

In The Name Of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful

Seerat of Hz Raeesuddin Khan (ra)

وَالسَّبِقُونَ السَّبِقُونَ ﴿١١﴾

[56:11] *Third*, the foremost; they are the foremost;

أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

[56:12] They will have achieved nearness to God.

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿١٣﴾

[56:13] *They will be* in the Gardens of Bliss —

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

[56:14] A large party from among the early *Muslims*,

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

[56:15] And a few from the later ones,

Asalam walaikum Dear Guests of the Promised Messiah,

First I think I need to address the questions ‘Who was Hazrat Raisuddin Khan Sb (ra) and why am I up here talking about him?’ He was one of two Sahaba from an area called East Bengal during the time of the Promised Messiah (as) and now known as Bangladesh – which is where I come from.

I would like to start by thanking the Organizers of this Jalsa for affording me the opportunity to address you with this topic. I feel honored to present today on a Sahaba of the Promised Messiah (as) from the region of Bengal, however I will take this opportunity to not only talk about Hz Raisuddin Khan Sb (ra) who is in the title of this speech, but of two others who also have a claim to honor from the same time from the same area.

The translation of the verses I have just recited are as follows:

The foremost; they are the foremost

They will have achieved nearness to God

They will be in gardens of Bliss-

A large party from among the early believers

And a few from the later ones (Al-Waqiah, Ch 56, vs 11-15)

The verses of Surah Al-Waqiah that I have recited reference believers from the later period or ‘A-ke-reen’. There are other more commonly referenced surahs such as Surah Al-Jumma, when discussing about the prophecies contained in the Quran about the people of the later times. However, Surah Al-Waqiah talks of three groups of people, those on the left hand – how unlucky are those on the left hand. It talks of those on the right hand – how lucky are those on the right hand. And finally it talks of those who are the foremost – a large party from among the early believers, and a few from the later ones, i.e. from the time of the Promised Messiah (as). Only Allah knows best, but surely the Sahaba have the greatest claim to be amongst the foremost.

A few more comments to anchor us before we introduce the Sahaba of the Promised Messiah (as), the companions of a Prophet that Allah describes as ‘stars’ in the Holy Quran. We are reminded that the stories in the Quran are not just tales of the ancient, rather through them are unlocked the very mysteries of our creation and purpose on this Earth. Likewise we should not take the recounting of the life of a Sahaba as stories from the past, but to remind us of the greatest miracle that Allah refers to again and again in the Quran. And what is that miracle? It is the miracle of the giving of spiritual life to the dead: how many a verse have we read in the Quran that speaks to the miracle of the rain that falls on the barren soil and with it brings forth the many bounteous flowers and herbage? That is the same miracle wrought with the coming of a Prophet, in those followers who drink deeply at the fountain of their righteousness and knowledge. Khalifa Rabae (rh) reminded us that the recounting of miracles is to strengthen the belief of the believer, it is not for those who do not believe, so likewise the recounting of the life of a Sahaba is to relish in the miracle of one who came to life at the hand of a Prophet, and for us to be in turn re-invigorated and reminded of our faith and belief in the Unseen.

I have taken this detour prior to getting to the main part of the speech as I thought it would be useful particularly for the younger members, if not for all, to establish some of the relevance and importance of recounting the life and history around the Sahaba of the Promised Messiah (as).

While there is rich history on the Sahaba who lived in Qadian, or spent much time there, the records for the first Sahaba of East Bengal are far more sketchy due to the fact that there was (a) only two Sahaba from Bengal, (b) they only remained in Qadian for a few weeks and (c) the Anjuman-e-Ahmadiyya in Bengal was formed many years after and as a consequence much of the history was not recorded. Given this backdrop what I am about to share today is as much about Hz Raisuddin Khan (ra) as it is about the miracle of the birth of Ahmadiyyat some 1500 miles from Qadian in a place called Bengal, a glorious example of fulfillment of the ilham vouchsafed to the Promised Messiah, ‘That I will surely cause thy message to reach the corners of the Earth’.

In one of his historical sermons, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra) mentioned that: “After Punjab province in India, the country in which Islam’s influence was most widely spread was Bengal”.

As I just mentioned, in the history of Ahmadiyyat, we find that two learned people from the then East Bengal, came to Qadian and took Baiat at the hands of Promised Messiah (as). They are: 1.

