

The Muslim Sunrise

June 2025

An Islamic magazine
published since 1921

"In the Latter Days, the sun shall rise from the West" — Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

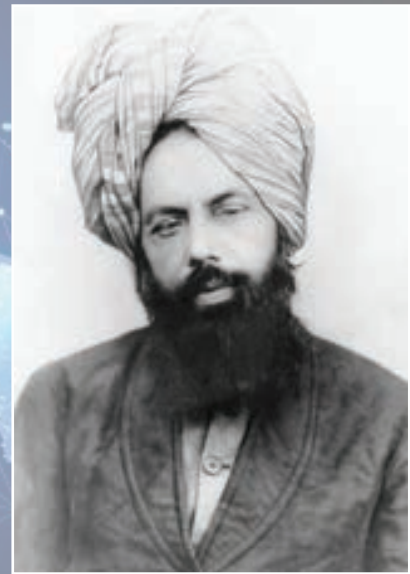


HEAVENLY GATHERINGS

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THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE

www.alislam.org
www.muslimsunrise.com
www.amibookstore.us
www.mta.tv



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may peace be upon him)

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjab province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (the Mahdi and Messiah).

The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam: peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God in its pristine purity.

Hazrat Ahmad (as) proclaimed in the commentary of Verse 6 of Chapter 98 of the Holy Qur'an: "[Islam] is the religion of the people of the right path."

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love

and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qura'nic teaching:

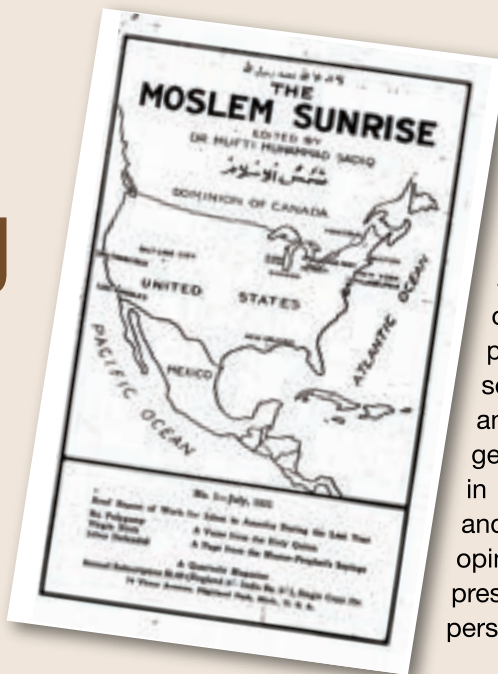
"There is no compulsion in religion"
(The Holy Qur'an: 2:257)

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

The Community has been led by the elected successors of Hazrat Ahmad (as). The present Head of the Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah (as).



One of the longest-running Muslim publications in America



In 1920, the first Ahmadi Muslim missionary, Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (ra), arrived in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as one of the longest-running Muslim publications in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics related to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever-changing global society and provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues while presenting solutions from an Islamic perspective.

The Muslim Sunrise welcomes letters to the Editor, questions, and submissions.

Email us at: contact@muslimsunrise.com or go online: www.MuslimSunrise.com

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The Muslim Sunrise

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer 'Alaihis-Salam or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.'

Companions of prophets who have passed away are saluted by Radiyallahu 'Anhu/a or 'may God be pleased with him/her.'

While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text in order to facilitate reading, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

- sa: Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
- as: 'Alaihis-Salam (may peace be upon him)
- ra: Radiyallahu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allah be pleased with him/her)
- rh: Rahimahullahu Ta'ala (may Allah shower His mercy on him)
- aba: Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala Bi-Nasrihil-'Aziz (may Allah support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'an count "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful" at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

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Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir, Missionary to US

Mahmud Ahmad Nagi

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From The Holy Qur'an

وَاصْبِرْ لِنَفْسِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ
وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنُكَ عَنْهُمْ

And keep thyself attached to those who call on their Lord,
morning and evening, seeking His pleasure; and let not thy eyes
pass beyond them.

The Holy Qur'an, 18:29

Saying of Prophet Muhammad

(Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

لَا يَقْعُدُ قَوْمٌ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَّا حَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ
الرَّحْمَةُ وَنَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said:

When a company foregathers for the remembrance of Allah its members are
surrounded by angels and are covered by mercy, and comfort descends upon
them and Allah makes mention of them to those around Him.

(Muslim) [Translation from Gardens of the Righteous]



Editorial



This year will be 75th time that Ahmadi Muslims will gather for their annual convention to renew their faith and bonds. Around ten thousand members from all over the country will converge on the Greater Richmond Convention Center in Virginia.

Ahmadiyya annual convention is the longest running Muslim gathering in the United States. The first convention was held in Dayton OH in 1948. The venue has moved to various locations over the years because of a continuous increase in the number of attendees from about a hundred to many thousand. It will be the second time that the convention is being held in Richmond VA. Men and women have their own separate areas. Generally, convention centers only have one great hall for a large gathering.

Members will spend the three days of gathering—Friday through Sunday—in prayer, learning and interacting with each other.

It is a spiritual gathering. The venue will reverberate with salutations of peace to each other. The predawn prayer services, Friday prayer service and the daily five prayer services will be held. Members will be remembering God throughout their stay and praying for peace in the world, in individual lives, in family lives and peace among nations in these turbulent days when many nations are at war and innocent people are suffering.

Speeches will disburse knowledge of the fundamentals of faith strengthening relation with our Creator and encouraging pious conduct. Literature related to all aspects of faith will be available. Exhibitions will portray the history of the Ahmadiyya annual conventions in the US and service to humanity.

The US is a very large country. This annual convention provides members with a chance to meet face to face with members living thousands of miles from each other. Members will have a great chance to meet each other and strengthen personal and familial relationships. Members renew the bonds of brotherhood and fealty with faith.

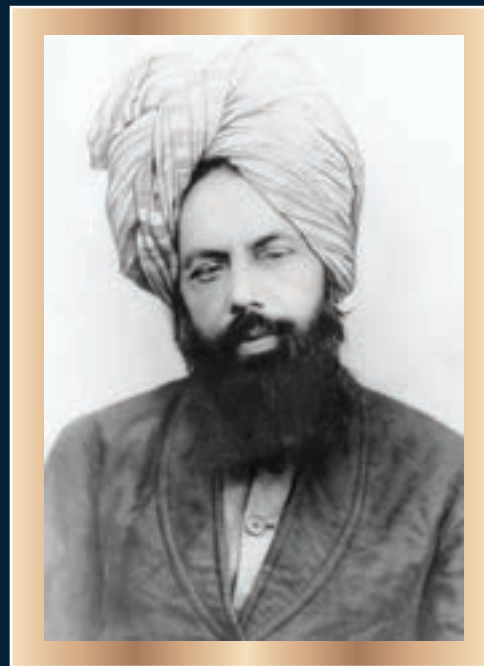
Volunteers plan all through the year for the annual convention. To set up the venue and to arrange to feed thousands of members of all ages for three days is a large operation.

This annual convention has the blessing of the prayers of the messiah of this age. The Promised Messiah, may peace be upon him, himself initiated the chain of annual conventions towards the end of the nineteenth century. The original annual convention in Qadian, India, has held since 1891. It spread to other countries and now is held annually in over sixty countries of the world.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a peaceful community. It believes in fidelity to one's country, forbids subversive activities and requires adherence to the law of the land, yet, unfortunately, Ahmadi Muslims are not allowed to hold their peaceful annual conventions in some countries due to pressure from its adversaries. Our prayers are that truth and peace prevail and mischief and disorder retreat.

