ahmad (Atlanta)

Badar (Ages 13-15)

Recitation of the Holy Quran

1st Usama Gill Ahmed (S. Virginia)
2nd Nazir Ahmed (S. Virginia)
3rd Rizwan Mir (Chicago West)

Memorization of the Holy Quran

1st Nazir Ahmad (S. Virginia)
2nd Rizwan Mir (Chicago West)
3rd Umar Momen (Silicon Valley)

Nazm (Urdu Poem)

1st Timur Ahmad (S. Virginia)
2nd Usama Gill Ahmed (S. Virginia)
3rd Masroor Khan (Chicago West)

Speech

1st Harris Qureshi (Hartford, CT)

2nd Zohaib Ahmad (Chicago West)
3rd Masroor Khan (Chicago West)

Essay

1st Safwan Zahid (Merced)

Atfal Team Trivia

Midwest Region – 1st

Rehman Bokhari (Chicago East)
Mir Mamoon (Chicago West)
Ekaan Ahmad (Oshkosh)
Mir Haroon (Chicago West)
Tazil Ahmad (Milwaukee)
Riaan Haadi (St. Louis)
Adeeb Ahmed (Chicago East)
Omar Qureshi (Zion)

Great Lakes/Capital Metro – 2nd

Zeeshan Ahmad (South Virginia)
Labeeb Ahmad (Cleveland)
Naman Naeem (South Virginia)
Hashim Ahmed (Cleveland)
NY Metro/East – 3rd
Qasid Chaudhry (Queens)
Qasid Bajwa (Queens)
Nasar Ahmad (Queens)
Hisham Malik (Central Jersey)
Adnan Akbar (Central Jersey)

Atfal Sports Competitions

Basketball

Sitara Atfal (Age 7-9)

1st place: TEAM A

Athar Awan (Atlanta)
Muizz Gill (South Virginia)
Hisham Ahmad (Potomac)
Shahmeer Ahmad (Potomac)
Daanish Malik (Laurel)
Fadil Bajwa (Potomac)

2nd place: TEAM B

Ibrahim Mudassar (Central Jersey)
Farhan Ahmad (South Virginia)
Nauman Naeem (South Virginia)
Mahid Qureshi (Hartford)
Nauman Saeed (Hartford)

3rd place: TEAM C

Mahid Qaiser (Chicago East)
Ekaan Ahmad (Oshkosh)
Ibrahim Trawalley (RTP)
Subhaan Ahmad (Chicago West)
Safeer Ahmad (Chicago West)

Basketball**Qamar Atfal (Age 10-12)****1st place: TEAM 1**

Danyal Mughal
Umer Ahmed
Farzan Gill
Zeeshan Ahmad

2nd place: TEAM 3

Danial Khan (Central Jersey)
Tayyab Ahmad (Wilmington)
Waqar Ahmad (Wilmington)
Ali Talha (Wilmington)
Hammad Amjad (Central Jersey)

3rd place: TEAM 7

Ekaan Ahmad (Brooklyn)
Naaman Ahmad (Brooklyn)
Yasir Ameen (Hartford)
Nasar Ahmad (Queens)
Talha Malik (Brooklyn)
Rehan Ahmad (Brooklyn)

Basketball**Badar Atfal (Age 13-15)****1st place: TEAM 1**

Jabraan Kadeer
Tahmeen Ahmad
Yousef Nadeem
Ghazi Qamar

2nd place: TEAM 4

Shumail Ahmed
Adil Choudhry
Abdul Rahman Malik
Osama Ahmed
Sheraz Kameer

3rd place: TEAM 3

NajihUllah
Zeeraq Ahmed
Lamin Trawalley
Waheed Ahmad
Arslan Rana

Soccer 7 - 11**HeadQuarter Region - 1st Place**

Sinaan Younus (Baltimore)
Sajeel Khan (Baltimore)
Affan Younus (Baltimore)
Hisham Ahmad (Central Jersey)
Danish Malik (Laurel)
Hanif Aina (Baltimore)

Northeast Region - 2nd Place

Khalid Hussain (Hartford)
Mahid Qureshi (Hartford)
Moazzum Chaudhry (Hartford)
Yasir Ameen (Long Island)
Adnan Alladin (Long Island)
Nauman Saeed (Hartford)
Waleed Saeed (Hartford)
Muneeb Sharif (Boston)

Capital Metro - 3rd Place

Ali Ahmad (South Virginia)
Ibrahim Mudassar (Central Jersey)
Raheel Tayyab (Central Virginia)
Shahmeer Ahmad (Potomac)
Farhan Ahmad (South Virginia)
Noman Naeem (South Virginia)

Soccer 13 - 15 Years**1st place:**

Timur Ahmed
Musawar Ahmad
Umer Ahmed
Danyal Mughal
Umer Choudhary
Farzan Gill
Nazir Ahmd
Adnan Ahmed
Usama Gill
Sheraz Qamar
Zeeshan Ahmad

2nd place:

Labeeb Ahmad
Hasan Qureshi
Hussain bin Ammar
Haris Qureshi
Nomaan Ahmad
Tubraize Khan
Arslan Mudassar
Zoheb Mubshar
Rafae Qadir
Huda Mubshar

Tanzil Ahmad
Adeeb Ahmad
Mubasil Choudhry

3rd Place: Midwest

Zohaib Baig (Chicago West)
Zohaib Ahmed (Chicago West)
Masroor Khan (Chicago West)
Mir Mamoon (Chicago West)
Asher Mir (Chicago West)
Safeer Ahmed (Chicago West)
Matee Chaudhry (Chicago West)
Rizwan Mir (Chicago West)
Raaif Majeed (Chicago West)
Ahmad Malik (Chicago West)
Hannan Ahmad (Chicago West)

Races**100 Meters (7 - 11)**

Uthman Momen (Silicon Valley)
Hisham Malik (Central Jersey)
Hannan Ahmad (Chicago West)

100 Meters (12 - 15)

Haris Qureshi (Hartford)
Zeeshan Ahmad (South Virginia)
Munajj Shahid (St. Louis)

200 Meter - Relay**Team A - 1st**

Uthman Momen (Silicon Valley)
Hisham Malik (Central Jersey)
Hannan Ahmad (Chicago West)
Rawahuddin

Team B - 2nd

Shan Arif
Aaqib Sayyed
Salik Chaudhry
Waleed Cheema

Team C - 3rd

Noman Afzal
Faraan Alladin
Ekaan Ahmad
Naman Naeem

JALSA SALANA MEMORIES AROUND THE GLOBE

Maryum Samar

Jalsa Salana- one word that is so rich with emotions. It is a gathering of Ahmadis (Muslims belonging to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community) in different parts of the world at different times during the year. Guests of other faiths are always welcome at these events. Usually it is a 3 day event and during these three days everyone attending is the guest of the Community i.e., free boarding and lodging, free food etc. All *Jalsa Salana* attendees are blessed with the prayers of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Though every *Jalsa* is special in its own way but the presence of Khalifatul Masih^{aba} makes any *Jalsa* even more special.

God has blessed me to have been able to attend many *Jalsas* around the world. I attended my first *Jalsa Salana* as a baby in my mother's arms of which I have no memory.. but it was unfortunately the last *Jalsa* that was held in Rabwah, Pakistan. The government of Pakistan has ever since banned *Jalsa Salanas* in Pakistan due to their hostile and racist attitude towards the Community. May the days of *Jalsas* in Pakistan return sooner *Insha Allah*.

In my childhood I attended the *Jalsas* of Sierra Leone and Ghana (West Africa). I can't recall the *Jalsa* of Sierra Leone but Ghana *Jalsa Salanas* are fresh in my memory as if it was yesterday. First the *Jalsa Salana* of Ghana used to be at a different place. I remember it was a long journey from our place and I can never forget how there were many cars in

front of us and behind us that were all going in one direction. The strong bonds between us though we were all not just from different regions of Ghana but of different nationalities. Then the *Jalsa* shifted to a place called Salt Pond. It was near Cape Coast where we lived. We used to go by car and it was a nice drive except for a small part near Saltpond where the road was very bad. The place was beautiful with huge coconut trees. They were so tall they reached the skies. It was a coconut farm since all the trees were in proper rows. A stage was made and one could see many *Khuddam* (young boys who are members of *Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* -an auxiliary organization consisting of boys aged 16-40) dressed in black trousers and white shirts and black and white scarves. All women used to wear white clothes during *Jalsa* and they all would have white handkerchiefs which they would raise in the air when slogans of "God is great" etc were raised. We used to stay at a home nearby and I was friends with the kids. Since there were few Pakistani families in Ghana..*Jalsa* was an occasion when we all kids would get together and play around when the *Jalsa* proceedings of the day were over. It's interesting how the *Jalsa* memories of Ghana are the ones I remember most clear-

ly. We would listen to speeches in local dialects of Ghana and though all of us foreigners especially kids knew some Ghanian which we had learnt at school, but even then it was the emotions, confidence and sense of strong faith in Allah that used to come across in these speeches. Without understanding a word, one could sense the strength and courage of the speaker. Truth is universal- one doesn't have to understand the language to understand it! The speeches would be highlighted by the slogans raised and well the kids' voices would be the loudest and strongest. One memory I cherish the most is when once it suddenly started raining and it rained heavily, but the rain did not have any effect on the speaker who continued his speech rather his voice became stronger. What was more interesting was that the gathering remained seated on the mats under the open skies and not a single person got up from his place. The coconut trees provided some shelter but even then not a single kid nor elder got up from his place and suddenly the rain stopped. The Bait (initiation) was always inspiring when everyone repeated the initiation words in one voice. The *Jalsa* would conclude with silent prayers and I remember how everyone used to be so sad that the *Jalsa* is over. I still recall how everyone used to spread around under those tall coconut trees when the proceedings of the day were over. Out of nowhere suddenly there were throngs and throngs of people all having a sense of achievement- all singing songs of praise of God in their special

Ghanaian way. Though it's been ages since I have been to Ghana but I know the *Jalsa* now is held in a new bigger place in the outskirts of the capital city Accra since the Community is growing day by day. Till 1986, I attended the Ghana *Jalsas* without missing them a single year and now that I have attended so many *Jalsas* around the world, I must admit Ghanaian *Jalsas* have their own ambience.

UK *Jalsa Salanas* 1987 and 2005 are the ones I have attended. Interestingly some of our family members had joined us from Pakistan too in both these *Jalsas*, so it was all the more fun. The *Jalsa* was at a place called Islamabad in the outskirts of London. The weather was great. I remember we bought pullovers from a store because it was extremely cold and yet a day didn't pass by when we kids asked our maternal uncle to buy us ice-cream from the ice-cream cart. I also remember getting the hot air balloons and how after a short while I lost hold of it and it flew up in the air. Everyday there were many in the air mostly lost by kids who forgot to keep a strong hold of them. It rained once, but everyone was under a huge covered marquee. Amazingly no one ever fought for the free food that was given at all three times of the day. Everyone knew there was enough for all. The lush green environment surrounding that *Jalsa* area still refreshes my mind. I remember the UK police would be roaming around freely. They had nothing to worry about since everyone in the community is peace loving. Since I am mentioning my experience of UK *Jalsa*, I would also mention my memories of attending the UK *Jalsa Salana* of 2005. The trip was gift from my ever loving mother. We were received at the airport by *Atfal* (boys belonging to *Atfalul Ah-*

maddiya—an auxiliary organization of boys aged 7-16) with welcome cards! We were then taken in a bus along with other *Jalsa* guests to the *Jalsa* area—this time the *Jalsa* was at a rented place – Rushmore Arena. It was very near the army headquarters and this made the *Jalsa* even more special. The area was a very large piece of grassy land with green bushes and trees surrounding it. The crisp air and the beautiful weather of July made the experience even more worthwhile. We got to stay in huge marquees with guests from different parts of the world, mostly Pakistanis and Germans. Women guests from Pakistan were given a free mattress, bedding and pullover. It was a bit cold the first day. I went to attend the *Taleem and Tarbiyyat Seminar*. (Knowledge and Up-bringing) The topic was how to spread the true message of Islam through media. This is where my interest in journalism developed. Many speakers gave awareness on the need for more journalists as the media has become a very powerful tool today. The western media in particular propagates a wrong image of Islam and if we had our own journalists, we could convince the readers more. All in all, it was an excellent opportunity to hear the views of people and journalists from around the world. A documentary was shown in the end as well. I then returned to my marquee and on my way I saw volunteers putting up television sets in different places in the marquee. Guests keep coming in till the next morning when the *Jalsa*

was to begin. The breakfast was so tasty I had it twice and it was given at the right time so people who were early risers didn't have to wait and people who preferred getting ready first and then having breakfast also had it on time. There was milk available for the babies attending *Jalsa*. The bathrooms were being cleaned constantly throughout the day by volunteers with smiles. I remember them so fondly and was impressed by their professionalism with gloves and masks! Though there were queues at times even though there were so many bathrooms available, no one was ever found fighting for their turns.

Jalsa proceedings amazingly began on time on all three days. The best part was that mothers with small kids were given a separate place to sit and thus it was less noisy in the other area. The speeches were great and spell binding and there was always something new to learn from each speech. There was a huge television screen in the ladies marquee so we could watch the proceedings from the men's side live. There was not a single moment when the audio or video quality was not up to mark. Water was provided by young girls who carried Jugs and glasses walking around the marquee.

On the 2nd day, girls who had scored excellent in academics were given medals by His Holiness. I met many of my old friends who I had not met for ages. I also made new friends of different nationalities. Interestingly, I am still in touch with them via email. Both these *Jalsas* were more memorable and special because of the presence of our spiritual leader and we were honoured to have been granted approval to meet them in person as well. I say 'them' because in 1987: it was Khalifa tul Masih IV, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmadth and in 2005: it was Khalifatul

Masih V, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}. In the 2005 *Jalsa*, I remember what a miracle moment it was when my eyes first saw Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}, coming down from a hill to address the gathering on the first day. The glow that surrounds him is extraordinary. His walk was fast but most graceful. It was drizzling slightly and thus a guard had an umbrella protecting him. Those moments though hardly a minute I have cherished all my life. Sometimes the smallest moments in life that become the biggest – the most cherished ones. The initiation ceremony was an angelic experience. Everyone formed a chain and repeated the words of initiation behind our spiritual leader (May Allah strengthen his hands). When the *Jalsa* days were over, the guests were shifted to our mosque in Morden called Baitul Futuoh which is the largest mosque in Western Europe.

There were 2 halls, one for ladies and one for men. All our luggage including the bedding we got were transferred here and since there were still some days left in the hospitality period we were all provided free food here too. We came in double-deckers from Rushmore to Morden. I have never seen so many double-deckers in one place before. Long queues of Ahmadis awaited their turns to sit in them. The view was awesome and the weather made it all the more special. Though everyone was sad that the *Jalsa* was over, the excitement of shifting to Morden was indescribable. The volunteers had started cleaning the area, packing all the material in the late night hours of the last day of *Jalsa* and by morning when we were leaving the place, their work was near completion. Its amazing how people leave their homes, their workplaces and come together and make all the

Jalsa arrangements and they do it all for the sake of God. This work is not of days but stretches over months. The volunteers at Morden were equally dedicated and we had a great time there too. The day we were leaving for Pakistan, we were driven to the airport in a bus also. I must admit *Jalsa* UK was hospitality at its best and I was most impressed by the humble and friendly nature of the volunteers even though they all belonged to well off families settled in the UK.

Although all *Jalsas* I have attended have registration cards, but the 2005 UK *Jalsa Salana* had computerised registration cards which were checked at all entry points. This was an incredible addition to *Jalsa* procedures because it increased the security and safety of those attending.

In 2001, my ever loving father gifted us a trip to USA and Canada on completing our A levels. We took advantage of this and attended both the US and Canada *Jalsa Salanas*. It was all due to the efforts of our very dear Aunty and Uncle who despite their old age drove us to Maryland, Washington all the way from North Carolina for the US *Jalsa*. As if this wasn't enough my Uncle decided to drive us all the way to Toronto, Canada for the Canadian *Jalsa* too, not to mention the tasty snacks my Aunty had prepared for us to have on our way. I remember the US *Jalsa* very fondly because I got more opportunity to help the volunteers

and was also part of the proceedings since I got the opportunity to sing a poem praising the Holy Prophet^{saw} on the 2nd and 3rd day. It was fun learning how to arrange the homeopathic medicines for the medical stall. We stayed at a nearby hotel. I was most impressed by the organizational skills of the volunteers. The food was distributed in the most organised way I have ever seen at any *Jalsa*. There were queues for the lentils/rice/pasta and each table already had packets of bread on it and volunteers made sure to provide bread and water at each table if more was required. The volunteers at the washrooms were also very well mannered and most helpful to everyone.

They were very quick to clean and efficient. What impressed me was their cheerfulness in spite of the work. I had a different image of people living in the US and attending the *Jalsa* totally changed that image. They are more humble than I thought they would be. The Mosque in Maryland is very beautiful and it stands out around the lush green area. There were book stalls and clothes stalls and food stalls. I enjoyed the ice-cream a lot. The speeches were inspiring and were in very easy language for all to understand. One more memorable event was the prize distribution ceremony, in which prizes were distributed to the most talented regions of USA. All in all, it was a very memorable *Jalsa* for me.