Moulvi Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) of village Bot-toli, of Chittagong district, and, 2. Moulvi Raisuddin Khan Saheb of village Nagergaon, of Kishorganj district. However, before going into details about them I would like to mention a third very important individual of Bengal.

This third very renowned person was a ‘pir’ of Brahmanbaria, Moulana Abdul Wahed, who during 1903 corresponded through letters with the Promised Messiah (as) and asked many questions to him. Hadhrat Masih Maud (as) answered his questions and to the good fortune of the future generations of Ahmadis of Bengal he preserved those questions and answers in his book, “Braheen e Ahmadiyya”, vol.5. Moulana Abdul Wahed’s research and investigations on the truth of Hadhrat Masih Moud (as) continued even after the death of Hadhrat Masih Moud (as) in 1908. Towards the end of 1911 Moulana Abdul Wahed decided to go to Qadian and see for himself how the lives of the disciples of Hadhrat Masih Moud (as) were transformed after taking Baiat. Since he himself was a prominent scholar, and studied in the madrasa of Moulana Abdul Hye Lukhnowi, he thought of meeting and exchanging ideas with some of India’s learned scholars of Islam. On his way to Qadian, he met Moulana Abdul Reza Khan Berelwi, Moulana Shibli Nomani and Moulana Abdullah Tonki. None of them could put forth any valid arguments against the reasoning and claim of Hadhrat Masih Moud (as). Rather he found them deceptive and holding grudges not based on taqwa (fear of God). Frustrated with them he reached Batala, the last railway station before Qadian, and there he met Moulvi Mohammad Hossain Batalwi, the famous Ahle Hadeeth stalwart. After some failed arguments, Moulvi Batalwi tried to persuade Moulvi Abdul Wahed Saheb not to go to Qadian, because “Whatever Mirza was, now that he is dead, there is no use going there.”

With profound wisdom, and surely a reflection of his state of mind, Moulana Abdul Wahed replied that ‘if a fire had been lighted there, he would surely be able to find its remains in the form of ashes’. After reaching Qadian, he went straight to meet Hadhrat Hakeem Moulvi Nooruddin, Khalifatul Masih I (ra) who was at that time taking a Dars ul Quran session. He was stunned by the new insight and brilliant explanations of the Holy Quran put forward by Khalifatul Masih I. After attending these sessions for a few days he found that all his personal vanity on his own depth of knowledge stood nowhere compared to this treasure of knowledge. He had to acknowledge that this knowledge could not have come out of human endeavor; rather it must have descended from above through revelations. He finally took bai’at at the hands of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I (ra) in December, 1912 and came back to Bengal.

He was given the authority to take baiat and so the people of Bengal could come and take baiat at his hands. He was also made the Ameer of the then Bengal. Hundreds of his disciples in Brahmanbaria entered Ahmadiyyat at his hands soon after his return and many local jamats were established. Although Moulvi Abdul Wahed Saheb was unable to take baiat at the hands of the Promised Messiah (as), and thus cannot be given the title of a Sahaba, yet, he was the first person of the then Bengal to correspond with Promised Messiah (as) and thus is just as important an individual in the history of Ahmadiyyat in the then Bengal, now known as Bangladesh.

Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra)

Now, I will come back to the two Sahabas of Bengal whose names I mentioned earlier. The first was, Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) from Chittagong district. A famous Mohsin

awlia (saintly person) came from Yemen and first spread Islam to this part of Bengal. Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) was an 8th generation descendant from Mohsin *awlia*'s nephew, Shah Sikandar who had also come with him from Yemen. Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) received his highest education from Deoband Dar-ul-Ulum of India and received in-depth religious knowledge. He was a learned Alim on Islamic teachings in light of the Holy Quran and Hadeeth. He would counsel and advise people to turn their attention to God. People were drawn to him because of his recitation of the Holy Quran with a beautiful and melodious voice and also because his speeches were emotional and touching. Thus he was recognized as a respectable, religious scholar in society. He was aware of the fact that *mujaddeds* appeared at the turn of every century. When he heard that Hadhrat Masih Moud (as) claimed to be the mujadded who was to appear at the beginning of the 14th century, he started to think deeply and seek guidance through prayers – and look how miraculously his prayers were answered.

