

## Friday Sermon: JalsaSalana UK 2013 and Hospitality

August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

After tashhud, ta'awwuz and recitation of Sura Al-Fatiha, HuzurAqdas (may Allah strengthen him with His Mighty Help) said that:

By the Grace of Allah, the Exalted, JalsaSalana UK will start from next Friday insha-Allah. The work related to the Jalsa starts to take place long before the Jalsa actually begins. Jalsa UK is such an event that for its arrangements a temporary city is set up for a few days.

When Jalsas used to take place in Pakistan, there was a permanent system in place for 'langarkhanas' - places to cook and distribute the food. Similarly, there were many permanent places where people could be accommodated. Before this time, when the Jama'at owned the schools and colleges those used to serve this purpose of accommodating the guests but when the Government took over these institutions these other accommodations were built.

Still, since there were a very large number of people who would come, some other temporary accommodations had still to be set up. Apart from these arrangements, a very large number of the guests were taken care of by the residents of Rabwah in their own private places of residence and the food for these guests was provided by the langarkhana.

So there were some permanent arrangements and some temporary to take care of the guests at the Jalsa in Rabwah and the residents of Rabwah had also become expert at taking care of the guests after many many years of training. May Allah again bless them with happiness and spiritually rejuvenating ambiances, and opportunities to serve.

Similarly, in Qadian now, many permanent arrangements have been put in place. As far as temporary arrangements that they need are concerned, these are primarily confined just to the needs for the JalsaGah - the place where Jalsa is held itself. It is true that for the langarkhana, workers need to be brought in to help with the cooking of food and the making of the roti (bread).

In Germany also, because we have the hall much of the needs are there permanently. They have to cook some food and the bread they purchase from outside vendors and they eat this thinking it to be fresh, although I think it is a week old at the least. If it is not, and it is fresh, they will arrange to tell me quickly - by nightfall likely, because they are very good in conveying news to me.

Similar is the case of other Jalsas in the world. But the UK Jalsa has now become the International Jalsa by virtue of the fact that Khilafat is present here. Till last year all Jalsa arrangements were of a temporary nature.

At first when the Jalsas used to take place in Islamabad, there was a permanent arrangement for the cooking of the food and similarly there was a sort of permanent arrangement for the making of the (roti) bread using a machine. But since the Jalsas have been moved to the Hadeeqatul Mahdi location, even the food was prepared here in a temporary facility for the last two or three years because it was very difficult to cook the food in Islamabad and transport it here. Some of the roti (bread) needed was made in Islamabad and some was purchased from outside vendors. Nevertheless we experienced a lot of difficulty due to all this.

So we had been trying to work with the local Council here so they would give us permission to build a permanent kitchen facility for the cooking of the food and thus we could avoid the need to make temporary cooking facilities in a tent which is not only troublesome but also dangerous in some ways.

The Council was gracious enough this year to allow us to build a permanent kitchen and one of the larger storage structures was fixed up, inside and out, and a very nice permanent kitchen facility has been built in which insha-Allah the food will be prepared as needed.

But so far as the roti (bread) preparation was concerned, when I drew their attention to this matter, the thought of Ameer Sahib and the local administration was that they would go with the same old methodology of having some roti made in Islamabad and that they would buy the rest from outside vendors. When I mentioned the need to install a machine they were concerned about the cost and hesitated. When I said that the Center could give them a loan, they felt motivated enough to undertake the expense.

So, by Allah's Grace, a roti plant has been brought from Lebanon and a sincere Ahmadi from Pakistan went to Lebanon and bought this machine and came here and installed it. He is still devoting time to this. He has had the experience of installing such a machine in Rabwah and Qadian also - so this work was accomplished in the best possible way here also. So now, by the Grace of God, permanent arrangements are in place in Hadeeqatul Mahdi for the cooking of the food and the making of the roti (bread). In any case we are grateful to the Council for their granting us permission. May Allah reward them also.

But still, this Jalsa is unique with respect to other Jalsas in the world in that many temporary arrangements have to be made to take care of some 30,000 people, especially if it rains as this causes serious problems with the paths and the accommodations.

