

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ

THE SYSTEM OF
MUSHĀWARAT
IN
JAMĀ‘AT-E-AHMADIYYA

ISLAM INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

جماعت احمدیہ کا مشاورتی نظام

The System of Mushāwarat in Jamā‘at-e-Aḥmadiyya

English rendering of *Jamā‘at-e- Aḥmadiyya kā Mushāwaratī Nizām*
(Urdu—Unpublished)

© Islam International Publications Ltd

Published in UK in 2007

Published by:

Islam International Publications Ltd
Islamabad
Sheephatch Lane
Tilford, Surrey
United Kingdom GU10 2AQ

Printed in UK at:

Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

ISBN: 1 85372 968 X

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PREFACE

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, in his Friday sermon on 31st March, 1995, (while Majlis-e-Shūrā was in session in Rabwah), said:

“The Jamā‘at should publish an introductory book about the system of Mushāwarat that is currently established in the Jamā‘at...I assign to Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya the task of publishing this book. Thereafter Tehrīk Jadīd will get it translated and publicize it around the world.”

Accordingly, Muhammad Aslam Shād Mangla Sahib was assigned this task by Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. He, along with Yūsuf Salīm Sahib and Rafīq Ahmad Jāved Sahib, did the hard and crucial work of collecting the required material and putting it into two covers.

Upon instructions from Chaudhry Ḥamīdullāh Sahib, Wakīl A‘lā, Tehrīk Jadīd, Rabwah, the task of translating the book into English was assigned to Wakālat Taṣnīf, Rabwah.

The initial groundwork for the translation was done by the late Miān Muhammad Afḍal Sahib. May Allah reward him for his labour of love and grant him a lofty station in heaven. The translation was then revised and finalised at Wakālat Taṣnīf by:

- Raja Ata-ul-Mannan
- Syed Tanwir Mujtaba
- Tahir Mahmood Mubashar
- Kashif Imran Khalid

We are grateful to Maulāna Munīruddīn Shams Sahib, Additional Wakīlul Taṣnīf, London, for his assistance and valuable suggestions in the course of this translation. We are also grate-

ful to the following who helped us to review the translation in its various stages. May Allah reward them abundantly.

- Pir Dabir Ahmad
- Nadeem Ahmad (Advocate)
- Professor Abdul Jalil Sadiq
- Professor Chaudhry Munir Ahmad
- Shafiq-ur-Rahman

We have tried to remain faithful to the Urdu text as far as possible. The text, for the most part, consists of extracts from speeches and sermons delivered by the Khulafā over the years. Some speeches by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth which are in English have been taken verbatim from the Urdu text. At some places where the words did not seem to make sense, we went back to the original tapes and made necessary corrections.

Please note that the name of Muhammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol ^{sa}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *Ṣallallāhu ‘Alaihi Wasallam* (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The names of other Prophets and Messengers are followed by the symbol ^{as}, an abbreviation for *‘Alaihissalām* (on whom be peace). The actual salutations have not generally been set out in full, but they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case. The symbol ^{ra} is used with the name of the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and those of the Promised Messiah^{as}. It stands for *Raḍī Allāhu ‘anhu/‘anha/‘anhum* (may Allah be pleased with him/with her/with them). th stands for *Raḥimahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (may Allah have mercy on him). ^{at} stands for *Ayyadahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (may Allah, the Mighty help him).

In transliterating Arabic words we have followed the following system adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society.

ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a*, *i*, *u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word 'honour'.

ث *th*, pronounced like *th* in the English word 'thing'.

ح *h*, a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.

خ *kh*, pronounced like the Scotch *ch* in 'loch'.

ذ *dh*, pronounced like the English *th* in 'that'.

ص *s*, strongly articulated *s*.

ض *d*, similar to the English *th* in 'this'.

ط *t*, strongly articulated palatal *t*.

ظ *z*, strongly articulated *z*.

ع ' , a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.

غ *gh*, a sound approached very nearly in the *r* 'grasseye' in French, and in the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the 'gargling' position whilst pronouncing it.

ق *q*, a deep guttural *k* sound.

ئ ' , a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by:

a for — (like *u* in 'bud');

i for — (like *i* in 'bid');

u for — (like *oo* in 'wood');

Long vowels by:

ā for — or َ (like *a* in 'father');

ī for ِ — or — (like *ee* in 'deep');

ū for ُ — (like *oo* in 'root');

Other:

ai for ی — (like *i* in 'site')[♦];

au for و — (resembling *ou* in 'sound').

Please note that in transliterated words the letter 'e' is to be pronounced as in 'prey' which rhymes with 'day'; however the pronunciation is flat without the element of English diphthong. If in Urdu and Persian words 'e' is lengthened a bit more it is transliterated as 'ei' to be pronounced as 'ei' in 'feign' without the element of diphthong thus 'کے' is transliterated as 'Kei'. For the nasal sound of 'n' we have used the symbol 'ñ'. Thus Urdu word 'میں' is transliterated as 'meiñ'.^{*}

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe.

We have not transliterated Arabic words which have become part of English language, e.g., Islam, Mahdi, Quran, Hijrah, Ramadan, Hadith, ulema, umma, sunna, kafir, pukka etc.

Chaudhry Muhammad 'Alī
Wakīlūt Taṣnīf
Tehrik Jadīd
Rabwah
03 June 2007

[♦] In Arabic words like شيخ (Shaikh) there is an element of diphthong which is missing when the word is pronounced in Urdu.

^{*} These transliterations are not included in the system of transliteration by Royal Asiatic Society. [Publisher]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نُحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ وَعَلَى عِبْدِهِ الْمَسِيحِ الْمَوْعُودِ

Chapter I

MUSHĀWARAT DURING THE TIME OF THE HOLY PROPHET^{sa}

The arrival of the Holy Prophet^{sa} at Medina marked the advent of a new era in the communal life of the Muslims. At Medina the Holy Prophet^{sa} laid the foundation of a regular government and strengthened it by signing a social pact with the Jewish tribes living in Medina. Thus he not only ensured peace for its inhabitants but also paved the way for social and political ties between Muslims and Jews.

Consultations with the Companions formed an integral part of the system laid down by the Holy Prophet^{sa} for running the affairs of the Islamic state. Under Divine command, he would consult his Companions in all political, social, economic and military matters. Having consulted them, he would at times accept their advice and at times reject it, in keeping with the Divine command:

فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

“When thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah.”

[Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:160]

In short, the Holy Prophet^{sa} always tried to accommodate the opinions of his Companions in every communal mat-

ter. He would sometimes consult all of them, and at times he would consult only a few selected Companions who could provide wiser counsel upon the matter at hand.

FIRST MEETING OF ISLAMIC MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

Many of the consultations made during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were related to military matters. The first such instance is the Battle of Badr which came as a complete surprise. The Muslims had come out of Medina unprepared and ill-equipped, since they had intended only to stop a trade caravan of the disbelievers. But when the Holy Prophet^{sa} got news of the approach of a whole army, he called a halt and summoned the Companions for consultation. This is how Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad Sahib^{ra} has described this episode:

Having summoned the Companions, the Holy Prophet^{sa} asked their suggestions as to which course of action should be adopted. Some said that, considering the circumstances, it was better to go for the caravan, for they were not prepared to face the full army. But this idea did not appeal to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Upon this some eminent Companions started making speeches vowing to sacrifice their lives and offering everything they possessed in the way of God. Miqdād bin Aswad^{ra}, alias Miqdād bin 'Amr said: "O Prophet of Allah, we are not like the Companions of Moses^{as}, who said, 'Go you and your God and fight, here we sit'. We are ready to go with you wherever you may lead us. We shall fight on your right and on your left, and in front of you and behind you." Hearing this, the Holy Prophet's^{sa} face became radiant with delight, but he still awaited some response from the Ansār,

for, under the Covenant of 'Uqba, they were only obliged to defend Medina if it was attacked. Despite all the impassioned speeches, the Holy Prophet^{sa} kept asking for more advice. Sa'd bin Mu'ādh^{ra}, the Chief of Aus Tribe, realized what the Holy Prophet^{sa} sought, so he stood up to speak on behalf of the Ansār, and said: "O Prophet of Allah, I suppose it is our opinion that you await. God is our witness that, having accepted you as truthful and taken you for our guide, we shall go with you wherever you may lead us. We call Allah to witness, Who has sent you with the truth, that if you order us to jump into the sea, not a single one of us will hesitate to do so. You shall, God willing, find us steadfast in battle, and you shall see in us that which shall please you."

[Sīrat Khātām-un-Nabiyyīn, pp. 354-355]

This, in short, was the first meeting which the Holy Prophet^{sa} called to consult his Companions. The devotion and spirit of sacrifice with which the Companions gave their advice, remains unparalleled in the history of the world.

MUSHĀWARAT ABOUT THE CAPTIVES OF BADR

After his successful return from the Battle of Badr, it was again through consultation that the Holy Prophet^{sa} reached a decision about the prisoners of war. It was the Arab custom to slay their prisoners of war or to enslave them for life, but the Holy Prophet^{sa} was strongly averse to either practice. Since he had not yet received any Divine revelation in this connection, he decided to put the matter before his Companions. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} was the first to respond:

“O Prophet of Allah, these prisoners are our cousins and our kith and kin. I propose that we free them in exchange for ransom. The money we thus receive will strengthen us against the disbelievers. It is even likely that Allah may grant these people guidance and they may become our helpers.”

[Musnad Ahmad bin Ḥanbal, vol. 1, pp. 30,31, published in Beirut]

Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} disagreed and took the position that kinship should not be a consideration in matters of faith. He said:

“O Prophet of Allah, these people are the enemies of God and they have rejected you. They are the ones who expelled you from Mecca and came out with a huge army and brought every calamity upon the Muslims. They are the pillars of infidelity and symbols of misguidance. The progress of Islam lies in destroying them. O Prophet of Allah, do not hesitate to slay them. I would even have the Muslims slay their own relatives with their own hands.”

The Holy Prophet^{sa} listened to Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar’s^{ra} speech but remained silent. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} stood up once more and spoke further about the importance of kinship, mercy and forgiveness, and expressed his hope that these people might accept Islam. But Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} was against giving the prisoners any concession. When the two had expressed their opinions, the Holy Prophet^{sa} retired to his tent for a while. When he came out, the Companions were all eager to hear his decision, for some of them agreed with Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and others concurred with the opinion of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra}. But the

Holy Prophet^{sa} once more asked for advice, and again the Companions came up with same two views.

[Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 31, published in Beirut; Hayāt-e-Muhammad, by Muhammad Hussain Haikal, Urdu translation, p. 330]

Because of his natural propensity to kindness and compassion, the Holy Prophet^{sa} accepted the advice of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and rejected the idea of slaying the prisoners. He decided that the prisoners who could pay for their release should be set free. This decision was later endorsed by Divine revelation. (Sūrah Muhammad, 57:5)

AN IMPORTANT MEETING OF SHŪRĀ

Having suffered a humiliating defeat, and having lost many of their chiefs and noblemen at the Battle of Badr, the Meccans were in a great rage, and their hearts were burning with the fire of revenge. They started preparing for a new onslaught, and, in the third year of Hijrah, their army was ready to move. When the news reached the Holy Prophet^{sa} at Medina, he summoned an open meeting for the purpose of consultation, in which all the Companions were present. In view of the superior numbers of the Meccans and their greater skill in warfare, the Holy Prophet^{sa} considered it advisable to adopt a defensive strategy and to fight the enemy from within Medina.

It is recorded on page 43 of *Sīrat Ibn-e-Hishām*, vol. 2, that the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not consider it expedient to move out of Medina to meet the Quraish at their camping ground. Some of the eminent Companions agreed with the Holy Prophet^{sa}, but he still called the

Majlis-e-Mushāwarat and sought advice from all the Companions. He wanted to have a consensus in dealing with the enemy.

The majority of the participants were of the opinion that the battle should be fought in the open outside Medina. These included not only passionate young men but also some of the wiser and more experienced Companions. Most of the young men were those who had missed the Battle of Badr and were now eager to prove their gallantry and valour. The spirits of the Companions had been greatly raised after the victory at Badr, and they thought that the enemy would consider them weak and cowardly if they fought from within fortifications. Among these zealous Companions was Ḥaḍrat Ḥamza^{ra}, the Holy Prophet's^{sa} uncle, who had shown great skill with the sword at the Battle of Badr. The excitement of some young men had risen to such a pitch that one of them passionately proclaimed, "We cannot allow the disbelievers to go back to Mecca and boast that the Muslims hid behind the battlements of Yathrib for fear of us."

When the Holy Prophet^{sa} saw such zeal and fervour on the part of the Companions, he accepted the majority opinion and decided to meet the enemy outside Medina.

It was Friday. After the prayers, the Holy Prophet^{sa} urged the Muslims to take part in the battle. He then went into his house and, with the help of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}, put on his headgear, his ar-

mour and his sword. While the Holy Prophet^{sa} was in the house, the Companions outside were still discussing the two strategies for battle: whether to make fortifications or to fight outside in the open. Some of the wiser Companions said that the people should not have insisted on fighting outside Medina. Therefore, when the Holy Prophet^{sa} emerged, they came forward and requested him to reconsider the decision. "We never intended to oppose your judgement, O Prophet of Allah," they said humbly. "Whether you decide to fight from within fortifications or order us to fight in the open, we can never disobey you. We are wholly at your command." But the Holy Prophet^{sa} declined to revise his decision and said: "I apprised you of my opinion but you disagreed. It is against the majesty of a Prophet of God to remove his armour once he has put it on for battle."

[Sīrat Ibn-e-Hishām, vol. II, p. 44; Sīrat Khātam-un-Nabīyyīn, pp. 485-86; Hayāt-e-Muhammad, pp. 356-359; Al-Raḥīq-ul-Makhtūm, pp. 393-394]

This crucial Majlis-e-Shūrā was held before the Battle of Uhud. Here is one of the verses of the Holy Quran revealed in this connection:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ
كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا
مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ
لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ
فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"And it is by the *great* mercy of Allah that thou art kind towards them, and if thou hadst been rough and hard-

hearted, they would surely have dispersed from around thee. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them in matters of importance; and when thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah. Surely, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him.”

[Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:160]

In this context, Imam Bukhārīth has said the following in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitābūl I’tisām bil Kitāb wa Sunnah*:

Consultation is held before a matter has been resolved or clarified. But, in compliance with the injunction *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ* [When thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah], once the Holy Prophet^{sa} had decided upon something, no one was allowed to bypass the decision of Allah and His Messenger. The Holy Prophet^{sa} consulted his Companions before the Battle of Uḥud as to whether they should fight the enemy from within Medina or outside. The Companions were for engaging the enemy outside, but when the Holy Prophet^{sa} had taken up his arms, and had decided to march out of the city, the Companions changed their minds and advised otherwise. The Holy Prophet^{sa} paid no heed to this belated advice. He said, “Unless God so ordains, it does not behove a Prophet, having once taken up his arms, to put them down again.”

The following is a summary of the commentary on this verse, as told by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth in his *Dars-ul-Quran*:

The Battle of Uḥud began with consultations with the Companions. Their proposal was accepted and the Muslims suffered as a result. But Allah said to the Holy

Prophet^{sa}: You accepted the advice of your Companions being too kind and considerate; But, henceforth, We command you: *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* “Consult them in matters of importance”, *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ* “When thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah.” The final decision shall lie with you, and once you have made your decision, you shall put your trust in Allah and not in the people. They shall be of no avail to you, only Allah shall be your help. He shall support you in whatever decision you take for His sake.

A SUGGESTION TO ADOPT FOREIGN WARFARE TACTICS

The animosity of the disbelievers of Mecca had reached its climax after the battles of Badr and Uḥad. They urged all Arab tribes to unite against the Muslims, and, mustering up all their strength, formed a formidable army and resolved to attack Medina. When the news of these preparations reached Medina, the Holy Prophet^{sa} asked his Companions' advice as to how this threat should be dealt with. Of those who participated in these deliberations was an eminent Persian Companion, Ḥaḍrat Salmān Fārsī^{ra}. Being conversant with foreign warfare, his idea was to solidify the defences of Medina by digging a deep trench around areas which were more vulnerable. The concept of digging trenches was completely foreign to the Arabs, but the Holy Prophet^{sa} accepted the idea and ordered the trenches to be dug.

[Strat Khātām-un-Nabiyyīn, pp. 574-575]

The strategy of digging a trench proved very effective

during the Battle of Aḥzāb. When the siege of Medina had dragged too long, Banū Ghaṭfān, one of the Meccans' allies, became restless. They sent one of their chiefs, Ḥārith Ghaṭfānī, as an emissary to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and offered that if they were given half the produce of Medina as ransom, they would break ranks with the Meccans.

It should be remembered that Banū Ghaṭfān were an extremely greedy and selfish tribe. They would join any group that could bribe them to their satisfaction. In the Battle of Aḥzāb, the Jews had secured their support by promising them half the income from Khyber. Hence, when the Holy Prophet^{sa} took up their proposal with Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'ādh^{ra}, they said, "O Prophet of Allah, if this is a Divine decree, then we dare not disagree. But if it is our advice you seek, then we humbly submit that in the past no one has ever dared to extract ransom from the people of Medina. How then can we accept such degrading terms after Islam has dignified us? We would rather die fighting than accept such conditions." Thereafter, the Holy Prophet^{sa} ceased all negotiations with the Banū Ghaṭfān.

[Sīrat Ibn-e-Hishām, vol.II, p. 257; Ḥayāt-e-Muhammad, by Muhammad Ḥussain Haikal, pp. 419-420]

ANOTHER INSTANCE OF CONSULTATION BY THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA}

Another example of consultation by the Holy Prophet^{sa} is found in relation to the Battle of Ḥunayn. The victory of Mecca was an occasion of great delight for the

Muslims. Their hearts were full of joy and their tongues were filled with the praise of Allah. But, at that very time, the other two famous tribes of the non-believers Banū Hawāzin and Banū Thaqīf of Ṭā'if were preparing to take revenge upon the Muslims. They had decided that before the Muslims could launch another attack, they would themselves attack the Muslims and destroy them. They quickly mobilized a formidable army, headed by a head-strong and youthful chief from Banū Hawāzin, by the name of Mālik bin 'Auf. The peculiar strategy they adopted was to take their cattle and families along with them, so that, instead of taking to their heels, the fighters should fight to their last, defending their children. They also carried with them on a *howdah* an aged person who, in his prime, had been a genius in the art of warfare, so that they could benefit from his knowledge and experience. But when this old man listened to the grunting of the camels, the bleating of the goats and the crying and shouting of women and children, he asked what it was all about. When the facts were revealed to him, he advised Mālik bin 'Auf not to make the mistake of taking all the cattle and children with him, for it would amount to their slaughter. "Lodge them at some safe place," he said, "and they can join you if you are victorious. But if you take them with you and are defeated, you shall suffer great humiliation because of them."

[Sīrat Ibn-e-Hishām, vol. II, pp. 523-524; Shān-e-Muhammad by Miān 'Ābid Ahmad, pp. 469-470]

But the haughty Mālik bin 'Auf, who was driven by a wild desire to be the supreme ruler of Arabia, paid no heed to the advice of the wise man. Consequently, he was met with a crushing defeat and hid himself in the fortresses of Banū Thaḳīf in the valley of Ṭā'if, who were his allies. But he left behind a huge fortune of 40,000 silver coins, 2,200 camels, more than 40,000 goats and 6,000 men, women and children.

[Ḥayāt-e-Muhammad, p. 540]

The Holy Prophet^{sa} ordered the spoils of war to be collected, while he himself set out in pursuit of Mālik bin 'Auf. Any laxity towards him could be dangerous since he was seeking sanctuary in the valley of Ṭā'if. When the Holy Prophet^{sa} reached Ṭā'if, he ordered a halt in order to consult his Companions. While the consultation was going on, the enemy was preparing an ambush. The Banū Thaḳīf scaled the walls of the fort and sent down a hail of arrows on the Muslims, martyring a number of them. The Holy Prophet^{sa} instantly moved his men to another location and continued the consultation. The point under consideration was whether the same sort of siege should be laid on the Banū Thaḳīf, to force them to surrender, as had been laid on the Jews at Khayber. Even if they came out to fight in these circumstances, it would be easier to overpower them. Another option considered in this meeting was to shower stones on the fort using catapults. It was Ḥaḍrat Salmān Fārsī^{ra} who proposed this war strategy which was alien to the Arabs. But even

that did not succeed in breaking the enemy defences. The Holy Prophet^{sa} was also advised to destroy the vineyards of the Banū Thaḳīf so that they could easily be subjugated, but the Holy Prophet^{sa} rejected this proposal, although it was used as a threat. While the Companions were offering all sorts of suggestions to overcome the enemy, some men who had deserted the Banū Thaḳīf presented themselves before the Holy Prophet^{sa}. They informed him that the enemy had a large stockpile of food and it could last them for up to a year. The Holy Prophet^{sa} consulted Naufal bin Mu'āwīa Delī^{ra}, who said, "The fox has gone into its den. If you continue to exert pressure, you can catch it, but if you leave it where it is, it can do you no harm." The Holy Prophet^{sa} then decided to lift the siege and went back to the valley of Ḥunayn where people were waiting for him to distribute the spoils of war.

[Ḥayāt-e-Muhammad, pp. 543-544; Al-Raḥīq-ul-Makhtūm, pp. 664-667]

As soon as the Holy Prophet^{sa} had disposed of the spoils, some men, who had accepted Islam from among the tribe of Hawāzin, sought his audience. They humbly requested him to return to them their families and their property, for they had been encouraged by the kindness which the Holy Prophet^{sa} had shown towards Ḥaḍrat Shīma bint Ḥārith^{ra}. The Holy Prophet^{sa} said to them, "What do you love more, your families or your possessions?" They said: "O Prophet of Allah, there is nothing dearer to us than our wives and children." "All right,"

the Holy Prophet^{sa} said, "I will return to you your men, women and children who are in my or my family's possession. As for the prisoners who have fallen to the lot of other people, you should make a request for their release in front of everybody after Zuh'r prayer. I shall then see what I can do." After they had done as instructed:

The Holy Prophet^{sa} said, "Friends, I return my own share and that of Banū 'Abdul Muṭṭalib." Hearing this the Companions unanimously said:

مَا كَانَ لَنَا فَهُوَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

"Whatever we possess is not ours but belongs to the Prophet of Allah^{sa}."

Saying so, they too gladly returned the prisoners who had fallen to their lot.

[Hayāt-e-Muhammad, pp. 545-546]

MORE INSTANCES OF CONSULTATION BY THE HOLY PROPHET^{SA}

Before the advent of Islam, there was no proper system of governance in Medina. It was inhabited by different tribes and each followed its own laws. No attention was given to matters of administration, and all powers resided in the Chiefs. It was the Holy Prophet^{sa} who first introduced a regular civil and administrative structure in Medina, though he did not consider it expedient to interfere with the internal affairs of the tribes. Whenever the Holy Prophet^{sa} invited opinions on various matters, the Chief of the tribe was expected to give his opinion about it. It is evident from Hadith that some people were also consulted individually.

[Dā'ira-tul-Ma'ārif (Urdu), vol. 19, p. 45]

In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth says:

“When we study the blessed life of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, we find that the number of people he would invite for consultation varied from ten or fifteen to a thousand. History has preserved instances of the Holy Prophet's consultations in which no more than 10 or 15 people took part. On other occasions they would number more. Hence the Holy Prophet^{sa} has set the example for consulting from ten or fifteen to a thousand people.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1967, p. 65]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth further elaborated this point:

“This is not the time to go into the details of the incidents which relate to Mushāwarat at the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, but we find all kinds of them, e.g., sometimes he would consult with only a woman, sometimes with a few Companions and sometimes with the whole community. At the occasion of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, the Holy Prophet^{sa} consulted the whole community and rejected their unanimous opinion.”

[Friday Sermon, 29 March 1996]

“The Holy Prophet^{sa} used to consult everyone, great or small, in view of his ability to give counsel. Since not everyone is proficient at everything, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would at times summon only a particular person for consultation. But the system of Shūrā which is now established, with its constitution and democratic voting procedure, did not exist at that time. It has come into existence due to the increasing demands of time. In principle, however, the system of Shūrā remains the same as practiced by the Holy Prophet^{sa}.”

[Friday Sermon, 28 March 1997]

SAYING OF THE HOLY PROPHET^{sa}: "ADVISE ME, O PEOPLE"

It was the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} to consult the people whenever an expedition was being planned or some other important matter was to be decided. He would summon them and say: أَشِيرُوا عَلَيَّ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ "Advise me, O people."

[Sīrat Ibn-e-Hishām, vol. 1, trans. Maulāna Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, p. 708]

Sometimes, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would invite everybody for consultation, but as it was up to the individual whether or not give his or her opinion, there would be silence at first. Then Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} would stand up, put forward his opinion briefly, and sit down. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} would then follow suit. Sometimes other Companions would also join in with their suggestions and the matter would be decided unanimously. The agreed opinion of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} usually proved to be conclusive. It is recorded in Musnad Ahmad bin Ḥanbal (vol. 4, p. 227) that the Holy Prophet^{sa} once said to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}: "When the two of you agree upon something during consultation, I do not disregard your opinion."

A famous Hadith, relating to consultation in matters of state, is attributed to Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal^{ra}, and has been mentioned by Imam Baihaqī in chapter *Al-Ijtihād* of his book *Majma'-ul-Zawā'id wa Mamba'-ul-Fawā'id*. He says that when the Holy Prophet^{sa} decided to send him to Yemen, he consulted a number of Companions including Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}, 'Umar^{ra}, 'Uthmān^{ra}, 'Alī^{ra},

Ṭalḥa^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat Zubair^{ra} and Usaid bin Ḥuḍair^{ra}. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} said, "O Prophet of Allah, if you had not asked for our opinion, we would have remained silent." The Holy Prophet^{sa} said: "I feel the same when I give my opinion regarding something about which Divine revelation has not guided me." Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh^{ra} said that these words of the Holy Prophet^{sa} encouraged the Companions and some of them started offering their suggestions.

CONSULTATION ABOUT ADHĀN

During the early years of migration to Medina, there was no proper means for calling the faithful to prayer. The Companions would gather in the mosque for prayer when they thought it was time. After the construction of the Prophet's Mosque the question as to how Muslims should be summoned for prayer came into limelight. One of the Companions urged the use of a trumpet, like the one used by the Jews, while another suggested the bells used by the Christians. But Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} suggested that someone should be appointed to call people to prayer when it was time. The Holy Prophet^{sa} approved of this idea and assigned this duty to Ḥaḍrat Bilāl^{ra}.

[Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitāb-ul-Adhān]

CONSULTATIONS WITH WOMEN

In his general consultations, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would also invite women to give their opinions along with the men. One such occasion was the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. The Companions were so grieved as a result of the Treaty, that when the Holy Prophet^{sa} asked them to re-

move the *Ihrām* and sacrifice their animals, they did not respond, for they were all heartbroken with grief. Observing this, the Holy Prophet^{sa} quietly retired to his tent. Ummul Mu'minīn Ḥaḍrat Umm-e-Salamah^{ra}, who was with him at the time, said, "O Prophet of God, do not be anxious. By the grace of God, the Companions are not disobedient, it is only the conditions of the Treaty that have so grieved them. I would suggest that you do not say anything to them. Instead remove your *Ihrām* and sacrifice your animal, the Companions, I am sure, will follow you." The Holy Prophet^{sa} did as advised, and when the Companions saw this, they also quickly started sacrificing their animals and shaved their heads.

[Sīrat Khātām-un-Nabiyyīn, pp. 769-770]

THE TRUE NATURE OF SHŪRĀ

So far we have discussed Shūrā in the light of consultations that were held at the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. We shall now proceed to analyze some of its theoretical aspects. In the verse, *وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* [*Consult them in matters of importance*], the word *Amr* does not apply only to extraordinary matters, but also to matters of governance and administration. The purpose of holding Mushāwarat is to seek people's opinions on important matters which require thought and deliberation. The final decision, however, lies with the head or the leader, and this prerogative is at the basis of Islamic Mushāwarat. When the leader calls responsible and wise people for consultation, he reserves the right to accept or reject their opinions.

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth has elaborated on the nature of these consultations with reference to the above verse *وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* [And consult them in matters of importance]. Ḥuḍūr said that if the one who seeks counsel, accepts it blindly in all its aspects, he will not have acted according to the true intent of the words “Consult them”. Consultation means inviting the opinions of others but it does not mean that those opinions should be accepted as they are. Rather, these opinions should be put to the test of reason and the best part should be accepted.

Writing about the need for governments to seek people’s opinion, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad Sahib^{ra} has raised a very fine point. He says that the verse *وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ* “And their affairs are decided by mutual consultation”, is addressed only to those who have been chosen by the people to run the government. He writes:

“The Holy Quran lays down the following principle for those who are elected as rulers by their people:

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

(Al-Shūrā, 42:39)

[Those who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what We have provided for them.]

The believers are instructed to be truly obedient to God, to worship Him regularly, to decide the matters of state with mutual consultation, and to spend the wealth God has given them for the welfare of mankind. The duty of the ruler, as laid out in this verse, is that, having been

elected, he should not adopt unilateral and tyrannical methods. He should always remember that the government has been given to him as a trust, and he should keep in touch with public opinion and run the affairs of state with consultation. Even to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, God Almighty said,

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

(Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:160)

This means, consult them in matters of importance; and when thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah.

This instruction was not directed towards the Holy Prophet^{sa} alone but was meant for all his Successors and followers....In exceptional cases, however, Islam acknowledges the right of the Amīr to overrule the opinion of the majority if he deems it necessary to do so. But, at the same time, the Shariah makes it binding upon the Amīr not to resolve any important matter without consultation. Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra}, the second Khalifa of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, who is considered an authority in Islamic socio-politics, went so far as to say: لَا خِلَافَةَ إِلَّا بِالْمَشُورَةِ [There is no Khilāfat without consultation.] This means that no Islamic government can be considered legal unless it establishes the institution of Mushāwarat.”

[Sirat Khātam-un-Nabiyyīn, pp. 633-634]

THE STATUS OF MUSHĀWARAT IN THE SHARIAH

The verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadith quoted above throw light on the importance of Mushāwarat in all important matters, whether they are related to governance or otherwise. The practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} bears out that he always consulted his

Companions, and they too followed his holy example in this regard. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IVth says:

“The injunction to hold consultations, which has been made binding upon Muslims through the Holy Quran, is so clear and explicit that no instance of it can be found in any other Divine Scripture. It is one of the many distinguishing features of the Holy Quran. No religion can produce an example of the elaborate system of consultation and Shūrā which the Holy Quran has laid down for the Imam and for Muslims at large.”

[Friday Sermon, 31 March 1995, Al-Faql International, 12-18 May 1995, p. 8]

Reaching important decisions through consultation is a source of great worldly and spiritual benefit for Muslims. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sa} consulted his Companions so often that Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurayrah^{ra} had to remark:

مَا رَأَيْتُ أَكْثَرَ مَشُورَةٍ لِأَصْحَابِهِ مِنْ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

“I have not seen anyone consult his companions as often as the Holy Prophet^{sa}.” (*Sunan Tirmadhī, Abwāb Faḍail-ul-Jihād, Bāb mā Jā'a fil Mashwarah*).

Ḥaḍrat Imam Baihaqī has quoted a tradition from Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās^{ra}, that when the verse *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* [Consult them in matters of importance] was revealed, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: “Though Allah and His Prophet stand in no need of consulting other people, Allah has made consultation a source of blessing for my umma. Therefore, any Muslim who adopts the path of consultation shall not be deprived of true light and guidance. But

he who avoids it will not escape humiliation.”

[Shu'b-ul-Imān, vol. 6, pp. 76-77]

Imam Baihaqī has quoted another tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abdullah bin 'Umar^{ra} in the same book. The Holy Prophet^{sa} said: “When a person intends to undertake something and reaches a decision about it after consultation, Allah always helps him to make the right decision.”

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP OF SHŪRĀ

The following Hadith throws light on the criteria that should be adopted for choosing Shūrā members. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} reports that he once approached the Holy Prophet^{sa} and said: “O Prophet of Allah, when you are no longer among us and we face some difficulty with regard to which the Holy Quran is silent, and upon which your own holy example does not throw any light, what do you advise us to do?” The Holy Prophet^{sa} said that such problems should be solved in the following manner:

اجْمَعُوا لَهُ الْعَابِدِينَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي وَاجْعَلُوهُ
بَيْنَكُمْ شُورَى وَلَا تَقْضُوا بِرَأْيِ وَاحِدٍ

“Call together the virtuous scholars from among you and reach your decision with consultation. But never, in such cases, depend on the opinion of any one individual.”

[Kanz-ul-'Ummāl, vol. 2, p. 340; Durr-e-Mantbūr, vol. 6, p. 10;
A'lām-ul-Mūqe'īn by Ibn-e-Qayyim, vol. 1, p. 54]

This Hadith clarifies that consultation is necessary only in matters about which there is no clear and explicit injunction in the Holy Quran or Hadith. It, therefore, follows that in matters about which clear injunctions are

to be found in the Shariah, consultation is not only unnecessary but is outright forbidden.

Moreover, consultation should only be held with people who are known for their knowledge, religious insight and righteousness. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurayrah^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} once said: "Seek advice from a wise person; when he gives his advice and you reach a decision, do not go against it, or else you will face humiliation." These two Aḥādīth taken together bear out that the Holy Prophet^{sa} has declared it essential for members of the Shūrā to be wise, sound of judgement, virtuous and pious.

MUSHĀWARAT DURING KHILĀFAT-E-RĀSHIDA

The institution of Khilāfat came into existence after the demise of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, and the Khulafā continued with the system of Mushāwarat. In this context, the Promised Messiah^{as} says:

"The use of authority can be a very sensitive matter. For this reason, the Khulafā^{ra} whole-heartedly adopted the path of Shūrā, so that if a mistake was made, the responsibility would lie upon the whole community rather than on one person."

[The Promised Messiah's^{as} letter to Nawāb Muḥammad 'Alī Khan Sahib, Maktūbāt-e-Ahmadiyya, vol. 7, part 1, p. 52; Aṣḥāb-e-Aḥmad, vol. 2, p. 1096]

UNPARALLELED RESOLVE OF ḤAḌRAT ABŪ BAKR^{ra}

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq^{ra} was elected Islam's first Khalīfa after consultation among the Companions^{ra}. When he took up the responsibilities of Khilāfat, he

found Medina in turmoil. Some of the tribes had rebelled and others were refusing to pay Zakāt. In addition to these hazards, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} also had to dispatch an expedition under the command of Ḥaḍrat Usāma bin Zaid^{ra}, which the Holy Prophet^{sa} had ordered to be sent during his lifetime.

In these circumstances, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq^{ra} sought the advice of the Companions, including Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}. They were of the view that, owing to the great danger faced by the Muslims in Medina, it would be better to postpone the expedition. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}, however, refused to accept this. He said:

“I swear by Him in Whose hand is my life, that even if I am in danger of being carried away by the beasts of the jungle, I shall not stop Usāma's expedition, which the Holy Prophet^{sa} had himself ordered. I shall send this expedition even if I am the only living soul left in Medina.”

[Sīrat Ḥaḍrat 'Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq-e-Akbar by Muhammad Ḥussain Haikal (translated), p. 137]

When some Muslim tribes refused to pay Zakāt, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq^{ra} called a meeting of Shūrā and invited the eminent Companions for consultation. Their unanimous opinion was that, under the circumstances, these people should be dealt with leniently. Ḥaḍrat Imam Suyūṭīth has related this incident as follows:

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} advised the Khalifa not to go to war, but Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} said: “If people refuse to pay even a small sum, or decline to offer lambs, as they did in the days of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, by God I shall go to war to collect these dues.” Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} asked: How can you

go to war, when the Holy Prophet^{sa} has clearly said, “I am responsible for the life and property of anyone who proclaims لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ [There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger], and I shall give them their rights; as for the rest, they will be answerable before God.” Hearing this, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} said, “I shall certainly go to war against anyone who tries to separate Zakāt from Ṣalāt.”

[Tārīkh-ul-Khulafā, pp. 74-75]

The following extract by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IVth further clarifies this point:

“Khilāfat does not only submit to God, but also submits to the authority of its predecessors, so much so, that it loses itself in submission to them. This also shows—and this is what the Khulafā have also understood—that the verse (Āl-e-‘Imrān, 160) equally applies to anyone who becomes the leader of the Muslim umma after the Holy Prophet^{sa}, whether he is appointed directly by God—as the Promised Messiah^{as} was—or is otherwise elected. Whenever he makes a decision, he shall do so through consultation. But only he shall make the final decision, and he shall be helped by God in whatever he decides. He has to put his trust in God, only then shall he be able to make his decisions.”

[Friday Sermon, 31 March 1995, Al-Faḍl International 18-22 May 1995, p. 8]

Hence, during the Khilāfat of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq^{ra} the opinions of eminent Companions were sought in all matters of importance, but it was the Khalīfa who always made the final decision, and even the Companions who differed with him would submit to it. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr

Ṣiddīq^{ra} always presented matters of importance before eminent Companions and tried to reach a consensus. He always kept the wise and experienced Companions close to him. No institution of Shūrā was yet in place, as would be in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}, but Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} always invited eminent Muhājirīn and Ansār and sought their opinions in important matters.

FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

When Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} became the second Khalīfa, he continued to act in compliance with the Divine injunction *وَأْمُرْهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ* [And their affairs are decided by mutual consultation], and made arrangements for regular consultations in all matters relating to the Islamic state. He established an all-encompassing institution of Majlis-e-Shūrā which ensured the stability of the Islamic system of government, and showed what a truly great administrator and thinker he was. He would always decide important matters after due deliberation and proper consultation in Majlis-e-Shūrā, which comprised of prominent and exceptionally brilliant people.

The Holy Quran has laid down the basic principles for Mushāwarat, but it does not put forward any particular procedure as to how it should be held. It leaves it to the Muslims of every time and age to determine a system which suits their requirements and also conforms to the example set by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Whatever form Mushāwarat may take, the aim is to reach decisions with consultation, so that unity can be assured among the

umma. By establishing the institution of Mushāwarat on a broad basis, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} highlighted its universal significance. During his Khilāfat, matters relating to the state and to the umma were decided in Majlis-e-Shūrā after proper deliberation. He believed that consultation was an integral part of Khilāfat, and would say:

لَا خِلَافَةَ إِلَّا عَنْ مَشُورَةٍ

“There is no Khilāfat without consultation.”

[Ibn Abī Shaiba, vol. 3, p. 139, with reference to Kanz-ul-'Ummāl]

Majlis-e-Shūrā consisted of wise and experienced people elected by the Muhājirīn and Ansār. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} would encourage young people and would seek their opinions in most matters. On occasion, he would even consult with women. And if the matter under consideration had to do with non-Muslims, they too would be included in the consultations.

[Al-Fārūq by Shibli Naumānī, p. 191; Shahkār-e-Risālat by Pervaiz, pp. 272-273]

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} would give preference to the opinion of even an ordinary person, if it happened to be better than his own or that of some other important person. On one such occasion, he said that the amount of *Mehr* (dowry) given to women was increasing by the day and a limit should be set on it. Upon this, one of the ladies said: “Allah says, that even if you have given your wives heaps of money, do not take it back.” When Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} heard this, he said: “My sister is right, and 'Umar was wrong.”

[Al-Sunan-al-Kubrā, vol. 7, p. 233; Al-Fārūq by 'Allāma Muhammad Razā, p. 68; Aṣḥāb-ur-Rusūl Aur Unke Karnāme, part 1, p. 164]

During the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}, Majlis-e-Shūrā was convened only to discuss important matters, but there was also a body consisting of eminent Companions which would meet in the Prophet's Mosque to deliberate upon routine matters. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} would update the members regarding the situation in different provinces and if there was any issue worthy of deliberation he would invite their opinions on it. It was in such a meeting that the question of levying tax (*Jizyah*) on the Majūsīs was first taken up. 'Allāma Al-Balādhurī, a famous Islamic historian, has described this meeting as follows:

A committee consisting of Muhājirīn used to meet in the Prophet's Mosque in the presence of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}. He would discuss with them numerous matters which came to him for decision. One day Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} said: "I cannot figure out what to do about the Majūsīs." 'Abdur Raḥmān bin 'Auf^{ra} stood up and said: I testify that the Holy Prophet^{sa} did say, "They should be dealt with on the same principle as the People of the Book."

[Futūḥ-ul-Baldān, part 1, p. 383]

USUAL METHOD FOR CONDUCTING MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

The usual procedure for conducting Majlis-e-Shūrā at the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} was that someone would go around calling people to the mosque, and they would all gather there. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} would offer two *rak'as* of prayer, and then make an elaborate speech about the matter under consideration. He would then invite people to offer their suggestions.

[Tārīkh Tabrī, p. 2574]

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} would give people full freedom to express their opinions, but he would also exercise his prerogative to make the final decision.

The question is: Is a Khalīfa bound by the decision of the majority, or has he the right to reject their opinion? We find both instances in the time of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}. There were times when the Khalīfa accepted the opinion of the majority. And one of the guidelines sent by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} to his governors was that, in cases where no clear guidance was available in the Quran or Hadith, decisions should be made on the basis of consensus. But, on the other hand, we also find decisions made by Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} which were against the opinion of the majority. For instance, with regard to the people who had refused to pay Zakāt after the demise of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, we find that Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} was determined to crush their rebellion, whereas the majority of the Companions, including Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}, was against such an action. In this instance, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra} overruled the majority and acted according to his own judgement. It was due to the blessing and majesty of Khilāfat that even those who had been against this idea, submitted to the Khalīfa's decision with all their heart and soul, and did not show any hesitation in putting down the rebellion. In this context, two important points need to be kept in mind.

If the basic guidance regarding the matter under consideration was to be found in the Holy Quran, the only

question that remained was how to apply it.

Even when the Khalīfa rejected the opinion of the majority, he would not force his decision upon them, but would put forward his arguments and try to convince the sceptics. For instance, when the question about the conquered lands of Iraq came up, a grand Shūrā was called which included, apart from Muhājirīn and Ansār, ten prominent leaders from the tribes of Aus and Khazraj. The majority differed with Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} and suggested that the control of the conquered lands should be given to the army. Ḥaḍrat Imam Abū Yūsuf has referred to this event as follows:

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Raḥmān bin 'Auf^{ra} said that those who conquered the land with their swords were more entitled to it than anyone else. Ḥaḍrat Bilāl^{ra} also advocated this idea so forcefully that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} was displeased and had to say: *اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِي بِلَالًا وَأَصْحَابِهِ* [O God, help me over Bilāl and his friends.] Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra}, however, was of the view that since the land was the property of the Government, it should be allowed to stay in the possession of its inhabitants. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat Ṭalḥa^{ra} were also of the same opinion....

The matter was taken up in Majlis-e-Shūrā and the debate went on for several days. People expressed their opinions boldly and confidently, but as they could not come to a definite conclusion, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} postponed the meeting pending further deliberations. He later recalled the Shūrā and opened the meeting with these remarks:

"I have bothered you to come forward and help me to discharge the responsibility which has been placed on

me, for I am just an ordinary man like you. Today you have to decide according to the truth. Some of you have disagreed with me and others have agreed, but I do not want you to agree with my opinion simply because it is mine. I merely refer you to the Book of Allah which tells the truth. Even I, when expressing an opinion, do so for the sake of the truth.”

[Kitāb-ul-Khirāj, Imam Abū Yūsuf, pp. 14-15]

He then said that during the deliberations, he had found guidance from some verses of the Holy Quran. He then quoted the verse:

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ

“Whatever Allah has given to His Messenger as spoils from the people of the towns, is for Allah and for the Messenger.” (Al-Hashr, 59:8)

After this, everyone, including the sceptics, were satisfied with the decision of Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra}.

This is how the Companions used to express their dissenting opinions, and this was the God-given capacity which helped the Khalīfa to make the final decision. Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd^{ra} used to say: “When Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} makes a resolve, it facilitates the matter for us.”

Even when choosing people for key posts, Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar^{ra} used to consult the Shūrā. At times when choosing a high official for some country, he would ask its leading citizens to nominate someone whom they considered competent, honest and trustworthy.

[Al-Farūq by Shibli Naumānī, p. 191]

SHŪRĀ IN THE FINAL DAYS OF KHILĀFAT-E-RĀSHIDA

As already mentioned, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} firmly established and organized the system of Shūrā during his Khilāfat. Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} continued this process by consulting eminent Companions and government officials. Most of the time when important matters came before him, he would call the Shūrā, and this Shūrā would include government officials.

Once an issue pertaining to the Holy Quran was brought to the notice of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} by the people of Iraq. They argued that since they had been taught the Holy Quran by Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī^{ra}, their *Qirā'at* (recitation) of the Holy Quran was more accurate than that of the Syrians. The Syrians, on the other hand, claimed that their recitation was more correct as they had been taught by Ḥaḍrat Miqdād bin Al-Aswad^{ra}. Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} consulted the Companions on this issue and it was decided that only that particular manuscript of the Holy Quran should be followed which had been collected in written form during the Khilāfat of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq^{ra} and had been handed over to Ḥaḍrat Ḥafṣa^{ra} for safekeeping. He also ordered that all other manuscripts should be burnt, and this order was carried out.

[Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh by Ibn-e-Athīr, vol. 3, pp. 111-112]

Once Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} summoned all the governors to Medina to discuss measures for maintaining law and order in the land. Officials from the smaller provinces were also invited, as were members of Majlis-e-Shūrā

and a number of other eminent people from Medina.

Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} addressed the gathering and said: "Everyone has advisors and counsellors; you are my advisers. You are well aware that people want me to withdraw some of my governors whom they do not like and to replace them with those whom they favour. It is on this matter that I seek your advice." All the governors and some members of Majlis-e-Shūrā offered their suggestions and Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra} listened to them all. Finally, some punitive and corrective measures were decided upon and the meeting was concluded.

[Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh by Ibn-e-Athīr, vol. 3, pp. 149-150;
Encyclopaedia Aṣḥāb-un-Nabī^{ra}, pp. 576-577]

After the martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} was elected the fourth Khalīfa. The same tradition of Shūrā was followed during the five years of his Khilāfat. After his martyrdom, Khilāfat was transformed into monarchy, for it was destined that the revival of the Islamic Shūrā was to take place with the advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

The Promised Messiah^{as} set up a consultative committee in his own lifetime to give spur to the mission of spreading Islam. This committee met regularly on the occasion of Jalsa Sālāna, and also discussed other matters of importance. The Promised Messiah^{as} would frequently consult members of the Jamā'at upon matters relating to the Jamā'at and administration. Jalsa Sālāna 1907 was the last to be attended by the Promised Messiah^{as} in per-

son. On this occasion, the first fiscal budget of the Jamā'at was presented for approval in a meeting of Majlis-e-Shūrā. Just as *Khilāfat 'alā Minhāj-in-Nubuwwah* was established after the Promised Messiah^{as}, so was Majlis-e-Shūrā established on a permanent basis. In the following pages we shall discuss the gradual development of Islamic Majlis-e-Shūrā during this renaissance of Islam.

MUSHĀWARAT DURING THE TIME OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^{AS}

FIRST MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT OF THE JAMĀ‘AT

Mushāwarat is one of the basic guiding principles which the Holy Quran has laid down for the establishment of the ideal Islamic society. It says:

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ

“And whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation.”

(Al-Shūrā, 42:39)

One of the fundamental objects of the Ahmadiyya Jamā‘at is to establish the institution of Mushāwarat in conformity with true Islamic values and unblemished by any sort of interpolation.

In keeping with the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, the Promised Messiah^{as} would always consult his Companions on important matters, both individually and collectively, as and when required. An important instance of collective consultation was witnessed during the first Jalsa Sālāna that was held in December 1891. Since the Jamā‘at was very small at the time, and only 75 members were present in the Jalsa, it was not considered necessary to hold separate sessions for Jalsa and for Mushāwarat. The Promised Messiah^{as}, therefore, used the occasion of Jalsa for Mushāwarat as well. This occasion is considered the first Majlis-e-Shūrā of the

Jamā'at. The first proposal that was presented on this occasion was that a committee should be formed, comprising both Ahmadīs and non-Ahmadīs, to record the innumerable signs with which God was continuously blessing the Jamā'at. This proposal was incorporated in the book *Āsmānī Faiṣlah* and was read out by Ḥaḍrat Maulawī 'Abdul Karīm Siālkotī^{ra} after Zuhr prayer, on 27th December, 1891. Thereafter the audience were requested to propose names for the committee and to suggest how this committee should function. The members who had come together solely to deliberate upon this proposal unanimously agreed that a booklet containing the proposal should be published at once, and, after gauging the reaction of the opponents, members of the committee should be selected with the mutual agreement of Ahmadīs and non-Ahmadīs.

[Āsmānī Faiṣlah, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 4, p. 336, footnote]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF JALSA SĀLĀNA

One of the objectives of Jalsa Sālāna, as mentioned by the Promised Messiah^{as} in his announcement of 7th December, 1892, is mutual consultation. The Promised Messiah^{as} said:

“A Jalsa of my devoted and sincere followers shall be held on 27th December in Qadian. The main objective of this Jalsa is for all the sincere ones to gain spiritual benefit, to increase their knowledge and to enhance their spiritual understanding, by the grace of Allah. Another benefit to be derived from such a Jalsa is that members of the Jamā'at will come to know each other better and their

relationships will be strengthened. Another important purpose of this Jalsa is that members should come up with valuable suggestions for creating better religious understanding among the people of Europe and America, since it is well-known that many righteous people in those countries are ready to accept Islam but are daunted by its sectarian divisions.”

