

**Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA**  
**33<sup>rd</sup> National Ijtimā' and 22<sup>nd</sup> Majlis Shūrā 2014**

The 33<sup>rd</sup> National Ijtimā' of Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA was held at Baitur-Raḥmān Mosque, Silver Spring, MD, on Friday, October 10 to Sunday, 12, 2014. As is customary, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Majlis Shūrā of Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA was also held during this time.

A target of 1,000 Anṣār brothers attending this year's Ijtimā' was set at the beginning of the year. Special efforts were made by Zu'amā and regional Nāzimīn to meet this target. Information about the Ijtimā', including online registration, accommodation, program, etc. was regularly provided in the months leading to the Ijtimā', through Majlis' website, emails, and newsletters to help Anṣār better prepare for the event. By the Grace of Allāh Almighty, 1,036 Anṣār from all over the USA attended the Ijtimā' which is the highest ever in any Anṣār National Ijtimā', Alḥamdulillāh.

The Ijtimā' sessions were held in a marquee erected at the outside grounds of the mosque as well as in men's Prayer hall. The Shūrā sessions were held in Anṣārullāh Hall. The meals were served in a separate marquee, next to the main marquee. The men's Prayer hall was used for Prayers and Women's Prayer hall was used for accommodation. 90 rooms at a nearby hotel were also reserved for Anṣār to stay on their own expense that were all utilized. Special arrangement for Tahajjud, congregational Fajr Prayer, and Dars were made at the hotel. The indoor sports activities took place in the basement area of the mosque while the outdoor sports activities were held at the outside grounds of the mosque.

Among the salient features of the Ijtimā' were congregational Prayers including Tahajjud, Dars, opening and closing sessions, educational and sports competitions, interactive workshops, a special session with Ṣadr Majlis Anṣārullāh, Canada and Mujeebur Rahman, Advocate, service oriented booths, and a grand BBQ dinner with bonfire and poetry on Saturday evening. Following are some of the highlights of the various Ijtimā' activities.

### **Opening Session**

The opening session of the Ijtimā' started at 3:30 PM with the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān. Ṣadr Majlis Anṣārullāh, Faheem Younus Qureshi, led Anṣār in recitation of the Anṣār pledge. This was followed by an Urdu poem recitation. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ V (may Allāh be his helper) had graciously sent a special message for the attendees of the Ijtimā' that was read to the audience.

In his welcome address, Ṣadr Majlis emphasized the need of change in attitude from "we should" to "we will" implying that instead of saying that we should do this or that our approach should rather be to come forward and say that we will do this or do that. He said that this change was necessary for us not only to elevate our spiritual status but also because, at this stage in life, we better take advantage of whatever time has left in our share and do as many good deeds as we can. Ṣadr Majlis related the story of 'Ikrama bin Abū Jahl how he wanted to redeem himself by risking his life and doing something significant at old age and how he and two other companions gave their lives in the way of Allāh trying to save each other's life, after they, together, made a break through opening for Islāmic army.

Ṣadr Majlis then invited respected Amīr Jamā'at, USA, Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, for the inaugural address. In his address, respected Amīr welcomed all Anṣār and presented the three attributes of Allāh Almighty—Rabb, Raḥmān, and Raḥīm—mentioned in the beginning of the Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah. Based on this, he advised Anṣār to fulfill their responsibilities towards their families, towards each other, and towards the Jamā'at. He referred to Ḥuḍūr's recent Friday sermon urging everyone to be kind and good to each other and be exemplary role models for our future generations. He wished Anṣār to have a successful Ijtimā' and led in silent prayer before closing the opening session.

### **Shūrā Proceedings**

Majlis Shūrā proceedings took place on Friday immediately after the opening session and then continued on Saturday evening. In the Friday session, last year's approved proposals and implementation reports were presented by Shūrā sub-committee chairmen and secretaries. New proposals that were not selected

for discussion and those selected for discussion were presented to the Shūrā body. Four subcommittees were formed for deliberations on proposals that were accepted for discussion. The subcommittees were Tabligh, Finance, Tarbiyat, and General. Şadr Majlis appointed a chairman and a secretary for each of the subcommittees. The subcommittees met and deliberated on their respective proposals until late on Friday night; all committees prepared comprehensive reports with recommendations.

