



MAJLIS
ATFALUL AHMADIYYA
UNITED KINGDOM

Winter Reading Challenge

From the Diaries of Abid Khan Sahib

20 December 2020 till 12 February 2021

Prepared by the Talim Department of Majlis Atfal-ul-Ahmadiyya UK

Introduction

Abid Khan Sahib is the Press Secretary of Huzoor-e-Anwar (aba) and has had the blessed opportunity to travel on tours with Huzoor-e-Anwar (aba) around the world.

He writes regular diaries called 'Personal Accounts' where he narrates his experiences of spending time in the blessed company of our beloved Huzoor (aba) and notes down experiences of people he meets on those tours including Ahmadi Muslims and those not part of the Jamaat.

This short booklet contains a few incidents to give you a glimpse of what's in store when you go to the below link and pick up one of the diaries to read.

All diaries are available on:

<http://www.pressahmadiyya.com/personal-accounts/>

They offer great insight and knowledge. If you haven't read them before, make sure to read them all when you finish this booklet.

This short booklet has been compiled by the Talim department of Majlis Atfal-ul-Ahmadiyya UK. For comments, questions, suggestions or feedback, please contact us at talim@atfal.co.uk.

What is the Winter Reading Challenge?

The Winter Reading Challenge's aim is to provide Atfal with an opportunity to keep themselves busy during the Holiday period with the help of a short compilation of faith inspiring and exciting new stories from the diaries of Abid Khan sahib.

The "Challenge" itself is broken down into different categories to accommodate for all Atfal. These categories are as follows:

Category	Criteria	Aimed at, but not limited to
Silver	Read the whole booklet	Dianat (7 to 9) Sadaaqat Group (10 to 12)
Gold	Read the whole booklet and submit a 60 second video recording of yourself telling us about your favourite story from the booklet or one of your personal accounts of our beloved Khalifa	Shuja'at Group (13 to 15)

There is nothing stopping a young tiftl to aim for the Gold category and we encourage you to send your videos even if you do not get to finish the whole booklet. There will be **prizes** given out by regional Nazimeen to those Atfal who manage to achieve the Gold category.

More details on how to submit the video to your regional Nazim are shared at the end of the booklet.

All details and resources, along with the final confirmation form, is available on the Talim website:

www.atfal.org.uk/talim-reading-challenge/

Or email us at: talim@atfal.co.uk

Enjoy the stories!

A Virus Like no Other

Through January and February, I presented daily updates to Huzoor about the coronavirus and after seeing Huzoor's reaction and response, it was clear to me at an early stage that this was no ordinary virus. From the outset, I could see how seriously Huzoor was taking the outbreak, well before it was declared a global threat or a pandemic.

Most Ahmadis will be familiar with the fact that Huzoor prescribed homeopathy medicines for COVID-19 in the very early stages, when the vast majority of cases remained in China or its neighbouring countries.

In a similar vein, I recall how, in mid-February 2020, when the UK was still very much 'open' and restrictions were still several weeks away, I asked Huzoor if our Jamaat events would be affected by the coronavirus.

In response, Huzoor said:

"Yes, it is likely they will be. The Peace Symposium is scheduled for late March but I do not think it will be possible to hold it."

Thereafter, Huzoor asked:

"What do you think about holding the Peace Symposium?"

Upon this, I most humbly submitted:

"Huzoor, I also thought that it may be difficult, especially, given that guests come from across the UK and abroad. It is also possible that there could be government restrictions on large gatherings by then."

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

"Yes, we would not know where the guests have travelled recently or with whom they would have come into contact and so there is a clear risk."

In light of this conversation, I was unsurprised when a few days later, the Peace Symposium was cancelled on Huzoor's instruction, even though, at that time, mass gatherings were continuing in the UK.

Precautionary Measures

As we moved through March, the atmosphere in England and other parts of the United Kingdom began to change, as we witnessed through our TV screens the desperate struggles and misery of the people of Italy and Spain, where the death tolls were rising at a horrifying rate.

The number of cases in the UK was also rising but still the British Government seemed reluctant to impose the restrictions enforced in other nations.

In contrast, our Jamaat, under Huzoor's direction, continued to take preventative measures. Huzoor spoke about the coronavirus in his Friday Sermons and gave clear guidance for Ahmadis to follow.

For example, Huzoor instructed elderly or vulnerable people to stay at home well before any official guidance or instruction from the Government was given.

In terms of our Jamaat office environment, I was personally given detailed instructions from Huzoor about how staff members should isolate themselves at home if they had even the slightest symptoms.

In addition, smaller practical measures were also taken. For example, white sheets that were washed and replaced after each prayer, were placed on top of the carpet in the Mubarak Mosque in Islamabad in order to reduce the spread of bacteria.

A sense of dread

As we progressed into the second half of March, finally, the restrictions announced by the UK Government gradually increased, culminating in a speech delivered by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson on 23 March 2020.

Prior to the speech, all indications were that the Prime Minister was set to effectively mandate a national lockdown.

I cannot deny that I felt impending dread at the thought of the lockdown because I feared it would lead to the suspension of my daily routine of reporting to Huzoor for Mulaqat, something that had been the greatest privilege of my life over the past decade.

During my Mulaqat with Huzoor on 23 March 2020, I hesitantly asked:

“Huzoor, if the UK Government orders a lockdown, possibly from this evening, should I still report to Islamabad for Mulaqat?”

I dreaded Huzoor's answer and sure enough, his response confirmed what I had feared. At the same time, his answer illustrated his piety and adherence to Islamic principles of following the laws of the land.

Huzoor said:

“Yes, if the Government bans travel or enforces a lockdown then you should not come and should stay at home.”

Perhaps seeing the dejected look on my face, Huzoor added:

“Baqi phone par rabta.”

Meaning:

“Apart from that, we can communicate on the phone.”

This comment partially alleviated my sadness, though I did not really understand what Huzoor meant by it.

I thought perhaps it meant that our communication over the next few weeks would be through text message or perhaps that Munir Javed sahib (Private Secretary) might call me to convey Huzoor’s instructions or guidance from time to time.

Lockdown

I drove home and listened far more eagerly than usual to the address delivered by the Prime Minister to the nation.

Normally, I listen or read statements of different leaders or officials from the perspective of seeing if they say anything noteworthy which I may need to report to Huzoor. However, on this occasion, my foremost interest was to see how the Government’s instructions would affect my ability to report for Mulaqat.