The problems with regard to paths can be resolved to a large extent by laying down tracks but the tents that are pitched for accommodation and the food arrangements and some other issues are still there and not resolved satisfactorily. But insha-Allah a time will come when all these issues will also be resolved and it is not at all unlikely that this temporary city itself becomes a permanent city of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at.

As I said these are temporary arrangements and much of this work is done by volunteers from among the Khuddam and those ansar who enjoy good health. Last Jumuh I went to Hazdeeqatul Mahdi by chance and I saw that there were, even at that time, apart from the people involved in the experimentation with the roti plant, many children and young and old men there for their own duties and works and trying to do whatever they could to make sure that the arrangements for the Jalsa are done in the best possible manner.

Here I want also to make it clear that the work involved in setting up the roti plant was not done by some outside company. All the involved work was done by our own volunteers, engineers, technicians and other experts. May Allah, the Exalted, reward them all for this work. The local UK standards are such that they need to be fulfilled - it is not the case, like in India or Pakistan, where it does not matter how something gets done because there is no checking. Things may be done in a temporary manner. If wires are hanging then let them be hanging or other things of principle. This is not the case here. Here, at every step there is checking and the relevant Government department comes and inspects and grants an ok and then you can proceed to the next step. So, by the Grace of Allah, the Exalted, all the conditions that needed to be fulfilled for the roti plant and the kitchen they were fulfilled as per the required standards and permissions have been granted.

In any case, what I am trying to say is that because of the need to make large scale temporary arrangements much more effort needs to be expended here in comparison to other places and by the Grace of Allah, Ahmadi volunteers discharge these duties with great zeal and passion. This spirit, that we have; to devote time for the sake of the Jama'at, is the hallmark of an Ahmadi. Ahmadi's present sacrifices of every type. The Engineers Association is there doing its own work. The Doctors Association is there doing its own work. Then there are others with all sorts of expertise and they are giving their time...and all this is apart from all the work for the Jalsas - and this happens all year round. This is something peculiar and special to the Ahmadiyya Jama'at and a tremendous amount of volunteer work is done. This is the result of years of training and education especially when we look at the tradition that has come into being of serving the guests of the Jalsas - this tradition is indeed the hallmark of an Ahmadi.

Children, young and old men, they come running - all of them are infused with the spirit of service during the Jalsa days. Whatever duties are assigned to them they can be seen dedicatedly working towards discharging those responsibilities. And this is as it should be because the guests of the Jalsas are in fact the guests of the Promised Messiah (as).

So this guest hospitality is a display of their high moral qualities as well as a reflection of their faith. Here I want also to tell everyone what was the extent to which the Promised Messiah (as) went to discharge his responsibility of hospitality so our levels of hospitality also rise even higher and become even better.

One day the Promised Messiah (as) was not feeling well and he was resting. A guest arrived and he was informed of this and so he came outside and said that I thought that the guest has a right to hospitality since he has come after putting himself into great difficulty. So I have come here outside to discharge this duty to the guest.

So today also, this same level of hospitality has to be shown for the guests of the Promised Messiah (as) because the opportunity that we are today being given is that of hosting those who are not only the guests of the Promised Messiah but these are guests who have come for a purely religious purpose. They are coming because they wish to hear the talks about Allah and His Messenger the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). They are coming because they want to improve their own spiritual and moral conditions. They are here because they want to establish and strengthen the mutual bonds of love and friendship and brotherhood.

There are many guests who arrive here after involving themselves in great pain and difficulties. Some are such as live in a very high level of sophistication in their own households. They come here and spend their time in some quite severe circumstances. But still they come. Some of the guests come from poor situations. They put themselves under heavy burdens to come here purely for the sake of gaining the blessings of Jalsa. They come in response to the command of the Promised Messiah (as) and responding to his calling them. They come to meet the Khalifa of the Time and to listen to his discourses.

MTA has no doubt made the world of Ahmadiyyat very close but still the environment and ambiance of the Jalsa is in itself a unique and quite distinct thing that has its own impact. So we should not think, “what difficulty is there these days that the guests are involving themselves in in coming to the Jalsa?”

Some of them are quite advanced in age and they undertake the journey despite suffering from a variety of ailments or difficulties. Some, as I said, leave off the ease and comfort of their homes for the sake of the faith and undertake the journey and sleep in tents and give preference to simple food. So such guests have a great right that they should be taken care of properly.