After a week, we went to Toronto, Canada from North Carolina by road to attend the Canadian *Jalsa*. Going up country was beautiful in its own way and we got to see many nice places on our way. We stayed at a nearby motel in Toronto. The mosque is amazing and I was taken aback by

its beautiful interiors. The Peace Village itself is a remarkable little township. The most amazing experience about the Canadian *Jalsa* was that everyone used to be in time for the daily prayers in the mosque. I really liked a special glass area which was built inside the mosque for mothers with small kids. The glass was noise proof and it stopped the noise from coming to the adjoining rooms. Amazing! The atmosphere was warm and friendly. I recall my uncle giving me 20 Canadian pounds to spend and I spent 19. I spent it on *nazms* (religious poems) cassettes which I love listening to this day and ice cream. Now the interesting thing here about ice cream was that it was available in vanilla, pistachio and strawberry flavours whereas it was only in vanilla flavour at the USA *Jalsa*. What was stranger was how come the ice cream had the exact same flavour across the border? Anyhow, all in all we enjoyed every moment of *Jalsa* Canada and on our way back saw the amazing Niagara Falls too!

Then I had the opportunity to attend the 2006 Qadian *Jalsa Salana* in India. God made it more special because I attended this *Jalsa* with my mother. My maternal Uncle drove us from Islamabad to Lahore. We got registered in *Baituz Zikr*, Lahore and we were so amazed at their organisational skills and remarkable sense of responsibility towards all those travelling to Qadian. Those working had no care for what time it was, they just knew their jobs and were totally engrossed in completing and helping those arriving from all over Pakistan. We were taken to Baitun Noor, Lahore after getting registered and we stayed the night in Baitun Noor, Model Town,

Lahore! The Community in Lahore took excellent care of us. The sleeping arrangements were most comfortable and they had arranged for heating as well since it was cold. They served us very tasty breakfast, arranged a bus for all of us to go to the border. While we were getting on the bus to go to the border, the *Khuddam* were serving packets of food if any one liked to have one or had not gotten the opportunity to have breakfast in time. At the border, there was a long queue and it took long, they had arranged for food and water at the border also with tents around and special areas for ladies. It seemed like the *Jalsa* had already started. We then crossed the border and the moment we did so was unbelievable, most intense emotions which words fail to describe. The border authorities on the Indian side were friendly. We were then taken to buses waiting for us after the paper work was done. *Khuddam* on duty carried our luggage. After a short while, the bus started and as if there was a rush of emotions. Everyone doesn't get to go to Qadian and more over everyone doesn't get to attend the Qadian *Jalsa*. It's the village where our Promised Messiah Mirza Ghulam Ahmed^{as} came and lived. We were lucky and blessed to be getting this opportunity. Our ancestors also had lived in Qadian; they had a beautiful house there too. So it was all very emotional and tears just rolled down every now and then and I certainly wasn't the only one in the bus who was

feeling this way. It was a short trip; we crossed Amritsar on our way. Then the moment came, when my eyes saw the beautiful white minaret called *Minaratul Masih* from afar. It stood there with all its glory and despite the surrounding scenes changing as we approached Qadian, my eyes were glued to the Minaret.

When we reached the stop where everyone got down, I thought I was in a dreamland. The *Khuddam* on duty helped us with the luggage. All through our stay in Qadian, I felt it was all a dream. The place gave a feeling which I have never felt anywhere in the world. I have visited around 10 countries in my life and I certainly say this with certainty: there is no place like Qadian. There is warmth in the air despite the chilling winter of December. There is brotherhood despite no one being a relative. There is humbleness, friendliness, cheerfulness, you name every good human quality and Qadian is where you are bound to find it. Since the Messiah (Peace be upon him) was no ordinary man, his city is no ordinary city as well. We were served lunch in our room by our hosts. We were so tired we went to sleep after that. We offered our prayers in congregation in Mubarak Mosque every day. It was always crowded and we were lucky to get the first row twice. After prayers, we would go to *Baitud Dua* (a room where the Promised Messiah^{as} offered prayers) and the adjourning rooms to offer prayers too. At home, I have often tried to cry in my prayers at home and it was always hard, but there is something about Qadian; the place makes you worship in the way worship should be done! There were times early in the morning when it was yet dark when it

would drizzle but it was the passion to please God that we wouldn't care for the rain and just walk towards the Mosque. Hearing the call for prayer in Qadian seemed to please the heart so much since we are not allowed to do so in Pakistan. *Jalsa* Qadian was crowded that year. Many had come from all over the world not to mention India itself which has a huge population of Ahmadies. I was on top of the world to be given a duty right near the stage on all three days of *Jalsa*. We young girls used to sometimes get tired standing and take turns to sit but there was an old lady of Karachi who never sat during duty time and we used to feel embarrassed watching her tirelessly performing her duty. She was none other than the wife of our famous poet the late. Obaidullah Aleem Sahib. During *Jalsa*, I became friends with Hiba. I would always be grateful to her for helping me in finding my great great maternal grandfather's (Hadhrat Babu Akbar Ali^{ra}) tomb! He was also a companion of The Promised Messiah^{as} and had done 1/5th *Wasiyyat*.

To have been able to pray at the tomb of the Promised Messiah^{as} was a moment I would cherish all my life. I used to go there everyday twice, one during the lunch break and once in the morning. Such a wrong doer I am and yet God's blessings are countless and unlimited. It's strange there are some in this world who don't even believe in God where as I see moments every day in my life of God's unconditional love.

Speeches were heard with silence I have never seen anywhere. It's amazing how much our translation department has improved. India alone, has so many languages and to cater to everyone's needs is something most remarkable and commend-

able. The food tasted great. The environment was super clean and every one made an effort to keep it clean too. Even small kids were throwing their toffee and chips wrappers in the dustbins. After the morning prayers, we would buy boiled eggs from a shop right in front of Mubarak Mosque and eat them on our way to the graveyard called *Bahishti Maqbara* where there are graves of many a noble people including The Promised Messiah^{as}. Then come back and get ready for *Jalsa*. We used to go as early as possible to the *Jalsa* and as soon as session one ended, we would all enjoy the lunch and prayer break and then came back to attend the second session. Then we would take some rest and go out sight seeing. One day we visited a Sikh household where some of our relatives were staying for *Jalsa*. The Sikhs are a very peaceful community in Qadian. We also did some shopping the last day. The shop dealers were very eager to sell as they had brought stuff from all over India just for *Jalsa* visitors and it's their most rewarding time in the whole year. We also visited Dr and Mrs. Tariq who are very close family friends and are working day and night at Noor Hospital for the people of Qadian and its surrounding areas. May Allah bless all such volunteers who work silently.

This was the routine on all three days but the third day was the saddest day as *Jalsa* was ending. Everyone was sad, the hosts, the guests. The way slogans were raised on the last day with tears and fully charged

emotions, I don't have words to describe especially when we sat in our buses to go back to Pakistan. We were taken very good care by our hosts – Uncle Abdul Rahman and his family especially his very caring and loving mother. We can never forget their warmth and hospitality. God Bless their family.

It is interesting how everyone would forget the worldly things during these days. I would forget my home works and school fellows, no one even thought about checking their emails or watching their favourite television show etc. The *Jalsa*'s spiritual environment engulfs you and it feels like being surrounded by angels. Everyone talks of love and peace and one hardly ever finds anyone fighting or even arguing at *Jalsa*. May God bless all the volunteers of *Jalsa* everywhere in the world and we pray we get to attend many more and *Insha Allah* one day soon we have *Jalsa* Pakistan. *Ameen*

HADITH

Hadhrat 'A'ishah^{ra} relates that whenever the Holy Prophet^{saw} took a bath after consorting, he would begin by washing his both hands. Then he would pour water with his right hand on the left and would wash his private part then would perform ablution like his ablution for Prayer. After this, he would take water and would comb his hair with his fingers to moisten the roots of the hair. When he thought that the hair was wet, he poured three handfuls of water on the head. After this, he poured water all over his body then he washed his feet the last.

(Muslim kitabuttaharat bab sifati
ghuslul janabah)

National Umoor-e-Kharija (Public Affairs) Department**Report of “Day on the Hill” and
6th Annual National Public Affairs Seminar****February 24-26, 2012****(Prepared by Amjad Mahmood Khan,
National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija (Public Affairs))**

On February 24-26, 2012, the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* (Public Affairs) Department hosted a special “Day on the Hill” event and 6th Annual National Public Relations Seminar in Washington D.C. and Silver Spring, respectively. The two events drew a record attendance of **107 delegates from 66 Chapters** across America (93% of total strength), including 4 *Naib Umara* and 4 Regional Missionaries. This was an increase of 5 Chapters as compared to last year.

“Day on the Hill” Event (February 24, 2012)

This year, the Annual Seminar was preceded by a special “Day on the Hill” event, in which local secretaries personally visited individual U.S. Congressional offices in Washington D.C. 73 delegates, including 6 Lajna members, from 41 Chapters traveled together on a bus and participated in **105 meetings with U.S. Congressional offices** (House/Senate) at Capitol Hill in D.C. (exceeding our original goal of 50 meetings by 210%). *Alhumdholillah*. A special 150-page binder/dossier (with appendices) was prepared for each U.S. Congressional office. The “Day on the Hill” event was followed by Juma prayers at the historic Baitul Fazl D.C. and then a special 3-hour tour of Washington D.C. monuments.

6th Annual National Public Affairs Seminar (February 25-26, 2012)**First Session**

The seminar began on Saturday, February 25 at 9:30 AM with the recitation of the Holy Qur’an by Rashid Mian Syed Sahib. After welcome and introduction by National Secretary *Umoor-e-Kharija* USA, Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib, Respected *Ameer Sahib* addressed the gathering. During his address, *Ameer Sahib* emphasized the importance of the *Umoor e Kharija* work and how critical it was for the U.S. *Jama’at* to maintain and nurture relationships with the leadership of the country. He referred to *Umoor-e-Kharija* and *Tabligh* work as occupying two sides of the same coin.

Respected Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib delivered a special address on the value of civil engagement. Drawing on his personal experiences in Canada and the United States, he discussed special techniques that yield success. Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib then delivered the annual report of his department, which included the following high level data:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total Number of Meetings</u>
Meetings with members of U.S. Congress (House) (or staff)	226
Meetings with members of U.S. Congress (Senate) (or staff)	68
Meetings with U.S. State Department officials in D.C.	94
Meetings with other government agencies in D.C.	15
Meetings with U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom	35
Meetings with United Nations officials	17
Meetings with U.S. embassy officials	31
Meetings with foreign embassy officials	46
Meetings with officials in China / Thailand / Indonesia / Egypt / Pakistan / Bangladesh	55
Hearings/briefings in D.C.	11
Meetings with mayors / governors / other state representatives	240
Meetings with intellectuals/professors	115
Meetings with NGOs/think tanks	42
Total # of meetings in all categories	995

Second Session

Respected *Naib Ameer*, Nasim Rehmatullah Sahib, presided the second session. The session began with a discussion on how to conduct an effective meeting with a member of United States Congress. During this discussion, Assistant National *Umoor-e-Kharija* Secretary, Mujeeb Ijaz Sahib, shared his personal experiences and focused on the following critical points:

- Know your audience
- Understand the officials' priorities and memberships to various committees
- Understand importance of nurturing and continuity of relationships
- Understanding, conveying and updating materials presented

A key objective for this year's Seminar was to have local secretaries cross-train and develop common techniques. To that end, the second session featured a special meeting simulation moderated by Muhammed Chaudhry, local secretary for Silicon Valley *Jama'at*, Qudus Malik, Assistant National *Umoor-e-Kharija* Secretary, and Nasir Rana, local secretary for Boston *Jama'at*. During the simulation, all local secretaries were asked to participate in mock meetings in which they were posed with a range of frequently asked questions. A panel of judges rated each secretary's participation and provided feedback for improvement. Amir Malik Sahib of Houston South *Jama'at* stood first as "Best Presenter."

Following the simulated meetings, *Naib Ameer*, Nasim Rehmatullah Sahib, and Muhammad Ahmad Chaudhry Sahib provided a refresher on media and communication materials. All local secretaries were briefed on value of common "collateral," including logos, letterheads, business card templates and media advisories.

Third Session

Respected Missionary Zafrullah Hanjra Sahib presided the third session. The session began with a presentation by Anser Ahmad Sahib, President Potomac *Jama'at*, and N. Mahmood Ahmad, member of the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* team, about the asylum process in the United States. The lecture provided a useful primer to all attendees about the critical differences between asylum law and refugee law, common issues facing asylees preparing for interviews and common misconceptions.

Mujeeb Ijaz Sahib then provided a moving account of his efforts to help Ahmadi Muslim refugee status seekers in Thailand and China. He recounted vivid details of the containment of the Ahmadi Muslim families in Thailand, the challenges the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* team faced in securing release of the families and the process for their eventual resettlement to the United States.

Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib and Qudus Malik Sahib then discussed a few special field cases involving the release of Ahmadi Muslim prisoners in Egypt and United Arab Emirates. They recounted moving details about the strength and courage of the Ahmadi Muslim detainees.

Fourth Session

Respected National General Secretary, Masoud A. Malik Sahib, presided the fourth session. During this session, Haris Ahmad, local secretary from Chicago West *Jama'at*, conducted a special professional workshop on how to become an effective leader. The workshop touched on many aspects of leadership within personal and professional areas of our lives as Ahmadi Muslims. The discussion further expanded on leveraging leadership concepts when working within the machinery and dynamics of our *Jama'at*.

N. Mahmood Ahmad Sahib then moderated a special roundtable discussion among local secretaries about their local success stories. Panelists included: Jariullah Khan (Dallas), Mehboob Alam Ali (Seattle), Nasir Rana (Boston), Jason Elsea (Columbus), Shahed Ahmed (Houston North) and Nasir H. Malik (Houston South).

Fifth Session

Respected *Naib Ameer*, Zaheer Bajwa Sahib, presided the fifth session. The session began with a special presentation by Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib. He shared details about expectations and planning for the upcoming *Jalsa Salana* 2012. He emphasized the importance of Huzoor's^{aba} visit.

All local secretaries were then asked to divide into separate groups for a breakout session to develop local quarterly plans. Each secretary was asked to develop a custom plan and present it to the larger audience.

Closing Session

Respected Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib presided the final session. Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib presented the "Day on the Hill" and Seminar report.

Maulana Mahdi Sahib then delivered the closing address, in which he stressed the importance of enhancing one's efforts through prayers and perseverance. The Seminar concluded with silent prayers.

A RESTORATION OF FAITH

Laila Isack

Allah *Ta'ala* has restored peace to my soul, placidly cradling my past anxieties and turning them into a new form of pure, anxious excitement for the days to come. This is a new beginning and a reminder of the task at hand—to follow the straight path that had been temporarily hidden by the desire of the life of this world and the fog of sin. As I sit here on this weather inflicted plane, while it shakes unstably, I feel content. And if I shall find this ride the tool used by God Almighty to take my life, then I pray the humbling events of *Jalsa Salana* have rendered my heart pure—clean from all forms of vial intoxication that stem from the joyous illusions of the present life. I feel as though I have been restored to the true purpose of life; and though I am tired, I feel as though I have seen rest after a thousand years of wake, as though I am alive after a thousand years of death—I feel as though I am home after a thousand years lost at sea. Allah the Guide has brought me back to the remembrance of His words; and my heart cries, running with ink filled tears, as the words of the Holy Qur'an have been branded into my heart, washing my soul clean.

The speeches of the *Jalsa* were gorgeous in their message and tone, weakening my heart to tears and strengthening my faith. From the eloquently powerful defining of the attributes *Al-Rahman* and *Al-Rahim*—The Gracious and The Merciful—with the explaining of the significant power in the Islamic phrase *Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*, to the delicate voice from a humble servant of God, as she pronounced the path to happiness lies in full submission to Allah the One, every speech called to the hearts and souls of the audience, pulling them on a journey closer to Allah The All-Encompassing. I feel as though the path to the pursuit of happiness has been shortened and the doors to paradise now stand in front of me; all I must do is open them—take the leap of the bird on the ledge. The blessings at the *Jalsa* unified man together as one species with one goal—to find our way home to our creator—the Creator. From talking to a non-Ahmadi, who arduously covers her head to enlighten people through her writings of what it is like to wear *Hijab* as a Muslim woman, to spending time with a pious family who welcomed me into their home with righteous care, I felt the connection of love that bonds us together as human.