[Majmū'ah Ishtihārāt, vol. 1, pp. 340-341]

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM

On 28th December, 1892, the second day of Jalsa Sālāna, the Promised Messiah^{as} asked the audience to come forward with proposals for the propagation of Islam in Europe and America. Members came up with various proposals, and it was finally decided, with the Promised Messiah's^{as} approval, that a booklet containing the basic concepts of Islam and presenting the beautiful teachings of Islam in rational terms, should be compiled and printed and should then be published extensively throughout Europe and America. Another proposal was for the establishment of a press in Qadian, and a list was made of members who would regularly contribute towards its expenses. It was also decided that a newspaper should be started for the purpose of spreading and helping the cause of Islam. Likewise, it was suggested that Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Sayyed Muhammad Aḥsan Sahib of Amroha^{ra} should be appointed as a missionary of the Jamā'at and he should visit places all over the Punjab and India. The Jalsa was concluded with silent prayer and it was decided that fu-

ture Jalsas would also be governed by these basic principles, i.e., planning new strategies for the propagation of Islam and for winning the hearts of new converts to Islam in Europe and America; considering schemes for the promotion of virtue, goodwill, righteousness and good morals, and elimination of immorality and ugly customs and innovations. A committee was constituted for implementing these schemes and handling other organizational matters. Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Nūruddīn Bhervī^{ra} was appointed its president and Mirzā Khūdā Bakhsh Sahib Atāliq^{ra} its secretary. The committee would consist of the following members: Khan Sahib Muhammad 'Alī Khan Sahib, Ra'īs Malīr Kotla; Shaikh Raḥmatullāh Sahib, Municipal Commissioner Gujrāt; Munshī Ghulām Qādir Sahib Faṣīḥ, Vice President and Municipal Commissioner, Sialkot; and Maulawī 'Abdul Karīm Sahib Siālkotī.

[Ā'īna-e-Kamālāt-e-Islam, Ruḥānī Khzā'in, vol. 5, pp. 615-616]

GENERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE JAMĀ'AT

In the national census of 1901, the government had decided that there would be a separate column for every individual sect and it was decided that in all official documents each sect would be referred to by the name it proposed for itself. Members of the Jamā'at, therefore, started writing to the Promised Messiah^{as} asking him as to what name they should indicate in this column. The Promised Messiah^{as}, therefore, decided to consult the Jamā'at on this point. One day, after 'Ishā prayer, he said:

"I am receiving letters from everywhere asking what

name should be given to our Jamā'at. I request everyone to suggest a name."

Present on this occasion were Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Nūruddīn Sahib^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Sayyed Muhammad Aḥsan Amrohi^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat Maulawī 'Abdul Karīm Sahib Siālkoti^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Qutbuddīn Sahib^{ra}, Mirzā Khudā Bakhsh Sahib^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat Pīr Sirājul Ḥaq Sahib Naumānī^{ra}. The Promised Messiah^{as} asked them to deliberate upon this matter and respond within three days, upon which Ḥaḍrat Pīr Sirājul Ḥaq Sahib Naumānī^{ra} said: "If you would kindly permit me, could I offer my suggestion right now." The Promised Messiah^{as} told him to go ahead, and he suggested that the sect should be called *Ahmadī*. The Promised Messiah^{as} did not give any immediate response, but the next day he published an announcement, under Divine guidance, in which he named the Jamā'at *Musalmān Firqah Ahmadī* (The Ahmadī Muslim Sect).

[Tadhkira-tul-Mahdī, by Pīr Sirājul Ḥaq Naumānī, part 1, pp. 145-147]

Ḥaḍrat Muftī Muhammad Ṣādiq Sahib^{ra} has similarly enlightened us upon the Promised Messiah's consultations with members of the Jamā'at. He says that whenever matters like Jalsas or publication of announcements required deliberations, the Promised Messiah^{as} would summon his Companions for consultation. This could happen up to three or four times a year.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, p. 144]

ESTABLISHMENT OF MADRASA AHMADIYYA

At the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}, a school was established in Qadian which was called Madrasa Ta'limul Islam. After the demise of Ḥaḍrat Maulawī 'Abdul Karīm Sahib Siālkotī^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Burhānuddīn Sahib Jehlamī^{ra}, the Promised Messiah^{as} became greatly concerned, and he was led under Divine guidance to consider: "Permanent arrangements have to be made for producing scholars who are skilled at oratory and are eager to serve the faith. He also said: I feel disappointed when I see the condition of Madrasa Ta'limul Islam, for it has failed to achieve the purpose I had intended for it. If the students who pass out of this institution go out only to seek the world, then why did we establish it? What we want is to produce people who will serve the faith."

[Maktūbāt-e-Ahmadiyya, vol. 5, part 3, p. 62]

So the Promised Messiah^{as} summoned a number of Companions to consider this problem and to suggest necessary reforms. He said that the Madrasa should be reformed in such a way that it should produce real scholars and good preachers who should take the place of those who were passing away. He said that the Madrasa should produce Quranic scholars, preachers and intellectuals, and should become a source of guidance for the world.

[Maktūbāt-e-Ahmadiyya, vol. 5, part 3, pp. 62-63]

Upon this, some members suggested that the Madrasa should be closed down altogether and another school,

exclusively for religious education, should be set up. The administrators of the Madrasa were also of the same view. But Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Nūruddīn Sahib^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad Sahib^{ra} disagreed. They suggested that the Madrasa should continue and religious education should be included in its syllabus.

[Al-Faḍl, Jubilee Number, 1939, p. 65]

The Promised Messiah^{as} accepted the latter suggestion and decided that a separate section, meant for religious education, should be established within the Madrasa.

[Al-Ḥakam, 10 February 1906, p. 2]

This section for religious education proved to be the precursor of a greater and separate religious institution that later came to be known as Madrasa Ahmadiyya.

FIRST FISCAL BUDGET OF THE JAMĀ'AT

The last Jalsa Sālāna which was graced by the presence of the Promised Messiah^{as}, was held in 1907. During the Jalsa, on 28th December, 1907, a conference of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya—an organization set up by the Promised Messiah^{as}—was held after Maghrib prayers. The Presidents and Secretaries of many outside Jamā'ats were also present. A report prepared by Secretary Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya regarding the working of the different Departments of the Anjuman was read out. This was followed by presentation of the budget for the year 1908. Khawāja Kamāluddīn Sahib discussed in detail various important aspects of the budget, after which Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Nūruddīn Sahib^{ra} made a speech

in which he spelled out the kind of organizations that were considered lawful by the Holy Quran.

According to the summary of the budget published in the newspaper, the income for the year 1908 was Rs. 63,875 and the proposed expenditure was Rs. 96,559. This was the first fiscal budget of the Jamā'at which was presented in the Conference.

[Al-Badr, Qadian, 16 January 1908, pp. 4-5]

Note: It was on this occasion that the word Conference was first used for Majlis-e-Mushāwarat.

MUSHĀWARAT DURING THE TIME OF ḤADRAT KHALĪFATUL MASĪḤ I^{RA}

The election of the first Khalīfa after the demise of the Promised Messiah^{as} was a perfect manifestation of the verse: *أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ* [Their affairs are decided by mutual consultation]. Members of the Jamā'at from within and outside Qadian, as well as members of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, gathered in Qadian for the funeral of the Promised Messiah^{as}. They all unanimously elected Ḥadrat Ḥakīm Nūraddīn Sahib^{ra} as Khalīfatul Masīḥ and first Successor to the Promised Messiah^{as}. Thus, according to the prophecy of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the Second Manifestation was established in the Jamā'at, and Khilāfat on the path of Prophethood was re-established.

FIRST MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ OF KHILĀFAT-E-ŪLĀ

In conformity with the pattern partly set by the Promised Messiah^{as}, the first meeting of Majlis-e-Shūrā was held

on the occasion of Jalsa Sālāna 1908, from 8 to 10 pm on 26th December, in Masjid Mubārak, Qadian. It was convened by the Secretary Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. Present in the meeting were representatives from Jamā'ats all over the country as well as members of the Anjuman. This meeting has historically been referred to as a Conference. The major issue discussed was whether to continue the religious institution set up by the Promised Messiah^{as} or to close it down. Here we give details of this meeting:

Despite being a member of the Anjuman, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad Sahib^{ra} could not be informed of this meeting beforehand. It was towards the close of the meeting that he learnt that the Shūrā was going on in the mosque and that the question of the Madrasa was being debated. When he entered the mosque Khawāja Kamāluddīn was making a passionate speech. After he finished, Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Sahib stood up and spoke briefly for about ten minutes. He said:

“The work of the Jamā'at is not going to end today. These are matters whose influence will be felt for hundreds and thousands of years to come, and people are going to scrutinize them...This is the first meeting of representatives of the Jamā'at after the demise of the Promised Messiah^{as}. Just imagine how history will judge us: That the religious institution set up by the Promised Messiah^{as}, in consultation with all members of the Jamā'at, just 2 years before, was closed down by his Jamā'at immediately after his demise!...”

This brief but stirring speech caused a change of hearts. Some members were so deeply touched that they could not restrain their tears. All those present unanimously announced: "We are not at all in favour of closing the Madrasa Ahmadiyya. This institution shall continue and we shall never let it close down in our lifetime."

[Tārīkh-e-Ahmadiyyat, vol. 4, pp. 247-250; Speeches of Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}, Al-Faḍl, 21 November 1935, p. 4; Al-Faḍl, 11 April 1961, p. 4; Speech Jalsa Sālāna, 28 December 1961]

A CRUCIAL AND DECISIVE MEETING OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

An important occasion which called for consultation with members of the Jamā'at during the time of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I^{ra}, was when some questions were put to him regarding the jurisdiction of the Khalīfa. Ḥuḍūr^{ra} instructed that these questions should be sent to forty members of the Jamā'at, who should forward their opinions to him, and should also assemble in Qadian on 31st January, 1909.

[Ḥaqīqat-e-Ikhtilāf, by Maulawī Muḥammad 'Alī Sahib, pp. 34-35; Mujāhid-e-Kabīr, Sawāneḥ Maulawī Muḥammad 'Alī Sahib, p. 92; Tārīkh-e-Ahmadiyyat, vol. 4, pp. 271-272]

About 250 representatives of the Jamā'at, who had been summoned by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I^{ra} for consultation, came to Qadian and assembled on the roof of Masjid Mubārak on the appointed date. When Ḥuḍūr arrived, he refused to stand at the place that had been specially prepared for him in the middle. Instead, he moved to the eastern side which had been constructed by the Promised Messiah^{as}, and made a moving speech. He said:

"My verdict is that the Khalīfa has to be obeyed by the Jamā'at and by the Anjuman, both of which are subservi-

ent to him. Anjuman is only an advisory body which is required by the Khalīfa.”

[Fārūq, 5 July 1917, p. 3; Tārīkh-e-Ahmadiyyat, vol. 4, pp. 280-281]

Ḥuḍūr added:

“Some people have said that the Khalīfa’s function is no more than to lead congregational and funeral prayers, to solemnize the Nikah, and to receive the pledges of Bai‘at. But when all this can be done even by a Mullah, where then is the need of a Khalīfa? I spurn the idea of such an allegiance. True Bai‘at means complete submission, with no question of violating even a single injunction of the Khalīfa.”

[Khilāfat-e-Ahmadiyya ke Mukhālfīn kī Tehrīk, pp. 18-19]

In consequence of this speech, all their doubts were removed and they understood the true status of the Khalīfa. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I^{ra} asked Khawāja Kamāluddīn Sahīb and Maulawī Muhammad ‘Alī Sahīb to renew their pledges of Bai‘at. He also said: I do not approve of those who held a Jalsa in support of the establishment of Khilāfat either. Once I had called people for a meeting, they had no right to hold a separate Jalsa. I never told them to do so. When God has granted me the courage to overcome this mischief, why then did they take this task upon themselves? Ḥuḍūr instructed Ḥaḍrat Shaikh Ya‘qūb ‘Alī ‘Irfānī, who had organized that Jalsa, to renew his pledge of Bai‘at as well.

[Al-Qaul-ul-Faṣl, January 1915, p. 48; Tārīkh-e-Ahmadiyyat, vol. 4, pp. 280-281]

AN OVERVIEW OF MUSHĀWARAT DURING THE TIME OF ḤADRAT KHALĪFATUL MASĪḤ I^{RA}

During Jalsa Sālāna 1909, which was held from 25th to 27th March, 1910, Ahmadiyya Conference was also held in a room of the Boarding House. It was presided over by Ḥadrāt Sahibzāda Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad Sahib^{ra}. Presidents and Secretaries from various Jamā'ats made recommendations regarding certain issues, including the budget, after brief deliberation. The Foreign Mission Fund was also launched and it was suggested that foreign Jamā'ats should not be bound to hold Jalsas every year, but should seek permission and guidance from Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya in this regard. Members were also urged to make urgent efforts regarding the collection of the Construction Fund after returning to their Jamā'ats. It was also suggested that, as and when suitable persons are available for the purpose of preaching, they should be appointed to serve in this field.

[Al-Badr, Qadian, 31 March 1910, p. 2]

With reference to this Conference, the Editor of *Al-Hakam* had this to report:

“In 1910, Jalsa Sālāna was held in March. Majlis-e-Mushāwarat was also held on this occasion under the name of Ahmadiyya Conference, and Ḥadrāt Sahibzāda Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad^{ra} was unanimously elected to preside over it. Interesting discussions took place on different topics, which shows that people are growing more and more involved in the affairs of the Jamā'at.”

[Al-Hakam, 28 March-7 April, 1910, p. 14]

Likewise, on the second day of Jalsa Sālāna 1912, Ahmadiyya Conference was held in Masjid Mubārak, at 7:30 in the evening. First of all, the Annual Budget was presented and passed after some discussion. The attention of the members was then drawn to Madrasa Ahmadiyya and Zakāt. Different proposals came up regarding the income of Madrasa Ahmadiyya, and it was finally decided that every Jamā'at should send a reasonable portion of the Local Fund—which is received from members on occasions of their promotion, births or marriages—in order to award scholarships. It was also decided that more and more young men should be motivated to join Madrasa Ahmadiyya, particularly those who can bear their own expenses; and that students who fail to make the grade should be given other suitable tasks.

Siālkot Jamā'at proposed that the larger Jamā'ats, in which the work of collection of funds is substantial, should be allowed to pay some honorarium to those who collect the funds and keep the records, so that they may be answerable for properly maintaining the accounts. Although a number of delegates were not in favour of this proposal, it was passed for it was considered necessary.

[Al-Ḥakam, 7–14 January 1913; Al-Badr, 9 January 1913]

MUSHĀWARAT DURING THE TIME OF ḤAḌRAT KHALĪFATUL MASĪḤ II^{RA}

Upon the sad demise of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul MasīḤ I^{ra}, on 14th March 1914, about two thousand members of the Jamā'at gathered in Masjid Noor, Qadian. Ḥaḍrat Nawāb

Muhammad 'Alī Khan Sahib^{ra} read out the will of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I^{ra} in which he had advised the Jamā'at to remain united on one hand. On hearing this, the people started speaking in favour of Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad Sahib. Although some people, who were against the institution of Khilāfat, tried to draw attention towards themselves, members of the Jamā'at refused to listen to them because these people were against the very idea of Khilāfat. A group of believers then started pledging Bai'at at the hand of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad Sahib^{ra} with such zeal and passion as if their hearts were in the possession of angels and were being drawn to the Divine will.

[Tārīkh-e-Ahmadiyyat, vol. 4, pp. 554-555]

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF SHŪRĀ

During the early days of this Khilāfat, it was felt necessary to call a meeting of the selected representatives of the Jamā'at, in order to curb the nefarious activities of the *Ghair Mubā'i'in*.¹ Messages were sent to Jamā'ats outside Qadian by Ḥaḍrat Nawāb Muhammad 'Alī Khan Sahib^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat Sayyed Muhammad Aḥsan Amrohī Sahib^{ra} and Ḥaḍrat Dr. Khalīfa Rashīduddīn Sahib^{ra}, stating that Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} wished to consult the Jamā'at upon some important issues on 12th April 1914, at Qadian. Every Jamā'at was instructed to elect two

¹ The group of Ahmadīs who refused to pledge Bai'at at the hand of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra}, also known as 'Lahori Ahmadīs'.

representatives from among those who had pledged allegiance to Khilāfat, and to send them to Qadian for this meeting. The Jamā'ats complied with this instruction and more than 150 representatives came from Jamā'ats outside Qadian. The total figure came to 250, including selected members from Qadian. The proceedings commenced in Masjid Mubārak at 7:30 a.m. The seating arrangement, as directed by Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}, was as follows:

1. Members of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and news reporters.
2. Representatives from Jamā'ats outside Qadian.
3. Members from Qadian.

Dr. Khalīfa Rashīduddīn^{ra} was the organizer of this meeting. First, Mīr Qāsim 'Alī Sahib^{ra} read out a paper written by Pīr Manzūr Muhammad Sahib^{ra}, in which he proved that Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} was indeed Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd (the Promised Reformer). Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} came to the meeting after praying in *Bait-ud-Du'ā* and delivered an incisive speech, which has been published under the title of *Manṣab-i-Khilāfat*, (The Status of Khilāfat).

After lunch and Zuhr prayer interval, the second session commenced. It was presided over by Ḥaḍrat Sayyed Muhammad Aḥsan Sahib Amrohī^{ra}, while Ḥaḍrat Nawāb Muhammad 'Alī Khan Sahib^{ra} acted as secretary. The delegates were invited to offer their suggestions and

comments on the Agenda presented by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} in his earlier address (on the status of Khilāfat). The delegates actively participated in the discussion and freely offered their considered opinions. It was finally decided that:

1. Missionaries should be sent to all the towns and cities in India for the propagation of Ahmadiyyat. Their expenses would be defrayed by the Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya under the head *Ishā'at-e-Islam*.

2. Rule no. 18 of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya was:

“In each and every matter, the word of the Promised Messiah^{as} shall be final and binding upon Majlis-i-Mu'tamadīn and its subsidiaries, as well as upon Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and all its Departments.”

It was decided that this rule should be amended and the words “Promised Messiah^{as}” should be replaced by the words “Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II, Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad Sahib.” It was also decided that this resolution should be proposed by Ḥaḍrat Nawāb Muhammad 'Alī Khan Sahib, Ḥaḍrat Sayyed Muhammad Aḥsan Sahib, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad Sahib, Ḥaḍrat Dr. Khalīfa Rashīd-ud-Dīn Sahib and Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Sher 'Alī Sahib.

3. Every district should send some students to study at Madrasa Ahmadiyya.

4. Missionaries should be paid by Anjuman-e-Mu'tamadīn and not by the Jamā'ats.

5. Secretaries of all Jamā'ats should determine the amount of Zakāt which is payable by their members, and make proper arrangements for its collection. This amount, as well as that under the head *Ishā'at-e-Islam*, should be sent directly to Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīh.

6. Ahmadiyya schools and hostels should be established wherever possible, in order to spread education. As far as possible, Government grants should not be accepted for this purpose.

7. A board should be convened to consider the establishment of a college at Qadian. This board should consist mainly of educationists and old boys from Ta'limul Islam High school.

[Manṣab-e-Khilāfat, 1st edition, pp. 55-56; Al-Ḥakam 14 April 1914, p. 9;
Al-Ḥakam 21 April 1914, pp. 7-8]

Members from the following Jamā'ats participated in this meeting: Lahore, Pakpattan, Kiryam (Distt. Jullundur), Rahon, Calcutta, Amritsar, Banga (Distt. Hoshiarpur), Mardan (Distt. Peshawar), Swabi, Saharanpur, Jammu, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Multan, Alipur, Lyallpur, Batala, Sarchur, Bhudiyar, Ghokhowal, Talwandi Rahwali, Jullundur Cantt., Gojra, Hilalpur, Kot Radha Kishan, Karachi, Bahria, Sargodha, Dulmial, Kapurthala, Lodhran, Jorah, Saikhsan, Mahallanwala, Ahrana, Sareeh, Mangat Unchay, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dojwal (Ajnala) Gujrat, Shahjahanpur, Delhi.

[Al-Ḥakam, 14 April 1914]

SHŪRĀ DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF KHILĀFAT-E-THĀNIYA

During the early years of Khilāfat-e-Thāniya, Ahmadiyya Conference—which was normally held at night in Masjid Mubārak during the Jalsa Sālāna—could not be held regularly due to the extraordinary circumstances. This is why no record of this Conference is available for the years 1914 and 1915. *Al-Faql*, however, did publish the following note about Jalsa Sālāna 1915:

“We regret to announce that, due to shortage of time, Ahmadiyya Conference, which is usually held each year in Masjid Mubārak at night, could not be held this year. But this has been more than compensated for by the fact that, for the improvement, development and progress of local Jamā'ats, Secretaries were provided half-yearly report forms at the behest of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ^{at}, so that, instead of exchanging views only once a year, the work can proceed uniformly all the year round.”

[*Al-Faql Qadian*, 8 January 1916]

Later, the half-yearly reports received from the Jamā'ats were compiled and presented in a full session of Jalsa Sālāna by Secretary Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. The details of income and expenditure were also included in these reports.

[*Al-Faql Qadian*, 30 December 1916; 22 January 1918; 12 January 1920]

Nāẓir Sahib Baitul Māl would sometimes request the Jamā'at for additional funds to meet the budget deficit. Therefore, the report presented in the Jalsa Sālāna of 1919 included a Rs. 234,000 budget for the following year. When an appeal was made for funds, the faithful

immediately responded with Rs. 12,000 in cāsh.

[Al-Faql Qadian, 12 January 1920]

During the Ahmadiyya Conference, discussions were traditionally held on important issues facing the Jamā'at. In this regard, the Editor of *Al-Hakam* wrote the following note on 28th March, 1919:

“Ahmadiyya Conference serves a vital purpose, but unfortunately it could not be held during the last two years. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ^{at} wishes to cultivate the habit of discussion and consultation in the Jamā'at. He emphasized this in his speech *Manṣab-e-Khilāfat*. It is therefore important that some time should be set aside for consultation on important issues of the Jamā'at during Jalsa Sālāna.”

[Al-Hakam, 28 March 1919, pp. 5-6]

CONSULTATIONS WITH EXPERTS & ORGANIZING THE STRUCTURE OF THE JAMĀ'AT

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} invited written suggestions from experts for improving the central organizational structure and establishing Naẓārats. Ḥuḍūr^{ra} said:

“In view of the rapid growth of the Jamā'at and increase in the volume of work, an organizational structure has been evolved, which will facilitate the work and deal with the problems that frequently arise. I proposed a scheme and sent it to some friends for their comments. After due consultation and prayers, the structure has started functioning from 1st January, 1919...The new system comprises four Departments:

1. Nāẓir Baitul Māl will be responsible for the generation of funds to meet the expenses of the Jamā'at.

2. Nāzir Ta'lif-o-Ishā'at shall compile the objections raised by the opponents against the Jamā'at and shall prepare suitable replies. He shall also make available supporting arguments and material to the Jamā'at.

3. Ta'lim-o-Tarbiyyat Department will be responsible for proposing and implementing the best schemes for the religious and conventional education of the Jamā'at and its future generations, because no nation can progress unless its future generations are enlightened.

4. Amūr-e-Āmah Department will be responsible for suggesting and implementing schemes related to politics, trade and industry, skills, jobs and agriculture. It will also work on solving problems related to marriage.

Then there shall be the Ifā Department, which alone will be entitled to pronounce edicts on religious matters, and to which all religious disputes shall be referred.

All these Departments come under a Nāzir A'lā, who presents weekly reports to me about all the subordinate Departments, and receives further instructions from me."

[Al-Faql, 1 April 1919, pp. 7-8]

FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT

Up to this time, the system of Mushāwarat had not been established as a permanent institution, and during the initial period of the Khilāfat-e-Thāniya, meetings were held for the purpose of consultation only when required. In 1922, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} established annual Majlis-e-Shūrā as an institution for the first time. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth has said:

"The institution of Mushāwarat which we see today in the Jamā'at was in fact established by Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-

Mau'ūd^{ra} in 1922. That was when Mushāwarat became a formal institution, and subsequent events proved its importance; for financial matters were acquiring a new significance, and occasional consultations were no longer considered sufficient. It was necessary to take the whole Jamā'at, who are the contributors, into confidence regarding financial matters. This is the Majlis-e-Shūrā which has continued to grow, and now, by the grace of Allah, it has been established on the same pattern in many countries around the world."

[Friday Sermon, 31 March 1995; Al-Faḍl International 12-18 May 1995, p. 7]

As a formal institution, the first meeting of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat was held in the auditorium of Ta'lim-ul-Islam High School, from 15th to 16th April, 1922. It was attended by 52 delegates from Jamā'ats outside Qadian, and 30 representatives from the Central Departments. Separate passes were issued to delegates and Zā'irīn (visitors). Zā'irīn were seated in the upper galleries while the delegates were seated in the main hall. Ḥudūr's chair and table were placed at the Northern side of the hall and the delegates sat before him in a semi-circle.

PURE AND IDEAL ENVIRONMENT OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

Majlis-e-Shūrā of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya does not only differ from other worldly organizations in its organizational structure and its functioning, it also has a very unique environment which has to be experienced to be understood. We will try to describe here it in a few words.

Nations are not built in a day, it is something that requires years of hard work and extraordinary supervision.

The atmosphere of Mushāwarat owes its development to years of hard work, continuous supervision and sincere prayers of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra}. His personality and character is imprinted on every aspect of Majlis-e-Shūrā as we see it today. Its every manifestation refreshes his memories in our minds. He was charged with the responsibility of educating and training the people of a backward area of an undeveloped country, who could not be termed as civilized and cultured by any standards—and this was particularly true of the Punjab. The task before Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} was extremely complex and difficult, not only because he had to transform such backward people into a civilized and cultured entity, but he also had to establish an Islamic System of Consultation with all its practical manifestations, which would become a role model even for the civilized world, and would project the superiority of Islamic teachings over other religions and ideologies.

This was an arduous task. At times people would continue to repeat the same mistakes despite his elaborate speeches and repeated exhortations. He would explain things to them again and again, and yet they would continue to make mistakes. He was like a mother who teaches her child to walk and eat, or like a teacher who finally manages to teach correct pronunciation to an errant student. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} had to work hard to make the members understand the etiquette, ethics and wisdom of the system of Mushāwarat. He worked till

his last breath and left behind a highly organized and ordered institution of Mushāwarat, which is doubtless a model for all consultative institutions of the world.

Whenever, due to lack of understanding or proper training, some members spoke unnecessarily during the Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} would advise them in words such as these:

“Yesterday I said that you should not speak just because you want to speak. You should speak only when it is really necessary. People tend to speak in haste because they lack wisdom, or perhaps they are so lost in their own thoughts that they do not hear what others are saying and go on repeating the same things.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1922, p. 32]

There were times when Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} had to admonish the members in a considerate manner. During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1923, in response to a question that was asked in an objectionable tone, Ḥuḍūr^{ra} said:

“This is not a Parliament where people are incited against one another; this is Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. If you do not understand something you should ask. Such problems are at times caused by a person’s tone. His intention may not be what his tone implies, and it may be his habit to speak in that tone. When the Quranic verse was revealed admonishing the faithful not to raise their voices in the presence of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, one of his Companions, who had a loud voice, adopted complete silence and even avoided the company of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, for he believed himself to be a hypocrite on account of his loud voice. He then had to be told the true connotation of the

injunction. Hence, if someone is in the habit of speaking aloud, he should try to control his voice and his tone.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, p. 26]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} would not only examine the questioner during Majlis-e-Shūrā, but he would also scrutinize the truthfulness and appropriateness of the Nāẓir's reply...If there was even a hint of ambiguity in the reply, Ḥuḍūr^{ra} would clarify the matter in such a way that there would be no need for any more questions. On the second day of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1923, Ḥuḍūr, not being satisfied with the reply of a Nāẓir Sahib, observed:

“Instead of saying that the report could not be prepared in such a short time, he has denied all responsibility for the work. Although he is the Nā'ib Nāẓir of the office which has published the report, he says that there is no record available. If he had plainly admitted that he could not complete the work due to shortage of time, the matter would not have taken this turn.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, pp. 29-30]

Ḥuḍūr closely monitored the reports prepared by the Nāẓirs and made sure that no segment of the report fell short of the high moral standard laid down by Islam. A Nāẓir Sahib in his report spoke about an eminent scholar of the Jamā'at in terms that implied slight sarcasm. Ḥuḍūr pointed out this error and demanded rectification.

Here we have given only a few examples. Those who have had the honour of regularly attending Majlis-e-Mushāwarat know how Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} made an untiring effort to revive Islamic traditions in

this institution. Whenever Ḥudūr noticed anything contrary to the established norms and principles he would admonish the Jamā'at in a suitable manner even during the discussion. Apart from drawing inferences from the Holy Quran and Hadith, he would also quote episodes from the Islamic history. At times he would speak about these important matters in his closing address. In case of minor mistakes, he would draw the attention of the person concerned by a kind remark. At times he would tell a joke or relate some interesting anecdote and put everyone at ease. He would normally use this method when someone was dragging his speech too long and was trying the audience's patience. He would point out the mistake in such a pleasant and charming way that the listeners enjoyed it and would feel refreshed. Thus he would not only rectify the error, but the interest of the audience would also be maintained. At times, however, he would be displeased by the unmannerly behaviour of certain people and would admonish them. Such situations normally arose when he noticed an element of egotism, arrogance or sarcasm in someone's speech; or when someone hurt other people's feelings; or got personal and deviated from the subject under discussion; or when someone sounded hypocritical or ostentatious. On such occasions Ḥudūr would express his strong displeasure. However, if a speaker referred to someone in light humour, he would not disapprove of it, and would himself join in the pleasantries and reply on behalf of the victim in a manner that left the audience marvelling at his ready wit.

He had great respect for the senior workers of the Jamā'at and Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}. During Mushāwarat he would treat them with due honour and respect, would listen to them attentively, would overlook their mistakes, and would not lay down any time limit for them. Since most members from the Punjab belonged to the rural and agriculture areas, and they would normally be in a majority in Majlis-e-Shūrā, he would listen to their suggestions with particular care. But at the same time he would encourage the representatives from far flung areas to offer their point of view, even if they were less in number. He would himself include the names of representatives from the Frontier Province, Sindh, Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Uttar Pardesh, in important sub-committees. And if they would not give their names, he would insist that they express their opinions.

Majlis-e-Mushāwarat was made up of all kinds of advisers, such as educationists, senior government officials, engineers, lawyers and doctors, and even craftsmen such as blacksmiths and masons. They would all offer their advice according to their own knowledge and capability. All of them, including ordinary shopkeepers, brokers, simple and illiterate villagers, Punjabis, Sindhis, Bengalis, Madrasis, Malabarais and the eloquent people of Uttar Pardesh would sit together and portray a spectacle of equality. Difficulties of language did not impede the proceedings, as those who had difficulty in expressing their

views were at liberty to mix Urdu with English or Punjabi or their local language and thus convey their message. They were never ridiculed. At times the audience would smile affectionately, or their eyes would grow moist with the thought of how Allah had brought all these pure souls to the fold of the Promised Messiah^{as}, so that they should all help in the revival of Islam. These people had the benefit of a wise, sagacious and enlightened leader who listened to them and understood them. And whenever the audience faced any difficulty in understanding something, he would eloquently and fluently explain it in his own words and they would be satisfied.

While important issues were being discussed, Ḥuḍūr would at times become anxious about the future of Islam, and whether succeeding generations would be able to properly discharge their obligations. His addresses during Mushāwarat possessed an aura of glory. His speech, which came from the depth of his heart, was electrifying and seemed to be coming from heaven. The atmosphere would be highly charged and moving, and a great surge of emotion would seep through the audience, and they would become filled with the desire to serve Islam with renewed zeal and fervour. The audience would respond: “Sayyedī! we, along with our progeny, are ready to sacrifice our lives, our wealth and our honour in the cause of Islam.”

It is not possible to accurately depict these special occasions, but here is a small extract from one of his

speeches which is enough to move any heart:

“We are now in a battle; and if a soldier dozes off during the battle, he is sure to be killed. We have the glorious examples of the Companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, whom we claim to be like... The enemy is trying his best to pull down the flag which has been handed to us by the Promised Messiah^{as}. It is our duty to hold it firmly in our hands; if our hands are cut off, we should hold it with our feet, and if one of us loses his life, let another come forward and hold it. Now, let me say to the children and young men who are sitting up there, it is quite possible that this war may not end in our lives. True, it is not the swords made of steel we are up against, but we are facing the sword of circumstances, of time and of death. If this sword is brandished before you, are you prepared to hold the flag from falling? (All present replied in affirmation). God and His Prophets have declared our era to be the last era; our sacrifices should also be the ultimate sacrifices.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1935, pp. 90-92]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} would also keep drawing attention towards prayer, *Istighfār*, and *Taqwa*, and the atmosphere would become saturated with spiritual fervour. At times people would find it hard to hold back their tears. The collective prayer after the closing address was quite unparalleled in its scenes of humility and emotion. The true miracle of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} was not in creating an environment of piety and righteousness during his lifetime, but in bringing about an everlasting change in the Jamā'at, so that the same spirit of piety and purity can be seen in Majlis-e-Mushāwarat to

this day. Even today we witness the same spiritual atmosphere, the same gathering of pure souls, and the same submission to Allah. Even today people offer their suggestions solely for the sake of Allah, and it is in the same spirit that they are accepted. Their prayers bear the same complexion even today. Even today they have the greatest reverence for Khilāfat. Their prayers are still offered in the language of tears. There have been many leaders in the world whose life's work was washed away as soon as they died, but the greatest heroes are those whose work not only survives the passage of time but attains immortality. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} was just such a great leader who left behind lasting impressions, which might get blurred with the passage of time, but it can never be washed away.

[Pages 55-63 have been quoted from *Sīrat Faḍl-e-'Umar*, vol. II]

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR SHŪRĀ

When Majlis-e-Shūrā was first established as a permanent institution in 1922, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} outlined its basic principles in his opening address, which serve as its charter. Ḥuḍūr^{ra} said:

“The Conference was scheduled to begin at seven, but whenever something new is undertaken, mistakes and errors are to be expected due to lack of experience. The smallest task cannot be performed to satisfaction without experience and practice. Those who drew out the programme and informed the outside Jamā'ats, failed to mention the time at which the Conference would begin. Consequently, some delegates arrived late by the night

train and we had to wait for them in the morning. I hope that the officials will try to avoid such mistakes in future. The delegates should be informed of the time when the proceedings start.

Before I come to the issues for which we have gathered here, I would like to say something about Majlis-e-Mushāwarat.

Why the Conference is Necessary: First of all I will tell you what this Majlis—which has previously been known as a Conference—is all about. The Holy Quran tells us *أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ* i.e., Muslims always make their decisions through consultations. Consultation is very important, and nothing can be properly accomplished without it. Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is held for the purpose of discussing issues relating to the establishment and progress of the Jamā'at. For this purpose, representatives of various Jamā'ats are invited to hold discussions, so that the task is facilitated and members are made aware of the needs of the Jamā'at. This is what Majlis-e-Shūrā is all about. I do not precisely know why other people hold Conferences, but this conference is meant for consultation.

The Difference between this and past Conferences: The main difference between this and previous Conferences is that the latter were called by the Secretary Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, while this Majlis has been called by the Khalīfa. The scope of the previous Conferences was limited and they had their own methodology, whereas the task before this Majlis is enormous and its methodology is quite different. I am not sure what procedure was adopted in the previous Conferences, but I must say that it gave rise to two contradictory ideas. During one of the Conferences in which I participated, some of

the participants were of the view that the decisions of the Conference should be considered as final, and Majlis-i-Mu'tamadīn should abide by them. I believe this point was raised by delegates from Simla and this view was supported by many others. The conveners of the Conference, however, got apprehensive and proposed in their speeches that Şadr Anjuman should have the final say on all matters. Hence the budget, which was supposed to have been presented for approval, was presented only for discussion. The result of the Conference—which consisted of representatives of the whole Jamā'at—should have been that the Conference should be able to oversee the work of a few individuals, but since the conveners had inimical intentions, they did not give the Conference its due importance. They intended to weaken Khilāfat by gaining the support of the Jamā'at, after which they would decide about the Khilāfat; but since the Conference went against them, they dissolved the Conference.

The Objectives of the Conference: But the objectives of this particular Conference are not the same, for the past Conference was convened by those who were opposed to Khilāfat, and this Majlis-e-Shūrā has been called by the Khalīfa himself. It has different objectives, and they are as follows:

(1) The Holy Prophet^{sa} would, as a rule, consult his Companions on all important matters. There were no trains in those days and no means of travel as there are today, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would, therefore, assemble the people of Medina for consultation. This practice continued during the time of the Khulafā. But since there are far better transportation facilities available now and people can easily come together, and I cannot say how much

progress may yet be made, and it may even become possible for people of Calcutta to come here for consultations and return the same day. In these circumstances it is important to expand Majlis-e-Mushawarat. This is why I have called you to share your views so that we can benefit from them. It is true that members from outside may not be familiar with the conditions prevailing in Markaz, but it is not necessary to know the background in every matter. Sometimes there are logical issues on which members from outside can give their opinion, and even better opinions than the opinions of those living in Qadian.

(2) Outsiders may not be familiar with our problems. That is why when they are asked for Chanda, they wonder where all the money is spent. Due to this lack of awareness they do not make contributions with the same zeal as they would otherwise do. I, therefore, thought that they should be made familiar with the prevailing circumstances, so that they may understand the problems faced by the workers of the Jamā'at.

(3) There are some businessmen who can give good suggestions. People who work for the government are very proficient in their fields, but even they at times have to call in expert opinion. We have such experts in our Jamā'at, and we have invited them here to offer useful suggestions on the basis of their experience.

(4) This occasion allows people who do not regularly visit Qadian to do so. Even those who are unable to come for Jalsa Sālāna can make use of this opportunity to strengthen their ties with Qadian.

Consultation during the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa}: Now I shall describe the way the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his Khulafā

used to make consultations. There were three ways in which these consultations were held:

(1) Whenever there was an issue that required deliberation, someone would make an announcement for the people to gather. Most often it would be a general announcement. The people would come together and discuss the issue, and the decision would then be taken by the Holy Prophet^{sa} or the Khalifa. But, in this day and age, due to the prevailing conditions, there are some problems in following this method. I, therefore, do consult with the people of Qadian, but in a different way. The Promised Messiah^{as} also did not seek advice in that manner, and it is in keeping with his practice and in view of the prevailing circumstances that I have adopted this method. In the days of the Holy Prophet^{sa} every group or clan had a leader or an Amīr. People would listen to whatever was being said but they would not speak by themselves. Only their leader spoke for them. They would all gather, but only the leader, whom they had elected to represent them, would speak. At times when an emotional person would stand up and express his opinion, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would refuse to acknowledge him unless his leader spoke for him, for knowledge and experience are required for giving a considered opinion. Even children can contribute their opinions when everyone else is doing so. And these days everyone considers himself competent to express his opinion, and does so. But the only person who is truly eligible to express his opinion is one who has knowledge and experience. Therefore, not every suggestion is worthwhile or worthy of consideration.

Thus, in the days of the Holy Prophet^{sa} only the leaders used to express their opinions, whereas nowadays every-

one speaks out. For this reason, only a selected few are invited and they are either consulted separately or some particular people are called to speak. Therefore, no one speaks by himself, and if someone does so, something useful can at times be deduced. The same procedure can be adopted even today if there are regular leaders, but since this is no longer the custom, people have to be selected for the purpose.

(2) The second procedure adopted in the days of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was that only a few Companions, who were considered competent to render advice, were invited, and the Holy Prophet^{sa} would consult them. Such advisers would number around thirty. At times, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would call all of them, and at times he would invite only three or four of them for consultation.

(3) The third method of consultation adopted by the Holy Prophet^{sa} was that, in extremely delicate matters, when he did not consider it proper to bring even two people together, he would hold individual consultations. He would call them one by one and discuss the matter separately. This would normally happen when he feared that people might get into a row due to their difference of opinion.

These were the three methods of consultation, each effective in its own way, and it is these three methods that I also use for consultation.

Guidelines for Consultation: Since we are now going to hold consultations, I wish to point out the things that we need to bear in mind.

(1) We have not come here for any worldly gain. I live in Qadian and I have not come from outside, but some of you, who are farmers, have had to get away from your

land to come here in this harvesting season, which is very difficult. Some of you are businessmen, while some are employees who might have got leave after a long time and had many other things to do, but they gave it all up to come here. Hence we are all here for the sake of Allah, and we should look only towards Him. This is even more important since we are facing the whole world and are competing with those who are superior in experience, organization and power. They have all the resources, they control the army and the government, while we, who have undertaken to conquer the world, have neither the strength, nor the resources, nor the experience, nor the expertise, and are in fact inferior in every field. In these circumstances, our deliberations can only be fruitful if we look to Allah. My first advice to you is to pray to Allah and solicit His help. You should pray: O' Allah, I have come here for Your sake, guide me, so that no personal consideration should cross my mind; nor should I give wrong advice and insist upon it and thus cause harm to the faith; nor should I be persuaded to accept someone's incorrect advice through his eloquence. I pray to You that my ego may not come in my way, and the desire for fame or honour may not cross my mind, nor may I become arrogant or give wrong and harmful advice, nor accept someone's wrong advice. May my intentions remain good and sincere, and may my advice be correct and subordinate to Your will. Everyone should pray in this manner, not just today, but whenever the Jamā'at holds consultations.

(2) My first advice to you is to pray, but no prayer is accepted unless it is accompanied by action. For instance, a person may pray for the ability to serve the faith, but if he is not willing to spend a penny in this cause, how will

he be able to render any service? Prayers must be supported by deeds. I, therefore, advise you to set aside all personal considerations, today, tomorrow or whenever consultations are held. Some people come with preconceived ideas which they want others to accept. But this is not what consultation is about, the aim is to sit with an open mind and say what is correct. Some people come here having decided that they are going to get a certain point of view accepted, and they try their best to this end, but this should not be the way of our Jamā'at, we should only say and stress what is correct.

(3) When sitting down for consultation, we should be prepared to accept any good suggestion, not just our own.

(4) Another point which must be remembered now and whenever such consultations are held in future, is that one should not offer any opinion for the sake of someone else. There are people who express an opinion and afterwards say that it was not their own, they had only expressed it only because a friend had asked them to. This behaviour is more dangerous even than misappropriation, but this is taken very lightly, so much so that even senior statesmen are found guilty of it. A member of the Indian Council once said that the opinion he had given was not his, and he had only offered it on behalf of a friend. It is surprising that he did not see any wrong in this. This is a most dishonest conduct. Members of our Jamā'at should shun such practices. They should not give any opinion for the sake of anyone else, and should say only what they themselves understand to be correct.

(5) The only motive should be to offer useful advice relevant to the issue under consideration. Let me explain this with an example. When discussing whether some new

scheme should be launched or not, some people, though they understand the importance of the scheme, oppose it simply because they believe that if the scheme is launched, such and such a person will be appointed to run it. Sometimes they do so with dishonest intentions, and at times they actually do not consider the person suitable for the job. Instead of taking up this issue when the appointment is being discussed, or to say clearly that the scheme should not be launched because the only person who can be assigned this task is not suitable, they oppose the scheme itself and say that it is not practicable. This is dishonesty and it should be avoided. Or, for instance, when a person is to be appointed for a certain mission, people start to negate the importance and viability of the mission itself, only because they do not want that person to be sent on the mission. This is not the right thing to do. Correct suggestions should be offered which relate to the actual question.

(6) We must not hesitate to accept the correct suggestions, no matter who presents them. Anyone who opposes a correct suggestion only because he is against the person who has offered it, is guilty of dishonesty.

(7) Do not form hasty opinions. Some people have no opinion of their own and merely start repeating what others have said. They should first listen to what other people are saying, compare their statements, and then form their own opinions, and should not depend solely on the opinions of other people.

Thus one should neither offer an opinion for the sake of another, nor form an opinion on the basis of another person's opinion. For instance, when someone points out some fault, you should not just agree with him, but should look into the matter yourself and then form an opinion.

(8) One should not be too sure that his own opinion is most appropriate and free of fault. Some people make this mistake and stray from the truth. At times even children can come up with astonishing ideas. The Holy Prophet^{sa} used to consult even with his wives. After the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, when people were very upset (and refused to slaughter their animals), the Holy Prophet^{sa} asked Hadrat Umm-e-Salamah^{ra} what he should do. She suggested that he should go ahead and slaughter his animal without saying anything to anyone. He did accordingly, and all the people followed him and slaughtered their animals. Therefore, a person should not insist on his own opinion, because even experienced people can make mistakes, and at times even an ordinary person may give sound and useful advice. He should sit here for the purpose of increasing his knowledge. It is equally wrong to accept every opinion of another person. You should only accept what is true and intelligible, and reject unenlightened opinions.

(9) Always keep the facts in mind, rather than follow your emotions. Some people rouse the emotions of other people, who then lose sight of the facts. I too once made use of people's sentiments, but I gave arguments as well. A meeting was once held to discuss the closure of Madrasa Ahmadiyya. When everyone began to speak in favour of this move, I stood up and gave my own arguments, for instance, that if we do not have our own religious scholars, from whom shall we seek religious edicts? I also passionately appealed to them that the Madrasa had been established in the memory of the Promised Messiah^{as}, and what would people say if we closed it down at the very first Jalsa after his demise? Af-

ter this speech, everyone agreed that the Madrasa should not be closed down. Even Khawāja Sahib, who had proposed the move, said that this is not what he had meant. Therefore, raising sentiments in support of one's argument is permissible, but it is dishonest to resort to sentiments alone and to try to alter people's opinions in this manner. Thus he who knows that his arguments are weak and, therefore, tries to raise people's sentiments, is dishonest, just as the one who knows that the arguments are wrong but still speaks in their favour under the influence of his emotions.

(10) There can be two kinds of proposals: those which offer greater religious benefit, and those which aim mainly at material benefits. Since we are a religious Jamā'at, we should support proposals which offer greater religious benefits.

(11) Let us always bear in mind that our ideas should not only be good, they should also be superior and more effective than those of our opponents. Similarly, our work should be more enduring than that of our opponents. For instance, if we build a house which is not in the way of the flood water, it will not matter even if it is not a strong house; but if it is in the way of the flood, it will be a mistake not to build the house strong enough. Therefore, our proposals in Majlis-e-Shūrā should not only be positive, but they should be strong enough to encounter our opponents. What is more, our proposals should be better than our own previous proposals. Nations fall into decline when they forget either one of these two principles. Just as it happened in the case of the Muslims, a time might come upon us when our opponents are weak; if such a time comes and our efforts are not better than before, we

too will suffer great loss. There was a time when the Muslims were weak, but then a time came when their enemy was weak and Muslims were strong, at that time the Muslims were far stronger even than the Christians, but, despite their strength, they went into decline because they did not have enough troops. Therefore, we must keep increasing our strength, or else we shall lose. For instance, if the opponent is standing and we are walking, we will surely overtake him, but if the opponent comes running and we merely increase our pace, he will surely overtake us, for at that time we will need to run faster than him. Unless a nation invites Divine wrath upon itself, it can never be destroyed when it makes sure that its plans are not only superior to those of its opponents, but are also better than its own previous plans. It is thus important to keep both these things in mind.

(12) The first thing when discussing a proposal is to see whether it is useful or not. People tend to get into arguments about minor issues which have nothing to do with the pros or cons of the proposal itself. You should avoid arguing about irrelevant issues, and should stay focussed on the real issue.

(13) Unless the point is of particular relevance, repetitions should be avoided. Not everyone needs to speak, unless he has something new to say.

(14) Save your own time and that of others.

The Result of Consultation should be to generate new ideas, learn different aspects of a proposal, and to gain knowledge, and not just to cast votes. This is the Islamic way. Proposals should be invited and opinions should be sought, and the useful proposals should be adopted.

Under the influence of the age, people tend to say, why not seek people's opinion and make decisions on that basis. The fact is that our faith teaches us **إِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ** i.e., Consult the people, but when you have made a decision, stay firm on it and do not fear what people might say. This has been the way in Islam. When Persia was attacked, the enemy destroyed a bridge and many Muslims were killed. Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās wrote back that if reinforcement was not despatched immediately the Muslims would be defeated and the enemy would enter Arabia. When Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} sought advice from the Companions, they all said that the Khalifa himself should go and fight, only Ḥaḍrat 'Alī did not speak. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} asked him why he was silent, and whether he disagreed with what the people were saying. He said he was against the proposal because he did not believe that the Khalifa should fight in a battle. The Khalifa's job is to support those who are fighting. A nation which spends all its force and has nothing to fall back upon is destroyed. If the Muslims suffer defeat despite your presence in the battle, they will have nowhere to turn and the enemy will overrun Arabia. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} accepted his opinion and did not go into battle.