He went to Rangoon in Mynamar, and there started a trading business. However, his health deteriorated in Rangoon, and upon the advice of his doctor he went to Uttar Pradesh in northern India in 1905 for a change for his health. On his way, he stopped in Delhi for some time. The Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani (as), was also at Delhi at that time. It was his last trip to Delhi. There was strong mukhalifat (opposition) of mullahs. The edicts of mullahs against the Promised Messiah were published in the papers. Moulana Saheb became sad and thought that if someone claims to be a messenger of God and the leader of the spiritual world, then his claim should be examined under the light of the Holy Quran and Ahadeeth. He felt that the mullahs were doing excess which is against the norm of peaceful Islamic custom. He felt that he should visit the Promised Messiah and go and check for himself.

When he arrived in Qadian, and came across Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)'s illuminated countenance, his heart bore witness that this was not the face of a liar. He then exchanged some thoughts and views with him, and thereafter being fully satisfied from all angles, he immediately took baiat at the Promised Messiah (as)'s hands. The year of bai'at is not exactly known, but taking into account various facts, is thought to be in the later part of 1905.

After some time he returned to his village home in Chittagong and engaged himself in tabligh like a full-fledged soldier. He was the only Ahmadi in the whole of Eastern Bengal at that time. He conducted lots of meetings and spread the news of the advent of the Promised Messiah (As) and Imam Mehdi. Immediately mukhalifat (opposition) cropped up. Mullahs started agitating against him and tried to stop him in many ways. But he continued to do tabligh resolutely and had a lot of *munazaras* (debates) with the ulamas. The ulamas went so far as to even sue him just to harass him. He would always pray fervently to the Almighty Allah for the guidance of his opponents. He also wrote regularly to the Promised Messiah (as) describing the tortures inflicted upon him and requested him to pray for him. His letters and reports describing the mukhalifat were published in the "Badr" newspaper in Qadian in 1907. Nobody was there in Bengal with whom he could share his grief and affliction.

During this time, he learnt about Moulana Abdul Wahed Saheb of Brahmanbaria whose account I mentioned in the beginning. He got news from Qadian that although Wahed Saheb did not take

bai'at, yet he had a soft corner for Ahmadiyyat. Learning this, Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) wrote to Moulana Wahed Saheb in Brahmanbaria and through their letters they developed good friendship and a bond was created between them. He also went to Brahmanbaria to visit him.

Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) used to explain the death of Hadhrat Isa (as) elaborately. He wrote a book named, "Wafaate Masih Maroof or Zulfikar e Ali". After its publication he became famous in the locality as "Isa mara Moulvi" [meaning "the moulvi who killed Isa(Jesus)].

Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) tirelessly and relentlessly continued to spread the word of Ahmadiyyat. However, it is not known whether anyone was blessed with the opportunity to convert to Ahmadiyyat through him.

Very sadly, he would often tell his relatives:

Oh my kith and kin! Oh villagers! Even after I explained so much to you, none of you accepted the truth. None of you had the good fortune of becoming a walker of "Siratul mustakim". But remember this! Ahmadiyyat is Allah's established Jamat. Its claim is that its truth is as clear as daylight and that Ahmadiyyat will be victorious all over the world. After my death, members of the Ahmadiyya jamaat from far off places will come to my grave. Behave well with them.

While the words are full of extreme pathos for those who did not accept the message, yet they are also undeniably clear in his clear belief of the triumph of the Promised Messiah (as) and Ahmadiyyat expressed with the certainty of knowledge of one who has experienced fire by putting his hand in the fire. As a result, his descendants are following his instructions. At present, if any Ahmadi goes to visit his grave, his close relatives show them the grave and treat them with love and kindness. They also narrate tales of his glorious life as an Ahmadi with respect.

The dates of birth and of death of Moulana Kabir Saheb are not known. However, he died when his children were still quite young and it is assumed that Moulana Kabir Saheb died between 1911 and 1912, in his mid-forties.

This great devotee of the Imam Mahdi (as) is buried at the family graveyard of Mohsin Awlia's descendants, situated near the shrine of Mohsin Awlia. However, no permanent structure was built to mark his grave. A name plate isn't there either (Jamat tried to put a name plate but locals did not allow because they follow a strict principle of not putting name plates in the common graveyard). Only his nephews can show the actual location of his grave, which they were shown by their fathers. His grave lies beneath the shade of a large tree.