Hazoor's grace, may Allah the Healer hold him in good health, blessed upon us, filled the air around with a dense energy that I cannot properly describe in words, but through my failed, premature attempt, I can most explain the energy as pure—a clean air encompassed by Allah *Ta'ala* that cured all the negative energy that once touched the atoms in the surrounding arena. What a blessed event that I feel so fortunate to have been able to attend. What a beautiful brother I have that submitted the finances for me to attend when I had not the means to do so on my own. What a listening God that answered my prayers when I asked for spiritual enlightenment. How gorgeous an event the *Jalsa Salana* truly is. I will end this with the community in my prayers and the hope that this reminder of our goal towards spiritual progress never meets its end but, instead, grows to become the rose of *Surah Al-Fatiha*:

I begin in the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful
 All praise is due to Allah
 Lord of all the worlds
 The Beneficent, The Merciful
 Master of the day of Judgment
 Thee alone to we worship
 And Thee alone do we implore for help
 Guide us to the straight path
 The path of which has earned Thy blessings
 Not the path of those who have incurred Thy wrath
 Nor of those who have gone astray *-Ameen*

MY PERSONAL JIHAD: OFFERING SALAT (PRAYER) IN CONGREGATION

Athar N. Malik, Boston

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ،
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! My screaming alarm jars me awake. It's 4AM on the Thursday before US *Jalsa*, I've been serving on MKA's *Khilafat* team for over a week, and I am physically and mentally drained. I can't even remember the last time I was this tired. But at the same time, I know that Hazoor^{aba} will be offering Fajr prayers in congregation at Baitur-Rahman. If I don't get up now, I will miss it. I prop myself up on my arm and start thinking:

No one will notice if I'm not there...I've been doing duty so I'm tired for a good reason...and I need sleep if I am going to be able to work today...even if I do get up, I probably won't be able to focus during *Fajr*. All these thoughts race through my mind. My tired body and mind do their best to convince me to go back to sleep. My arm weakens and my eyelids begin to droop. But, then I remember that I need to strive in the way of Allah. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"And strive in the cause of Allah as it behoves you to strive for it. He has chosen you and has laid no hardship upon you in the matter of reli-

gion...Therefore observe prayer and pay the *Zakat* and hold fast to Allah." (The Holy Qur'an, 22:79)

This is a test of my faith. This is my *Jihad*. As I think about it more, I get a little less sleepy and I remember that Allah Almighty further says:

"Establish prayer and give *Zakat* and bow down with those who bow before God." (The Holy Qur'an, 2:44)

I remember that only a few days ago, our beloved Hazoor^{aba} gave a *Khutba* in Baitur-Rahman explaining:

"*Salat* should be offered in congregation...this verse [2:44] emphasizes that offering prayer ... takes the best form when offered in congregation." (Friday Sermon, 6/22/12)

I remember the *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet^{saw} in which he told us that offering prayers in congregation increases the reward 27 fold compared to offering it alone (Gardens of the Righteous, *Hadith* #1068).

My arm straightens back out, my eyes open, I sigh and realize that sleep will have to wait.

As I make my way to the *masjid*, I see a small but steady stream of people shuffling into

the mosque. I am inspired by their devotion. I remember the *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet^{saw} in which he says that *Fajr* is such a blessed prayer that if the hypocrites knew of its blessings even they would come to offer it (pause) even if they had to crawl on all fours (*Gardens of the Righteous*, *Hadith* #1077).

The companions of the Holy Prophet^{saw} understood so clearly understood the importance of congregational prayer that they went to great lengths to participate in it. One companion has related, "Some of us were brought to the mosque supported between two men till they reached their place in the row." (*Gardens of the Righteous*, *Hadith* #1073)

I think about the blessings of *Fajr* and the striving of the companions for congregational prayer, and I realize that I made the right decision. *Assalatu khairu minnan naum*. Indeed, prayer is better than sleep.

Dear brothers, these are some of the teachings of Islam about the importance of striving to offer *Salat* in congregation. The very best example we have today of establishing *Salat* in accordance with these teachings is our beloved Hazoor^{aba}. We all saw his example up close during his recent visit to the US. We all saw how despite his busy schedule he established every single *Salat* in congregation no matter **where** he was, no matter **how**

busy he was, no matter how tired he must surely have been. This model of the *Khalifa* of the time is the model that we need to follow. It was this very model and Hazoor's^{aba} timely guidance that not only inspired me to get up that morning to join him for congregational *Fajr* but also inspired many members of the US *Jama'at* to offer congregational *Salat* with Hazoor^{aba}. I saw with my own eyes how many people came to offer congregational Prayers with Hazoor^{aba} so that every prayer seemed to be a *Jalsa* in itself. Dear brothers! The importance of striving to offer congregational prayer cannot be overemphasized. It is so important that the Holy Prophet^{saw} said: "I have sometimes thought that I would ask for fuel to be collected and the *Adhan* to be called, and would appoint someone to lead prayer and then go to those people who did not come for prayer and set fire to their houses before their eyes." (*Gardens of the Righteous, Hadith #1072*).

May Allah enable us to internalize the importance of congregational prayers and strive with our greatest striving to offer them whenever possible. And may he enable all the righteous changes we made in the company of Hazoor^{aba} to become permanent changes in our lives. *Ameen*.

*Wa akharudawana anil hamdolillahe
rabbil aalameen.
Assamalo Alaikum wa Rahmatullahe
wa barakatohu.*

MKA NATIONAL
IJTEMA 2012 IMPROMPTU
SPEECH FINALS

JALSA SALANA (ANNUAL CONVENTION)

In 1891, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as} laid foundation of the *Jalsa Salanah* system in the *Jama'at*. The first *Jalsa Salanah* was held in 1891 at *Masjid Aqsa* in Qadian. In this *Jalsah* only 75 members participated. The second *Jalsa Salana* was held on December 27, 1892 and the total attendance of this convention was around 500. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as} said about the first *Jalsa Salana*:

"All friends should make it a point to reach on this date for the sake of God to listen to His words and to participate in prayer. Such truths and words of wisdom shall be heard as are essential for the increase of faith, conviction, and knowledge. Such friends will also be entitled to special prayers and special attention. Efforts will be made before the most Merciful Lord that He may draw them towards Himself and accept them and grant them a change for the better. A secondary advantage of such gathering will be that every year when they come to Qadian on the appointed dates, they will see and meet newcomers into the fold and this personal acquaintance will continually develop into close friendship and love. ... And effort will be made through prayers to create a bond of spiritual union between all and remove every barrier of estrangement, aloofness and difference."

It was during the first *Jalsah Sa-la-nah* that the objectives of this gathering were defined which among others were:

1. To Propagate Islam.
2. To think out ways and means of promoting the welfare of new converts to Islam in Europe and America.
3. To further the cause of righteousness, goodwill, purity, piety and moral excellence throughout the world.
4. To eradicate evil habits and customs.

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as} further said about the *Jalsa Salana*:

"I should like to repeat that this Convention must not be taken like other ordinary gatherings, for unlike them, it has been based on the succor of God."

This *Jalsa Salanah* became the beginning of a World-wide system of holding *Jalsa Salana* every year. Today, these *Jalsa Salanah* are held all over the world. The *Jalsa Salana* held at a place where the *Khalifah* resides becomes an international *Jalsa Salana* as Ahmadis from all over the world come to attend that *Jalsa*. In Pakistan, the first Annual Convention (*Jalsa Salanah*) was held in Lahore on December 27-28, 1947. In Rabwah, the first *Jalsa Salana* was held on April 15-17, 1949. In the last *Jalsa Salana* held at Rabwah, Pakistan in 1984, more than 250,000 Ahmadis and non-Ahmadi guests participated.

RESURRECTING AFTER HURRICANE ISAAC

Mobashir Ahmed, President, New Orleans Jama'at

New Orleans Mission House located in a residential street in Kenner was purchased 35 years ago. It was built over 100 years ago and yet it stood the wrath of many weather events including several hurricanes and rising floods. We did quite well through Hurricane Katrina and its immediate aftermath. Katrina was a fast-moving storm with very low barometric pressure, and our reasonably stout building weathered the wind onslaught much better than other area residences. Regrettably, our outcome from Isaac was nearly the opposite and bordering on worst case scenario. Isaac first made landfall at the crows-foot delta of the Mississippi and then slowly wobbled westward for half a day making a second landfall near Barataria Bay, in our Parish. Then ever so slowly the eye passed about 20 miles to the west of the Mission House and then northwesterly between Donaldsonville and Baton Rouge. Given the counter-clockwise rotation of cyclones in the northern hemisphere, the exact worst place to be is north and east of the eye. Regrettably, that's where our building was for 36 battering hours of unremitting horizontal sheets of rain.

There are two main avenues in which had entered the building: the biggest threat area was through glass doors and windows which were original equipment on this 1930's vintage building. They have been on the wish list to replace for both moisture protection and sound reduction purposes for a number of years. The second main avenue is through the exterior vents and from the roof leakage. There are mitigators but no slam

dunk solutions to that issue. The monstrous 100 mile/hour wind for over 3 days caused major water infiltration as the roof blew away and the continuous rain for several days impacted and exasperated the conditions even further.

So we were inundated with water far worse than Katrina and far worse than some of our adjacent buildings. Getting power restored was a major challenge. Power went out for us at approximately 8:05PM Tuesday. Several adjacent building were with power even though most of these properties are fed by the same substation, which has 8 outgoing feeder lines, lucky us, our feeder line was the one with evidently the most perplexing issues, and we did not get restored until Monday at 7:43PM. The utility was so clueless that we received a call at 10:30 this morning from Entergy asking us the state of our power! Although the water infiltration occurred from Tuesday evening through Thursday mid-day, rain continued all day Friday, and outside weather conditions were hot and humid even without rain. As I write, 2 of our rooms which are primarily used for prayers have suffered heavy losses, and have had carpet removed and drywall removed to a minimum of two feet above floor, and in the case of the exterior wall, all the way up. So at the moment we have about 10% usage of the Mission House ostensibly shutting us

down from conducting our business. Making matters much worse than Katrina is the way insurance policies have been rewritten by almost all carriers since Katrina. For Katrina, the losses were treated just as any other losses, but with a few exclusions. Since then the industry moved to a deductible based on 3% of replacement cost for the peril of wind in Gulf Coast counties. This year for our renewal, the rules changed again, and the general property insurance industry decided that all losses from "named storms," regardless of the specific peril, whether it be wind, loss of power, business interruption, etc., would be considered as a single loss, and the deductible would be calculated as 5% of the sum of building and improvements replacement cost, contents (FF&E) coverage, And the limit on business interruption for which coverage was mandated to be a full year of incremental cost. As a result we will face a large deductible which we may have to raise ourselves as the insurance proceeds will not be adequate to cover the entire loss.

I preface all of the above to highlight the enormity of this disaster for our small *Jama'at*. We are trying to secure an alternate space for regular prayers and bi-weekly meetings. This house has been a profound and noble source for us to gather, pray, reminisce, socialize and teach and learn together. While the hardship is palpable we will *Insha Allah* rebuild and re-establish ourselves. We seek prayers for our well being and that may Allah *Ta'ala* bless our efforts in building a new House of Worship. *Ameen*

Khalifa of Islam on U.S. Tour

S. Ahmad (Suwaneepatch: Posted on June 26, 2012)

At a time in history when there is a visible lack of central leadership among Muslims and most Muslim countries are in chaos faced with war, political unrest and chaos, I feel blessed and proud to be part of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community that is unified under guidance of one individual or Khalifa. The Khalifa (Caliph) of Islam, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, has been on a tour of United States for the past few days. I am pretty certain that most Americans are unaware of his existence or the fact that he has tens of millions of followers in around 200 countries. Our community bears the motto, "Love for all, Hatred for None" and our leader urges us to serve mankind in whatever way possible, live in peace and never take law into our own hands even when faced with persecution in many parts of the world. Only recently he sent letters to the Prime Ministers of Israel, Iran and President Obama so that they could resolve conflict and avoid third World War at all cost.

'Khilafat' is nothing new to Islam. The word 'Khilafat' means *succession* and we believe that the Khalifa is a *successor of a Prophet of God* whose goal is to carry to completion the tasks of reformation and moral training seeded by the Prophet of Islam. Historically speaking, there have been four successors/'Khulafa' after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This institution was re-established after the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community whom we believe to be the promised Messiah of the latter days. His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad is the fifth Khalifa of our community and has been serving the community since 2003. He resides in United Kingdom with his family, which serves as the community's International headquarter. This is his second visit to the U.S with the main objective being the meeting with community members spread in 71 Chapters all over the country and also to convey the message of peace to the people and government of United States. At an event in Washington D.C on June 27th, he is scheduled to deliver a keynote address "*The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations.*" Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Republican Congressman Frank Wolf, Congressman Keith Ellison and Senator John Kerry will attend the event along with other dignitaries.

The governor of Illinois welcomed His Holiness with a welcome letter on his arrival in Chicago from London. He then went to Zion because of its historic nature for our community. This town was established by John Alexander Dowie, to whom the Promised Messiah issued a challenge of a prayer duel in 1902 upon his repeated insults and false allegations about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Dowie never responded but died a sad and lonely death as prophesied by our community founder. This led to the memorable headline in the 'Sunday Herald of Boston' on 23 June 1907:

"Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is Great – The Messiah foretold pathetic end of Dowie."

After visiting the first Ahmadi Mosque in Chicago, as of June 22, His Holiness has arrived at Bait-ur-Rahman mosque in Maryland where about 2000 community members greeted him. This mosque serves as our community's National Headquarter in the U.S.

In the next few days he will be meeting more community members and leaders in addition to attending our annual convention in Harrisburg, Pa., from June 29 to July 1, which is expected to draw more than 10,000 followers from all over the U.S and the world. Usually community members travel to U.K to see him in person, so his US visit brings a great opportunity for us to catch a glimpse and to be in his presence. That is why many families, including my own, from our Georgia chapter are traveling to Harrisburg to attend the convention.

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Source: Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA

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Khalifa of Islam to Visit United States

His Holiness to Speak at Capitol Hill and Attend Oldest Annual Muslim Convention

SILVER SPRING, Md., June 1, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Thousands of American Muslims wait in anticipation for the historic U.S. visit of His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, worldwide spiritual and administrative head (*Khalifa*) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, in June. As the Muslim leader commanding the largest following of Muslims in the world, His Holiness visits the U.S. shortly after contacting several world leaders -- including President Barack Obama, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad -- to resolve international differences with diplomacy and to avoid violence at all costs in order to prevent a Third World War.

During his visit, His Holiness will meet with not only thousands of American Muslims but also with significant U.S. government leaders to strengthen relationships and find means of establishing peace and justice for all people.

On the morning of June 27th, His Holiness will deliver the keynote address at a special bi-partisan reception at the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill entitled, "The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations." In conjunction with the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the event will include a welcome address by Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, as well as remarks by U.S. Senator Robert Casey and Representatives Frank Wolf, Mike Honda and Keith Ellison. Dozens more members of Congress, Ambassadors and thought leaders from across the country are expected in attendance.

His Holiness will also preside over the 64th Annual Convention of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on June 29th through July 1st. As the nation's oldest annual Islamic convention, this three day event is expected to attract over 12,000 American Muslims and 1,000 non-Muslim guests.

Contact us for more information.

Contact:

Harris Zafar, National Spokesperson

harris.zafar@ahmadiyya.us

About the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community:

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a dynamic, fast growing, international revival movement within Islam. Founded in 1889, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community spans 200 countries with membership exceeding tens of millions. Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, established in 1920, is the first American-Muslim organization.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the only Islamic organization to believe that the long-awaited messiah has come in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadian. Ahmad claimed to be the metaphorical second coming of Jesus of Nazareth and the divine guide, whose advent was foretold by the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad. The Community believes that God sent Ahmad, like Jesus, to end religious wars, condemn bloodshed and reinstitute morality, justice and peace. Ahmad's advent has brought about an unprecedented era of Islamic revival and moderation. He divested Muslims of fanatical beliefs and practices by vigorously championing Islam's true and essential teachings.



IV

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 709

Welcoming His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, to Washington, DC, and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, nonviolence, human rights, religious freedom, and democracy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 27, 2012

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California (for herself, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mr. HINCHAY, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HONDA, Mr. WOLF, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DENT, Ms. CHU, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. MCGOVERN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Welcoming His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, to Washington, DC, and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, nonviolence, human rights, religious freedom, and democracy.

Whereas, from June 16, 2012, to July 2, 2012, His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, an international religious organization with mil-

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lions of members across the globe, is making a historic visit to the United States;

Whereas His Holiness was elected to become fifth Khalifa to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a lifelong position, on April 22, 2003;

Whereas His Holiness is a leading Muslim figure promoting peace, who in his sermons, lectures, books, and personal meetings has continually advocated the Ahmadiyya values of service to humanity, universal human rights, and a peaceful and just society;

Whereas the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has suffered repeated hardships, including discrimination, persecution, and violence;

Whereas, on May 28, 2010, 86 Ahmadi Muslims were killed in Lahore, Pakistan, when two mosques belonging to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community were attacked by anti-Ahmadiyya terrorists;

Whereas despite the continued sectarian persecution that Ahmadi Muslims are subjected to, His Holiness continues to forbid violence;

Whereas His Holiness has traveled globally to promote and facilitate service to humanity, meeting with presidents, prime ministers, parliamentarians, and ambassadors of state;

Whereas during his visit to the United States, His Holiness will meet thousands of American Muslims in addition to significant United States Government leaders in order to strengthen relationships and find means of establishing peace and justice for all people; and

Whereas, on the morning of June 27, 2012, His Holiness will deliver the keynote address at a special bipartisan recep-

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tion at the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill, “The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) welcomes His Holiness, Mirza Masroor
3 Ahmad to Washington, DC;

4 (2) commends His Holiness for promoting indi-
5 vidual and world peace, as well as individual and
6 world justice; and

7 (3) commends His Holiness for his perseverance
8 in counseling Ahmadi Muslims to eschew any form
9 of violence, even in the face of severe persecution.

○

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR MARTIN O'MALLEY

Dear Friends:

Greetings to the Ahmadi Muslim community and His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad for the 64th Jalsa Salana.

Last April, I participated in the U.S. World Islamic Forum in Washington, D.C., where we discussed the importance of fostering bonds with our neighbors. Thank you to the Ahmadi Muslim community for building bridges of understanding and for promoting friendship.

Here in Maryland, we believe in the dignity of every individual regardless of race, creed, ethnicity, ancestry or religious belief. Our State is committed to bringing people together in the spirit of engagement and service. And, we understand that diversity is our greatest strength and there are some challenges so large that we can only hope to tackle them together.