It therefore becomes clear that the purpose of consultation is not to cast votes but to gather really useful proposals. In the end, the opinion of a few or even a single person might be accepted. This was the system followed by the Companions, and this is what we learn from the Holy Quran, and it should suffice for a man of insight. But since the opposite thinking is current these days, I will speak a little about the advantages of the suggested system, which certainly are more than the

advantages of the system followed by the Anjuman, and the defects that are cited in this system are present in that system as well. Majority opinion, in fact, is not the opinion of the majority, for there is one leader who influences the opinions of all others. It is not a question of the majority, but only a matter of who is able to attract more votes. This is also what happens in the Parliament when members vote to save the government. Not everyone is competent enough to form a correct opinion, therefore most people follow others. Even those who have an opinion of their own are influenced by those who are more powerful, and ultimately join them. Thus one party competes with the other and a constant wrangling goes on. But this does not happen in the Shūrā, since there is no concept of group or party. The concept of Anjuman comes to play when some people wish to move ahead of others, for they know that if everyone is in agreement they will have no opportunity for self-projection. They, therefore, keep wrangling over issues and try to bring people around to their point of view and create parties. We have seen an example of this: as soon as the Anjuman was formed, parties came into existence and the result is self-evident. Although those people have left the Jamā'at, some people are still under the spell of the Anjuman and cannot free themselves from it. Such things happen despite the fact that all the current members of the Anjuman have pledged Bai'at and are devoted members. Some time ago a delegation of Anjuman came to me and said that the work of the Anjuman was being hampered because a certain person had been sent off on some other assignment. They said that he should be reassigned to his previous post. I agreed with them and said that henceforth I will not send him

elsewhere. Soon somebody came to me from some place and requested that he required the assistance of the said person in a court case. I told him that I had promised not to send him anywhere. The man was of an excitable nature and he argued with me, but I stayed firm on what I had already told him. He then contacted an officer of the Anjuman who then sent the man with him. I said that if the Anjuman had meant that the man should not go at the behest of the Khalifa, and only at their own behest, this would lead to friction. There are positive and negative aspects in everything; Islam has adopted the positive ones and discarded the negative ones. Islam does away with autocratic form of government whereby the son—no matter how incompetent—becomes the successor, and instead endorses a government which is based on majority opinion. And when a leader has been appointed, he is required to act with consultation, so that the people do not resort to party politics. Since he cannot nominate even his own son as successor, he cannot pass on the benefits of his office to his heirs. I believe that the Shariah does not permit the Khalifa to nominate his own son as successor, just as Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} declared that the son cannot be a Khalifa. Some people wanted him to nominate his son as his successor, but he refused to do so. Moreover, there is no higher status for which the Khalifa can aspire, hence there is no competition or partisanship. The negative aspects of the Anjuman are thus eliminated. Now, it is not only the right of Indians to become Khalifa of the Promised Messiah^{as}, and it is quite possible that after one or two Khalifas, the next Khalifa may be from among the Arabs or Africans, for this is not the prerogative of any particular class or country. The Khalifa can hail from any place. Thus Islam has made

Khilāfat open to all and has done away with partisanship. Kingdoms are ruined due to dynastic succession. The Khalīfa, on the other hand, inherits neither personal property nor personal advantages, so that he might create disorder. Nor can he transfer the Khilāfat to his heirs, since the system of Khilāfat prevents it. Hence all the hazards of autocracy are also eliminated.

Democratic governments cause ruin through partisanship. This is what is currently leading England and France on a fatal course. But there are no such hazards in the Islamic system. The Roman Catholic system is very similar to the Islamic system, and that is why it has endured for thousands of years, and no other government has lasted so long in this way. However, the major flaw in their system is that they consider the law of their faith as a curse; the Pope can, therefore, effect changes in the teachings as and when he wishes. Though the system continues to function, the faith has lost its purity because the Pope makes all the decisions. This interference also results in disputes. But such things cannot happen in Islam due to the presence of the Holy Quran and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} which bind the Khalīfa to work within their bounds. Thus all the possible flaws have been eliminated and all the essential elements have been put into use. The fundamentals have been comprehensively stated by God Almighty, and the Holy Prophet^{sa} has elucidated them further. A Jew once said that Islam is indeed the true religion, for it contains comprehensive teachings relating to the smallest issues, even such as going to the toilet. The author of a book which was recently published in Germany says that whatever one may say about Islam, it is a complete religion and it leaves nothing out.

Since there are no parties, and the Khalīfa has a relationship with everyone, the relationship is therefore like that of father and son. Brothers may quarrel, but no one stands up against his father. Since the Khalīfa maintains a relationship of love with everyone, they bring their disputes to him and things do not get out of hand.

Advantages of Shūrā: (1) Many new ideas come to light.

(2) Since there is no rivalry, the delegates try to form the correct opinion.

(3) New ideas and solutions emerge during the discussions.

(4) People who come from outside get to know the problems faced by Markaz.

(5) The work of the Khalīfa is facilitated. Since the Khalīfa is also a human being, he can be misled, but the Shūrā helps him to gauge the thinking of the people.

It takes a lot of supervision to prevent people from getting on the wrong track. In the Shūrā people are hesitant to go against their prevalent views until superior arguments are presented to the contrary. The presence of the Khalīfa, therefore, facilitates matters.

The Procedure of Majlis-e-Shūrā: (1) The Khalīfa will give general instructions regarding the proposals that will be discussed, and the things members need to bear in mind.

(2) Sub-committees shall then be formed for each Department, because opinions should not be formed in a hurry. Experienced people should sit down and propose schemes which should then be debated in the Shūrā. The committees should deliberate on the proposals at length and then present their reports for discussion in the general meeting, where the participants should be given the

opportunity to comment on them. If anyone wants to add or remove something from the proposal, or to make some amendment in it, he should stand up and present his suggestion. All such suggestions should then be written down by one or more persons. Each kind of proposal should then be discussed one by one, without reference to any individual. This discussion should also be recorded. At the end of the discussion, or later on, the Khalīfa will give his decision on the matter.

Those who want to speak should stand up, and he who stands up first should be allowed to speak first. Someone should be appointed specifically to note who has stood up first. If many people stand up to speak, they should be allowed to speak one by one. When they are all finished, anyone else who wishes to speak should be asked to speak also. If someone stands up to speak again, he should be allowed to speak only after the others have spoken, unless he wishes to respond to some objection or question relating to his speech. No one should be given more than two chances to speak, for the purpose is to resolve the issues, and not to argue. The person who is appointed to let people speak in turn, shall serve as Assistant to Khalīfatul Masīḥ or his representative. He will assist the Khalīfa so that he is free to focus on other important matters.

Work of the Sub-Committees: (1) The Head of the concerned Department shall be the Chairman of the sub-committee. His deputy, or anyone else whom he appoints for the purpose, shall officiate in his place if he is busy elsewhere.

(2) The committee shall choose its own Secretary.

(3) Efforts should be made to reach a consensus. If this is not possible, the opinion of the majority shall be ac-

cepted. But if those in minority think that their opinion must also be taken into consideration, their opinion shall also be recorded.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1922, pp. 3-18]

DECISIONS OF MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT: BEACON FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in 1924, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} further said:

“Now I take up the proposals which are going to be presented. The Agenda has already been published, and it contains an important matter relating to management. The best time for a people is that which is closest to their Prophet. The Holy Prophet^{sa} said that his time was the best, followed by the one after him and that things would begin to deteriorate afterwards. The Promised Messiah^{as} has also said that his would be the best time, followed by the one after him, and that things would deteriorate after three hundred years. It is, therefore, essential that, in this better period, such regulations should be established for the functioning of the Jamā'at which may serve as a foundation for future generations and they may not be able to deviate from them. We pray that Allah may help this Jamā'at, and we may not see a repetition of the mischief caused by the Paighāmīs [Lahori Ahmadīs], but it is still possible that such people might rise again, or people might come to follow different Khalīfas. Those who rule with power can crush such dissent by force, and most often people do not even dare to stand up against them, but we have no such power, all we have is our faith which allows freedom, how then can we stop such dissent? Therefore, we have to be extra cautious and establish a system in which there should be no danger of dissension,

unless Allah so wills, and none can challenge His will.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1924, p. 11]

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ AND WORLDLY CONFERENCES

During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1925, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh II^{ra} said:

“Our procedure and our method of deliberation is not based on the principles that govern worldly Parliaments and consultative bodies, for their aim is that every party should protect its rights and demand them from the government. Their consultative gatherings are more like a battlefield where opposing armies vie to get their own rights. But our aims are different, and so is our procedure. We do not come here to ask for our rights, for they were specified for us even before our birth... We are not here to demand our rights. And we do not demand our rights from human beings who are likely to make mistakes and fail to give us our full rights.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1925, pp. 2-3]

In the same context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh II^{ra} said:

“We have gathered here, by the grace of God, so that we should think of ways for spreading the light and the truth which God Almighty has sent for the guidance of the world. We are also here to deliberate upon any material, social or political issues that arise in this context, not because we wish to gain personal benefits, but because we wish to benefit mankind at large.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 1-2]

Ḥuḍūr^{ra} also said:

“Other people hold conferences in order to squabble over

their own interests. We, on the other hand, come together to establish peace in the world, and to establish the world upon justice and righteousness. Hence, we speak to the whole world and serve the whole world. This is Allah's great favour upon us."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 19-20]

SHŪRĀ: FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Explaining the difference between Ahmadiyya Majlis-e-Shūrā and other worldly conferences, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

"Worldly conferences try to show immediate results and to present a report before the people, but I have to present my report before Allah, Who has His eyes on the future also. Therefore I am always anxious that everything we do today should serve as a foundation for the future. We should not think only of ourselves, but should work in such a way that we can say to God: If future generations remain cautious, they will not go astray. Thus it is the future I am worried about, and it is for the future that we should lay down the foundation....Future generations will pray for those who have laid down this foundation...The time will come when God Almighty will demonstrate that this work has served as the cornerstone for the Jamā'at."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 19-20]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} also said:

"In worldly consultations, every member has a right to say whatever he wants, whether it is accepted or not, but no one has this right in Khilāfat. It is the prerogative of the Khalīfa to consult people on matters which he considers important, and the Shūrā is bound to offer their sugges-

tions upon those. Shūrā is entitled only to offer its opinion on matters upon which the Khalīfa wishes to consult it."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 42-43]

ADVANTAGES OF CONSULTATION OTHER THAN IN MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1967, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

"As far as consultations are concerned, it is not the right of every member to give his advice. It is only up to the Khalīfa to seek suggestions from the Jamā'at. The two things are completely different. If every member of the Jamā'at was entitled to advise the Khalīfa, there would be thousands who would say that although it is their right to give advice, they choose not to exercise it. But if it is taken as the right of the Khalīfa that all useful suggestions for the progress of the Jamā'at must be sent to him, a person who does not do so becomes guilty of violating this right. In the first instance, he says that it is his right but he foregoes it, but in the second instance he violates the right of the Khalīfa, which can never be allowed. As for general consultations, I am grateful to hundreds of our members who keep on sending their suggestions to me, and some of them are indeed very valuable. But at present we cannot put them into practice due to our limited resources. They are nevertheless useful suggestions and may at a later time be of use to us."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1967, p. 245]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth also said:

"Thus, consultation is of the essence. After the consultation, there can be four possibilities:

(1) Shūrā gives unanimous approval, and Khalīfatul Masīḥ approves it.

(2) A suggestion is upheld by the majority of the Shūrā, and is also approved by Khalīfatul Masīḥ.

(3) A suggestion is not supported by the majority, but is approved by Khalīfatul Masīḥ.

(4) Khalīfatul Masīḥ rejects a proposal that has been unanimously approved by the Shūrā.

The principle is that in all events when a decision has been made, everyone must resolve to comply with it. Thus Shūrā and resolve become one and the same thing."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1978, pp. 5-6]

JURISDICTION OF ISLAMIC SHŪRĀ IS LIMITED TO GENERAL AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth has said:

"Matters relating to finance are the main reason for consultation. This is where Shūrā differs from other worldly conferences. The consultative bodies or Parliaments, which have been elected democratically or otherwise, have the right to formulate all kinds of new laws. In Islamic Shūrā, however, there is no occasion for law-making, nor can there be any question of it, for the Law-Giver has already laid down the laws.

There are two fundamental pillars for every consultative body, whether it is called Majlis-e-Shūrā or Parliament. The first is legislation pertaining to general matters, and the other, which is the most important, is the budget... Since it is not possible for Muslims to legislate during the Shūrā—in the sense that they should interfere with the Divine law by amending it, for the Shariah is final and everlasting—the next most important thing is the budget. The Shūrā deliberates on financial matters and comes to a decision. In this way all the people are taken

into confidence. This exactly is the system which, by the grace of Allah, is established everywhere in the Jamā'at. Hence, in these matters, it is most important that we follow the injunction *أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ* [*Their affairs are decided by mutual consultation*].”

[Friday Sermon, 31 March 1995, Al-Faql International, 12-13 May 1995, p. 5]

THE GLOBAL NATURE OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

Majlis-e-Mushāwarat was regularly held during the auspicious periods of Khilāfat-e-Thāniya and Khilāfat-e-Thālitha, and foreign Jamā'ats were also represented in these Central Shūrās. Ahmadīs from foreign countries who were present in Markaz during the Mushāwarat would also represent their respective countries. In this way Central Majlis-e-Mushāwarat served as an International Shūrā, and it also deliberated upon problems faced by Jamā'ats in other countries.

In 1982, when Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth became Khalīfa, he called a separate session of Majlis-e-Shūrā at the end of his first Jalsa Sālāna, and thus introduced the International element in Majlis-e-Shūrā. This International Shūrā was attended by members from foreign Jamā'ats who were present on the occasion and represented their countries. Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan and the Central Institutions were also represented. This laid the foundation for an International Majlis-e-Shūrā, separate from the Central Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, which was being held continuously since 1922. Ḥuḍūr, in his address, explained how this Shūrā was different from the

other Shūrā. He said:

“Our Majlis-e-Shūrā (which has been held regularly for the last 60 years), in its deliberations keeps in mind the problems faced by Ahmadīs all over the world. Now, however, another Majlis-e-Shūrā has been initiated to specifically consider the issues of Jamā'ats outside Pakistan...This new Majlis-e-Shūrā has not taken away the International status of the Central Majlis-e-Mushāwarat.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, p. 122]

ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ IN EVERY COUNTRY

In 1983, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth undertook a tour of some countries of the Far East. Towards the end of this tour, before inaugurating Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in Sri Lanka, Ḥuḍūrth observed:

“The third programme which is being implemented in all the countries, and shall, *Inshaallāh*, be implemented here also, is the holding of Majlis-e-Shūrā. The Holy Quran has instructed the Holy Prophet^{sa} to consult the Muslims in matters of importance, he therefore always consulted them upon such matters. The Holy Quran also said that after the consultation, the final decision would lie with the Holy Prophet^{sa}, i.e., it was not obligatory upon him to abide by the opinion of the people. The consultation was only meant to acquire useful suggestions. He himself would make the decision, and once he had done so, he was told that Allah would bless his decision; he need not fear anyone and should place his trust in Allah. After the Holy Prophet^{sa}, his Khulafā followed the same procedure; they would consult the Companions, but would themselves take the final decision after praying and seeking guidance from Allah. Although people's suggestions

were accepted in most cases, the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his successors always had the final say in keeping with the Divine injunction.

Expansion of the Existing System of Shūrā: The same practice was followed by the Promised Messiah^{as} and his Khulafā. Nothing was added to this system, but it was organized in a certain way. Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} began the system of holding Majlis-e-Shūrā every year. In 1922, for the first time, he invited delegates from all Jamā'ats and Majlis-e-Shūrā was established as an institution. Since then it has been held more or less every year.

The step I have taken is to establish Majlis-e-Shūrā in every country. This is because if Majlis-e-Shūrā was held in Markaz alone, other Jamā'ats in other countries would remain ignorant of what Shūrā is all about, and how it functions. Moreover, just as the Holy Prophet^{sa} has been asked to *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* [*Consult them in matters of importance*], the Muslims have likewise been told, *أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ* [*Their affairs are decided by mutual consultation*]. Therefore, it is not only those who have been appointed by Allah that are required to hold consultations, but Muslims at large have also been directed to work in consultation with one another. By the grace of Allah, the institution of Shūrā has now been established in most countries of the world. The Shūrā that begins tomorrow morning will probably be the first to be held in Sri Lanka.”

[Report of Ḥudūr's visit to Sri Lanka in 1983, pp. 6-7]

EVOLUTION OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

The institution of Majlis-e-Shūrā in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya progressed gradually and its traditions matured with time. In its present form, Majlis-e-Shūrā

began in Qadian in 1922. It has continued to be held in Qadian, then in Rabwah, and since 1985 it is being held in London. With regard to this evolutionary process, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth had this to say during the International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1990:

“The fact is that I have established the system of Shūrā in all countries. Previously it was being held in Pakistan only, and that Shūrā was considered as representing all the Jamā'ats of the world. Then another Shūrā, known as the International Majlis-e-Shūrā, began to be organized by Tehrīk Jadīd. At the same time, the system of Shūrā was established in different countries and it has now been established as a proper institution in Jamā'ats all over the world. Ahmadīs in these countries are now benefiting from the blessings of Shūrā, just as they benefited from the Central Shūrā. The Markaz supervises these Shūrās and they send their reports regularly to Markaz. If there is any mistake, or a proposal happens to be against the established norms, it is immediately taken note of and rectified. The system is slowly progressing and expanding by the Grace of Allah. Although this consultative institution is acquiring an international status, I still feel that the Central Shūrā, held under Khalīfatul Masīḥ has its own colour and its own distinctive features, which should be introduced.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1990, pp. 53-54]

On the occasion of International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1992, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth spoke about the establishment of Majlis-e-Shūrā in various countries and its favourable results:

[English] “So, *Alḥamdulillāh*, we have finished the business even sooner than we estimated, and, in a very

beautiful atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect, and submitting the proposals only to win Allah's favour, to be in the right, and not in the spirit of debates which are commonly held in Parliament, etc. May Allah help us preserve this purity forever, because, as long as we succeed in preserving this purity of thought, purity of counselling, purity of intention and purpose, this Shūrā will remain unique in the world, as it is unique today. And, I wanted to add this, when you hold your respective Shūrās in your countries—as already, with the grace of Allah, this practice has started with immense benefits to the Ahmadīs of different countries—you must remember that the same tradition should be reproduced ditto to the Central Shūrās held under various Caliphs, and, in accordance with the holy traditions of Central Shūrā. If you do that—I know how seriously Ahmadīs are moving in that direction in every country, then *Inshaallāh*—the system will be preserved. Because, Central Majlis-e-Shūrā is not safe until that spirit is implanted with purity in the worldwide Ahmadiyya Communities, and all know what Shūrā is. If we fail to do that then the Central Shūrā will not be understood by people who will join us later on. And they will consider it to be a sort of imposition of views of a certain country on rest of the world. And these were some fears, among other reasons, why I started to institutionalize Majlis-e-Shūrā in all countries of the world, wherever possible. With the grace of Allah, the results so far are most encouraging and wonderful. I am particularly happy to observe that ever since I requested the countries where Shūrā is held to submit to me their detailed reports, as to what passed and what happened and how and in what style a submission was presented, I have been noticing deviations which might have taken

place in the future. And I am horrified to note that if that step had not been taken in time, what would have happened to the future generation when discussions of such nature came up later on. Now, despite the fact that my sermons are reaching directly to all the Jamā'ats of the world, as far as possible, and on Shūrā my derivations and observations have also been conveyed to all Jamā'ats, yet here and there speakers stand up and express their views in a style which is so alien to Ahmadiyya viewpoint and Ahmadiyya traditions.

So that is why it is highly essential for a Khalīfā to be there, not theoretically there, but practically, to watch the trends of the Jamā'ats universally, and to be personally familiar with the trends of thought everywhere in the world, and the style in which those thoughts are expressed. We have the special blessings of Allah in this period that Ahmadīs as a whole, with very few exceptions—one in a million, or less than that—are totally committed to the word of the Khalīfā. And they accept that word, not in formality, but with all their heart. So, with the grace of Allah, these corrections are made, which could have commanded such respect and such love as in the early period of Ahmadiyyat. As we have noticed, those who remember the time of Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} when he gave his opinion at the end of a discussion...every heart changed and every mind changed and submitted to the final verdict of Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}. Now I am so glad that this was not only limited to the attitudes of Ahmadīs to him. Later on I saw the same attitude vis-à-vis Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth throughout the history of Shūrā when he presided, and then the same was passed on to my era. With the grace of Allah, this is now spreading

to the whole world. I have been receiving reports from Africa—from Nigeria, Ghana, etc., and ultimately when I made observation, in places I disagreed with proposals, in places I took exception to the style in which certain proposals were discussed, and I have not a single complaint to make. Every time my opinion reached the country concerned, they submitted totally with full accord. So, with the grace of Allah, this is a very epoch-making period in the sense that we are preparing this institution to be handed down to generations later on, intact, pure and healthy, as we received it from our forefathers. So when you return to your respective countries, please remember—this is a very important thing, very essential to the survival of Ahmadiyyat and the spirit of Ahmadiyyat—Shūrā is the most sacred institution after Khilāfat in the Ahmadiyya Community, like it was according to the Holy Quran...The most sacred institution mentioned in the Quran is Shūrā, where the right to consult others is given to the Holy Prophet^{sa} but no advice can be imposed on him. It is in exactly the same style and the same noble tradition that Majlis-e-Shūrā was introduced by the late Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}. And this is one of his great contributions to Ahmadiyyat which alone should justify him being called a Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}. The benefit of this will be to the end of time. For us it is to preserve those noble traditions. For us it is to safeguard against possibilities from all sides. For us it is to deeply implant in the hearts and attitudes of minds of the present generation, and to see to it that they will convey the same institution down to the next generations—healthy, intact and with the same noble traditions. That is why I mentioned to you that, traditionally, I should have changed my assistant at the time of committee, because

this is how I saw Khulafā working. So an occasional exceptional deviation is made, but it is mentioned clearly that it should not be taken as a future course of events. It is just a small deviation from the past, and that deviation is also taken because it is a small affair. It is not central to the spirit at all. It is just a form. Otherwise, I would never have taken that exceptional decision.

So try to preserve the form as well as possible, because the form protects the spirit. And try to imitate Majlis-e-Shūrā Central to the very word, and letter, and spirit everywhere you hold Majlis-e-Shūrā, and continue to submit the reports to me so that I can have a general view of what is happening, and notice in time if a deviation is being made here and there, because I know it will be corrected, *Inshaallāh*, and the correction will be wholeheartedly accepted.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1992, pp. 43-45]

EXTRAORDINARY BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth has said:

“The institution of Majlis-e-Shūrā is extremely important for the Jamā‘at. Although eight to ten years ago Majlis-e-Shūrā was already established in the Jamā‘at as a Central institution, and an International Majlis-e-Shūrā would also be convened after the Jalsa, and suggestions from other countries would also be included in the Central Majlis-e-Shūrā, Majlis-e-Shūrā was still not held in other countries. But since the Holy Quran has laid great emphasis on consultation, and Shūrā is the most important institution in Islamic System after Khilāfat, and it also helps in the education and training of the Jamā‘at, I, therefore, decided that it should be established in every

country. And ever since this institution has been established in the West, in Africa and in some Eastern Countries, by the Grace of Allah, extraordinary signs of strength and vigour have appeared in the Jamā'ats. In addition to many other advantages, participation in Majlis-e-Shūrā enables members to establish a responsible relationship with the Jamā'at. Everyone who attends Majlis-e-Shūrā as a delegate and deliberates upon different issues, realizes that it is a very important institution in which the entire Jamā'at is represented."

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, pp. 1-2]

SHŪRĀ—LIFELINE OF THE ISLAMIC ORDER

In a Friday Sermon, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

"After Khilāfat, Majlis-e-Shūrā is the most important institution in the Jamā'at, for the two have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and in them lies the life of the Islamic order. That is why I am stressing the importance of Majlis-e-Shūrā all over the world, and I am also endeavouring to keep an eye on them, so that if and when some fault is observed, it is immediately rectified, so that no wrong tradition is passed on from us to the next generation. The traditions of Majlis-e-Shūrā are spread over a long period of the Khilāfat of Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}. They are extremely valuable traditions, and the picture of Majlis-e-Shūrā which is imprinted upon one's mind after studying these traditions is the same that I am trying to inculcate in these Majālis-e-Shūrā, and this is what I will continue to do in the future."

[Friday Sermon, 30 April 1993, London, p. 12]

On the opening day of Majlis-e-Shūrā Germany, held on 28th April, 1995, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

"I wish to inform the German Jamā'at that although as an institution Majlis-e-Shūrā has attained maturity and people now understand how far members of Majlis-e-Shūrā are at liberty, and at what point the Shariah laid down by Allah holds them back and seals their tongues and forbids them from going any further. Thus, as far as the formal order and discipline is concerned, the system has been very much regularized and people now understand the system. Everyone is aware of his rights as well as his responsibilities."

[Friday Sermon, 28 April 1995, Al-Faql International, 9-15 June 1995, p. 5]

A REQUIREMENT OF THE NEW CENTURY OF AHMADIYYAT

In his message to Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1993, held in Rabwah, Pakistan, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

"*Alḥamdulillāh*, Majlis-e-Shūrā has now become a truly global institution. It has been introduced in many countries outside Pakistan, and in some it has been properly established. *Alḥamdulillāh*, Majlis-e-Shūrā everywhere is functioning in keeping with the same values which you preserved in Qadian and are now preserving in Rabwah. It is now becoming clearer by the day that the greatest need of this century is to establish the system of Majlis-e-Shūrā in all countries, in keeping with high traditions and values of the Jamā'at. It should also serve as a precious gift from the previous century to Jamā'ats that are stepping into the new century."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā Pakistan 1993, p. 3]

GLOBAL IMPACT OF MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT

International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1993 was a historic event, in that two honourable members of Parliament from

Burkina Faso were also among the delegates, as was a Mayor from a city in Ivory Coast. On this historic occasion, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Maṣīḥ IVth said:

[English] "I would like to announce something which may be of interest to all of you because I think it is the first time in the History of Ahmadiyyat that members of Parliament of a country have also become members of Ahmadiyya Parliament of consultation, and that has happened in the case of two members of Burkina Faso. They are sitting members of their Parliament, who have also become, for the first time, members of this consultative body. Allah bless them. This should be recorded as another mark in the history of the progress of Ahmadiyyat.

Again, I do not remember if ever a sitting Mayor of a city was made a member of the Ahmadiyya Majlis Shūrā, and this time this has also happened. A Mayor from Ivory Coast who attended this Jalsa Sālāna, as you well know, himself opted to become a regular Ahmadi. He said, I should be accepted in the fold of Ahmadiyyat. So when I met him I said, "Yes, you are accepted in the fold of Ahmadiyyat and in the fold of my spiritual sons." He was delighted by that remark and asked me what name you would propose for me. I said another member who came from your country wanted my daughter's name for this daughter, why not my name [for you], so he said, "Yes I am very happy about that." This elated his spirit very much and he said, "I promise that when I return to my country I will make my entire Mayordom an Ahmadi Mayordom, and then I will invite you and say: See for yourself! *Alḥamdulillāh*! Allah bless him and give him strength, and he may be the first drop of rain vis-à-vis other Mayors coming and joining the fold of Ahmadiyyat

in Ivory Coast. This is also a historic event that a regular Mayor of a city has also become a member of Majlis-e-Shūrā. This should also go into the records of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1993, pp. 7-8]

OBJECTIVES OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

Although the Promised Messiah^{as} had begun the system of consultations in conformity with Islamic traditions during his lifetime, he had also given the glad tiding of *Qudrat-e-Thāniya* (Second Manifestation) which would continue to the last day. Accordingly, all the Khulafā, in their own time, have done remarkable work in strengthening this institution and establishing it on firm grounds. The evolutionary process which Mushāwarat, as an institution, has passed through during the time of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} is remarkable in the history of the Jamā‘at. The establishment of the consultative process on permanent and sound basis is an achievement which points to a glorious future for the Jamā‘at. Through this institution, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} inculcated the habit of mutual consultations in the matters of the Jamā‘at, which consequently helped to sharpen and broaden their minds and created a culture of thought and reflection among them. It also gave them the zeal and enthusiasm to forge ahead. It is a most auspicious and blessed system which continues to open up new ways of progress for the Jamā‘at.

Why did Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} feel the need to establish Mushāwarat as a regular institution, and what was its significance and its aim in his eyes? To answer these questions, let us again turn to an extract from *Sīrat Faḍl-e-‘Umar*:

Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1922, which was the first step in the establishment of this regular institution, is of great significance in the history of the Jamā'at. Of particular importance is the inaugural address delivered by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} on that occasion, in which he highlighted the aims and objectives of Majlis-e-Shūrā—the Islamic system of consultation—the etiquette to be observed, the responsibilities of the participants, the method of deliberating upon the Agenda and the significance of the Shūrā's decisions. This address definitely serves as a charter for the system of Shūrā in the Jamā'at. It is a river flowing with knowledge, wisdom and reflection, and is evidence of his superior qualities, which must be present in a great reformer. Here I will reproduce some extracts from that address, which should suffice as an introduction to the institution of Shūrā in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya. Speaking of the importance of Shūrā, Ḥuḍūr^{ra} said:

“First of all I would like to tell you about this Majlis, which was previously called Conference. From the Holy Quran we learn that it should be the practice of Muslims to *أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ* i.e. decide their affairs through mutual consultation. Consultation is very useful and essential, and nothing worthwhile can be accomplished without it. The purpose of this Majlis, in a few words, is to bring together members of the Jamā'at and to discuss with them matters relating to the progress and strengthening of the Jamā'at, so that the work can be facilitated and members made aware of the needs and requirement of the Jamā'at. This is the essence of Majlis-e-Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1922, p. 3]

Speaking about the great importance and significance of Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

“Our Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is not worth ignoring. At present it may not be possible to perceive its significance, for it is yet like a seed, and even the greatest tree is at one time only a seed. When we see that some of the delegates who come to attend this Majlis belong to small towns and villages, some come from places where there are only four or five Ahmadīs, and that most of the members come only from within India, it is hard to conceive that our consultations have anything to do with our future progress. But, we must remember, the future before us is not as limited as it might appear today, it is indeed a bright and glorious future that awaits us—far brighter and more glorious than any that a victorious nation has ever seen. No nation has ever been given the tidings that it shall reach such pinnacles of greatness and splendour that all other nations will be as nothing compared to it, and will become as weak and insignificant as the menials. But this is exactly what has been foretold about our future through the Promised Messiah^{as}. We have been told that Islam and Ahmadiyyat will continue to progress until other faiths will become insignificant and Islam will reign supreme over the world. No other nation has ever had such a future. With this in mind, we can understand how our consultations are going to affect the world. I do not speak about the time when representatives of the Jamā'at will come from the world over and will represent four, five or six people, I rather speak of the time when the delegates will represent millions of people, when the decisions taken in this Majlis will not affect four or five hundred thousand people, but will transform the world

from East to West, North to South. We cannot say that only at that time will these consultations be of importance, they are important even now, in fact they are even more important, for that future will be born out to today. Future generations will not be able to easily change these decisions, due to the respect and honour people have for their forefathers, just as the decisions taken close to the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} are given greater importance in Islam, and are referred to as Ijmā' (consensus) and sunna...In view of all this, you can understand how important it is for you to pray fervently before giving an opinion and how deeply you should reflect before offering your suggestions."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1926, pp. 2-3]

Regarding the extraordinary importance of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} once said:

"I see that Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is assuming great importance in the Jamā'at, and this is how it should be...The fact is that Khilāfat cannot be beneficial unless it is supported by the process of consultation. Majlis-e-Shūrā was always important in the sight of Allah, but the Jamā'at was not giving sufficient attention to it. It is, however, doing so now.

This time two or three Jamā'ats have made submissions that so and so should represent them and so and so should not, whereas in the past they would select anyone who was willing to spare time. This time the Jamā'ats have elected their representatives after proper deliberation, and this is the positive spirit.

Our Jamā'at should realize that the dignity and honour of Majlis-e-Shūrā does not come from the chair and benches

that are placed here, rather its real importance is that which it has in the eyes of Allah. Can anyone say that the Holy Prophet^{sa} was honoured because of the dress he wore? No, indeed, his honour was due to the status Allah had bestowed on him. Although at present our Majlis-e-Shūrā does not enjoy any importance in the world, a time comes when the members of the greatest Parliaments of the world shall not have the status which the delegates of this Shūrā shall have, for all Parliaments shall be under it. Membership of Shūrā is a great honour and time comes when kings shall be proud of its membership. The Jamā'at needs to realize its importance even more, and it should be called twice a year so that the issues can be deliberated upon."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, p. 14]

The importance of Majlis-e-Shūrā can also be seen from the emphasis that is placed on participation in its sub-committees. During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1956, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

"It is only 34 years since the process of consultation formally began in our Jamā'at, but the British have been doing this for the last one thousand years. We have never heard of their members absenting themselves; they, in fact, consider it an honour to attend the sessions of Parliament and participate in its proceedings with enthusiasm. But the situation here is that some members of a committee, which had been set up to discuss an important issue of the Jamā'at, did not turn up for the meeting. It would seem that they consider it an honour to attend the meetings of the District Board, but do not care for the meetings of the Jamā'at. A believer, on the con-

trary, should consider it more prestigious to attend the meetings of the Jamā'at than to become a member of Parliament. Unless this spirit is born in the Jamā'at, it cannot continue to do its work successfully. To ensure continuity and progress, it is important to include the members in the process of consultation, and if they are not interested in the affairs of the Jamā'at, our work may continue to an extent but there will be no real progress.

Do as you wish, but remember that the day comes when those who involve themselves in the activities of the Jamā'at will be greatly honoured, and the descendants of those who do not take interest in these things will be rejected. When great powers like Britain and America will send their representatives for consultation, and will consider it an honour, these people's descendants will want to be included in the consultations, but they will be sent away and will be told that since their ancestors had rejected this process in their time and did not care for the work of the Jamā'at, they, too, cannot be included in these consultations.

Get rid of this callousness and remember that those who attend the meetings of the Jamā'at are so blessed by God that even the membership of the American Congress is worthless against it. Try to attend these meetings at all costs, and if you do not, the Jamā'at will lose nothing because of your absence, while you will surely deprive yourself of Divine rewards. The Jamā'at was functioning even when there was no Shūrā, and it continues to function now when there is Shūrā. So, regardless of whether you participate in it or not, the work of the Jamā'at will go on. If you do not consider it an honour to serve the Jamā'at, your descendents will be deprived of future re-

wards. People are wont to acquire valuable properties for the benefit of their descendants, you too will be leaving behind a valuable legacy for your children if you continue to actively participate in the activities of the Jamā'at."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1956, pp. 22-25]

PURPOSE OF MUSHĀWARAT

During Majalis-e-Shūrā 1925-1940, Ḥadīrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} continued to highlight the importance of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. Here we reproduce a few extracts from his speeches:

"The purpose for which we have gathered here is to understand how best can we fulfil our obligations and perform our duties. This being the sole purpose of our gathering, there can be no question of any dispute or wrangling among us. We have come here for only one purpose, and that is to find ways of adequately fulfilling our obligations. People who come here for this purpose and understand their responsibility can have no wish to quarrel with one another...When offering our opinions, we should not be hasty, nor become angry, nor should our opinions be influenced by our like or dislike for some person.

A believer belongs to the throne of the Almighty. He may physically be on earth but his thoughts are high and sublime, for he reflects the attributes of Allah. Hence he is above all prejudice. He does not segregate between young and old, ignorant and learned, acquaintances and strangers; they are all equal in his eyes. You should, therefore, remember your status as a believer when you take part in deliberations and when expressing your opinions, and do not unduly hurt the feelings of anyone.

This is not such a difficult thing, what is even more diffi-

cult is to desist from forming an opinion in ignorance. This means that whatever opinion you express should be motivated by sincerity and good intentions. At times, a person may not realize that his opinion is being tempered by his own personal prejudices, while this in fact is the case. Therefore, if he sees that his opinion is always opposed to some other person, even though the majority supports him, he should understand this is due to his inner prejudice, otherwise why should he always oppose the thinking of a particular person. This normally happens when some thoughts that are lurking at the back of our mind influence our opinion and lead us on the path of hostility and opposition.

Whenever you form an opinion, always keep the fear of Allah and His pleasure in your mind, for the smallest error can prove fatal to your faith, and a single misstep can cause such damage as might take centuries to rectify...

The issues that we discuss here will affect millions and billions of people. No one knows to what extent our Jamā'at will progress, but the Promised Messiah^{as} has told us that it will spread so far and wide that people of other faiths will become inconsequential. Our future generations will be affected by our decisions. Therefore, my advice to you is to always keep the fear of Allah in your mind."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1925, pp. 3-5]

THE SPIRIT OF SHŪRĀ AND MUTUAL CONSULTATIONS

"Coming together once a year and voting for certain proposals is more or less a formality, and these consultations do not always prove to be beneficial. I, for one, know that precious few things come up in these consultations that I do not already know... Sometimes the things being

said are altogether wrong, but we still have to listen to them. This is because the purpose of holding such meetings and consultations is to develop the spirit of cooperation and to come up with suggestions for the progress of the Jamā'at. If this aim is not achieved, then it will be futile to hold such consultations. It is completely wrong to imagine that, like Europeans, we too have established some kind of Parliament of our own. When we have withdrawn from the world, cut ourselves off from people, and settled in an isolation—where there are no worldly honours and benefits—our aim is surely not to imitate the Europeans in anything. Our sole aim and purpose is to please God Almighty. Let people say what they want, we should keep ourselves focussed on what Allah says and what our Prophet^{sa} proclaims and urges us to do. We can only succeed if we follow the path outlined for us, and never otherwise.

I, therefore, urge you to pay more attention to this task, for the time will soon run out. Great changes are in the offing and a tremendous revolution is round the corner. So what is required of us in practical terms is to bring about a transformation in ourselves, to live up to the pledges we have made, to abide by the truth, and to love Allah and His Messenger^{sa}. By thus bringing about a positive change in ourselves, we will be able to win Allah's favour. It is our duty to distribute among our friends and other people the wealth of knowledge that God has given us."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, pp. 125-126]

VICTORY OF ISLAM IS LINKED TO MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth also continued to stress the need for strengthening the institution of Shūrā. He said

that in the strengthening of Majlis-e-Shūrā lay the secret of the victory of Islam. In his opening address on the occasion of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1966, Ḥuḍūrth said:

“You have all gathered here to give suggestions about some important matters on which Khalīfatul Masīḥ wishes to consult you. As the purpose of this gathering is only to seek the pleasure of Allah, let us first bow down to Him in humility and meekness, and solicit His help and guidance, so that our Beloved and Loving God may keep our deliberations free from anger, jealousy, malice and egotism. May He enable us to reach the conclusions that should strengthen Islam, and should hasten the day which centuries have waited for—the day when Islam will become victorious over all other faiths. We are insignificant and our efforts are of no consequence, but our God is All-Powerful. He can, if He so wishes, bless our efforts, and we do sincerely hope that He will bless our efforts, and the purpose for which He has created us and established the Ahmadiyya Jamā'at shall be fulfilled. Let us now pray.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, pp. 7-8]

ROLE OF SHŪRĀ IN THE STABILITY OF THE JAMĀ'AT

During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1923, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} spoke about the need for consultations despite the presence of Khilāfat.

“A Jamā'at must have a nucleus, and the most suitable option is that there should be a Khalifa, who should be independent in his views and judgement. He should receive recommendations from others and accept only those which he considers appropriate, and reject those which he understands to be harmful for the faith, even if

the whole Jamā'at supports them. And whatever Allah puts in his heart in its place and establishes him upon it, he should put it before the people and they should accept it and follow it."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, p. 7]

Ḥudūr also said:

"Despite the presence of the Khalīfa there is still need for consultation...I established this institution in the Jamā'at in keeping with the way of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Consultation is necessary despite the presence of Khilāfat."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, p. 6]

In the same context, Ḥudūr said:

"No Khilāfat can remain established without consultation."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, p. 8]

Similarly, in his last Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ III^{rh} said:

"We have been commanded:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ
عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

(Āl-e-'Imrān, 3:160)

[And consult them in matters of importance; and when thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah. Surely, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him.]

Consultation is very important and there is great wisdom in it. Every man thinks and reflects in a different way, this is why everyone is given an opportunity to freely put forward what he considers to be beneficial for the Jamā'at.

Another wisdom in this system is that the one who seeks

advice should not become arrogant and imagine that he is the only one who can conceive of better ideas. But the decision still lies with him. He must listen, but he does not have to accept.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1982, pp. 7-8]

Speaking about Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“Just like Khilāfat and the Jamā'at, Shūrā and the Jamā'at are also inseparable. This is why I believe that if the system of Shūrā becomes fully established in the Jamā'at—just as Khilāfat has already become established, by the grace of Allah, the structure of the Jamā'at will become so strong that no power in the world will be able to destroy it.”

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, p. 2]

UNIQUE CHARACTER OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

During the International Majlis-e-Shūrā in 1989, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

[English] “The Ahmadiyya system of Majlis-e-Shūrā is a unique system in the world. Absolutely! there is no peer, no equal to this system anywhere. I was thinking of this in comparison to those countries where they have a single party House. It may be misunderstood by some that this also is a single party House. It is not so. There are many single party Houses in communist countries, in African countries, but this is a ‘no party House’. This is the distinction which you must always maintain and keep in view. Everyone is a ‘party’ member if it is a ‘party’, so practically it is a ‘no party’ House. Everyone has an equal right, an equal obligation as well. This system is manifested at its peak, at its most beautiful expression,

when these Majālis-e-Shūrā are attended by the Caliph of the time himself. Then order is most perfectly maintained. Then everybody is very cautious that he should not say anything which should even inadvertently hurt the feelings of others. So he is very cautious about choosing his words, and so on and so forth. What I was thinking about during these discussions was that this system should be maintained in its purity everywhere in the world as if the Caliph is also present there when somebody else is chairing. I thought how can be this achieved? Then, immediately, I was reminded of *Taqwa* again. Thinking of Khalīfa being present is not enough. I rejected this idea. My train of thought went to the ultimate end, that always thinking that God is present. When we begin to forget that, we go awry, we go astray, we become corrupted. Everything goes about our deliberations. So this is my last message. Carry it home. Remind everyone when you get together for consultations that we are sitting in the presence of God and before expressing our opinions we must consult ourselves, search our hearts and see to it that whatever we thought was in the presence of God, if it was taking shape in the recesses of your hearts under the sight of God, then whatever you say would be blessed. If there were some periods in which you felt as if you were not observed by God, then I assure you that there you must have made some mistakes. So I hope you'll keep this in view. I remember, when training my first child I used to emphasize to her that she should not do this or do that because there is God. Although she could little understand what it was, I wanted to train her in this particularly, because I would not be there throughout my life, I would not be with her. So the only safe rule I thought would be to train her to always

concentrate on the presence of God. Children are very very intelligent, of course, and once perhaps I had overdone it. So once she was about to jump on the sofas and I looked at her. She turned back to me and said, "God has gone out, please. For the time being there is no God." (laughter) Now this is pardonable from a child. She innocently could think that God had temporarily left her, but it is not pardonable among adults. So never think that God has left you. Please, this is my message."

In his Friday Sermon on the opening day of Majlis-e-Shūrā Germany, 1995, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

"If we can establish the institution of Mushāwarat with the utmost care, and close the doors to any tendency that is contrary to *Taqwa*, I am sure that, by the grace of Allah, the Jamā'at will progress at a great speed."

[Friday Sermon, 28 April 1995, Al-Faḍl International, 9-15 June 1995, p. 5]

THE EXEMPLARY INSTITUTION OF MUSHĀWARAT

Addressing the delegates of International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1990, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

[English] "This is Ahmadiyya system as you have observed today and witnessed today. A few days ago, not a few days, but a few months ago, an important Minister from an African country met me and wanted my advice as to what should be done about the system of government in his respective country and other African countries. Many African countries now run on a single-party system, which is considered to be the right form of democracy suitable for them. And when you speak of multi-party system, the party in power does not tolerate it and will not hear of it. So he wanted my advice as to what he should suggest to the government that should be

done, from Islamic point of view, of course. So I said the answer is very simple, it should be a no-party system. Neither one-party system is Islamic nor multi-party system is Islamic. No-party system is the only advisable system which can work truly democratically right to the grass root level, where the loyalties are not to the party but to the ideas. The loyalties are to wisdom, to common sense, to the real requirements of the people as a whole.

So this is the Ahmadiyya system. There is no party and everyone is not only free, but is completely and totally unrestricted to follow any group here, or Jamā'at or anybody else. He has to express his opinion openly and freely according to his own conscience and his own concepts of what is right and what is wrong. Preserve this system. Do not let partisan spirits encroach into your healthy system which is devised by God in the Holy Quran. And this was the system which was enacted throughout by Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Muṣṭafā^{sa}. He freely consulted people and that is exactly what he was advised by Allah: *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* i.e., in all important matters consult others. This is the true Islamic Parliament, which is a constant process, but occasionally people are called together, representatives like you who are specially consulted on some important matter from time to time. But the spirit which I want you to always preserve and guard with all your life and honour whatever you can, is the spirit of non-partisanship, the institution of non-partisan aspect of the Ahmadiyya consultative bodies.

And that is why I take very strong exception to the beginning of partisan attitudes in the Jamā'ats. And sometimes people think that I take very extreme measures in dealing with this. When I sometimes hear of it, I

immediately turn the people involved in this crime out of the Community. I say you may continue to call yourself Ahmadi, but I have no relationship with you. Because this will be the beginning of the end of everything good in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya.

To be loyal to God is to be loyal to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, is to be loyal to his subordinates, and it works downwards right to the ultimate end. And, to be loyal only to them, means to be loyal to the values they stand for. That is the only meaning of loyalty. So, that is why I explained this point very clearly in answer to a question raised by Mr. 'Abdur Raḥīm. You know I told him that to disagree with the Khalīfa is not a crime, to disagree with the Khalīfa in the sense as Islam permits—respectfully, of course—not in a manner as to injure the sensibilities of the Jamā'at with regards to their love for the Khalīfa, or to insult the Khalīfa as a representative of the institution. That would earn Allah's displeasure. I have no doubt about it. But to express the opinion honestly, genuinely is a must, and not to express your opinion when required is a crime, because the loyalty to the goodness of Islam requires that, whenever required, you speak up the truth as you know. So the loyalties are ultimately to the truth and because the Prophets and their successors are wedded constantly and permanently with the truth. So to speak out the truth will never hurt them. It always pleases. But to choose a word with a view to please the Khalīfa, even if you consider that it is not the whole truth, or truth at all, that is a crime. I remember once, during the time of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra}, I found some office-bearers of the Jamā'at trying to read the mind of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} so that they would please him, and they could never please

him. He was always angry with them. Once I spoke to some person, I said: 'Behave! What you are doing is *Shirk*, and *Shirk* can never please a Khalīfa. Your goal is to please him, and when you judge him because you are distorted within, you judge according to your own measures. So, instead of trying to judge him, know what the Holy Quran says. Familiarize yourself with the traditions of Islam, and when you show your loyalty to those traditions, even if your personal judgement is that it may displease the Khalīfa, you should learn that your judgement is wrong. You should judge that you have ill-treated your own Khalīfa by considering him to have an opinion which is against your knowledge of the Holy Quran. So thereby you can never please him. So the ultimate advice to you is: always please God. And when you do that, you will always please every godly person, whoever he is. You will never displease anyone, any officer who is godly, I mean. If somebody is sordid, let him be displeased. You do not miss anything, you do not lose anything if you displease a person who is not permanently identified with the values of Islam.

So guard these values. It is a very precious institution. No other institution in the world exists as the institution of Shūrā in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya. The last thing which is mentioned in the Holy Quran regarding the Shūrā is *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ*. The decision lies with you. You must consult people but, having consulted them—because you are not loyal to the party, because you, of all the people, are loyal to God more than anybody else—so take your decision after consultation, according to what you judge the right thing to please God. So, that is why consultation is left out after that. It is said *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ* when

you have made a final conclusion and have reached a judgement—because your decision is in relation to God—then you must stick to it firmly.

And تَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ that is the part which has disclosed the secret of the philosophy. From تَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ I infer that عَزَمْتَ means: Because you have taken the decision to please God, it is the responsibility of God to help you, and He will.

So this is how I read the underlying message of this verse, and this is what I want you to understand and always practice meticulously. Allah be with you and may Allah always be pleased with us and with our thinking phenomenon. The result may be wrong, but if the thinking phenomenon is pleasing to God, we have nothing to fear.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1990, pp. 96-100]

This was the gist of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth in which he directed Majlis-e-Shūrā to guard against negative tendencies. In the same context, he also instructed the Jamā'at to protect itself from innovations in religion and deviation from the right path. Ḥuḍūr said:

[English] “But this is the process through which innovations are sifted out. Shūrā is one of the instruments which helps Khalīfatul Masīḥ to realize that there is a danger of innovation. So, as such, it is not objectionable. This has been discussed before and this argument has been entertained, alright, in principle. Later on, if the other side made the rest convinced on particularly, they let us say make the Khalīfatul Masīḥ convinced, there is no innovation involved, then the matter was carried.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1991, pp. 23-24]

The system of Mushāwarat in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya is free from any sort of influence from the representatives of the auxiliary organizations. Rather, the distinctive feature of this consultative body is to take up issues of a universal nature, on the basis of truth and wisdom. In the same Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥuḍūr said:

[English] "Everyone who comes to this forum is free to speak for himself, and his representation of groups ends there. It is only revived when the group's interests are being discussed on the Agenda. Lajna vs. Ansār or anything; then, of course, Lajna member represents the interests of Lajna. But we have been sent here from different quarters, from different organizations, or different areas, to represent, not just their thinking, because they all send Ahmadīs to this forum to represent truth and represent wisdom. So this is why Ahmadiyya Majlis-e-Shūrā is not at all like any other such organization or institution in the world. Here you have no loyalties to the groups that sent you here. But you have only loyalty to truth and wisdom and understanding. So when you submit a proposal to the Khalifa, you must remember that you are submitting it with the consciousness that God is watching you and God expects you to submit only that which is good for the ultimate interest of truth. So forget about your allegiance to Lajna altogether. It is your allegiance only to God and to the truth, and you are free to express yourself as best as you please. With this amended concept of your participation, now I give you another chance to clearly speak as to whether you support the Shūrā sub-committee's proposal."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1991, pp. 36-37]

THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURE OF MUSHĀWARAT IN JAMĀ'AT-E-AHMADIYYA

The establishment of Majlis-e-Shūrā in the Jamā'at is, in fact, the revival of the Islamic system of Mushāwarat. It might seem to resemble worldly Parliaments in some ways, but it is in fact purely religious in nature. Its only purpose is to make collective efforts to bring the world together upon one faith—Islam. In Chapter II, we have detailed the distinction between Majlis-e-Shūrā and worldly institutions, and have quoted the words of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth and Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth on the subject. But this topic cannot be complete without the following extract from Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IV'sth book *Sīrat Faḍl-e- 'Umar*:

Majlis-e-Shūrā was established as a purely religious institution. Any resemblance to worldly Parliaments is solely superficial. Describing the objectives of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} has said:

“Allah has once again given us the opportunity to come together in order to invite the world towards Islam and towards spirituality, while the world holds consultations for its material progress. The rest of the world strives for material gains, but we are gathered here, by the grace of God, to spread the light which He has sent for the guidance of the world and to think of schemes to accomplish this task. We shall also be deliberating on social and political issues which result from our schemes, but our aim will not be to gain anything for ourselves, rather it will all be for the benefit of the world at large. It is the hallmark of every Jamā'at established by a Prophet, that all their efforts are directed, not at gaining anything for

themselves, but to help others. Therefore, if we too want to be counted among the followers of a Prophet, then all our efforts and our plans should be such that they benefit the world, regardless of whether they are Ahmadīs or non-Ahmadīs, Muslims or non-Muslims. It is our duty to serve everyone, for, a believer is a servant of mankind.