Hadhrat Rais uddin Khan (ra)

Hadhrat Rais uddin Khan (ra) is the second sahaba of Bengal. He was from village Nagergao of Kishoreganj district and police station – Kotiyadi. He was blessed with the opportunity to visit Qadian in 1906 and take bai'at at the hands of Hadhrat Masih Moud (as) and thus become a sahaba.

His father's name was Nazm Uddin Khan. Nazm Uddin Khan Saheb was a pious and respected citizen. He gave the highest religious education to his children in their early days. It is said that Rais uddin Khan Saheb studied in Mymensingh and Kolkata. In those days, educating boys, especially Muslim boys, was rare. The alem and ulema had given the edict that learning English was wrong and against the Shariah. As a result, Muslim boys and girls did not go to school to study. In such a situation, the schooling of Rais uddin Khan Saheb lighted up Nagergaon.

He became well-known for having an excellent character and being a pious man. All his relatives were proud of him and wished and prayed for him. After finishing his education he joined the postal department. He worked in different locations and then was posted in Myanmar as a Post Master. After the days work his interest was only to worship. He would be busy with fasting, prayers and religious programs.

Since childhood, Rais uddin Khan Saheb was interested in reading books. He knew Bangla, English, Urdu and Persian language. So he would read religious books and papers in different languages. He would be busy reading and researching the Holy Quran and Hadeeth for gaining knowledge and proficiency in Islamic literature. It was then that he came to know from an Urdu newspaper that a man of Qadian, of Punjab claimed to be Imam Mahdi and that he was a liar according to the alem and ulama of the society. This raised an interest in him to find out the truth because the holy Quran and Ahadeeth have prophesized about the advent of Hadhrat Imam Mahdi (as) at the beginning of the 14th century. Thus, the claim had to be checked studying Islamic literature. However, Rais uddin Khan Saheb had no clue as to how he was going to do so. So, he continued to pray.

Look how gloriously his prayers were answered by the the Unseen God. One day, during Jumma prayers at Magui in Myanmar (where Rais uddin Khan Saheb was posted), two people came in the mosque from Punjab. One was from Punjab and was a member of the armed forces. The other was an employee of the Postal department. After Jumma prayers they wanted to speak to the devotees in the mosque about the truth and advent of the Imam Mahdi and distribute books and leaflets. At the very beginning of their speech, those in the mosque became agitated and they rose up and insulted the two men and forced them out of the mosque. Seeing this, Rais uddin Saheb became very upset. He knew that what the members of the mosque did was not according to the teachings of Islam. Islam teaches that even if someone is lying one should be given the chance to explain their case and if it seems unreasonable then should be refuted by reasoning. Thus, while leaving the mosque, Khan Saheb, according to the teaching of Islam, spoke politely to them and invited them to his house.

Thus the two sahabas went to Khan Saheb's house. For a long time they intensely discussed the truth of Hadhrat Masih Moud (as)'s claim. Khan Saheb being a very pious man, immediately saw the undeniably clear signs of logic and was blessed by the Almighty. Before the two men left, they presented to him an urdu book of the jamat named, "Asl-e-Mosaffa". After being introduced to the "dajjal" while reading the book, he ultimately accepted the truth of Ahmadiyyat. He wanted to go to Qadian and accept bai'at at the hands of the Masih. So he took leave, and came to his home in Nagergao. He told his elder brother of the glad tidings of the advent of Hadhrat Iman Mahdi (as) and requested him to accompany him to Qadian. His elder

brother was also amazed after listening to the manifestation of God's signs, however due to his poor health could not accompany him.

Rais uddin Saheb set out for Qadian alone - this was in the middle of 1906, in the month of June or July. He went to Batala by train and then rode to Qadian on a horse. When he reached Qadian and met Hadhrat Masih e Moud(as), he was astonished by the countenance of his holy face and by hearing his pleasant voice. He was even more amazed when he saw Hadhrat Imam Mahdi (as)'s concern on whether he got hurt on his way to Qadian. He took bai'at at Hadhrat Masih e Moud (as) and stayed in Qadian for 15 days. Within this time he learnt many things from the Promised Messiah and many of his sahabas. He also became a great soldier for tabligh gaining knowledge of the Holy Quran and Ahadeeth. He returned to Mynamar and went back to his previous work routine.