Syed Sajid Ahmad

In The Words of His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as)



“ HEAVENLY GATHERINGS

I conclude with the prayer that everyone who travels for [attending] this Convention that is for the sake of Allah: May Allah, the Exalted, be with him, reward him in abundant measure, have mercy on him, ease up for him his circumstances of hardship and anxiety and eliminate his anguish and grief. May He grant him freedom from every single hardship and lay open for him the ways of [achieving] his cherished goals, and raise him up, on the day of Judgment, among those of His servants who are the recipients of His blessings and Mercy. May He be their Guardian in their absence until after their journey comes to an end. O Allah! O Sublime One and Bestower of bounties, the Ever Merciful and One Who Resolves all problems, do grant all these prayers, and grant us Victory over our opponents with scintillating signs, because You alone have all the prowess and power. Ameen! Ameen!!

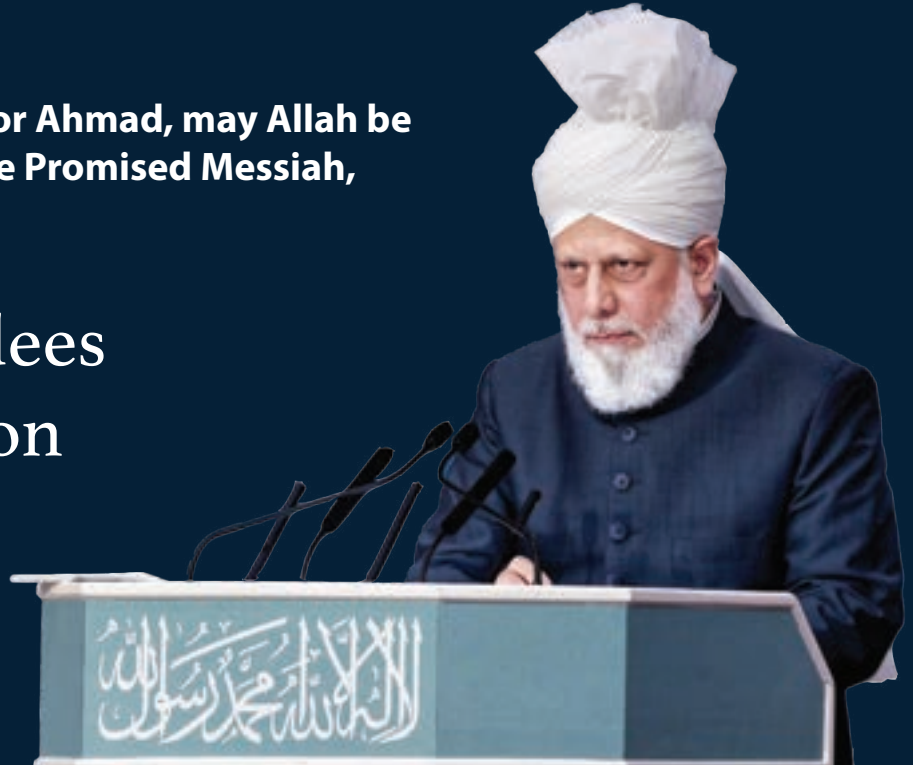
(Ishtihar 7 December 1892, Majmu'ah Ishtiharat, vol. I, p. 342)

”

Guidance from Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, may Allah be his Helper, The Fifth successor to the Promised Messiah, may peace be upon him.

Guidance for Attendees of Annual Convention

From the Friday Sermon delivered on July 26, 2024



A temporary city has been created in Hadeeqatul Mahdi (in Alton, UK) where people have gathered to remove themselves from the grasps of worldliness in order to improve their religious, spiritual and moral states. Hence, rather than being concerned with being afforded ease, one should be more concerned with how they can achieve these purposes. In any case, the organisation and administration do their level best to afford ease and comfort to all the guests. For this purpose, thousands present their selfless services and volunteers.

Guidance for Jalsa Salana Workers

His Holiness (aba) said to the volunteers that whatever duty they have been assigned, they should strive to fulfil it in the best possible manner. They should consider all guests to be the guests of the Promised Messiah (as). The volunteers should exhibit the highest standards of morality. They should overlook whatever behaviour may be displayed by the guests and should maintain their own high standards of behaviour. Hence, volunteers should exhibit the standard desired by Islam – and certainly the volunteers of the Jalsa work with this passion.

The Promised Messiah (as) used to say that the heart of a guest is like a mirror; it is fragile and must be carefully cared for. It can shatter upon the smallest thing and be put in trial over the smallest thing. This generally applies to newcomers or those not part of the Community. The volunteers must take special care to tend to these guests in the best manner, no matter what or where their duty may be.

Guidance for Guests Attending Jalsa Salana

His Holiness (aba) then addressed the guests, saying that first and foremost, they have come to the Jalsa for a righteous

purpose and have come as guests of the Promised Messiah (as). Rather than trying to attain any sort of worldly rank or status, they must focus on attaining the lofty purpose of every Muslim, and for which they are attending this convention. Those who undertake a journey for the sake of God care very little about worldly comforts and care more about becoming spiritually nourished. Thus, the guests of the Jalsa should never consider them as worldly guests. When this is the mentality, then small weaknesses or shortcomings can be overlooked.

If every Ahmadi Muslim attends the Jalsa in order to be spiritually nourished rather than trying to attain worldly comfort, then both guest and host will be able to pass through the days of Jalsa with ease. The volunteers strive their utmost to ensure everyone attending the Jalsa is treated equally and fairly, however, certain discrepancies can naturally arise. The guests should overlook any such instances. Where the hosts or volunteers are enjoined to care for the guests, the guests must also be mindful of their hosts and should try to afford them ease as well.

The Promised Messiah (as) used to care a great deal for his guests. During ordinary times, the Promised Messiah (as) would say that guests should express their needs without any hesitation. However during the days of Jalsa, the Promised Messiah (as) advised that the arrangements should be the same for all as far as possible. Therefore, the hospitality during Jalsa takes on a different form, and the organisers do their best to ensure that the basic and required needs are provided.

The Promised Messiah (as) would emphasise to the guests of Jalsa Salana that their purpose is beyond any worldly endeavour, rather it is to learn the faith and to purify one's mind and heart

while drawing nearer to Allah the Almighty. This is the mindset with which one should attend the Jalsa.

During the days of Jalsa, everyone should sit attentively in the hall and listen to the speeches. A believer should use their time wisely. Naturally when so many people are gathering from around the world, there is a desire to meet one's acquaintances and family members from around the world, as is one of the purposes of the Jalsa. This convention does away with borders and brings together all sorts of people. The Promised Messiah (as) said that one of the purposes of this convention is to strengthen ties of brotherhood. Of course this requires meeting one another, however, the focus should be on attentively listening to the Jalsa proceedings, and only afterwards should one then take the time to meet others. Sometimes it has been noticed that these meetings will take so long that they will go late into the night causing people difficulty in waking up for the morning prayer (Fajr). This also puts volunteers in a difficult position when people sit for extended periods in the food marquee or even for hosts at homes where guests are staying. Hence, there must be balance.