As expected, the Prime Minister did announce a lockdown. However, he also said that if it was impossible for someone to work from home they would be permitted to continue to go to work.

When I heard this, my lawyerly instincts, which had remained dormant for the past 13 years, were instantly resuscitated. The first thought that came to my mind was ‘loophole’!

I convinced myself that because it was not possible for me to report for Mulaqat with Huzoor whilst working from home, it would not be wrong or unlawful for me to continue to travel for Mulaqat.

However, given the instructions and guidance Huzoor had given me earlier in the day, I knew I could not simply report for Mulaqat as normal the next day. Rather, I would need to seek Huzoor’s permission, which I duly sought.

In response, I received the following instruction from Huzoor:

“During this period, come to Islamabad one day a week, the rest of the week stay at home. If I need you for any particular work, I will call you to Islamabad when necessary.”

As I read this, I felt a mixture of emotions. I felt sad and sorrowful that my daily opportunity to meet with Huzoor were to be adjourned indefinitely.

On the other hand, I felt relief that, at the very least, I was still permitted to see him on a weekly basis.

A Change of Pace

The next few days were a complete and sudden change of lifestyle for me.

For 13 years, my every day revolved around Mulaqat. It was the focus of my life. Both my office and family life revolved around Mulaqat timings.

Now, all of a sudden, I was working from home, there was no daily travel to Islamabad, there was no preparing daily notes for Mulaqat.

Instead, in common with millions of others, I was now suddenly thrust into the entirely unfamiliar world of home-schooling.

During that week and those that followed, Google proved to be a faithful ally, as it helped me navigate my way through the challenges of teaching my elder son.

Truth be told, I quite enjoyed the first two or three days of lockdown.

The weather was extremely pleasant and so I took the opportunity to walk in our communal gardens every afternoon as the sun shined from the cloudless skies above.

Furthermore, though I missed seeing Huzoor desperately, I did not miss the heavy traffic I often encountered whilst travelling to and from Islamabad.

Soon though I was impatiently yearning to report to Islamabad once again.

A Different Atmosphere

Most graciously, Huzoor had left it to me to choose which day I would come to Islamabad each week and so I decided upon Friday.

Having last met Huzoor on Monday, I was excited and joyous when on Friday, 27 March I travelled to Islamabad. Though my Mulaqat was not until the evening, out of sheer anticipation and excitement, I drove to Islamabad in the morning.

Despite my happiness at the prospect of seeing Huzoor, I felt sad that he was not able to deliver his Friday Sermon due to the lockdown restrictions and instead he delivered a live message from his office.

More generally, I was shocked to see how noticeably the atmosphere in Islamabad had changed in just three or four days since my last visit. Though precautionary measures, such as temperature checking, had been taking place for some weeks, now I had my temperature checked on three separate occasions before I was permitted entry into the main compound.

Islamabad seemed eerily quiet. I did not see anyone on site who did not live in Islamabad, except for a few members of the MTA team. Most of the residents of Islamabad stayed within the four walls of their home at all times.

Every person I encountered, including Huzoor's office staff, were wearing a face mask. I did not have a mask myself and so felt exposed and uncomfortable and so the first thing I did was to find one.

To my surprise, I was told that Khuddamul Ahmadiyya had privately sourced some coronavirus tests and that several office staff had taken the test in the past couple of days. I asked if I could also be tested and was relieved when the test result came back as negative.

At around 6.30pm, Alhamdulillah, I was once again able to meet Huzoor, to present my report and to spend time in his blessed company.

I was pleased when Huzoor said:

“Even though I had said you could come on any day, I thought the best day for you to come would be on Fridays.”

In line with the government guidelines, the chairs opposite Huzoor's desk were now placed further away to maintain a safe distance. I was also glad I had procured a face mask because I soon realised that it was on Huzoor's instruction that people in Islamabad were now all covering their faces.

During the Mulaqat, my mask slipped below my nose on a couple of occasions and each time, Huzoor alerted me and said I should pull it up. He also showed me how to ensure it fitted around my face securely to ensure better protection.

Following the Mulaqat, I left Islamabad with a sense of sadness, even grief, that I would not see Huzoor for a week. I tried reminding myself that there were so many Ahmadis who were unable to ever meet Huzoor and so I should continue to thank Allah and to be grateful for His blessings, rather than to unnecessarily wallow in my own change of circumstances.

Friday Sermon in an Empty Mosque

On 3rd April 2020, I travelled to Islamabad and reported for Mulaqat. The week before, Huzoor had been unable to deliver his Khutba due to the COVID-19 lockdown. However, after consultation with some Ahmadi lawyers, Huzoor took the decision to resume his weekly Friday Sermon.

It was certainly a relief to members of the Jamaat to see and hear Huzoor's sermon through MTA once again.

Due to the government stipulations, the sermon had to be delivered in an empty Mosque in which the only people present, apart from Huzoor, were the Muezzin and an MTA cameraman.

As I watched the sermon from my home, I thought of how strange it must have been for Huzoor to speak to an empty Mosque. So, upon entering his office, I asked Huzoor if he had found it upsetting or difficult to deliver his sermon in this different way.

Smiling, Huzoor said:

"It was not difficult at all! I just looked in the direction of the Muezzin or the cameraman and treated it like any other sermon!"

I mentioned that some Ahmadi lawyers were of the opinion that Huzoor could have delivered his sermon the week before on 27 March 2020, rather than delivering a message from his office.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

"Yes, one or two lawyers gave their opinion to me that there was nothing to stop me delivering my sermon on 27 March, as long as only one or two people were present in the Mosque. However, I decided it was not appropriate to deliver a sermon last week due to the sensitivities at that time."

I also took the opportunity to mention that someone had asked me how the challenges and consequences of the coronavirus pandemic were affecting Huzoor's personal spirits.

Appearing surprised that this question had even been asked, Huzoor said:

"Do I look down or depressed? Of course there is sadness at the loss of life and the trials faced by people but we have trust in Allah and so there is no sense of frustration or depression."

As I left Huzoor's office, I presented him with the third and final part of a personal diary I had written about Huzoor's tour to Europe in September and October 2019. Huzoor graciously said he would review it when he had some time.

An Unexpected Call

The following evening, 4 April 2020, at around 7.30pm, as I was sitting in our lounge with my children, I received a phone call from the Private Secretary's office. To my complete surprise, a Missionary serving in the PS Office, Ghalib Javaid, informed me that Huzoor wished to speak to me.