The final session of Shūrā started at 9:00 PM. The chairman of each of the aforementioned subcommittees presented their reports. The recommendations were deliberated by the Shūrā body. The recommendations were submitted to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ V for approval. The final Shūrā session ended at 10:30 PM.

### **Educational Competitions**

Beginning of Day 2 of Ijtimā' 1000—which means proceedings will kick off with the educational competitions. It was an auspicious day, as the excitement surrounding how many attendees had come for this Ijtimā' was perceptible in the air. And talking about the 'air', the morning was cool and crisp with a light drizzle of heavenly rain to welcome the day's competitions. However, the weather was to cause the first commotion of the day; due to the chill/drizzle, the organizers had decided to move the educational competitions into the mosque as opposed to holding in the large and beautifully arranged marquee. Names of competitors for the Recitation of the Holy Qur'ān competition—which was starting at 9 A.M. sharp—were being called out in the mosque, and responses of 'forfeit, forfeit' rang out from the judge as would-be competitors were being rounded up and sent to the mosque! Finally, with adrenaline pumping, 11 out of 12 competitors had been found and the Recitation of the Holy Qur'ān competition was off and running!

This year, the competitors were given a randomly selected verse from a set of verses to recite from, and thereby, truly judging who had mastered the right elements of pronunciation along with melody. After the competitors had finished, Qā'id Ta'līmul Qur'ān, Fazal Ahmed Syed, highlighted that it is tough to correct errors at this age, and so we all have to make more conscious effort and increase our frequency of practice. He also pointed out a few of the common errors that had been made, for the benefit of the audience. The results of the competition were then announced.

Next up was the nerve wracking Impromptu Speech competition. A little twist to this year's competition was that the randomly assigned topics were from the 2014 Anşār syllabus, and as such, competitors were only allowed to use the Anşār handbook in order to prepare in their allotted 3 minutes. The judge reminded competitors that there would be penalties for anyone exceeding the three-minute limit, and advised that if they did not know passages from the Holy Qur'ān correctly, not to try and recite them. This year, the regional competitors all looked in fine form, and there was nary an individual that showed any nervousness getting up to the podium in front of so many attendees. Amazingly, this year—and a sign of the great enthusiasm at this year's Ijtimā'—we had a number of members who had not qualified at their regional Ijtimā', however, felt they should have, asked for special permission to also participate in the Impromptu Speech competition even though they would not be considered for ranking. This incident would be a first for a competition that many try to avoid!

Finally, we moved on to the General Knowledge competition. This year, with so many attendees, the organizers decided that each region would have two teams compete. Then, in order to whittle down the large number of teams, there were two knock out rounds introduced. Also, with so many participants, the organizers moved away from the approach used in the last few years of answering through a web-based site to old-fashioned pencil and paper, and the honor system for assessing the correct number of answers. There was great excitement to the event, and it would be no fun if, invariably, there was not much dispute and controversy on a couple of answers! However, the judge kept a firm handle on the situation, and took the controversies in his stride!

This year's competition really had an extra special buzz and excitement in keeping with the energy of the overall Ijtimā' 1000!

### **Sports Competitions**

Many sports competitions including Darts, Horse Shoe Toss, Table Tennis, and Volleyball were held during the Ijtimā'. The contestants enthusiastically participated in the various sports competitions and vied with fellow Anṣār brothers in a most congenial atmosphere. Cheering crowds provided much encouragement to individual and team participants.

Sports competitions were held on Saturday. Due to bad weather, the competitions were delayed; however, with the prayers of Anṣār brother, many of the sports competitions were held.

### **Interactive Workshops**

Many interactive workshops were especially held for non-Shūrā members parallel to the Shūrā sessions including the following.

- Planning Your Finances and Writing a Will
- How Do We Facilitate Marriages of Our Children?
- How to Talk to Our Children so They Will Listen?
- Changing Habits, Achieving Dreams—A Personal Development

An interactive Health Talk session was also held by Qā'id Health, Dr. Lutufur Rehman, where Anṣār benefited from the information presented to them and asked many health related questions.

