

The National Amīr/ President
Jamā‘at Aḥmadiyya,

Dear Brother,

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

Summary of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V (May Allāh be his Helper) on 18th October 2024 at Mubārak Mosque Islāmabād, Tilford, UK

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: Tomorrow, the UK Jamā‘at will host an event to commemorate the centenary of the Faḍl Mosque, to which non-Aḥmadi guests, neighbours, and others have also been invited. The Faḍl Mosque holds significant historical importance as it was the first mosque of the Aḥmadiyya Jamā‘at built in the heart of the Christian world. It was from here that the true teachings of Islām began to spread widely. Our opponents today claim that the Aḥmadiyya Jamā‘at was a creation of the British, but how is it then that, through this very Jamā‘at, the moral and spiritual failings of people living in the West are being exposed in their own lands, while the beauty of Islām is being propagated.

Before the Faḍl Mosque was built, a mosque had been established in Woking by the renowned orientalist G.W. Leitner. He had retired as the principal of Oriental College in Lahore and returned to England, where he built the Woking Mosque in 1889. Coincidentally, this was the same year in which the Aḥmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at was founded. Leitner passed away that same year, and with his demise, the mosque was closed as there was no one to oversee it. Later, during the time of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I (May Allāh be pleased with him), Khwaja Kamāluddīn Ṣāḥib came to Woking and made efforts to reopen the mosque, which proved successful. He wrote to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I (May Allāh be pleased with him) and informed him that a trust had now been established for the mosque and that he had been appointed its supervisor. Subsequently, worship resumed at the mosque. When it reopened, Chaudhry Zafrullah Khan Ṣāḥib and Khwaja Kamāluddīn Ṣāḥib came to the mosque and offered supplications there.

Soon after, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) made an appeal for missionaries to be sent abroad. Despite financial constraints, Ḥaḍrat Chaudhry Fateḥ Muḥammad Siāl Ṣāḥib was sent to London, where he worked alongside Khwaja Kamāluddīn Ṣāḥib. After the demise of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I (May Allāh be pleased with him), Khwaja Kamāluddīn Ṣāḥib did not pledge Bai‘at to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II (May Allāh be pleased with him), therefore, Ḥaḍrat Chaudhry Fateḥ Muḥammad Siāl Ṣāḥib parted ways with him and moved elsewhere. This is the history of the Woking Mosque.

However, the Faḍl Mosque has the distinction of being the first mosque built by an organised Muslim Jamā‘at. Today, there are many mosques across England and the West, but the Faḍl Mosque retains its unique status as the first mosque in London. A key feature of the Aḥmadiyya Jamā‘at is that its mosques are constructed through the donations and sacrifices of its members. Dozens of Jamā‘at mosques have now been built across the UK.

I would like to share a few words about the Faḍl Mosque. The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) made numerous statements regarding the spread of Islām in the West. On one occasion, the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) said that the prophecy about the rising of the sun from the West symbolises the spiritual awakening of Western nations—which have long been steeped in darkness, disbelief, and ignorance—through the light of truth. The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) said that, in a vision, he saw himself standing on a pulpit in London and making an address in fluent English. He then caught many white birds that were perched on small trees. The Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him) interpreted this vision to mean that while he would not be present there himself, his writings would spread among the people of the West, and many righteous individuals would accept the truth.

Ḥaḍrat Chaudhry Fateḥ Muḥammad Siāl Ṣāḥib was the first formal missionary in the UK, and Allāh blessed him with the honour of converting the first British person to Aḥmadiyyat, followed by a dozen more. Ḥaḍrat Qazi ‘Abdullah Ṣāḥib, who was a Ṣahābī of the Promised Messiah (Peace be upon him), served in England during the First World War. During his tenure, a rented house was acquired for the mission.

From 1917 to January 1920, Ḥaḍrat Muftī Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ṣāḥib (May Allāh be pleased with him) also served as a missionary in the UK. In 1919, Ḥaḍrat Chaudhry Fateḥ Muḥammad Siāl Ṣāḥib returned as a missionary, accompanied by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdul Raḥīm Nayyar Ṣāḥib, and they worked tirelessly in the service of Islām. In 1920, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) instructed Ḥaḍrat Chaudhry Fateḥ Muḥammad Siāl Ṣāḥib to purchase land in England for the construction of a mosque. Accordingly, a plot was purchased in the Putney area for over £2,200. When Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) received the news, he was in Dalhousie at the time. He held a large ceremony and named the mosque ‘Faḍl Mosque’. A fundraising campaign was then launched for its construction.

In 1924, when Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdul Raḥīm Nayyar Ṣāḥib was invited to present Islām’s teachings at an interfaith conference in Wembley, he informed Qādiān about it. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) accepted the invitation and authored a book titled ‘Aḥmadiyyat, the True Islām’, which highlighted Islām’s virtues. It was then decided that Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) would attend the conference in person. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) arrived in England on 22 August 1924, travelling via Damascus, Egypt, Italy, Switzerland, and France. He stood before St. Paul's Cathedral and prayed for the triumph of Islām before entering London. His visit attracted considerable attention in the press.

The first step in constructing the mosque was to raise funds. This was facilitated in the post-war period when the value of the pound sterling had begun to decline. In response to Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd’s appeal, 30,000 rupees were initially collected, followed by appeal of 100,000 rupees. The amount started to be collected, and through the Bank of India, it was sent to England in the amount of 3468 pounds. You can compare your conditions today with the circumstances of that time; that amount totalled 52000 rupees.

On Sunday, 19 October 1924, the foundation stone of the mosque was laid. Invitations were sent to various dignitaries, including members of parliament, leaders, politicians, and diplomats. Despite the short notice, a large number of guests attended the event. Representatives from various countries were also present, and the event was a great success.

The foundation stone ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Qur’ān by Ḥāfiẓ Roshan ‘Ali Ṣāḥib, followed by an address by Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him).

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ Mau‘ūd (May Allāh be pleased with him) said that the teachings of the Holy Qur’ān and the practice of the Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s blessings be upon him) establish that the doors of mosques are open to anyone wishing to worship God and that mosques serve as a unifying point for people of different faiths. He declared, "Before I lay the foundation stone of this mosque, I wish to affirm that a mosque is built solely for the worship of Allāh."

Two years after the foundation stone was laid, the mosque was inaugurated. Although Prince Faiṣal had been instructed by his father to do the inauguration, opposition from some Muslims led the king to retract this decision. Ultimately, Sheikh ‘Abdul Qādir Ṣāḥib inaugurated the mosque. He said that while he was not an Aḥmadi, we must, in the service of Islām, transcend sectarian differences and support one another. His courage and open-heartedness are indeed commendable, and may Allāh reward him for it. This is a brief history of the Faḍl Mosque, whose purpose was to spread Islām in the West.

Today, we are marking the completion of one hundred years, but this is not merely a worldly celebration. The Faḍl Mosque is a place where people gather to worship Allāh and fulfil the rights of one another. It is also a place where they strive for spiritual reform and moral betterment. On this occasion,

we must make every effort to fulfil our duty to worship Allāh, obey His commandments, and uphold the rights of His creation. Only by doing so can we make this world a haven of peace and security. May Allāh enable us to do so. Āmīn

Wassalām,

Abdul Majid Tahir
Additional Wakīlut Tabshīr
ISLĀMABAD (UK)
Dated: 23 October 2024