The Promised Messiah (as) said that guests should not linger after having eaten so that the volunteers can have time to wrap up and prepare for the next shift. Hence, the guests must remain mindful of such things.

In such large gatherings, it is possible for disagreements to arise. It could be that a guest becomes displeased with a volunteer and says something to them, and then perhaps the volunteer also responds in a certain way which starts a back-and-forth. This creates a negative aura and impacts the environment, even if such instances are sparse. Allah the Almighty says that true believers suppress their anger. Hence, both the one being wronged and the wrongdoer should keep the sanctity of the Jalsa in mind. If, in the view of a guest, they have been wronged then even then they should exhibit patience. If a volunteer feels that a guest is being unjust in what they are saying, then they should remain patient and should do away with their anger.

In light of the state of the world, security becomes that much more important. Some may find security checks and having to pass through various checkpoints to be inconvenient. This particularly impacts the women, as they have children with them and will often have multiple bags with them that require to be checked which takes time. Hence, start with, women should try to bring a minimal number of bags with them. As for those with children, they should bring with them only the necessities and not things that are extra, otherwise, the increased number of bags which require checking will hold up lines and take more time causing difficulty to others as well.

One of the commandments for a believer by the Holy Prophet (sa) is that they should maintain contact with even those who cut ties with them and to give to even those who don't give to you. Similarly one should be kind to even those who speak in an unbecoming manner to them. Hence, these things point towards having greater patience. This spirit must be exhibited by both the volunteers and the guests. In accordance with the wishes of the Promised Messiah (as), everyone should strive to establish an atmosphere of love and harmony.

The volunteers and guests should bear in mind that there are non-Ahmadis and non-Muslims attending the Jalsa as well. Hence, if they exhibit the highest level of morality then this will serve as a form of silent propagation which greatly impacts the guests.

Those attending the Jalsa should establish the habit of saying Salam (Islamic greeting of peace) to one another. This is an excellent prayer taught to us. Not only does doing so eliminate any sort of fear but it also is a beautiful prayer which gives way to an atmosphere for peace and security.

The Companions of the Holy Prophet(sa) set an example for us in every respect. Influenced by the esteemed personage of the Holy Prophet(sa), the Companions would strive to fulfil every commandment of the Holy Qur'an. One of the commandments in the Holy Qur'an is that if a guest is turned away by the host then they should happily leave their home. A Companion said that he wished to fulfil this commandment of the Holy Qur'an as well in order to achieve the pleasure of God Almighty. However, he said that the opportunity never arose, where a host turned him away from their home. Hence, these were the lofty standards of morality exhibited by the Companions of the Holy Prophet(sa), both of the hosts and the guests. This is the kind of patience that we should have. When this becomes the case, then small matters become easy to overlook.

The Holy Prophet (sa) elaborated that one should convey greetings of peace to those who they know and even those who they don't know. When this atmosphere is established at Jalsa, then it will have an impact not only on external guests but will also serve as a valuable lesson for new converts and will also create more of a comfortable environment for them to feel like a part of the community.

There is an incident from the time of the Promised Messiah (as), that when the Jang-e-Muqaddas took place, which was a debate between Muslims and Christians, the Promised Messiah (as) was staying somewhere and due to the high volume of guests, the workers forgot to present the Promised Messiah (as) with food. After some time had passed and the Promised Messiah (as) had been waiting, the Promised Messiah (as) enquired if there was anything to eat. The workers became extremely worried at the fact that food had not been presented to him and that it was late at night and the markets were closed. When the Promised Messiah (as) learned of this, he said that there was no need to become so worried, he said that if there were any leftovers on the tables he would eat that. There remained nothing but a few pieces of bread, and the Promised Messiah (as) said that this was enough and ate that. This was the example of the Promised Messiah (as), and as those who are part of his Community we must establish the same spirit of patience and gratefulness. Hence, despite their best efforts, if there are any oversights on the part of the workers then they should easily be overlooked. His Holiness (aba) said that later on, if guests wish to send any feedback so that there can be betterment in the future then they can do so.

There are also various exhibitions at the Jalsa. For example there is an exhibition on the occasion of a hundred years elapsing from the time when the Second Caliph (ra) visited Europe and the UK. There are also exhibitions by The Review of Religions, the Archives and Outreach departments, Makhzan-e-Tasaweer. His Holiness (aba) said that these are all exhibitions which should be visited and he trusts they would have been set up well. Rather than wasting time during the breaks, people should try to visit these exhibitions.

In light of Covid cases increasing in the world, a preventative homoeopathic medicine is being offered at all entrances and gates which everyone should avail. His Holiness (aba) prayed that may Allah protect everyone from any sort of illness and evil.

The best form of security is for everyone to be aware of their surroundings. Doing so eliminates the possibility for any evil doers to do anything. Similarly if there are any unattended bags they should be pointed out to the relevant authorities as should be the case with any suspicious activity.

The greatest weapon we have is the protection of Allah, for which we must pray especially in these three days. His Holiness (aba) prayed that may Allah enable everyone to implement these things and may the Jalsa be blessed in every respect.

History of Annual Conventions

1891

FIRST
CONVENTION

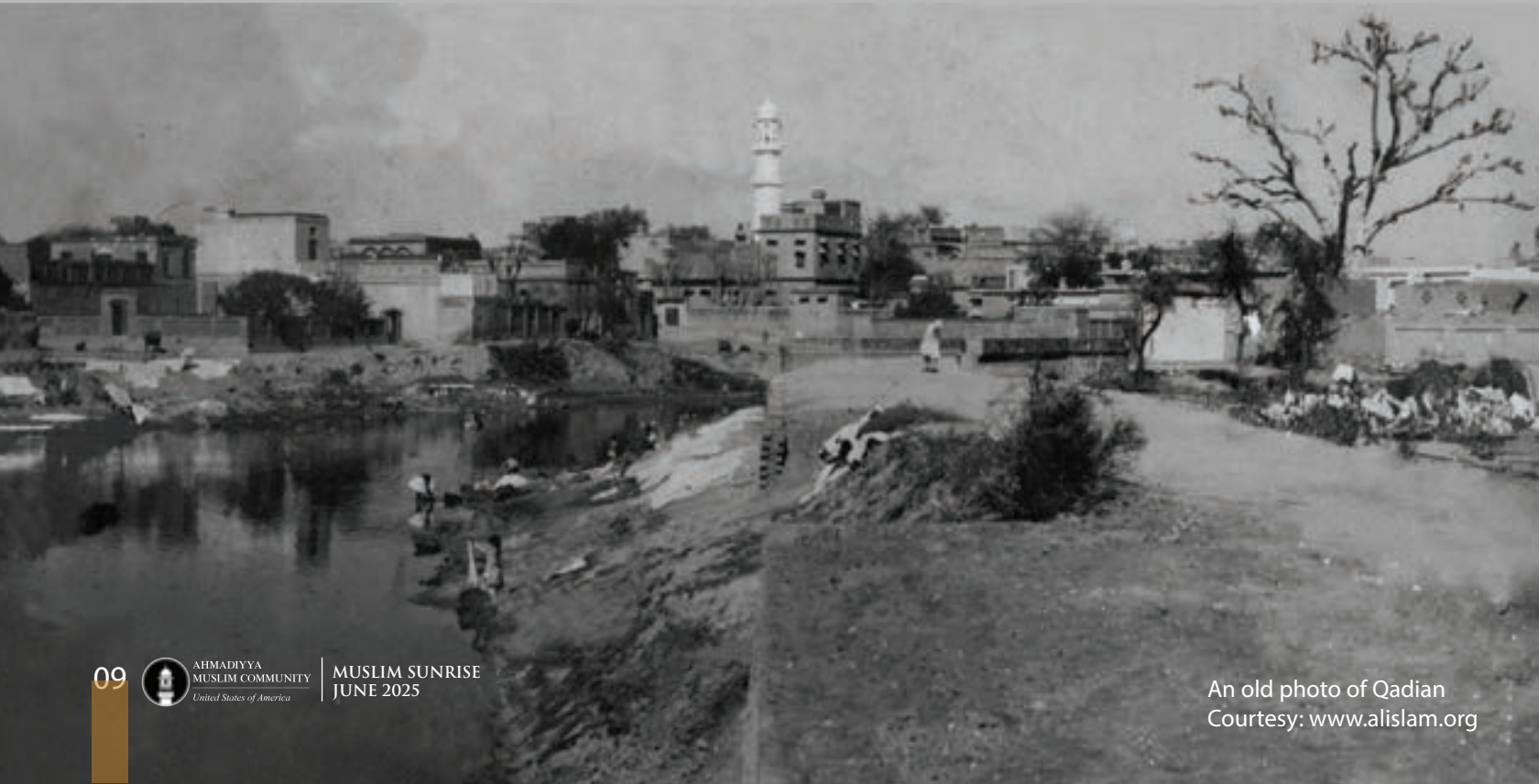
During the first Annual Convention in 1891, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as), announced that the newly initiated convention would be held annually on the 27th of December. Accordingly, in 1892, Jama'at members traveled to Qadian for the Annual Convention and benefited from the blessed company of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as).