By the Grace of Allah, the Exalted, there is a large majority of guests who come just for the sake of attending the Jalsa and for no other reason. And now the costs involved in attending the Jalsa have increased enormously. But they undertake the expenses and they do not care. So it is incumbent upon us that we respect these guests. These are guests who merit the most highest of respect. Their intention is to win the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger.

Advising us regarding this same subject, on another occasion the Promised Messiah (as) said: ***Look, many guests have arrived. Some you know and recognize and others you do not. So the proper thing for you is to show humility and consider everyone worthy of respect and honor. I am positively inclined towards you all and trust that you provide every comfort for the guests. Do serve them all to the best of you abilities.***

So all these are the guests of the Promised Messiah (as) and have come here for the purpose of the faith. Their intention is to gain the favor and pleasure of God. So we need to pay attention to the directive of the Promised Messiah (as) and do justice to his good expectation from us. And our hearts should be full of passion and zeal to

serve to the best of our abilities every guest. And our hearts should always be filled with the thought that the guests have their rights.

Wheresoever we may be assigned any duty we will try and discharge this duty to the guests. These thoughts must be in the hearts and minds of every worker and duty holder so that we may fulfill the good expectations that the Promised Messiah (as) has from us. So that we may be able to say that, “O Messiah sent by God, and O True Lover of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), we are devoted to fulfilling your every direction and advice even today.” Indeed this is precisely what ought to be expected from an Ahmadi. The journey of over a century has not made us oblivious to your good expectations from us. Even today, our children, our young and old men, and our women are all trying, to their very best ability, to fulfill their duties and obligations and insha-Allah will keep doing this.

We need always to keep this desire and wish and worry of the Promised Messiah (as) in the forefront of our minds. And keeping these thoughts in front of us, we must pay heed to his concern that, **“I always worry that no guest should suffer any kind of pain or difficulty. Indeed I always keep advising and urging that as far as possible the guests should be provided every comfort. The heart of a guest is very fragile like a piece of glass and apt to break upon the slightest rough treatment.”**

So this is a highly essential piece of advice. This should not just be our verbal commitment. It should become our practical example and practice. Jalsas take place in every country, but here especially, peoples from all parts of the world come and the desires and the expectations are different based on the nationalities and the differing strata of the various people who come and the extent of their ability to bear hardships is also different. Their ways of talking and expressing of their pleasure and displeasures are also different. Their expectations and preferences are different. So we need to deal with every one with great wisdom.

This is why we need always to keep this wonderful and full of wisdom direction of the Promised Messiah (as) in front of us. If we heed this, all our affairs will turn out all right, that **“The heart of a guest is very fragile like a piece of glass and apt to break upon the slightest rough treatment.”**

If everyone devoted to serving the guests could take firm hold of this advice then all these small, petty issues that crop up every now and then would not happen, except perhaps only once in a while. There would be no complaints excepting the case when someone simply just wants to create mischief. In such circumstances of course, of necessity, some strict measures have to be adopted.

Last year, an incident took place during the dinner among the ladies. A lady guest who had come from a far off place became upset for some reason. In this occurrence whether there was involved anyone’s fault or not is not the issue. What we have to do is recognize that this happened and if we do, then we could effect an improvement and reformation instead of presenting a variety of explanations.

This time there is need to especially take care of this among the guests of Tabshir, both men and women so that no one should be put into any trouble or pain of any kind. I am talking here about the foreign guests from abroad. Of course all guests are guests.

I have also made some changes in staffing of this department. These changes are operational in nature and mostly we have involved waqfeen-e-nau and waaqfat-e-nau. Now, by the Grace of Allah, many waqfeen-e-nau and waqfaat-e-nau have attained to such an age that they can start to take care of their assignments. Some are taking care of Jama’at responsibilities on a permanent fashion and others who have come into the temporary arrangements.

I am hopeful that the standard of service will be much better this year. But remember that improvements do not come about just by changing the faces or officeholders. Rather, we need to pray to God that His Grace should descend upon us and be a part of all our actions and deeds and we are enabled to do such deeds and are blessed

to work in such a manner as God desires from us. And we should seek from God such an ability. And pray also that no such occasion should develop or occur that should give rise to any misunderstandings.