Best wishes for an enjoyable and successful event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin O'Malley'.

Governor

DAVID PRICE
4TH DISTRICT
NORTH CAROLINA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
RANKING MEMBER, HOMELAND SECURITY
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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June 29, 2012

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88 VILCOM CENTER, SUITE 140
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27514-1600
(919) 967-7924

N.C. MUTUAL PLAZA
411 WEST CHAPEL HILL STREET
DURHAM, NC 27701-3642
(919) 688-3004

www.price.house.gov

Mr. Rafiq Sayed
President
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA
102 Avenue of the Estates
Cary, NC 27518

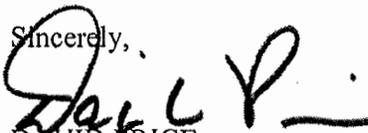
Dear Mr. Sayed,

Thank you for the gracious invitation to attend your national convention. I regret that I cannot join you and hope it will be an informative and productive meeting for those in attendance, including representatives of the Ahmadiyya community from the Fourth District of North Carolina.

I also want to welcome His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad to the United States and to commend him for his outreach to the United States Congress in furtherance of his commitment to peace, human rights, and democracy around the world.

The persecution faced by the Ahmadiyya Muslim community worldwide is unacceptable, and I am gravely concerned by the tragic episodes of violence against its members that have occurred in recent years. It is my strong conviction that the free and peaceful expression of religion is a fundamental right that must be protected, and I am committed to continuing to work with the Ahmadiyya community to ensure that the United States government works to uphold this basic civil right.

Again, I wish you the best for a productive gathering and look forward to working in furtherance of our common values.

Sincerely,

DAVID PRICE
Member of Congress

CC: Mr. Shamim Malik, Director, Public Affairs, Research Triangle Chapter

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

- *RANKING MEMBER* — SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT
- SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, COMPETITION, AND THE INTERNET

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

- *RANKING MEMBER* — SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

- SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
- SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515

ZOE LOFGREN
16TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

635 NORTH FIRST STREET
SUITE B
SAN JOSE, CA 95112
(408) 271-8700

1401 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3072

WWW.HOUSE.GOV/LOFGREN

CHAIR, CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

CO-CHAIR, CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS ON
VIETNAM

CO-CHAIR, DIVERSITY & INNOVATION CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR, CONGRESSIONAL HAZARDS CAUCUS

June 30, 2012

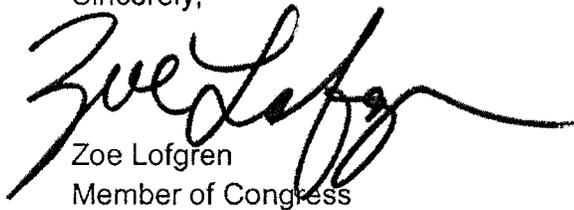
Dear Friends,

It is with pleasure that I extend sincere greetings to all that are gathered today to attend the 64th Annual Jalsa Salana USA.

For over a century, and in the face of adversity, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has advocated for peace, tolerance, and universal human rights. I stand with you in your support for these principles, and I applaud your commitment to creating a better world.

Once again, I extend my best wishes to you for a successful conference.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

Pat Quinn
GOVERNOR

June 16, 2012

His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V
The Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

Your Holiness,

As Governor of the State of Illinois, I am pleased to welcome you to Illinois on the occasion of your visit to Chicago.

Throughout the years, you have been a backbone of strength to Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which is thriving here in Illinois. As spiritual and temporal leader, you have provided the community with guidance and support. Your unwavering commitment to peace, faithfulness and respect has undoubtedly touched numerous lives, and provided a source of inspiration to many people throughout the Land of Lincoln, and around the world.

It is quite an honor for Chicago and Illinois to serve as host to such a prominent religious leader as Your Holiness. While I wish I had the opportunity to join you, prior commitments regrettably preclude me from meeting with you. It is my hope that while you are in Chicago, you have the opportunity to enjoy all that Chicago has to offer.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I once again welcome you, and offer you my best wishes for a successful visit.

Sincerely,
Pat Quinn

Pat Quinn
Governor



Office of the Mayor

Phil Dyer
MAYOR

Greetings,

On behalf of the City of Plano, Texas, I am deeply honored to have this opportunity to recognize the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA and to welcome the 64th Annual Jalsa Salana USA Convention. The event offers members the opportunity to renew their personal faith, establish friendships with other members, welcome new members, and remember through prayer those who have passed away.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, founded in 1889, has continually supported universal human rights and safeguarded all minorities. The efforts to show that your religion is one of peace and love will be rewarded by the acceptance and appreciation of others.

The Plano community joins in welcoming His Holiness Mirza Misroor Ahmad, the fifth Khalifa, to our country. Our citizens appreciate the enrichment that Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA and the Annual Jalsa Salana USA Convention bring to our culture. We wish you the utmost success with this event and with all your future endeavors!

Sincerely,


Phil Dyer
Mayor

JOHN CORNYN
TEXAS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

June 29, 2012

Jalsa Salana USA
Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

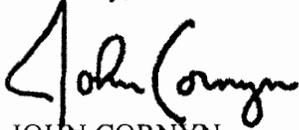
Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 64th annual Jalsa Salana of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Since its founding in 1921, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA has worked to facilitate greater spiritual awareness among Community members, strengthen ties, and promote peace. Tonight's program will serve to further promote these goals.

I send my best wishes for this year's Jalsa Salana convention.

Sincerely,



JOHN CORNYN
UNITED STATES SENATE

PETER J. ROSKAM
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
ILLINOIS, 6TH DISTRICT



United States Congress
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 25, 2012

His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V
The Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Community
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
15000 Good Hope Rd
Silver Spring, MD 20905

Your Holiness,

On behalf of Illinois' Sixth Congressional District, I write to extend my sincere welcome to you on your special visit to the United States.

Your role as the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is an exemplary testament of leadership.

Thank you for your gracious invitation. Although I am unable to join you on this occasion, I wish you a successful visit and offer my warm regards and best wishes.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roskam", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

Peter J. Roskam
Member of Congress



CITY OF BETHLEHEM

10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018-6025

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Phone: 610-865-7100

Fax: 610-865-7257

TDD: 610-865-7257

www.bethlehem-pa.gov

John B. Callahan
Mayor

June 19, 2012

Dear Members and Guests of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community:

On behalf of the City of Bethlehem I would like to congratulate you as you celebrate your **64th Annual Jalsa Salana USA** convention in Harrisburg, PA. Your commitment to your members and the community for over sixty years serves as an example to all of us.

I would also like to extend a special welcome to His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community who will preside over this year's convention. We wish you much success in your work to strengthen relationships and find means of establishing peace and justice for all people, as you meet with the many American Muslims and U.S. government leaders over the next several weeks.

On behalf of the residents of Bethlehem, I extend congratulations to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA for their success in keeping with their motto, "Love For All, Hatred For None." Your efforts in advocating for universal human rights and protections, and for peace and tolerance are to be commended. As Americans, we are most fortunate to have such distinguished and spiritual individuals sharing their gifts every day.

For the exceptional contributions you have made in the Muslim community in the United States and to our community as a whole, I thank you and express my appreciation for the high level of service you provide for which we are most grateful. Best wishes for a very successful convention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John B. Callahan".

John B. Callahan
Mayor

ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ
12TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA
TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3813
June 22, 2012

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1227 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
TEL: (202) 225-6111
FAX: (202) 225-0511

DISTRICT OFFICE:
7219 FRANKFORD AVENUE
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19136
TEL: (215) 335-3355
FAX: (215) 333-4506

706 WEST AVENUE
JENKINTOWN, PA 19046
TEL: (215) 517-6572
FAX: (215) 517-6576

www.house.gov/schwartz

Dear Friends:

Thank you for the invitation to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's 64th annual U.S. convention. I regret that I was not able to attend.

My faith teaches me that we must work to repair our broken world and strive for justice and equal opportunity for all. Throughout my career in Congress and as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I have fought to promote human rights and religious freedom. No one should face discrimination or persecution because of their faith. No one should have their economic opportunities limited or their voices silenced because of what they believe.

I applaud the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad for promoting understanding between people of all faiths. I look forward to partnering with you in the years to come to build a more just world.

Sincerely,



Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress

Committee on Financial Services
Ranking Democratic Member,
Subcommittee on Oversight
& Investigations

Committee on Transportation &
Infrastructure

Democratic Steering & Policy
Committee

Democratic Caucus
Chair, Committee on Oversight,
Study & Review

www.house.gov/capitano



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Michael E. Capuano
8th District, Massachusetts

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

1414 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2108
(202) 225-5111
FAX: (202) 225-9322

DISTRICT OFFICES:

110 FIRST STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02141
(617) 621-6208
FAX: (617) 621-8628

ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CAMPUS LIBRARY
ROOM 211

June 30, 2012

Dear Friends,

I regret that I cannot be with you in person today as you celebrate the visit of His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, to the United States. This week, I was honored to join with other Members of Congress in welcoming His Holiness to Capitol Hill and recognizing his commitment to religious liberty and universal human rights.

Your commitment to peace and justice should compel the respect of all persons who hope for a world free from fear and hatred.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael E. Capuano".

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

TOM REED
29TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
HUMAN RESOURCES
OVERSIGHT

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE
1037 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3229
PHONE: (202) 225-3161

www.reed.house.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

CORNING DISTRICT OFFICE
89 WEST MARKET STREET
CORNING, NY 14830
PHONE: (607) 654-7566

PITTSFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
672 PITTSFORD VICTOR RD, SUITE 2
PITTSFORD, NY 14534
PHONE: (585) 218-0040

OLEAN DISTRICT OFFICE
1 BLUEBIRD SQUARE
OLEAN, NY 14760
PHONE: (716) 379-8434

June 30, 2012

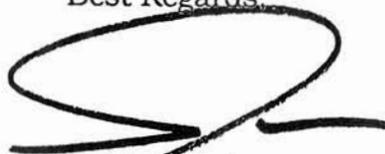
Dear Friends of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA,

Congratulations to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA on its 64th Jalsa Salana!

I join with the many people world-wide who admire your work to take a stand against the persecution of peaceful Muslims and Christians in Pakistan and around the globe. Those of different religions can peacefully co-exist and work together toward the mutual goal of a world free from fear and violence based on one's beliefs or ethnicity. I very much appreciate your commitment toward that goal.

I wish you peace and a successful conference.

Best Regards,



Tom Reed
Member of Congress
NY-29

Bill Text
112th Congress (2011-2012)
H.RES.709.IH

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Bill PDF	XML [Help]	Printer Friendly [Help]	Congressional Record References	Bill Summary & Status
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H.RES.709 -- Whereas His Holiness was elected to become fifth Khalifa to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a lifelong position, on April 22, 2003; (Introduced in House - IH)

HRES 709 IH

112th CONGRESS

2d Session

H. RES. 709

Welcoming His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, to Washington, DC, and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, nonviolence, human rights, religious freedom, and democracy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 27, 2012

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California (for herself, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mr. HINCHEY, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HONDA, Mr. WOLF, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DENT, Ms. CHU, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. MCGOVERN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Welcoming His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, to Washington, DC, and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, nonviolence, human rights, religious freedom, and democracy.

Whereas, from June 16, 2012, to July 2, 2012, His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the worldwide spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, an international religious organization with millions of members across the globe, is making a historic visit to the United States;

Whereas His Holiness was elected to become fifth Khalifa to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a lifelong position, on April 22, 2003;

Whereas His Holiness is a leading Muslim figure promoting peace, who in his sermons, lectures, books, and personal meetings has continually advocated the Ahmadiyya values of service to humanity, universal human rights, and a peaceful and just society;

Whereas the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has suffered repeated hardships, including discrimination, persecution, and violence;

Whereas, on May 28, 2010, 86 Ahmadi Muslims were killed in Lahore, Pakistan, when two mosques belonging to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community were attacked by anti-Ahmadiyya terrorists;

Whereas despite the continued sectarian persecution that Ahmadi Muslims are subjected to, His Holiness continues to forbid violence;

Whereas His Holiness has traveled globally to promote and facilitate service to humanity, meeting with presidents, prime ministers, parliamentarians, and ambassadors of state;

Whereas during his visit to the United States, His Holiness will meet thousands of American Muslims in addition to significant United States Government leaders in order to strengthen relationships and find means of establishing peace and justice for all people; and

Whereas, on the morning of June 27, 2012, His Holiness will deliver the keynote address at a special bipartisan reception at the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill, 'The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

- (1) welcomes His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad to Washington, DC;
- (2) commends His Holiness for promoting individual and world peace, as well as individual and world justice; and
- (3) commends His Holiness for his perseverance in counseling Ahmadi Muslims to eschew any form of violence, even in the face of severe persecution.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Leader Visits Capitol Hill

By Elliott Francis // June 27, 2012



Elliott Francis

Mirza Masroor Ahmad speaks with leaders prior to his keynote.

The worldwide spiritual leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is visiting Washington D.C. this week. He made his first trip to Capitol Hill Wednesday to speak with Congress and urge legislators and world leaders to seek global peace.

Legislators, including Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), hosted the bipartisan event to honor Mirza Masroor Ahmad. Also known as the "Khalifa of Islam," Ahmad is the leader of one of the largest followings of Muslims in the world. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community in the U.S., which is the oldest Muslim-American organization, was established in 1920.

The community claims to be the leading Muslim voice of peace, actively renouncing terrorism and war across the globe. This week, before a packed hearing room in the Rayburn House Office Building, Masroor Ahmad spoke about the peace initiatives he's urging world leaders to follow.

"All people should be granted equal rights without any discrimination or prejudice," said Masroor Ahmad. "This is the key and golden principle that lays the foundation for harmony between different groups and nations, and for the establishment for peace."

Despite their wide reach, the Ahmadi are often persecuted and prohibited from practicing their faith in many countries including Indonesia, Pakistan, and Egypt. At a reception in his honor, Pelosi acknowledged Masroor Ahmad's commitment to peace and global harmony in the face of repression.

"You have been persecuted for your beliefs, jailed for your faith, and exiled from your homeland, but you refuse to turn to bitterness or vengeance, and that is a very important lesson," Pelosi said.

Later, in his keynote address to more than 200 Muslims, legislators, and local leaders, Masroor Ahmad described what he says is the path to peace.

"It requires absolute justice, and it requires that the developed nations put aside their own vested interest and instead help and serve the less developed and poorer nations with a truly selfless attitude and spirit," Masroor Ahmad said. "If these factors are observed then true peace will be established."

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), is the nation's first and only Muslim member of Congress.

"His holiness comes from a point of great credibility, not only because of his spiritual elevation, but also because the Ahmadi community has been persecuted around the world in ruthless ways," Ellison said Wednesday. "So we need this message of religious tolerance."

Next week, Masroor Ahmad will attend the Ahmadiyya community 64th annual gathering in Harrisburg, Pa.

U.S. Congress Honors Khalifa of Islam on Capitol Hill

>PRWEB.COM Newswire

Washington, DC (PRWEB) July 02, 2012

On Wednesday, June 27th, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad – worldwide leader (Khalifa) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community – received bipartisan support and praise at a special reception on Capitol Hill from over 150 dignitaries, including members of Congress (both the House and Senate), members of the diplomatic corps, foreign representatives of embassies, representatives from the Executive

Branch, members of uniform services, thought leaders, faith leaders, NGO and think tank leaders and professors. Once introduced by Leader Nancy Pelosi, His Holiness delivered the event's keynote address.

Prior to the keynote, Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) presented the Khalifa with House Resolution 709, formally welcoming His Holiness "and recognizing his commitment to world peace, justice, nonviolence, human rights, religious freedom, and democracy." Full text of the Resolution can be found here: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.uscongress/legislation.112hres709>

Everyone in the crowded Gold Room gave the Muslim leader a standing ovation as he came to the podium for his keynote address entitled "The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations." The Khalifa advocated that "peace and justice are inseparable – you cannot have one without the other." The Khalifa stated that the disorder and disruption of peace all over the world is due in large part to the failure of governments to fulfill the requirements of justice.

Mirza Masroor Ahmad advised that Islam teaches the total equality of people of all nations and ethnicities, but sadly "in the United Nations we find that there is a distinction made between certain countries. Thus in the Security Council there are some permanent members and some non-permanent members. This division has proved to be an internal source of anxiety and frustration and thus we regularly hear reports of certain countries protesting against this inequality."

"Powerful and rich countries should not usurp the rights of the poor and weaker countries, in an effort to preserve their own rights, nor should they deal with the poorer nations in an unjust fashion... On the other hand, the poor and weaker nations should not seek to inflict harm on the powerful or wealthy nations, whenever the opportunity arises. Instead, both sides should ~~endeavor to fully abide by the principles of justice.~~"

The Khalifa provided guidance from the Holy Quran on the matter, saying “no party should ever look enviously at the resources and wealth of others. And similarly no country should seek to unjustly appropriate or take over the resources of another country on the false pretext of trying to assist or support them.”

His Holiness concluded by saying “if we desire peace to be established in the world, then we must leave aside our personal and national interests for the greater good and instead we must establish mutual relations that are based entirely on justice.”

The Khalifa’s presence and words on Capitol Hill were widely extolled and praised. Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi expressed her happiness at the bipartisan welcome that had been extended to the Khalifa. Calling His Holiness a visionary and an inspiration, Leader Pelosi thanked the Muslim leader for his courage and integrity and gave wishes that his dream of peace for humanity is realized.