1892

THE BIG JALSA

The Annual Convention of 1892 became known as "The Big Jalsa" among those attending.

This Convention was held next to a pond in Qadian, the stage was built from the mud collected from and around the pond. The Promised Messiah (as) sat upon the raised platform covered with a carpet, and members of the community were seated around him on the ground.



International Conventions Held in Qadian, India

Ahmadiyya international annual conventions were held in Qadian in Punjab in India from 1891 to 1946. Country annual conventions have continued to be held in India at Qadian after the partition of India into Bharat and Pakistan.

1891 - 1900

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1891	*75
1892	500
1893	**Cancelled
1894	N/A
1895	N/A
1896	***Cancelled
1897	N/A
1898	N/A
1899	N/A
1900	500

*First jalsa

**Cancelled by Promised Messiah (as)

***Cancelled due to International Religious

Conference held in Lahore

N/A: not available

1901 - 1910

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1901	N/A
1902	*Cancelled
1903	N/A
1904	250
1905	N/A
1906	**2500
1907	N/A
1908	***2500
1909	3000
1910	2500

*Cancelled due to plague.

** Last Jalsa of Promised Messiah (as)

***First Jalsa of Khalifatul Masih I

1911 - 1920

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1911	2000
1912	3500
1913	3000
1914	3500
1915	4400
1916	5000
1917	N/A
1918	5000
1919	7000
1920	7000

1921 - 1930

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1921	7192
1922	9000
1923	15000
1924	18000
1925	14384
1926	15617
1927	16520
1928	25000
1929	20316
1930	17316

1931 - 1940

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1931	25776
1932	20752
1933	N/A
1934	25000
1935	21278
1936	25856
1937	31820
1938	38479
1939	47950
1940	33000

1942 - 1947

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1941	27209
1942	23760
1943	39256
1944	22600
1945	42435
1946	47786

Jalsa Salanas held in Lahore, Pakistan

DATE	VENUE	ATTENDANCE
27-28 December 1947	Ratan Bagh Jodha Mal Building	6250
28 March 1948	Ratan Bagh Jodha Mal Building	4250
25-26 December 1948	Ratan Bagh Jodha Mal Building	17000

First Convention in Pakistan was held in Lahore, Pakistan in December 1947. There was a supplemental convention to enable those who could not attend the one in March of 1948. Subsequent international Ahmadiyya Annual Conventions moved to Rabwah in Pakistan.



Jalsa Salana 1947 in Lahore, Pakistan

International Jalsa Salanas held in Rabwah, Pakistan

As the number of attendees continued to increase, the venue of Jalsa also continued to move to larger venues

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1949	16000 (First convention in Rabwah)
1950	30,000
1951	31,250
1952	41,600
1952	51,974
1954	6,308 (Men attendance not known)
1955	50,000

MUBARAK
MOSQUE

1949-55



1956-60

NUSRAT
GIRLS
SCHOOL

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1956	74,000
1957	70,000
1958	125,000
1959	70,000
1960	90,000

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1961	85,000
1962	90,000
1963	100,000
1964	100,000
1965	90,000

NUSRAT
GIRLS
SCHOOL

1961-65



1966-70

AQSA
MOSQUE

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1966	80,000
1967	85,000
1968	100,000
1969	100,000
1970	100,000

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1971	Indo-Pak War
1972	170,000
1973	125,000
1974	125,000
1975	125,000

AQSA
MOSQUE

1971-75



1976-80

AQSA
MOSQUE

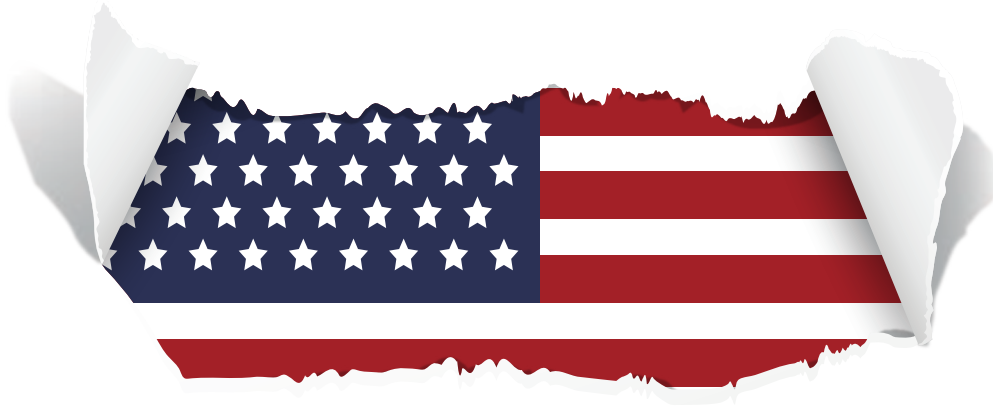
YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1976	179,537
1977	150,000
1978	170,000
1979	235,660
1980	220,000

YEAR	ATTENDANCE
1981	289,600
1982	291,600
1983	355,721
1984	No annual convention could be held in Pakistan from 1984 onwards

AQSA
MOSQUE

1981-84

National Annual Conventions in the US



1948 : Dayton, OH
1949 : Pittsburgh, PA
1950 : Cleveland, OH
1951 : Cleveland, OH
1952 : Dayton, OH
1953 : Chicago, IL
1954 : Pittsburgh, PA
1955 : Saint Louis, MO
1956 : Cleveland, OH
1957 : Dayton, OH