With regard to hospitality I also want to make this thing clear that the Ahmadi living in England, and especially those Ahmadi living in London, should take care that those who have come here from abroad are also their guests. These guests number more or less 3,000 now. If visas are granted, then this number could be larger even than this. So regardless of whether an Ahmadi of the UK has been assigned any duty or not he or she should take care that every person who is here from abroad is also their guest.

Naturally, an Ahmadi of the UK, who is not on duty, is a guest at the Jalsa. BUT a visitor from abroad must be considered by a UK Ahmadi to be his guest. Saying it in another way, when under some circumstances, guests from abroad are involved they must be given preference over those Ahmadi from the UK and the Ahmadi living here in the UK must make sacrifices for these guests from abroad. So always remember that you, despite being guests yourselves, under some circumstances, are also hosts.

This is not just the work or assignment of those on duty - rather this thinking needs to be more widely adopted. And adopting this thinking make yourselves into those who are prepared to make sacrifices for this cause. And when this will happen, we will see a beautiful society come into existence.

When we look at some ahadith, sayings of the Holy Prophet (sa), the thought comes in mind that instead of being guests we should always remain hosts. According to one hadith, being a host is also a sign of a momin, a true believer.

It is recorded in a hadith that the Holy Prophet (sa) said that **“the one who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment should respect and honor the guest.”** In other words the one who does not honor and respect the guest is weak in his belief in Allah and the Day of Judgment.

So in the light of the fact that the Promised Messiah (as) has repeatedly drawn our attention to adequate hospitality of the guests, he did so because of the sayings and directives of his Master and Guide and because of the commandments of the Holy Quran. So that we may be able to strengthen our faith.

Then in another hadith the Holy Prophet (sa) has said that dealing with our brothers with a smiling, happy countenance is a lofty act of righteousness.

So these three days of the Jalsa in which a variety of good righteous actions are undertaken, this act of dealing with one another with a smiling, happy countenance is also a great deed of goodness. Different occasions arise where this needs to be done and such opportunities shall arise for the hosts and for the guests.

I would especially counsel those on duty that they should deal with each other, while talking, or doing something together with a smiling happy countenance - when one is tired, sometimes this becomes difficult and even at such times this advice must be acted upon. And those officers who are on duty and incharge of people working under them, they too should deal with those under their authority in a smiling, happy, manner.

For officers sometimes specific places are designated where they can take things to eat or drink but from where other lower officials are not meant to take anything and it has happened that if an ordinary worker even so much as takes a sip of water from such a place people have gotten very upset over this. Such things should not happen amongst us.

In any case, as I said, while working many things happen and sometimes things go awry but remember always that we must keep good manners and morals at the forefront of our minds.

We will of course, naturally, deal with our guests with good manners and happy smiling countenances but if we put the same into practice in our mutual dealings this will have a great and positive impact on our guests also and the ambiance will become even more congenial and pleasant and agreeable. And this will also leave a good righteous impress on the non Jama'at guests who will have come to participate in the Jalsa. And we will also be

increasing our own righteous conduct by demonstrating these good manners and morals and becoming those who win the pleasure of Allah.

Then all on duty need to remember that serving the guests is no cause for thinking you are bestowing a favor upon anyone. Rather, as the Promised Messiah (as) has said, and which I have mentioned before already, and it is what the Holy Prophet (sa) has told us, that this is the right of the guest. And what is it that Allah says about the need to discharge our obligations?

At one place Allah says [17:27]:

*“And give thou to the kinsman his due, and to the poor and the wayfarer, and squander not thy wealth extravagantly.”*

Here, the rights of three types of people are being mentioned, but with reference to the topic under discussion today, I want to draw the attention of everyone with regard to the wayfarer, the traveler. There are many types of travelers. But those who undertake a journey for the sake of God and because of the command of God, they are the most fortunate of travelers.

It is stated in a hadith that in a gathering where mention is being made of Allah, the Exalted, and His Messenger, even the Angels of God send their salams and pray for those sitting in such a gathering. Our Jalsas also, by the Grace of Allah, the Exalted, are just such gatherings. And in order to join such gatherings those who undertake journeys, their station is also very lofty indeed because of the intentions with which they come, because the angles are praying for them. So very fortunate are those who discharge their obligations of hosting such travelers.