Hadhrat Khan Saheb and other Ahmadis of the army and postal division did Jamaat work. They undertook considerable tabligh efforts and conducted Jumma and Eid prayers. A Moulana of the Ahle Hadeeth, who was previously a disciple of Moulana Sanaullah Amritsari, had the good fortune of accepting Ahmadiyyat through the tabligh of Hadhrat Khan Saheb.

In 1910, Hadhrat Khan Saheb's elder brother, Saiamuddin Khan passed away. Their mother became restless to see her son, Raisuddin beside her. Thus, in April/ May 1912, Khan Saheb took leave of his duty for 1 year and returned to his motherland and anxious mother. At the end of one year, when Khan Saheb was to leave and join his work, his mother told him not to and explained how the Holy Quran and Hadeeth mention that one should serve one's parents. Being an obedient and dutiful son, Khan Saheb left his government job. He lived in his home to serve his aged mother. Along with the opportunity to serve his old mother, Allah the Almighty also provided him with the opportunity to show the lost Muslims of Bengal the right path through tabligh.

When Rais uddin Saheb took bai'at, there was only one other Ahmadi in the whole of Bengal and that was Hadhrat Moulana Ahmed Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) on whom I spoke earlier. The second Ahmadi was Hadhrat Rais uddin Khan Saheb himself. The third was his wife – Hazrat Azizat un Nese Sahiba of the Syed family

From 25th November 1912, Moulana Syed Abdul Wahed Saheb (ra) started taking Bai'ats in Brahmanbaria. Anjuman e Ahamdiyya was first established in Bengal, in the presence of Mufti Mohammad Sadeque (ra) in Brahmanbaria. All those people in various parts of Bengal, to whom Khan Saheb had done tabligh, all entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat. Moulana Syed Mohammad Abdul Wahed Saheb became the president.

Rais uddin Khan Saheb continued to do tabligh and held many "bahas" (debate) sessions in his own home. These sessions were attended by many moulvis, however they became greatly aggravated to the point that they filed a case against him at the local police station, stating that he held anti-government sessions at his home.

The local police inspector went over to inspect and asked Raisuddin Saheb whether the complaint was true and whether he had any witnesses. Khan Saheb replied that the accusations

made against him were completely false. He said that he only tried to prove the truth of Ahmadiyyat, and Hadhrat Masih e Moud (as)'s claim in the meetings he held at his place. He never gave any anti-government speeches.

When the inspector saw he could not find any witnesses who would testify that Khan Saheb was lying, he realized that he was speaking the truth and wrote in his investigation report at the police station that the villagers had a disagreement on religious matters and that the accusation made against Khan Saheb was false.

He passed away at 12:30 midnight in September 1921, at the age of 56 or 58. Before his death, he told his wife that he should be buried in front of his house so that in the future people can come from very far off places to visit his grave. There is a folk tale very popular among the locals that if any tree is cut from this graveyard, then it will bring ill-fate. Thus, even though there is no caretaker to look after the graveyard, no villager tries to damage the grave. The villagers have respect for this graveyard. Presently, the graveyard remains well preserved.

These two saintly and pious people, Hadhrat Moulana Ahmad Kabir Noor Mohammad (ra) and Hadhrat Rais uddin Khan Saheb were devout followers of the Holy Prophet (saw). By the Almighty Allah's grace they had the opportunity to see the truth in the claim of the Promised Messiah and take baiat at his hands. Thus they were privileged to get the exalted status of "Sahabas" of the Promised Messiah. They were two great men of Bengal whose life I could only briefly put forward on this occasion. We hope and pray that the people of Bangladesh are inspired by the lives of these men who have led exemplary lives and had sacrificed so much following the teachings of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Saw) and his Promised Messiah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as).

In the end I conclude with where I first started - in the final verses of Surah Al-Waqiah, Allah promises to those on the right hand 'Peace be on the thee, who is from those on the right hand'. And Allah's promise to those who are the foremost is that 'for him is comfort and fragrance of happiness and a Garden of Bliss'. May Allah's promises be fulfilled on these three jewels of Bengal. Ameen.