“On Capitol Hill today, His Holiness offered a message of wisdom and compassion, implored us all to build bridges of understanding, and inspired us to remain dedicated to the mission of peace and the cause of justice,” Leader Pelosi said. “His Holiness and his community are a critical thread in the fabric of American life and success, always staying true to our values: pluralism, equality, non-violence among nations and respect among faiths.”

America’s first Muslim Congressman, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), said the U.S. was “honored by the presence of His Holiness” and that Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA was proving to be a “true blessing for the people of the United States.” During an interview with American University Radio after the event, Rep. Ellison commented: “His holiness comes from a point of great credibility, not only because of his spiritual elevation, but also because the Ahmadi community has been persecuted around the world in ruthless ways. So we need this message of religious tolerance.”

Katrina Lantos Swett spoke on behalf of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) spoke on behalf of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, both speaking passionately for the cause of religious freedom as evidenced by their helping to put on the event. Senator Robert Casey (D-PA) thanked the Khalifa for bringing together the House and the Senate in this event.

Representative Brad Sherman (D-CA) then thanked His Holiness for his commitment to being “a model of tolerance for the entire world” and later formally recognized and welcomed His Holiness during session at the House floor with the Khalifa and his delegation looking on from the House Gallery. Calling Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA one of the most organized Muslim communities in the country, Rep. Sherman commended the community for its motto: “Love for all, hatred for none.”

"I am honored to have shared a wonderful two days with His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Worldwide Leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community," said Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), who also spoke at the event. "Our powerful discussions on access to a world class education for each child resonated deeply with me and will continue to inspire the work I do in Congress every day. Equally as moving was His Holiness' speech delivered to Congress on Wednesday about the interconnectedness of peace and justice...May this historic visit serve as a powerful symbol for the bright future of international religious freedom."

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Ahmadi Muslim Spiritual Leader, Addresses Congress

Religion News Service | By Lauren Markoe
 Posted: 06/28/2012 7:35 am Updated: 06/28/2012 5:03 pm



Wikipedia - Smur26

WASHINGTON (RNS) The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is persecuted around the world, but it has plenty of friends on Capitol Hill.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., joined more than 20 House colleagues and at least one senator Wednesday (June 27) at a reception to mark the first visit of the Ahmadiyya's spiritual leader, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, to Congress.

The Ahmadiyya have faced severe repression, Pelosi said, "but you refused to turn to bitterness or vengeance."

"The message we carry is 'if you are being hurt, do not respond with hurt,'" said Ahsanullah Zafar, president of the Ahmadiyya community in the U.S.

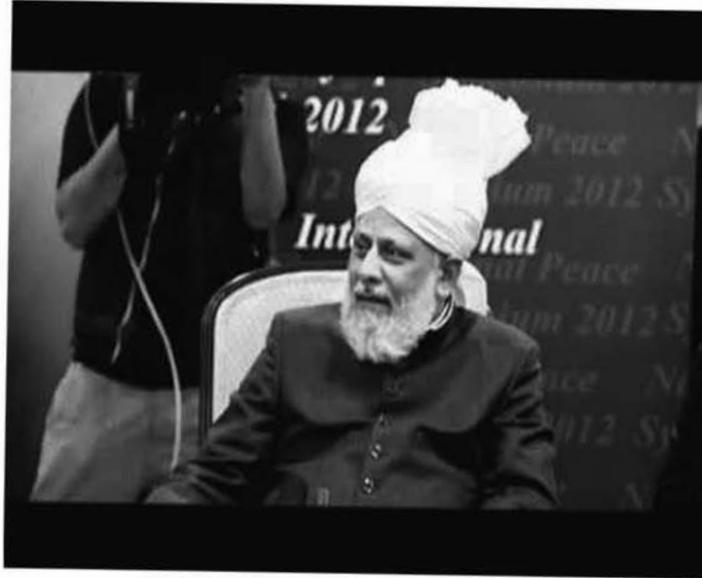
The branch of Islam, founded in India in 1889, emphasizes tolerance and nonviolence, and counts tens of thousands of followers in the United States and millions more abroad. The Ahmadiyya, also known as the Ahmadi, believe the messiah has already come as the founder of their community, Hadhrat Mirza Gulam Ahmad, a view perceived as heretical by most other Muslims.

The Ahmadiyya are prohibited from freely practicing their faith in Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, among other nations, and are often victims of violence that authorities often do little to discourage.

In 2010 in Lahore, Pakistan, two Ahmadiyya mosques were attacked, killing 86 people and injuring 120 during Friday prayers. The Taliban took responsibility.

Ahmadiyya Muslims get warm welcome in Congress

AHMADI MUSLIM | JUNE 28, 2012 | BY: MATTHEW HULET |



Ahmadi leader Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad speaking at press conference in Pakistan

Credits: Photo: wn.com

The Ahmadiyya Muslim

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadiyya Muslim Community](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadiyya_Muslim_Community)) group received a warm welcome at Congress (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/congress>) on Wednesday. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

(<http://www.examiner.com/topic/nancy-pelosi>), D-Calif., joined more than 20 House colleagues and at least one Senator at a reception to mark the first visit of the Ahmadiyya's spiritual leader Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.

The Ahmadiyya is a branch of Islam founded in India in 1889 and emphasizes tolerance and nonviolence. The branch claims to have tens of thousands of followers in the United States and millions abroad. Also known as the Ahmadi, they believe the messiah has already come as the founder of their community, Hadhrat Mirza Gulam Ahmad. This view is perceived as heresy by most other Muslims.

The Ahmadi are prohibited from freely practicing their faith across Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other nations. In 2010, two Ahmadiyya mosques were attacked (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/30/world/asia/30pstan.html>) by the Taliban, killing 86 and wounding 120 others. Globally, they have built hospitals, schools and organized disaster relief and development projects around the world. They also continue to press separation of church and state.

On Wednesday in Washington, Ahmad told more than 300 politicians, and supporters that Islam requires justice.

"The message of the Ahmadiyya community is a positive call for world harmony and liberty. We who believe in peace and freedom dare not be silent," said Katrina Lantos Swett, the chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious freedom as she urged the audience to give the Ahmadiyya a standing ovation.

Islamic sect has appealing message for U.S. politicians but has global enemies

July 7th, 2012
01:00 AM ET

By Dan
Merica, CNN

Washington
(CNN) –
You’ve almost
certainly
never heard
of him, but
Hadhrat Mirza
Masroor
Ahmad drew
some serious
star power at
a recent
Capital Hill reception in his honor.

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Republican Sen. John Cornyn were among the many lawmakers who showed up to meet Ahmad, a Muslim leader who was in town last week on a rare U.S. visit from London.

- snip -

It’s not just Ahmad who espouses his can’t-we-all-get-along read on Islam. The 61-year-old is the spiritual leader of the global Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, whose friendliness toward the West and whose criticism of other Muslims has earned the sect allies at the highest level of the U.S. government, even as it faces mortal enemies in other parts of the world.

Unlike most Muslims, Ahmadiis believe that the 19th century founder of their sect was the metaphorical Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Ahmadiyya Muslims get warm welcome in Congress

Lauren Markoe|Jun 27, 2012|[Comments \(4\)](#)

WASHINGTON (RNS) The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is persecuted around the world, but it has plenty of friends on Capitol Hill.



The worldwide spiritual leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim movement, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, greets followers of the Ahmadiyya movement during their convention in Harrisburg, Pa. The movement attracts persecution overseas and skepticism from some U.S. Muslims because of some unorthodox beliefs. Credit: Religion News Service photo by Michael Fernandez/The Patriot-News of Harrisburg, Pa.

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The Ahmadiyya have faced severe repression, Pelosi said, "but you refused to turn to bitterness or vengeance."

"The message we carry is 'if you are being hurt, do not respond with hurt,'" said Ahsanullah Zafar, president of the Ahmadiyya community in the U.S.

The branch of Islam, founded in India in 1889, emphasizes tolerance and nonviolence, and claims to have tens of thousands of followers in the United States and millions more abroad. The Ahmadiyya, also known as the Ahmadi, believe the messiah has already come as the founder of their community, Hadhrat Mirza Gulam Ahmad, a view perceived as heretical by most other Muslims.

The Ahmadiyya are prohibited from freely practicing their faith in Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, among other nations, and are often victims of violence that authorities often do little to discourage.

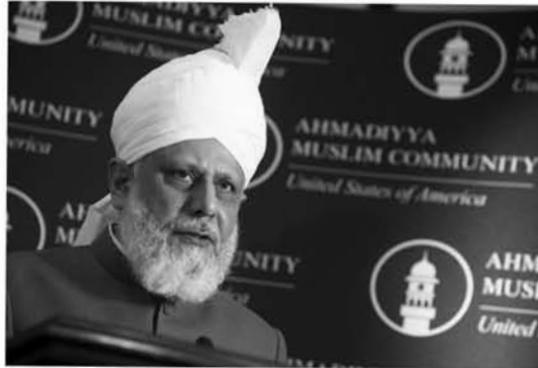
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"The message of the Ahmadiyya community is a positive call for world harmony and liberty," Swett said. "We who believe in peace and freedom dare not be silent."



Mirza Masroor Ahmad, spiritual leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, speaks on Capitol Hill (AFP, Saul Loeb)

US lawmakers show support for Ahmadiyya

(AFP)—Jun 27, 2012

2

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Lawmakers welcomed Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the leader or khalifa of the minority Muslim group, in the US Capitol complex and praised the sect for supporting inter-religious peace and efforts such as blood donation drives.

Senator Robert Casey, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, praised the religious leader for the "demonstrated commitment that you have shown to tolerance and to justice and to peace."

Representative Keith Ellison, who is Muslim, noted the Ahmadiyya's problems in Pakistan and said: "In this world we live in, the fact is that there are precious few countries where all the people can practice their faith as they are inspired to do."

Founded in 1889 in India, the Ahmadiyya differ with most Muslims by considering the movement's founder to be a messiah. Pakistan in 1974 adopted a law to brand the Ahmadis as non-Muslims.

Activists say that the law has contributed to persecution of the community. More than 80 people died in May 2010 when gunmen stormed two Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore and then attacked victims being treated at the hospital.

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Katrina Lantos Swett, the chair of the commission and daughter of the late lawmaker and rights activist Tom Lantos, called for the United States to press Pakistan and Indonesia to amend their laws.

"The United States should specifically confront governments which target the Ahmadiyya," she said.

The Ahmadiyya leader, who is visiting the United States from his London base, delivered an address in which he called for powerful and weak nations to treat one another with respect.

"If we desire peace to be established in the world, then we must leave aside our personal and national interests for the greater good and instead we must establish mutual relations that are based entirely on justice," he said.

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US Lawmakers Show Support for Ahmadiyah

June 28, 2012



US Representative Keith Ellison (L), a Democrat from Minnesota and the first Muslim member of the US Congress, shakes hands with Mirza Masroor Ahmad (C), spiritual leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, after he spoke on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on Wednesday, June 27, 2012. Mirza Masroor Ahmad is in the US to deliver the keynote addresses at the community's 64th annual convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to be held June 29 through July 1. (AFP Photo/Saul Loeb)

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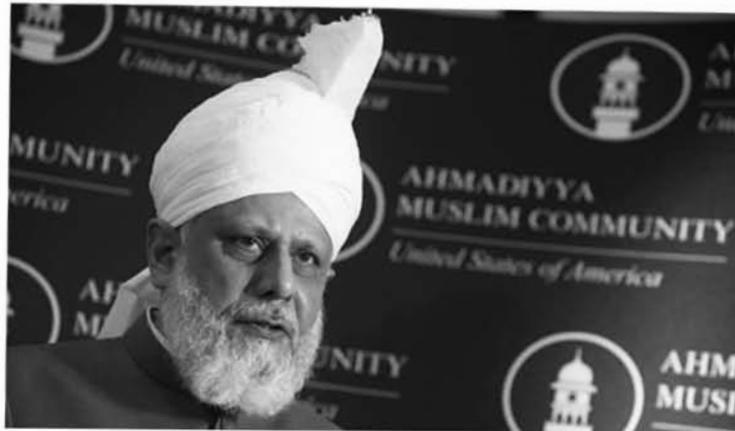
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Agence France-Presse

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NEWS

Ahmadi Muslim leader pushes plight in Congress

Jun 28, 2012 by Lauren Markoe

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Religious leader to open convention

BY MARY KLAUS
mklaus@patriotnews.com

The spiritual and administrative head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is coming to Harrisburg next week.

His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad will preside over the 64th annual convention of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA June 28-July 1 at the state Farm Show Complex June 29 through July 1.

The convention is expected to attract more than 12,000 American Muslims and 1,000 non-Muslim guests, said Akram Khalid, president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of York and Harrisburg.

"His Holiness will inaugurate our Hadeed Mosque" on June 28, Khalid said. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Harrisburg in 2009 bought the former Lakeside Lutheran Church at 245 Division St. in Harrisburg and turned it into a mosque.

During his American visit, Masroor Ahmad will meet with thousands of American Muslims and with U.S. government leaders to advocate establishing peace and justice. On June 27, he will discuss "The Path to Peace: Just Relations Between Nations" at a bipartisan reception at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C.

The convention in Harrisburg will begin at 12:45 p.m. June 29 with a flag hoisting ceremony, followed by prayers at 1 p.m. An opening session for men will begin at 1:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:40 p.m.

Congregational Tabajjud prayers will be held at 4 a.m. June 30. Separate sessions for men and women will follow

On the Web

www.muslimforpeace.org



His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad will preside over the 64th annual convention of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community at the state Farm Show Complex.

from 10 to 11:45 a.m., then Zuhr and Asr prayers at 1:30 p.m. and lunch at 2 p.m. Separate afternoon sessions will run from 4 p.m. until shortly before dinner at 6 p.m.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is an international revival movement within Islam. Founded in 1889, the community has tens of millions of members in more than 200 countries.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA was established in 1920 as the first American-Muslim organization.

Ahmadiyya Muslims believe that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, who died in 1908, was the long-awaited Messiah. They believe he was the metaphorical second coming of Jesus and the divine guide whose advent was foretold by the Prophet Muhammad.

Ahmadiyya Islamic sect has appealing message for U.S. politicians but has global enemies – by Dan Merica, CNN

by admin



Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, presides over a sermon to his followers in suburban Washington, D.C.

Washington (CNN) – You’ve almost certainly never heard of him, but Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad drew some serious star power at a recent Capitol Hill reception in his honor.

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Republican Sen. John Cornyn were among the many lawmakers who showed up to meet Ahmad, a Muslim leader who was in town last week on a rare U.S. visit from London.

At a time when the United States is struggling with its views about Islam – as Islamists gain power in the Middle East and with ongoing concerns about Quran-citing terrorists – it’s not hard to see Ahmad’s appeal to both parties. As he said in his Capitol Hill speech, he has “love for all, hatred for none.”

It’s a sentiment that Sen. Robert Casey, Democrat of Pennsylvania, echoed in introducing Ahmad, praising the “leadership you have shown to tolerance and to peace.”

It’s not just Ahmad who espouses his can’t-we-all-get-along read on Islam. The 61-year-old is the spiritual leader of the global Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, whose friendliness toward the West and whose criticism of other Muslims has earned the sect allies at the highest level of the U.S. government, even as it faces mortal enemies in other parts of the world.

Unlike most Muslims, Ahmadis believe that the 19th century founder of their sect was the metaphorical Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

It’s because of that belief that Sunni and Shiite Muslims do not regard Ahmadis as true Muslims. The rift has provoked Egypt to charge Ahmadis with blasphemy, Saudi Arabia to deport them and Pakistan to pass a law that designates Ahmadis as non-Muslims.

Persecuted abroad

On a sweltering recent Friday, a long line of people sat patiently in a mosque on the outskirts of Silver Spring, Maryland, just outside Washington. Despite the heat and humidity, they seemed happy to be there, waiting for a chance to meet the leader of their faith.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who leads an international Ahmadi community is the sect's fifth Khalifa, or leader. The group claims tens of millions of followers around the world, but outside experts say the number is smaller, in the millions.

For Ahmad and his followers, their relatively small sect is the real face of Islam, which has more than a billion followers around the world.

"It is time that we, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, should give the real and true picture of Islam," Ahmad said in an interview inside the Silver Spring mosque. "I will always be talking about peace. That peace is not from myself or some new teaching but it is the true, real teaching which I gather and get from the holy Quran."

That emphasis, says Ahsanullah Zafar, the leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, is rooted in a belief that the only jihad worth practicing is against one's own self – a jihad of self-improvement. The word jihad is often translated as struggle or war.

"Even more important than prayer, which we talk about a lot, is how you behave as a human being," Zafar said. "It is not physical fighting that accomplishes anything. It is dialogue and the progressivism that leads somewhere."

Founded in 1889, the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect is the only Islamic group that believes that a second prophet has come, in the form of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Ahmad lived at a time of great religious upheaval, said Akbar Ahmed, chair of Islamic Studies at American University.

"In India, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said that he has the message of the renewal of Islam," Ahmed said. "Slowly it began to build momentum – it is a kind of spirited, modern version of Islam."

Ahmed characterized the makeup of the Ahmadis as "very scholarly, very prominent leaders in Pakistan."

But when the Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist political party in Pakistan, began to push the country to a more orthodox view of Islam in the 1970s, the Ahmadis were cast out.