I had no idea for what reason Huzoor was calling and those five to ten seconds from when Ghalib informed me to when the phone was connected were spent in a state of panic and confusion.

I jumped up from the sofa, frantically gestured to my wife and children to remain quiet and ran to my bedroom trying desperately to compose myself.

After a moment's pause, I heard Huzoor's voice on the other end of the phone.

Huzoor said:

"Assalamo Alaikum, kya haal hai?"

That:

"Assalamo Alaikum, how are you?"

My voice quivered. I had spoken to Huzoor on the phone a handful of times and each time had found the experience extremely nerve-wracking.

When I have the opportunity to meet Huzoor in person, I have time to prepare and to compose and ready myself. Yet, whenever I have spoken to Huzoor on the phone, it has been sudden and unexpected.

Immediately, Huzoor mentioned that he had already checked the diary and that there were some corrections needed. I was taken aback that Huzoor had completed the diary so soon, as it was well over 100 pages long.

Huzoor said he had marked the corrections in pencil and that Ghalib would scan and email me the notes. However, in case I did not understand the written notes, he had called to explain them over the phone.

Huzoor said to get a pen or pencil and so I looked in the room frenetically not wishing to waste a moment of Huzoor's time.

Knowing my personality, Huzoor said:

"Take your time, there is no need to rush!"

I went to the lounge and found a pen and an old envelope, which I brought back to my room and informed Huzoor that I was ready.

Over the next ten minutes, Huzoor identified several errors in the text I had submitted. For example, Huzoor referred to a section I had written about Hazrat Musleh Maud's (ra) command and understanding of the English language.

Huzoor informed me I had written up the incident inaccurately and he then very patiently explained the whole story again.

I was extremely grateful and relieved that Huzoor had corrected me because when I re-read what I had originally written, I realised it was not only misleading but also had the potential to be taken out of context and to reflect wrongly on the pure character of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra).

After correcting and clarifying a few further points, Huzoor referred to the fact I had mentioned that some Ahmadis from Bremen Jamaat in Germany had gathered on a bridge to wave at Huzoor from above, as the Qafila proceeded on the motorway.

Huzoor said:

"You have written that you are not aware if I saw the Ahmadis on the bridge, in fact, I did notice them and so you should mention that as it will make them happy."

Upon this, I said:

"Huzoor, in the diary I have written that I thought it was unnecessarily dangerous for them to stand on the bridge, as they could be a potential distraction. Should I remove this comment?"

Huzoor said:

"No, keep your personal opinion. Where they will be happy to know that I saw them, they will also consider the safety aspect."

Before the call concluded, Huzoor said:

"These days are you helping Mala with the cooking and cleaning?"

I said I was helping with the cleaning but not so much with the cooking, for I did not wish to put my family through the ordeal of eating the food I had prepared!

I took Huzoor's question as an indication that I should assist my wife Mala as much as possible, given we had a new-born and two young boys in the house.

Thus, over the next couple of weeks, I did cook occasionally. My children loved my cooking but both Mala and I found it somewhat less palatable!

After Huzoor said “Allah hafiz”, I put the phone down and felt incredibly grateful and emotional to have had the chance to speak to Huzoor so unexpectedly.

A Middle Name

A couple of days later, I received a call from Munir Javed sahib and was informed that Huzoor wished to speak with me. Just like the previous time, I was not expecting the call and was completely unprepared.

After asking how I was, Huzoor asked if I had published the diary which he had approved two days before.

I informed I had and took the opportunity to share a little feedback I had received.

In the diary I had mentioned that my wife and I had been blessed with a daughter in March and, during the call, I informed Huzoor that many people had congratulated me and sent mubarakbaad after reading about her birth.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“You did not write the name of your daughter – did people not ask what her name is?”

As I heard this, I thought of how carefully Huzoor checks the diary and how his recall was incredible, whereby he even noticed and remembered small details such as this.

In reply, I said:

“Huzoor, one or two people did ask but most just offered congratulations.”

As the topic of conversation had turned to our daughter Jaweria’s name, I took the opportunity to seek Huzoor’s guidance on a related topic.

I said:

“Huzoor, at the moment we do not have any middle names for Jaweria. Should we give her a middle name and if so what should it be?”

After a moment’s silence, Huzoor said:

“You can call her Jaweria Abid.”

Naturally, I was delighted by this. I had not imagined that my daughter could share my name. When I told my wife she was also extremely happy that Huzoor had chosen not only Jaweria’s first name but also her middle one.

I continued to share some diary feedback with Huzoor and at one point, I misread the comment of one person.

Instead of saying:

“She has written that Huzoor’s speech had a great and positive impact upon her..”

I said in error:

“She has written that MY SPEECH has had a great and positive impact upon her..”

Though I quickly corrected myself, it was not before Huzoor had heard what I said.

Jokingly, Huzoor said:

“I think whilst at home you must be delivering lots of speeches to Mala these days, which is why you assumed she was talking about you!”

I laughed at Huzoor’s joke but also thought of how there was an underlying truth to Huzoor’s joke. Being at home probably meant that I was commenting on domestic matters much more than normal!

A Phone Mulaqat

On 7 April 2020, in the early evening, I was again blessed to receive a call from Huzoor. This time, I was prepared and had notes ready and presented a media briefing, as I would under normal circumstances in Huzoor’s office.

The opportunity to speak to Huzoor on the phone was a great blessing and, in some respects, speaking on the phone was more intimate and personal than even speaking to Huzoor in person.

However, not being able to physically see Huzoor sometimes led to difficulty or confusion.

For example, when meeting Huzoor in his office, often there are moments of silence, sometimes long periods, in which Huzoor continues to read and review his files.

On the phone, that day and on those that followed, there were occasional moments of silence where I could not tell if Huzoor was working or if he was waiting for me to say something.

Anyway, at the start of the call, I mentioned that the death toll in the UK from COVID-19 was rising quickly and that in the past 24 hours over 800 people had died.

Huzoor expressed his deep sadness that so many lives were being lost and offered prayers for those who were suffering.

During the call, I mentioned how Sister Reem Shraiky, a Syrian Ahmadi, had contacted me overwhelmed with joy because Huzoor had called her and her husband Ibrahim Ikhlaq sahib to enquire after their health earlier that day.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“I told Reem that I considered it necessary to call her after reading the article she had written for the Press department about Ibrahim’s illness.”