1948-1957

1958 : Pittsburgh, PA
1959 : Chicago, IL
1960 : New York, NY
1961 : No Jalsa Held
1962 : Pittsburgh, PA
1963 : Cleveland, OH
1964 : Cleveland, OH
1965 : Dayton, OH
1966 : Dayton, OH
1967 : No Jalsa Held

1958-1967

1968 : Dayton, OH
1969 : Dayton, OH
1970 : Dayton, OH
1971 : Washington, DC
1972 : Lake Forest, IL
1973 : Lake Forest, IL
1974 : Boston, MA
1975 : Wilberforce, OH
1976 : Madison, NJ
1977 : Saint Louis, MO

1968-1977

1978 : Dayton, OH
1979 : Saint Louis, MO
1980 : No Jalsa Held
1981 : Washington, DC
1982 : Wayne, NJ
1983 : Bellville, MI
1984 : Madison, WI
1985 : Madison, WI
1986 : Washington, DC
1987 : Baltimore, MD

1978-1987

1988 : Baltimore, MD
1989 : Baltimore, MD
1990 : Detroit, MI
1991 : Ypsilanti, MI
1992 : Long Island, NY
1993 : Long Island, NY
1994 : Baitur Rahman, MD
1995 : Baitur Rahman, MD
1996 : Baitur Rahman, MD
1997 : Baitur Rahman, MD

1988-1997

1998 : Baitur Rahman, MD
1999 : Chantilly, VA
2000 : Baitur Rahman, MD
2001 : Baitur Rahman, MD
2002 : Baitur Rahman, MD
2003 : Baitur Rahman, MD
2004 : Baitur Rahman, MD
2005 : Chantilly, VA
2006 : Chantilly, VA
2007 : Chantilly, VA

1998-2007

2008 : Harrisburg, PA
2009 : Chantilly, VA
2010 : Chantilly, VA
2011 : Chantilly, VA
2012 : Harrisburg, PA
2013 : Harrisburg, PA
2014 : Harrisburg, PA
2015 : Harrisburg, PA
2016 : Harrisburg, PA
2017 : Harrisburg, PA

2008-2017

2018 : Harrisburg, PA
2019 : Harrisburg, PA
2020 : No Jalsa (Pandemic)
2021 : No Jalsa (Pandemic)
2022 : No Jalsa (Pandemic)
2023 : Harrisburg, PA
2024 : Richmond, VA

2018-2024





WHY JOIN

The Promised Messiah (as), in an announcement, articulated the following aims and objectives for the attendees of Jalsa Salana (Annual Convention)

An announcement of the Promised Messiah (as) published in The Heavenly Decree in 1891



The visit will be solely for the sake of Allah, to listen to heavenly discourses, and to participate in prayer to their utmost ability.



The voicing of such truths and verities will be the occupation of this Jalsa, which is important for the progress of belief, certainty, and enlightenment.



Friends that join this Jama'at in each new year shall, by attending on the appointed dates, get to meet their brethren and, as a result, become friends.



Also, for anybody who passes away during the year, a prayer for their forgiveness shall be made at this Jalsa.



It shall be endeavored to spiritually unite all brethren and to remove disassociation, unfamiliarity and hypocrisy from among them

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Book Review:

The Heavenly Sign (Nishan-e-Asmani)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as)



The book under review was written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as), in 1892 and published by Riyad-e-Hind Press, Amritsar in 1892. The book was written in Urdu language and was also called "Shahadat-ul-Mulhimeen" (Testimony of the Recipients of Revelation) consisting of 55-pages. The book had been translated into English as "The Heavenly Sign" and translated into Hindi, Bengali, and Arabic languages.

The Promised Messiah (as) authored this book to draw attention to heavenly testimony in support of his claim by means of dreams, visions and revelations of diverse natural phenomena. People living in various parts of the world had dreams and visions. They knew nothing about the Promised Messiah (as) and long before he himself was divinely informed that he was the Promised Messiah, definite indications had appeared about his advent. In those days, a large number of people who went to bed with their hearts full of hate and bitterness against the Promised Messiah (as) woke up as his devotees. There were others who came to Qadian and without making enquiries, they saw and recognized his holy face which they had seen in their dreams as that of the Promised Messiah (as) and became his followers.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) eloquently presents the arguments and evidence supporting his claim of being the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. The book is rich in references from the Holy Quran, Hadith, and other religious texts, meticulously interwoven to substantiate his position. One of the central themes of the book is the concept of divine signs that herald the arrival of a prophet. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) meticulously lists the signs that appeared in support of his claim and explains their significance. These signs are not only

physical phenomena but also encompass spiritual experiences and revelations that he received.

The author explains in the book the simplest, shortest and surest way for Muslims to pray that God will reveal to them by means of vision, dream or inspiration and guide them to the right path. The author has also claimed that he was the Sultan-e-Mashriq, the Mahdi, whose appearance in this age was prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). (Life of Ahmad by A.R. Dard, 2008, pp. 339-340)

"Nishan-e-Asmani - The Heavenly Sign" is more than a book; it is a spiritual manifesto that calls for a return to the true essence of Islam. It is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the signs of divine intervention and the role of the Promised Messiah (as).

The book is available on www.alislam.org and from www.amazon.com.



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may peace be upon him)



About the Author

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may peace be upon him) was born in 1835 in Qadian, India. From his early life, he dedicated himself to prayer, and the study of the Holy Quran and other scriptures. He was deeply pained to observe the plight of Islam, which was being attacked from all directions. In order to defend Islam and present its teachings in their pristine purity, he wrote more

than ninety books, thousands of letters, and participated in many religious debates. He argued that Islam is a living faith, which can lead man to establish communion with God and achieve moral and spiritual perfection. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may peace be upon him) started experiencing divine dreams, visions, and revelations at a young age. In 1889, under divine command, he started accepting initiation into the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The divine revelations continued to increase and he was commanded by God to announce that God had appointed him to be the same Reformer of the Latter Days as prophesied by various religions under different titles. He claimed to be that very Prophet who the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said would be raised as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is now established in more than 200 countries. After his demise in 1908, the institution of Khilāfat (successorship) succeeded him fulfilling the prophecies made in the Holy Quran and by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) is the Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him) and the present head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.



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Annual Convention

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Jalsa Salana Germany
Annual Convention

26-28 December

West Coast Annual
Convention
(Jalsa Salana)

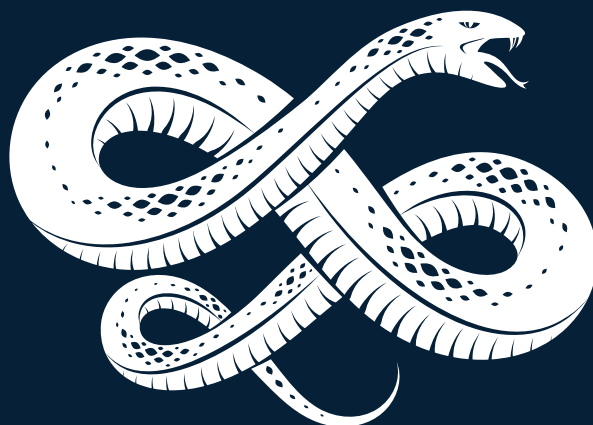


Enigma of Sin- Part 5

Hair-splitting and Splitting Throats

Continued from the previous issue.