God be praised, that while other people hold conventions to squabble over their own interests, we, on the other hand, come together to establish peace in the world, and to establish the world on justice and righteousness. Hence we speak to the whole world, and we serve the whole world. This is a great favour of God upon us.” (Report Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1931, pp. 1-2)

...The progressive development of Majlis-e-Shūrā presents a very interesting study. This institution flourished and progressed under the direct supervision of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} from 1922 to 1965. All the new branches that grew out of it, and whatever form it took, reflected two important concepts:

1. The concept of the Consultative system of Islam as visualized by Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīruddīn Maḥmūd Ahmad^{ra}.
2. The crucial role he played in putting his concepts into practice.

The system of Shūrā, as implemented by Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya, makes a very interesting study particularly in this age. It presents solid material for scholars and researchers who are interested in the comparative study of religions, and particularly between the various religious and non-religious consultative systems.

Here it will not be out of place to mention that afterwards Maulānā Maudūdī, the head of Jamā'at-e-Islamī, established a system of Shūrā in Jamā'at-e-Islamī as well.

Regardless of how much he benefited from our system of Shūrā, or did not, the comparative study of the two systems will be of great interest to future researchers and scholars, and it will become obvious as to which of the two systems is worthy of being called a Divine system and a system established under direct heavenly guidance.

Let us now present an outline of the system of Mushāwarat in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya.

(1) It is directly related to and dependant upon Khilāfat. Khalīfatul Masīh, in keeping with the injunction *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* [*Consult them in matters of importance*], may invite the opinion of relevant people as and when he wishes.

(2) Every such meeting begins with prayers and remembrance of God, so that all decisions are made with *Taqwa*, and with Divine help and guidance.

(3) Every member is at liberty to express his views freely with the permission of the Chair. But the speaker should address himself directly to Khalīfatul Masīh and not to the audience. Khalīfatul Masīh has full authority to accept or reject the views of the majority.

This is the basic outline of the system of Mushāwarat in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya. Let us now turn to the subject of its gradual evolution, and highlight some aspects of this process, particularly those which reflect upon the mental or spiritual brilliance of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh.

The initial method adopted by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh II^{ra} for selecting members of Shūrā was as follows: He would extend personal invitation to some people, whom he knew to be sagacious and competent, to attend Majlis-e-Shūrā. But most of the delegates were those who had been nomi-

nated by various Jamā'ats in view of their ability and their competence in matters that were to be deliberated upon. There was no limit as to the number of delegates, but as the Jamā'at grew and people started taking greater interest in Mushāwarat, it was considered necessary to set a limit. Referring to this need, Ḥuḍūr said:

“From this year some conditions have been laid down under which the number of delegates has been limited. Jamā'ats are no longer free to nominate as many delegates as they wish. And as our Jamā'at increases further, even more restrictions might have to be imposed in the future. No, indeed, it is not a matter of ‘may’, this is sure to happen. The time will come when we will have to invite delegates from districts or even provinces rather than from Jamā'ats, for it will not be possible for Shūrā to accommodate thousands of people. When God causes our Jamā'at to spread throughout the world, at that time representatives will only be invited from various districts, provinces or even countries. The Jamā'ats should not mind these restrictions, which are necessary, and the necessity is only going to increase. But as long as the small Jamā'ats enjoy the privilege of sending their delegates, they must exercise their right and should elect the most suitable people to represent them in Majlis-e-Shūrā.” (Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, pp. 4-7)

This method of selecting delegates is in place to this day. Only the number of delegates varies according to the circumstances.

Amīrs of the Jamā'ats, by virtue of their office, are members of the Shūrā, and so are the Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}, because of their privileged position. Various Departments of the Central Anjumans are also

represented in the Majlis-e-Shūrā. Another tradition, which is ongoing, is that Khalīfatul Masīḥ invites some scholars, experts, or eminent members of the Jamā'at, whose opinion he considers valuable.

[Sīrat Faḡl-e-'Umar, vol. II, pp. 177-178, 192-194]

IMPORTANCE OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ IN THE TRAINING OF THE JAMĀ'AT

With regard to this important aspect of Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“The institution of Majlis-e-Shūrā is vital for the proper training and education of the Jamā'at as well as for maintaining its special character and safeguarding its potential. I receive reports from many European and other countries in which Majlis-e-Shūrā has been established, and I am told that a new life has been breathed into those Jamā'ats. They have attained a new life and a new confidence, and the speed of their progress has increased.”

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, p. 9]

Ḥuḍūr also said:

“By the grace of God, you too shall progress gradually. Today you have come of age, for a Jamā'at cannot become mature without Majlis-e-Shūrā. The maturity of thought, the confidence and the satisfaction one gets from being personally responsible, cannot be attained other than from the Shūrā.”

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, p. 2]

Regarding the status of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth wrote:

“The Khalīfa has divided his work into two parts. The first is the administrative part, which involves the ap-

pointment of office-bearers...The second aspect is the laying down of principles and basic framework, and for this purpose he consults Majlis-e-Shūrā. Thus, just as the Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn represents the Khalīfah in administrative matters, so does Majlis-e-Shūrā represent him in matters of principle.

But it is the Khalīfah who heads both these institutions. In matters of administration he guides Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and in matters of formulating principles and rules and regulations, he heads and guides Majlis-e-Shūrā.

[Sīrat Faḍl-e-'Umar, vol. 2, p. 204]

HOW SHŪRĀ UNITES KHILĀFAT AND THE JAMĀ'AT

Historically speaking, the evolution of Shūrā and the way it unites Khilāfat and Jamā'at is a very interesting study, referring to which Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"It is only once out of a hundred times that I have to make a decision on my own. In ninety-nine percent of the cases, I reach a decision by adopting a little of one person's opinion and a little of the other, and drawing a conclusion from both. If the common man is not involved in Mushāwarat, he would not get used to thinking of anything other than of his domestic problems. But when we involve them in Mushāwarat, their mental faculties are enhanced. Thus, a whole scheme can be formulated by bringing together various opinions, and this is most beneficial for the Jamā'at."

[Tafsīr-e-Kabīr, vol. 10, pp. 182-183]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

"The requirements of our mission and our responsibilities are changing, it is, therefore, of no use to the world if we

come here as matter of routine, talk to one another, and go away. We have to solve the world's problems, and it is this we have to think about. God has made you the basis for all this."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1977, p. 13]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth also said:

"In a way, the delegates of Majlis-e-Shūrā are the leaders of the areas they represent."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1973, p. 19]

JURISDICTION OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

A most complicated problem has been put before the Shūrā several times, and it is to do with the interpretation and explanation of the rules of Waṣīyyat. These rules were formulated by the Promised Messiah^{as} himself. The role which Majlis-e-Shūrā can play in the interpretation of these rules is explained by Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} in Majlis-e-Shūrā 1942:

"The proposal under discussion has become very intricate. One of the questions that have been raised is whether or not we have the right to effect changes or amendments in the rules of Waṣīyyat laid down by the Promised Messiah^{as} himself. Another question that has been raised, and regarding which there has been some disagreement, is how to define the property on which Waṣīyyat would apply.

Let me, first of all, clarify that the question simply does not arise as to whether we have the right to amend the rules of Waṣīyyat, because no Ahmadī ever says that he has the right to effect any change in the rules laid down by the Promised Messiah^{as}. The question only applies to

certain rules whose wording seems to admit of change. So the debate can only be whether a certain rule falls under the above category or not. When someone suggests an amendment, he does not mean that a rule laid down by the Promised Messiah^{as} should be changed, all he says is that it appears from the wording of the Promised Messiah^{as} that this particular rule admits of the possibility of change. While another person who says that no change should be affected does not mean that the first person does not agree with the rules laid down by the Promised Messiah^{as}, he only wishes to point out that he does not consider this particular rule to be among those in which we have the right to effect change.

So no one should unnecessarily insist that those who are in favour of a change do not accept the rules specified by the Promised Messiah^{as}. The reason I have had to point this out is because some people in their speeches seem to allege that their friends wish to abrogate the rules laid down by the Promised Messiah^{as}. There is absolutely no question of abrogation. The question is only about the nature of the writing. Accusing an Ahmadī of trying to abrogate any writing of the Promised Messiah^{as} is a very wrong attitude.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1942, pp. 52-53]

ELIGIBILITY FOR REPRESENTATION IN SHŪRĀ

PROCEDURE FOR REPRESENTATION

In 1922, when the first regular Majlis-e-Shūrā was held, the total number of delegates, including representatives from Markaz, was 82. The next year this number rose to 128. In 1924 an even larger number of delegates took part in Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. The procedure for electing delegates for Shūrā was also discussed on this occasion. Since the system of Shūrā was still in a nascent stage, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} made the following decision in this regard:

“The question is: how should the members be elected? Should the present system be continued or should the delegates be nominated for a period of three years? Since we are still at a very early stage, the latter option can be set aside. We may not be able to find many people who can make themselves available for three successive years. At present anyone who is available is sent, and though this may not be very desirable, it is better not to put too many restrictions on the Jamā'at considering its present state. What we can consider, however, is that the person who has been nominated by a Jamā'at will continue to represent it in the Shūrā until the following year.

I believe this is not a very important matter, and we have had enough discussion over it, so let me just outline the various suggestions that have come up.

(1) Jamā'ats should again be reminded that they should elect their representatives for the period of one year.

(2) The representatives who are attending this Shūrā should be considered representatives for one year.

(3) The present delegates should be considered as representatives of their respective Jamā'ats until the next Shūrā, and it should be announced through the newspaper that any Jamā'at which wishes to change its delegate should elect a new one and inform us. Jamā'ats which have not sent any representatives should choose them now and inform us also."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1924, pp. 32-33]

Ḥudūr also said:

"Let me say one thing more. Representative should be chosen by the Jamā'ats and not by the Secretary, President or the Amīr. The whole Jamā'at should be involved in choosing a representative. When intimation about the nominee is sent to Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, it should be mentioned specifically that the delegate has been chosen by the members of the Jamā'at. The Secretary, President or Amīr of a Jamā'at cannot nominate the representative on their own without consulting the Jamā'at. This is very important."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1924, p. 34]

PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING REPRESENTATIVES

1. Shūrā is linked to Khilāfat. Hence, whenever Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh desires, he can summon people of sound judgement for consultation.
2. Initially, there were no restrictions on the number of representatives.
3. As the Jamā'at progressed, a limit was put on the

numbers so that all districts, provinces and countries could be represented.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, pp. 4-7; Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1938, p. 58]

Some instructions regarding the nomination of members for Shūrā always accompany the published reports of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. These instructions are as follows:

1. The delegate should be sincere, of sound judgement, and pious.
2. A person can only represent a Jamā'at if he is paying his Chanda in that particular Jamā'at.
3. A delegate should be one who abides by the Islamic customs, e.g., he should have a beard.
4. A student cannot be sent as a representative.
5. A representative should be regular in his Chandas, and should not be in arrears.

[Instructions from Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IInd, Al-Faḍl 11 March, 1952]

A person is considered to be in arrears if he has not paid his obligatory Chandas (Chanda 'Ām, Ḥissa Āmad, Jalsa Sālāna) for six months or more.

6. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth has instructed that the representative of a Jamā'at should not be nominated directly by the Amīr, President or Secretary; the whole Jamā'at should be consulted. And when informing Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat of his nomination, it should be specifically mentioned that the Jamā'at got together and chose such and such a person to represent them.

7. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth also said that the members of the sub-committees of Shūrā should be appointed by their Jamā'ats so that consultations can be more effective and speedy.

8. In Islam, while choosing representatives for Majlis-e-Shūrā, you do not vote for a party or a group. No one is allowed to canvass on his own behalf.

9. When people choose a representative, they do so with the understanding that he is honest, spends his time in the service of the faith, and is dependable. They also keep in mind his personality and his past conduct. No one asks them to vote for him and no one canvasses in his favour. Hence the selected individual is truly a representative of his people.

10. It is the privilege of the people to choose from among them one whom they know to be upright in his everyday affairs, and to be pious and virtuous.

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, pp. 5-7]

11. If it is the righteous people who are elected by members of the Jamā'at, then this Jamā'at can never perish.

[Friday Sermon 2 April 1993, Al-Faḍl Rabwah, 30 May, p. 2]

RESTRICTING THE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

When Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} saw that the number of delegates was increasing with every passing year, he decided to put a limit to their numbers. He said:

“Beginning from this year, some conditions have been laid down under which the number of delegates has been

limited. Jamā'ats are no longer free to nominate as many delegates as they wish. And as our Jamā'at continues to increase further, even more restrictions may have to be imposed in the future. No, indeed, it is not a matter of may, this will surely happen. The time will come when we will have to invite delegates only from districts or provinces, rather than from individual Jamā'ats, because it will not be possible for Shūrā to accommodate thousands of people. When Allah causes our Jamā'at to spread throughout the world, representatives will not be invited from various districts or provinces but from countries. The Jamā'ats should not mind these restrictions for they are necessary, and the necessity is only going to increase. But as long as the small Jamā'ats enjoy the privilege of sending their delegates, they must exercise their right and should elect the most suitable people to represent them."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 2-3]

WAṢIYYAT NOT A PRECONDITION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF SHŪRĀ

It was proposed in Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1948 that only Mūṣṣīs should be allowed membership of the Shūrā. Though a large majority voted in favour of this proposal, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} rejected the majority opinion and decided that Waṣiyyat cannot be made a condition for membership of Shūrā. He said:

"The majority has recommended that Waṣiyyat should be made a condition for membership of Shūrā. But today I will make the decision, contrary to my usual practice. I do feel that there should be more restrictions concerning the membership of Shūrā. The present rules are not enough. But the condition of Waṣiyyat will serve no pur-

pose. Members of the Shūrā are very few and their [financial] sacrifices are not likely to substantially increase our budget. Secondly, most of the delegates representing different Jamā'ats are already Mūṣīs, and imposing such a restriction will not increase our Chandas to any considerable extent."

When Ḥudūr ordered a count, it came out that 163 out of the 260 delegates were already Mūṣīs, and only 97 were non-Mūṣīs. Ḥudūr then said:

"If these remaining people are encouraged, they too will become Mūṣīs. So, despite the fact that the majority is in favour of making Waṣiyyat a precondition for the membership of Shūrā, I give my verdict in favour of the minority: that Waṣiyyat is not a must for membership of the Shūrā."

[Unpublished report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1948, pp. 68-69]

HAVING A BEARD AS A CONDITION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF SHŪRĀ

Another proposal in this connection was that having a beard should be a precondition for membership of the Shūrā. A lengthy but very interesting discussion was held on this subject. After analyzing the various aspects of the matter, Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} decided:

"All members are agreed that the question should be limited to having a beard, and this is also my decision. But, first of all, it is necessary to make people understand the significance of having a beard. There are some members of the Jamā'at, who, despite their sincerity, are guilty of shaving their beards. And it is because they do not realize the importance of keeping a beard, and do not consider it as a part of faith and sincerity. Therefore, it is first and

foremost duty of the Nazārat to publish tracts in which the significance of growing a beard is outlined. And until such tracts are published, it is not proper to hold people answerable. I hope that Nazārat Ta'lim and Tarbiyyat will publish such tracts and inform the people that growing a beard is the requirement of the Shariah. Our members are so sincere and devoted that once they understand something to be the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the commandment of the Shariah, they will surely act upon it. Someone once asked me whether faith depends on the beard, I said, 'No, faith depends on the practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, and his practice was that he kept a beard.' Therefore, it is necessary to publish such tracts. But the question before us is: What should be done when an Ahmadī does not keep a beard?"

After listening to different views from the delegates, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

"Since this is a matter of Shariah, the sub-committee does not have any right to place limits on it. The Promised Messiah^{as} has given us the principle that sunna means everything which the Holy Prophet^{sa} practiced and taught others to practice; thus not everything the Holy Prophet^{sa} did can be included in the sunna. The word 'sunna', therefore, is applicable only to those acts of the Holy Prophet^{sa} which he also urged other people to follow. Now, it is an established fact that the Holy Prophet^{sa} kept a beard and taught others to do the same, but in no Hadith do we find him telling how long the beard should be. On the other hand, history tells us that some of the Companions kept small beards. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} also wore a small beard and historians are of the view that the same was true of most of the Companions.

I cannot say it with certainty about the Holy Prophet^{sa}, but the Promised Messiah^{as} would cut and trim his beard regularly. I do the same. If I allowed my beard to grow it could grow much bigger. The Promised Messiah^{as} used to trim his beard every week, and some people collected the hair from his beard as *Tabarruk* [sacred relic]. I also had some which I kept in a bottle, but someone took it.

Once I told some students not to shave their beards. They stopped shaving, but they would trim their beards so fine with scissors that they looked as if they had shaved. When I spoke to them, they said they had not shaved, they had only trimmed their beards.

The thing is that one should wear a beard, no matter how big or how small, or of which fashion. We know that some of the Companions had small beards, and the Shariah does not tell us how long a beard should be. We also know that the Holy Prophet^{sa} had a long beard, and if someone follows his example in this regard he does so as an expression of love for him. The beard may be of any size, the size of a grain or a handful, it depends on one's own liking. No one has the right to interfere in this matter; anyone who does so interferes in the Shariah...

The Holy Prophet^{sa} did say that one should lengthen one's beard, but this does not imply that one should keep oiling and grooming it until it virtually sweeps the ground. The Holy Prophet's^{sa} injunction was in fact with reference to the Jews who used to shave their beards... This has become a very interesting issue, perhaps it has always been so. Some are saying the Mullahism is trying to impose itself, while the religious scholars are agitated and keep sending me notes to sanction the keeping of long beards. But the discussion is not

about the length of the beard, it is about its shaving, and whether the sub-committee's recommendation should be placed before the house...

(1) We have had enough of this discussion. Now, those of you who think that people who shave their beards should not be allowed membership of the Shūrā should stand up.

(The majority stood up in favour of the proposition, and it was considered unnecessary to count their numbers.)

(2) All those who think that people who shave their beards should not be given any responsibility in Markaz or in the local Jamā'ats, should stand up.

(This time also the majority was in favour, and no counting was considered necessary.)

(3) Those who think that the beard should be a precondition for those wishing to enter into Waṣiyyat, should stand up."

(84 delegates supported this proposal and 95 opposed it.)

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} then decided to defer the implementation of the decision until the following year. He said:

"By the grace of God Almighty, such is the spirit of sincerity and devotion in our Jamā'at, that I am sure if they are repeatedly told about the importance of having a beard in sermons and through articles, they will put this teaching into practice...

Though I approve of your recommendation, I would still like to place a condition on it. I believe that keeping a beard is very important, because physical things influence the morals. A person who steals surreptitiously under the cover of darkness does not affect other people

as adversely as a person who does a minor misdeed out in the open in front of everybody. Therefore, I do accept the proposal, but it should be implemented after a year from today."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, pp. 166-171]

This restriction remained in place during the time of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth. If, at times, a delegate was sent by a Jamā'at who did not have a beard, the Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat would not issue him a pass for Shūrā. Referring to one such incident, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

"I want to give you the good news that three of our friends have started growing beards because of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. They came here as representatives of their Jamā'ats, but the office refused to issue them passes because they did not have beards, whereupon they immediately promised in writing that from that very moment they would start growing beards. So this is another benefit of Mushāwarat. If Jamā'ats keep sending ten or twenty such members in future, it will prove quite beneficial. It has also been reported from Dhaka that two members who did not have beards were elected as representatives; but when they learnt about this precondition, they immediately decided to grow beards."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1968, p. 198]

SOME CRITERIA FOR ELECTING REPRESENTATIVES

By the grace of God, as this consultative institution progressed, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} laid down some criteria for choosing the representatives. Due to the extraordinary significance of Majlis-e-Shūrā, he decided

that only pious and righteous people should be selected as representatives...He always stressed that a delegate of the Shūrā should not be one who is given to verbosity and glibness; he should neither be quarrelsome nor a faultfinder, and he should not be devoid of piety and purity. Ḥudūr also considered it very important that the *Taqwa*, piety, righteousness and sincerity should be the main consideration when selecting representatives for the Shūrā. Ḥudūr said that only those suggestions can truly profit us which come from truly sympathetic hearts and are accompanied by humble and sincere prayers. At the occasion of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1940, he chose this very topic for his opening speech, some extracts of which we reproduce below:

“My dear people, who have come from far and wide to participate in this Majlis-e-Shūrā, our responsibilities and our obligations are so formidable that one shudders at the very thought of them. The task of creating a new earth and a new heaven—which God Almighty had given to the Promised Messiah^{as}—has now been entrusted to us. And there is not one among us who does not realize and acknowledge that we are not competent enough to accomplish this mission. In fact, we know nothing about it. The task entrusted to us is to build a structure, which, in its spiritual capacity, should equal the greatest buildings in the world, such as the Taj Mahal. But, as it is, we are not even capable of building cottages or even shelters for labourers. How then are we to build such an impressive structure that should amaze all those before us and after us? Surely we cannot do it, unless God Almighty Himself builds it for us, just as it is narrated in old tales that

geniis would build houses for people. Those, of course, are mere tales, but we do expect from our Lord that, while we are asleep, He should Himself have mercy on us and raise that spiritual structure for us. And when we wake up, we should bow our heads in gratitude for His kindness, for it was a task that would have been impossible for us. But whereas we can beg God through prayers and supplications to do for us one portion of the task, there is yet another portion we ourselves have to do. And if we do not attend to it and do not try to accomplish what has been left to us, we will never deserve His help, which we are hoping for. The responsibility that is upon us is that we should always select competent people for our tasks. I am sorry to say that some Jamā'ats do not elect competent representatives for Majlis-e-Shūrā... They do not consider who is competent for the job, and merely choose a person who has nothing else to do and send him to Qadian. They merely ask, 'Is there anyone who is free and can go to Qadian?', and anyone who says he is free, is sent here. Such Jamā'ats do not at all realize the immense responsibilities of Majlis-e-Shūrā which these representatives have to shoulder. They send a person only because he was readily available, or was outspoken and critical, or was well to do, or simply because he craved for prominence, while the Holy Prophet^{sa} has said that anyone who seeks to become prominent or desires an office should not be accommodated. Therefore, I wish to convey this message to the Jamā'ats through you: The work which God has taken upon Himself shall no doubt be done, but if we do not fulfil the task that is upon us faithfully and responsibly, Allah's blessings shall also be delayed.

Try, therefore, to understand your responsibilities and always select competent people as your representatives. I think that the Jamā'at has not yet fully realized the significance of Majlis-e-Shūrā. They merely consider it a committee in which they must send a representative to avoid embarrassment. It has, therefore, not been given the required attention...If in our Jamā'at there happen to be hypocrites, people of weak faith, people who do not offer their prayers, braggarts, accusers, and people whose hearts are devoid of the fear of God, this Majlis will be affected by partisanship. Loyalties will be divided and quarrels, disputes, and disturbance will ensue, just as it sometimes happens in weak and naïve Jamā'ats when a President or some other office-bearer is to be elected. Different sections of the Jamā'at canvass for different people and, instead of thinking seriously of a suitable person for the job, each party wants its candidate to win. Such disputes and such partisanship, if it starts in Majlis-e-Shūrā, will not do us any good either materially or spiritually. The people who are sent here should be of such strong faith that, when it comes to the interest of the Jamā'at, they should not listen even to their parents, let alone that they should give ear to everything and start talking against the Jamā'at. This kind of people should stay as far from Majlis-e-Shūrā as possible, and there can be no question of sending them as representatives.

This time some Jamā'ats have been guilty of negligence in this matter, but I hope that Jamā'ats will remember these instructions in future. I would like to ask the concerned staff to publish this portion of my speech, and keep publishing it on the occasion of every Mushāwarat, so that the Jamā'ats should only elect those people who

are more pious and honest and are regular in their worship. Some Jamā'ats naïvely believe that such and such a person should be sent as their representative because he knows something of financial matters or is a good speaker. Let me say that if the knowledge of finance was the criteria for representation in Shūrā, we would invite some Hindu as a delegate, or even a Christian, if he happened to be good at finance.

The thing is that budgetary matters are only of secondary importance, and it would not matter if they were not included in the Shūrā at all. After all, no budget was prepared in the days of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Likewise, no budget was prepared in the time of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr^{ra}, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} or Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra}. And no budget was prepared during the time of the Promised Messiah^{as}. The budget only started at the time of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I^{ra} when the task was assigned to the Anjuman. If at any time, due to any necessity, we were to abolish this Majlis, would it harm the Jamā'at in any way? The discussion about the budget, therefore, is only a superficial matter, and if we were to select members who had knowledge of finance, but were braggarts and critics, and did not consider piety and *Taqwa* as the criteria for selecting the members, it would be very much like taking out someone's soul in order to cleanse his face; and what can anyone do with a corpse, even if it has a clean and shining face!

There would be nothing better than to find people who are pious and righteous, and are also proficient in worldly knowledge and in financial matters, or happen to be good speakers or lecturers. And I have never said that we should elect only those people who are regular in their prayers but

know nothing of accounts, or people who are righteous but do not know how to speak. It would be infinitely better to elect someone who possesses both qualities. Instead of electing some unrighteous person, who is only an expert in worldly affairs, it would be much better to elect one who is pious and God-fearing, and whose heart is filled with sympathy for the faith, if he is not a braggart, nor projects himself and is capable of understanding things and offering advice. It is simply absurd to consider only a person's worldly merit and to take no note of whether he has any fear and love of God in his heart.

I would like to invite your attention towards these considerations, and I would also like to direct the concerned staff that they should keep sending the relevant portions of my speech to the Jamā'ats, so that they may realize that they have to elect only such people to represent them in Shūrā who are pious and God-fearing, and are not quarrelsome or mischievous or those who are not regular in their prayers, and tell lies, and are not straightforward in their dealings, and lay false accusations upon others, and are hypocrites and weak of faith. Electing such people is like hitting the very foundation of the Jamā'at. Such people should not be allowed anywhere near this Majlis, regardless of how many millions they have, and how good they are at holding the audience spellbound with their oratory. For us only those people are blessed who are faithful and God-fearing, even if they cannot speak well, rather than those who are great orators and their homes are full of gold and silver, but have no faith or fear of God in their hearts. We do not need such people, and the farther they stay from this Majlis, the better it will be for us...

It can be of no use to us to bring together such people and to include them in our consultations and our plans for the future, who are only good speakers and orators while their hearts are devoid of piety, purity and spirituality. The people who can be of use to us are only those who are pious and pure, and only those suggestions will benefit the Jamā'at which come from truly sympathetic hearts. Suggestions which are not accompanied by the humble prayers of a believer, cannot benefit the faith. When selecting members for the sub-committees, the same criteria of piety, righteousness and sincerity should be considered, so that God may be pleased with us. All this may not be in keeping with rules of the world, but we do not care of that. Victory comes from God, and He loves the principles that He Himself has laid down for us."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, pp. 3-11]

ELIGIBILITY OF THE DELEGATES—ANOTHER ASPECT

In view of the immense significance of Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} had already instructed the Jamā'at in 1926 that great care should be taken when selecting representatives for Shūrā, and only the best people should be selected. Those who get selected as representatives should bear in mind the dignity of the Shūrā, and consider it a great honour for themselves. Speaking further on this subject, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"Sometimes, instead of coming himself, the Amīr of a Jamā'at sends someone else to represent him. Such an attitude does not only harm the institution of Mushāwarat, but the whole system established by God, and it also adversely affects their own selves. There were once a people who showed similar ingratitude, and were meted

out a perpetual punishment. They were the Israelites. God said to Ḥaḍrat Moses^{as}, 'Tell your people to send their representatives, so that I may reveal My Word to them.' When Ḥaḍrat Moses^{as} brought this message to his people, they refused to go with him and told him to go himself. Upon this God declared that He would not reveal His Word to them, and would instead raise a Prophet from among their brethren.

People who do not hold the Jamā'at in due esteem, also do not realize that it is God's favour upon them that they have been chosen to participate in this Majlis, which is going to mould the future of the world. Representation in this Majlis is such a great honour that even a monarch of the entire world would feel honoured to be part of it. The Jamā'ats, therefore, need to be most careful when electing their representatives and should choose the best people to represent them.

I am pleased to note that awareness about Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is growing in the Jamā'at, and some Jamā'ats insist on their right of representation and choose the best people to represent them, but, on the whole, Jamā'ats are still not giving full attention to this matter. This year the attendance is better than last year, but this is not because Jamā'ats have realized their responsibility, it is because when I saw that the best people were not being selected for Shūrā, I sent invitations to some veterans of the Jamā'ats, and some good workers, and some young men whom I wished to involve in the affairs of the Jamā'at. These people are not the representatives of their Jamā'ats, they are in fact my representatives, for they were not chosen by their Jamā'ats, nor did their Jamā'ats show any eagerness to choose the best people as their

representative. In short, our consultations are of the utmost importance.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1926, p. 3]

In the same context, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said during Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941:

“I have observed that whereas there are sincere Jamā'ats that do their best to send capable representatives, there are others who send representatives merely because they feel obliged to do so. They do not have any reverence for Majlis-e-Shūrā. They just ask their members if any of them plans to visit Qadian, and if someone says yes he is planning to go to Qadian because he wants to build a house there or for some other reason, they nominate him as their representative. Or if someone is going to Lahore or Amritsar on his own business, they ask him to be kind enough to go to Qadian as well and represent them in the Shūrā. Their behaviour is like the proverbial *Bannia*, who could not bathe in winter and considered another person's bath as his own. Some of these Jamā'ats even nominate people from Qadian to represent them, rather than send their own representatives. It seems that these people have no inkling of the immense importance of Mushāwarat, and have no idea of the fact that all future development depends on it.

In the beginning members of the Jamā'at were completely ignorant of its importance, and for many years it was thought that there was no use of offering advice or suggestions when the Khalifa himself was going to make the final decision, and it did not matter whether people said anything or not. Though this impression is still to be found among some people, it has for the most part been

dispelled. People have now begun to realize that Majlis-e-Shūrā has its own importance, regardless of the fact that the Khalīfa takes the final decision.

Some other faults are also being corrected gradually. Though people still at times make unnecessary speeches during Shūrā, those who attend it regularly can feel that a change has gradually come about. People now tend to speak only when they consider it truly necessary. It has also been observed that the system has matured considerably, and suggestions are sent to Shūrā after full thought and deliberation, and people who wish to speak do so at the proper time and occasion.

In short, I see great improvement in the working of Majlis-e-Shūrā. Our members now have a greater realization of its importance and are better conversant with the workings of the Jamā'at. Mistakes are still made, but they are far fewer, and result mostly from individual dispositions."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 3-4]

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE FOR SELECTING REPRESENTATIVES

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} instructed members of the Jamā'at to improve and reform their own selves, because the whole Jamā'at has to be established on *Taqwa* before it can come up with the best representatives. He stressed this point in his Friday Sermon prior to the first session of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1952:

"Unless people truly reform themselves, and become God-fearing, and adopt the spirit of moderation and reflection, and utilize their minds and their wisdom, their representatives will remain devoid of truth and righteousness, and they will be at par with those who have no one to represent

them at all. The purpose which the Shūrā serves is that, if the members are righteous, it enables us to reach the correct decision; but it is not the purpose of Shūrā to reform the members. Such reformation solely depends on the will and endeavour of the individuals themselves...

Reformation can only be achieved through personal effort and endeavour. If you become righteous, your Shūrā and your suggestions will also become right, and you will also try to implement the decisions. On the other hand, if the individuals are not righteous, their representatives, who are from amongst themselves, will also not be righteous. And when the representatives are deprived of wisdom and righteousness and piety and moderation, their suggestions will also not be rational. Even if they happen to offer correct suggestions, they will not be fruitful. Unless you reform yourselves, you will be wasting your time. And if the representatives do not render correct advice, it will also not be possible to implement it. The key, therefore, lies in the hands of the individual, and this is why Islam lays so much emphasis on the individual."

[Al-Faql 23 March, 1952 p. 3]

NAU MUBĀ'IT'IN AND MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

Since the people who join the Jamā'at are not familiar with the etiquette and traditions of Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave some instructions regarding their training. Ḥuḍūr also said that new Ahmadīs and the new generation should learn to express their views in the same patient and polite manner as is the custom of their elders, so that they too may progress in *Taqwa*. Here we reproduce an extract from

Ḥuḍūr's speech addressed to Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941:

"I have already mentioned that the new generations also need to be educated, and so do the people who keep joining missionary Jamā'ats. This is why God Almighty has taught us the prayer:

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

[Guide us in the right path—The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed *Thy* blessings.—Al-Fātiḥah, 1:6-7]

This implies that all members of the Jamā'at should try to raise the new converts to the same level of faith as themselves. Likewise, their progeny should also be brought to the same standards. If we can understand this point, we will begin to progress very fast. If the *Ṣaḥāba*² realize that the *Tābe'in* should be at the same level of faith as themselves, and if the *Tābe'in* feel the same about *Taba' Tābe'in*, and they feel the same about the *Taba' Taba' Tābe'in*, and if every father realizes that his progeny should possess at least as much faith and as much knowledge of religion as himself, then such a Jamā'at can never perish. Things only deteriorate when new Ahmadīs or new Muslims come into the Jamā'at and do not have the same respect for the Jamā'at which earlier people had, and the Jamā'at begins to decline. Their

² *Ṣaḥāba*: Those who have the honour of being in the company of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Tābe'in: Those who have the honour of being in the company of the *Ṣaḥāba*.

Taba' Tābe'in: Those who have the honour of being in the company of the *Tābe'in*.

Taba' Taba' Tābe'in: Those who have the honour of being in the company of the *Taba' Tābe'in*.

forefathers offered great sacrifices and suffered great hardships and persecution—as a result of which they realized the importance of their faith, and prayed, and studied the books of the Jamā'at; the new generation, on the other hand, when it grows up, finds only relatives and friends all around them. Thus they do not suffer at the hands of the enemy, not get beaten and persecuted for their faith and, consequently, they do not realize the significance of prayer, nor possess the strength and forbearance to face persecution and hardship. They do not progress in the higher morals, they do not attach themselves to the Jamā'at, and always remain in need of guidance.

This is an ongoing process, without which no community can be called a living community. But this does not mean that new converts themselves do not have to strive to learn about their faith. True, it is the responsibility of old Ahmadīs to educate the new ones, but the latter are also under obligation to learn and follow the good examples of their predecessors. For instance, there may be many here who have never attended Majlis-e-Shūrā before. They should observe those who have had this experience and should try to express their views as they do, and show the same kind of patience, forbearance and courtesy as they show. The same teaching has been given to us by the Holy Quran. God Almighty says **فِيهِمْ أَقَدِيدَةٌ** (Al-An'ām, 6:91), which means that you should follow the good example of your elders, for they have lived under the influence of the Holy Prophet^{sa} for a long time. He prayed for them and they grew and flourished under the blessings of God. Why not make use of the model that is before you, rather than experimenting on your own? The Holy Prophet^{sa} said:

أَصْحَابِي كَالنُّجُومِ بِأَيِّهِمْ أَفْتَدَيْتُمْ إِهْتَدَيْتُمْ

That is, 'My Companions are like stars; they suffered great tribulations but bore them all with patience and fortitude until they had learned all the lessons in the Divine academy, and had qualified in the tests of piety and virtue.' Today it is your duty to follow their example. Instead of adopting new ways and undertaking new experiments, you should look at your predecessors and follow them. Those of you who have joined Majlis-e-Shūrā for the first time should follow the example of your predecessors, and should not only adopt their virtues but should try to get ahead of them, so that you may win Allah's approbation."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 4-7]

DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

Having discussed different aspects of the eligibility of representatives for Shūrā, it will be appropriate now to lay down the principle instructions regarding the number of representatives. Initially, the Jamā'ats were at liberty to send as many representatives as they liked, but certain restrictions were imposed later on and the number was fixed. During Majlis-e-Shūrā 1935, it was recommended that, in order to reduce expenditure, only one representative should be elected from districts where the number of Ahmadīs is small, but where the number is greater, one representative may be elected from each Jamā'at of the district. The second proposal was that one representative should be elected from each *Imārat* and one from each city Jamā'at. In this way, the expenditure will be reduced, everyone will have representation and the areas will be

delimited. The third proposal was that one representative was not sufficient for the larger Jamā'ats, and they should be given greater representation. After these proposals had been discussed, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} analyzed the issue in its various aspects, and said:

“The basic amendment was from Sayyed Nadhūr Ḥussain Sahib, according to which one representative should be elected from every *Imārat* and from every city, thus the expenditure will be reduced, every Jamā'at will be represented, and the areas will be delimited. It has been proposed by Bābū Shamsuddīn Sahib that one representative is not sufficient to represent the larger Jamā'ats, and they should have more representatives. He has suggested that the Jamā'ats consisting of 25 or more Chanda-payers should be allowed to send up to 4 representatives, and those with fewer Chanda-payers should be allowed only one representative.

Some other delegates also expressed their opinions. Dīāul Ḥaq Sahib raised some important points, but they relate only to the official work. He says, for example, that when the announcement is sent for the election of the representatives, the conditions of eligibility should also be sent. But this does not relate directly to the proposal under consideration. Likewise, he says that only good workers should be elected as representatives. This, too, does not relate to the proposal. It is, no doubt, important to encourage good workers, but if we make this a rule, the representatives will only represent the Naẓārats and not the Jamā'ats. This also does not pertain to the proposal. Another thing which he hinted at, and I will also hint at is that certain representatives come here on my special permission, even though they do not fulfil the requirements of membership and

have not been elected. These are mostly new converts whom I invite so that they may observe other people and try to fulfil the requirements in future. A couple of such people who were invited last year have come here now, having fulfilled all the requirements.

Now, those who think that the city Jamā'ats should be allowed to elect up to four representatives or more than one representative, should stand up.

(9 were counted in favour)

Since only 9 have voted in favour, the amendment is, therefore, rejected. Now I shall put before the house the amendment of Sayyed Nadhīr Hussain Sahib in which he has proposed that every *Imārat* and every city should have only one representative, and no more. All those who are in favour should stand up.

(Only 3 were counted in favour.)

Since both the amendments have been rejected, I think that nobody needs to speak on the recommendations of the sub-committee. I will now put the proposal to vote. If this proposal is also rejected, it will mean that no representative should come at all. The recommendation of the sub-committee is that the proposal which says that only one representative should be allowed from the districts where there is a small number of Ahmadīs, and where there are many Ahmadīs every Jamā'at should be entitled to elect one representative each, is not practicable at the present moment. As long as all the Jamā'ats, small or big, deal directly with Markaz, and send their budgets and Chanda directly to Markaz, and are answerable to Markaz for their affairs, it will be detrimental to adopt this proposal. However, if Anjumans are established at the district level, and

they take total responsibility for the missionary, organizational and financial affairs of their subordinate Jamā'ats, this proposal might then become practicable. But at present it is not possible to establish district Anjumans and to shift all the responsibilities to them.

All those who are in favour of this resolution may rise. (A large majority stood up in favour of the resolution).

Decision: There is no need to count. I understand that it is not yet time for us to start laying down limits on the number of representatives. The *status quo* will be maintained.

Our Majlis-e-Shūrā also serves as an institution for learning. People make mistakes and I correct them and teach them the correct procedures. Thus the people who come here get trained. But let us lay down some limited restriction for the time being. For example, this time we received 24 applications from the 13 *Halqas* of Lahore Jamā'at, but I permitted them to send only 13 representatives. Such excess should be curtailed, and only reasonable excess may be entertained. I think that the present system is quite reasonable. And if there happens to be some extraordinary excess, the office can refer it to me for correction."

[Report Majlis-e-Mushawarat 1935, pp. 23-25]

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES

During Majlis-e-Shūrā 1935, it was also suggested by one of the representatives that when an announcement is made in *Al-Faḍl* regarding the election of representatives, the conditions of eligibility should also be mentioned, so that the election can be held in keeping with these conditions, and sincere people who possess good judgement can be elected as representatives.

Therefore, from 1940 onwards instructions regarding the election of representatives were published from time to time. Finally, on 11th March, 1952, the following instructions were published in *Al-Faḍl* with the approval of Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}:

Instruction of Ḥaḍrat Khalifatul Masīḥ II^{at}, regarding the election of representatives, have already been published in *Al-Faḍl*, 11th March, 1952. All the office-bearers and members of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya are requested to please keep in mind the following points:

- (1) The representative should be sincere, and sound of judgement;
- (2) He should be a Chanda-payer of the Jamā'at which he represents.
- (3) He should be one who abides by the Islamic traditions, and should have a beard.
- (4) He should not be a student.
- (5) He should be regular in his Chanda, which should be paid at the prescribed rate in keeping with his real income, and there should be no arrears against him.

(Note): As per policy of Naẓārat Baitul Māl, a person will be considered to be in arrears, who—if he is a member of an urban Jamā'at—has not paid his Chanda for the last three months, and—if he is member of a rural Jamā'at—has not paid his Chanda for the last one year.

(6) Jamā'ats can send their representatives as per the following ratio:

- Jamā'ats with 50 Chanda-payers: 2 representatives;
- Jamā'ats with 51-100 Chanda-payers: 3 representatives;

- Jamā'ats with 101-200 Chanda-payers: 4 representatives;
- Jamā'ats with 201-500 Chanda-payers: 6 representatives;
- Jamā'ats with 501-1000 Chanda-payers: 8 representatives;
- Jamā'ats with more than 1000 Chanda-payers: 12 representatives.

The Amīrs will be included in the quota of representatives, which means that the Jamā'at which is eligible to send four representative, will elect only three and the fourth will be the Amīr.

The record of Baitul Māl will be the basis for ascertaining the total number of Chanda-payers in a Jamā'at.

Ḥaḍrat Amīr-ul-Mu'minīn has also instructed that the Secretary, Amīr or President of a Jamā'at should not nominate the representative on his own and should seek advice from their whole Jamā'at. The letter written to Secretary Mushāwarat in this regard should mention specifically that the Jamā'at came together and elected such and such a person as their representative in keeping with the conditions published in *Al-Faḍl*. The Secretary, Amīr or President will not nominate anyone without consulting his Jamā'at. Consultation with the Jamā'at is a must.

Secretary Majlis-e-Shūrā

[Al-Faḍl, 11 March 1952]

REPRESENTATION OF ṢAḤĀBA^{RA} AND MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL ANJUMANS

The issue of limiting the number of representatives for Majlis-e-Mushāwarat was taken up again during Majlis-e-Shūrā 1951. The Private Secretary proposed that a proper

procedure should be put in place to represent the Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and Tehrîk Jadîd. Since no procedure had as yet been put in place for the representation of Central Departments, the number of their representatives was increasing unnecessarily. Likewise, there was no suitable arrangement for the representation of the Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

[Al-Faql, 25 March 1951]

No accurate account of the discussion which took place at the time and the decision that was reached, is available, because the report regarding Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1951 was not published. In the following year (1952), however, Nāẓir A'lā Sahib presented the following report on the implementation of the previous year's decisions:

Apart from the budget approved by Shūrā last year, Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya also received Ḥudūr's approval for Shūrā's decision that from now on the representation of Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}, Tehrîk Jadîd and Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya will be as follows:

- All the Companions of Promised Messiah^{as} who belong to the period prior to 1900 have an automatic right of representation.
- Fifteen representatives will be selected from the Companions who belong to the period after 1900.
- Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya will be entitled to send 20 representatives.
- Tehrîk Jadîd will be entitled to send 15 representatives.

In the light of the above decision, the list of the representatives was sent to Secretary Majlis-e-Shūrā by Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. The list of the Companions of Promised Messiah^{as} prior to 1900 was also sent. But the procedure for selecting 15 Companions from the second category has not yet been specified. Therefore, the complete list of these Companions was provided to Secretary Majlis-e-Shūrā, so that he can present it before Ḥuḍūr for approval.

Nāẓir A'la Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya

11th April, 1952

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1952, pp. 53-54]

After this report was read out, Ḥuḍūr spoke about the benefits and blessings associated with the Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} and their participation in Shūrā. Then Ḥuḍūr announced his decision that all the Companions who accepted the Promised Messiah^{as} before 1900, and were at least 12 years old at the time of his demise, and had accepted him and had the privilege of sitting in his blessed company, will be entitled to attend Majlis-e-Shūrā.

Likewise, regarding the proposal that 15 of the Companions who joined the Promised Messiah^{as} after 1900 will be invited to attend the Shūrā every year, it was decided in Majlis-e-Shūrā 1954, with the approval of Ḥuḍūr, that 15 of such Companions (who fulfil the given requirements) will be invited to attend the Shūrā every year. These decisions were duly followed from then on.

It was in Shūrā 1951 that the strength of representatives

of the Central Institutions was first defined. It was decided that Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya will send 20 representatives, and Tehrîk Jadîd will send 15. Later this was changed to 25 representatives for each. Subsequently, the quota of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya was increased to 30 while it remained 25 for Tehrîk Jadîd. Quotas for Waqf Jadîd Anjuman Ahmadiyya was fixed at 9, Central Majlis Ansârullah and Majlis Khuddâmul Ahmadiyya were allowed 2 representatives each, Hādîqat-ul-Mubashirîn and Majlis Nuşrat Jehân were allowed one representative each, and Fadl-e-'Umar Foundation was allowed 2 representatives. These quotas are liable to change with the approval of Hādrat Khalîfatul Masîh. At first it was not considered necessary to place any limit on the representation of Lajna Imāillāh, and their number would vary with the circumstances. But Hādrat Khalîfatul Masîh IVth limited their numbers to 30.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, p. 78]

In addition to the above, some people are given special representation in Shūrā. Hādrat Khalîfatul Masîh himself nominates them and they are sent personal invitation letters from Huḍūr. These representatives are called 'special invitees'. They can express their views on any point, and are eligible to cast their votes.

BASIC DECISION REGARDING THE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

The issue of specifying the number of representatives for Shūrā remained under consideration during the time of Hādrat Khalîfatul Masîh IIIth. In his first Majlis-e-Shūrā

as Khalīfa in 1966, Ḥuḍūr said:

“There is an even more important issue, but the District Amīrs are not giving it the attention it deserves, and it relates to the representation of every Jamā'at in Majlis-e-Shūrā. At the moment there are many Jamā'ats that are not being represented. If they had been represented, even if they did not participate in the discussions, they would at least get an idea of the requirements of the Jamā'at, and how things are to be done. They would also have seen the positive outcome of the work they are doing, and they would have gone back happy with the knowledge that God blesses even their small sacrifices and grows a big and beautiful tree out of their meagre efforts...But if every Jamā'at is to be given representation in Majlis-e-Shūrā, changes will have to be made in the present regulations. Presently Jamā'ats with 50 members send 2 representatives, and in future they might be allowed only one. No doubt these details can be worked out, but the District Amīrs are responsible and they need to make an effort to bring to Shūrā representatives from all their Jamā'ats, and let Majlis-e-Shūrā bear witness to this.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, pp. 13-14]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth took up the same issue the following year, and said:

“I also want to create a new and extraordinary sub-committee. In the last Shūrā I had pointed out that not all the members who are required to attend the Shūrā under the rules, actually come to Shūrā. This time I have collected a lot of statistics, which show that if all the representatives who are supposed to come here according to the existing rules do turn up, they would

number 1871. In the last Shūrā 579 representatives came. This would imply that 1300 people, who were supposed to come for consultation, did not come, and were guilty of disobedience.

Secondly, if all the representatives were to come, they would number 1871, and if we also include the representatives of the various Departments and the Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} who are eligible for membership of Shūrā, the total number comes to between 1950 and 2000. But at present we do not have a hall spacious enough to accommodate these numbers, and we would have to meet in some open place, hoping that it does not rain. On the other hand, it is difficult to hold proper consultations with such a large number of people. This is why I want to establish a sub-committee to determine what the total number of representatives should be, and how this number should be divided between the various districts...

I want this sub-committee to consist of ten members. I will give them these statistics to deliberate upon. They will have to determine the strength of the representatives, and if they can divide these numbers between the districts, so much the better, but they must at least come up with a formula to make this distribution."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1967, pp. 7-9]

The sub-committee submitted the following recommendations to Ḥudūr for approval:

1. The number of representatives from Jamā'ats should be 550. The Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} and the representatives of Markaz will be in addition to this

number, so that any change in their representation will not affect the representation of the Jamā'ats.

2. The number of representatives from a Jamā'at will depend on the number of its Chanda-payers.

3. Forty Chanda-payers will constitute one unit. Jamā'ats which have less than 40 Chanda-payers will be combined with other Jamā'ats to form a unit of 40. Smaller Jamā'ats, which are combined to form one unit, will send their representatives in rotation, so that every Jamā'at gets representation one after the other.

Any Jamā'at or unit consisting of 40 to 60 Chanda-payers will be eligible to send one representative. If the number is between 61 to 100, they will send two representatives... If the Chanda-payers are more than 100, one representative will be selected for every additional 50 Chanda-payers, e.g., 3 representatives will be selected from 150 Chanda-payers, and 4 from 200, and so on.

4. In case a small or far-off Jamā'at is not able to get representation in the Majlis-e-Mushāwarat under the new rules, the District Amīr can submit its case before Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ.

5. If the East Pakistan Jamā'at faces any problems due to the distance and expenditure involved in attending the Shūrā, the Amīr should submit his case before Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ and seek guidance.

