

HAZRAT MIRZA BASHIR-UD-DIN MAHMUD AHMAD

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This short translation is an excerpt of a Friday sermon delivered by Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra}, the Promised Reformer and Second Successor of the Promised Messiah^{as}, on 28 November 1930 in which he discourses on the importance of the Jalsa Salana and how it is a divine sign from God. The translation was first published in the weekly Al Hakam newspaper and an amended version of it is being reproduced here.

A Mighty Sign from God

After the recitation of *tashahhud*, *ta'awudh* and *Surah Al-Fatihah*, Huzoor said:

For the past few days I have been suffering from otalgia¹ and have faced further discomfort from the growth of a lump and attacks of migraine. Therefore, I was unable to deliver the past two Friday sermons. By the grace of Allah the Exalted, I have recovered from the last two ailments. However, the pain in my ear is such that I have never experienced anything like it before and it has, for the time being, made me somewhat hard of hearing.

A person can only appreciate the true nature of a hardship once they have experienced it for themselves. For example, one

¹ A pain of the ear. [Publishers]

can only understand the struggles faced by a deaf person once they have gone through the same misery. Moreover, for a speaker, a clogged ear is a severe aggravation. It hinders their ability to deduce whether their voice is reaching their audience or not. Nor can they determine whether they are speaking at an appropriate level for their audience. In much the same way, I too am unable to sense whether or not I am currently talking in a manner that is appropriate for the gathering before me.

Today, I wish to comment on the fact that by the grace of God Almighty, our Jalsa Salana is once again [fast] approaching. As I have said numerous times before, this gathering is one sign among the many shown by Allah the Exalted. There was a time when no one visited Qadian. Though many would travel here from far off places upon hearing the name of the Promised Messiah^{as}, they would often return

to [their homes] from Amritsar and Batala at being told that this town was the home of an infamous Antichrist. Even today, there are many people within our community who live with the regret of not visiting Qadian during the lifetime of the Promised Messiah^{as}. They too only got as far as Batala or Amritsar because the enemies of our community deceived them. After listening to them, they decided against visiting Qadian. If they had done so, they would have been included among the companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Though Allah the Exalted enabled them to accept Ahmadiyyat because their intentions were true and sincere, they were deprived of the Promised Messiah's^{as} companionship.

The participants of the first jalsa held in Qadian were so small in number that they would have been no more than one-sixth or one-seventh of the total people gathered in the mosque today for this Friday sermon.

However, back then, this was heralded as a great triumph. I cannot say for certain which of the first four jalsas it was, but I recall that a blue sheet was laid out in a room situated in front of the old book depot that has now been replaced by a tailor. Nor can I remember the speech that was delivered on the occasion as I was just a child, but I do recall the Promised Messiah^{as} going there and the entire sheet being able to accommodate all the attendees. Hence that jalsa was no larger than a modestly sized wedding reception.

Such is the way things were. However, today, despite the fact that Qadian has expanded and properties in the town as well as the buildings of our community and our members have only grown in number and size, and even though the members of the community give over their homes for the guests who come for the jalsa, we still have to ask non-Ahmadis and Hindus to let us use

their homes to accommodate our guests.

I remember during the Promised Messiah's^{as} last Jalsa Salana, I did not accompany him on his [regular] walk, but when he returned, he told me that due to the amount of guests, it might prove difficult for him to go out again. He had not been able to travel far because the dust [which rose from the feet of the large number of guests who accompanied him] made it impossible for him to continue. According to most estimates, approximately 700 people attended that jalsa, far fewer than the number sitting before me in the mosque today. I do not recall the speeches that were delivered that year, but I remember that at the time, the parapet of the mosque ended just after the grave that is situated in the mosque's courtyard. The courtyard was much smaller in those days. The participants sat here while the Promised Messiah^{as} delivered his address seated on a chair in front of the middle door

of the mosque. I sat on the parapet with a few other people while the mosque was completely full and all of us took great pleasure in the fact that in accordance with the prophecies of God Almighty, the community had spread enormously. However, today at this Friday sermon, there are three times as many people as there were back then.

With the full power at its disposal, the world and all the followers of its religions, their scholars and mystics, their rich and poor, their men and women have ardently strived to halt the spread of this community. They resorted to deceit and falsehoods, published derogatory statements and used every possible means they could think of [to derail our community]. Just as a single hand cannot stop the water of a river from flowing and just as sand slips between the fingers, similarly, the [spiritual] light the Promised Messiah^{as} brought with him spread [and

slipped] through the hands of the world's elders, scholars and mystics before reaching out across the entire earth. Thus the world witnessed another sign just as it did during the time of Noah^{as}, Abraham^{as}, Moses^{as} and Muhammad^{sa} the Messenger of Allah.