Jamaat-e-Islami argued that the Ahmadis did not conform to a key tenet of Islam – the finality of the prophet Mohammed. "That is the elephant in the room for the Ahmadis," said American University's Ahmed. "The Ahmadis say that there are two kind of prophets. One is the lawgiver. Then there are messengers who come with a message and not necessarily a new book."

In light of the crackdown, many Ahmadis began to leave Pakistan, some as religious refugees. Large numbers of Ahmadis now live in Germany, England, Ghana, Canada and the United States, where the Ahmadis claim tens of thousands of followers.

But persecution persists.

In 2010, almost 100 people were killed when two Ahmadi mosques in Lahore, Pakistan, were attacked by men armed with hand grenades and AK-47s.

In the U.S. government's 2012 International Religious Freedom Report, the plight of Pakistan's Ahmadis was front and center.

"Among Pakistan's religious minorities, Ahmadis are subject to the most severe legal restrictions and officially sanctioned discrimination," reads the report. The same report outlined violence against Ahmadis in Indonesia, where it said that at least 50 Ahmadiyya mosques have been vandalized.

A unique view of Islam

Harsh treatment in various corners of the world has instilled a deep Ahmadi appreciation for life in the United States.

"In America, all these small Muslim communities are flourishing, they love being in America," said Ahmed. "They are 100% Muslim and they are 100% American."

Ahmad, the Ahmadis' current leader, was in the United States for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's annual convention, which drew 10,000 to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, last week.

"Wherever I go I have one goal ... to meet my people," Ahmad said.

But he was also here to meet politicians and journalists. For the Ahmadis, the scrutiny of American Muslims in the decade since 9/11 has been treated as an opportunity to discuss beliefs and answer questions.

Many in the community came out in favor of Rep. Peter King's, R-New York, insistence last year on holding congressional hearings on radicalization within American Islam, even as other Muslim groups blasted the hearings as anti-Muslim.

"If the government thinks that congressional hearings will improve homeland security and help expose those exploiting Islam, I assure full cooperation. I, too, aspire to have a more secure America," wrote Kashif N. Chaudhry, the director of an Ahmadi youth program in the United States, in a New York Times letter to the editor.

Chaudhry was hardly the only Ahmadi Muslim to speak up.

"You need to be with other people, you need to talk about your ideas and in that conversation and discussion, new things arise," said Zafar. "It is like throwing the seed and putting water on it, you need the seed and you need the water for it to sprout."

"We need to come together with the people around us in the United States, we need to do that and see how it flowers," he continued.

The split between the Ahmadis and other Islamic sects is also apparent in how Ahmad, the sect's leader, talks about extremists.

"Nowadays, Islam is being targeted only because of so-called Muslim groups who claim themselves to be Muslims but are not following the true teachings of Islam," Ahmad said, speaking of what he calls "fundamentalists Muslims." "If it is that Islam that is being portrayed by those orthodox Muslims, then I don't think there is any chance in spreading Islam."

Using terms like "so-called Muslims," to refer to some outsiders has not endeared Ahmadis to other Muslims. Leading Sunni and Shiite groups are reluctant to even talk about the Ahmadis.

CNN contacted the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Islamic Society of North America, two major Muslim groups, and neither responded to requests for comment.

A future in America

Zafar, the leader of the Ahmadis in the United States, said his sect is looking to grow.

The group has an organized media operation and operates three 24/7 satellite-television channels under the name Muslim Television Ahmadiyya International.

The initial purpose of the channels was to broadcast the sermons of the Khalifa, but it also provides other programs in different languages. The Silver Spring mosque is surrounded by large satellite dishes that beam the shows around the world.

In addition to satellite television, the Ahmadis run Islam International Publications, a publishing outfit.

Many Ahmadis are concerned about the version of Islam being portrayed in the media, which they say is too focused on the radical elements of Islam and not focused enough on peaceful Muslims.

"Right now there is a caricature of Islam," said Zafar. "The biggest challenge I believe in the United States is for Muslims to get out of that image of extremist behaviors which are so popular in the press."

Ahmed of American University sees the future of the Ahmadis as a bridge between Islam and the West.

"On the American side, they [the Ahmadis] are acting as a positive bridge to Islam and the Americans need that right now," he said. "And then for Muslims, if they do link up and join mainstream Muslims, they are able to give Islam a link to the world and also help them work out these polemics that are tearing the world apart."

For now, Ahmadis are stuck in between those two worlds.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this story incorrectly said that Ahmadi Muslims believe their founder was the Second Coming of the Prophet Mohammed. They believe he was the metaphorical Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Source: <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2012/07/07/islamic-sect-appeals-to-u-s-politicians-but-has-global-enemies/>

Ahmadiyya Muslim leader visits, inspires

Community members describe experience as 'surreal'

Originally published June 30, 2012

By Katie Crowe
News-Post Staff

Shahina Bashir has had the opportunity to meet His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the fifth Khalifa, or leader, of the entire Ahmadiyya Muslim community, twice before.

Yet when Bashir, media associate for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, had to opportunity to personally greet him in a meeting with her immediate family last week, she said it was "like a dream."

"We love him more than we love our parents -- not just this particular Khalifa, but each one that has been elected," Bashir said. "Without him, we'd be lost."

His Holiness, who lives in London, was elected into the position of Khalifa in 2003, after the death of the previous leader, Bashir said. As tradition stands, he will rule the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, a sect of Islam, until his death, she explained.

Members of the Ahmadiyya community are spread throughout 200 countries, Bashir said, and although each country has its own headquarters, the community's national headquarters in the U.S. is the Bait-ur-Rehman Mosque in Silver Spring.

His Holiness arrived in the area June 20 for the first time since 2008. At that time and again this year, the purpose of his visit is to attend the Ahmadiyya Muslim community's U.S. National Convention in Harrisburg, Pa., which began Friday and continues through Sunday.

The convention, called Jalsa Salana, takes place annually, and although having previously been held in places such as Silver Spring and Dulles, Va., has taken place at a larger venue in Harrisburg for several years due to increased community membership, Bashir said. About 12,000 people are expected to attend this year's convention, which mainly consists of spiritually motivated speeches delivered by various community members throughout the three days, Bashir said.

"The whole purpose is to get together to see family members and friends and feel that sense of community bonding ... and to have an atmosphere of really high spirituality," she said of the convention.

His Holiness arrived in the U.S. on June 16 in Chicago, Bashir said, and was greeted by about 2,000



Courtesy Photo

His Holiness, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifa-tul Masih V (the fifth Khalifa) delivers the Friday sermon on June 22 at the Bait-ur-Rehman Mosque in Silver Spring.

community members at the Silver Spring mosque on the 20th.

"It was a very hot day, but people didn't care," Bashir said. "Even the children. ... We were amazed they were so patient."

Samina Malik, a Germantown resident and member of the Ahmadiyya community, said the moment the Khalifa arrived, all she could think about was the universal importance of making the world a better, more positive place.

"While everyone was around and standing there ... saying 'God is great,' I was thinking we are all striving, striving to be good," Malik said.

She added it was incredible to see and feel the emotion present at the scene, and to think about why people were there, "not only to please the Khalifa but also to please God."

Every day of the week, members of the Ahmadiyya community pray five times a day. On Fridays, a sermon is also read as part of the afternoon prayer, Bashir said.

Since his arrival, His Holiness had been leading the morning, afternoon and evening prayers at the mosque in Silver Spring, and he read the sermon on Friday, which focused mostly on the importance of prayer as a way and means to get close to God, Bashir said.

The sermons the Khalifa gives in the United Kingdom are streamed via satellite on TV, Bashir said, so community members always have the opportunity to hear his sermons.

Hearing him give it in person at their own mosque, however, was a much different -- and very exciting -- experience for community members, said Sadiq Asad, a 16-year-old Ahmadiyya community member and Frederick resident.

"He's the man who has the most insight into our religion. ... It's a really humbling experience to be able to hear what he says and see how he acts in person," Asad said.

Before attending this weekend's convention, His Holiness addressed U.S. lawmakers at a reception Wednesday on Capitol Hill, Bashir said.



Photos from The Patriot-News

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64th annual Ahmadiyya Muslim Community convention

(http://photos.pennlive.com/patriot-news/2012/08/06/20120806_0121)



By PAUL CHAPLIN, The Patriot-News

After addressing the female attendees His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad of London, center, leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, walks to the men's hall to lead a prayer during the 64th annual Ahmadiyya Muslim Community convention at the state Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg. PAUL CHAPLIN, The Patriot-News



PAUL CHAPLIN, The Patriot-News
(<http://connect.pennlive.com/user/pchaplin/photos.html>)

After addressing the female attendees His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad of London, right, leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, leads a prayer in the men's hall during the 64th annual Ahmadiyya Muslim Community convention at the state Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg. PAUL CHAPLIN, The Patriot-News

Who Will Speak for the Ahmadi Muslims?

by Arsen Ostrovsky

July 12, 2012 at 3:00 am

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3163/ahmadi-muslims>

Such slaughter, however, does not occur in a vacuum. It is the direct result of a pervasive state-sponsored, indoctrinated hate – with a nation using all the force of both its exchequer and communications infrastructure to incite violence. The United Nations has been totally oblivious to the plight of the Ahmadis: it has failed to pass even a single resolution at the Security Council, General Assembly or Human Rights Council.

Rejected by many in the Islamic world as heretics and routinely persecuted because their more moderate beliefs do not accord with mainstream Islamic interpretations of the Quran, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community is arguably one of the most persecuted Muslim communities in the world. However, beyond some faint pleas for better treatment from the U.S. State Department and human rights groups, the Ahmadi Muslims plight has largely gone unnoticed.

The Ahmadi Muslims trace their roots to the late nineteenth century, when the movement was founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in the Punjabi village of Qadian, now modern day India.

They share many of the basic tenets of Islam, however differ in some significant respects.

For one, the Ahmadi Muslims condemn the use of terror and reject any attempt to spread Islam through violence or coercion. According to Naseem Mahdi, national Vice President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the U.S., "there is no place or justification found in Islam for violence whatsoever," and that "Islam condemns terrorism unreservedly and totally."

The Ahmadi Muslims are also one of the few Islamic organizations to endorse a separation of Mosque and State; they believe individuals must be both "righteous souls as well as loyal citizens." Mahdi says that "Islam requires all Muslims to live in peace and harmony wherever they may be," and that "it is thus the duty and responsibility of all Muslims living in the U.S. to be loyal to the flag and to be law-abiding citizens."

Mahdi has also warned that the vast majority of reasonable, peace-loving and law-abiding population of Muslims living in the US must "speak out and speak out loudly" about the dangers of radical Islam.

Additionally, the Ahmadi Muslims advocate universal human rights and protections for religious and other minorities, including the empowerment and education of women. Contrast this to some other Muslim states, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, which treat women and people of other faiths and minorities as less than second class citizens.

Yet, the singular most controversial element of the Ahmadi faith, which has riled up so many in the Islamic community, is the belief that their founder, Ahmad, was both the second coming of Jesus as well as the Mahdi (the Messiah). This contradicts a fundamental tenet of Islam: that the Prophet Mohammed was the last of the prophets sent by God (Quran 33:40).

As a result, the Ahmadi Muslims, who number globally about 10 million, have become a persecuted minority in most Muslim countries where they are not even recognized as Muslims.

Although the majority of the world's Ahmaddis are in Pakistan (where 3 to 4 million currently live), most are dispersed throughout South East Asia (India, Bangladesh, Indonesia) and in the Arab Middle East, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the disputed Palestinian Territories.

Nowhere, however, is the persecution of the Ahmadi Muslims more evident, nor blatant, than in Pakistan, where they have been stripped and denied of their most basic human rights. For example, not only are members of the Ahmadi community expressly declared non-Muslims under Pakistan's constitution, but under Section 298C of the Pakistan Penal Code, they are explicitly prohibited from "posing" as Muslim or "referring" to their faith as Islam. Likewise, preaching, making the call for Muslim prayer or using any visible representation of their faith is also prohibited and punishable by imprisonment of up to three years. At the behest of radical Islamists, Section 298C adds that any Ahmadi who "in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims" is also be liable to be imprisoned. In short, the treatment of the Ahmadi Community in Pakistan is nothing less than religious apartheid.

Of gravest concern are Pakistan's blasphemy laws, largely because under Section 295C of the Penal Code, blasphemy is an offense punishable by life imprisonment or even death. Pursuant to this law, which was created specifically against the Ahmadi Muslims, their belief in the prophethood of Ahmad is considered blasphemous insofar as it "defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad."

To date, Ahmadi Muslims account for almost 40% of all arrests under Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws.

Ahmadi Muslims are also denied their most basic right, at least in a democracy: the right to vote -- unless they first disavow their identities and declare themselves to be a non-Muslim or that their founder was an imposter.

Not only does the government in Pakistan deny the Ahmadi Muslims the same rights afforded to other Muslim citizens, it adds fuel and justification to extremist organizations to perpetrate violent attacks against them, then looks the other way when the attacks occur.

In Lahore, for example, in May 2010, terrorists from the Pakistani Taliban attacked two Ahmadi mosques. 93 people were killed and hundreds injured in the largest single assault ever on the Pakistan's Ahmadiyya Community. Although two men were charged after the attacks, two years later, they have still not been brought to justice and their case stands abandoned with the Pakistani government pandering to extremists and repeatedly ensuring the proceedings are adjourned. .

In March of this year, Amjad Mahmood Khan, the National Director of Public Affairs for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the U.S., testified before the House of Representatives Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, on the religious persecution facing the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in South Asia.

In his testimony, Khan said that "owing to pressure from religious extremists, Pakistani authorities have demolished, set on fire, forcibly occupied, sealed or barred the construction of over 90 Ahmadi Muslim Mosques. They have also denied the cemetery burial of 41 Ahmadi Muslims and have exhumed after burial the bodies of 28 Ahmadi Muslims. In addition, Pakistan's state security forces do not adequately protect Ahmadi Muslims from attacks by extreme religious groups."

There are, moreover, many such examples of violence in Pakistan against the Ahmadiyya community. Such slaughter, however, does not occur in a vacuum. It is the direct result of a pervasive state-sponsored, indoctrinated hate -- with a nation using all the force of both its exchequer and communications infrastructure to incite violence and deny the Ahmadis their most basic human rights.

Equally regrettable, there have been few world leaders or human rights organizations even stirred by the problem, let alone aroused to fight for justice and equality for the Ahmadiyya Community, not only in Pakistan, but the world over.

The United Nations has been totally oblivious to the plight of the Ahmadis: it has failed to pass even a single resolution at the Security Council, General Assembly or Human Rights Council.

What is needed immediately is a Special Rapporteur to investigate such human rights abuses in Pakistan: however given the dominance and control of the block of 56 nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, one should not be holding one's breath.

To (some) credit, Human Rights Watch has spoken out, saying that "the [Pakistan] government's continued use of discriminatory criminal laws against Ahmadi Muslims and other religious minorities is indefensible," adding that, "as long as such laws remain on the books, the Pakistani state will be seen as a persecutor of minorities and an enabler of abuses."

Amnesty International has also demanded that the Ahmadi Muslims be free to practise their religion, calling on the Pakistan government to "protect the Ahmadiyya community against threats of violence."

Despite the occasional condemnation from HRW and Amnesty, however, neither has taken up the Ahmadi cause with any fervor.

The Obama Administration has been even more pitiful on this issue. Notwithstanding that Pakistan is one of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign aid and a hotbed of terrorist activity, the Administration has totally failed to stand up for the Ahmadi Muslims.

Both the U.S. State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practises for 2011, and especially its Report to Congress on International Religious Freedom (Pakistan - 2011) criticize the Pakistan government over its treatment of Ahmadi Muslims (and other minorities). However, without concrete steps putting meaningful pressure on Pakistan to reform, such as withholding aid, this, as the Pakistani government knows full well -- in addition to all the other abusers of human rights -- is just empty rhetoric.

The U.S. State Department and the Obama Administration have also failed to reach out to the local American Ahamdi community, especially in the fight against radical Islam. Given that the Ahmadis represent model moderate American Muslim citizens, one would have thought this would have been elementary. Apparently not.

On June 27, 2012, the Ahmadiyya's spiritual leader, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, marked his first visit to Congress, where he met with various House and Senate members from both sides of the political aisle.

Katrina Lantos Swett, the Chair of U.S. Commission on Interreligious Freedom and daughter of former Representative, Holocaust survivor and human rights activist Tom Lantos, called for those present to stand up for the Ahmadiyya, saying, "We who believe in peace and freedom dare not be silent."

Those who believe in peace, freedom and human rights must stand up against injustice anywhere. The Ahmadi Muslims are among the most persecuted groups in South Asia; it should be expected of us all to demand respect for their dignity and rights.

Muslim Peace Fellowship

let there be no compulsion in religion

28 Jun 2012

1 Comment

Which Muslim Leader Is the Real Champion of Peace?

Dr. Faheem Younus (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/faheem-younus>)

"We've been waiting for you."

People say this all the time when I teach courses (<http://www.muslimamerican.com/lectures-and-keynotes/>) about Islam and peace at colleges, universities and places of worship.

With the Muslim world erupting in chaos from the Libyan shores of Bin Ghazi to the tribal areas of Pakistan, this yearning for peace is becoming a global phenomenon. But name a Muslim leader today, spiritual or political, who has the vision, global presence, personal integrity and a track record of establishing peace.

Well, the wait is over.