Mubasher Ahmad



A particular sin or wrongdoing in any given belief system may not be seen as an evil act when looked at from a different religious or spiritual perspective. It might turn out to be quite the opposite and therefore considered as innocent or even a commendable virtuous conduct. Such an example is the differing views on cutting human hair and animal killing.

In Sikhism it is deviation from a religious commandment for men and women to cut their hair; but in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and some other major world religions removal of facial hair or shaving of the head are harmless acts. The Hindus regard the human body as a temple where God resides, but unlike the Sikhs, they do not hold any devotional attitude towards the natural growth of body-hair. The hair can be cut and discarded without infringing upon any of their religious instructions. Even at the death of a Hindu man his body is bathed, anointed with sandalwood and shaved. The Buddhist monks shave their faces, heads and sometimes even eyebrows without feeling any sense of guilt. The Jain ascetics do not remove their hair by shaving but do so by pulling the hair by hand. They do so in compliance with their centuries-old holy traditions. In their estimation, hair is usually a source of vanity, and good-looking hair makes a man feel proud and self-conceited - an attraction to women; its care is time consuming and waste of money. The underlying motive of a Jain or a Buddhist is to abandon all sources of vanity. These monks take their vows of poverty in full humility, and for them non-possession and self-detachment are serious convictions. Their objective is to overcome all egotistic cravings, and maintenance of hair is a hurdle in their spiritual path. For them, keeping hair and its grooming are acts of self-indulgence, a type of sensual pleasure.

However, the Sikhs earnestly believe that the human body is sacred, and the hair is a natural and beautiful gift of the Creator. Not to cut hair is an outer expression of an inner disciplined piety. According to Sikh understanding, all prophets of God had long hair. To keep uncut hair, called kesh in the Punjabi language, is therefore a religious requirement in accordance with the centuries old Sikh code of discipline. Moreover, a beard is seen as a mark of nobility, pride and manhood. To keep one's naturally grown body-hair is an essential teaching of Sikhism, specifically passed down from Guru Gobind Singh to have a unique identity of the Sikhs. To keep kesh is one of the fundamental 'Five Ks' required of all initiated Sikhs. The other four Ks are kachha (breaches), kara (iron bangle), kangha (comb) and kirpan (sword). Other than kesh, none of the Five Ks is a part of the human body. The kesh is to be kept neat and clean by combing it regularly, at least twice a day. Hence there is the need to carry a kangha (comb) all the time. The kachha symbolizes chastity, the kara signifies that all are the soul-brides of God. As the kara is round, it is infinite and symbolizes equality. It is worn on a stronger hand as a constant reminder to do righteous deeds. The kirpan is for protection. Kirpan is a compound word of 'kirpa' (grace) and 'aan' (honor). Hence, kirpan was to protect the honor of those who could not defend themselves. Men tie their kesh into a "topknot", and keep it covered with a turban; and women keep their hair under chunies – the long flowing scarves. However, there are life threatening circumstances where hair removal is acceptable.

Religious restrictions on haircut are not unique to Sikhism. There is a general prohibition in Judaism against shaving or cutting hair on Sabbaths and during a period of mourning. The Mosaic Law in

Leviticus, the third book of the Torah, dictates a strong prohibition: "You shall not round the corners of your heads; neither shall you destroy the corners of your beard" (Lev. 19:27). This prohibition cannot be dismissed as frivolous because it helps to keep the observant Jew holy. In the Torah, this proscription is grouped with some extremely grave sins such as idolatry, stealing, defrauding, injustice, revenge, adultery and prostitution. Many ultra- Orthodox Jews, therefore, do not cut their sideburns, and keep their beards and long hair. Moses was also commanded by God to instruct those who wanted to sanctify themselves not to shave their heads and let the locks of the hair grow (Numbers 6:5). This instruction was directed specifically towards those who wanted to take a Nazarite vow for a restricted period of time, at least 30 days, to express thanks to God. At other times, it was exclusively for spiritual self-purification and to experience a state of holiness. For this purpose, purity of body and clarity of mind were essential. Therefore, along with explicit restriction on haircut, two additional prohibitions were imposed: Not to drink wine or any other intoxicating beverage, and not to approach a dead body even if the deceased was a close relative. If a Nazarite happened to be defiled by touching a corpse, his vow was deemed to be broken. The atonement was, ironically, to shave off the hair on his head. After shaving one's head, there was a waiting period of seven days. On the eighth day, to seek redemption, an offering of two turtle- doves and two pigeons was to be made to the priest.

In many famous Christian works of art, God the Father is depicted as having a full-fledged beard and long flowing hair. The same is the case with Abraham, Moses and other Biblical personalities of high esteem. Jesus and most of his disciples had beards. But the majority of Christian clergymen do not seem to follow their role models. For a Christian, it is no sin to have a clean-shaven face and a haircut. It is not clear when the Christians decided to do away with their facial hair, but at least for the first four centuries in Christianity, the Biblical Law concerning hair was taken seriously as is evident from the Apostolic Constitutions (390 AD). The Apostolic Constitutions contain treatises on Christian discipline, worship and doctrines for clergymen and to some extent for laity as well. Though the identity and the authority of the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions remains questionable, nevertheless it is significant to note that it confirms the Biblical Law that men may not destroy the hair of their beards and should not change their natural form in which God has made them. Nevertheless, in Christian theology it was never considered a sin to cut hair. Among the populace, growing of beards or shaving them off seem to fluctuate throughout the centuries. It seems more a matter of cultural trend and fashion, without any spiritual consequences. Contrary to the Sikh Gurus, the Christian religious leadership did not see any sin in removing the natural gift of God from the human body. Some Catholic Popes and Protestant religious leaders kept beards, but most of them were clean shaven. Generally, shaving seems to be a popular tradition among the Christian clergymen who take a vow of celibacy. The same trend seems to be in place even in modern times.

The Islamic holy book, the Qur'an, is silent concerning removal or keeping body hair, but the personal conduct (Sunnah) and sayings (Hadith) of the Prophet of Islam make it meritorious for Muslim men to grow beards. Prophet Muhammad himself kept a beard and shoulder-length hair. He encouraged the believers to follow his personal practice. However, he did not approve for men to keep very

long hair. The Prophet taught his followers that growing beard was in the tradition of Abraham who was commanded by God to keep his beard, shorten his moustache, clip his nails, shave the hair around his genitals, and pluck the hair in his armpit. Islam claims to be a 'natural' way of life, Deen-e-Fitrah. Its teachings are claimed to be in accordance with the dictates of human nature, and nothing is supposed to be without an appealing to reason. Therefore, the question could be raised as to the wisdom behind the instructions concerning the Islamic directives about human hair. Why God wanted Abraham to wear a beard, and to remove hair from some other parts of his body? Most probably the answer would be that it is 'natural' for a male to have a beard, but as humans do feel repulsed by bad body-odor, it is undesirable to keep hair where it could catch perspiration and other bodily secretions. To keep the body clean, ablution is performed before Prayers five times daily, and taking a bath regularly is highly recommended. To further hamper the spread of body odors, along with removal of "undesirable" hair, the use of perfumes is also Sunnah of the Prophet.