The one whose right has been fixed by God, the one who discharges or fulfills that obligation is surely such a one as would win the pleasure of God. And the one who wins or gains the pleasure of God Almighty who could be more fortunate than such a one?

So if we ponder, we will see how wonderful is this system, this nizam of the Jalsa that after each act of goodness, another door is opened for yet another righteous deed for everyone. So, as I said in the beginning, everyone devoted to serving, needs to understand the spirit of service and keep this in the forefront of his mind. They may be doing this already but there is need to improve in this.

Those who are on duty should not be doing their duty only because the Jama'at has asked them to assist those who are doing the work or because Sadr MajlisKhuddamulAhmadiyya has said that we have to do waqar-e-amal, so come and join in, or because such a message has come from Sadr Lajna. No. The purpose must be to win the pleasure of Allah.

How did the Companions of the Holy Prophet discharge their duties of hosting the guests in order to win the pleasure of Allah and fulfill the right due to them? I will present one example of this. No matter how many times we hear or read this tradition it always gives one a new joy and pleasure and we learn new lessons.

Hazrat Abu Huraira (ra) states that once a traveller came to the Holy Prophet (sa). The Holy Prophet (sa) sent a message home to send some food for the guest. The reply came that apart from water there is nothing in the house today. Upon receiving the reply, the Holy Prophet (sa) asked the Companions who will arrange to feed this traveler? One Ansari said he would make the arrangement. So he went home and told his wife to host a guest of the Holy Prophet (sa). The wife said that there is only some food for the children in the house. The Ansari said to her to prepare the food and when the time to serve the food comes, to light a lamp and take the children and put them to bed. So the wife prepared the food and lit the lamp and put the children to sleep hungry and then got up in pretence of fixing the lamp and instead put it out. Then both of them sat with the guest and pretended to be eating with the guest. So they also remained hungry that night.

In the morning when that Ansari presented himself before the Holy Prophet (sa), he smiled and said that even Allah smiled upon seeing your plan and its execution last night or he said that Allah was well pleased by this action of you both last night. It was on this occasion that this verse was revealed:

*“but prefer the Refugees to themselves, even though poverty be their own lot. And whoso is rid of the covetousness of his own soul — it is these who will be successful.” [59:10]*

So look, how big a sacrifice it is to put the children to sleep hungry and feed the guest. Today, by the Grace of Allah, this is not likely to be the condition of anyone. And especially for the guests of the Jama'at this is certainly not the case. Those guests for the sake of whom this family gave this sacrifice they were also the guests of the Jama'at, they were guests who had come for the sake of the faith. They were guests who had come to meet the Holy Prophet (sa). By setting up such examples they have taught us the importance of this subject of hosting the guests.

That guest who was the guest of the Holy Prophet (sa) occupied a lofty station and today those who are the guests of the True Lover and Servant of the Holy Prophet (sa), they too have been bestowed a great level of importance. So every worker must keep this importance of the guests of the Promised Messiah (as) in front of him.

Apparently this seems like an excess that the children were forcefully kept hungry but in fact a very lofty example of sacrifice and service has been established in this way in which the whole family joined in - some happily and some perforce. Most certainly Allah must have bountifully rewarded these children also, as is clear from the subject of this verse.

Allah, the Exalted, has included such people among the muflayhoon - the successful. And who are those who achieve falah - success- when we look at the meaning of this we see the vastness of this. These are the ones who are to be found flourishing and blooming, those who are blessed with success, those who attain their righteous and lofty desires and thus achieve happiness and every goodness. They are those who are permanently to be in a state of such success and happiness. They are those who attain peace and tranquility in their lives. They are those who are to attain safety and security. So by sacrificing one meal to fulfill the requirement of hosting a guest they became deserving of the pleasure of God and this took them to such a lofty station. And the one who attains to all this through the pleasure of God what more could such a one desire?

So always remember that this is that station which is granted to those who discharge the obligation of hosting a guest. This is that station that we must try and attain by serving our guests. This is that standard which by granting us the nearness of God will set right our affairs of this world and the Hereafter. So we must remember that by granting us the opportunity to serve the guests of the Promised Messiah (as) Allah, the Exalted, is opening for us the ways to become among the muflayheen - the successful.