Meet His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad. (<http://www.alislam.org/khilafat/fifth/>)

He is the fifth elected spiritual leader — or *khalifa* — of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and is currently visiting the United States. I always tell my students that my peaceful understanding of Islam comes precisely from His Holiness's leadership. From the day he was sworn into office (April 22, 2003), he has committed himself to extending a message of peace to the world." Hush. Can you hear millions around the globe, whispering, "We've been waiting for you"?

Let's go back to the challenge of finding a Muslim leader with vision, global presence, personal integrity and a track record.

Unless you were sleeping under a rock for the past decade, you know exactly how many Muslim leaders have a vision problem. Despite the Quran's commitment to protecting all houses of worship, the Saudi grand Mufti called (<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/destroy-all-the-churches-saudi-arabias-poor-treatment-of-christians/254650/>) for the destruction of all churches in the Arabian Peninsula. Despite the Quran's prohibition of religious compulsion, the mesmerizing Pakistani cleric Maudoodi preached death (http://www.alislam.org/library/books/mna/chapter_5.html) for the apostates. Despite the Quran's flexible position on governance, the newly elected Egyptian leader, Morsi, is anxious to implement (<http://www.businessinsider.com/morsi-says-jihad-is-our-path-and-death-in-the-name-of-allah-is-our-goal-2012-6>) his brand of the Shariah Law. People, can't you see a trend?

Which Muslim Leader Is the Real Champion of Peace? « Muslim Peace Fellowship

His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, however, exhorts Muslims worldwide to strengthen interfaith relationships, champion religious freedom and embrace the separation of church and state.

Yes, His Holiness is not the only Muslim leader

(<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1670291,00.html>) rallying for peace. But he is the only leader who has an international following of millions of Muslims. In 2009, His Holiness launched a peace campaign in U.K. (<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/11041>) with the Community's motto: "Love for all, Hatred for none." Bearing this message, the ads decorated London's red buses and thousands of flyers were distributed in neighborhoods. Following his lead, Ahmadiyya communities launched similar peace campaigns in Germany (<http://www.themuslimtimes.org/2012/02/religion/islam/spreading-the-message-of-peace-in-metropolis-frankfurt>), Australia (<http://ahmadiyyatimes.blogspot.com/2010/09/australia-ahmadi-muslims-launch-peace.html>), Canada (<http://www.therecord.com/news/local/article/527094--muslims-to-promote-peace-with-flyer-campaign>) and other countries. In America, all hands were on the deck when a "Muslims for Peace" campaign was launched in 2010. Young volunteers distributed (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/07/us/07religion.html>) more than half a million flyers, the elders sponsored hundreds of bus ads, and the scholars held dozens of interfaith symposia.

Talk of integrity. His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad is not someone who gives inflammatory statements to his internal audiences and plays peaceful in front of the cameras. His Friday sermons, privately watched by millions of his global followers, are a spiritual institution of peacemaking. Whether it's violent reaction over Danish cartoons or the anger over Quran burnings (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/10/quran-burning-nato-troops-shoot?INTCMP=SRCH>), the Ahmadi Muslim khalifa has never instigated his members to create disorder. In 2004, His Holiness launched the annual National Peace Symposium (<http://www.reviewofreligions.org/2289/7th-annual-peace-symposium/>) in U.K. where government officials gather to exchange ideas on the promotion of peace. In 2009, he launched the annual Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace (<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=102067>) for individuals or organizations that have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the cause of peace. Watching the escalating tensions with Iran, His Holiness, has written personal letters to the Presidents of Iran, Israel, Canada and America in 2012, warning (<http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2012/03/11/israel-khalifa-of-islam-warns-israel-against-attack-on-iran-starting-world-war-iii/>) them about the threat of a nuclear third world war.

None of this is conceptually new to Ahmadi Muslim leaders though. Despite facing constitutionally backed persecution for over half a century in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, South Africa, the Ahmadi Muslim leaders have advocated for peace and compassion under threats and oppression. As a result, not even a single member of this community has ever been charged with an extremist act.

Last week, I was among the thousands to meet the Khalifa, His Holiness, during his visit to the United States. This week he will be meeting congressional leaders at the Capitol Hill. Many are waiting in line.

But many don't like to lie in wait. For them I have good news. Just look at the teachings, practices, track record and the character of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and their spiritual leaders over the past century, objectively. Once done, your likely response is going to be, "We've been waiting for you."

Islamic sect has appealing message for U.S. politicians but has global enemies

You've almost certainly never heard of him, but Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad drew some serious star power at a recent Capitol Hill reception in his honor.

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Republican Sen. John Cornyn were among the many lawmakers who showed up to meet Ahmad, a Muslim leader who was in town last week on a rare U.S. visit from London.

At a time when the United States is struggling with its views about Islam – as Islamists gain power in the Middle East and with ongoing concerns about Quran-citing terrorists – it's not hard to see Ahmad's appeal to both parties. As he said in his Capitol Hill speech, he has "love for all, hatred for none."

It's a sentiment that Sen. Robert Casey, Democrat of Pennsylvania, echoed in introducing Ahmad, praising the "leadership you have shown to tolerance and to peace."

It's not just Ahmad who espouses his can't-we-all-get-along read on Islam. The 61-year-old is the spiritual leader of the global Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, whose friendliness toward the West and whose criticism of other Muslims has earned the sect allies at the highest level of the U.S. government, even as it faces mortal enemies in other parts of the world.

Unlike most Muslims, Ahmadis believe that the 19th century founder of their sect was the metaphorical Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

It's because of that belief that Sunni and Shiite Muslims do not regard Ahmadis as true Muslims. The rift has provoked Egypt to charge Ahmadis with blasphemy, Saudi Arabia to deport them and Pakistan to pass a law that designates Ahmadis as non-Muslims.

Persecuted abroad

On a sweltering recent Friday, a long line of people sat patiently in a mosque on the outskirts of Silver Spring, Maryland, just outside Washington. Despite the heat and humidity, they seemed happy to be there, waiting for a chance to meet the leader of their faith.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who leads an international Ahmadi community is the sect's fifth Khalifa, or leader. The group claims tens of millions of followers around the world, but outside experts say the number is smaller, in the millions.

For Ahmad and his followers, their relatively small sect is the real face of Islam, which has more than a billion followers around the world.

"It is time that we, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, should give the real and true picture of Islam," Ahmad said in an interview inside the Silver Spring mosque. "I will always be talking about peace. That peace is not from myself or some new teaching but it is the true, real teaching which I gather and get from the holy Quran."

That emphasis, says Ahsanullah Zafar, the leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, is rooted in a belief that the only jihad worth practicing is against one's own self – a jihad of self-improvement. The word jihad is often translated as struggle or war.

"Even more important than prayer, which we talk about a lot, is how you behave as a human being," Zafar said. "It is not physical fighting that accomplishes anything. It is dialogue and the progressivism that leads somewhere."

Founded in 1889, the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect is the only Islamic group that believes that a second prophet has come, in the form of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Ahmad lived at a time of great religious upheaval, said Akbar Ahmed, chair of Islamic Studies at American University.

"In India, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said that he has the message of the renewal of Islam," Ahmed said. "Slowly it began to build momentum – it is a kind of spirited, modern version of Islam."

Ahmed characterized the makeup of the Ahmadis as "very scholarly, very prominent leaders in Pakistan."

But when the Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist political party in Pakistan, began to push the country to a more orthodox view of Islam in the 1970s, the Ahmadis were cast out.

Jamaat-e-Islami argued that the Ahmadis did not conform to a key tenet of Islam – the finality of the prophet Mohammed. "That is the elephant in the room for the Ahmadis," said American University's Ahmed. "The Ahmadis say that there are two kind of prophets. One is the lawgiver. Then there are messengers who come with a message and not necessarily a new book."

In light of the crackdown, many Ahmadis began to leave Pakistan, some as religious refugees. Large numbers of Ahmadis now live in Germany, England, Ghana, Canada and the United States, where the Ahmadis claim tens of thousands of followers.

But persecution persists.

In 2010, almost 100 people were killed when two Ahmadi mosques in Lahore, Pakistan, were attacked by men armed with hand grenades and AK-47s.

In the U.S. government's 2012 International Religious Freedom Report, the plight of Pakistan's Ahmadis was front and center.

"Among Pakistan's religious minorities, Ahmadis are subject to the most severe legal restrictions and officially sanctioned discrimination," reads the report. The same report outlined violence against Ahmadis in Indonesia, where it said that at least 50 Ahmadiyya mosques have been vandalized.

A unique view of Islam

Harsh treatment in various corners of the world has instilled a deep Ahmadi appreciation for life in the United States.

"In America, all these small Muslim communities are flourishing, they love being in America," said Ahmed. "They are 100% Muslim and they are 100% American."

Ahmad, the Ahmadi's current leader, was in the United States for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's annual convention, which drew 10,000 to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, last week.

"Wherever I go I have one goal ... to meet my people," Ahmad said.

But he was also here to meet politicians and journalists. For the Ahmadi's, the scrutiny of American Muslims in the decade since 9/11 has been treated as an opportunity to discuss beliefs and answer questions.

Many in the community came out in favor of Rep. Peter King's, R-New York, insistence last year on holding congressional hearings on radicalization within American Islam, even as other Muslim groups blasted the hearings as anti-Muslim.

"If the government thinks that congressional hearings will improve homeland security and help expose those exploiting Islam, I assure full cooperation. I, too, aspire to have a more secure America," wrote Kashif N. Chaudhry, the director of an Ahmadi youth program in the United States, [in a New York Times letter to the editor](#).

Chaudhry was hardly the only [Ahmadi Muslim](#) to speak up.

"You need to be with other people, you need to talk about your ideas and in that conversation and discussion, new things arise," said Zafar. "It is like throwing the seed and putting water on it, you need the seed and you need the water for it to sprout."

"We need to come together with the people around us in the United States, we need to do that and see how it flowers," he continued.

The split between the Ahmadi's and other Islamic sects is also apparent in how Ahmad, the sect's leader, talks about extremists.

"Nowadays, Islam is being targeted only because of so-called Muslim groups who claim themselves to be Muslims but are not following the true teachings of Islam," Ahmad said, speaking of what he calls "fundamentalists Muslims." "If it is that Islam that is being portrayed by those orthodox Muslims, then I don't think there is any chance in spreading Islam."

Using terms like "so-called Muslims," to refer to some outsiders has not endeared Ahmadi's to other Muslims. Leading Sunni and Shiite groups are reluctant to even talk about the Ahmadi's.

CNN contacted the [Council on American-Islamic Relations](#) and the [Islamic Society of North America](#), two major Muslim groups, and neither responded to requests for comment.

A future in America

Zafar, the leader of the Ahmadi's in the United States, said his sect is looking to grow.

The group has an organized media operation and operates three 24/7 satellite-television channels under the name Muslim Television Ahmadiyya International.

The initial purpose of the channels was to broadcast the sermons of the Khalifa, but it also provides other programs in different languages. The Silver Spring mosque is surrounded by large satellite dishes that beam the shows around the world.

In addition to satellite television, the Ahmadi's run Islam International Publications, a publishing outfit.

Many Ahmadi's are concerned about the version of Islam being portrayed in the media, which they say is too focused on the radical elements of Islam and not focused enough on peaceful Muslims.

"Right now there is a caricature of Islam," said Zafar. "The biggest challenge I believe in the United States is for Muslims to get out of that image of extremist behaviors which are so popular in the press."

Ahmed of American University sees the future of the Ahmadi's as a bridge between Islam and the West.

"On the American side, they [the Ahmadi's] are acting as a positive bridge to Islam and the Americans need that right now," he said. "And then for Muslims, if they do link up and join mainstream Muslims, they are able to give Islam a link to the world and also help them work out these polemics that are tearing the world apart."

For now, Ahmadi's are stuck in between those two worlds.

THE HILL

THE HILL'S Congress Blog

Where lawmakers come to blog

US should pressure nations to rescind anti-Ahmadiyya laws

By Katrina Lantos Swett, chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) - 07/16/12

04:59 PM ET

On June 27, along with members of Congress and other guests, I heard a message of peace and freedom from the Ahmadiyya world leader, His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, at a Capitol Hill reception co-sponsored by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), of which I am chair, and the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

Founded in India in 1889, the Ahmadiyya is a peaceful, reformist movement claiming tens of millions of adherents worldwide. While its members oppose violence and support freedom for others, they often face severe violence and other violations of their own freedom.

In Pakistan, the constitution labels them “non-Muslims.” For more than a quarter century, Pakistan’s government has barred the community from calling its own worship centers “mosques,” publicly uttering the traditional Islamic greeting or quoting from the Qur’an, and displaying Islam’s basic affirmation.

Throughout Pakistan, Ahmadiyya are prohibited from sharing their faith with others or publishing or disseminating their own material. They are restricted from building houses of worship and holding public gatherings. And since they must register as non-Muslims to vote, Ahmadiyya who insist they are Muslims are effectively disenfranchised.

Coupled with Pakistan’s blasphemy laws which affect every faith community, these laws have helped foster a climate of violence against Ahmadiyya members. The terrible attack on two of their mosques in Lahore in May of 2010, killing nearly 100 people, was but one example.

Unfortunately, Pakistan isn’t the only country which violates freedom of religion for Ahmadiyya.

In Indonesia, since June 2008, the government has seriously limited Ahmadiyya activity to private worship and prohibited members from telling others about their faith. Since that time, at least 50 Ahmadiyya mosques have been vandalized and 36 mosques and meeting places shut down. In parts of East and West Java and elsewhere, extremist religious groups consider any Ahmadiyya activity “proselytizing” and pressure local officials to close places of worship or ban Ahmadiyya activity altogether.

In Saudi Arabia, Ahmadiyya members have been deported for their beliefs. In Egypt, they have been charged under its blasphemy laws. In 2010, USCIRF’s intervention helped a number of members leave Egypt for safety abroad.

The Ahmadiyya message includes a positive call for world harmony and liberty. It points beyond today's sufferings to tomorrow's hopes and possibilities.

Nonetheless, we who believe in peace and freedom must shine the spotlight on these sufferings.

So what can we do?

First, we must realize that the same societies that violate the religious freedom of Ahmadiyya abuse the rights of others. As USCIRF has documented, where Ahmadiyya suffer, Hindus and Christians, Sikhs and Baha'is, Shi'a and other Muslims, often are persecuted as well.

Second, in order to protect the rights of all, including the Ahmadiyya, we who are in Washington must make religious freedom a truly compelling foreign policy priority, woven into every aspect of our relationships with other countries.

Finally, the United States should confront governments which target the Ahmadiyya. It should urge Pakistan to amend its constitution and rescind all anti-Ahmadiyya laws. It should encourage Indonesia to overturn its 2008 decree and all provincial bans against Ahmadiyya practice. It should press both governments to investigate acts of violence thoroughly and prosecute perpetrators vigorously. And until Pakistan is serious about reform, USCIRF believes that it qualifies as a "country of particular concern" as a severe religious freedom abuser.

The rights of people everywhere to think as they please, believe or not believe as they wish, peacefully practice their beliefs, and express them publicly without fear or intimidation are inviolable. We are proud to stand with the Ahmadiyya community and proclaim together that these and other freedoms are the birthright of humanity.

Katrina Lantos Swett is the Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). This article is based on her remarks at the June 27, 2012 event she describes.

Source:

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/238199-us-should-pressure-nations-to-rescind-anti-ahmadiyya-laws>

CNN's Belief Blog: The faith angles behind the biggest stories

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TheIndian EXPRESS

INDEPENDENCE DAY



WestCoast Newsline

AUGUST 17, 2012

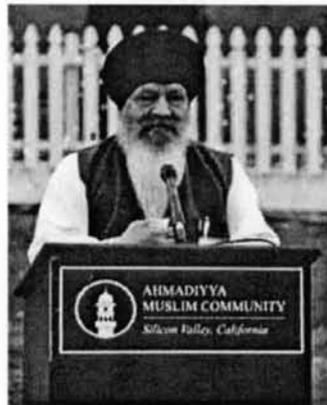
15

Iftaar dinner celebrated with recognizing Community leaders and spreading the message of Peace

MILPITAS

As a tradition, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Milpitas organized Annual Iftaar Dinner at Baitul Baseer Mosque on Evan Road on Saturday evening. The invitees were community leaders, civic leaders & thought leaders. The event was also represented by members from various religious groups from all over Silicon Valley.

Muslims all over the world are observing Ramadhan, month of fasting. This is a time when Muslims, not only abstain from food from dawn to dusk, but also seek closeness to their Lord, one God. There are special prayers held privately and publically all over.



Leader from San Jose Sikh Temple, Mr Bajwa addressing



Teresa Cox, US Trade adviser to Obama Administration

Special emphasis is given to the holy book, Quran by reciting and understanding the message. One of the practices get a significant attention, that is breaking the fast at the time of sunset, called Iftaar. Muslims tend to gather for Iftaar and then prayers. They invite friends, neighbors and relatives to join in for breaking the fast. This promotes the sense of friendship while eating together and praying together.

The event started an hour before sun set with the recitation of the Holy Quran. The president of local Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Wasim Malik welcomed the guests and explained the purpose of the event. He described that during the month of Ramadhan, God sent message to His prophet Mohammad, which was compiled into this scripture, the Holy Quran. Muslims strive to understand the message more profoundly during this month of Ramadhan.

Continued on Page 16.

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INDEPENDENCE



DAY SPECIAL

WESTCOAST Newsline

AUGUST 17, 2012

Continued from Page 15...

IFTAAR DINNER CELEBRATED...