Huzoor was referring to an article the Press & Media Office had published in which Sister Reem had very emotively and vividly described the trials and tribulations that she and her family had faced when Ibrahim sahib became critically unwell with COVID-19.

Huzoor once again mentioned (late) Nasir Saeed sahib and reiterated his regret that it was not currently possible for people to visit the family and offer support in person or to attend the burial.

I took the opportunity to mention how countless tributes to Nasir Saeed sahib were being posted on social media.

I said:

“Huzoor, I am quite sure that Nasir Saeed sahib will never have been on social media and probably will not have even known what it was, yet in the past couple of days I have seen dozens and dozens of messages on social media in his remembrance from Ahmadiis across the world. He truly touched the hearts of people in so many countries.”

Thereafter, Huzoor kindly asked how my children were. I mentioned that they were well but that due to COVID-19 restrictions, our new-born daughter was not being seen by any health visitors or nurses, as would normally be the case. As a result, we were deprived of the reassurance that medical experts could give regarding her health and development.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“Do not worry, as long as she is feeding well she will be fine. Also make sure you check her temperature regularly. May Allah bless her.”

Truly, Huzoor's guidance and prayers gave us comfort and reassurance that was a million times greater than could have been given by any health professional.

As the call drew towards a close, I mentioned that an individual had contacted me to express their opinion that perhaps the one silver lining of the lockdown would be that Huzoor would finally have some time to rest and to spend with his family.

Hearing this, Huzoor laughed a little and said:

"I have been in the office since the morning reviewing the mail and correspondence and so I have not noticed any difference to my schedule! Even the slot normally used for family Mulaqats is being utilised for other tasks."

The need for Sensitivity and Compassion

On 8 April 2020, I received a call from beloved Huzoor and I informed him that we had received a lot of positive feedback to the article written by Sister Reem Shraiky.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

"Do you know which part of the article I liked and appreciated the most? It was Reem's response to the Ahmadi lady who had said to her, when Ibrahim was in a critical state, that 'Don't worry if you or your family is ill then it means that your sins are being forgiven'. In reply, Reem said 'I also know very well the Hadith that you speak of but it does not require for you to remind me of this at a time when I am at my most vulnerable and weakest.'"

Huzoor continued:

"I am very glad that Reem wrote this because there are even some Ahmadis who are extremely insensitive and gossipy. This Hadith is a means of comfort to believers in their time of ailment and something for them to reflect upon. However, it is absolutely not the case that when someone is facing a trial they be reminded of their past sins! This is something that the Sadr Lajna should take note of and ensure that the Lajna members are taught about what is appropriate and how to comfort and console people when they are suffering."

The Importance of Cleanliness and Good Hygiene

I informed Huzoor that the UK was now reaching the peak of coronavirus cases and so the death toll over the past 24 hours was over 900 people.

I also mentioned that it was now coming to the attention of the authorities that the proportion of people who were severely affected by coronavirus was significantly higher in ethnic minorities.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“As Muslims, we should always have the very highest standards of cleanliness in our personal hygiene, in our homes and elsewhere. This is the teaching of Islam and if people uphold the Islamic standard then the risk of infection will be less.”

Huzoor continued:

“Yesterday, on my instruction, the personal residences and communal areas here in Islamabad were disinfected. Furthermore, dhooni (incense) is being used in the offices and homes here, as it is a means of eliminating bacteria. You should also do this in your own home.”

Leading Jummah

After presenting a media briefing, I mentioned to Huzoor that I had led Jummah prayers in my home for the past two weeks.

Smiling, Huzoor said:

“Masha’Allah, as a result of the virus even you have learned how to perform Jummah!”

Huzoor enquired if I knew Khutba Saania by heart. I said that, having heard it every week throughout my life, I knew most of it by heart but I still needed to read it from a paper.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“It is good to keep it written in front of you, even if you know it by heart in case your memory fails and because when you read it your Tilawat will generally be of a better standard.”

Patience, Empathy and Compassion Required

I also informed Huzoor of a front-page story published by Forbes which featured the political leaders of Germany, Taiwan, New Zealand and certain Scandinavian countries.

The article suggested that those countries had dealt with the coronavirus crisis better than other nations and highlighted the fact that common to each of these nations was that their political leader was a woman.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“Women have experience of the home and because of this they naturally have good managing skills and understand how to allocate limited resources. Furthermore, by looking after their homes, women have developed higher levels of patience, empathy and compassion. During this type of crisis, in which people are dying of illness or become ill, the women leaders know better how to manage the limited

resources and are naturally more calm and compassionate than men and so are able to relate to the sufferings of their public better.”

An Unnecessary Suggestion

I also mentioned that an Ahmadi had written to me that Ahmadis were feeling anxious and panicked due to the effects of the coronavirus and so he suggested that Huzoor might lead an ‘Aalmi dua’ – an international collective prayer through MTA.

In response to this suggestion, Huzoor said:

“What is the need for such a dua when I am leading Jumma each week and it is being broadcast on MTA as normal? Some people have developed the ‘Pir’ mentality whereby they think that until a person raises his hands it is not a proper prayer. However, in every sermon, I am praying for an end to this pandemic and offering prayers for the members of the Jamaat – if people who are watching say ‘Ameen’ then it will be an Aalmi dua in itself.”

An Awful Haircut

Later in the call, I mentioned I had attempted to cut my son’s hair but it had not at all been successful!

Though the front looked ok, if someone saw his hair from above they would soon see that it was cut to various levels and there was a large, rather random square where his hair was at least an inch shorter than the rest of his head.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“If you do not have proper clippers then try to get one of those combs that has a blade attached. It cuts as it combs and this is how I used to cut my hair in Ghana using the comb’s blade and a mirror.”

A Period of Anxiety & The Love of a Father

I was somewhat anxious and worried the next day, 18 April 2020, because our two elder children, Mahid and Moshahid, had both developed symptoms associated with the coronavirus. One had a persistent cough, whilst the other had a fever. Given we had a new-born in the home, we were even more worried.

I was initially in two minds as to whether I should inform Huzoor. Part of me thought it might just be a normal ‘run of the mill’ cold or cough, which children often get and recover from quickly. Yet, at the back of my mind, was of course the possibility that it could be COVID-19.

We called the NHS 111 service and though they were helpful, they were unable to provide any clarity about the children’s symptoms. They simply advised that it could be coronavirus or equally it could be a normal cough or cold.