### **Becoming Men of God—Interactive Session**

In the Sunday morning session, a presentation by Imām Naseem Mahdi, Nā'ib Amīr and Missionary in charge, was made on the topic of How YOU can become a Man of God. It was followed by an interactive program on What does it “really” take to be Men of God? that was facilitated by Imran Hayee, Nā'ib Ṣadr Ṣaff Dom. Following is a gist of the session.

Imām Naseem Mahdi started his presentation by explaining the fact that even though all companions of the Promised Messiah (may peace be on him) have passed away and are no longer with us as role models, we have been given the glad tidings by the Promised Messiah and Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) that Khilāfat will remain with us forever for our guidance. He recited verse 256 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah where Allāh Almighty has promised that He is the friend of all believers. He said that this very fact provided all of us an encouragement and assurance that if we do good deeds and sincerely repent from our sins and shortcomings, we can become men of God. The door of salvation is always open as Allāh is pleased with His servants who repent and adopt the path of righteousness. He also explained the topic by quoting the “Verse of Khilāfat” from Sūrah Al-Nūr and an excerpt from the booklet Al-Waṣīyyat.

Imām Naseem Mahdi then presented various faith inspiring incidents from the noble lives of the companions of Promised Messiah including Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ghulām Rasūl Rājaykī and Hazrat Maulānā Sher 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with them). He also narrated incidents from the life of Maulānā Muḥammad Aḥmad Jaleel who was not a companion of the Promised Messiah, to make the point that Allāh Almighty continues to bless the Jamā'at with Men of God who are like those companions of Promised Messiah in the early days. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing the need to listen to Friday sermons of Khalīfatul Masiḥ as they are essential for the moral training of the Jamā'at members and also by developing a true relationship with Allāh the Almighty.

Imran Hayee, Nā'ib Ṣadr Ṣaff Dom, continued the interactive discussion based on the topic of becoming Men of God. He started by reciting and translating verses 3 through 6 of Chapter 23 (Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn) of the Holy Qur'ān where Allāh Almighty describes the characteristics of true believers. He provided a context for the discussion by listing potential hurdles that come in the way of believers such as our egos, our prides, our love of worldly things, our fears, etc. Then he opened an interactive discussion with the audience. The discussion was based on real life scenarios such as how to avoid addictions, how to overcome the fear of losing job, how to control anger and frustration, how to address our personal egos, and our honor becomes our god, etc. Many Anṣār members from the audience actively participated in this

scenario-based interactive discussion by expressing their experiences and opinions to address these pitfalls. Nā'ib Şadr Şaff Dom closed this session by quoting relevant excerpts from the Holy Qur'ān and Malfūzāt.

### **Concluding Session**

The concluding session of the Ijtimā' was presided by respected Amīr Jamā'at USA, Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar. The session started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān followed by an Urdu poem. Prizes were distributed among the performing Majālis and Anşār.

In his closing address, Şadr Majlis Anşārullāh, USA, Faheem Younus Qureshi, highlighted the progress of Majlis Anşārullāh made over the year and how so much was achieved just by the hard work of Anşār and their belief in Allāh. After highlighting the yearly progress, he talked about how Almighty Allāh helped the Majlis achieve the 1,000 attendance target at the Ijtimā'. It was only Allāh's help and hard work of workers who tirelessly worked to make this happen. Şadr Majlis closed by urging members to shun all forms of ego and bring about the pious transformations that Khalīfatul Masīh expects from us. He then requested respected Amīr to make the closing remarks and lead the members in silent prayer.

In his concluding address, respected Amīr Jamā'at, USA, Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, opened up with "Verse of Khilāfat" from Sūrah Al-Nūr and talked about the attributes of those people who deserve Khilāfat. He emphasized how Aḥmadīs are recipients of the blessings of Khilāfat and what we should do to be thankful to Allāh for that. He emphasized the need of enhancing our good deeds so that we can continue to be blessed with the gift of Khilāfat in the generations to come. Finally, he congratulated Anşār on achieving the attendance target of 1,000 Anşār at Ijtimā' and advised them that they should continue to inspire their children with their efforts and prayers. He then led the members in silent prayer before ending the closing session.

A survey was conducted on the final day of the Ijtimā'.

A postcard invite was mailed to every Nāşir of the Majlis 100 days prior to the Ijtimā'.

### **Acknowledgement**

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