6. The District Amīrs should recommend how the units

should be divided. Where there are no District Amīrs, the Divisional or Area Amīr should make these recommendations. In East Pakistan, this will be the duty of the Provincial Amīrs...All these recommendations will be submitted to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ for approval.

The delegates voted 334 to 221 in favour of the first proposal, and it was approved by Ḥuḍūr.

Majlis-e-Shūrā was also unanimous in favour of the second proposal, and it was also approved by Ḥuḍūr.

The third recommendation was approved by Ḥuḍūr, with the condition that Karachi and Rabwah Jamā'ats will get 23 and 15 representatives, respectively. The remaining will be distributed district-wise and, where this is not possible, they will be divided division-wise in proportion.

Since the remaining three recommendations related to matters of detail, the majority was of the view that they should not be taken up for the time being, and may be deliberated upon later. Ḥuḍūr approved of this idea.

[Published Decisions, Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1967, pp. 87-88]

On 29th June 1967, after Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, Ḥuḍūr nominated the following five people to deliberate upon this matter and submit their report:

- (i) Sayyed Dāwūd Ahmad Sahib
- (ii) Mirzā Ṭāhir Ahmad Sahib
- (iii) Mirzā 'Abdul Ḥaq Sahib
- (iv) Chaudhry Bashīr Ahmad Sahib of Gujrat

- (v) Maulānā Abul 'Atā Sahib, whom Ḥuḍūr appointed as the convener.

This sub-committee met several times and analyzed the district-wise lists of Chanda-payers provided by Naẓārat Baitul Māl.

Keeping in view the decision of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ that the total number of representatives will be 550, and that the representatives of the Central Anjumans, other Central Institutions and Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} will be over and above this number, the committee submitted the following recommendations:

1. In the light of the resolution passed in the Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, the case of the 32 major Jamā'ats was considered separately. They would be eligible to send 235 representatives.

2. After the above allotment of 235 representatives for the major Jamā'ats, the smaller Jamā'ats are left with 299 representatives. We recommend that this number should be divided among the smaller Jamā'ats district-wise, as follows:

(a) There should be one representative for every 35 Chanda-payers.

(b) On more than 35 Chanda-payers—or the higher fraction of 35—one more representative shall be allotted. Thus there will be 299 representatives for smaller Jamā'ats and 235 for the major Jamā'ats. This brings the

total to 534, and 16 vacancies are still available out of 550. We think that these 16 should be divided as follows:

(i) Districts where the strength of the Jamā'at is three times more than the proposed representatives, should be given additional representation in such a way that every Jamā'at gets its turn after three years. That is to say, districts where the Jamā'ats are so many that each Jamā'at will not get its turn even in three years, can be considered for additional representation.

(ii) Similarly, districts where the Jamā'at is small and is not entitled to send any representative, apart from the Amīr, can also be given additional representation.

These two methods can be adopted within the range of the prescribed limit.

In keeping with the established pattern, major Jamā'ats in East Pakistan are eligible to send 12 representatives, while the smaller ones can send 17. Since, at present, it is not possible for all these representatives to actually come to the Shūrā, the number should be limited to 10. As and when the members are able to attend, the quota may be gradually increased. In case this proposal is approved, there will be vacancy for 19 more representatives. This will be added to the above 16 and the total will come to 35, which may then be distributed as required.

REVISED DECISION ABOUT THE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

In making the decision about the number of representatives for Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth had said that

this proposal should be reconsidered after three years. This matter was, therefore, taken up once again in Majlis-e-Shūrā Pakistan 1991. Since the districts had been re-zoned, Majlis-e-Shūrā proposed that a sub-committee should be constituted to re-determine the number and division of representatives. A committee was set up with the approval of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, and it made the following recommendations:

1. The number of representatives from Jamā'ats (excluding those from Markaz) should remain 550, as approved in 1967.

2. When the total number of representatives was fixed at 550 in 1967, it was decided that there should be one representative for every 40 Chanda-payers in the major Jamā'ats, and 35 in the smaller Jamā'ats. But, by the grace of God, the number of Chanda-payers had grown since that time. It was, therefore, recommended that:

- (i) 80 Chanda-payers should constitute one unit for the major Jamā'ats, on which they should be eligible to send one representative. On the higher fraction of 80, they should be allowed to send one more representative. Likewise, 50 Chanda-payers should constitute one unit for the smaller Jamā'ats, on which one representative should be authorized, and on the higher fraction of 50 they should be allowed to send one more representative.

- (ii) With the exception of Jamā'ats in NWFP, Baluchistan and Azad Kashmir, the district-wise increase or decrease

of representatives of Jamā'ats should be calculated according to the above ratio. But the number of representatives for Lahore, Karachi and Rabwah will remain same as decided in Majlis-e-Shūrā 1967. (Lahore: 32, Karachi: 23, Rabwah:18)

(The number of representatives for Rabwah was 15, but it was later given three more representatives with the approval of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth)

(iii) As regards NWFP, Baluchistan and Azad Kashmir, it was recommended that if there was an increase in the number of representatives of a Jamā'at according to the above ratio, the increase should be granted; but if there was a decrease it should be ignored and the previous numbers should be maintained. As a result, no reduction was made in the case of three representatives for Peshawar District and one for Mardan.

3. The strength of representatives should remain 550 for the next 5 years, after which it will be reviewed.

4. According to the new formula, the total number of delegates was calculated at 536, whereas previously it has been 545.

5. There was a difference of 14 representatives between the fixed number of 550, and the recommended number of 536 for all the Jamā'ats of Pakistan. Therefore, it was decided that if there was need for increasing the number of representatives anywhere, it could be accommodated from the 14 with Ḥuḍūr's approval.

According to the revised formula, the number of representatives for all the Jamā'ats of Pakistan was determined as follows:

1. Central representatives from Şadr Anjuman, Tehrīk Jadīd, Waqf Jadīd, the auxiliary organizations, and Companions of the Promised Messiah^{as} = 110

2. Proposed number of representatives of Jamā'ats of Pakistan = 536

Total number of representatives = 646

[Unpublished report Majlis-e-Shūrā Rabwah, Pakistan 1993, pp. 82-85]

ALTERNATIVE REPRESENTATION

According to the decision of 1967, the number of representatives for Faisalabad was fixed at 14, which, by the grace of God, was increased to 60 by 1970, but only 31 representatives participated from that district, leaving 29 seats vacant. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth instructed that the remaining Shūrā passes should be given to some Zā'irīn (visitors) from Faisalabad. In this way, most of the seats were filled, but some still remained vacant. Ḥuḍūr directed that from next year the number of representatives from Faisalabad would be reduced by 29. Ḥuḍūr said that the list of representatives should reach Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat at least three months prior to the Shūrā. And it should be accompanied by a list of 50% additional names. These will be considered as alternate representatives... These alternate representatives will sit among the Zā'irīn, so that if any

representative does not show up, his seat can be filled.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1970, pp. 29-30]

This instruction was not limited to Faisalabad, Ḥuḍūr made it mandatory for all the Jamā'ats to arrange 25% alternate representatives from the whole district. They should not be chosen just from cities like Faisalabad or Sargodha, but from the rural areas also. These alternate representatives should come as Zā'irīn, and if any representative is absent, one of them can take his place. Ḥuḍūr said:

“Every Jamā'at should arrange 25% alternate representation. The only proper way to do this is that Jamā'ats should elect 25% alternate representatives from all over the district and send them to Shūrā. They should not be elected only from the cities, such as Lyallpur or Sargodha, but from the whole district, including rural areas. They should come here as Zā'irīn, and there should be no need to send them invitations. An assessment should be made on Friday morning, and if some representatives have not turned up, alternate names should be suggested to fill the vacant seats.

Suitable arrangements will have to be worked out in relation to the rural areas. People in those areas may not be able to make all these arrangements by themselves, because they are constrained by time and other difficulties. Therefore, those who are able to manage these things, should take it upon themselves.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1973, p. 143]

In order to maintain the required number of representatives, the matter relating to alternate representation was

taken up by the Shūrā from time to time. On one occasion, only 28 out of 31 representatives from Gujranwala attended the Shūrā. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth expressed his displeasure at this and once again gave instruction about alternate representation:

“Maybe this has happened before, but things come to be noticed at their own time. For some time the districts have been given their quota of representation, e.g., Gujranwala has been allotted a certain number of representatives for Shūrā and this time 31 representatives were to come from there. Some districts are bigger than others and their representation has been determined accordingly. Within Gujranwala, these 31 representatives are divided according to the principles that have been laid down by the Shūrā. But I am afraid Secretary Shūrā was not informed about this distribution in time. For instance, the number of Jamā'ats in Gujranwala is far greater than 31, by the grace of Allah, and the distribution can be done in various ways, e.g., representation can be given in rotation, or areas can be earmarked for representation. The result is that today I received a number of applications from people who claimed to be representatives of their villages and requested for passes. When the first such application came to me, I told the concerned official that the application should have been verified by the District Amīr. But then I remembered that it could also have been verified by the President of the concerned Jamā'at, since it may be difficult for people to contact the District Amīr. But this had proved to be incorrect and, therefore, the verification of the District Amīr was required. If we had received the list of representatives from various localities of Gujranwala, whose total number

would be 31, then, before confirming from the District Amīr, the office could have checked whether there was any representative coming from that village at all. Mischief may not necessarily have been intended and this may only have happened due to a person's desire to participate in the Shūrā.

There are many applications whereby an applicant wants to substitute for an elected representative, who has fallen ill or has been unable to come. But the essential condition for a representative is that he should have been elected, and no one can be considered for representation merely on the basis of his desire to participate. All this calls for a more efficient system and organization. Secretary Shūrā and District Amīrs should ensure that the lists are sent in time and the representation is correct. There should be full representation. I stressed this point once, and perhaps what we are seeing is a reaction of that. For instance, we authorized Gujranwala to send 31 representatives and they elected them in accordance with the rules, but three of them could not turn up, and only 28 out of 31 turned up. This was not right. Therefore we introduced the system of alternate representation, i.e., electing a few more than the approved quota. Only today I received a letter in which it was stated that the elected representative had fallen ill, and the alternate representative could also not come. These difficulties arise so that we should think of their solutions. There are problems, but God Almighty has gifted man with a powerful and efficient brain. These are only minor difficulties which can easily be solved, and should be solved."

[Report, Majlis-e-Shūrā 1980, pp. 7-8]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth also continued with the

system of alternate representation. Once, during the International Majlis-e-Shūrā, a lady representative had to go back to her country and another lady was permitted to take her place.

[English] “Ḥuḍūr invited names of the speakers. On a point of order, it was pointed out by a lady representative that Mrs. Al-Hassan was not a representative but was representing Mrs. Samoonoo, the Nigerian Lajna President, who had been there that morning but had to leave. Ḥuḍūr said: All right, I appoint her as a delegate. So her name should be included.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1988, p. 97]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth took into consideration both the numbers and the quality of representation in Shūrā. During Majlis-e-Shūrā 1976, Ḥuḍūr instructed Secretary Shūrā to ensure that in future one fourth of the representatives would be less than 30 years of age.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1976, p. 13]

In 1989 rules and regulation concerning Shūrā were published by Tehrīk Jadīd, but they did not include the above rule. Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya Canada, therefore, proposed in International Shūrā that there should be 25% representation for those under 30 years of age in the Shūrā of Jamā'ats in all countries. Although this proposal was not included in the Agenda, the following explanation was given about its necessity:

[English] “Canada Jamā'at sent this proposal saying that: It has been a practice to elect 25% of the delegates to the National Majlis-e-Shūrā from members who are below 30

years of age. In the rules and regulations of Tehrīk Jadīd Anjuman Ahmadiyya, issued in December 1989, this provision has been omitted. It is proposed that the following sub-para be added to the rules: "Clause 399: At least 25% of the representatives from local Jamā'ats, which have more than 25 Chanda-paying members, shall be below 30 years of age. For example, Jamā'ats electing two, three or four representatives will elect at least one young representative." The comment on this proposal is that the rules and regulations of Tehrīk Jadīd have been published and put into practice recently. Such a quick change is not desirable at this early stage. It may be considered after a few years if genuine or practical difficulties are experienced. Moreover it should be clear to all that the existing rules do not bar the election of members below the age of 30 as delegates to the national Shūrā. They may be elected if the members of the Jamā'at so desire."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1989]

REPRESENTATION OF LAJNA IMĀILLĀH

There was previously no specific system to hear the opinions of women in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya. In Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1928 a proposal was tabled regarding the establishment of a women's hostel in Qadian. The sub-committee of Shūrā accepted the usefulness of this proposal but recommended that the hostel should only be opened after the allocation of funds and availability of female staff. After listening to the discussion, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"The matter under discussion mainly concerns the women and I think that they deserve to be heard on this issue. However, the Girls' Madrasa has scheduled its ex-

ams so that the Lajna are not able to attend this Majlis. At present they are lost in their books, and most of the ladies who are present here are not well-versed at expressing their views. But, lest they should say they were not permitted to speak, I invite anyone among them who wishes to speak, to do so."

The women, who were sitting behind a screen, said that they needed time to consult among themselves. Ḥudūr gave them time to do so, and in the meantime he said a few things about various aspects of the women's hostel. Thereafter Ḥudūr said: "I have been informed that two of the women wish to speak. I am happy to invite them to speak."

Ustānī Maimūna Ṣūfiā Begum, the widow of Ḥakīm Maulawī Ghulām Muhammad Sahib Amritsarī, was the first to speak from behind the curtain. She said:

"Assalāmo 'Alaikum. On behalf of my sister ladies I wish to say that we are willing to pay the expenses for establishing the school. Secondly, we are willing to work for the school in any way we can. You can freely entrust to us any task, and we will do it willingly."...

She was followed by the daughter of Maulawī Dhulfiqār 'Alī Khān Sahib who said that the women wanted the hostel to be opened as soon as possible, and that they would be willing to offer contributions for this purpose. They could also supervise the work together.

After listening to the women, Ḥudūr enquired from them whether it was appropriate to open the hostel immedi-

ately or, as the sub-committee has recommended, to wait until all the essential items had been procured. Ustānī Maimūna Şūfiā Begum stood up once again and said: "On behalf of the sisters, I wish to say that we are willing to make financial contributions, but we can wait until competent teachers are available from outside or have been trained here. The donations should be collected, efforts should be made to acquire teachers, and this proposal should not be forgotten."

Ḥadrat Muşleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} accepted the proposal but did not approve of the idea that only women should contribute for this project. He said:

"If we leave it to the women to make all the contributions, it is likely to adversely affect our future progress. It will shatter the peace of our homes and generate the feeling that men are not doing, and do not wish to do anything for the women. I, therefore, do not accept this suggestion. We should contribute for this project and tell the women that we are prepared to do our utmost for their education. We should portray the project in such a manner that only men should contribute to it. And this should be documented, otherwise if this work is done solely through the women's contributions it will have very adverse effects. These days there is a growing feeling among Christians, Hindus and Muslims that men do not care for the education of women. I do not want this feeling to develop in the women of our Jamā'at. We will make arrangements for the education of our women through our own contributions and will not demand even a single *paisa* from them. I will myself make an an-

nouncement to this effect, and those who wish to contribute should do so. I hope that this project will be completed soon."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, p. 61]

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} was of the view that the women should be given representation in Majlis-e-Shūrā. The discussion regarding the women's hostel worked as a spur and at the end of the same Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥuḍūr said:

"I had wanted to make a long speech, but now I shall confine myself to just one point which I want you to think about. It will be placed on the Agenda of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat next year. It did not come to my mind merely as a result of yesterday's discussion, but I had already made a note of it, and it has to do with the representation of women. Before taking any decision, however, I would like to hear your opinions. I want to ask you, and particularly the scholars among you, whether or not the women should be given representation in the Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. And if so, to what extent? The question about representation of women is being raised everywhere and it should be taken up in our Jamā'at also. When Islam has given men and women equal rights in certain matters, why should they not be consulted on important issues as well? The Holy Prophet^{sa} himself would consult the people in his household, why then should our women not be given this right? This discussion should be held on the basis of arguments as to whether women should be given the right of representation or not. This is something which has to be deliberated upon and it shall be put before Majlis-e-Mushāwarat next

year, so that we can reach a definite conclusion.”²⁵

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, pp. 141-144]

In accordance with this decision of Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}, the issue of representation of women was taken up for deliberation in Majlis-e-Shūrā 1929. Delegates made forceful speeches both for and against the proposal. After listening to the arguments from both sides, Ḥuḍūr said:

“In order to include everyone present, let me say this very clearly that the women have given in writing that they should also be allowed to express their opinions. I had told them that if any of them wishes to say something about their rights, and desires to be included in the consultations, or is willing to say something on behalf of her fraternity, I will give her a chance to do so. Their reply was that none of them wanted to say anything. But I repeat that if any woman wants to speak, she is welcome to do so. I permit any woman from my family who wants to say something to do so. And if she is from some other family, she may consider her own good. From the religious point of view, there is nothing wrong in a woman addressing men. Ḥaḍrat ‘Āyesha^{ra} used to stand up and deliver lectures, as she did during the Battle of Ṣiffīn and on other occasions. Today, in a manner, we are deciding the destiny of womankind. Any woman who wants to speak can do so, and if they do not speak, two conclusions will be drawn from their silence: Delegates who are against the representation of women will say that if women cannot speak about their own rights, how can they be expected to speak about other important matters? While others can say that the women are in fact testing

the justice and fairness of the men, to see whether or not they will give them their right by themselves. Anyhow, I will wait for four minutes and see whether any woman speaks or not, and then I will go on to something else.”

Upon this, Ustānī Maimūna Şūfiā Begum said:

“Our Leader and our Imam,

السلام عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

I just wish to ask that while educational institutions are being established to educate us women, so that we can preach Islam, will it not be detrimental for us if it is decided that we do not have the right of representation in Shūrā? Will other women not refuse to listen to us because we do not have the right of representation in our own faith?”

After this Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭah-e-Mau‘ūd^{ra} delivered an elaborate address on the rights of women, at the conclusion of which he said:

“I believe that the discussion we have had on this subject is not sufficient. I will therefore not take a decision just yet and shall leave the matter as it stands. We shall take it up again next year and see what kind of representation should be given to women. I have opened up a line of thought. Members should consider their arguments and we shall discuss it next year.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1929, pp. 138-149]

INDIRECT REPRESENTATION OF LAJNA

During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1930, the matter could not be debated formally due to shortage of time. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭah-e-Mau‘ūd^{ra}, therefore, gave an interim decision:

“This time some important matters have consumed a lot of time, due to which certain issues had to be left out. One of these, which our women were so anxious about, was to do with the representation of women...

Now I defer the other proposals for the future, but I will give an interim decision about the matter of the representation of women. Wherever Lajna Imāillāh is established, they should get their members registered and get approval from my office. The Agenda of the Shūrā will then be forwarded to those of them who are accorded my approval. They will write down their opinions on the issues and send them to the Private Secretary. While making a decision on these matters I will keep their opinions in mind as well. Thus the problem of men and women getting together will not arise, and I will also find out how useful it is for us to consult women. Their views will be read out in Majlis-e-Shūrā when a proposal is being decided. This is my interim decision in their favour. The rest of the discussion will be held next year.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, p. 127]

This interim decision continued to be implemented for a number of years. But when Ḥuḍūr felt that there were some shortcomings in this procedure, he introduced certain changes to it in Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941. He said:

“I also want to mention something very important about the representation of Lajna. Lajna are consulted every year but their recommendations are given no importance whatsoever and are not presented in Majlis-e-Shūrā. My proposal is that at least one representative of Lajna Imāillāh should be present in Majlis-e-Shūrā next year, and the suggestions which the Private Secretary

receives from Lajna of other Jamā'ats should be forwarded to him. It will be his responsibility to mention these proposals when the relevant issue is being discussed, and also to inform the house where the proposals have come from. Thus we will not only learn about their opinions, but may also learn something useful and receive some wise suggestions. But even if there is no other advantage, we will at least remain aware of the mental development of women in our Jamā'at. When their suggestions are read out, some of them will be ridiculous and we will know that they are ignorant about certain matters; but at times their opinions will be very sound, from which we will learn that their opinion about those issues is quite mature. Thus from the opinions we receive from them, our members will be able to determine the mental development of our women. It is also possible that on certain matters relating to women, the members might respect the opinion of the women and alter their own opinion in favour of the women.

The office should note that in future, after receiving instructions from me, they should send all the suggestions to the person who has been elected the Lajna's representative, so that when those issues are being discussed, he should be able to inform the house that such and such Lajna has given such and such an opinion about the matter. This will help us to cater for the feelings of women as well, particularly in matter that relate to them."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 116-117]

DIRECT REPRESENTATION OF LAJNA

The system of indirect representation of Lajna Imāillāh continued till 1982. After Jalsa Sālāna, on 30th December,

1982, on the direction of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, Tehrīk Jadīd organized a one-day Majlis-e-Shūrā for foreign countries, in which some women were nominated as representatives by Ḥuḍūr, and they directly addressed the house. In Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, some women were not only nominated by Ḥuḍūr as representatives, but were also permitted to express their opinions in the house. On this occasion, Ḥuḍūr spoke about different aspects of giving the right of representation to women. He said:

"I wish to bring it to the notice of the Jamā'at that from this year the procedure of representation for Lajna has been changed. Previously they were represented in Majlis-e-Shūrā by a male member who would convey their opinions. Although it was difficult for him to maintain contact with the women, he would receive small chits from them, would try to understand what they wanted to say, and present their views before the house.

Background to the Decision on the Representation of Lajna: I have made a research into the matter and have learnt that it was in 1929 when this issue was first brought up in the Jamā'at. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IInd put it before the Jamā'at in Majlis-e-Shūrā 1929. Long discussions were held and eminent scholars of the Jamā'at were divided on this issue. The sub-committee voted with a small majority in favour of the right of women to personally present their point of view. The committee comprised 19 members, 9 of whom voted for the proposal and 9 against. The Chairman of the committee voted in favour of the proposal and it was, therefore, presented before the Shūrā for approval. The discussion which was held in the house

was animated and scholarly. Top ranking scholars, including many Companions^{ra}, spoke for and against the proposal and left nothing unsaid that was relevant to the issue. I think that that discussion should have been a matter of pride for any Majlis in the world. Not even the smallest point was ignored. Both sides presented their arguments to prove either that women should not be given the right to speak in Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, or that they must be given this right. It was a very interesting situation. Let me put before you some fascinating points that came out of it.

Importance of Khilāfat: First of all, this event shows that the Jamā'at realizes the significance of Khilāfat. When I say this, I do not mean that I am trying to make you realize this, rather I want to assure you that this was an occasion for the expression of the certitude which God Almighty has placed in your hearts with regard to Khilāfat.

When Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} presented his own point of view, scholars from both sides put aside their own opinions and bowed their heads in submission, and the Jamā'at showed an example of perfect harmony and obedience. Had such a situation arisen without Khilāfat, the Jamā'at would have been split into two sects. One of them would have considered addressing a male gathering by a woman as *Ḥarām* [unlawful] in the light of the Quran and sunna, whereas the other group would have considered it as permissible and essential.

Hence this was a historic occasion, and when we reflect upon it we learn about the factors that cause divisions. The reason why differences arise in religious communities is that they do not enjoy the blessings of Khilāfat. But, in the presence of the Khalīfa, there is no reason for

any dissent. Both sides honestly present their points of view, but when the Khalīfa analyses the matter and announces his decision, they all become one. Nowhere else in the whole wide world will you find a system that ensures such complete harmony. As I was reading these proceedings, my heart was filled with praise for God Almighty who has blessed us with a beautiful and pure system to ensure solidarity and to proclaim His Oneness. This is also the conclusion that we derive from *Āyah Istikhlāf*. If and when you are blessed with the gift of Khilāfat, the result will be لَا يُشْرِكُونِي شَيْئًا i.e., they will worship Me and will not associate partners with Me.

Divine unity is and shall remain firmly established, and with its blessings the Jamā'at will also be blessed with unity, and the whole Jamā'at will move in one direction.

A Subtle Point about the Status of Shūrā: Another thing worth mentioning in this regard is a fine point that was raised by Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Mirzā Sharīf Ahmad Sahib. He had a very perceptive mind and was the only one to have mentioned this point. He said that Majlis-e-Shūrā has two basic functions:

The first is to offer advice to the Khalīfa, and in this capacity the question of right does not arise. And the apprehension that if women gain majority they will pull the decision in their favour is simply absurd and baseless, because the function of the Islamic system of Shūrā is only to give advice.

The other function of the Shūrā is that, in case a Khalīfa passes away, it plays a role in electing the new Khalīfa—at least this was the position at the time. This is the only function of Shūrā which needs to be deliberated upon, for there are no dangers associated with first one. What we

have to consider at the moment is that if the women are to be given representation, to what degree should it be.

A Memorable Warning: Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd's^{ra} assessment was very interesting. He said that the conviction expressed by each side that its opinion is categorically established by Shariah, is meaningless and irrelevant. What is categorically established is that the Holy Quran neither permits nor forbids us in this matter. It is in fact a theoretical issue. And if we were to deprive the women of a certain right, while Islam does not deprive them of it, this may result in very dangerous tendencies, and it is possible that at one time women may refuse to accept these rules which have been made by men and not by God. In such a case, the responsibility shall rest wholly and solely with Majlis-e-Shūrā. Thus Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave a grand warning.

On the other hand, however, he declared with great resolve that, as far as the Quranic injunctions are concerned, there is no fear in my heart regarding their implementation. If the women defy the implementation of Quranic injunctions, we will not be bothered in the least. This is what God desires and we shall honestly decide accordingly and we shall definitely implement God's will. And if, as a result of this, liberal women are offended or turn away, we shall not be responsible for it. These are the commandments of God; He is responsible for their implementation and has the power to implement them.

The First Ahmadi Woman to Offer her Opinion in Shūrā: Thus it was established that since this was an intellectual matter, it would not be proper to deprive the women in the name of the Shariah. As far as the personal opinion of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} was concerned, it becomes

clear from his assessment of the matter that he not only approved of it but also felt that a time would come when women would have to participate in these matters alongside men. As a proof of this, he permitted women to speak in this Majlis for the first time, but he did not make this a rule and said that the previous procedure would continue. In order to dispel the apprehension that perhaps it was against the Shariah, he invited the representatives of women to speak, but no one spoke. Then he felt that perhaps men would not like to hear the voice of their own women, so he said that the women of his own family may speak if they so wished. Still silence reigned. He then said, Look! You are making history for all times to come. If you shy away from exercising your right while men are speaking in your favour, you will prove that you are not competent for this task. I am telling you so, and I will now give you a few minutes to speak if you want to.

The first woman who made history and spoke in Majlis-e-Shūrā was Ustānī Maimūna, an active member of Lajna Imāillāh, who was the mother of the late Malik Ghulām Ahmad 'Atā Sahib, *Wāqif-e-Zindagī* and Wakīl (Teḥrīk Jadīd). She addressed the Shūrā for a few minutes.

Therefore, we cannot say that this is the first Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in which a woman has directly addressed the house. This may be the third such Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. The first one was that in which Ustānī Maimūna spoke, the second was this year's Majlis-e-Shūrā which consisted of representatives from other countries, and in which women from Africa and America directly expressed their views. And this (Mushāwarat of 1983) is the third such Majlis-e-Shūrā in the history of Ahmadiyyat, and this practice shall continue in future, *Inshaallāh*."

The second Majlis-e-Mushāwarat referred to here was held on 30th December, 1982, after Jalsa Sālāna. For the first time in the history of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya, a Majlis-e-Shūrā comprising only of representatives from foreign countries had been organized by Tehrīk Jadīd. Male and female representatives from 24 countries participated in it. With permission and guidance from Ḥuḍūr, two of the women representatives spoke from behind the screen.

“A misunderstanding which might have arisen from the previous discussion needs to be corrected. Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Sharīf Ahmad Sahib merely hinted at it, but it has not been thoroughly discussed. The Islamic system of consultation does not give the right of consultation either to men or to women. There are two injunctions regarding the Shūrā. The first is *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* [*Consult them in matters of importance.*] This verse addresses the Prophet, or, by way of Zill [reflection], the one who occupies the seat of his Khilāfat, and makes it binding upon him to hold consultations. As far as the Holy Prophet^{sa} was concerned, he had very little need to consult anyone. No one in the world has ever stood in so little need for consultation as did the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Such was his personality, his ability and his luminous nature that, in the words of the Holy Quran, he was ready to shine even if the heavenly spark had not illuminated him, meaning thereby that his nature was immaculately pure.

Taqwa is in fact the true wisdom. Hence a perfectly righteous one, who is by nature so pure that even if he is not blessed with revelation, he will still be able to make the best decisions, such a one will seldom be in need of

consultation. But when the heavenly light descends upon his light and he becomes a manifestation of نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ [light upon light], why then should he be in need of any consultation at all?

It is established by the history of Islam that every decision taken by the Holy Prophet^{sa} was invariably correct. Even when he did not accept the advice of others, his own decision turned out to be right one. And when he accepted the advice of others but said that he did not personally agree with them, such a decision proved to be erroneous and the Holy Prophet's^{sa} personal opinion turned out to be the best.

The inference that I draw from this is that although, on the face of it, the verse addresses the Holy Prophet^{sa}, it is in fact intended to constrain those who would come after him. Thus this verse will mean: 'O people, I am constraining the only person in the world who could have been exempted from consultation, therefore, the lesser people who succeed him should dispel the very thought from their minds that they will be able to take a decision in accordance with My will, without holding consultations.' But, at the same time, God has also given an assurance. He says فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ which means that the responsibility for the final decision shall rest with the successor of Prophethood, and advice shall only serve the purpose of conveying an opinion to the one who is going to make the decision. Thereafter, since his decision will be obeyed and the consultations will have been held with complete honesty, the Holy Quran does not term it as a decision of the Majlis-e-Shūrā, but says فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ i.e., the final decision is to be taken by one person, and We assure you that We shall be with you in that decision.

فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ i.e., have faith in God, Who will bless whatever decision is taken and He shall be with you. This is the Islamic concept of Majlis-e-Shūrā.

Therefore, all discussions as to whether women have this right or not, are absurd. Neither men nor women have any right, it is solely the prerequisite of the Khalifa to hold consultations. As to how he should hold them, we know that during the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} various methods of consultation were adopted in various circumstances. An objection is at times put forward that the Holy Prophet^{sa} never consulted men and women together. The fact is that this kind of Majlis-e-Shūrā had not been established in his time, nor was there any occasion for such consultations. On the other hand, there were occasions when cases related to men and women were presented separately, and the Holy Prophet^{sa} held consultations about them. During the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, a situation arose whereby the men lost control over themselves and adopted an attitude which greatly perturbed the Holy Prophet^{sa}. On that occasion, he consulted Ḥaḍrat Umm-e-Salamah^{ra}, and it was her advice which turned out to be correct. Therefore, there can be no question of ignoring the advice of women.

In the same context, the point discussed was whether men should hear the voice of women or not. It is proven from Islamic history that women would come to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and present their problems, even personal problems, before him in the presence of men, who narrated these incidents. They had not been invited as witnesses, but were already present on these occasions. Women would come to the Holy Prophet^{sa} and say whatever they wanted to say. The fact that Ḥaḍrat 'Āyeshah^{ra} would ad-

dress the public is also a part of history. Therefore all such objections are based on mere superstitions.

The fact remains that the Khalīfa is bound to hold consultations according to the circumstances. According to the conclusion drawn by Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} this is an intellectual issue and consultations with women might vary according to the circumstances. Now it is not a question of the right of women, it is a question of how to give them representation. The discussion will not be how women should exercise their right of representation, but what procedure should be adopted to consult them. I do not think that a quota should be fixed. The Khalīfa will call any number of women in any manner in keeping with the circumstances. There is no need to lay down any rules in this regard."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, pp. 48-56]

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DELEGATES

The chapter relating to the eligibility, numbers and election procedure for the representatives will now be concluded with a few words about their responsibilities. While Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} has very clearly stated the conditions of eligibility for the representatives, he has also emphasized that they should not only take a lead in financial sacrifices themselves, but should keep reminding their members about it, and try to inculcate in them the spirit of making financial sacrifices. Reminding the representatives about their responsibilities, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"You, who have come here as representatives of your Jamā'ats, must show that you are their true representa-

tives. If the schemes which have been presented here do not succeed and the income is not enhanced to meet the requirements of the budget, how can those who have come here call themselves representatives. A representative is he who can satisfy those who have elected him. I hope that you shall consider yourselves representatives for the whole year and will successfully implement the proposals that have been approved here."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1929, p. 182]

A STRONG ADMONITION TO THE REPRESENTATIVES

One of the important responsibilities of the representatives is to support and strengthen the Jamā'at. Members are liable to censure for neglecting this aspect of their duty. Admonishing the representatives in this regard, Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"I want to admonish the Jamā'ats through their representatives who have come here. We have seen the results of leniency. It is the responsibility of the representatives either to adopt methods by which no one who calls himself an Ahmadi remains a defaulter, or the method which I have suggested, i.e., sending the names of the defaulters to Markaz. If they are not able to overcome this weakness they will be brought to account and will have to face one of the following penalties: They will not be accepted as representatives in future, or they shall not hold any office of the Jamā'at, or they shall not be permitted to meet me. And if they still remain indifferent, the Jamā'at will sever all ties with them because they failed in their responsibilities to support the Jamā'at."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1933, p. 121]

REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD PERFORM THEIR DUTIES RESPONSIBLY

The representatives should not consider participation in Shūrā a pastime. They should take this honour seriously and should not only do their own work responsibly but should also try to bring awareness to the Jamā'at. Advising the representatives, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“The representatives should realize their responsibilities with regard to others, and should not come here just for fun, and be like the proverbial giant who used to wake up after six months. I have clearly stated the responsibilities of everyone, and if I take action against someone after this, there should be no complaints.

No doubt, paradise has been brought closer in this age, but hell has been brought nearer as well. The world is out to crush the spirit, culture, economy and social system of Islam. No one can, therefore, be permitted to show negligence. All of you, who represent your Jamā'ats, should try to motivate all your members, and if, despite such efforts, some members still keep lagging behind, their cases should be reported to Markaz in time.”

Noticing a change in the manner in which some representatives addressed the house, Ḥuḍūr said:

“I am sorry to say that the standard which Majlis-e-Shūrā has maintained in the past is beginning to go down. No doubt some speakers have spoken sensibly, but there were others whose discourse was full of fault-finding and fun-making. It appears that due to the presence of new members, the old members have also forgotten the manners of discourse. I hope that in future your suggestions will be serious and dignified, so that people may look up to you.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1933, pp. 134-135]

REPRESENTATIVES ARE THE TRUSTEES OF SHŪRĀ

On another occasion, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“If you go back and immediately start pressing the members of your Jamā'at to arrange a meeting so that you may convey to them the message that you have to convey, the members will become mentally prepared to accept the new proposals, and when they hear the details, they will become fully convinced.

I also want to remind the representatives that their duty is not only to convey to their Jamā'ats the proceedings of the Shūrā, but to keep reminding them of these matters continuously and persistently. The responsibility of the representative who attends the Shūrā does not end with the closing of the proceedings here, for he remains the representative of his Jamā'at for the whole year and it is his duty to keep reminding his people of the decisions that have been taken here. Hence you should not consider yourselves representatives for just three days. When an individual is elected as a representative, from that day to the day when elections are held for the next Majlis-e-Shūrā, he continues to be the representative of his Jamā'at. Just as it is the duty of a representative to convey the opinions of his Jamā'at to us, it is also his duty to convey our decisions and our points of view to them. He first comes to us as the representative of his Jamā'at, and then goes back to them as our representative. It is his duty, till elections are conducted for the new Majlis-e-Shūrā, to consider himself a representative and to keep telling his Jamā'at about the proposals approved here. You should not think that your representation of Shūrā has terminated today. Your representation is not yet over and it will continue till the end of the year. It is your duty, till the next

elections, to keep your Jamā'ats awake and to see to it that they do not become indolent. Remember, negligence and indolence can never bring any good."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, p. 145]

In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IV^{rh} has said:

"Offer your opinions with discretion and carry them back with discretion. Reveal only as much as is permitted by Majlis-e-Shūrā or the Chairman...The trust assigned to you by God should remain secure in your hearts."

[Friday Sermon 29 April 1994, Al-Faḍl International 13-19 May 1994, p. 10]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IV^{rh} also said the following:

"May God Almighty be with you, and may He carry you back happy and under His protection. May you be able to breathe a new life into your Jamā'at, and may we see the bounties of God being showered upon us as a result of your efforts. May this happen by Allah's grace. (Āmīn)"

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, p. 250]

ATTENDANCE OF THE DELEGATES

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} expected from the representatives that their standard of attendance should be superior to any other institution of this kind. It was also expected that the quorum of Majlis-e-Shūrā should always be 100% and all members should always remain present and participate in the proceedings of Shūrā. The punctuality should be such that all members should be in their seats before the arrival of the Khalīfa or his honourable representative.

The discipline and noble traditions of Shūrā are un-

doubtedly the result of the deep insight and magnificent training of Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}. From the very beginning he established Majlis-e-Mushāwarat on such lines that punctuality and discipline became the second nature of its members. But whenever he observed even a little slackness he would take them to task. At one time Ḥuḍūr was stationed at Nakhlah (a place 600 feet above sea level, in Khushāb District) for a change of climate, from where he would come to attend the Shūrā. On one such occasion he noticed some slackness in the attendance, and observed:

“Only 411 out of the 432 representative are present. This means that all the members who were issued passes are not here. This is indeed a very sorry situation. The members who are not present in this session should be identified and should not be given the responsibility of Shūrā in the future. They have come here specifically to attend the Shūrā, but have absented themselves. I have travelled 100 miles just to attend the Shūrā despite my illness, and they, who were present in Rabwah, have not bothered to show up.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1958, p. 32]

THE ETIQUETTE OF SHŪRĀ

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} kept a close eye on the etiquette to be observed in the Shūrā. When he first formally established this institution, he laid out its code of conduct in great detail. These basic guidelines, which serve as a part of Shūrā's manifesto, have already been stated in the first chapter of this book, and need not be repeated.

During Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave the important directive that such things will not be discussed in Majlis-e-Shūrā which amount to an indirect attack or sarcasm against any section of the Jamā'at. Ḥuḍūr had launched a scheme for the collection of 50,000 rupees. When different aspects of this scheme were considered, some delegates were of the view that the scheme should not be open for all, it should be declared a special Chanda and should only be collected from the affluent.

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} did not agree with the idea of calling a Chanda "special", and said that it would amount to an assault on the Jamā'at. Although our Jamā'at is weak, most of our financial contributions come from the poor. In this backdrop, Ḥuḍūr's following observations are full of sagacity and wisdom:

"I am inclined to agree with the opinion of the majority. The word "special", however, requires some explanation. Here this word has not been used for any special distinction. As far as I am concerned, anyone who contributes

even a *paisa* is special, and it has nothing to do with sincerity of the person. The word "special" only distinguishes between the affluent and the not so affluent. The affluent are very few. The implication of the words Chanda 'Ām (common subscription) is not that the common people are inferior, but it only means that the condition of affluence is removed and the Chanda is collected from the entire Jamā'at. Therefore, I agree with those who say that these fifty thousand rupees should be collected from the affluent. The rest of the Jamā'at, who cannot pay a substantial sum, may be kept in reserve. The logic offered by one member that Chandas are mostly paid by the rich and poor people do not pay, is an imputation against the Jamā'at. Actually, the major part of our contributions comes from the poor, but this time we want to keep them in reserve so that when we are in need of more contributions we will accept from them as well. Their contributions are small, not because they do not want to pay more, but because they cannot pay more. But when we make an assessment, we find that the total contribution made by the poorer members of our Jamā'at is greater than that of the affluent."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, pp. 49-50]

AN EXHORTATION TO SPEAK WITH COURAGE AND CONVICTION

While explaining the rules and etiquette of Shūrā to the delegates, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} also instructed them that whenever they participate in Shūrā, they should express their views with courage and confidence. But, at the same time, it is important that their intentions and desires should remain subordinate to the will of Allah. In the Friday Sermon before the inauguration of Shūrā 1927,

Ḥadhrat Muṣṭaleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“If you want to embellish even your ordinary deeds, you must show courage, confidence and bravery in everything you do. When we do everything for the sake of God, everything will become beautiful, but if we do not, we will never have any beauty. Therefore, on this occasion, I would like to tell our friends who have come here, that when they go into Shūrā they should subordinate their opinions, their intentions and their views to the will of God, and should express themselves with true courage, so that they are able to spread Ahmadiyyat bravely, and so that through their courage and bravery they are able to open up for their successors ways which will lead them to their true destination. So try to develop real courage and present your views with confidence.”

[Friday sermon 15 April 1927, Al-Faḍl 22 April 1927]

Ḥadhrat Muṣṭaleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} also said:

“Those whom the Khalīfa asks for advice are under obligation to advise him faithfully. And when they are asked for advice they should express their views openly even if their views contradict the views of another person. But the thought should never cross their mind that rejection of their opinion would be a mistake.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, p. 7]

SOME IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONS

It was also considered a part of the etiquette of Shūrā, that the representatives should not waste the time in needless arguments and repetitions. Secondly, they should listen to the proceedings attentively and should not talk to one another. Thirdly, no personal attack

should be made when expressing an opinion, people should not be discouraged, and there should be no undue insistence. Fourthly, it is important for the representatives to participate in the proceedings wholeheartedly, and if they have to go out they should come back immediately. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Delegates should also see to it that they do not waste time. Sometimes people keep on repeating the same things. If you want to support a proposal which has been presented, you can do it through your vote. If there is a fresh argument, or if something has been missed, it can be presented, but repeating the same things all over again is a sheer waste of time. Delegates should keep in mind that they should only stand up to present a fresh argument, and should not repeat what has already been said.

Listen to other speakers carefully and attentively. It has been observed that some delegates either go to sleep or begin talking to one another during the proceedings. In the Parliament, which is in fact the Chief Parliament, members clap and laugh and make faces. But that is the mother of worldly Parliaments, whereas this Majlis is the mother of all religious conventions. The Quranic injunction for participating in such gatherings is **فَاسْمِعُوا لَهُ** i.e., listen with care.

Therefore, you should avoid talking to one another, unless someone comes from outside and enquires about the proceedings, or you have to give some important instructions.

It is also important to bear in mind that you should never give an opinion for the sake of someone else. The words of a believer are not commodities that can be bought for money, or given as a favour. A believer is not a call-girl

whom anyone can buy. He forms and gives his opinion only for the sake of Allah and not for anyone else. He does not give an opinion for the love of someone or for fear of someone's eminence. He only says what he considers to be right.

He should, nevertheless, be careful not to offend or hurt other people. He should not insist too much on his arguments and should realize that other people's opinions may also be correct. But even if he considers his opinion to be the right one, he should realize that the world will not come to an end even if it is not accepted. Or even if there was such a danger, God would take care of things and the wrong would be put right.

It is also important to ensure maximum participation in the proceedings. Our proceedings are so lengthy that not everyone can sit for so long, though I myself have to remain present all the time. It is true that some are old and infirm, and others have to go out to eat or to attend to other necessities. Despite all this, members should try to ensure maximum participation. If someone has to go, he should do so for the minimum time and come back as soon as possible. In the Parliaments, members sit only as long as the matter under discussion is of interest to them, otherwise they get up and leave. But we should give all our time to this cause, because our greatest personal need is of no value compared to the smallest requirement of the faith."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, pp. 13-14]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, in his address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Belgium, also shed light on the rules and etiquette of Shūrā. Here is a summary of his instructions:

1. Do not say anything which may hurt another person.
2. Whenever the Chair asks you to stop talking, you must stop immediately. All blessings lie in this, and from this emerges a dignified system.
3. Do not speak against one another. Do not even need to speak with reference to one another.
4. If you really have an argument to present, present it at your own turn and finish it within your time.
5. When in doubt, ask about the procedure.
6. Do not leave without permission.
7. A member of the sub-committee cannot speak against the recommendations of the sub-committee, unless he has already handed in a note of dissent.
8. Offer your names when names are invited for speaking about a proposal.
9. It is improper to ask someone to propose your name (for the sub-committee). There is no harm if you propose your own name or that of someone else.

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992]

In a Friday Sermon, Ḥuḍūr similarly said that consultations should be held in an atmosphere of love and harmony.

“Shūrā is for those whose hearts are bound together. True suggestions are those which come from people who love each other and offer their advice in true sympathy.”

[Friday Sermon 15 April 1994, Al-Faḍl International 13-19 May 1994, p. 7]

SEEKING PERMISSION FOR GOING OUT

It had been established as a rule that delegates will not go out without permission during the proceedings of Shūrā. It is in fact the injunction of the Holy Quran that when a meeting is being held to discuss important matters, no one should leave without the permission of the Chair. That is why when anyone wants to go out during the proceedings of Majlis-e-Shūrā, he has to raise his hand and get the Chair's permission. But undesirable situations did at times arise due to some people's ignorance of this established rule. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth gave the following instructions:

"There are two sorts of people who raise their hand during Majlis-e-Shūrā. I have observed that there are those who raise their hand and wait for permission to go out, and there are others who raise their hand and start walking, which seems to imply that they must go whether or not they are given permission and that the system of seeking permission is only a joke. We have to be patient, because God repeatedly asks the believers to exercise patience, forbearance and etiquette. You should raise your hand, and if no one notices you from here, i.e., me or some other friend does not see you, then any worker who happens to see the raised hand should come here and point him out."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, p. 100]

The delegates have to raise their hand to go out in case of need, but sometimes the Chair is too preoccupied to notice them and they have to keep standing with their hand raised. In such a case, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth delegated this authority to his assistant, and said:

[English] “Also remember that if some hands are raised...and some people want to go out for some short period, you can also permit them by waving to them to go out, otherwise they will keep standing. Sometimes I am too busy and I do not see the people who are standing.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1988, p. 54]

If a delegate is compelled to leave the Shūrā and go back in an emergency, he has to ask Khalīfatul Masīh’s permission. It is neither desirable nor permissible for a delegate to leave with only his Amīr’s permission.

At the time of International Majlis-e-Shūrā in 1989, when Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IVth learnt that a representative had left with the permission of his country’s Amīr, he expressed great displeasure, and said:

“First of all the delegate should have sought permission from me. And you (addressing the Amīr) too should have sought permission from me regarding the delegate, because during the Shūrā no Amīr is eligible to grant leave to a delegate. Such things have to be brought to the notice of the Chairman of the Shūrā. So, in future all delegates should remember that the Amīr does not have the authority to grant leave to anyone, only the Chair is eligible to do so.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1989, p. 94]

IT IS SINFUL TO VIOLATE THE ETIQUETTE OF SHŪRĀ

During Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau‘ūd^{ra} laid great stress on offering *Istighfār* and presenting one’s views in a decent manner, with the fear of God in one’s heart. He considered this to be a vital part of the etiquette of

Shūrā. Huḍūr said:

“The Holy Prophet^{sa} would always offer *Istighfār* whenever he sat in a meeting. According to the Traditions, he used to recite *Istighfār* seventy times. The reason for this was not, as some people discourteously say, that his heart would begin to be stained when he sat with other people, and he would offer *Istighfār* to remove these ill effects. How could anyone stain the Holy Prophet’s^{sa} heart, who himself has said that his Satan had become a Muslim? The Holy Prophet^{sa} did talk about the heart being stained, but this does not mean that his own heart could be stained. The reason why he offered *Istighfār* was so that other people’s hearts should not be stained and Allah may protect them. And the others offered *Istighfār* so that they would themselves be safe from being stained.

Now, what has the company of the Holy Prophet^{sa} to do with the staining of one’s heart? The fact is that on these occasions, or when Khulafā are present in a meeting, many things can happen that may cause people’s hearts to be stained. The Holy Quran instructs us not to speak in a manner that might be disrespectful to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. And that which stands for the Holy Prophet^{sa} also stands for the Khalīfa. If someone speaks sharply or loudly in any other gathering, he will be considered rude, but if someone speaks in this manner in the presence of the Prophet or Khalīfa, he will not only violate the etiquette of a meeting, but will become guilty of a sin.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, pp. 136-137]

THE KHALĪFA DOES NOT SIDE WITH ANY PARTY

There is no concept of preferential treatment in Majlis-e-Shūrā of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya. In this context, Ḥaḍrat

Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Our members should get into the habit of speaking in a more dignified and God-fearing manner. But it has been observed that some delegates, without taking into account the fact that I have already made a decision, say that it requires amendment. Even in worldly governments, nothing is said against the decision of the Chairman. Although those people may have no loyalty or religious reverence for their Chairman, and in their hearts they may even call him stupid, but they still show regard for his decisions. The members of our Jamā'at, on the other hand, are quite sincere and devoted, and they only commit such errors due to ignorance of the etiquette. This has not happened before, but this time I feel as if some of them consider me to be one of the Nāzirs, whereas in fact the Khalīfa is for everybody and not for any particular group. He treats everyone equally. He does not represent any particular Department, and is equally attached to all members of the Jamā'at. You, therefore, need to observe the etiquette laid down by the Shariah in such matters. The Promised Messiah^{as} once began a series of lectures for women, but when he heard them making noise, he decided to discontinue the lectures for the women were not paying due attention. It is, therefore, important to bear in mind the etiquette of Khilāfat and of meetings.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, p. 137]

THE KHALĪFA ALONE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED

It has already been mentioned that the delegates should participate in Majlis-e-Shūrā with an open mind, and to offer their opinions in a brief and rational manner. They should not address one another and should not repeat the

same things over and over again. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} had the following to say in Majlis-e-Shūrā 1933:

“The delegates should sit in Majlis-e-Shūrā with an open mind. They should establish a relationship with God and pray that He may guide them. And to be successful they should also bear in mind رَفُوءًا بِالْقَوَارِيرِ i.e., there are weak members in the Jamā'at whom they have to take along with them. Let us guard against arrogance and, instead of sitting down and relaxing after accomplishing one task, we should immediately embark upon something else. Our God is the Lord of the Universe and He is the Master of unlimited progress. Why should not we also try our best?