To put my mind at ease, I then sent a message to Huzoor informing him and seeking his prayers. Even though I have had many experiences of Huzoor's love and grace, I was completely blown away by his love and concern throughout that day and in the coming days.

I tend not to mention my wife Mala in my diaries as much as I used to. One reason is that a couple of people expressed their view that it was inappropriate for me to refer to my wife and to mention her name in my diaries. In my view, theirs was quite an extreme position to take and not one I shared. Nonetheless, their opinion had a subliminal effect that meant I was more reluctant to mention her in my recent diaries.

Still, I believe it is necessary to mention her at this point because when the children became unwell she was far more anxious and worried than me. She believed there was a strong chance that they had contracted COVID-19 and given how the news was punctuated with occasional horror stories of healthy children becoming suddenly critically unwell, her fears escalated and very quickly she became panicked and desperate.

She was worried that she or I would contract the coronavirus and would not be able to take care of our children and, above all, she was terrified that the children could be hospitalised and we would not be able to be with them.

She kept referring to the devastating story of a 13 year old boy who had died from the coronavirus without any of his family being present during his hospital stay or even at his funeral.

Given that our children's symptoms were mild, I kept trying to reassure that she should not worry and everything would be fine but, as a mother, she was panicked and I could not offer her the respite or comfort she required.

Where I could not relieve her concerns, the sheer mercy, compassion and love of Khilafat meant that all her fears were soon swept away and by the end of the day her panic and anxiety was completely relieved.

Shortly, after I informed Huzoor, he sent an extremely loving message filled with prayers.

He instructed that we start giving the children the homeopathy remedy for coronavirus and also said I should consult with Dr Hafeez Bhatti sahib (in charge central Homeopathy Department) and then report back to Huzoor.

I immediately called Dr Hafeez Bhatti sahib who explained how the homeopathy should be given to the children.

I thanked Dr Hafeez sahib and said that I was praying for him not only because he was treating our children but treating Ahmadis around the world.

Upon this, Dr Hafeez Bhatti sahib became emotional and said:

“I do not warrant any thanks, rather all gratitude should be directed to Khalifa-Waqt and it is his grace that he is permitting me to serve and please pray I can serve until my last day.”

With that, I received a further message from Huzoor stating:

“At this time (when coronavirus was still near the peak stage) it is better to avoid going to the hospital if possible. In addition to the homeopathy, give your children honey. You should all sip cinnamon (daar-cheeni) infused water regularly. Give the child who has fever paracetamol every four or five hours and give the child with the cough paracetamol twice a day. You should also place some Vicks in a pan of boiling water twice a day and let the steam naturally circulate in the home for half an hour. May Allah the Almighty heal them and grant full recovery.”

A little later, Huzoor sent a further instruction:

“Regarding the steam, it should not be inhaled or brought near any person, rather leave the pan on the stove and the Vicks-infused steam will naturally spread within your home.”

Thereafter, at regular intervals during the next few days and even at Fajr time the next morning, I received messages from Huzoor with further instructions and asking how the children were. He also most graciously phoned me and before hearing the daily news report, Huzoor enquired about the health of the children.

Furthermore, Huzoor instructed that I should remain home on Friday, instead of coming to Islamabad and that he would call me on that evening.

Huzoor’s love and concern was so much that it was actually a burden upon my heart that we were taking up so much of Huzoor’s precious time.

I swear to Allah the Almighty that no father or mother could love their child more than Huzoor loves the members of the Jamaat.

Upon receiving Huzoor’s constant guidance and prayers, Mala’s panic and worries were alleviated. We were both sure that whatever symptoms the children had they would fully recover and with the Grace of Allah they both soon did.

A Wrong Innovation

I also mentioned how the day before a lot of Ahmadis were posting tributes to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) and sharing their memories of him in light of the fact that it had been 19 April, the day on which he had passed away in 2003. I had seen similar posts in previous years but it seemed to me that more people had posted messages and tributes this time.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“To mark the day someone has died is not just unnecessary but is wrong. There is no such thing as marking a ‘death anniversary’ in Islam. The reason more people will have posted messages this year is that they are at home and so are spending more time on social media. They will have seen some messages and thought that they too would join in and post their own memories or photos. If Ahmadis wish to honour and respect Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) they should seek to follow the instructions of the Promised Messiah (as) and the Khulafa, rather than sending a message once a year.”

A precious Urdu Class Moment

A day or two before, I had shared a video clip with Huzoor from MTA’s archive. It was a clip of an Urdu Class from 1997 in which Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) showed a photo of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) and introduced him.

It was my good fortune to have been present in that Urdu Class and Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) spoke with me at that moment and reminded me that Sahibzada Mirza Masroor Ahmad, as he was then, had visited Hartlepool with him earlier that year.

I remember that moment quite clearly. In fact, as a teenager in 1997, I remember thinking that there must be something very special about Sahibzada Mirza Masroor Ahmad because Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) had mentioned him with great love and affection.

Looking back, I consider it a great blessing that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh), with whom I spent a lot of time as a child, introduced me to that blessed person who was destined to take charge of fulfilling the mission of the Promised Messiah (as) and for whom I have been most privileged to serve closely for many years.

During the phone call, Huzoor mentioned the video clip and much to my surprise, Huzoor instructed that I share it with others. I was embarrassed to share the clip publicly given that I was present in it but sensing my reticence, Huzoor again instructed that I should share it with others and that it would prove of benefit for some people.

As a result, I first posted the clip on a family WhatsApp group, followed by a small group of staff members from my office. Finally, I posted it on Twitter through which it was disseminated far and wide.

Over the next day or two, I received many messages from Ahmadis in various countries in response to the clip. Many wrote that their faith had increased and they felt happy and emotional to see Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) speak so lovingly of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba).

It was after receiving such comments that I realised what Huzoor had meant when he said that it would prove of benefit for the clip to be shared.

A Timely Move

I mentioned I was receiving regular feedback about an article written by Ibrahim Ikhlaq sahib about his experiences with COVID-19.

I asked Huzoor if he agreed with Ibrahim sahib's point that Huzoor's move to Islamabad before the onset of the coronavirus was also part of Allah's planning.

In response, Huzoor said:

"Yes, what he says is right because it would have been much more problematic if the Markaz had remained at the Fazl Mosque during the pandemic. It would not have been possible for me to go to the Mosque or to leave the building in which my residence and office was. Furthermore, many of the staff members in the PS Office and the other central offices based in Islamabad live on-site and so they are able to continue working, whereas if we were at the Fazl Mosque it would not have been possible for them to report for duty."