Despite their hate and prejudice, in their hearts, [our enemies] know that everything that was destined to happen has occurred. Although, the world still considers us insignificant, it knows well that we will grow into a large community. Many have let go of their hate and view our community with respect and reverence. Despite the differences in our faith, beliefs and approach, they all agree that we alone are a [successful and] functioning community. This too is a form of recognition and means that our [spiritual] river has extended [into their hearts]. Anyone who lives in a place where canals are common, might have witnessed small springs of water

forming in their surroundings. Although these springs are not canals themselves, they create similar water trails. In the same way, thousands and indeed millions of hearts have been soaked [by the spiritual water of the Promised Messiah^{as}]. [Even those] who are not Ahmadis have little choice but to acknowledge the services rendered by Ahmadiyyat. We ought to reflect over our circumstances. An honest introspection would reveal that we are incapable of achieving the things our community has succeeded in so far. How then are they being accomplished? We are incapable of realising these tasks and yet somehow our endeavours are always fulfilled. The only answer to this is that God Almighty carries them out Himself.

Listen to what the rulers of the country have to say about us. They too recognise the importance of this community. Not so long ago, the current governor of the Punjab said

during an address that our community is a shining example in the field of education. Whereas, if we give a little thought to this statement, we will soon see the flaws in it. How then are we considered to be an educated community? Surely, it is because of the light which we have received from the Promised Messiah^{as}; otherwise, in terms of our formal education we are not especially better off than others. However, in terms of our mental advancement and learning, we have gained instruction in an institution that other people have not had access to. Hence, even uneducated Ahmadis appear scholarly and learned in the company of others. There are certain subjects which we discuss easily among ourselves at our gatherings, but when we raise them with other people, there is always a concern that they will not be able to understand them. These include the intricacies of the sharia, the truths of the

Holy Qur'an, philosophy, logic, psychology and so on. Even land owners within the community listen to these discourses with so much enthusiasm that it appears as though they are consuming a sweet syrup. Where did they learn psychology and philosophy from? It was certainly not from their own efforts or from any educational institute. Instead, their connection to the Promised Messiah^{as} caused a [spiritual] fountain to flow in their hearts; and this is the same fountain which always flows from divine movements.

Hence, the day of jalsa is a sign. People from all spheres of life attend this event. They listen to all sorts of discussions and revel in them. At times, there are people who leave during the middle of a session. [Later] when it is enquired about them, those members of our community who are not that well-educated, in their innocence and candour, tell us that [the people who left early] were non-Ahmadi

friends of theirs who had accompanied them [to the jalsa] and left because they failed to comprehend the [complexity of] the issues being discussed. Whereas in truth, these non-Ahmadis are far more educated than the Ahmadis who they come with. Yet, the members of our community do not for a moment see themselves as being less educated than their friends and, therefore, when they anxiously leave early, they say it is because they did not understand the addresses that were being delivered. Therefore, they assume that because their friends do not understand the speeches, they tend to leave early. Although this is said with the greatest of innocence, it is completely true. In truth, these non-Ahmadis leave exactly because they have failed to understand what is being said. And even though they excel our members in terms of their formal education, it is Ahmadis who end up feeling sorry for them.

And this is nothing new, rather it has been happening since the remotest ages. Whenever a prophet appears, those who deny him fail to comprehend his spiritual message as do the hypocrites from among his followers. The Holy Qur'an says that those who are not [true] believers and only portray themselves to be Muslims cannot fathom the intricacies [of the Qur'an]. When the leaders of the hypocrites would leave the presence of the Holy Prophet^{sa} they would derogatorily say:

مَاذَا قَالَ ارْفَأْ²

That is: We cannot understand a thing he is saying.

Before embracing Islam, Abu Hurairah^{ra} had a weak memory and would struggle to remember things. However, [after he became Muslim], he treated every word of the Holy

² *Surah Muhammad*, 47:17 [Publishers]

Prophet^{sa} like a precious pearl and preserved it in his heart. On the contrary, Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, who was set to become the chief of Medina [before the arrival of the Holy Prophet^{sa}] would excuse himself from the company of the Holy Prophet^{sa} because he claimed that he could not understand the matters which would be discussed. On the surface, he was a learned man and Abu Hurairah^{ra} was illiterate. However, the insights given to the latter were not bestowed on the former. Accordingly, Abu Hurairah^{ra} would understand [the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sa}] while Abdullah bin Ubayy would not.

Another sign that is witnessed during the days of the jalsa is the large number of people who come here; and this is something that could never have been anticipated. We then witness a further sign when those who are considered to be lacking in knowledge,

ardently drink from this [spiritual] fountain in such a manner that even those people from other communities who wish to quench their thirst are unable to benefit from it in a similar way.

God Almighty has made the people of Qadian a means of its protection and it is to bless this town that He brings people together. Hence I instruct those of the members of the community who live here to prepare for the coming days and those who have their own homes should give them over to our guests. Moreover, they should volunteer themselves and sacrifice their time for this event.

(Alfazl, 04 December 1930)

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