Another thing worth remembering is that if a discussion gets lengthier due to some misunderstanding, it is the duty of the concerned Nāẓir to correct that misunderstanding. At times a member misunderstands something which results in a lengthy discussion, and the concerned Nāẓir does not correct him, which is wrong.

Delegates should not address one another. This is wrong both from the spiritual and worldly point of view. Mushāwarat means that the Khalīfa is seeking advice from you. Therefore, you should address yourself to him. This is not a small matter, for it saves people from stumbling. When someone addresses another as an adversary, he is likely to get into a rage, but when he is addressing the Khalīfa, this will not happen. Hence you should always remember to address the Khalīfa on such occasions. This does not mean that you should actually address him with the word 'Khalīfa', but your speech should be directed towards him.

Also remember that your points should be brief and logical. Some speakers tend to get into such details that they go completely off the track. Since there is little time and the matters that need to be discussed are many, you should be brief in whatever you say."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1933, pp. 12-14]

IT IS WRONG TO RIDICULE SOMEONE UPON HIS MISTAKE

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} kept a close eye on every aspect of the etiquette of Shūrā and repeatedly advised the members to abide by them. Since no rules were yet in place, the delegates would express themselves at their own ease and in their own language. At times people would try to express themselves in broken Urdu, which would be unbearable for some participants while others would not be able to control their laughter. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} took strict notice of this, and said:

"Let me tell you that it is against the Islamic ethics to laugh at someone who makes a mistake while speaking, or to correct him during the meeting. Such a person should either be advised quietly, and if that is not possible, then you should keep quiet. In any case, laughing and making fun of him is not appropriate. Such things happen in other gatherings but should never happen in ours, for they are against the Islamic code of conduct. Everyone makes mistakes. By the grace of God, I am a good speaker but many times during a speech or a sermon I feel that I have spoken some words wrongly. This sometimes happens due to fatigue."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1929, p. 52]

In the same Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, Ḥuḍūr further said:

“Some delegates have written to me that they do not understand Punjabi and they cannot speak Urdu. Such people can speak in English and those who know English will understand them, and, if required, their speech can be translated for others also. Similarly, those who can speak in Punjabi may do so, and since the majority understands Punjabi, it needs no translation. Since there are no hard and fast rules in this regard, we should take things as they come. It is neither essential for every speech to be translated in a particular language, nor is there any prohibition. If we feel that a certain Punjabi or English speech is very important and is having a special impact, it can be translated.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1929, p. 56]

Similarly, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“When you come for Majlis-e-Shūrā, keep an eye on your weaknesses, and the greatest weakness is egotism. Time and again your soul will deceive you and will tempt you to laugh at your less intelligent friends, and will urge you to make fun of those who are giving incorrect arguments. There are many kinds of evil temptations which get in the hearts and minds of people attending meetings where important matters are being discussed, and it is these that cause nations to go astray. Members of Majlis-e-Shūrā should try to protect themselves from these temptations through *Istighfār*.”

[Friday Sermon 30 April, 1993]

Preserving the values of the Jamā'at: At the end of this Sermon, Ḥuḍūr directed the delegates of Majlis-e-Shūrā to adhere to the following:

1. Every delegate should come to the Shūrā offering

Istighfār, and having performed Wuḍū.

2. Every delegate should embellish his virtues, become subservient to God, and present himself before Him in the best manner.

3. After offering an opinion, everyone should say:

سپر دم بتوایہ خویش را تو دانی حساب کم و بیش را

*[I have given you my opinion, it is now up to you
to accept it or not.]*

If you come to Majlis-e-Shūrā in this spirit, and if you maintain these high traditions, I am sure Majlis-e-Shūrā will be able to safeguard the traditions of the Jamā'at, and will guarantee an everlasting life for it.

[Friday Sermon, 30 April 1993]

LISTEN TO EVERYONE WITH CARE AND ATTENTION

Since adherence to the etiquette is mandatory for everyone, whenever Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} noticed some deviation he would correct it, and would not let any expediency come in his way. Once when he noticed a representative of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya speaking in violation of the etiquette of Shūrā, he said:

“Let me remind friends that the rules of conduct which should be observed in every meeting—and this is not peculiar to any religion but is important for people of every religion, though some may choose to overlook it—is that when the proceedings have begun people should not talk among themselves. Yesterday it was not the people sitting in front of me who gave me reason for complaint, rather it was those sitting behind me, who are the workers of the Jamā'at. While I was speaking, two Nāẓirs kept talking intimately for a long time. This is in direct violation of the rules of conduct for this Majlis, and it was

being done by the Nāzirs of Ṣadr Anjuman, who are holding important posts. They indulged in prolonged discussions while the Khalifa was talking and they were sitting close to him. It seemed as if they were settling their family problems right here. I have felt this before and I want to draw your attention to it again. Let me make it clear that if there is a complaint against any Nāzir in future, I will issue instructions for him to be expelled from Majlis-e-Shūrā. If there is something important, it can be conveyed in writing, or even a brief conversation will not interfere with the speech, but this is not what happens and a long conversation takes place.

In these consultations, you should remember that you do not know who will say the right thing. Speak your mind, and then listen to what others have to say. I have occasionally had the experience that the advice given by some educated person was not correct, while that of an illiterate villager, who could not even speak well, proved to be right. Therefore it is important to bear in mind when listening to someone that God may possibly guide us through him. A question arose during the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} as to how people should be called for prayers. An ordinary man suggested a method to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, on hearing which Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} said that he too had thought of the same method, and it was *Adhān*. So guidance in religious matters can come even from an ordinary person. We should listen to others attentively. It is a common practice nowadays that when a 'lesser' person is speaking, we do not pay attention to him, rather we turn away from him, whereas the Holy Prophet^{sa} would listen attentively to anyone who spoke to him. What is the use of Shūrā if we do not listen attentively to everyone?"

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1934, pp. 11-15]

BLIND FOLLOWING IS NOT THE WAY OF THE BELIEVERS

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} also advised the members that they should not follow other people blindly, but should use their own reason. Instead of being carried away by emotions, they should give due thought to the matter at hand and then form an opinion. Once when the curtailment of the budget for Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya was being discussed in the Shūrā, Ḥuḍūr said:

“The workers of the Jamā'at have contributed a thousand times more than the other members of the Jamā'at in relieving its financial burden. I understand this situation, and had I been attending this meeting as a representative of some Jamā'at I would have been ashamed of suggesting that a cut should be imposed on the allowances of the workers. This shows how much difference there can be between temperaments of different people. The fact is that the members do not give serious thought to an issue before expressing their opinions. Last year member after member got up and said that there was no reason to impose a cut on the allowances of the workers of the Jamā'at because whatever they are getting is a subsistence allowance and not a salary, and that the additional burden should be shared by the outside Jamā'ats. I stopped them time and again and said that it was not correct to burden only the outside Jamā'ats. But today every speaker has said that the cut imposed on the workers' allowances may not be restored to them, as the Jamā'at is faced with financial problems. The Shūrā is the same, the members are the same, the circumstances are the same, and the topic under discussion is the same, then why is it that last year you were insisting that no deduction should be made from the allowance of the workers and the fi-

nancial burden should be transferred to you, but today you are saying that the Jamā'ats should not be burdened and that the deduction should be made from the workers' allowances? Why this change of heart? Your faith has not changed, the circumstances have not changed, the proposal has not changed, why then this difference? Is it perhaps because some of the members of our Jamā'at blindly follow others and do not reason out the proposal by themselves? When one suggests that deduction should not be carried out from the workers' allowances, everyone starts supporting him, and when someone suggests that the amount should be deducted, then also everyone supports him. If we learn to talk according to principles, our opinion will not change even after ten years. It will not change until there are changes in the arguments or in the circumstances which force us to revise our previous opinion. But if we blindly follow others, our opinions are liable to change every moment. I once read in a history book about the condition of a country in which the noose would be tightened around a person's neck hardly a minute after the crown had been placed on it. Similar is the condition of some of our representatives. If somebody says, 'Sacrifice! Sacrifice!' everyone starts saying, 'Sacrifice! Sacrifice!' And if someone says 'Burden! Burden!' then also everyone agrees with him. This is a very unsound system...Members do not properly deliberate upon the issues. At times they become passionate and jump into the field of sacrifice without caring for the consequences, and when they withdraw, their condition is all the more laughable. This is a most undesirable state of affairs. You should first of all think about whatever is presented before you, and then, if you wish to say something about it, you should do so seeking guidance from

God, and you should always adopt the middle path. To ignore the requirements of the time and the condition of the Jamā'at, and to be unmindful of who is saying the right thing, and to just go on speaking emotionally does not behove a true believer.

Keep your emotions under control when you are excited, and when your passions are cold, try to warm your hearts. When you are impassioned, look for arguments. And when you are satisfied with the arguments, stir up your emotions, so that whatever opinion you render is proper and results in your winning the approval of God. If you do not bear these things in mind, then consultation will be utterly useless and the true purpose of holding this Shūrā will not be achieved."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, pp. 92-94]

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND DETAILED DEBATE ON THE BUDGET

In the same Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} explained the difference between general and detailed debate on the budget, and said:

"The gentleman who is speaking should remember that this is not the time for general debate, and whatever he wants to suggest should be properly outlined. This is not the time for giving proposals that something should be done like this or like that. The time for that has passed. Now he can only say, for example, that the amount allocated to the head of account for postage should be reduced by this much. But he cannot suggest that the system of mail should work this way or that. If he wants to say something he has to give a definite recommendation, that so much amount should be reduced from such and

such head of account. The general discussion has already taken place.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, p. 112]

FAR-REACHING EFFECTS OF SHŪRĀ'S DECISIONS

The delegates of Majlis-e-Shūrā were occasionally advised about the rules of conduct and were asked to realize their position and to offer opinions which have been properly considered, because the decision which they take today will become a precedent for future generations, and people will refer to the reports of Majlis-e-Shūrā for guidance. In this context, Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Today we should make every decision after due deliberation, because scholars of the future shall seek guidance from them in resolving major issues. Our present condition is like the sun and those who succeed us shall be like the moon, which is illuminated by the sun. There is obviously a lot of difference between the two. Therefore, while making a decision the members should fear God...and we should take everything seriously. Gravity and solemnity should be apparent in your faces and in your body language, so that people should look at you and realize that Ahmadis really mean what they say...If friends abide by these instructions and keep them in mind when attending conferences and meetings, it can be quite beneficial both for their Tarbiyyat and also for Taḥlīḡ. This is what Majlis-e-Shūrā is all about. If the participants make the new members conversant with the rules of conduct, especially on how to speak, the latter can easily learn these things. But what I have observed is that members start talking among themselves, and al-

though I have repeatedly asked them not to do so, they still get carried away in moments of excitement. Therefore I will again advise you that you should show seriousness while talking and while forming your opinions. You should keep in mind that you have to bring about a new revolution in the world, and future generations will solve their religious issues on the basis of our decisions. We have been made responsible for an enormous task and such tasks are accomplished only when subordinated to the will of God. Therefore, the fear of God and thought of His greatness should always be present in our hearts. We should avoid being unnecessarily critical and sarcastic, and there should be no argumentative behaviour.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 17-20]

SOME EXTREMELY VALUABLE ADVICE

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth gave some extremely useful instructions regarding the code of conduct in Majlis-e-Shūrā. He said:

“Before taking up the proposals one by one, I would like to draw your attention to certain issues.

1. God has created us to cultivate dignified manners and to spread tolerance in the world. In these things we are the teachers of the world. Hence during the proceedings of our Shūrā, we should maintain decorum and should avoid impatient behaviour.
2. Nobody should stand up merely to contradict someone else or to criticise him. This will have a negative impact on unity, brotherhood and love which Allah has created in our Jamā'at merely out of His grace.
3. Try to avoid repetition. Many people get up and repeat

something that has already been said. Something new comes into their mind, but before they get a chance to say it, someone else has already said it, but they still stand up and repeat it. This wastes a lot of time and we are already short of time. Some years ago, four days were allocated for Shūrā, but it has again come down to three days, and I forgot about it. In the future, *Inshaallāh*, the Shūrā will be for four days. But if we are to properly deliberate upon all the issues, even four days are not enough. It is important to save time as far as possible, and this can only be done if you express your opinions briefly and clearly. Use minimum words and do not repeat what has already been said. Repeating an argument merely tells us that you agree with it, and this we will know anyway when you are asked to vote on it. We do not need to know it at this stage. We do want to know, but the members should tell us at the proper time.

4. Do not give your discussion the form of a debate. It is wrong to do so in Shūrā as a matter of principle, because everyone who gets up and presents his viewpoint before the Khalīfa, addresses himself to no one but the Khalīfa, and there is no one to debate with. You should not get into a debate, so that my time is not wasted in stopping you.

5. It is most important to pray when you stand up to give your opinion. We do pray collectively, and it pleases me to look at the faces in front of me and know that they are not only listening but also praying. But you should pray particularly when you stand up to express your views, so that God Almighty may guide you to say the correct thing in the correct manner, and if He approves of what you want to say, He might make your speech effective and others may also be convinced.

The consultations we are holding today are extremely important from the historic point of view. Thousands of years hence people will refer to these consultations of Majlis-e-Shūrā, and will point out that such and such discussion took place in such and such Shūrā and the Jamā'at arrived at such and such a decision. Most of us do not realize the significance of Majlis-e-Shūrā. If we were to realize its importance and its far-reaching effects, we would be very careful in what we say, since God Almighty has assured us that these words will become a model for the whole world. May God Almighty bring those days soon! The days are surely coming when the whole world shall assemble under the banner of Islam through the Promised Messiah^{as}, *Inshaallāh*.

This Majlis is a model for the entire world. It does not behove us to assemble for such important consultations and to speak so carelessly. Nations which have to progress live their lives in continuous reflection, deliberation and resolve. There is a time when a person or a nation reaches a line of action after full deliberation, and then implements it. The Holy Quran tells us that a time comes when you act upon *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* and hold consultations about the progress of the Jamā'at and of Islam, and for the establishment of *Tauḥīd* [Oneness of God]. And then there is a time when you act upon *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ* i.e., you come to a final decision, and you do not look to your means whether they are meagre or numerous, and start working with full faith in God, and do not take a single step back. The Holy Prophet^{sa} once accepted an advice of the Companions^{ra} which he thought was not correct. When he saw that it was the opinion of the majority, he agreed (perhaps God had wanted to teach them a lesson) and got

ready to go to battle. When he came out in his armour, carrying his weapons, some eminent Companions^{ra} realized that though he had accepted the advice of the majority, he was personally not in favour of fighting with the enemy outside Medina. Therefore, they submitted: 'O Prophet of God, your opinion is correct and it should be implemented.' But the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: 'God's Prophets do not remove their armour having once put it on', i.e., when they have taken a decision they only march forward.

Since God Almighty has thus linked our actions, it is essential for us to give thought to every aspect of the matter before coming to a decision. We should come to a decision with the intention that we have prayed to God, and have tried to keep our intentions pure, and have endeavoured to make utmost use of our intelligence which God Almighty has given us, and that once God has led us to this decision, no matter what happens we shall implement it. And regardless of our meagre resources, if God enables us (and He does enable His people), we shall keep thinking and deliberating as He has commanded us to do, and shall try to implement our decisions with sincerity and resolve...and He shall surely produce the best results for us.

Therefore, when you stand up, you should pray that you should be able to fulfil the responsibility that has been placed on you, both with regard to offering your suggestions and implementing the decisions that you will arrive at. Pray that you may arrive at the correct decision and are able to implement it."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, pp. 77-80]

It is improper to instigate one against another. In this context, Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

“This is not a Parliament where one party is instigated against another. This is Majlis-e-Mushāwarat.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, p. 26]

Once during a Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth did not allow a representative to seek clarification, and said:

“You have come here to give suggestions, not to seek clarifications. This is not the occasion for it. If you need any clarification, you should come to the office where the staff will clarify the matter for you.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1969, p. 92]

On another occasion Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

“I have called you here for consultations. You should give your opinion and should not say that what someone has said is wrong. You should only give your own opinion.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1982, p. 14]

DO NOT BASE YOUR OPINIONS ON HEARSAY

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth forbade the representatives from basing their opinions on hearsay. When a representative said that he had heard something about so many people, Ḥuḍūr said, “Do not talk about what you have heard. If there is actually such a person, you should name him.” He said that he could not name anyone with certainty. At this Ḥuḍūr said: “You cannot make something a basis for your argument in Shūrā which you are not sure of. You can only say that this is what you think, but you cannot say that there are many such people.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1973, p. 114]

AVOID EXAGGERATION

Once during Majlis-e-Shūrā a delegate mentioned a carpet-factory which, in his words, was very big. But when Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth asked him how many looms it had, he said that he did not know the exact number. Upon this Ḥuḍūr said that instead of saying that there were lots of them, he should have said that he did not know the number. Later on, when Ḥuḍūr enquired from the same delegate as to how many children worked on those looms, he exaggerated their number also, upon which Ḥuḍūr said:

“Do not exaggerate, give us the correct statistics. I was trying to make you understand this but you do seem to take the point. This is why I have chosen to talk to you directly. You should only say what is correct. Exaggeration will neither affect me nor the members who are sitting here, for we are all one body. You should present the accurate facts before the Jamā‘at.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1976, p. 61]

DO NOT INSIST UPON YOUR OPINION

It is also among the etiquette of Majlis-e-Shūrā that delegates do not insist on their own opinions. Every opinion that is offered has to be based on good intentions. Secondly, if during the discussion the Chair does not want an issue to be discussed any further, the delegate should immediately stop speaking. Thirdly, no personal issues should be brought into discussion. If any representative thinks that a mistake has been committed by someone in offering his opinion, he should remember

that it is only the privilege of Khalīfatul Masīḥ to correct him. Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}, while highlighting these aspects of the etiquette of Shūrā, said:

“I have always advised members not to be carried away like a cork in a stream. Once it has been said that only fundamental issues should be discussed, and no detailed discussions would take place, what then is the use of getting into details? In all the speeches there were only one or two fundamental points. As for the others, I cannot say that they wasted time because I let them continue, therefore, morally speaking, the time was not wasted, and I did not stop them so that they would not be embarrassed. But, in effect, time has been wasted because little of substance has been said. Some members keep on talking even though they have been told to stop and despite the fact that the Khalīfa is present. No one dares to defy even the Chair when he stops him. But here some of us are so obdurate that they keep talking even when they have been told to stop (by the Khalīfa). This shows that such people have very weak hearts, and they get carried away by every current.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1934, pp. 88-89]

In the same context, Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“I want to remind you once again that if you are asked not to prolong the discussion, you should comply. Sometimes when delegates are restrained from speaking about an issue, someone starts a lengthy discussion on the same subject. I do not think that it would hurt the Jamā'at in any way if individual opinions were not invited on a matter due to some expediency. It is against the etiquette to start arguing with the one who is presiding and to say

that he has not understood what you want to say. Even if he has not understood and has asked you to shorten the discussion, what is the harm? It is important not to continue the discussion at that time and, if it is really necessary, you should give your point of view in writing. If I consider it important, I will allow you to speak.

The third thing is that repetition should be avoided. I have said this so many times but friends keep forgetting. Recently I read somewhere that things are repeated many times in the British Parliament, and this practice is to be found everywhere. But our method and our system should be superior to the greatest Parliaments of the world, because we have less time, fewer people, and very important issues at hand.

The fourth thing is that you should be brief. It is no use prolonging a discussion unnecessarily.

The fifth point is that you must not on any occasion address one another. Every speaker should address me, because it is I who have invited you for consultations.

The sixth point is that everything should be said with the best of intentions. You should not be motivated by personal considerations, and nothing personal should come between you. If somebody has erred and there is a need for admonition, I will admonish him myself.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1935, p. 15]

Since it is essential for delegates to submit to the Chair, therefore, when presenting their suggestions to the Khalīfa, the delegates should keep in mind his status and should not say anything which is against the status and dignity of Khilāfat. The delegates must obey the com-

mands of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, must listen to him attentively, and must comply fully with whatever he says. Upon every word of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ the delegates would become a picture of, *'We have heard and we submit.'* When he asks a speaker to stop, he should stop at once. To continuing speaking after that, is not only against the spirit of Shūrā, it is also against the etiquette of meetings.

During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1970, a delegate expressed his views in a very improper and objectionable manner, which not only displeased Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth, but the delegates also took an exception to it. Thereupon the delegate offered his apology to Majlis-e-Shūrā, which was accepted by Ḥuḍūr. He said:

“May God Almighty forgive you. Try to keep control over yourself.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1970, p. 107]

Likewise, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth once reprimanded a representative on his unbecoming behaviour, and said:

“I am telling you not to talk in this way and to sit down. If you do the same thing again and continue speaking when you have been asked to stop, your membership of Shūrā shall be cancelled and you will not be given membership in future. This is not only against the spirit of membership of Shūrā, but it also amounts to rudeness, that you are repeatedly asked to stop but you go on speaking.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, p. 126]

ISSUES REGARDING AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS NOT TO BE RAISED IN SHŪRĀ

During an International Majlis-e-Shūrā, issues related to the observance of *purdah* [*hijāb*] were under discussion. In breach of the traditions of Shūrā, one lady delegate started speaking about how to improve cooperation between the Lajna and the Jamā'at, the need for general *Tarbiyyat*, and improving the relationship between husband and wife and their families. Ḥuḍūr declared this to be against the etiquette of Shūrā. He said:

[English] "As far as the exception you have taken to the attitude towards Lajna, by either the administration of Canada or by men in general, is concerned, this is not the forum for this discussion, please. You met me in Canada. You explained some of the problems to me. I thought I had answered them and satisfied you. If I failed to do so, you could have written to me again, through the Amīr this time.

Sister Maḥmūda Miān: Ḥuḍūr, you have explained very well.

Ḥuḍūr: This is not the forum for such discussions. So please confine yourself to the point under discussion alone.

Sister Maḥmūda Miān: Thank you, Ḥuḍūr."

[Report International Majlis Shūrā 1989, p. 120]

Later during the same Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥuḍūr further clarified this point and said that the rules of Shūrā do not permit the representatives of Lajna Imāillāh, Khuddāmul Ahmadiyya or Ansārullāh to raise or discuss problems related to their organizations. Their representation to

Majlis-e-Shūrā does not mean that they should bring up matters concerning their organizations and thus create polarization. In the broader interest, they should only discuss the point of view of the Jamā'at. Likewise, the delegates of Shūrā, whether or not they are related to the subordinate organizations, will not take up any such issue. Ḥudūr said:

[English] "Excuse me. This is what I was afraid may happen. Now let me clarify one point without any ambiguity. This Shūrā is not of Lajna or Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya or Ansārullāh. No discussion as such should be held. That is why when Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya is permitted to speak on this forum, they are not permitted to discuss Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya itself. Nor, on the other hand, other members who do not belong to Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya, who have come just to represent some Jamā'at in Shūrā, are permitted to discuss Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya as such, Ansārullāh as such, and Lajna Imāillāh as such. What Lajna did was, and why I accepted this proposal for discussion, was that they tried to push the mischievous child from their lap to the lap of men and to the lap of Jamā'at as such. I accepted it temporarily. I mean to return it to their lap of course later on, but the discussion here only should be from the Jamā'at point of view, from men's point of view, from women's point of view, from children's point of view, alright, but not from the Lajna point of view and the Jamā'at point of view, not in this polarization please."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1989, p. 126]

TRADITIONS OF SHŪRĀ

Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is an important consultative body of the Jamā'at which functions directly under the supervision of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. The Private Secretary to Khalīfatul Masīḥ acts as Secretary Majlis-e-Shūrā and manages administrative matters related to Majlis-e-Shūrā. Mushāwarat is generally held for three days, once every year—usually in the last days of March or early April. If, for some reason, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ is unable to preside over it, he appoints some senior member of the Jamā'at to officiate in his place, who conducts the meeting in accordance with the same accepted traditions of the Majlis which are observed when Khalīfatul Masīḥ is presiding. The Agenda of Majlis-e-Shūrā comprises important issues relating to the Jamā'at, which are sent in the form of proposals by the Central Departments and the outside Jamā'ats. Representatives elected by the Jamā'ats participate in Majlis-e-Shūrā. These representatives sit in front of the stage, the representatives of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya sit on the right, those of Teḥrīk Jadīd sit on the left, and those of Waqf Jadīd sit behind the stage. The representatives of the auxiliary organizations sit with the Companions^{ra} and other special guests. The representatives of Lajna Imāillāh sit separately behind a curtain.

DURATION OF SHŪRĀ

In the beginning Mushāwarat would be held for two days, but in 1927 it was felt that two days are not

enough. Since the issues to be decided were very important, and the time allocated for the discussion was insufficient, Naẓārat Ulyā proposed that Mushāwarat should be held twice a year, or for four days once a year.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, p. 9]

The sub-committee recommended that Majlis-e-Shūrā may be extended to three days or more, as required. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} decided that Mushāwarat would only be held once a year, and its duration could be extended.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, pp. 142-143]

Thereafter Majlis-e-Shūrā has been held for three days and this has become part of the tradition of Shūrā, which, by the grace of Allah, is being followed even today. In 1958 and 1959, however, the work had to be completed in two days because of Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd's^{ra} illness. With this exception, Majlis-e-Shūrā has been held throughout for three days. A decision was once taken for Mushāwarat to be held twice a year, i.e., during the Easter holidays, and then in June or July, so that the work that remained unfinished in the first Shūrā may be completed in the second.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1944, p. 146]

At one time four days were allocated for Shūrā. In this connection, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“This year the Shūrā had been scheduled to last four days, but like last year the work was completed within three. I expect that as delegates gradually understand the

importance of the work, more and more delegates will be participating, and the work will not be completed in three days. Moreover, longer duration will make it easy for us to give more time to those who wish to speak at length.

There is a proverb in Punjabi: 'The fruit which takes longer to ripen is all the sweeter for it.' If a mango is covered up with fifteen quilts to ripen it quickly, it shall only rot because of excess heat, but if it is allowed to ripen in moderate heat, it will turn out very sweet. The progress of the Jamā'at has also been gradual. Take for instance the case of the first Shūrā. Only about 150 delegates participated in it, but later the number exceeded 500. True, the numbers did come down after the Partition, but they are beginning to increase once more.

Whenever something new is started, only a few people at first take part in it. Very few people turned up for the first Jalsa Sālāna in Rabwah, but now the number has gone up to forty, even fifty thousand, and in the coming years the figure shall, *Inshaallāh*, rise to a hundred thousand and more. This year the Agenda of Shūrā was completed in three days, instead of four, but when we get used to holding it for four days the delegates will be mentally prepared, and the number of participants will also increase."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1956, pp. 105-106]

Thus a number of suggestions were considered for the duration of Shūrā, but in practice its duration remained three days. Except in case of emergencies, the Shūrā has neither been held twice a year nor has it been extended to four days.

DETERMINING THE DATES FOR SHŪRĀ

Majlis-e-Shūrā is now usually held in the month of March, as decided by Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}. In 1958 Mushāwarat was held on 25-26 April. On this occasion, Ḥuḍūr said:

“This time Shūrā has been convened in an extremely hot month. Had it been held a month earlier, it would have done no harm, and the participants would not have to endure such heat. Before the Partition, Shūrā was held in this season to coincide with the Easter holidays, so that the delegates would not have to obtain special leave from their jobs. But now the situation has changed. There are no longer any holidays for Easter, and the delegates have to get leave anyway. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to hold Shūrā during these days. It can now be held during the month of March, and the delegates will not have to endure such heat.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1959, p.2]

THE OPENING SESSION

When Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh, or the Chair appointed by him, steps into the auditorium, all the delegates, who are already seated in their respective places, stand up in his honour. When Ḥuḍūr occupies his chair they resume their seats. The session starts with recitation from the Holy Quran, which is followed by collective silent prayer. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} would sometimes say some prayers aloud in his own words before the silent prayer. For instance, on one occasion Ḥuḍūr said:

“In keeping with the traditions of Shūrā, and as matter of necessity, before we begin the Shūrā I would like friends

to join me in prayer that God may bless everything we do here, and our actions may produce good and fruitful results. May He bestow on us ample resources for accomplishing these tasks and then help us to benefit from them. May the results of our efforts be beneficial not only for us, but for our future generations, and indeed for the whole of mankind inhabiting the earth, and their future generations as well. Now I raise my hands in prayer, please join me."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1925, p. 1]

THE REALITY OF PRAYER

Another example of the close relationship between Shūrā and prayer is seen in Mushāwarat 1945. In the opening session, before the collective silent prayer, Ḥadrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} explained the philosophy of prayer:

"The proceedings of Mushāwarat are about to commence...I would like all delegates to join me in praying that God may enable us to tread the path that He approves of. May He nurture in us sincerity and breed in us love for Him. May He guide our thoughts and our ideas. May He expel from our minds all thought of pride and arrogance, so that we may become His instruments when working for the faith. May He remove from our hearts every trace of arrogance and ostentation. The work which has been assigned to us is of such importance and is so immense and difficult, that we do not have even a thousandth part of the power that is required to accomplish it. Only Allah can do it, and only with His help and succour can we accomplish it. So we should solicit Him for help so that the results of our deliberations may fulfil the objectives which He wants us to achieve. His intention

should be our intention and His plans should be our plans, so that not the slightest part of our accomplishments is contrary to His desire.”

Ḥudūr then led the participants in a long silent prayer.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1945, pp. 1-2]

PRAYER—AN IMPORTANT PART OF SHŪRĀ

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} declared the collective prayer to be an integral part of Shūrā, and said:

“We have come here today to discuss the budgets of Teḥrīk Jadīd and Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and also to discuss some other important issues related to the Jamā'at. But before we start our regular work I shall, according to the usual practice and tradition, begin with prayer and would like all of you to join me. May God help us to seriously ponder over the issues and guide us to their correct solution. The work which awaits us is stupendous while the resources at our disposal are meagre. Our responsibilities are great but we often tend to take things lightly. We fail to give due attention to what is important, because we lack the proper training. On the other hand, we sometimes give so much importance to trivial matters that a lot of our precious time and energy is wasted. So we pray to Allah that He may enable us to realize what is truly important, and may give us the strength and wisdom to deal with the issues in an appropriate manner, and may He enable us to make the best use of whatever little we have. May our plans and our sincere efforts result in replenishing our resources to meet the needs of tomorrow, and may they increase even further in coming years, until we are able to effectively discharge the responsibilities that are upon us. May God

also help us so that we may not remain entangled in mere talk, and our efforts may lead us to concrete results. May our thoughts take such a practical shape that no power may be able to stop us.

Our meetings always begin with prayer. For the future I prescribe that the work on all the three days of Shūrā should start with prayer, and should also be a prayer at the end of the concluding session. Thus we shall pray four times during the Shūrā: on the beginning of the first and second day, and then at the beginning and end of the third day.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1952, pp. 1-2]

HOLDING SHŪRĀ UNDER THE CANOPY OF PRAYER

In the opening address on the occasion of Mushāwarat 1967, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

“You have not come here for any personal gain. You have all come so that you may forget your personal interests, disregard your own biases and dispositions, and advise the Khalīfa regarding the proposals that are put before you in the form of the Agenda, while praying to God and partaking of His help. I pray that Allah’s angels may guide you. Let them point out the path and may you be able to follow it, and may you be able to offer the right suggestions. The right suggestions are not necessarily those that are accepted at the end of the day, but every suggestion (whether it is accepted or not) which you offer with sincerity and purity of intention is the right suggestion. And I have come here so that when I have listened to your views I should reach a decision and make a resolve, putting full faith in the living powers of my Lord and trusting Him to bless everything that I do or get

done. As I make a resolve, I pray that may Allah guide us in our righteous acts, for just as we stand in need of His guidance in our deliberations, so do we require His succour in their implementation. May Allah bless our meagre efforts and produce from them momentous results that are momentous in His eyes also. We neither care for the world, nor do we look to it. All our expectations are with our Lord, and our heads are prostrate before Him. We seek His help and support and we are sure that when we have wholly become subservient to Him in His eyes, He will bless us with a new life and a new spirit, and will cause armies of angels to descend for our assistance. And He will enable us to accomplish that for which He sent the Promised Messiah^{as} in this age. Islam shall become victorious over all false religions, Satan shall suffer the final defeat, and the truth shall triumph. Let us therefore begin our Majlis-e-Shūrā with the prayer that may Allah, by His grace, accept from us even that which has not come to our minds and which has not been uttered by our tongues. He is the Knower of the unseen, while our knowledge is imperfect and so are our actions.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1967, pp. 5-6]

OPENING ADDRESS

As already mentioned, the regular proceedings of Shūrā begin with recitation from the Holy Quran and collective silent prayer. Then Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ delivers the opening address, in which he usually mentions the objectives of Shūrā, and gives instructions as to how the Shūrā is to be conducted and how the delegates should express their views. This address can be brief or lengthy depending on the circumstances.

On one occasion Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ III^{rh} chose not to follow this tradition and appointed the sub-committees straightaway without delivering the opening address. But he did make a speech at the end in which he spoke about three kinds of consultations. He said:

“I did not deliver the opening address because I have a feeling that it has become a tradition which is not really necessary. Hence I chose not to follow this procedure. When the delegates bring forward their suggestions, I may have something to say about them.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1973, p. 14]

PUNCTUALITY

Mushāwarat is conducted according to a previously drawn out programme in which the time of each session is indicated. The delegates are expected to be present in the Shūrā hall before the scheduled time. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} was very particular about this. On one occasion he remarked:

“It is as a result of long years of servitude and the bad habits of our country, that the Shūrā is about to begin but the chairs of many Nāẓirs are empty, and so are those of a number of delegates.

Hard-working nations, whose objective is to dominate the world, behave very differently from other nations. They understand their responsibilities and value their time. But we seem to think that the time that has been fixed does not need to be adhered to....

It has become our second nature to be late, that is why we assume that we do not necessarily have to be present

at the appointed time. But I believe that if we have to be successful, we must learn to be punctual. Unpunctuality signifies lethargy and those who strive for progress cannot afford such slackness. I hope that friends will bear this in mind and act accordingly."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1925, pp. 10-11]

APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

After Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ's opening address, sub-committees are appointed as required by the Agenda. The first sub-committee is set up to deliberate on proposals related to the budget of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. The Second sub-committee is appointed to consider proposals regarding the budgets of Teḥrīk Jadīd and Waqf Jadīd. If there are proposals related to the teaching and training of the members of the Jamā'at, committees may be set up to deliberate upon them under Naẓārat Işlāḥ-o-Irshād or Naẓārat Ta'ālīm. If there are matters of general nature or issues related to social welfare, another committee may be set up under Naẓārat Umūr 'Āmma. And if any technical or special issue is to be taken up by Mushāwarat, a committee comprising experts and technocrats may be appointed. At times committees have also been formed to revise or interpret the rules of Waṣīyyat.

Before coming to the Shūrā, the representatives should consult their Jamā'ats about nominating certain members for certain sub-committees. This information is passed on to the Secretary Mushāwarat before the Shūrā

begins so that the nominations can be taken into consideration when the sub-committees are being formed. But this does not imply that all nominations are accepted. During the inaugural session some more members can also be added to these committees in consultation with the delegates.

To assist him in nominating members for the sub-committees, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ appoints someone from among the participants, who is fully conversant with the procedure of Mushāwarat. He sits on the right hand of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ and prepares lists of members of all the sub-committees. These lists, which contain the names of the members and the Jamā'ats they come from, are read out, so that any confusion can be clarified. The names of the Chairman and Secretary of each sub-committee are also announced after they have been approved by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. At the end of the opening session, the Chairmen or Secretaries of the sub-committees announce the time and place for the meeting of their respective sub-committees. The names of the members are again read out and the meeting is adjourned, to be continued the following day.

OTHER SESSIONS OF SHŪRĀ

On the second day the first session starts as usual with recitation from the Holy Quran and collective silent prayer. This session goes on until 1:00 p.m. and is followed by an interval for lunch and Zuhr and 'Aṣr prayers. This is followed by the third session which also

begins with collective prayer. The fourth and final session begins on the morning of the third day with recitation from the Holy Quran and collective prayer. This session ends with a concluding address and silent prayer led by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ.

The second session of Mushāwarat begins with a presentation of annual reports regarding the working of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and Tehrīk Jadīd. Thereafter, the Nāẓirs and Wakīls of various Departments of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and Tehrīk Jadīd present reports regarding the implementation of the decisions that had been taken by Shūrā in the previous year. Sometimes the order is reversed, and the reports about the implementation of the decisions come before the reports about the working of Ṣadr Anjuman and Tehrīk Jadīd. This is followed by requests for increase in budgetary allocations for the three Anjumans, and then Secretary Shūrā reads out proposals received from various Jamā'ats which have not been included in the Agenda, and the reasons why they have been left out.

THE TASK OF THE CHAIR'S ASSISTANT

After these preliminary steps, the real work of Shūrā begins, and the reports of the sub-committees are analyzed. These reports are presented by the chairmen of the various sub-committees. They are then taken up and discussed clause by clause. At this stage, for the second time, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ appoints some delegate to assist him.

In the beginning, anybody who wanted to express his views about a proposal would stand up and would be allowed to speak. But Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} did not approve of this practice. He decided that a list should first be prepared of all those who wish to speak on the proposal, and then the Assistant to the Chair will call them to speak in turn. Anyone who stands up during the discussion and wants to speak will not be allowed to do so.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, p. 140]

A very interesting point was raised during the same Shūrā. One of the delegates suggested that the gentleman assisting the Chair should not sit on the right hand of Ḥuḍūr. At this Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} remarked:

“As already explained, the previous procedure that anyone who wished to speak could stand up and do so, has been changed. The new procedure is that after a proposal has been read out, the names of those who wish to speak upon it will be written down by Chaudhry Zafullāh Khan Sahib, who will then call each of them to speak in turn. Since Chaudhry Sahib does not know the names of everyone, therefore, those who stand up will first call out their names. The delegates should also note that if they have to say anything they must give their names immediately after a proposal has been read out. Those who stand up later will not be permitted to speak.

One gentleman has suggested that Chaudhry Sahib should not sit on my right. I do not understand what he means, but I know the saying of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, that when only two people are praying together the second person should stand on the right side of the Imam. So,

regardless of what the world says, the Shariah tells us that when somebody is working with the Khalīfa, he should sit on his right.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, pp. 140-141]

OFFERING NAMES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE DISCUSSION

The usual practice of Shūrā is that the names of those who desire to participate in the discussion are written down, and each of them is then called to speak in turn. But if during the discussion some points need to be elaborated, the Assistant to the Chair can permit some other delegates to speak on the issue as well. In this connection, Ḥādrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“When a proposal has been read out, it shall be the duty of Dr. Sahib (Ḥādrat Dr. Mīr Muhammad Ismā'il Sahib) to ask who would like to speak on the proposal, and to note down their names. He will then call one by one the delegates whom he considers appropriate. It has been noticed that some of the delegates initially have no intention of speaking but as the discussion goes on they start expressing their desire to speak. Within certain limits, such conduct would certainly be more useful than harmful, because someone can suddenly come up with an idea that he did not have previously. But as it is, people get so carried away that everyone wants to speak while they have nothing new to say, and they keep repeating what has already been said. So the appropriate procedure is to enlist the names of those who would like to speak, immediately after a proposal has been presented, and then they should be given the opportunity to speak. If after that I feel that more views are needed, more people desirous of speaking on the subject can be invited. Or if

the delegates feel that further discussion is required, and the majority of them are of this view, more delegates may be permitted to speak.

One problem which might be faced by the gentleman who has been appointed to prepare a list of the speakers is that he may not know the names of all those who wish to speak. I know the names of the members of the Jamā'at more than anyone else, and I am familiar with their faces as well, but even I forget the names of some of them in large gatherings. So when the delegates stand up and offer to speak, they should first tell their names. Some stand up and merely say, 'I want to speak,' but the gentleman recording their names does not know who 'I' is. So when you stand up, call out your names and this will facilitate the work."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1931, pp. 26-27]

Advising the delegates who wish to speak, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"The sub-committee pertaining to Naẓārat Ulyā should now present its report. After this the delegates will be permitted to speak on each proposal. According to the tradition, I will now appoint a delegate to invite friends to speak one by one. Chaudhry Zafullāh Khan Sahib, please come forward. Delegates should keep in mind that no one knows the names of everybody. I know the names of most people, but even I do not know all of them, and I believe Chaudhry Sahib knows far fewer. So the procedure shall be that those who want to speak should first speak out their names. In Punjab people feel shy in telling their names, but without this it will not be possible to know who is standing and is desirous of speaking on the

proposal. So those who intend to speak should stand up and speak out their names.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1933, pp. 20-21]

On another occasion, Ḥuḍūr^{ra} said:

“Those who want to speak on this subject may do so. I want to add to the previous instructions that sometimes an important point comes up during the discussion. If Chaudhry Ṣafrullāh Khan Sahib thinks that more discussion is required on the issue, he may permit even those delegates to speak whose names had not been listed before.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1934, p. 27]

CLARIFICATION ABOUT THE CHAIR'S ASSISTANT

Although it is a great honour to work as Assistant to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, it at times causes some misunderstandings. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

“A gentleman is usually called to assist the Chair. For this purpose I shall be inviting different individuals in every session. But since this could give rise to some misunderstanding, let me make it clear that when I call a different person to assist me, it should not be inferred that this change was made because the performance of the first one was unsatisfactory. This clarification was needed to remove any possible misunderstanding.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, p. 22]

ENTERING THE SHŪRĀ HALL

Entry into the hall where Shūrā is being held is by an entry pass. Secretary Mushāwarat issues different passes

to delegates and Zā'irīn (visitors). Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} had his eye on every detail. On the matter of the checking of the Shūrā passes, he said:

“Passes should be checked at two places. The checkers who are posted at the entrance to the hall get so overburdened that they can only see a piece of paper in the hands of those entering, but they cannot read what is written on it. So there should be another check, five to seven yards before these checkers, from where the entrants should proceed one by one so that the next checkers can check their passes thoroughly.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1935, p. 28]

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} also stressed that the rule regarding the passes should be strictly observed and no one should be exempted. He said:

“Now there is something to which I want to draw the attention of the organizers. As I came in, I saw a son of mine at the entry door. The checker at first stopped him, but when he saw me he allowed him to come in. This was not correct. The correct thing would be to issue passes to my sons just like other people, so that they should realize that they too are bound by the rules, and are not eligible to enter without a pass merely because their father is presiding over the meeting. Letting them come in like that is a disfavour to them and not a favour, for it is likely to adversely affect their morals and character, and could develop in them the habit of breaking the law, rather than making them realize that they too have to abide by the law and cannot be allowed to break it.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, p. 12]

ATTENDANCE OF ZĀ'IRĪN IN SHŪRĀ

Many members from the outside Jamā'ats who come to benefit from the Shūrā as visitors are given separate passes as Zā'irīn, upon recommendation of their District Amīr, local President, or a Central Department. In the Shūrā hall these Zā'irīn are seated behind the delegates. They listen to the proceedings of the Shūrā silently and attentively. They are never allowed to speak during the Shūrā proceedings.

On some occasions Zā'irīn are not allowed into the Shūrā. For instance Zā'irīn were not given passes in the extraordinary Majlis-e-Shūrā held on 27th May, 1973.

[Report Extraordinary Majlis-e-Shūrā 1973]

Similarly, Zā'irīn were not allowed to attend the concluding session of Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, p. 190]

THOSE ON DUTY MUST WEAR BADGES

Many people are posted within the Shūrā hall to attend to miscellaneous duties. But it sometimes becomes difficult to distinguish between them and the delegates. To remove any such misunderstanding, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave the following instructions:

“The second point which I want to make is that, though our Shūrā has continued to be held since 1922, the organizers have not benefited from their long experience. Here in this hall delegates and workers are sitting together, but it is difficult to distinguish between them. If we had tried to solve such problems as and when they occurred, we

could have found a solution for them long ago. I do not think it would be proper to ask the delegates to wear badges, but it would be better to prescribe some sort of badges for the workers, which they could wear during the session. A worker wearing the badge will be distinguishable from a delegate, and there will be no confusion. The workers of Shūrā, which is the most important branch of the Jamā'at, should wear badges just like the members of Khuddāmul Ahmadiyya. They will thus be easily distinguishable and will not be taken for delegates. It will also make it clear to everyone that those wearing badges are workers and do not have the right to vote. By the grace of God, this is not the time when somebody will want to cheat and stand up to vote, but the possibility of some weak person doing so cannot be ruled out. So it is essential for the workers to have a distinguishing mark in the form of a badge, which they should put on during Mushāwarat. Thus there will be no confusion: they will not be taken for the delegates and will not be allowed to vote."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1950, p. 7]

PHOTOGRAPHY NOT ALLOWED

During Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1983, someone started taking photographs, upon which Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

"I have not given this permission to anyone. As far as I am concerned, you were only permitted to attend as a Zā'ir (visitor). I did not permit you to take photographs. It is not in my knowledge that photographs have ever been taken in Shūrā. It causes disturbance anyway."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, p. 118]

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DELEGATES

With regard to the seating arrangements, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said that representatives from each district should sit together, so that they may consult one another when giving their opinion.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1950, p. 45]

In accordance with these instructions, it has become a tradition of Shūrā that the chairs of representatives are organized district-wise. The arrangements are altered every year so that representatives of every district get a chance to sit in front of the stage in rotation.

FOLLOW GOOD TRADITIONS

The great traditions established by Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} were carried forward by the Khulafā who succeeded him. During the first Majlis-e-Shūrā of his era, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth explained the philosophy behind these traditions:

“It is the sign of progressive nations that the lessons they learn during their lives are moulded into traditions. They stick to the good traditions and forge ahead embracing these assets of the past. Every day of their life brings a fresh lesson, and if it is a positive and enduring lesson, they mould it into a new tradition and thus the traditions keep growing. They keep marching towards the future, making conscious use of the past and preserving their present experiences.

The Zā'irīn sitting in the rear should remain silent. I want to tell those of you who have come here for the first time about the etiquette of this Majlis.

One of the traditions of our Shūrā is that we do not sit here with our heads uncovered. The second tradition is that we do not talk to one another. The third tradition is that when a subject is under discussion and a good suggestion comes into one's mind, he expresses it gently and rationally and as briefly as possible. We have very few days and, by the grace of God, a great many brains have gathered here. Thus, while there is no need to remain silent due to shyness, there is also no need to speak without any reason. And when someone has said something and we have all heard it, there is no need for anyone to repeat it. But if you have a new point, you must express it, so that in the limited time we have, we are able to listen to all the opinions highlighting different aspects of the subject.

Another of our traditions, which needs to be explained in detail, is that we should have a positive approach, i.e., whatever we say or whatever we do should be beneficial for us, for our own people, for the whole of mankind, and for future generations."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, pp. 3-5]

SOME IMPORTANT TRADITIONS OF SHŪRĀ

Regarding the traditions of Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

"It is our tradition that we do not talk to one another during our Mushāwarat. Nowhere in the world will you find consultations being held in such a tranquil atmosphere. Some noise can be heard from people standing in the rear, who have probably come here for the first time. Our own training was such that while I was very young and was memorizing the Holy Quran in class 1 of Madrasa

Ahmadiyya, we would be encouraged to attend Mushāwarat, even though a child of that age could not understand what was going on. There would also be other children of my age with me, but no one would make any noise. It is wrong to hinder other people from the fulfilment of their duties. If the Zā'irīn sitting on the back start making noise, the delegates will not be able to hear us, they will, therefore, become irritated and lose their attention...

It is important to keep the new-comers abreast of our traditions, and also to remind the older people who may forget. As I have said, what is right must be said without hesitation, but one must also refrain from talking unnecessarily. Do not address one another or talk to one another. It is I who have invited you for consultations, and it is to me you should offer your views. Do not criticize what someone else has said, offer your own point of view and we will know that you hold a different view. Do not make noise and listen attentively. Do not speak out of context and do not waste time. Keep praying as you listen. There are many things which cannot be done simultaneously, but what I am telling you can be done at one and the same time: your ears should be listening but in your heart you should be busy praying. These two things can be done simultaneously.