Love through Reformation

A few days earlier I had written an article in which I had interviewed Qamar Suleman sahib, also known as 'Babbi', from Rabwah.

I told Huzoor that one point which had struck me was that Qamar Suleman sahib said that sometimes Huzoor had, on occasion, personally paid the financial dues owed by individuals according to the judgment of the Darul Qadha (A department that judges between mutual disputes within the Jamaat).

Upon this, Huzoor said:

"I have mentioned in my sermons that I am greatly pained and saddened whenever I have to take action against any Ahmadi. The only reason that I give any sanction is because it is my duty for the sake of reforming the individual and ensuring the wellbeing of the Jamaat. And yes, Babbi is right, there have been some occasions where I personally paid whatever was owed by one party so that the dispute would end and to ensure that the unity of the Jamaat was not threatened in any way."

The Wisdom of Khilafat

I informed Huzoor that the UK Government Education Minister had announced that whenever schools would reopen in the UK, the class sizes would be limited and that it would not be possible for the full school to reopen at once.

After learning of this, Huzoor said:

"I told you some days ago that when they reopen school it should be done with smaller classes and that this was the only way to do it safely."

In response, I said:

“Huzoor, probably the Government spent millions commissioning reports and taking scientific advice before reaching this decision – if they had come to you and sought your guidance they would have saved a lot of money and time!”

Huzoor laughed and seemed to enjoy the comment.

Though my comment was light-hearted, there is no doubt that Allah the Almighty has granted Khalifa-Waqt wisdom not only in religious matters but also in secular affairs.

From time to time, there are some humble leaders or politicians who have sought Huzoor’s advice and guidance.

Sadly, the majority remain oblivious to the great blessings associated with Khilafat and we can only pray that they or their successors come to recognise the truth.

Holding his Umbrella

Earlier that day, a Khadim who was on duty at Islamabad contacted me to express his sadness that because of the requirements of social distancing, Huzoor now had to hold his own umbrella when it rained.

During the call, I mentioned this to Huzoor.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Agar umbrella pakar na par gya tu phir kya huwa?”

That:

“So what if I had to hold my umbrella?”

Huzoor continued:

“It was raining at Fajr time and so Ahmad (Muhammad Ahmad sahib) came forward with the umbrella but I told him and the other security team members to stay back. Then, Waqas (Sahibzada Mirza Waqas Ahmad) came forward and offered to hold the umbrella but I told him that I will carry it myself.”

Laughing Huzoor said:

“Mein tu azaad huwa hoon! Enjoy kar ra hoon!”

Meaning:

“I have become free and am enjoying it!”

Upon this, I said:

“Huzoor, if you feel free and happy then it is good!”

Certainly, it felt that Huzoor was enjoying those little things which we tend to take for granted, such as holding an umbrella and not having crowds of people constantly around him.

In normal circumstances, Huzoor permits his security staff to hold his umbrella or members of Khuddam to hand him the shoe-horn as he exits the Mosque but not because he desires such protocol or help. Rather, he permits such things because they fulfil our desire to reap the blessings associated with serving Khilafat.

We can only imagine how restricting, even suffocating, it must be for Khalifa-Waqt to have his every movement shadowed and to always be in the public eye. Yet, Huzoor has always accepted this burden for the sake of Allah the Almighty.

This does not mean that he never misses his old life prior to Khilafat in which he had the privacy and freedom that the rest of us take for granted. Thus, the happiness in Huzoor’s voice when he spoke of holding his own umbrella.

Lead By Example

Later in the week, I received a call from Huzoor in which I mentioned that my elder son had turned 7 and I sought Huzoor’s guidance about whether it was now necessary for him to offer all five daily prayers.

In particular, I was not sure if it was necessary to wake him for Fajr or to keep him awake for Isha on those summer days when Isha is offered very late at night.

Huzoor’s response was a reflection of Islam’s balanced and moderate teachings. He made it clear that at the age of seven there was still room for some flexibility but that every effort should be made to convey the importance of Salat and its practice.

Huzoor said:

“Tell Mahid that he should offer at least two or three prayers every day and if he can manage all five then it is even better. Most importantly you should lead by your personal example. If you are leading Namaz in your home these days he will naturally offer them with you and it will become his habit without any effort.”

Huzoor continued:

“Treat him with love and softness but you should make it clear to him from now that when he reaches the age of 10 it will be his obligation to pray five times a day. Also, as it is Ramadan, you should let him do a chiri roza (baby fast) so that he comes to understand the spirit of Ramadan. Wake him one day and let him eat a good sehri(pre-dawn breakfast) and then he can end his fast with a meal at midday.”

After the call, I told Mahid that Huzoor had given special instructions for him regarding Salat and Ramadan and he was extremely happy.

The next weekend he did a chiri roza, as suggested by Huzoor, and it was clear that it enabled him to start appreciating the spirit of Ramadan.

Turning to Allah the Almighty

I mentioned to Huzoor that it seemed as though we would have to offer Eid prayers in our home.

In response, Huzoor said that he had already given instructions to Amir Sahib UK to inform Jamaat members that Eid prayers would be offered in homes, as there was no chance of Government restrictions on places of worship being lifted before the end of Ramadan.

As I considered the likelihood of not seeing any family or friends and, above all, not seeing Huzoor and not offering Namaz behind him on Eid day, I said:

“Huzoor, bohat ajeeb dunya hogi hai, bohat ajeeb halaat hogay hain.”

That:

“Huzoor, the world and the current circumstances are extremely strange.”

Responding in the most beautiful way, Huzoor said:

“Phir Allah say chimat jao, yay hi hul hai, yay hi tareeka hai.”

Meaning:

“Then attach yourself to Allah, this is the only solution, this is the only way.”

Seeing my Beloved Once Again

I will never forget that moment when I entered Huzoor’s office and saw him for the first time since he had fallen and injured himself.

Before entering, I kept wondering how I would enquire about Huzoor's health and what words I would use.

Yet, before I had the chance to say anything, Huzoor said:

"Abid how are you, how is Mala and how are the children?"

I could not believe that even at that time where it was my duty and obligation and heartfelt desire to ask Huzoor how he was, it was he who enquired after the health of me and my family.

As I sat down, I was relieved to see that Huzoor's injuries were healing extremely well and were hardly noticeable. I was further reassured at the sight of Huzoor sitting at his desk as normal.

The only difference was that he was not wearing an achkan and was just in shalwar kameez.

