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That Defining Moment—When My Heart Bonded with Islam, Ahmadiyyat, and Khilafat

Habeeb Shafeek Jr., Orlando

It was December 1973. We were under the Jalsah Salanah stage marquee, in Rabwah, on a beautiful, crisp, cold, but sunny day. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (may Allah shower His mercy on him) had just stepped to the podium, and began speaking to a sea of stoic and eager believers. In those days, there was no simultaneous translation. The foreign, non-Urdu speaking delegates were arranged in clusters of four or five. Each cluster was assigned a Khadim who served as that group's translator. Our translator was very capable and enthused to have this duty. Our beloved Imam would speak a few phrases, and our translator who would be standing, listening with rapt attention, would then kneel back down and give us a sweet gist of Huzoor's Urdu words in English. His enthusiasm was not just in the honor to serve us but to be in the marquee in close proximity to the Khalifah of the time.



This coordination worked well for a period of time but then something very peculiar happened. All of a sudden, the translator was standing up longer, and we were sure we were losing precious context. He became so engrossed and captivated in the Khalifah's message that pretty soon it was obvious to us that Huzoor's speech and our translations were not in synch. We did not have the faintest idea that we were about to become the direct objects of Huzoor's address. It was clear that the Amir of the foreign delegation, Dr. Muzaffar Ahmad Zafar of Dayton, was becoming very anxious—and somewhat annoyed—at the lack of timely translation by our “mesmerized” young translator. In a low but commanding voice, Dr. Zafar said, “What is Huzoor saying? We are missing way too much.” Our translator replied respectfully, “Sir, I am coming...one moment sir.” Brother Zafar replied sharply, “We have missed too much already.” He said, “Please sir, I am coming, I will be with you in a moment.” Our translator was indeed transfixed on the face and words of our beloved Khalifah. Then, it happened. We were seated to the left of the Khalifah as he faced the thousands in the Jalsah Gah. Our beloved Imam took off his glasses, turned his head to the left, extended out his arm fully toward us, and sweetly beckoned all of the male foreign delegates, “Stand Up! Stand Up!” We obeyed immediately—without knowing why? All we knew was that our Khalifah said, “Stand Up, Stand Up.” And we humbly did so! Suddenly, there erupted the most thunderous sound I had ever heard in my life! Na'ra-i-Takbir, Allahu Akbar! The Na'ras (slogans) continued and Huzoor allowed this fervent gathering of tens of thousands an unusually long time to release and express this breathtaking, resounding, and most amazing expression of emotion. Our small—somewhat confused group—still did not know what was happening?

As our humble foreign delegation looked out at the sea of excited believers, I could see thousands of faces crying, and I was dazed with profound curiosity. Why, I wondered? Our young translator was crying profusely. He looked helpless, wanting to perform his duty yet overwhelmed with emotion. As this enormous crowd continued this outpour of expression, I could see our Khalifah was smiling and indulging this outpour. We implored of our translator, “What is happening? What is going on?” He quickly got a grip, squared his shoulders, and said, “As you could see on your way to the Jalsah Gah, government soldiers are now occupying our city of Rabwah. Near the railway station, there is a huge wall with the phrase painted on it with the revelation of the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him), ‘I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth.’” He continued, “These government soldiers have been ordered to erase this slogan which is in both Urdu and English. So our beloved Khalifah was speaking to these soldiers in a very sweet and lovely tone. He said to these soldiers, ‘you may erase the words that are on that wall. You may even remove the wall on which the words are written, but my dear soldiers, what are you going to do with these individuals standing up here who are not words,

but they are the living fulfillment of those words and that prophecy, what are you going to do with them?” So, as Huzoor proposed this question to the soldiers and asked us to stand up; the Jalsah Gah erupted into a fury of excitement and incredible words of praise. After Huzoor’s speech concluded, it was time to leave the Jalsah Gah. Hundreds of people began to come up to all of us to embrace us, to shake our hands, to touch us. It was the most overwhelming experience I had ever had to this day in my life. I hugged and embraced and touched so many Jalsah attendees before I could even get to my shoes. Then as we begin to walk back to our guest quarters, we were assailed yet again with waves of individuals who wanted to just shake hands and embrace us. When I got back to the guesthouse, my body felt like it had had a rigorous workout at the gym!

This was indeed that defining moment in my life. I was 21 years old. While I was born an Ahmadi, it was at that moment when my Khalifah said, “Stand Up, stand Up,” which became the defining moment when I bonded with Islam, Ahmadiyyat, and Khilafat. That was the moment I became an Ahmadi, Alhamdulillah!

Living a Healthy Lifestyle as a Nasir

Rashid Syed, Los Angeles

On February 2, 2014, I ran Surf City Huntington Beach Half Marathon, 13.1 miles, along with approximately 28,000 runners. I have been running for as long as I remember but I have been running half marathons since 2009. Not only does it help me stay healthy it also helps raise funds to benefit causes such as Alzheimer’s Cure Research Foundation, American Liver Foundation, Cops for Kids with Cancer, and many more.

In 2005, I experienced lower back problem. The doctors advised for a back surgery to repair the bulge in my disc but I decided not to let the doctors cut open my back; instead, I started exercising more. That was the best decision I have ever made. I continued running and I am not sure what happened but my back pain disappeared. I have not seen a doctor for my back since 2005.

In 2008, the doctors found out that I had blockage in 3 arteries. After many examinations, the doctors decided not to do a bypass or place any stents. They decided to treat my condition with medication. After two months of rest, the doctors decided that it was safe for me to resume running. I was determined to treat myself with diet and exercise. I got more aggressive in running.

I am a living example of the fact that discipline, determination, motivation, watching diet, and doing a little exercise can cure many health conditions. Everyone experiences aches and pains with the age but at age 66, I feel pretty good about my health.

I would encourage my Ansar brothers to keep a healthy lifestyle by doing exercise and eating healthy. However, if you are not in the best of health, please do not start running 13.1 miles based on my experience rather consult your physician or Qa’id Health (qaid.health@ansarusa.org) before you start running.

I am not a doctor but I would recommend the following best practices to keep a healthy lifestyle.

- Start with a 15-20 minute walk everyday and increase as you continue.
- Watch your diet and cut down on fatty food.
- Get a regular physical examination at least once a year and monitor your blood pressure, cholesterol, sugar, kidney, liver, etc.
- Get colonoscopy every 10 years after the age of 50.
- See an eye doctor once a year.
- Visit a dentist at least once a year.