May Allah make it so that all devotees and all officeholders and workers become those who attain to this bounty. And may Allah facilitate all the arrangements for the Jalsa that are being made.

After the Jumma prayers I shall lead a janazaghaib [funeral in absentia] which is for one of our brothers Zahoor Ahmad Sahib Kayani who was martyred in Orangi Town, Karachi on the 21st of August. Inna lillahaywainnaelaihayrajayoon. To Allah we belong and to Him shall we all return.

This incident happened as follows. Zahoor Sahib went to see his car that was at some distance from his house. It had just been returned after being repaired. When he came out for this purpose his neighbor NoorulHaq Sahib also came out. This was around 11:15 AM. When they were coming back after seeing the car two motorcycle riders came and one got off and started firing on Zahoor Sahib. As this was happening NoorulHaq Sahib tried to intervene and at this point the other motorcycle rider started firing upon NoorulHaq Sahib also and then they ran away. When Zahoor Sahib's daughter heard the firing she saw that two motor cyclists were going away and she

threw her cup of tea that she was drinking at the time on them. These people also then fired at her. Luckily she was unhurt but Zahoor Sahib was martyred at the scene. He was 47 years old. Inna lil-lahaywainnaelaihayrajayoon. NoorulHaq Sahib, his non-Ahmadi neighbor also was martyred. May Allah have mercy and forgiveness on him also.

Ahmadiyyat came into Kayani Sahib's family through his father's younger brother Yusuf Kayani Sahib and Muhammad Saeed Sahib Kayani. Both were blessed to do bai'at in 1936. Both were learned men and both entered into bai'at after studying the literature. Then after this, the father of ZahoorKayani Sahib and three other uncles also entered Ahmadiyyat. The family was connected to Premkot, Kashmir.

Zahoor Sahib was born in 1966 and moved to Karachi in 1976. There he was educated to B.A. and took up employment in the Federal Board of Revenue. Up till his martyrdom he was employed in the anti-smuggling unit as clerk or deputy clerk.

He was very cooperative with his Majlis, very friendly and from among those of the highest rank in financial sacrifices. He was a gracious host and distinguished in this. He would never let a guest go from his home without attending to them as a gracious host.

He would be respectful of every Jama'at official and never give anyone an opportunity or reason to complain. He was a moosi and had a passion for tabligh and was blessed to have had a person accept Ahmadiyyat through his efforts in 2009.

A large group joined in his funeral from his office and everyone praised his high morals and habits. One of his colleagues who remained with his body said, while crying continuously, that Zahoor Sahib was a very loving man and always inclined towards bringing about accord and reconciliation.

This colleague said that when they would get angry during the course of their work he would always counsel patience. His officers said that Zahoor Ahmad was a courageous officer willing to lay down his life for the cause, who would win over everyone with his personality in a short period. Today we have been deprived of a good colleague.

His father in law, Bashir Kayani Sahib said that Zahoor Sahib would help every relative of his. He was well off financially so that whenever anyone in the family was in need he would be the one who would offer his help. Even outside of the family no one in need would go empty handed from his doorsteps.

His treatment of the children was also full of love. He would take care of the needs of the children fully and he was always preoccupied regarding their education. He would take very great care of their affairs. His wife said that Allah had bestowed such a good heart upon him that perhaps it was for this martyrdom that he had been blessed with such a good heart. He would never reprimand the children. She says that just before being martyred he asked that his shoes be cleaned, as he was just coming back. He then smiled and went out.

She says that after the attack when she came outside and saw him he looked at me and the children with a smile despite his condition as if he was saying his farewell and then he delivered himself to his Creator.

He himself would not say anything to the children but when my Khutba would go from here via MTA he would insist that they listen to it and would let his unhappiness be known if this was not done. He was very strict with this. He had a very special relationship of love and affection with his daughters.

Among his surviving family are his wife TahiraZahoorKayaniSahiba and three sons and four daughters. Imran Kayani, 20 years of age.Kamran Kayani 14 years of age.And Sarfraz three years old.Noorus Saba, 16 years; NoorulAin, 14 years; AttyatulMujeeb, 7 years and FaiqaZahoor, 5 years.

May Allah, the Exalted, raise the station of the deceased and keep his children and his wife in His care and protection and enable to bear the sad loss with steadfastness.