Thus you should take part in the proceedings of Mushāwarat praying to God for His favours, His blessings, and His mercy. May God accept our prayers. May all of you go back to your homes fulfilled, both individually and as a Jamā'at, and may you not return empty handed."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1982, pp. 13-15]

NEED FOR REITERATING THE TRADITIONS OF SHŪRĀ

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth also kept reminding the new-comers about the traditions of Shūrā, so that the purpose of Majlis-e-Shūrā and the procedure of forwarding opinions in Majlis-e-Shūrā may become firmly established in their minds. Ḥuḍūrth once said:

“This objection should not arise in the minds of those who are conversant with the traditions of Majlis-e-Shūrā. Since young people keep coming to the Shūrā, it is necessary to keep reminding them that the purpose of presenting certain proposals in the Majlis-e-Shūrā is to draw the attention of the Jamā'at to issues which have become crucial due to lack of attention; and though the Jamā'at did employ certain means to solve these issues in the past, they have become dormant. When it becomes necessary to bring these issues to the front and to draw the attention of the Jamā'at towards them, they are allowed to be presented in Majlis-e-Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, p. 70]

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW NAZĀRAT OR APPOINTMENT OF A NEW NĀZIR

The point was once raised in the Shūrā that there should be a separate Nazārat for *Rishtā Nāṭa* [affairs relating to match-making and matrimony]. In response to this, Mirzā 'Abdul Ḥaq Sahib said that it was not in the purview of Shūrā to offer proposals regarding Nazārats. All matters relating to Nazārats and Nāzirs are considered solely by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, and he alone decides on these matters. We do not have the right to render recommendations and proposals in this regard. At this,

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“What Mirzā ‘Abdul Ḥaq Sahib meant was that there are certain on-going traditions of our Jamā‘at, and one of them, which has not been broken up to this day, nor should it ever be broken, is that decisions regarding the establishment of a new Naẓārat or appointment of a Nāẓir are taken by the Khalīfa himself. Members do not offer proposals in this connection, but if the Khalīfa himself feels the necessity, he can seek advice from anyone, and only then should they offer their advice. No one offers such an advice on his own. This tradition, too, should be upheld in Majlis-e-Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, pp. 106-107]

TRADITIONAL SHŪRĀ DINNER

One of the traditions of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is that a dinner is held in honour of the delegates on the evening of the second day of Mushāwarat. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ graces the occasion with his presence and the representatives feel privileged to have dinner in the company of their beloved Imam. Referring to this dinner on the occasion of Majlis-e-Shūrā 1988, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

[English] “At 10 p.m. there will be a dinner. The same function which was held during lunch-time last year has now been brought earlier and has been turned into a dinner (for the delegates). You remember that we were offered a special feast...and got together last year by way of a lunch at 10 p.m. We will be served dinner in the same dinner marquee.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1988, p. 123]

VALUABLE TRADITIONS OF THE JAMĀ'AT

Ahmadiyya Jamā'at is a worldwide community. The character of Ahmadīs all over the world is derived from excellent traditions which have developed with time, and many of which have taken the form of rules and regulation and have become part of the system of the Jamā'at. Elaborating upon this point during Majlis-e-Shūrā 1989, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said that preserving the rules and regulations in book form is not the real purpose, the real aim is to preserve the valuable assets of the Jamā'at which we possess in the form of traditions. Ḥudūr said:

[English] "Another thing I must explain to you is the fact that the Jamā'at has grown traditionally. The purpose of this booklet is not to create new rules and regulations. The purpose is to capture the wonderful, beautiful traditions which have evolved, into print, and to try to present to the people, who are newcomers or who are untrained, that these are the noble traditions of the Jamā'at. As such the important thing is to stick to the spirit of traditions, otherwise these rules and regulation can lead people astray and change the spirit and the attitude of the Jamā'at members to the organization. They may become over technical, they may become legalistic, while it is against the tradition of the Jamā'at to indulge in such formalities. We always try to create and maintain the very best atmosphere of cooperation and to run the organization with the minimum friction possible. So when these rules are published, they sometimes create friction because some legalistic minds try to read things in them which were not intended, and not being well versed with

the traditions of the Jamā'at, they sometimes try to create problems. Now, as far as I remember, I had spoken on all these things which you have raised during my visit to Kenya in the National Executive meeting. We had a very lengthy session together. Also, wherever I visit these questions are raised and I try to educate the executive members and other Jamā'at members on these issues. So I thought I had done enough work to resolve all the ambiguities. But it is a human process. Ambiguities will be born again and again and we will have to remove them. It took so long because of all that you have suggested. It is a critical thing. It is a very sensitive area and I wanted the traditions to be captured in the best of spirits and everything to be explained. So we hope that this has been realized. If there are problems, if there are further amendments and queries which come our way after the publication, then, of course, *Inshaallāh*, from time to time we will take these things up in our hands and try to explain away the ambiguities, and so on and so forth, if any...

The purpose was exactly to provide the countries with a document which would work as a source of light for them for various issues which may be raised from time to time pertaining to the administrative setup in their countries. It is not for public distribution as you have well understood. But the advisability of publishing smaller booklets like you do in your ships, etc., is questionable here. In this case I feel—and this has been the effort throughout—to introduce the traditions without making people's minds turn to the finer law points and things. Once it begins to happen, then the whole administration will become just form without substance.

That is the fear which I have entertained generally and

this is why I am always hesitant to issue more rules and more laws and things. This is a natural tendency in the world, that once you begin to create rules, laws and things, then the spirit is sometimes relegated to the background and a very formal, dry structure is created. As far as I have learnt from nature and God's creation, it should be the other way around. In the process of life, the dead things are pushed out and the live phenomenon begins from within outwards. Now, in the modern tendencies, the fact is that when you make new rules, laws and regulations, somebody misinterprets it, sometimes somebody goes beyond his jurisdiction to take certain actions. Instead of attending to the problem of a wrong person and correcting him, they go for making new rules, and that creates deadwood in the centre, which is very detrimental for the day to day running of the administration. That is why, I instructed the Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya to revise the rules of Waṣiyyat, etc., and to minimize the rules as far as possible. I think let's first experiment with this book. Let the Jamā'at show their response and try to learn the Ahmadiyya traditions from these books, and when in doubt they should always refer to me about the ambiguities which they consider are left in certain wording, etc., and then, I think, from day to day I will be able to explain to them what really is meant, or I may reach the conclusion that the wording is not correct and we will change it to a better wording. For the time being, I think that should suffice. Other things were raised here by Mr. Gakuria. They indicated the mishandling of affairs by certain Amīrs. That is a completely different problem. However big a book may be of law and regulations, etc., if the authorities are twisted slightly, or even in their innocence, they are not experienced, they can always make

mistakes in the implementation of these laws, and rules, etc. If these things happen, they should be treated on that level, not on the level of rules and regulations to bind them more and more. Then the problem will be that you will bind the hands of some Amīrs, and rightly perhaps, but then you will be binding the hands of many other Amīrs unnecessarily, leaving very little room for them to perform their day to day duties. So what has been done, let's consider it sufficient for the time being and during the next two or three years we will be able to revise this issue again.

I will tell you in essence what it is. As I have tried already, we have tried to capture the best of the traditions of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya into print, and these traditions have already been, in many cases, converted into rules and regulations, and in some other cases, they have not been converted into rules and regulations. So also we have tried to explain the philosophy of the running of the organization, day to day responsibilities and prerogatives of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Waqf Jadīd, Tehrik Jadīd, Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya. Everything has been introduced here to make the Ahmadi members fully understand how the system runs under the Caliphate."

[Report International Majlis Shūrā 1989, pp. 59-67]

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT

In view of the increasing importance and growing needs of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, Ḥaḍrat Muşleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} issued some comprehensive guidelines. Fresh arrangements were required for Shūrā every year, and necessary items had to be acquired on rent, which were not only costly but were also difficult to get. Ḥuḍūr, therefore, instructed the

management as follows:

“I want to direct the workers that, in view of the importance of Majlis-e-Shūrā, they should keep all the necessary items in stock. Our Jamā'at will, by the grace of God, last forever and Majlis-e-Shūrā shall remain its permanent feature and shall get even more organized with the passage of time. It is, therefore, necessary to have seating arrangements for the delegates and Zā'irīn.

There is no doubt that in the past people were used to sitting on the ground, but it is very difficult to get up from the floor and speak. The person speaking from the stage also feels that he is not reaching out to the audience. Therefore, in order for the speaker to speak confidently he should be in a position to look directly at the audience, and they too should clearly see him. This can be done effectively when people are seated on chairs. It is difficult for someone sitting on the floor to get up and speak time and again. This point should henceforth be borne in mind, and some inexpensive chairs should be purchased for the purpose of Majlis-e-Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1950, pp. 6-7]

PREPARING AND PRINTING OF THE SHŪRĀ REPORTS

The arrangements of Shūrā include the preparation and printing of detailed reports about Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, which serve not only as a source of information and guidance for the delegates, but also form a record of the consultations and important decisions taken at the Shūrā. In view of this and other advantages, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave instructions for the immediate compilation and printing of these reports and dispatching them

to the Jamā'ats. Once he even expressed displeasure because representatives forget the decisions taken at the Majlis-e-Shūrā as soon as they go back, and do not try to implement them in their Jamā'ats. He said that it was also the fault of the organizers, for they do not get the reports of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat printed and sent to the Jamā'ats in time. If the complete reports are delivered to the representatives within a month, they are able to remember the promises they made during Majlis-e-Shūrā. Ḥuḍūr also said that the representatives should not need to be reminded, and he directed the organizers to fulfil their responsibility and have the reports printed as soon as possible.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, pp. 10-11]

Thereafter Ḥuḍūr accepted a request from the Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat which included an assurance that the reports would be published within four months after Mushāwarat.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, p. 54]

Ḥuḍūr also directed that a number of people should be deputed to write down the proceedings of Mushāwarat, so that the report can be quickly compiled for implementation. In compliance with Ḥuḍūr's instruction, six people were deputed to prepare the reports.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1937, pp. 28-29]

The following request by Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat and the answer given by Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} sheds light on the problems faced by Secretary Majlis-e-

Mushāwarat with regard to the preparation of these reports, and also highlights Ḥuḍūr's desire in this regard:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Sayyedī—may God be your Help

السلام عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

During Mushāwarat 1928, Ḥuḍūr mentioned in his speech that it was only due to the slackness of the organizers that the previous year's report had only now been published, whereas it should have been published within one month after Mushāwarat and should have been sent to the representatives so that they would be reminded of the promises which they made in the Majlis. Hence the report should be published within a month after Mushāwarat.

I humbly solicit Ḥuḍūr to kindly reconsider this decision. The report of Mushāwarat is about 244 pages long. The publication of such a voluminous document requires much more time. First of all, Munshī Ghulām Nabī, the Editor of *Al-Faql*, takes a long time in producing a neat copy of the report which he records during Majlis-e-Shūrā. For this he requires from 4 to 6 months. Furthermore, even if the scribe writes four pages per day, it will take about three months for a book of this volume. Then I have to go through the proofs all by myself when I find time from my official duties. Therefore, I humbly solicit Ḥuḍūr's permission that the report may be published within eight months after Mushāwarat.

Your humble servant

Yūsuf 'Alī,

Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat

08-04-1930

Ḥudūr replied:

In this situation, I feel that a period of four months should suffice. Efforts should be made to publish the report within four months of Mushāwarat. But my decisions must be published within one month. Your request and my instructions should be read out on the occasion of Shūrā.

(Signed)

Mirzā Maḥmūd Ahmad

Khalīfatul Masīḥ II

08-04-1930

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, p. 54]

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SHŪRĀ REPORTS

Proposals continued to be presented in Shūrā regarding the publication of detailed Shūrā reports during the time of Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth. In Mushāwarat 1976, for instance, a representative said that since the proposals presented in the previous years are quite elaborate and contain some matters relating to legislation, therefore, if the report is prepared and sent out to the members who are coming for Mushāwarat, they can go through it before they come here and can offer better advice.

Such suggestions continued to be presented even during International Majlis-e-Shūrā. On one such occasion, Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

[English] "But if you go back to some preceding years, you would notice that this practice was omitted during the Majlis-e-Shūrā held in the Headquarters as well as some preceding years. So it is not an issue which only applies to this International Majlis-e-Shūrā. The decision

was taken regarding the Shūrā in Pakistan, which, at that time, was the only representative Shūrā for the whole world. So, there are some reasons, of course. But, as far as proceedings are concerned, they are recorded completely, without any omission, with all the opinions expressed, and they are well recorded. So, as far as the record goes, that practice would continue to be so, but as far as the publication of the full report and distribution to all the Jamā'ats is concerned, I do not want to elaborate on this point. But due to some exigencies, it was decided that a limited circulation should be made only to the Jamā'ats which are concerned. And with the time, of course, in mind, we could circulate a limited amount of reports, not perhaps elaborately, but regarding...the proposals and the final decisions to all the Jamā'ats, for their consumption at Majlis 'Āmila level and the level of Murabbī, etc., but not for public consumption.

Mr. Maudūd Ahmad: Huḍūr I was just wondering that, if it would be possible, that since the Shūrā is dealing with current affairs and if we can agree on one thing that let us say after every ten years the reports are then put in the library, in a central library, so that future generations will have access to that.

Huḍūr: Yes, this is a good suggestion, but it is not directly related to this proposal, I think. We will take note of this.

You know, we send the entire records of this Majlis-e-Shūrā to be preserved in Pakistan and sometimes to India, etc. And we preserve the record here as well. So, maybe after a while when the situation eases, we will publish them all together in one big volume, or small volumes as well. Previous reports were published, of

course. When I started writing the biography of Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}, I immensely benefited from the study of these earlier reports. They make very interesting reading and enlighten you so much on various aspects of the development of Ahmadiyya thought within the jurisdiction of the Holy Quran and the Traditions and the writings of Ḥaḍrat Masīḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{as}.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1994, pp. 46-47]

THE AGENDA

PREPARATION OF THE AGENDA

Preparations for Shūrā begin from December to February when the Private Secretary, at the behest of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, consults Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Tehrīk Jadīd and Waqf Jadīd as to the dates that will be most suitable for Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. Reports from the three organizations are then submitted to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. Following Huḍūr's approval, a notice is published in newspapers announcing that such and such dates have been fixed for the Shūrā and that outside Jamā'ats and Central and Auxiliary organizations are invited to send in their proposals by a certain date.

It is an established rule that the proposals should first be discussed in a general body meeting of the local Jamā'at from where they originate. The approval of Majlis 'Āmila of the local Jamā'at alone is not enough. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ III^{rh} remarked:

“Representatives of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya normally gather for deliberations at the Shūrā once every year. The Agenda of the Shūrā includes the approval of budgets for Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Tehrīk Jadīd and Waqf Jadīd, and other proposals related to finance. Miscellaneous proposals which are sent by the Jamā'ats are also deliberated upon in the Shūrā. Some of these proposals conform to the rules of Shūrā while others do not. With regard to the latter, it is the duty of the local Jamā'ats to

inform their members about the rules under which proposals are sent to the Shūrā. Proposals which do not conform to the rules have to be discarded right away and are not to be tabled before the Shūrā. Some of the proposals that are sent in accordance with the rules do not relate to the Majlis-e-Shūrā at all, and are in fact related to administrative matters. Then there are proposals which concern only the local Jamā'ats. But we keep receiving such proposals, for people are not adequately informed about the rules and guidelines for sending proposals to the Shūrā.

I sometimes place in the Shūrā Agenda proposals which Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya has rejected (and has recommended not to be tabled before the Shūrā). This is because I wish to speak about these issues. In this way I am able to provide necessary guidance to those who have sent the proposal and the Jamā'at at large. Such proposals do not per se relate to Majlis-e-Shūrā, but it is important to place them before the Jamā'at so that they may understand the issues that need to be understood.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1977, pp. 4-5]

In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth has said:

1. Proposals should only be sent to Markaz after they have been properly deliberated upon in the local Jamā'at.
2. When Khalīfatul Masīḥ allows a proposal to be tabled before the Shūrā, it does not necessarily mean that he agrees with the proposal.
3. Approval of a proposal by a Majlis 'Āmila is no reason for it to be approved by the Shūrā.

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, pp. 15-17]

GUIDELINES REGARDING THE FRAMING OF THE AGENDA AND REJECTED PROPOSALS

With regard to the framing of the Agenda and the proposals that do not meet the Shūrā's criteria, Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Mirzā Ṭāhir Ahmad Sahib (Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth) has said the following on pages 197-198 of *Sīrat Faḍl-e-Umar*, vol. 1:

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} has devised the following procedure for preparing the Agenda that is presented before the Shūrā: Various Jamā'ats and individuals send their considered proposals to the office of the Private Secretary according to the established guidelines. The Private Secretary then sends these proposals to Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, which, after considering them carefully, presents them before Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ with their recommendation as to which of them are worthy of being tabled before the Shūrā that year, and which of them should be rejected.

The rejected proposals are read out before the Shūrā, so that delegates may know the kind of proposals that were sent by the Jamā'ats, and which of them Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya did not consider eligible for the Shūrā. With regard to this procedure, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} gave the following guidelines to Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya:

“It would have been appropriate if Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya had given its reasons for rejecting some proposals, so that members would not think that Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya had summarily rejected valuable proposals without giving them due consideration. And if these reasons proved to be somewhat insufficient, the Jamā'ats would have an opportunity to deliberate further

on the matter, and Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya would receive better advice...Without such an explanation, it becomes impossible to know on what basis the proposals were rejected...It is not enough simply to reject the proposals, it is also important to give the reasons for rejecting them. This will be for their own good, for if they merely read out the proposals without giving the reasons why they have been rejected, people will think that the authorities were foolish to have rejected proposals which would only have increased their reputation and prestige. So, if the Nāzirs of the Anjuman do not wish to be seen as foolish in the eyes of the people, they should give their reasons for rejecting the proposals. In this way people will understand that the rejection was not a result of lack of deliberation, but the result of reasoned consideration."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1945, pp. 16-18]

ANOTHER GUIDELINE REGARDING REJECTED PROPOSALS

On another occasion, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} gave further guidelines in this regard:

"Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya was indeed justified in barring certain proposals from being tabled before the Shūrā, but it was not enough for the Anjuman to have said merely that they did not consider these proposals relevant to the Shūrā. Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya should have given the reasons for rejecting them. For example, if it had been said that the Agenda was already a long one and time was short, and the proposal would therefore be tabled in the next Shūrā, this explanation would have been quite understandable. It is difficult to satisfy people merely with the statement that these proposals do not concern Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. The primary question is whether the proposals point at a genuine need. If

they do, and are related to Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, it would have been appropriate to explain that the proposal had been referred to the relevant Department and that the needful would be done. If, on the other hand, the proposals could validly be tabled at the Shūrā, it should have been announced that the proposals had been tabled before the Shūrā for deliberation. If it was not relevant to the Shūrā, the reasons should have been given.

The fact is that every matter which pertains to our Jamā'at falls under one of the following four categories:

(I) Matters which do not relate to our Jamā'at: In such cases, the reasons should be given.

(II) Matters which concern Majlis-e-Shūrā: These should be placed before the Shūrā.

(III) Matters relating to Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya: The Anjuman itself should make decision about these matters.

(IV) Matters which relate neither to Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya nor to the Shūrā, but pertain directly to Khilāfat: With regard to such proposals, Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya should inform the Shūrā that they have been referred to Khalīfatul Masīḥ.

In each case Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya has to respond differently. If a matter does not pertain to the Jamā'at and relates, for instance, to politics, the Shūrā should be informed of its non-relevance. If a matter requires a decision by the Khalīfa, Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya should explain that it relates directly to Khalīfatul Masīḥ and has been referred to him for decision. In the third eventuality, if the matter pertains only to Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, the latter should not merely say that it does not recommend the proposal to be placed before the

Shūrā, rather it should inform the Shūrā that the matter has been referred to the relevant Department. The fourth eventuality may be that a proposal is related to the Shūrā, but cannot be placed before it due to time constraints. In such a case, it should be announced that the proposal will be included in the Shūrā Agenda the following year.

Since every proposal will necessarily fall within these four categories, it is not enough merely to announce that we have barred certain proposals from being tabled before the Shūrā. Full explanation should be given as to which of the four categories the proposal falls under and what decision has been taken with regard to it. If this procedure is followed, the person or the body initiating the proposal will be satisfied, and the thought will not cross people's minds that a useful proposal had been rejected unreasonably. Instead, they will understand that the procedure adopted was the appropriate one."

[Unpublished Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1948, pp. 1-3]

PROPOSALS PERTAINING TO ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Administrative matters need not be placed before the Shūrā, for they can be disposed of by Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya or the other Anjumans. Once, when such a proposal was being discussed in the Shūrā, Malik 'Abdur Raḥmān Khādim Sahib, Amīr Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya Gujrat, raised the following point:

In the presence of clear instruction by Ḥudūr that administrative matters and matters of detail do not need to be placed before the Shūrā, the current proposal should not be presented here. Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya can itself take a decision about it. (This proposal was about hold-

ing quarterly meetings of the Agriculture Committee.)

Chaudhary Mushtāq Ahmad Bājwah Sahib, Secretary of a Shūrā sub-committee, said that it was true that the matter being discussed was not of fundamental importance, but it had been placed before the Shūrā so that Jamā'ats should take more interest in it. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Khādim Sahib is of the opinion that only matters relating to principles should be presented here. He is also of the view that the details can be worked out by Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, which is an administrative body. In my opinion, he is right. The details of a proposal should not be discussed in Majlis-e-Shūrā, for Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya is fully competent to decide upon such matters.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1956, p. 75]

Regarding the right to appeal when a proposal has been rejected, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“Each of you (delegates) has the right to appeal to me through the Chairman, and say that a proposal made by our Jamā'at was rejected, although, in view of past precedents, it should not have been rejected. Kindly allow us to re-submit this proposal on some future occasion.”

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, p. 17]

WHAT MATTERS CONCERN THE SHŪRĀ

1. Only such matters should be presented before Majlis-e-Shūrā whose expenditure has to be borne by members of the Jamā'at, and for which the Jamā'at is responsible. If a proposal does not fall under this category, it is a waste of time to put it before the Shūrā. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} issued the following directives:

"I have said time and again that only such matters should be put before Majlis-e-Shūrā whose expenses are directly linked to the members of the Jamā'at. It is useless for Shūrā to deliberate upon matters which do not put any monetary obligation upon the Jamā'at. In the proposal now being discussed, it has been suggested that books relating to the life of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the Promised Messiah^{as}, and other important material about the Jamā'at, should be translated into other languages, particularly into English. It suggests that books written by the Promised Messiah^{as} should also be translated. It suggests that members should be asked to offer honorary service in this regard. In my opinion, there was no need to place this proposal before the Shūrā, because it relates specifically to the Nāzīr of the concerned Department. If he considers this proposal to be worthwhile, he should begin work upon it immediately; no one forbids him from doing so. It will only be a waste of time to discuss this proposal in the Shūrā."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, p. 6]

2. With regard to a proposal that a permanent committee should be set up to advise Nazārat Tablīgh, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

"This proposal does not concern the Shūrā. If such a committee were established to advise the Nāzīr Sahib, no one would object; it is, therefore, not a matter to be placed before the Shūrā. Only such matters should be deliberated upon here which place an obligation on the Jamā'at as a whole, or for whose implementation the Jamā'at is expected to make financial contributions. Anything which lies outside these parameters does not concern the Shūrā. For instance, if someone were to sug-

gest before the Shūrā that he wishes to offer Tahajjud prayers at Masjid Mubārak, such a proposal would have nothing to do with the Jamā'at as a whole. It is his personal matter and he is free to do so if he so wishes."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1944, p. 74]

3. In the same context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

"I have emphasized time and again that it is useless to place before the Shūrā matters pertaining to institutions whose functioning is dependent on their own income. If a scheme is good and beneficial and members of the Jamā'at are contributing towards it, it can be implemented. But if people are not prepared to make contributions for it and do not seem to approve of it, there is no reason why the Jamā'at should take the responsibility upon itself. A similar sort of proposal was submitted by Nāẓir Ta'lim. He suggested that the High School at Ghatiāliān should be upgraded to higher secondary school. The fact is that when the school was established, members of the Jamā'ats in the area pledged to make contributions to meet its expenses, but they failed to do so. Thereafter, the school was upgraded to a middle school, and then to a high school, but the local Jamā'ats still did not offer any financial assistance. Now Nāẓir Sahib has suggested that this school should be upgraded to a higher secondary school. No doubt, there is a high school at Rabwah whose expenses are borne by the Jamā'at, but this is in Markaz, and the whole Jamā'at has to make contributions towards it. On the other hand, it is not obligatory upon the Jamā'at to make contributions for a school in a village in Sialkot District. It is the duty of the local Jamā'ats to bear the expenses of their own school...

Such proposals should be considered by the relevant

Nazārat or Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. There is no need for us (the Shūrā) to waste time on such proposals. The proposal which appears as no.1 on the Agenda had initially been approved with the provision that students would only be awarded scholarships if people made contributions for it. It is futile to seek further approvals in this connection. Hence I cannot allow this proposal to be tabled before the Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1958, pp. 9-10]

AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE AGENDA

4. Only realistic and practicable proposals should be included in the Agenda, and the budget should be specifically mentioned. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

“Initially, members of the Jamā‘at would send proposals in order to motivate, and though they were good proposals, it was not possible for us to implement them. The proposals presented these days, on the other hand, are quite often in our power to implement. In any case, it is essential that only practicable proposals should be placed before Majlis-e-Shūrā. The proposals should not be such as are beyond our power to implement, either because we lack the resources, or because of the prevailing conditions, or because they are likely to cause mischief or disorder, or merely because better proposals have already been presented before the Shūrā.

I do not wish to speak any further on this...but I would like to point out a major deficiency in the Agenda, in that it does not contain any budget proposals, despite the fact that the budget is the most important matter which Majlis-e-Shūrā has to deal with. Thus if we follow the

current Agenda, we will not be able to deliberate on the budget proposals. Nāzīr Baitul Māl says that he forgot to include the budget proposals in the Agenda. This is indeed a grave omission, and is actually like a wedding procession in which all are present except the bridegroom. It is hard to make such a mistake. Anyhow, the Nāzīr Sahib has managed to complete this difficult task, and the budget will be presented and deliberated upon."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 8-9]

PREMATURE PROPOSALS

Regarding half-baked and premature proposals, Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masih IIIth said:

"We in Markaz should pay more attention to this matter, and the Jamā'at as a whole should also keep thinking of new proposals. All useful proposals should be sent to me. In fact, during the last few months, I have felt that proposals which are sent to me by individuals are far better than those that are sent to Shūrā. This is because an individual understands his responsibility, gives proper thought to his proposal, considers its every aspect, and sends it to me only after it has been perfected. Unfortunately, when it comes to the Shūrā, people only convene a meeting when the Shūrā is close at hand, and send in any proposal they can think of. These proposals are not given due thought and are at times sent without even considering the facts. People do not even take into account the prevailing circumstances and the rules relevant to such proposals. They just send their proposals without properly thinking over them and end up wasting our time. I am thinking of some procedure which will allow members of the Jamā'at to deliberate longer on the proposals for the Shūrā, so that they are sent to us only when

they have been perfected. Immature and raw proposals should not be sent to us. If anyone can think of a way to improve the proposals that are sent to Shūrā, he is welcome to share his suggestions with me. If we all think together I am sure we can find a suitable solution.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, pp. 215-216]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ III^{rh} also said:

“When suggestions are sought through the Shūrā, Majlis-e-Shūrā comes between the one who offers the suggestion and Khalīfatul Masīḥ. But there is no such barrier when someone offers his suggestion directly to Khalīfatul Masīḥ.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1976, p. 63]

PROPOSALS SHOULD CONFORM TO PREVAILING CONDITIONS

The proposals contained in the Agenda should deal with current needs. A proposal was once rejected by the International Majlis-e-Shūrā, with the approval of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IV^{rh}, on the following basis:

[English] “Proposal No. 8 submitted by Jamā'at in Tuvalu. It said: Considering the number of branches within countries and continents, it has become logistically difficult to effectively implement the Shūrā resolutions within a period of 12 months. The problems of logistics are compounded by the inadequacy of the postal and communication system in many parts of the world. Accordingly, they suggested that the new proposals for consideration by the Shūrā be brought up every two years, and the mid-term sessions be used mainly for the appraisal of national follow-up progress reports and their implementation, in addition to dealing with other regular

Shūrā business, as appropriate.

Comment: This proposal has not been included in the Agenda because it is not in line with the practices and traditions of the Jamā'at. According to the normal routine, fresh proposals are invited every year and only such proposals are put on the Agenda which really present the needs of the time. The expanding needs of the Jamā'at also suggest that the present practice should continue."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1994, p. 11]

AN UNSAVOURY PRECEDENT

On one occasion a Jamā'at sent a proposal without properly considering it and without taking into account the relevant rules and regulations. The proposal was that when young missionaries are sent abroad, their wives should be sent with them. When Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth inquired from the concerned Jamā'at, it turned out that the president of the Jamā'at had sent the proposal on his own without consulting Majlis 'Āmila or anyone else. When this proposal was being discussed in Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

"The president did not have the right to send such a proposal without consulting the (local) Jamā'at...When a proposal comes to Markaz, it considers whether or not it is worthy of being presented before the Shūrā, and the reasons for it. These recommendations are then sent to me...I have purposely asked for this proposal to be included in the Agenda so that I can make these people understand...This is why I had this proposal included in the Agenda although Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya had recommended otherwise...I therefore announce (and this

was the purpose of placing the proposal in the Agenda) that all such proposals will henceforth be rejected. Such proposals should never be presented in the Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1972, pp. 200-201]

THE FINAL SHAPE OF THE AGENDA

At times Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya recommends that a particular proposal should not be tabled before the Shūrā, but Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ decides otherwise so that some issues relating to it can be explained in the Shūrā, or the representatives can be given an opportunity to give advice upon it. However, such proposals are not assigned to a sub-committee of the Shūrā for deliberation. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth once remarked:

“As I have already mentioned, there were three issues which should not have been included in the Agenda, but I still had them included so that I may shed some light on them and members may give their opinion about them, and the matter should be resolved in an appropriate way.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1973, pp. 14-15]

SHŪRĀ DOES NOT CATER FOR PROPOSALS SENT BY INDIVIDUALS

According to the rules and regulations, any proposal which is presented by an Ahmadi in his individual capacity cannot be presented before the Shūrā. It is true that all proposals are initiated by individuals, but they take on a communal form since they are sent after proper deliberation by the Jamā'ats or established institutions of the Jamā'at. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ can, however, send proposals made by individual to the relevant Departments and instruct them that, if they consider the proposal wor-

thy of being presenting in Shūrā, it should be presented on behalf of the Department, and not on behalf of the individual. With regard to proposals that are rejected, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth once observed:

“The list of rejected proposals read out just now includes some proposals by Mr. Mubashirāt Ahmad of Lahore. There seems to have been a slight misunderstanding which has caused these proposals to be presented in a different form. I had referred these proposals to Secretary Majlis Kārpardāz with the notation that if they considered them worthy of being tabled before the Shūrā, they should submit them either on behalf of their own Department or through the Standing sub-committee. But there was apparently a misunderstanding, or perhaps I did not explain the matter adequately, and my notation was taken to mean that I wanted these proposals to be tabled before the Shūrā. Thus, when these proposals came before me in their original form, they had to be rejected, for, under the rules, no proposal sent by an individual can be tabled before the Shūrā. It is true that all proposals are initiated by individuals, but they have to come through Jamā'ats or through the established institutions.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, pp. 33-34]

PROCEDURE FOR RE-SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

If a proposal has been tabled before Majlis-e-Shūrā and has been rejected, then, under the rules, such a proposal cannot be presented again before three years. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“A proposal that has been rejected by Khalīfatul Masīḥ cannot be presented again until after three years.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, p. 100]

Likewise, proposals which are already being implemented in one form or the other cannot be included in the Agenda. In this context, the following announcement was made with the approval of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth during an International Majlis-e-Shūrā:

[English] "Secretary Shūrā will now read a list of rejected proposals and will also read the reason why they were rejected."

‘Aṭāul Mujīb Rāshid Sahib: "In order to maximize the beneficial use of time available and concentrate on key issues, certain rules are observed by the Majlis-e-Shūrā. For instance, a proposal which has been debated and rejected in an earlier Majlis-e-Shūrā cannot be tabled again within three years of its initial inclusion. Similarly proposals which are accepted and adopted or are being implemented, with the permission of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, are not included in the Agenda of the International Majlis-e-Shūrā."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1988, p. 22]

PROCEDURE FOR RECONSIDERING A DECISION OF THE SHŪRĀ

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth had already clarified that in case a proposal has been tabled before Majlis-e-Shūrā, and has been accepted or rejected after deliberation, and it is to be presented again (after three years), the original proposal will first have to be read out and members will have to be told of the decision that had been taken by Majlis-e-Shūrā, and why it has now become absolutely necessary for the decision to be revised. Ḥuḍūr said:

"It is important to note that if a proposal has been tabled

before Majlis-e-Shūrā and has been discussed and finally accepted or rejected by Khalīfatul Masīh (as the case may be), then, if such a proposal is to be presented again, it will be necessary to mention that the same proposal has already been deliberated upon in the Shūrā. It should also be mentioned that the decision was taken on the basis of such and such arguments. It should also be explained why it has now become necessary to revise the previous decision. If the circumstances, have changed they should be explained. If the proposal was one that had been rejected, the Shūrā should be told of the arguments that had been presented in its favour and why these arguments had failed to convince the Shūrā. But now, as the circumstances have changed, we once again table this proposal before the Shūrā and request it to consider it once again.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, p. 187]

ANOTHER IMPORTANT INSTRUCTION REGARDING THE AGENDA

Various aspects of the preparation of the Agenda and the proposals contained in it have already been discussed. When these proposals have gone through the different stages and have been finalized and published in the shape of the Agenda, they are then sent to the Jamā'ats so that their representatives can study them and elicit the opinion of their respective Jamā'ats before coming to the Shūrā. Majlis 'Āmila of every Jamā'at is required to discuss the proposals and come up with a collective opinion, which their representative can present before the Shūrā. We shall discuss this in greater detail in Chapter IX.

With reference to the publication of the Agenda, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh II^{ra} has said that it is necessary to state

the chronological year of the Shūrā, and also to mention how many years have gone by since the first Shūrā was held. He said:

“At the very outset, I would like to point out to those who prepare the Agenda that the chronological year of the Shūrā should be mentioned at the top. It is not enough merely to mention the year in which the Shūrā is being held, but it is also necessary to mention that it is such and such year of the Shūrā. This is very useful in the historical perspective. The current Agenda only mentions at the outset that Majlis-e-Shūrā will be held on 7th 8th and 9th April, 1939. Although this is helpful in learning the programme of the Shūrā, it does not tell how many Shūrās have been held before and what year of the Shūrā it is—whether it is the fifteenth, sixteenth or seventeenth. Hence the historical record remains incomplete. From now on those who are responsible for publishing the Agenda should not only mention the year in which the Shūrā is being held, but should also mention the year of the Shūrā, so that the historical record remains up-to-date.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1939, pp. 1-2]

ADDRESSING PROPOSALS ACCORDING TO THE AGENDA

Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} always tried to address every proposal contained in the Agenda. To this end, he would discourage unnecessary repetitions, so that the Agenda could be finished in time. He once said:

“The Agenda before us today contains several points. We should try to deal with the whole Agenda within the days allocated for the Conference. In the past, many items of the Agenda remained unattended because some members did not have experience of such meetings, and they kept

dwelling on trivial things, or merely repeating themselves. At times people have been seen to repeat themselves up to ten times. We should not waste time in this way and should endeavour to address the whole Agenda.

With this in view, two changes have been proposed from now on. First, a time limit has been set for each sub-committee within which it must complete its work. Second, the practice in the past has been that whenever a proposal is tabled for deliberation, members begin to speak on it one after the other, and at times when people see other people speaking they, too, want to speak, though the proper way of expressing their opinions is through the vote. It has, therefore, been suggested that when a proposal is read out those who wish to speak on it should come forward. Only these should then be allowed to speak and none else, because on such occasions people just stand up to speak when they see others speaking. If they really have something to say, they should express their desire to speak when the proposal has been read out, though in certain circumstances it becomes necessary to speak even afterwards. I believe that in this way we will be able to save time and the work will be completed in time.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, pp. 6-7]

Chapter VIII

APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

In the inaugural session of Shūrā, sub-committees are appointed to consider the points of the Agenda in detail, and to formulate concrete recommendations after addressing all the relevant issues. The letter from Secretary Shūrā, in which he forwards the items of the Agenda to the Jamā'ats, also contains an instruction that the Shūrā representatives should consult among themselves and propose which of them should serve in the Shūrā's sub-committees. The Secretary expects such information to be conveyed to him before the start of the Shūrā, so that the proposed names can be taken into consideration when the sub-committees are being formed. But it is not binding upon the convenors of the Shūrā to include in the sub-committees everyone who has been recommended by the Jamā'ats.

Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth instructed that three copies of the lists of these nominees should be prepared to avoid any confusion: one for Khalīfatul Masīḥ, the second for the Assistant who would be appointed for this purpose, and the third for Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1983, p. 11]

The usual practice in the formation of the sub-committees is to nominate delegates who are competent and experienced and, preferably, experts in the relevant fields. The sub-committees deliberate upon the items of the Agenda and look thoroughly into the relevant issues

before formulating recommendations to be placed before the house. It thus becomes easy for the house to reach a decision upon them.

The Agenda generally comprises matters related to finance, education, Tarbiyyat, Tabligh, and issues of general nature. To consider all these issues, three or four sub-committees are considered sufficient, but more sub-committees may be formed if required. The sub-committees usually relate to the Budget of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, the Budgets of Tehrîk Jadîd and Waqf Jadîd, Nazārat Işlāḥ-o-Irshād, Ta'lim and Umūr 'Āmma. At times standing committees are constituted by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, which keep deliberating upon certain issues throughout the year and present their reports in the next Shūrā. And if no decision has been arrived at, the deliberations can continue until a decision is reached.

Some members of the sub-committees are nominated by the Central Organizations of the Jamā'at, while the rest are nominated by the Jamā'ats. Each sub-committee comprises about 30 members. A Chairman and a Secretary are also nominated for each sub-committee. In early years, one of the Nāẓirs would chair the sub-committee, and the committee would itself choose a secretary from its members. This procedure was later changed. Now the Amīr of a Jamā'at, or an office-bearer, or an expert in the related field is nominated as the Chairman of a sub-committee, and a Nāẓir or Wakīl is appointed its Secretary.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, p. 99]

This procedure has gradually become a permanent part of Shūrā.

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP OF SHŪRĀ SUB-COMMITTEES

With regard to the formation of the sub-committees, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} made the following observations during Mushāwarat 1952:

(1) "Members are now requested to propose the names for the Budget sub-committee. As I have said a number of times before, you should not propose names of people who are not present here. Sometimes people just propose names without ascertaining whether the person whose name has been proposed is even here or not. Secondly, only the names of people who are competent for the required task should be nominated. It is essential that the person who is nominated understands the matter that has been assigned to him. For instance, the task of making reductions or increments in a budget, or including items which were previously not part of it, requires that the member should be well-informed, should be familiar with his own area, should know the procedure for collecting Chanda, and should be aware of the difficulties that are faced in this regard. He should also have an idea of the steps that are required to aid the progress of the Jamā'at. It is also important to include delegates from different provinces.

We have here representatives from Jamā'ats in Bengal, Sindh, Karachi, Balochistan, Bahāwalpur, Punjab, Kashmir and NWFP. We also have foreign delegates from the United States, Syria, Indonesia, Egypt, Sudan and other countries. The difference is that the budgets of the foreign countries are not discussed here, and are ap-

proved by the countries themselves. Only certain fundamental issues are decided here and they prepare their own budgets accordingly. As such the representatives of these countries are really not concerned with matters pertaining to our budget. The Jamā'ats whose Chandas do form part of our budget are those within Pakistan. India is a separate country and since the Jamā'ats of that country are not contributing to our main budget, they are not directly concerned with it. Delegates from all the provinces of Pakistan must be represented on the various sub-committees. Bengal, Karachi, Sindh, Balochistan, Bahawalpur must all be represented. Punjab should have a larger representation because it has the larger number of Jamā'ats, but the representatives should be such as can render us the maximum assistance."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1952, pp. 4-5]

MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEES SHOULD BE SELECTED WITH CARE

(2) In this connection, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"I have been advising you time and again, and let me repeat that just as it is necessary to be careful in the selection of delegates, and to make sure that they are competent and are capable of forming an independent opinion, the same criterion should be applied in selecting members of the various sub-committees. I have been told that sometimes delegates do not understand their responsibility in this regard. I myself once heard a delegate asking another to forward his name for a particular sub-committee. Of course there is no harm in presenting one's own name for a committee, provided one has the required ability, but it is not desirable for a delegate to ask someone else to present his name. For in such a case

he tries to give the impression that other people feel the necessity of having him on the committee, while he is in effect presenting his own name. The Holy Prophet^{sa} said that one should not present one's own name for any position. In those days he personally knew all the Companions, for they were close to him night and day, and he knew who was competent to give a particular advice or carry out a specific duty and who was not. But our Shūrā comprises representatives of different Jamā'ats and I do not know about each and every person whether or not he is capable of advising on a particular matter. If the Shūrā were to be limited to the people of Qadian, I myself could nominate the members of the committees, but now things are different. Representatives from other Jamā'ats also participate in this Shūrā, and I do not know all of them. I do not know which of them is an expert in the field of law, or education, or finance. Therefore, it is not improper for someone to offer his own name for a sub-committee, or for someone else to recommend him if he knows him. But it is highly disagreeable to ask somebody else to suggest one's name. Such a conduct implies that the concerned person considers himself very capable but wants to give an impression of humility. The fact is that he is only expressing his desire for self glorification, and this is why he wants to be nominated for a sub-committee. I later discovered that the concerned gentleman, although he had himself initiated his name, did not turn up to attend the meeting of the committee. It is important to be careful about this in the future...

Those who are nominated to work on the committees, should work diligently and should only offer practicable proposals for solving the problems of the Jamā'at."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 7-8]

SELECTING MEMBERS FOR THE SUB-COMMITTEES

(3) In Shūrā 1942, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

“I do not wish to make a long speech, I only want to speak to you about the selection of members for various committees. Let me briefly reiterate what I have already said on a number of occasions, that only people who are well versed in the relevant fields should be nominated for the committees. Sometimes the delegates behave irresponsibly and propose the names of people who are not members, or have not even come to Qadian. This causes unnecessary wastage of time. So you should propose only the names of those who are present in Qadian, are elected representatives, and are competent for the task. If you propose the name of a person who is present in Qadian but is not a representative, it will not only waste a lot of time but will also be a cause of embarrassment to the person whose name has been proposed but he is not even a member of Shūrā. Moreover, this would also be against the etiquette of Shūrā. Only those people should be nominated who are representatives, are present in Qadian, and have some sort of affinity with the task that they are to be entrusted. For instance, they may be secretaries (of their Jamā'ats) or people who are otherwise interested in the matter or possess relevant information. But when somebody does not fulfil these conditions, his name should not be proposed.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1942, p. 2]

SUB-COMMITTEES SHOULD CONSIST OF PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE

(4) Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave another very important guideline about the nomination of members for the

sub-committees. He said that it is not necessary for all Jamā'ats to be represented on the committees, and, secondly, all the members should not be from urban Jamā'ats. Representatives of rural Jamā'ats should also be nominated. Huḍūr said:

"Now we are going to appoint the sub-committees and I want to make it clear that it is not fair for members of every Jamā'at to think that they should be represented in these committees. The number of Jamā'ats, by the grace of God, is fairly large, and it is not possible to accommodate all their representatives in the committees. The thing to be considered is that the right kind of people should be on the committees, no matter what Jamā'at they belong to. If every Jamā'at were to nominate its representative, there is the likelihood that the right type of people would be left out. Another defect might be that people nominated for the first committee may actually be more suited for a committee that is to be formed afterwards, but they do not make it into that sub-committee because they have already been nominated for the first one.

We should take sincerity and fear of God as our guiding principle. Prayer should precede every step you take. Pray to Allah before offering your opinion, when listening to others, when expressing your views, and when intending to give a proposal. You should also remember to nominate for the committee members who are more eligible and competent for the task than others. Another thing to be considered is that all members of the sub-committees should not be from urban Jamā'ats; rural areas should be represented as well. The majority of our people come from rural areas and their representation is necessary. So please propose the names for the commit-

tees keeping all these things in mind. If someone is really competent in a certain area, he must be proposed for the relevant committee.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1934, pp. 8-9]

(5) Emphasizing the point that members of the committees should be pious and dedicated, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“During previous Shūrās, I have said the people whose names are proposed for the committees should have the required expertise, and should be able to spare time for the committee’s work. I had also emphasized that all sorts of persons—even villagers and uneducated people—and people from all the provinces should be given a chance to work on the committees. As far as relevant expertise is concerned, there is little difference between the educated and uneducated. I have noticed that at times even uneducated people have the ability to reflect seriously about different matters. They express their ideas so admirably on certain issues—to which they must have given good thought—that even educated people, who are not prone to deliberation, cannot do it to such effect. So when I said that only those people should be recommended for the committees who have some sort of affinity with the work, I was referring to their mental affinity and I did not mean that they should necessarily be graduates or should have attained a certain level of education. It is, in fact, the sincerity and *Taqwa* of a person which determines whether he is suitable for a religious assignment. If somebody fears God and loves the faith, he can come up with ideas which may never be conceived by an educated person who is devoid of these qualities. It is my everyday experience that a person who

is utterly illiterate but is in the habit of serious thinking and reflection, and entertains the fear of God, and loves the faith, is blessed with such knowledge from God as is not possessed by a renowned scholar who only possesses conventional knowledge.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, pp. 2-3]

(6) Once, during a session of Shūrā, names for members for the sub-committee for Nazārat Da‘wat-o-Tablīgh were being proposed. Someone proposed the name of a person who was not a delegate. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau‘ūd^{ra} gave him a warning and said:

“In future if somebody proposes the name of a person for a sub-committee, while the gentleman concerned is not a member of Shūrā, the one who proposes his name shall not be permitted to attend the remaining session of the Shūrā for that day.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1945, pp. 4-5]

A GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR THE SUB-COMMITTEES

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau‘ūd^{ra} would give instructions to members of the sub-committees after they had been formed. He once said:

“It has been observed during the past few years that the sub-committees constituted for deliberating upon the items of the Agenda did not put in the hard work that was required of them. Some committees even left the work half finished. Hence, this time only two sub-committees have been formed so that the task can be performed properly. I now hope that they will work diligently and attentively, will not leave off until their work is finished, and will present their reports in time for tomorrow’s session.

There is also another point I want to stress. The sub-committee working on the budget proposals should give particular thought to the means that should be employed for increasing the income. The war now appears to be over and this will considerably affect our income. The experience we have from the previous war is that the income came down suddenly after the end of the war and this state of affairs continued for ten years. So we should now consider how to increase our finances, and we should have the maximum amount in the reserve fund. We should also try to reduce our expenditure as far as possible."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1945, p. 5]

HOW THE SUB-COMMITTEES SHOULD DELIBERATE

When forming a sub-committee for considering budget proposals, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} used to give guidelines as to how different aspects of the budget should be deliberated upon. During Majlis-e-Shūrā 1936, he said:

"According to the established procedure, I shall first constitute one or more sub-committees to deliberate upon these proposals before they are taken up in the general session. Before consulting the delegates as to whether one or more committees should be formed, I would like to give some guidelines to the prospective members of the committees so that they may keep them in mind when considering the proposals.

At the outset, let me clarify that members are free to offer any advice they like, but it is up to the one who is seeking advice to accept it or not. There are, however, certain matters on which it would only be a waste of time to deliberate. For instance, let us take up the fourth issue

under consideration, namely, 'What is the solution to the financial crisis faced by the Jamā'at?' I want to inform you of my views about this matter the viewpoint from which I will analyze your recommendations.

I have said this before, but let me clarify once again, that I do not believe in abandoning a project unless I am fully convinced that it is detrimental to our interests. Of course I am prepared to consider suggestions about the abandonment of a certain project, but I will only take such an action when it has been categorically proved that continuing with the project will be harmful for us. But I do not close the door for someone to make such a suggestion. For example, if someone suggests that our school should be closed, I would be prepared to listen to him, but, let me make it clear, I will not accept such a suggestion unless it is proved that the schools will be detrimental to the interests of the Jamā'at. Someone else might suggest that the London Mission should be closed. I would be prepared to listen to him as well, but I will only seriously consider this suggestion when it can be proved categorically that continuing with the mission will be injurious to Islam and Ahmadiyyat. I will not consider a proposal merely on the grounds that it puts a financial burden upon the Jamā'at. I will not consider such a proposal because if the idea is only to curtail expenditure, it will be more convenient to do away with all the projects, just as other Muslims have done, who do not wish to carry such a burden. They neither enter this field nor do they shoulder any such responsibility. If we too must follow them, then why wind up just one or two projects, we will feel more comfortable by closing them all down.

If we are going to close down projects, then why are we

holding this Shūrā, and why are we seeking advice? Why not shut down all the projects and go home and rest? But if the purpose of our lives is to serve the religion of Allah, then our argument should not be that we could save a lot of money by closing a certain project. Our attitude should be to think how we can support and finance a certain project, the responsibility of which we have taken upon ourselves.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1936, pp. 3-4]

ABSENCE FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

All members are required to be present in the meetings of the sub-committees and the standing committees. If a member has some urgent business, he should apprise the Chairman of the relevant committee. Absence without permission signifies lack of interest, and the absence of a member may hinder the work. A sub-committee once recommended the following penalty for a member because he remained absent without any valid reason:

Members who have been informed of their nomination to a sub-committee but fail to turn up for the meeting, can be nominated for membership of the Shūrā but they will not be nominated for any committee for the next three years. This action is necessary, since important work is sometimes held up due to the absence or lack of interest of a member. So, if despite repeated written reminders by the Nazārat, a member does not respond or does not participate in the committee meeting without a valid excuse, his name should be announced in the Shūrā. If he still persists in this kind of behaviour, he

should not be made a member of any sub-committee for the next three years, so that he might realize his error.

The majority of the delegates voted in favour of this proposal, and Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} made the following observations:

“I accept the proposal with the amendment that for the next three years such a person will not be nominated as a representative for the Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 45-53]

Thus absence of any member from the meeting of the sub-committee without permission is a violation of the rules and traditions of Shūrā and invites punitive action. In one such case, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth asked a member to explain his absence from a meeting of the sub-committee, at which he apologized and expressed remorse. Ḥuḍūr remarked:

“You feel sorry, but you should have been good enough to intimate about your absence. You have a lot of experience, by the grace of God, and you know that such conduct amounts to disparaging the committee. It does not behove a person who has the honour of the membership of a Shūrā sub-committee to absent himself without permission, just like a schoolboy.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, p. 72]

PROLONGED SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Sub-committee meetings generally go on late into the night. Only after lengthy discussions and extensive deliberations do the committees reach their conclusions

which are then formulated in the form of a report. Commenting on the work of the sub-committees, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“The sub-committees used to complete their work during the night. They would sit down immediately after the first session and sometimes continue to work until 3 a.m. in the morning. I too would remain awake and the reports of the committees would keep coming in as late as 2 or 3 O'clock in the morning...Hence the sub-committees should give maximum time to their assignments. We have to work throughout the year and we have only these three days to deliberate upon our work. We should be prepared to bear the maximum load during these days.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, pp. 141-142]

WORK OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave detailed instructions as to how the committee for Naẓārat Baitul Māl should deliberate upon the budget proposals and what means should be used for reducing or increasing expenditure. Ḥuḍūr said:

“This year again I have noticed certain flaws in the budget. I had proposed that this year Nāẓir Baitul Māl should himself prepare the budget, because last year Anjuman took too long to prepare it, but the Nāẓir Sahib has taken almost the same time. Another flaw which has been discovered is that he did not present the budget to the Anjuman, while this is not what I had intended. Anyhow the budget proposals have been presented here without having gone through the procedure of being presented before the Anjuman. The sub-committee was not aware

of the reasons for the extra expenditure as demanded by different Departments of the Anjuman, and it had to spend considerable time in finding out the reasons for the suggested increase. What the sub-committee should have done was to invite the concerned Nāzirs or their representatives to give their reasons for the increase in expenditure. The Nāzirs or their representatives could then have justified this increase before the committee. This would have made it easier for the committee to decide whether or not it should allow the increase. But this was not done, and the entire business had to be taken up here (in the house) and the members had to sit idle for about one and a half hour, for they were in no position to give their opinion on the issues.