Several dignitaries were individually recognized in the audience.

Some leaders showed up on the podium and spoke. They related Ahmadiyya Muslim Community for the social work and the efforts towards creating harmony among different religious and non-religious groups of the area. Former Mayor Henry Manayan reminded the audience that Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was the first to respond and condemn the terrorist attack during September 2011. Some of the guests recognized were:

- Jose Esteves, Mayor Milpitas
- Pete McHugh, Vice mayor Milpitas
- Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones -- Pastor First Unitarian Church of San Jose
- Wei-Chien Lee, Ph.D. -- Educational Counselor, San Jose State University
- Rev. Bruce Bramlett -- Educational Consultant and facilitator
- Rev. Andrew Kille, Ph.D. Director of Interfaith Space
- Rev. Debbi Weatherspoon -- Pastor Los Gatos United Methodist Church
- Debbi Belmessieri -- Editor Tapping Into God.



Welcome by Wasim Malik

- Teresa Cox US Trade Advisor of Obama Administration
- Debbi Weatherspoon, Chairperson of Interfaith Council on Economic & Justice,
- Granth Bajwa, Head Priest of Sikh Gurdwara San Jose
- Rod Cordoza, Abrahmic Alliance
- Rini Johar, Radio talk show host
- 1170am
- Derrick Bulls, Executive Director of hands helping hands foundation
- Blanca Cinco, Commissioner in

Human Relations in Santa Clara County

- Jamil Sheikh, Commissioner and Chair Person of Human Relations of Mountain View

Additionally several candidates for the public offices from Milpitas and surrounding cities were engaged in networking. Community's Director for General Services, Atif Chaudhry made the announcement of the upcoming campaign, "Muslims for Life" (August 11-September 11). In the response and anniversary of September 2011 terrorist attack, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is organizing a nationwide campaign to collect 11000 bags of blood. Mr. Chaudry invited everyone to donate blood during this month. He also added that our local blood drive is schedule at Baitul Baseer mosque on September 11, 2012

Before finishing the formal program, Imam Mubasher Ahmad of Baitul Baseer mosque came on the stage and led the audience for prayer. This was followed by "call for prayer" at the time of sunset. This was the moment everyone had opportunity to break the fast with traditional "dates". After the evening formal prayer, members and the guest were served with a buffet dinner. During the dinner and after, over 250 people were engaged in networking, which continued till 10 PM.

AHMADIYYA PROGRESS WORLDWIDE



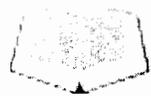
The world consists of 239 countries;
Jama'at is established in 200 countries



15987 Mosques have been established



2325 Mission Houses have been built



70 translations of the Holy Quran are
now reaching 5.35 Billion people



1800 Missionaries are engaged in the field



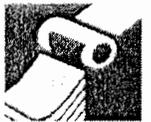
Eight Jamias are in operation worldwide



603 Schools are in operation in Africa



40 hospitals are providing health care



Eight printing presses are in operation



Over 200 solar energy stations have been
installed in 12 African countries



Huzur's Friday sermons are translated
into 8 languages simultaneously

**MTA is broadcasting 24/7 via four chan-
nels throughout the world.**

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ۝

SURELY, EVERY HOUR THAT FOLLOWS IS BETTER
THAN THE ONE THAT PRECEDES

اب یقین سمجو کہ آئے گزر کو کھانے کے دن

Certainly, the days to devour disbelief have dawned

STATISTICS OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TEHRIK E JADID WORLDWIDE

LAST YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS TOTALED

£ 6.631 MILLION = \$ 10.8 Million

An increase of £ 1.162 Million

USA Contribution = \$ 1.667 Million

USA Participants = 9015

Top Four Countries in Tehrik e Jadid:

First: Pakistan, Second: United States

Third: Germany; Fourth: UK

**First Time in the History of the scheme
of Tehrik e Jadid, Huzur Aqdas gave a gift
of \$ 100,000 to Jam'at USA for their stu-
pendous job in Tehrik e Jadid**

ALHUMDOLILLAH

Worldwide Participation target this year:

One million Participants worldwide

This year's targets for USA:

Contributors = 13,000

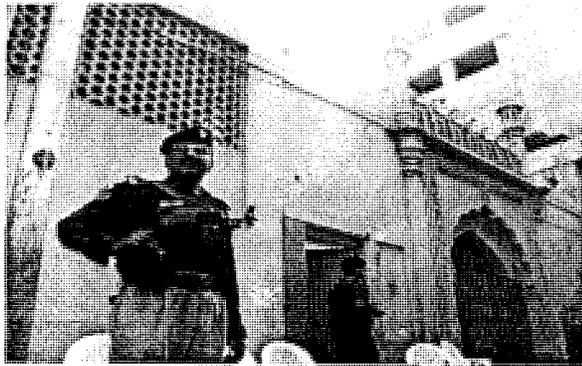
Amount = \$ 2.0 Million

**Wouldn't every member of your fam-
ily like to participate to make Huzur's
target with a small contribution of \$
25 each in your family. Please contact
your local Secretary or President. For
further info, you can write to tehrike-
jadid@usa.com**

AHMADIYYA PERSECUTION WORLDWIDE

And who is more unjust than he who prohibits the Name of Allah being glorified in Allah's Mosques and seeks to ruin them (2:115)

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا أَسْمَاءُ وَتَسْمِيَّتُهَا حَرَامًا



Ahmadis in Rawalpindi are deprived of their right to congregate for Eid prayers. July 20, 2012



Police destroyed the six Minarets of Ahmadi Mosque in Khariyyan, Punjab



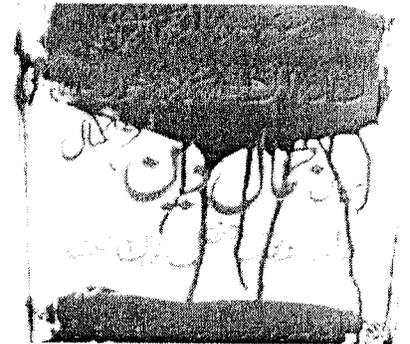
In West Java, Islamic extremists massacred our facilities and destroyed copies of the Quran.



The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has banned the official website of the Ahmadiyya community, alislam.org, reported by The Nation on Friday, July 6, 2012



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yAnt6eJ-wc>



Bismillah and verses were blackened on a grave of a Sahabi in Bahishti Maqbara

And they plotted, and Allah too planned, and best of planners is Allah

وَمَكْرُوهٌ وَمَكْرَ أَلَلَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ الْمَكْرِيينَ

The opposite page describes the stupendous progress of Jama'at A'Alamgeer in spite of this severe persecution and annihilation. Khilafat e Ahmadiyya Zinda Bad

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}

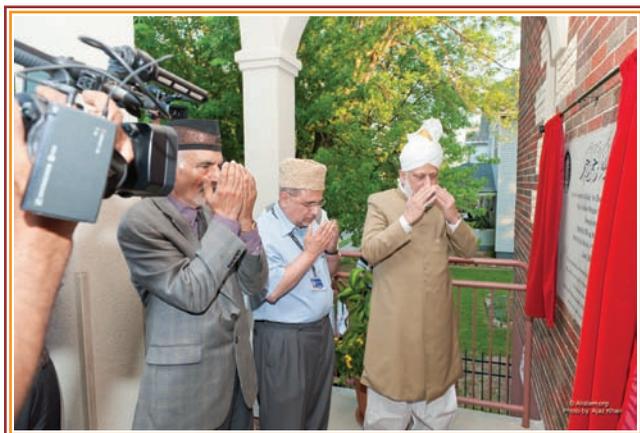
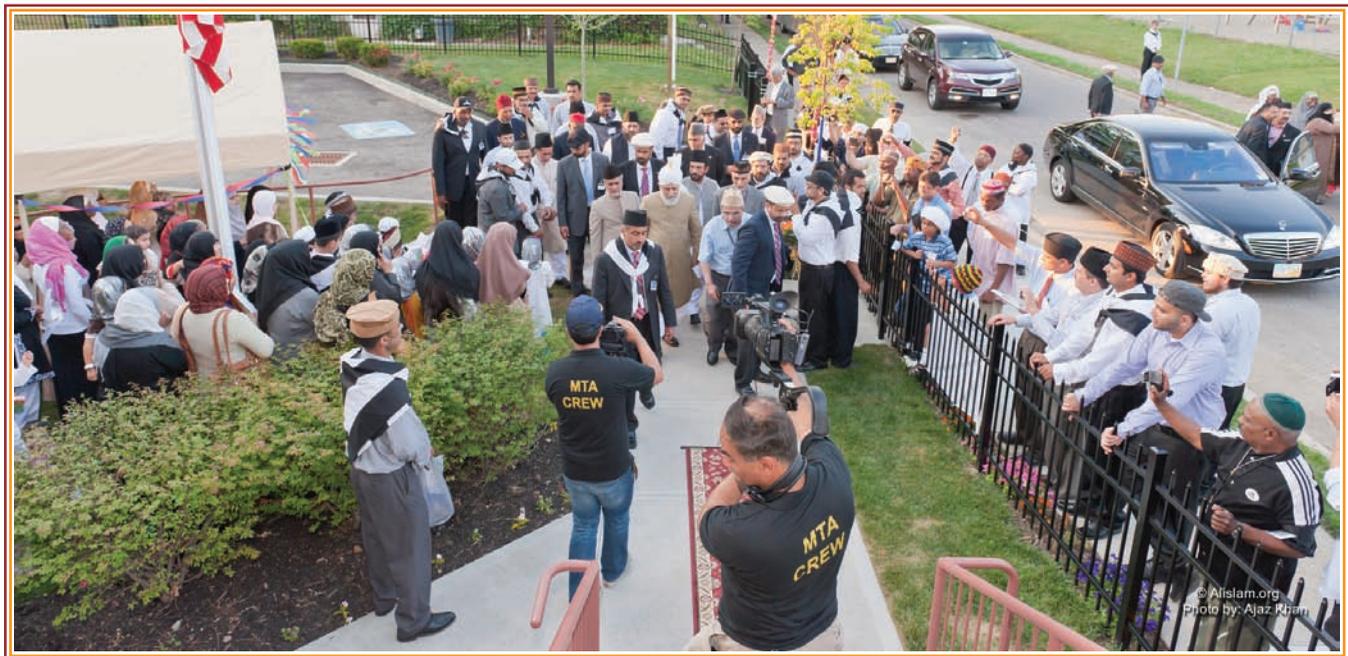


Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} in Chicago, IL

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} in Zion, IL



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} visting Dayton, OH

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}



▲ Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} in Columbus, OH

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} in Pittsburg, PA ▼



2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} arriving at Baitur Rahman Mosque

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}



*Various dignitaries visiting
Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} at Baitur Rahman Mosque*

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} at the occasion of visit to Capitol Hill where Hazoor^{aba} spoke to members of US Congress and Senate

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}



Scenes from visit of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} to the Capitol Hill where Hazoor^{aba} spoke to members of US Congress and Senate

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}

▼ Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} visiting Fazl Mosque, Washington, DC



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} visiting Mubarak Mosque, Chantilly, VA ▲

▼ Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} reviewing plans of Nasir Mosque, Philadelphia, PA



Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} visiting Baitul Kareem Mosque, Baltimore, MD ▲



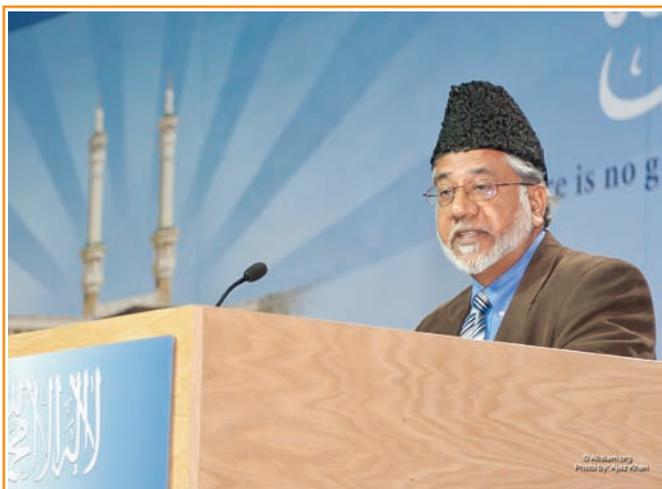
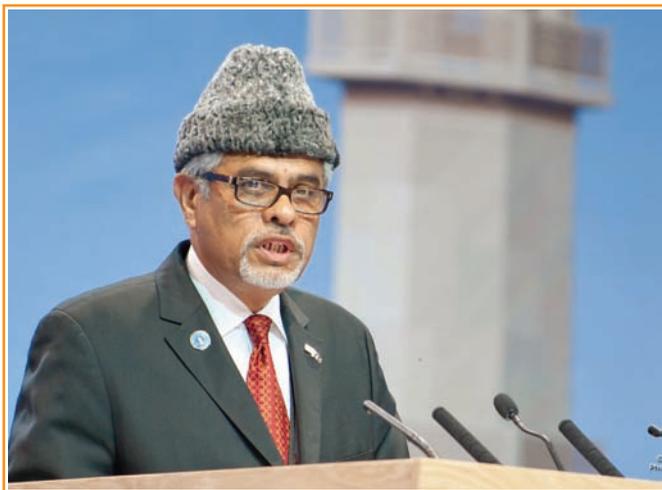
Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} visiting Hadee Mosque, Harrisburg, PA

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih 7^{aba}



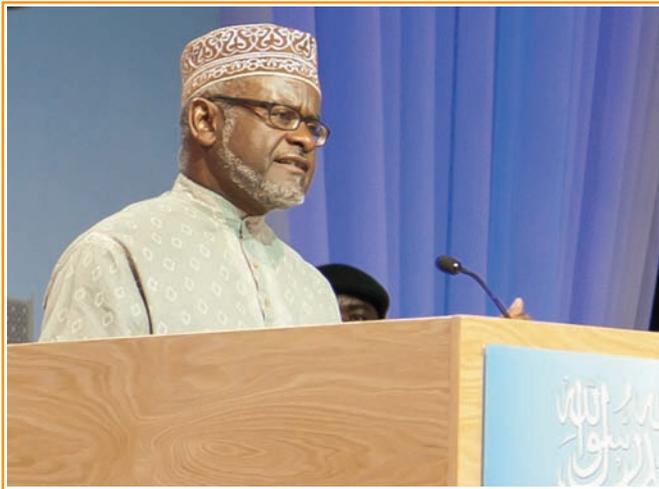
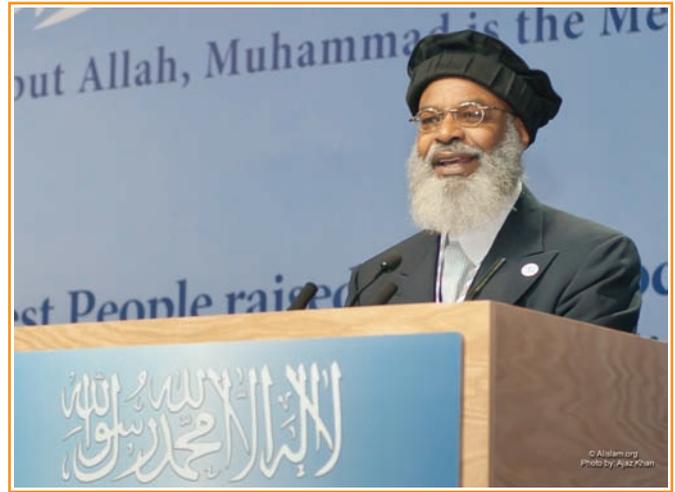
Scenes from 2012 USA Jalsa Salana

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih 7^{aba}



Speakers addressing attendees of 2012 USA Jalsa Salana (In order: Left to Right, Top to Bottom) Maulana Azhar Haneef Sahib, Faheem Younus Qureshi Sahib, Wasim Malik Sahib, Basyir Rodney Sahib, Waseem Sayed Sahib, and Falahuddin Shams Sahib.

2012 USA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih 7^{abna}



Speakers Addressing attendees of 2012 USA Jalsa Salana (In order : Left to Right, Top to Bottom) Sahizada Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad, Nasirullah Ahmad Sahib, Hasan Hakeem Sahib, and Mansoor Qureshi Sahib



2012 WOSA Trip of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih Q^{abna}



Above: Under 12 Waqfeene Nau with Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih Vaba



Bottom: Waqfeene Nau boys over the age of 12 with Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih Vaba



2012 NBOA Trip of Hadhrat Khalfatul Masih Qadim



Top: Members of National Majlis-e-Amila USA with Hadhrat Khalfatul Masih Vada

Bottom: Departure of Hadhrat Khalfatul Masih Vada for Canada



*Top: Members of Houston Area Chapters with Senator Mitch McConnell;
Bottom: Members Houston Chapters with Consulate General of India at the occasion of Eid Milan gathering*



Anwar Mahmood Khan Sahib addressing participants of Iftar Dinner and Quran Exhibition at Temple B'nai Torah, Seattle



Members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Miami with Congresswoman Frederica Wilson



Above: Ehtishamulhaq Mahmood Kauser receiving Shahid degree from Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba}
Bellow: Dr. Karimullah Zirvi with Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V^{aba} at 2012 UK Jalsa Salana



2012 Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA Public Relations Activities



Top: Participants of 2012 National Public Affairs Seminar; Center: PR Secretaries leaving for the "Day on the Hill"; Bottom: PR Secretaries at Capitol Hill for the "Day on the Hill"