Islamic scholars hold differing opinions on the issue whether keeping beard is mandatory or optional for Muslim men. Some claim that it is mandatory, and its disobedience would constitute a sin. Others consider it only a 'distasteful' (makruh) act, but necessarily not a sin punishable by God. Still others argue that the Prophet's instruction should not be taken out of its historical context. The wording of one of the Hadith in Sahih Bukhari -- the authentic collection of the sayings of the Prophet -- quotes him: "Do the opposite of what disbelievers do. Keep the beards and cut the moustaches short." (Bukhari, Narration 5892). In other words, it was only for keeping a separate social identity from the surrounding antagonists of that time. It is argued by some modern Muslim scholars that under changed social environment, it may not be necessary to keep beards and trim moustache. There is certainly no prohibition for Muslim men to shave their heads. At times it is considered spiritually commendable. For instance, at the end of the pilgrimage of Hajj, which is one of the five pillars of Islam, to shave off the hair on one's head or cut a portion of hair is an essential religious requirement for Muslim men in order to complete the rituals of Hajj. Even Muslim women have to cut a small portion of their hair. Therefore, to cut the hair is no sin in Islam.

It would be of interest to note that, as the Prophet instructed the Muslims to remain distinct from the non-believers, one of the Yemenite Jewish kings wanted to differentiate between Jews and Muslims, and he instituted the Mosaic legal prohibition concerning removal of one's sideburns. Similarly, the Sikh religion which was initiated by Guru Nanak in the late 15th century in India had to maintain its separate identity from the surrounding Hindu majority, and most probably the Sikh Gurus adopted the tradition of Muslim Sufis (mystics) of that time who kept beards. Thus, it becomes obvious that shaving facial hair which is considered as a deviation from commandments by an observant Sikh, Orthodox Jew or some among devout Muslims, becomes a commendable and pious act for others due to a different motive, intention or religious conviction.

(To be continued...)

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir Ahmadi Missionary to US

Compiled by Mahmud Ahmad Nagi



Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir (1946-1959) served as an assistant to Sufi M. R. Bengalee until 1948 and then succeeded him as Missionary in-Charge in February 1948. He established the Ahmadiyya mosque in the Nation's Capital, which was named the American Fazl Mosque by the Second Successor to the Promised Messiah and served as the Headquarters for the Community from 1950 to 1994.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir and other early missionaries such as Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, Maulawi Din Muhammad, Sufi M.R. Bengalee, and Chaudhri Ghulam Yasin Khan were administrative in-Charge of the US Jamāat as well as missionaries.

Dr. Khalil Nasir started the Annual Conventions, initiated the elections of the National Executives and the National Auxiliaries, published new books and launched the Ahmadiyya Gazette. He also participated in several international conferences.

Dr. Khalil delivered a lecture in a high school in Arlington, Virginia, and answered many serious questions from students. (Al-Fazl, 12 February 1953, p. 6)

A well-known newspaper, "Pittsburgh Quire," interviewed Chaudhri Khalil Ahmad Nasir and published it with distinct titles in two installments. He emphasized basic beliefs of the Jamā'at and highlighted the needs and rehabilitation of the black Americans. The article was well publicized, and the mission received many letters. (Al-Fazl, 13 February 1953, p. 5, Tarikh Ahmadiyyat, vol. 14, p. 418)

A weekly newspaper, "Afro-American" of Baltimore, published an article on Islam in which it stated some incorrect matters inadvertently. Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir wrote a letter to the newspaper. (Al-Fazl, 13 February 1953, p. 5)

He arrived in Rabwah on 18 May 1954 (Tarikh Ahmadiyyat, Vol. 23) for a visit.

Missionary Mirza Monawar Ahmad of Pittsburgh and Missionary Chaudhri Ghulam Yasin from New York helped Chaudhri Khalil Ahmad Nasir to establish the New York Mission on sound footings. The Mission was already established during the era of Missionary in-Charge Sufi M.R. Bengalee. Early Ahmadis like Talib Daud, Muhammad Sadiq and Abid Haneef from Pittsburgh helped these missionaries wholeheartedly. (Wakalat Tabshir Report on New York Mission)

Islam was represented by Dr. Khalil A. Nasir in the World Conference on Religions at Shimizu City, Japan, and in the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois, in 1954. (The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Fiftieth Jalsa Salana USA, p. 65)

Missionaries Chaudhri Khalil Ahmad Nasir and Nur-ul-Haqq Anwar delivered lectures at the American University in New York. Five speeches were given on the radio during the year 1955. (Daily Al-Fazl, July 3, 1955, p. 3)

Khalifatul-Masih II, in his Friday Sermon of 20 January 1956, mentioned that the missionary in-charge USA, Khalil Ahmad Nasir, had asserted that annual receipts in the USA had touched \$40,000. He hoped and wished that when the receipts shall increase in the future to the order of 40 trillion dollars annually, ten times more than the annual income of Pakistan then we shall be able to tell that the Americans have sacrificed for Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Islam. A day shall come when there shall be millions of mosques in America. On that day, we shall

be satisfied that the Americans have really moved. (Al-Fazl, 8 February 1956, pp. 3-4)

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih II instructed Dr. Khalil to write a reply to an American Firm that wrote derogatory remarks about the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be on him). The firm was informed accordingly. Timely reply forced the firm to send a written apology.

During the first seven months of 1958, he addressed all of the missionaries in the US. He gave twenty-three lectures in churches, clubs and conferences. The main ones are:

1. Church Peace University, New York
2. Ann Arbor under the University of Michigan
3. Missionary Training School at Wesley Theological Seminary

These successful lectures aroused interest in the study of Ahmadiyya literature. American Mission distributed 12000 pamphlets of "Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam."

The book, "An Interpretation of Islam", by Dr. Laura Veccia Vaglieri was published in a good-looking edition.

Islam was represented by Chaudhri Muhammad Zafrulla Khan and Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir at the World Religions Conference in Dallas, TX, in 1959. It was attended by world-renowned leaders such as the Prince of the Netherlands and His Excellency U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma. (The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Fiftieth Jalsa Salana USA, p. 65)

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Nasir returned to the international headquarters at Rabwah on 10 July 1959 after successful missionary work under the auspices of Tahrik Jadid. (Record Wakalat Tabshir, Tahrik Jadid, Rabwah and Tarikh-e-Ahmadiyyat by Dost Muhammad, vol. 20, p. 548)

He concluded his career as professor of political science at the University of Long Island, New York.