I do not know if that was due to the residual effect of his injuries or merely due to the warmer weather.

When it came to my turn to ask Huzoor how he was, I twisted my words and had to repeat myself three times before Huzoor understood what I was saying.

My emotions were getting the better of me and so the clarity of my spoken Urdu, weak at the best of times, was utterly incoherent.

Huzoor explained how he had fallen.

It is not my place or my desire to narrate the details, yet what I wish to say is that Huzoor's courage and bravery at that time was an example for all men. Huzoor had gone into his garden with purpose of turning off a switch and after falling severely, he got up himself and went and completed that errand, before returning to his house and calling Dr Shabbir Bhatti sahib who, thankfully, was on site at Islamabad.

Despite the pain and severity of the injury, Huzoor told me that he reassured Dr Shabbir sahib and told him not to worry and to attend to his injuries without any sense of panic or worry.

Telling me about the next few days, Huzoor said:

"Alhamdulillah, I am much better now and the pain has mostly subsided. Even during the first few days, even though I was in pain and was unable to come to the office, I used to send Waqas (Sahibzada Mirza Waqas Ahmad) to get the office files and letters and I would review them in my home."

Upon this, I said:

“Huzoor, during that time I was also sending office letters to you and would receive them back from your office the next day. When I learned that you had been injured I felt so embarrassed that I had burdened you with non-essential letters but at the same time amazed that you had continued to go through it so quickly.”

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

“When I first got injured I feared that it would take me at least two weeks to recover but with Allah’s Grace and Mercy the recovery has been much faster.”

As he continued to work, Huzoor said that he still had some pain in his knees and in his wrist.

Given he had said this, I was surprised to see Huzoor walk to a cupboard near his desk and bend down for several moments, whilst undoubtedly putting extra strain on his knees.

As he stood up, I saw Huzoor had taken something out of the cupboard, which he gave to me as an early Eid gift. I could barely control my tears.

Time and time again, Khalifa-Waqt is he who ignores his own pain due to his love for us.

He is the person who makes every possible sacrifice in the cause of Islam and to ensure the wellbeing of Ahmadi Muslims across the world.

May Allah enable every Ahmadi Muslim to recognise how fortunate we are to have Khilafat. Ameen.

End of stories from “COVID-19 Diary”

Blessings of Khilafat – A Personal Incident

A few months before the Germany tour, I had put an offer on a house which I had planned to purchase and I had paid a substantial deposit but for various reasons, the purchase eventually fell through.

Initially, I was assured that I would be paid back my deposit but as the days turned into weeks I started to receive mixed messages and the payment was not returned. Finally during the days of Jalsa I received an email that suggested that I would not be paid back the deposit at all.

I became worried and thought that it seems that this money has been wasted and will not be returned. At that point, I wrote a short letter to Huzoor requesting his prayers.

The next day the Private Secretary Sahib handed me the letter which Huzoor had read and signed. I felt relieved and grateful that Huzoor had read my letter even amongst the extremely busy days of Jalsa.

Literally, moments after reading the letter I happened to check my personal bank account on my phone. I did so without any purpose but as a matter of routine and when I checked it I was astounded because the full amount of the deposit had been returned to my account.

I had not received any message since the email the day before in which it appeared I would not be paid back the money. It truly seemed like a miracle and purely the result of Huzoor's prayers.

An Interesting Aameen Ceremony

Following the meeting, Huzoor proceeded to the Mosque where, before Namaz, the Aameen ceremonies of around thirty children took place.

One child, whether due to nerves or otherwise, was unable to read the Quran at all whilst sitting next to Huzoor.

To save the child and his family from embarrassment, Huzoor very affectionately and patiently himself read each word and the boy then repeated each word after Huzoor.

At the end, Huzoor turned to the boy and jokingly said:

"Tum nay aaj meri Aameen karwa di hai!"

Meaning:

"You have performed my Aameen today!"

Everyone in the Mosque laughed and enjoyed Huzoor's comment.

Birthdays

[A] member of the Khuddam Amila mentioned that his daughter attended a school that celebrated the birthday of each child and he sought Huzoor's guidance over this matter.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“If the school wants to mark the birthday of every child, including your children, then let them do it. However, you can let the school know that within your home you do not celebrate birthdays and consider them to be a waste of expense that could be put to better use.”

Advising how the Khadim should do the Tarbiyyat of his child, Huzoor said:

“You should also explain to your daughter the true Islamic way of commencing a new year in their life. Instead of expecting others to spend lavishly, our Ahmadi children should be taught that they should give one or two euros in charity and offer Nafil (voluntary) prayers. If other parents want to give your child a gift you do not have to reject it but let them know that we prefer for our children to give to charities on birthdays, rather than receiving gifts themselves.”

Thereafter, illustrating the moderate teachings of Islam, Huzoor said:

“You should not be harsh or overly strict with your child. Marking a birthday is not a matter of Sharia and it is not haram. There is even no harm if you bring a small cake for your children to have within the home on their birthday. What is wrong is for them to expect gifts or to have a party.”

Blessings of Prayers

Speaking of his personal experiences of Huzoor, Ahmad Konadu sahib said:

“Huzoor is very loving and I feel blessed that he knows my name. I have seen myself how Allah is with the Khalifa always. For example, I was serving as Regional Qaid in Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya for eight years and during that time I tried for our Scotland region to improve and I considered it was my duty to set an example for the Khuddam in my region. Thus, I ensured that me and my children attended Fajr and Isha at the Mosque every day and participated in all Jamaat, Khuddam and Atfal activities. With the Grace of Allah, for many years I hardly ever missed congregational Fajr or Isha prayers in the Mosque.”

Ahmad Konadu sahib continued:

“However, when my eight years as Regional Qaid were coming to an end, I felt sad that I never had the chance to shake the hand of beloved Huzoor at the Ijtema because our Scotland Majlis was not able to win the Alme-Inami or to win the academic or sports prizes. Hence, during my final Khuddam Ijtema as a Khadim in 2015 I prayed and wept every day in Tahajjud seeking Allah’s forgiveness and saying that I have not done well for my Majlis. I begged Allah for His mercy and prayed that even if there was one thing I had ever done which had pleased Him then I desired above all to have the opportunity to shake the blessed hand of the person who Allah loves the most before I returned home. This was my prayer and it was something between me and Allah alone and I never mentioned it to a single soul.”

Narrating his story further, Ahmad Konadu sahib said:

“I kept repeating this prayer throughout the Ijtema and my tears remained a secret from others. However, the entire Ijtema concluded and I did not get any opportunity to shake Huzoor’s hand. Thus, feeling extremely dejected I rounded up our Scottish Khuddam so we could depart for the long journey back to Scotland. Just before our departure, I decided to go to the bathroom when a National Amila member beckoned me and said that Huzoor is touring the Ijtema site. Immediately, I headed towards where Huzoor was but, as I am always shy in the presence of Huzoor, I remained on the fringe of the large group and there were many people between me and Huzoor. Yet somehow Huzoor saw me from a distance and called me. I was so far away that I did not even hear and it was only when someone else told me that Huzoor is calling you.”

Ahmad Konadu sahib told me that Huzoor stopped walking and waited especially for him.

Ahmad Konadu sahib said:

“When I reached Huzoor he asked me if it was my last year in Khuddam and then Huzoor told some very kind and funny jokes that Ghanaians are extremely fearful of entering Ansar and so they do not admit they are Ansar until they reach their late 40s! Everyone laughed a lot and thereafter Huzoor extended his hand towards me and I had the opportunity that I dreamed and had wept for to shake his blessed hands. Then, Huzoor kept hold of my hands and I was able to walk alongside with him for the next minute or two.”

Ahmad Konadu sahib continued:

“No one can imagine how I felt during those moments! Only I knew of the tears I had shed before Allah praying for the chance to touch the hands of my Khalifa and when I thought that there was no chance left and the Ijtema was over, everything had been fulfilled in a way that I could never have imagined.”

It was very interesting and faith-inspiring to hear the story of Ahmad Konadu sahib and later he showed me a photo of that moment where Huzoor held his hand. It was an extremely beautiful photo in which Huzoor was smiling with great affection whilst walking with Ahmad Konadu.

A Lesson in Urdu

Thereafter, Huzoor told me an incident pertaining to a friend of mine, Amer Safir, a Waqf-e-Zindighi (life devotee) serving currently as the Editor of the Review of Religions. When Amer dedicated his life, several years ago, Huzoor sent him to Pakistan for a year to learn Urdu. With the Grace of Allah, his Urdu has now reached a level where he often live translates Huzoor’s Friday Sermons or other addresses. However, with a smile, Huzoor told me his Urdu was not always at such a level.

Huzoor said:

“When I first sent Amer to Pakistan, one day he received a message in Urdu that ‘Wakil-e-Ala, Chaudhry Hameedullah sahib aap ko yaad farmaa rahay hain’, meaning ‘The Wakil-e-Ala’ is remembering you’, which is a common and polite way in Urdu to call someone. Upon receiving this message, Amer said ‘Jazak’Allah’ and stayed in his room. Then after ten or fifteen minutes, the same person came back and repeated the message and again Amer said ‘Jazak’Allah’ and remained in his room. Thereafter, the third time the person came and gave the same message. Amer was very happy thinking that Chaudhry sahib is missing him so much that he keeps sending these messages of affection! It was only on the third or fourth such occasion that the messenger finally explained to him that this was not an expression of remembrance, rather Chaudhry sahib was actually calling to his office!”

Writing Letters To Build a Personal Relationship

That evening I also met with a young Pakistani Missionary, Shahab Ahmad (27) who had recently been posted in Tanzania.

Moments after meeting Huzoor for the first time, Shahab said:

“I had written a while ago to Huzoor that I was trying to learn Swahili and so today, as soon as I entered Huzoor’s office and met him for the first time, he asked me ‘How is your Swahili developing?’ I was awestruck at Huzoor’s memory as he receives thousands of letters and yet he remembered mine!”

“What is your number”

After around 20 minutes, Huzoor stood up and I thought he was standing up to leave the hall and so I was amazed to see that Huzoor stepped forward and invited all the Ahmadis in the hall to come and personally meet him and to have the opportunity to shake his hand.

Over the next hour, Ahmadis continually came forward one by one to meet Huzoor. They would introduce themselves, mention their problems, seek his prayers and have their photo taken with him.

With amazing patience, Huzoor met each Ahmadi and listened to their problems and prayed for them.

Initially, I stood near where Huzoor was but after a few minutes, I stepped away and stretched my legs and then came back a few minutes later and saw that the line of people waiting to see Huzoor seemed as long as ever.

Other people nearby were also becoming tired and fidgety. For example, the local person responsible for taking photos handed his camera to someone else so that he could take a break for a minute or two. Yet, the one person who stood throughout and displayed no sense of tiredness was Huzoor himself.

Huzoor met each person with a smile and showed great affection to everyone. Some who approached him had huge smiles etched on their faces, whilst others were unable to control their emotions, as tears rained down their faces.

Amongst the high emotion, there was also the odd moment of laughter.

Upon meeting one Ahmadi Khadim, Huzoor asked:

“What is your number?”

By this, Huzoor was asking what position he was amongst his siblings, however the Khadim misunderstood and responded by saying:

“Huzoor are you asking for my mobile phone number?”

Huzoor smiled and waved him on, before meeting the next individual.

Finally, after more than 35 or 40 minutes the hall began to empty somewhat and it seemed as though the crowd was thinning. Then, after around nearly an hour, Huzoor met the final person before proceeding to another hall where he met many Ahmadi ladies.

What now?

By the Grace of Allah, you have now finished the Winter Reading Challenge. *Allhumdolillah*

However the challenge doesn't end here. To win **prizes**, you must now complete the confirmation form by heading over to atfal.org.uk/talim-reading-challenge.

Once you have done this, the last step is to film a short video of you telling your fellow Atfal brothers about your favourite story from the Winter Reading Challenge or one of your personal accounts of our beloved Khalifa. The specifications for the video are:

1. Must be no longer than 2 minutes
2. Must be filmed in portrait mode
3. Must not have background noise
4. Must be of the Tifl only
5. The Tifl must be wearing a cap (topi)
6. The Tifl must start with "Asalam-o-Alikum"
7. The Tifl must say their full name

These videos will be used on our social media pages as well as the Atfal website.

If you do not want your video to be shared, please explicitly mention so to your regional Nazim when submitting.

Once you have recorded the video, please send it over to you regional Nazim Atfal. They should then contact you with regards to the prize.

We hope that you have enjoyed the Winter Reading Challenge and are looking forward to more similar initiatives. Head over to atfal.org.uk for more information or contact us at talim@atfal.co.uk

Wasalam,
Talim Team