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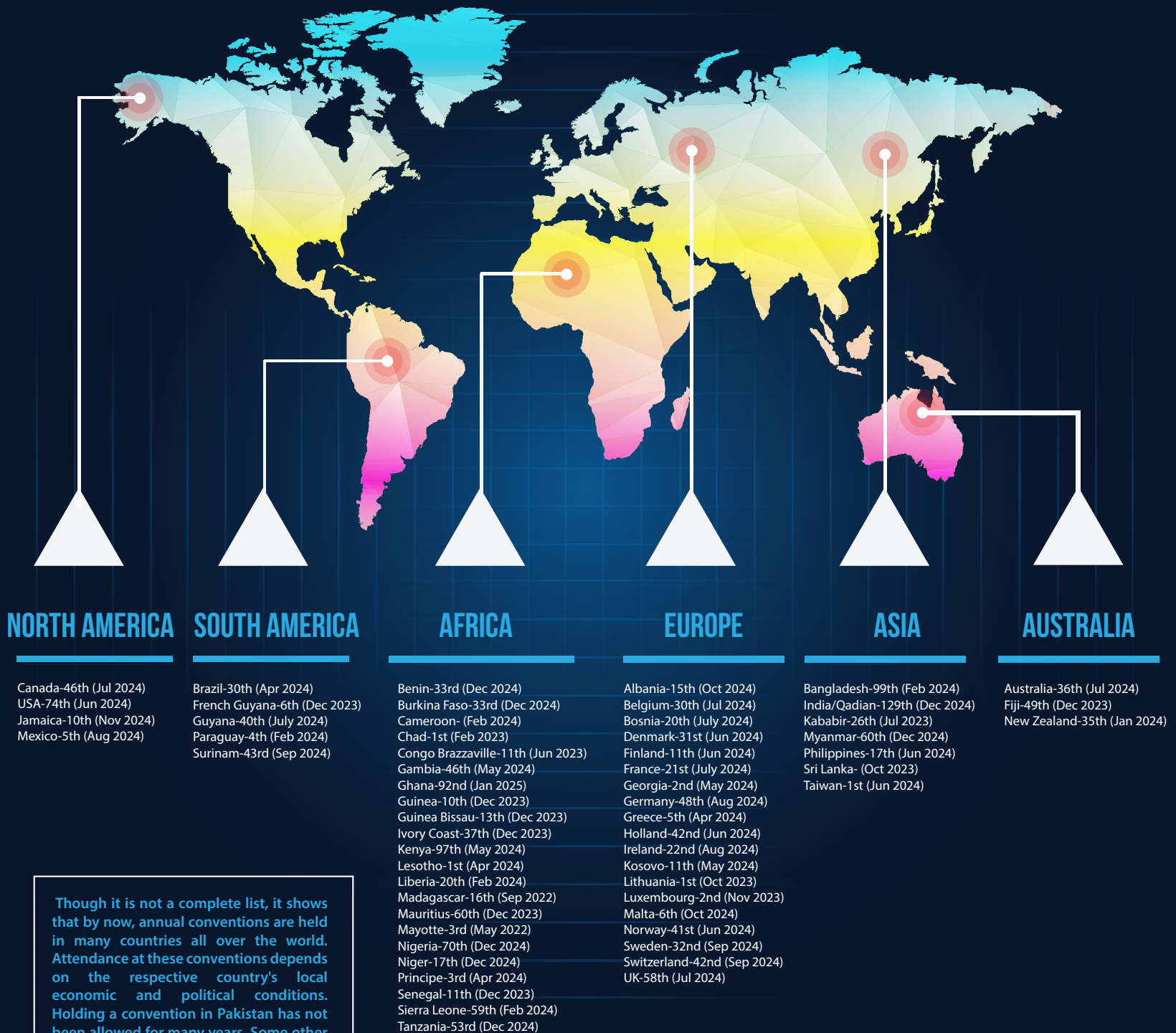
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Though it is not a complete list, it shows that by now, annual conventions are held in many countries all over the world. Attendance at these conventions depends on the respective country's local economic and political conditions. Holding a convention in Pakistan has not been allowed for many years. Some other countries also have similar restrictions, and it has not been possible to hold a convention there.

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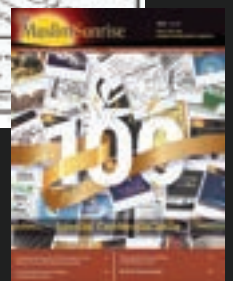
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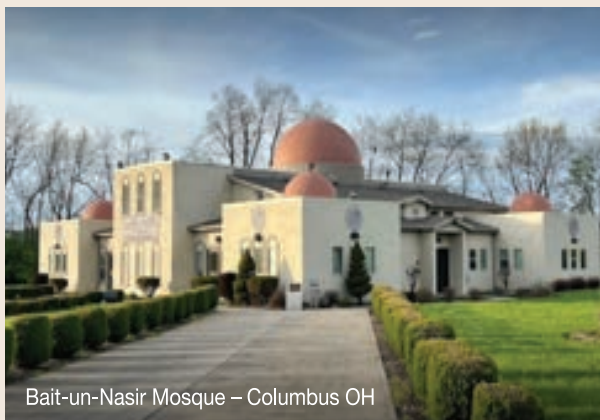
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 9925 SW 35th Dr, Portland, OR 97219-6136
PA – Harrisburg - (Hadee Mosque)
 245 Division St, Harrisburg, PA 17110-1262

PA – Lehigh Valley - (Bait-ul-Ata)
 2860 S Pike Ave, Allentown, PA 18103-7637
PA – Philadelphia - (Baitul-Afiyat Mosque)
 1215 W Glenwood Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19133-1336
PA – Pittsburgh - (Al-Noor Mosque)
 747 South Ave, Wilkinsburg, PA 15221-2939
TN – Alabama/Tennessee - (Mahmood Mosque)
 101 Maple St, Smyrna, TN 37167-2631
TX – Austin - (Bait-ul-Muqet Mosque)
 800 Deepwood Drive, Round Rock, TX 78681-5628
TX – Dallas - (Bait-ul-Ikram Mosque)
 1850 Hedgcoxe Rd, Allen, TX 75013-3083
TX – Fort Worth - (Bait-ul-Qayyum)
 2801 Miller Ave, Fort Worth, TX 76105-4134

TX – Houston - (Bait-us-Samee Mosque)
 1333 Spears Rd, Houston, TX 77067-1507
VA – Central Virginia - (Mubarak Mosque)
 4555 Ahmadiyya Dr, Chantilly, VA 20151-3393
VA – Richmond - (Anwaar Mosque)
 2617 Turner Rd, Richmond, VA 23224-2539
VA – Woodbridge - (Masroor Mosque)
 5640 Hoadly Rd, Manassas, VA 20112-3408
WA – Seattle - (Bait-ul-Ehsan Mosque)
 23515 Old Owen Rd, Monroe, WA 98272-7636
WI – Oshkosh - (Qamar Mosque)
 300 N Eagle St, Oshkosh, WI 54902-4225
WI - Milwaukee
 10401 W Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53227

10 Conditions of Bai'at (Oath of Initiation)



When his Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him) was divinely instructed to take the Oath of Initiation and start a Jama'at, he published an announcement on 1 December 1888, paraphrased below:

"Another message that I wish to convey to the people at large, and to my Muslim brothers in particular, is that I have been commanded to take an oath of Initiation [bai'at] from seekers of truth who wish to acquire true faith and purity; who yearn to find the path to Allah's love..."

01

That till the last day of his life, he shall abstain from **Shirk** (associating any partners with Allah).

02

That he shall keep away from falsehood, cruelty, adultery, dishonesty, disorder, rebellion and every kind of evil

03

That he shall offer Prayers (**Salat**) five times daily

04

That he shall not inflict injury on any of Allah's creatures

05

That he shall bear every hardship for the sake of Allah

06

That he shall not follow vulgar customs, and shall guard against evil inclinations

07

That he shall discard pride and haughtiness, live in humility and meekness

08

That he shall hold his faith, dignity, and the welfare of Islam dearer than his own life, wealth and children

09

That he shall have sympathy for all of God's creatures, and devote his talents to their welfare

10

That he shall establish brotherhood with him (i.e., Ahmad), obeying him in all good things, and firmly adhere to these rules until the last breath of his life

The list provided here gives an overview and abbreviated version of the Ten Conditions of the Bai'at. Please see the full text of the Ten Conditions of Bai'at at: <https://www.alislam.org/articles/conditions-initiation-baiat/>



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