Another defect was that all the committee members were not sitting together. If they had been, they could have been consulted and a meaningful decision could have been taken regarding the acceptance or rejection of additional expenditure in keeping with the majority view. The members were having meetings at different places and the decisions were taken independently by the Chairman of the sub-committee and Nāzir Sahib Baitul Māl as its Secretary. This was a fault, and one of the members who drew attention to it suggested that if all the members had held a joint meeting and had listened to the explanations of the concerned Nāzir, they might have modified their opinion. Hence I propose that in future if the members of the sub-committee for Baitul Māl wish to change their opinions after hearing the views of the Nāzirs, they should send in a written note requesting that their views may also be heard before the final decision is announced.

My second proposal is that when the report of the sub-

committee for Baitul Māl is presented, all its members should sit together. This will help the Chairman of the sub-committee to put all the pertinent issues before them and secure their views. In future, when the report of a committee is being presented, all the concerned members should sit close to the stage, so that if they want to change their opinion after hearing the report, they may be able to communicate it.

Another point to be noted is that when the budget sub-committees are considering the proposals, a note should be sent to the concerned Nāẓir regarding the issues that are to be taken up by the committee, so that either the Nāẓir himself or his representative should attend the committee meeting and offer explanations for the proposed increase in expenditure, and an appropriate decision can thus be reached...Anyhow, the sub-committee has sanctioned the increase in the expenditure wherever possible. The Nāẓirs cannot now present the proposals that have been rejected. But if members feel that some of the proposals made by the Nāẓirs were justified, they may suggest changes. For instance, the post of a clerk in the office of the Nazārat Umrur 'Āmma has been rejected, which is wrong. The clerk is very much needed in that office. Similarly, if some other changes are needed, they can also be suggested by the members. They can also suggest increase or decrease in expenditure under certain heads."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1944, pp. 131-133]

JURISDICTION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEES

The sub-committees may leave the proposals of the Agenda unchanged, modify them, or make some new

recommendations about them within their main framework. The sub-committee for Baitul Māl, while considering the budget proposals of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, may exercise its authority and make an increase or decrease in the proposed budget. This decision was taken by Ḥaḍrat Muşleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} during Mushāwarat 1945. The following is the relevant extract from his speech:

“The delegates have listened to the opinions that have been expressed. I think there has been some misunderstanding, for members did not give detailed comments about the expenditure when they were asked to, but they are doing so now when we are in fact discussing something else. The recommendations now being made pertain to increasing the expenditure rather than reducing it. The question put to the house was that if a certain expenditure was considered unjustified or if some reduction was required, they should point it out. They were not asked to propose increase in the budget. So the mistake was that when the delegates were asked to discuss the expenditure in detail they kept silent, but now when a different item is being considered they are coming up with suggestions for increase in expenditure. For the future, my instructions are that the sub-committee for Baitul Māl should deliberate upon all the proposals that are presented to it with regard to increase in expenditure.

I have been told that the sub-committee was of the view that it had no authority to suggest increase in the budget, but this was wrong. I believe that the committee does have the authority to recommend increase in the expenditure. So my directive for the future is that the sub-

committee should consider all such proposals. And since representatives of different Departments will also be on the committee in the future, members of the committee will learn about their viewpoint as well. Anyhow, the sub-committee for Baitul Māl has the authority to increase the expenditure or effect changes in the suggested proposals. In future, a fairly large number of representatives of the Anjuman will be on this committee, as such the committee shall know the viewpoint of different Departments as well. Another possibility is that, if the sub-committee does not itself increase the expenditure, it may refer the matter to Majlis-e-Shūrā where the opinion of the delegates can be elicited. But it is better for the sub-committee to deal with these issues itself, for it may not be possible for the house to adequately deliberate upon a suggestion regarding increase of expenditure. As for reduction, it does not require a lot of thinking, for we know about past expenses and can thus decide how much curtailment is possible. But new expenditure requires a great deal of thought and consideration. So I cannot permit discussion about increase in expenditure here in the house. If such matters are allowed to be presented before the house, they would consume a lot of time. Since these are facts which cannot be ignored, I have authorized the concerned committee to increase the expenditure in any item they think necessary. The delegates should also keep in mind that if they consider it necessary to increase the expenditure for any head, they should present their suggestions to the committee. The representatives of different Nazārats, being present in the committee meeting, will also be able to consider these proposals and form a definite opinion about them."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1945, pp. 65-67]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ III^{rh}, speaking about the jurisdiction of the Shūrā sub-committees, observed that it was binding on them to consider properly all aspects of a proposal presented before it, and to work out all the necessary details. It should also recommend the formation of another committee, if further deliberation upon some of the proposals is necessary. Huḍūr said:

“If Ṣadr Anjuman proposes an increase in its budget, this or any other proposal should be clearly indicated in the budget proposals. This requires immediate implementation. But the mere recommendation that a committee be constituted is vague. How did you make such a recommendation? Who will form the committee, when shall it be formed, and how many members will it consist of? All this should have been decided by the committee. Committees are made specifically to go into such details. Your recommendation should have been that the committee should comprise, say, three or more people and that it should be formed immediately and begin its work. The need for referring to the Shūrā should arise only when a project has been devised and has to be financed, or when some important decision has to be taken which requires consultation with the whole Jamā'at. If it is only a matter of making an assessment and doing your work, it should be done there and then.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1979, p. 93]

OPINION OF A DEPARTMENT ABOUT THE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

In Shūrā, there is also a tradition that the concerned Departments are consulted regarding the recommendations of the sub-committees. On one occasion, before an-

nouncing the final decision regarding the procurement of land for Maqbarah Mūṣṣān in foreign countries, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth sought the views of Tehrīk Jadīd regarding the recommendations of the sub-committee, upon which Sahibzāda Mirzā Mubārak Ahmad, Wakīl A'ālā, Tehrīk Jadīd presented the Tehrīk's viewpoint.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1976, pp. 154-156]

COPIES OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

The sub-committee reports would sometimes be very lengthy, which would make it difficult for the members to discuss them. A delegate, therefore, made the following suggestion:

“I suggest that in view of the importance and length of the reports, and because they admit of diverging views or require some explanation, their copies should be circulated among the members at least a little time before they are to be discussed. And if it is not possible to provide these copies to every member, they may be distributed among groups.”

In response to the above suggestion, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

“The practice of Shūrā is that copies of the recommendations of the sub-committee are not supplied to all the delegates. The recommendations can, however, be taken up one by one, as I have already instructed. The report which has been provided to Wakīl A'ālā is incomplete. I do not know who supplied it to him. It was not the same that was presented to me, and that is why he had to wait so long. It has, therefore, been decided that, instead of

taking up the nine recommendation all at once, each should be taken up separately. But it is not our practice to circulate copies of the report among the delegates.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1976, pp. 156-157]

The same problem came up on yet another occasion. A member suggested that the report of a sub-committee is sometimes so long that delegates cannot remember all its points. But Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth replied that it was not that long, only one item had been read out. The delegate agreed but said that some reports are very long. Ḥuḍūr said: according to our procedure, the entire report is first read out so that members may get an overview of the recommendations. But if the report contains twenty points, they are not discussed all at once, each point is taken up and discussed individually. Your objection, therefore, is not valid.

The delegate again requested that if copies of the recommendations could be supplied to the delegates it would facilitate things. Ḥuḍūr said:

“Making copies of the report would only be necessary if the whole of the report was to be taken up all at once, but when the recommendations have to be taken up one by one, and each item is read out a second time, there is no justification for it.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1979, pp. 105-106]

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

As already mentioned, the Shūrā sub-committees prepare their reports after a detailed discussion upon all the

issues involved, after which their recommendations are presented before the Shūrā for deliberation. Some issues relating to the proposals are at times highlighted before the actual discussion begins, and at times some instructions are also given as to how the discussion should take place. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave the following guidelines:

“It should be remembered for the future, and I should be reminded of it next year, that when the report of a sub-committee has been presented, a time limit should be set, both for those who are presenting the recommendations and those who are commenting on them. This can be done after the list of speakers has been prepared. If the number of speakers is small, more time can be allocated to each speaker, but in case a large number of delegates wish to speak, they will have to be given less time. These instructions should be noted for the future.

Some members are not aware of the rights they have in respect of the budget. They think that when the budget is being discussed their views should be confined to the budget. The fact is that general speeches can be made while the budget is being discussed, and the members can comment on the working of every Department.

Some members think that they can make their observations only in respect of the Nazārat which has initiated a proposal, but this is also not correct. If, for example, a Nazārat does not come up with a proposal for ten years, does it mean that it shall not be able to benefit from the advice of the delegates? When the budget is taken up for discussion, every member can offer his ideas for overall improvement, wherever it is called for. If proper attention

is not being paid to Tarbiyyat, the shortcomings of the concerned Nazārat can be pointed out. A member made a suggestion about the translation of the Holy Quran. This was correct and justified. Such observations keep me up to date with the thinking of the members and also draw my attention to the relevant issues. There is no time for it now, but members should remember this in future.

When the budget is presented in other organizations, the members sometimes propose a reduction in the expenses of a Department in order to criticize its work. But this is not necessary in our case. Members can express their opinions without resorting to such tactics.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1937, pp. 137-138]

WHY SOME ISSUES NEED TO BE DISCUSSED BEFOREHAND

Once, some members of a sub-committee misunderstood a proposal and thought that it was aimed at establishing a university by the Jamā'at. Commenting on their recommendations, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} observed:

“The report has been read out, but I will now deviate from the routine and will state my own observations before inviting members to offer their views. Let me first explain what will happen if we take up the proposal as understood by the sub-committee. The committee members seem to have thought that the proposal was aimed at establishing a university under the British Charter. I believe that it is a mere waste of time to discuss such a proposal at this juncture, because we do not have even a fraction of the money and resources that are required to establish such a university...And even if we are able to establish a university under the British Charter some 30, 40 or 50 years from now, it is useless to discuss it now.

There is no doubt that some matters have to be considered even a thousand years in advance, but it is futile at this moment to consider whether 20 or 25 members should manage a university which may be established sometime in the future. When the time comes for implementing such a project, people will work out the necessary details. The only issues we should take up at this stage are those which may cause future generations to go astray if we do not provide proper guidance about them now. The matter of establishing a university does not fall into this category."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1940, pp. 30-33]

VAGUE AND UNCLEAR RECOMMENDATIONS

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth made the following observations regarding such recommendations:

"The recommendations of the sub-committee are not specific. In item number 1, it has been recommended that parents who can send their children to Rabwah for memorizing the Holy Quran should do so. This is a vague recommendation. If parents of one thousand children opt to make use of this opportunity, do we have enough provisions in the budget to cater for them? The sub-committee has made no recommendations for such an eventuality. Thus its recommendations are vague. If the suggestion had been for accommodating 20 children this year, it would have been possible, but it will become impossible if we say that all children who wish to memorize the Holy Quran may benefit from the scheme. Such recommendations do not go beyond offering goodly counsel. Of course a word of good advice can be included in Mushāwarat, but on the whole only concrete recommendations should be presented here which help

the progress of the Jamā'at. The recommendation that children should be sent here for this purpose is not worth being considered in Mushāwarat. If one thousand children turn up for the Quran memorizing class, has the committee made an estimate of the expenditure that would be involved? And how many teachers would be required? Have you considered how many teachers are presently available? Thus the committee has not given due thought to the details which would have facilitated the implementation of this scheme. The recommendations made are vague and ambiguous, and you still suggest that I should accept them as they are?"

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1975, p. 148]

PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE RULES OF ŞADR ANJUMAN AHMADIYYA

After the establishment of Majālis-e-Şeḥat in the Jamā'ats, the question of appointing Secretary Şeḥat came up in the Shūrā in the form of a proposal. The concerned sub-committee's report was in favour of the proposal. When this issue was taken up in Mushāwarat, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

"The conclusion we can easily draw from the statements made here is that members of the Jamā'at realize the need for such a programme, hence no one has opposed the proposal which stresses the need for paying attention to health. But when we consider how the Secretary will fit into the existing framework from the legal point of view, we are confronted with difficulties. What is more, this proposal has been presented in violation of the rules. Our practice and our tradition is that if a proposal affects a certain existing rule, then the proposer should first refer to the relevant rule. If he does not do

so, the proposal falls short of the rules, and, as such, cannot be presented.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, p. 66]

DISSENT FROM THE GENERAL CONSENSUS OF A SUB-COMMITTEE

The sub-committees deliberate for several hours and then prepare their reports with general consent. These reports are signed by the President and Secretary of the committee and are then presented to the Shūrā for deliberation. If, however, consensus about a certain proposal is not reached, the dissenting members, provided they had entered a note of dissent, can express their dissenting views before the general meeting of the Shūrā, with the permission of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ or his representative who is presiding over the proceedings. But if a member has not entered a note of dissent, he can only speak in favour of the proposal during the general session. Expressing dissenting views at that stage would be considered contrary to the rules, and he shall not be allowed to speak against the recommendations. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“A member of the sub-committee cannot speak against the recommendation of the committee, unless he has already submitted a note of dissent.”

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, pp. 20-21]

Similarly, the original proposals are not discussed in Majlis-e-Shūrā. Only the reports of the sub-committee are taken up for consideration. But if the majority feels that the recommendations of the sub-committee are impractic-

cable, members can be invited to offer their opinions about the original proposal.

PROCEDURE FOR SUGGESTING AN AMENDMENT

It has already been mentioned that the Shūrā sub-committees deliberate exhaustively on the proposals, and their recommendations are presented before the Shūrā for further deliberation, and the views of all the delegates of the Shūrā are elicited. Sometimes, if the committee's report has missed some point or some aspect, it can be set right through an amendment. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Maṣīḥ IVth said:

1. Before Majlis-e-Shūrā can deliberate upon a proposal, it is first taken up by a sub-committee. Thereafter the proposal is presented in the Shūrā in whatever form the sub-committee chooses.
2. Once a proposal has come to Shūrā, it belongs to the Shūrā and the sub-committee has the authority to present it in any form, by making it better or removing any flaws in it. Thus the Shūrā does not deliberate upon the original proposal, it only deliberates upon the proposal that is presented by the sub-committee.
3. If a proposal (presented by the sub-committee) is rejected, we go back to the original proposal. You then have the right to deliberate upon the original proposal, for the proposal presented by the sub-committee has been rejected. Amendments can also be presented at this juncture.
4. When a proposal has been read out and a member

stands up and says that the proposal is not good enough and he wishes to suggest an amendment, he will have to present it in writing, and not verbally...When an amendment has been presented, it is taken up before the proposal.

5. Once a recommendation has been presented in the Shūrā, members of the sub-committee are not entitled to speak against it.

6. If, during the sub-committee meeting, someone is not satisfied with its report, and his conscience does not permit him to support it, he has the right to submit a note of dissent before the end of the sub-committee meeting. He is then free to offer any opinion in the Shūrā.

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, pp. 18-20]

VARIOUS DIRECTIVES REGARDING AMENDMENTS

The presentation of amendments during a discussion can be a very complicated matter. At times members present amendments upon amendments, some of which contradict one another. It becomes difficult to decide which of the amendments should be adopted. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave the following guidelines on various occasions:

1. Ḥuḍūr's first directive in this regard was:

“The amendments which have been suggested are making things very difficult, because some of them contradict others, and some are amendments to amendments. We do not have time enough to hold lengthy discussions on them and come to some conclusion. It is also difficult for

me to decide which amendment I should present first. I might present the amendments in the wrong order. I consulted Pīr Akbar 'Alī Sahib on this matter, and he thinks that if we could adopt the amendment suggested by Shaikh Bashīr Ahmad Sahib, all the other amendments would be annulled. But I think it will not be fair to the members if we first present an amendment which results in the rejection of all others. The general rule is that amendments which do not reject others should be presented first."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1942, p. 59]

2. Discouraging the presentation of unnecessary amendments, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"We already have about 22 or 23 amendments. Even if we give five minutes to each, it would require about two hours for us to gauge the members' view...I do believe that the delegates who come from other places are entitled to express their views about the budget, but they should bear in mind that Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, as well as the concerned sub-committee, has already given due thought to these proposals. Therefore, except in rare cases, the budget does not contain items that are unnecessary or subject to criticism. But I have noticed that members at times come up with needless amendments. For a matter of 4 or 10 rupees, they waste so much of everyone's time. They ought to take into account the fact that the officers of the Anjuman who have prepared the budget, and the concerned sub-committee, must have sanctioned this expenditure for some justifiable purpose, and they must have given due thought to the matter. No one can include such expenditure without consideration, merely to waste the Jamā'at's money. The Jamā'at should give advice about fundamental

matters and issues which have a far-reaching effect, and not just fiddle with the idea of cutting down five rupees from some contingent expenditure or slashing the stationery of an office. I admit that while some unnecessary suggestions are made by members, they also come up with many useful ones...

In future Shūrās, the budget proposals should be taken up first. And this discussion should be allowed to continue even if it takes all the three days. The other items may be put off...

As for the current budget proposals, my decision is that all amendments presented here should go to the budget sub-committee, which should consider them in its next meeting and reach a proper decision about them."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1944, pp. 144-147]

3. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{1a} also said that after the report of each sub-committee has been presented before the Shūrā, a four-member board should be appointed to decide which amendment can or cannot be presented before the house. He said:

"In future, no amendment should be presented verbally; it should be written down and handed to the Secretary of the sub-committee whose report is being presented. If the sub-committee accepts the amendment, it shall become a part of the recommendations of the sub-committee. But if it is not accepted, it may be taken up for discussion.

Since it is not possible for all the members of a sub-committee to come together on that occasion, and it is not enough for the Secretary alone to say whether he approves or rejects the amendment, it is therefore necessary

to set up a board representing every sub-committee, consisting of three members and the Secretary, and they should be present on the stage when their report is being presented. For this purpose three chairs should be placed on the stage. When an amendment is presented, this board should decide either to accept it or not, and should present its recommendation to me. The board can only accept or reject amendments which are new. The board will be bound to reject all proposals which have already been presented in the sub-committee and have been turned down.

In future, delegates who wish to present amendments should do so in writing. A lot of time is wasted in the current procedure, for while an amendment is being dictated, the rest of the delegates have to sit idle.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1935, pp. 28-29]

4. On another occasion, Ḥudūr said:

“If any delegate wishes to suggest an amendment, he should do so in writing. And if a delegate wants to express his views verbally, he should have his name listed for this purpose. At times delegates do not give their names in time and later express their desire to propose an amendment. This is not good. Whoever has an amendment to present, should do so right now. Likewise, those who want to offer their views verbally should have their names listed.”

[Unpublished Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1947]

5. Amendments are taken up first. Regarding this rule, Ḥudūr said.

“Since amendments have to be presented first, I would like to ask your opinion about this amendment before the

sub-committee's recommendations are presented."

[Unpublished Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1948]

HOW TO AMEND THE SUB-COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

6. The Sub-committee's report should reflect the instructions given by the Khalīfa, and if they do not, the delegates should propose appropriate changes through amendments. Although it is the prerogative of the Khalīfa to include the instructions he has given with regard to the budget, etc., in the sub-committee's report, but in order to highlight the importance of Mushāwarat, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said that the required changes in the committee's report should be made through amendments presented by delegates. He said:

"I want to say, as a matter of principle, that in all our expenditure we should keep our priorities in mind. Whatever projects we have begun and whatever money we have allocated, we should keep these in mind when suggesting future increases in the budget. Whenever more funds are available, priority should be given to finance these projects, so that our work does not go on haphazardly. If, for some special reason, we have to change priorities, the change should be made with the prior approval of the Khalīfa, and the request made in this connection should specify that a project which had priority should now be deferred and the money should be allocated to the new project. But before presenting this proposal, the Shūrā should make a decision that this project should be given priority. People sometimes try to play tricks with me and ask me to approve a certain sum for a certain project. And later when I ask why something

which I had previously approved has not been accomplished, they say that the money was diverted to some other project with my approval. In such cases, the correct procedure is to first specify that a previously approved project is to be abandoned, and then to raise the question of funds for a new project.

In any case, we must outline our priorities, so that we can pursue them properly. Our work should not proceed haphazardly, and our money should not be wasted.

I instruct the sub-committees to prepare their reports bearing all this in mind. I also authorize the delegates to suggest amendments if they think that the sub-committees or the finance committee has not complied with my instructions.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1952, p. 51]

MORE INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING AMENDMENTS

(i) A proposal was once presented in Shūrā that people who do not pay Chanda or are in arrears should not be elected as representatives, nor should they have the right to vote in elections. An amendment was later proposed that the final clause, ‘nor should they have the right to vote in elections’, should be discarded. In response to this, Haḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth said:

“I do not accept this amendment because the implication of this amendment would be that if 50% or 51% members of a Jamā‘at are in arrears in respect of financial contributions, then, while they will not be entitled to hold any office of the Jamā‘at, someone else can become a representative through their votes. This means that though they themselves are not eligible to come here (to

the Shūrā), their representatives can do so. In view of this possibility, I do not allow this amendment to be presented in Shūrā.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, p. 193]

(ii) During another Shūrā, a representative raised the following question: I seek clarification about a fundamental issue. Last night when a proposal was under discussion in the sub-committee meeting, an amendment was proposed. At the time of voting, I pointed out that we should first vote on the amendment, for this is our usual practice. But some senior gentlemen opposed this principle. I request Ḥuḍūr to kindly clarify what our practice should be in such cases. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth responded:

“The amendment should be voted upon first. This is the rule. Your viewpoint is correct.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1970, p. 103]

(iii) Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth gave the following guidelines regarding the amendments:

“Members can speak in favour of this amendment, but if they desire to modify it they should do so in writing. In the sub-committee’s amendment, the word ‘at least’ has not been used in connection with matriculation, so you should either remain confined to the amendment as suggested by the committee, or, if you intend to add something to it, you should suggest an amendment in writing.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, p. 34]

(iv) Ḥuḍūr also said:

“The amendment is now before you. The procedure will be as follows: If delegates want to make some remarks

about it they may do so, after which the amendment will be put to vote. Here it is necessary to clarify that this amendment has been sought in the proposal as amended by the sub-committee. So opinions will first be invited regarding the amendment. If this amendment does not go through, then the amendment proposed by the sub-committee will be put to vote. And if that fails as well, then the original proposal will be voted upon. This will be the procedure which the delegates should be clear about. Now, those of you who wish to express your opinions about this amendment should give your names.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, pp. 63-64]

(v) With regard to the procedure for commenting on an amendment proposed by a delegate, Ḥuḍūr said:

[English] “If the amendment had been tabled then you had a right, and everybody else had a right, to propose their names for a second discussion on the amendment.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1988, p. 80]

(vi) When a sub-committee presents a proposal in an amended form, the amendment is first put before the house. In this regard, Ḥuḍūr said:

[English] “I agree. You support that idea with certain reservations and certain amendments. Those reservations and amendments were not put in black and white nor submitted by you as a separate amended proposal. So, as such, you have lost the right to discuss that amendment which does not exist. If we accept your view—I am making it clear to all the audience here, all the members of the Shūrā—if we accept Mrs. Salma Sa‘īd’s view, it would not mean that automatically the first proposal on Agenda would be resurrected. It only means that this

proposal will be rejected. The proposal of the sub-committee and the first proposal will also go overboard. That is where we stand in this situation. So now I call for division. Those who are in favour of accepting the proposal of the sub-committee...because Hidāyatullāh Hubsh has very rightly pointed out that the reasoning is not all correct, so forget about the reasoning part, those who agree with the proposal of the sub-committee should raise their hands.

There is only one hand which is not raised, which I cannot see, but that does not matter anymore, because all the members here have raised their hands in favour of the sub-committee's amended proposal. So that becomes the recommendation, and I accept that recommendation."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1991, p. 38]

(vii) Ḥuḍūr mentioned the procedure to be followed when a member of a sub-committee differs from the recommendations of the sub-committee. He said:

[English] "So this becomes a *Tarmīm* (amendment). As such an amendment should have been suggested in writing to the committee of which you were a member."

Speaker: "It was presented, Sir, but it was rejected."

Ḥuḍūr: "And yet you registered your right to speak in favour of the rejected amendment."

Speaker: "Yes, sir."

Ḥuḍūr: "That cannot be done. You see, you have the right of dissent and you have the right to speak against the decision of the committee of which you are a member, that is very clear. But an amendment, when it is brought, is not discussed, but any other member here has a right to pro-

pose another amendment. In that case first the amendment will be discussed and if the amendment is dropped then we will revert to the proposal of the sub-committee. Otherwise the amendment will remain the main subject of discussion. This is the procedure which we have inherited from the past and we should not change our tradition.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1991, pp. 25-26]

(viii) Explaining the correct procedure for presenting amendments, Ḥudūr said:

[English] “You see, first of all let me remind you of the correct procedure. When the sub-committee proposes an amendment, it is the amendment which is the subject of discussion and not the original proposal. Right? Forget about the original proposal. Only when you want to reject the amendment and adopt, partially or totally, the original proposal, can you give reference to the proposal. But the subject of discussion is no longer the original proposal, it is just the amended form of it.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1994, pp. 5-6]

ABSENCE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF A JAMĀ'AT WHICH INITIATES A PROPOSAL

It is essential for the Jamā'at which initiates a proposal to be represented in the Shūrā and also in the concerned sub-committee. The representative must also be present in Shūrā during the general discussion. But since the International Majlis-e-Shūrā is held in London and it may be difficult for representatives from some countries to attend, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, therefore, said that if the representative of a country, whose proposal is included in the Agenda, is unable to attend the Shūrā, the

proposal will still be taken up and they will be given the benefit of doubt. Ḥudūr said:

[English] "Mauritius has sent this proposal and no Mauritian representation has remained in Shūrā. Why is this? In International Shūrā perhaps you do not apply the rules so strictly, do you? While in Pakistan this was a custom because it was easy for (I mean, within reach) one who participates in Shūrā. So it was considered essential, whichever Jamā'at proposes anything representatives of that Jamā'at must be present in the Shūrā when the item is being discussed. But here it is a different situation. Because of the global nature of the Shūrā, it is not possible perhaps for every Jamā'at to be here. So I will make this exemption, not only for this time but for the future as well. It should be noted down that this rule will be applied only to such cases where there should be every reason for the participation of the proposing country. If there is not a very obvious reason, then we will give the benefit of doubt and accept the discussion in absentia."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1991, p. 19]

As already mentioned, it is essential for the representative of a Jamā'at or country which initiates a proposal to be present in the sub-committee also. Referring to a case whereby a representative of such a Jamā'at is present in Shūrā but not in the concerned sub-committee, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

[English] "No it's not that. If a proposal is considered by the sub-committee but the country which sends the proposal originally fails to send their representative either to the Shūrā or to the sub-committee, then what was the attitude of Majlis-e-Shūrā towards the proposal?" (Ḥudūr

then explained in Punjabi, and the speaker replied that Ḥuḍūr's observations were correct and such a proposal was not considered).

Ḥuḍūr: Shaikh Mubārak Ahmad Sahib!

Shaikh Mubārak Ahmad Sahib: Sayyedi, on this point, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} was very very serious; not only rejecting but also warning very severely”.

Ḥuḍūr: “Sometimes the warning went to the extent that in future we will not give you the right of representation if you do not mend your ways. And Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth was also very particular on the presence of all the members, to the extent that if somebody did not appear without any solid reason, which he presented beforehand and got permission to remain absent, that Jamā‘at was also warned.”

Shaikh Mubārak Ahmad Sahib: “In such a situation when representative was present on the Shūrā and he did not attend the Shūrā committee, it was more serious.”

Ḥuḍūr: No, but this was the practice I remember...

Shaikh Sahib: Rejected...

Ḥuḍūr: You support my memory?

Shaikh Sahib: “Certainly, strongly support.”

Ḥuḍūr: “I am quite sure that this was the custom, and I personally also believe that this is my natural reaction to it, and this is in line with the reaction of all the Khulafā before me. So we drop this proposal and send a strong note of admonishment to South Africa.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1994, p. 14]

Chapter IX

THE HIGH POINT OF MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT

In previous chapters we have discussed at length the organizational structure of the Shūrā and the way its proceedings are conducted. Now we enter the most important and conclusive phase, which Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Mirzā Ṭāhir Ahmad's (Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth) has beautifully portrayed in an extract which was included in Chapter II of this book.

In this session the reports of the sub-committees are presented before the delegates to be discussed until they evolve into concrete decision with the assent of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. The delegates freely discuss the proposals of the sub-committees. They weigh all their pros and cons, and offer their best advice to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. The proposals are then put to vote and become part of the rules and regulations.

In this chapter, we will discuss this procedure in detail. Members debate the proposals of the sub-committees with great care and diligence. The gravity and solemnity and decorum with which the proposals are debated, is unparalleled.

OFFERING ADVICE IS A RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION

After this brief introduction, let us now take up the subject of the general discussion in Shūrā. The first point which the delegates should bear in mind when commenting on the recommendations of the sub-committees, is

that the truly correct and blessed advice is the one which reflects the thoughts and feelings of the believer, and is put forth with sincerity and pure intent. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} has said:

“One of the qualities of the believers mentioned in the Holy Quran is that they settle all their affairs through mutual consultation. This teaching is one of the unique features which distinguish Islam from other faiths. Obviously we cannot imagine a time in human history when people did not consult one another or were averse to doing so. From the day man was created, people have been consulting one another and shall always do so. But it is only the Holy Quran that has made it a part of faith and an obligation. No previous scripture contains such injunctions. The Holy Quran is the first book which has declared consultation to be a part of faith and has called it a branch of Islam. In this manner Islam invites our attention to two important points: First, many times the Will of God is infused into the hearts of the people at large, and His intention is reflected in the hearts and minds of the Jamā'at. Instead of conveying His message through verbal revelation, He manifests it through the will of the people. If this was not a fact, then consultation would not be an integral part of faith and would not be considered a branch of Islam. It is only in this manner that the thinking of the people can be in harmony with the will of God. Thus we learn, in the light of the Divine injunction mentioned in the Holy Quran, that the will of God does at times descend upon the Jamā'at, just as it descends upon the ears and tongues and hearts of Prophets^{as}...

The second thing we learn is that, according to the teachings of Islam, all human beings are equal, and they have

equal rights. And if someone is given greater authority for the sake of management, it is only for the purpose of facilitating things. It is not given to him as a birthright nor for any other reason. He represents the people and speaks on their behalf. He does not possess the rights which God has conferred upon mankind as a birthright or as personal privilege. Otherwise God would not give the injunction regarding consultations.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} laid so much emphasis on consultation that he said, "Where there is no consultation, there is no blessing." He said, "Neither God nor His Prophet^{sa} needs your advice, and it is only out of compassion that He has given you this right." This is obvious, for consultation means conveying something good and useful, and who would be capable of doing such a service to God? As for the Prophet, he may be in need of consultation as a person, but when God has provided him with everything, he stands in no need of consultation. But God says that consultation is a mercy for you. If the Holy Prophet^{sa} had not consulted his Companions, people who came afterwards, especially those with authoritarian tendencies, would have found an excuse for not consulting others because the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not do so.

When the Holy Prophet^{sa} offered sunna prayers, it became a tradition; when he ordered the cutting of a small part of human flesh, it became a tradition; when he ordered the growing of a beard, it became a tradition; so when he consulted others, why should this not be appropriately deemed as a tradition? The Holy Prophet^{sa} used to consult others so that people would not be deprived of the advantages with which God has imbued this process.

There is a Punjabi saying: "A hundred wise men, but the

same advice.” This means that even if a hundred wise people are consulted, the idea proposed by one of them, if it is correct, will be shared by all the others...

This is why the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that consultation was a source of blessing, for when a person presents an idea or accepts it, he will also implement it with enthusiasm, and will be safe from any impure thoughts that might invade his mind.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1926, Ahmadiyya Gazette 26 February 1927, pp. 1-2]

THE METHOD OF CONSULTATION AT THE TIME OF THE HOLY PROPHET^{sa}

In past chapters we have already given a detailed account of the Holy Prophet's^{sa} method of consultation. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ta} adopted the same method. He said:

“Now I shall explain the method adopted by the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his successors with regard to consultation. They would hold their consultations in three ways:

(1) When consultation was required in any matter, a person would go round making an announcement, and people would assemble. This was the common method; a general announcement would be made, people would gather and consultations would be held, and the final decision would be made by the Holy Prophet^{sa} or his Khalīfā...

(2) Another method was that the Holy Prophet^{sa} would summon only those whom he considered competent to advise on a particular matter, and not others. History tells us that the number of these people would be around thirty. At times the Holy Prophet^{sa} would consult them all together, and at others he would consult three or four of them at a time.

(3) The third method was that when the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not consider it expedient to consult even two people at one time, he would call them one by one. He would talk to one and send him away before talking to the next. He would adopt this method when he feared that difference of opinion might create some sort of hostility between the people.

These were the three methods employed in those days, and all of them were very useful. I, too, use the same methods."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1922, pp. 6-7]

ADVICE SHOULD BE OFFERED IMPARTIALLY

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} would stress that members should remain impartial during the proceedings of Mushāwarat. Elaborating upon this basic principle of Islam, Ḥudūr observed:

"Do remember that people who are offering opinions may have their personal differences, but when it comes to offering advice, the focus should be on the subject matter and not on the person who has given the opinion. It would be extremely mean to oppose something merely because it has been presented by someone with whom you have differences. Here I am only supposing that a member of our Jamā'at can have such feelings against another. But even it were so, no one should speak against another merely on the basis of personal antagonism. Nor should he allow the harshness of someone's tongue to affect his own opinion. All such things will only lead us astray and will only do us harm.

Now let me say that we must keep two things in mind when making our decisions. Firstly, we should not forget

that in every community, there are two kinds of people: the strong and the weak. The strong should not think that everyone should be as strong as they are. Similarly, the weak should not think that others should also become weak. The powerful will have to reduce their strength, and the weak will have to enhance theirs, only then can they work together. This idea can be elaborated with the example of a strong bullock and a weak one, both wearing the same yoke to pull a cart. Their collective effort is the average of their individual strength. The stronger is required to slow down a bit, and the weaker one has to exert himself a bit more. So when giving advice you should opt for the middle way: do not place such heavy burden as it cannot be lifted by the weak, and do not become so indulgent that it becomes impossible to move forward.

The second point which you should take into account while offering advice is that this Jamā'at has been set up by God, and its progress does not depend on our efforts, but only upon His help and succour. Our own worthlessness should not worry us. Regardless of what we are, the objectives that we are required to achieve have been set out by God, and it is He Who has entrusted them to us and has commanded us to move forward to achieve them. Our faith and trust in God demands that we should consider ourselves worthy of achieving these objectives. No wise man would entrust the task of a grown up to a child. No king would assign the mission meant for a general to a sepoy. How then can we imagine that God would entrust a task to us which we are unable to accomplish, and that He should oblige us to achieve objectives which we are powerless to achieve.

No one knows our weakness and helplessness more than

ourselves. The enemy thinks that we are weak and tries to crush us, while the fact is that we are even weaker than he can imagine. Just a few days ago, a man, who was bursting with pride at the thought that his movement was gaining strength in the Punjab, boasted that he would crush the Ahmadiyya Jamā'at. If I were a slave to my ego, I would have said, "Who are you to crush us? It is we who shall crush you!" But I only smiled at him, and I thought that the Jamā'at which he claims he is going to crush is even weaker than he thinks. I smiled again, for he does not know in Whose lap we are sitting. He considers himself to be a wrestler and views our Jamā'at as a child. He raises his hand at it and claims that he will trample it underfoot. Now, if he indeed considers himself a wrestler and the Jamā'at a weakling, he should be ashamed of making such claims before a mere child. If only he had eyes, and he could only see that the child is sitting in the lap of its Father, compared to Whom the power of the entire world is like a mosquito, and all the powerful people of the world are but like ants! Of course the opponent can crush the Jamā'at if we consider only the physical means, but this Jamā'at is protected by Him, Whom no one can fight and He can reduce the greatest enemy to dust within the twinkling of an eye...

Here we pledge before God that we shall do such and such work during the next year, but those who are weak forget this promise, and this is what obstructs the implementation of our decisions, and stops us from making the utmost sacrifices. When offering their opinions, members should keep these things in mind. While they should have faith in God, they should also employ the physical means...

It is hoped that all of you will deliberate upon the issues

with sincerity and *Taqwa*, and will keep both these things in mind: faith, and making use of the available means.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1932, pp. 9-18]

ANOTHER FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

When offering their suggestions, the delegates address themselves to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. They neither address any particular member of the Jamā'at nor speak in personal terms. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} has said:

“The etiquette of this meeting requires every speaker to understand that there is only one person whom they should address, namely, the Khalīfa. As long as a delegate is here, he should be oblivious of those sitting on his right or left, and should imagine that he alone is addressing the Khalīfa. If the delegates do not keep this point in mind, the very purpose of consultation would be defeated, especially if they imagine that their aim is to contradict others. In fact, it is for the Khalīfa to accept or reject any point raised by a delegate. Their duty is only to express their ideas and to say no more. When this rule is violated, it can result in heated arguments and strong words. But when you are addressing the Khalīfa, it is not your right to reject or condemn what has been said by another delegate. I hope you will also keep in mind that even though a delegate may speak against the opinion of another, it should not be taken personally. No personal consideration should ever find their way into our discussions. If someone makes a mistake you should not dwell on it. If this principle is not observed, the result will be that when one person has expressed his opinion, another will stand up to contradict him, and then a third would contradict the second. This will result in a tussle and

people will forget the etiquette that have to be observed in the presence of the Khalīfa. I am afraid that if the delegates do not observe these principles, I will have to enforce them and might even have to stop such members from speaking. We come here to win the approbation of Allah, to plan for the progress of Islam and to help implement the schemes which will ensure its progress. How can we enhance our prestige merely by condemning the opinion of another person as unreasonable, and declaring our own views to be beyond criticism? Wisdom comes from God, for it depends on knowledge, and He grants true knowledge."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1937, pp. 54-55]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth also forbade delegates from criticizing one another. He said:

"Members should remember that we have come here to seek advice, to listen to advice and to offer advice. Some delegates use words of criticism, which is improper. When someone has expressed an opinion, there is no reason to oppose him by name. Each of you has to give his advice to me, and if you disagree you must express your disagreement. This is what is expected from consultation. But we should always avoid using unbecoming words."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1969, pp. 252-253]

During Majlis-e-Shūrā International 1992, a delegate started addressing the audience along with the Chair. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth corrected him and said:

[English] "You should address the Chair only. This is the tradition of the Jamā'at, please. You should only address the Chair, not the members."

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1992, pp. 17-18]

IT IS WRONG TO INSIST UPON ONE'S OPINION

The delegates should express their opinions only when they are asked to do so, and they should stop immediately when asked to stop. They must not insist on their point of view. In this context, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“The proceedings of Mushāwarat will now begin. I would like to advise friends to make sure that no time is wasted. Let there be no repetition in the speeches, and when all the arguments have been put forward, no one should stand up to speak unless he has some new argument for or against the proposal, and unless he is asked to do so.

For better management of the proceedings, I usually appoint an assistant and I shall do the same now. When he announces that delegates who wish to speak on a particular issue should give in their names, they should give their names. They should also say whether they will speak for the proposal or against it. And when he asks them to stop speaking, they should do so at once and should not insist on completing their speech. Consultation is important but this does not justify violation of the rules. Even if your advice is a useful one, it should be rendered in keeping with the rules. If you sit down when you are told, your advice will produce better results.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1936, pp. 47-48]

PROPER PROCEDURE FOR DEBATE

Although, as mentioned previously, a specific procedure has been laid down for enlisting the names of those who wish to comment on the recommendations of a sub-committee, it is quite possible that a very useful suggestion might occur to a delegate during the discussion. In

such a case, even if the delegate has not already enlisted his name, the Assistant to the Chair can still permit him to address the house. Elucidating this point, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Although this procedure has been explained time and again, it is still necessary to mention it for the benefit of those who are attending the Shūrā for the first time, or those who come from Jamā'ats which have only recently been formed. I, therefore, deem it necessary at the outset to repeat my instructions regarding the offering of proposals.

(1) I want to inform the members that I have appointed Pīr Akbar 'Alī Sahib to take down the names of those who want to express their views about any proposal. Therefore, when a proposal is presented, those who wish to express their views about it should give their names to Pīr Sahib. It has often been noticed that delegates do not give their names at first, and later express their desire to speak. This causes disturbance in the proceedings. So let me remind the delegates that those who are keen to speak about a proposal should give their names immediately after it has been presented. Of course it is possible that someone may not realize the importance of the proposal in the beginning and may not offer to speak on it, and might wish to speak when he realizes its significance, but this happens very rarely. Nevertheless, Pīr Sahib has the authority to allow anyone to speak, if he considers it necessary. But this should only happen as an exception and not as a rule. Delegates who give their names for speaking about the proposals should also mention the Jamā'at they represent. While this will eliminate any chance of the names getting mixed up, it will also tell us which

Jamā'at has tendered which advice, and this record might be of use in the future, for a Jamā'at might say that it was not of a certain opinion, while the same opinion had been expressed by its own representative.

So when a proposal is presented, Pīr Sahib will write down the names of those who offer their names to speak about it, and this must be done immediately after the proposal has been presented. Exceptions can later be made if a supplementary question arises or somebody wishes to speak after realizing the importance of the proposal. It will be upon Pīr Sahib to accord such permission, or perhaps I myself might permit someone."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1937, pp. 14-15]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth also elaborated upon this procedure in the following terms:

- (1) When a proposal is presented people are invited to speak on it. Those who wish to speak raise their hands and their names are noted by the person who is assisting the Chair.
- (2) It is not mandatory to note the names of all who wish to speak. At times, if there are a lot of people who desire to speak and the time is short, the Chair can say that a certain number of speakers are enough.
- (3) If the discussion has ended and a delegate believes that his point of view has not been presented by anyone, the Chair may give him permission to speak.

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, pp. 21-22]

**REPRESENTATIVES ARE BOUND TO EXPRESS THE
VIEWS OF THEIR JAMĀ'ATS AS WELL**

During the general discussion, the representatives shall be bound to express the views of their respective Jamā'ats. If their personal point of view is different, they are free to express it, but they must clearly outline the viewpoint of their Jamā'at and then state their own view. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{1st} clarified this point in the following words:

“You must keep in mind that you are the representatives of your respective Jamā'ats. Hence we expect that you have consulted the members of your Jamā'ats about all the proposals contained in the Agenda. If your own opinion and the opinion of the majority members of your Jamā'at is the same, then you should present that opinion, and if the Jamā'at has not given an opinion, you should then express your own views. But if your opinion is not the same as the opinion of the members of your Jamā'at, then you should present their opinion as well because your Jamā'at has reposed confidence in you.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1933, p. 14]

During Mushāwarat 1943, Ḥuḍūr also said:

“Of course we allow the delegates to present their own viewpoints as well, but their main responsibility is to present the views of the Jamā'ats which they represent. Islam does not permit that any individual should be denied the right to express himself, nevertheless, a delegate does not have the right to ignore the consensus of the Jamā'at whose majority has nominated him as its representative.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, p. 22]

When the proposal under discussion was put to vote, Ḥudūr said:

“It appears that 116 out of 228 delegates have come here having consulted their respective Jamā'ats, while some have not done so. Henceforth all representatives should consult their Jamā'ats before coming here. When they stand up to speak, they should first present the consensus of their Jamā'ats, and then, if their personal opinion is different, they may add that these were the views of their Jamā'at, but they personally do not agree with them and such and such is their own opinion.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, p. 25]

PROCEDURE FOR DELIBERATING UPON THE SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chairmen of the sub-committees present their reports and delegates are invited to offer their views on each of the recommendations. The Assistant to the Chair prepares a list of those who wish to express their views and then invites them to speak one by one. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} has mentioned the following four points with regard to deliberating upon the reports of the sub-committees:

“Members of our Jamā'at should observe the etiquette peculiar to our Jamā'at, particularly when they stand up to speak. I shall appoint someone to invite the delegates to speak one by one. He will see who has stood up first and will invite them to speak in the same order. But even if he is mistaken in this regard, his decision will have to be followed. Secondly, when you express your opinion, you should neither contradict nor criticize one another, for this causes a breach in harmony.

Thirdly, do not keep repeating the same things. Speak only if you have something new to say. Everyone will have a chance to express his views when the proposal is put to vote. However, if a member has not expressed his ideas very well, another one can do so, but the task of inviting members to speak will have to be carried out more responsibly.

Delegate who stands up to speak should first pray. The nations of the past were by no means inferior to us in their power and unity, in fact they excelled us in everything, but just see in what ways they were led astray!"

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1924, pp. 12-13]

With regard to deliberating upon the reports of the sub-committees, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

[English] "The report of the first committee will be read before you now by the President of the committee, and after he has finished, we will take up the matter one after the other, point by point. And then we will invite observations, comments, recommendations, etc. So those who want to participate should raise their hands. One after the other we will call them to stand up and announce their names. Once their name is recorded, they will be requested to sit down. After we have finished this, their names will be called in the same order, (sometimes slightly changed order), one after the other, and that is going to be the first round and the last round. If you do not make up your mind to participate, then you have missed the bus. Unless sometimes an amendment is moved, then new comments are invited and in that case you are given again an opportunity. And again sometimes I need an expert opinion. So I invite some others

who have not given their names, that is, offered their comments themselves. So this is the tradition of the Majlis-e-Shūrā which we should always keep in mind. The purpose of these explanations is that, whenever you return home, you conduct Shūrā in the same style as it has always been conducted in Qadian and later on in Rabwah, so that we have uniformity and universality of character. Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya develops exactly on the same lines and the same style in every country of the world.”

[Report International Majlis-e-Shūrā 1988, pp. 153-154]

VARIOUS FORMS OF CONSULTATION AND MAIN OBJECTIVE OF SHŪRĀ

Consultation can take various forms. If a person honestly believes something to be correct, or conceives a good idea, he must present it before Khalīfatul Masīḥ, and should not keep it to himself. This form of consultation goes on round the year.

The second form of consultation is when workers of the Jamā'at seek guidance from Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, or he seeks advice from them.

The third form of advice is Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, which is held every year. In this forum delegates from the Jamā'ats submit their opinions before Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ.

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth had the following to say about these three forms of consultation:

“The Holy Quran says شَاوِرْهُمْ i.e., consult them all. These consultations are of two kinds. First, there are the consultations which go on round the year and they can be divided into different categories. A Nāẓir or an office-bearer can seek advice regarding his work, or the Khalīfa

can seek advice from anyone he chooses regarding various matters. The second form, which is really wonderful, is that when a new idea comes into the mind of a person, he sends it to me. I say it is wonderful because it gives me satisfaction. Everything has various aspects, and some even have thousands of aspects. A member of the Jamā'at who realizes only two aspects of a matter advises me accordingly. But all the other aspects, say ninety-eight out of a hundred, were not known to him or he never thought about them. Likewise, some other member may visualize fifty to fifty-five aspects of an issue, and yet another may have understood five to ten aspects. Thus I receive communication from various people covering almost all aspects of an issue. And if a member has sent a proposal with only two or four aspects in mind, the proposal has to be rejected when it is considered in all its aspects. But the person who puts forward such a proposal gets the Divine reward for his good deed. I, on my part, am also pleased to see that members of the Jamā'at are taking keen interest in the affairs of the Jamā'at. At times, fifty members of the Jamā'at shed light over a hundred aspects of an issue, or provide me with a small portion of some news, and the other portion is provided by other members, and thus, by piecing together all their information, a complete picture of the issue or the news or the incident emerges. Something positive does emerge from the various suggestions.

Therefore, the injunction *شَاوِرْهُمْ* does not mean that everyone's advice will be accepted. If fifty people give contradicting opinions on one issue, how is it possible to accept them all? Out of the fifty different opinions, I will deduce some important points and try to utilize them. So if

someone is led astray by Satan and says, what is the use of my giving advice when it is not accepted. He will be wrong to think in this way, for everyone must offer his advice to me. Whenever an idea comes to someone's mind he must send it to me, because some of these ideas turn out to be very important. For example, a certain important issue may need to be brought to the knowledge of the Jamā'at, of which only two or three aspects have been brought to my attention. I thus realize how people have been mistaken in this matter. I then study the whole situation and inform the Jamā'at about the true state of affairs...

Hence, the injunction شَاوِرْهُمْ does not only mean that people should come to Majlis-e-Mushāwarat and offer their advice. The process of giving and seeking advice continues throughout the year. I have explained the different forms of the process. It is almost a daily routine that some consultation is needed or offered on one matter or the other. At times I receive a letter or a report that a certain individual has made some hypocritical remarks. At times, the person concerned is not a hypocrite at all, but has said something out of ignorance. But the one who hears him, being a sincere Ahmadi, writes to me that such and such a person has said such and such thing which was not appropriate. At times we have to make such a person understand that the concerned individual has only spoken out of ignorance and he is really not a hypocrite.

When Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} was assaulted, Khud-dāmūl Ahmadiyya became suspicious about a person who was a hypocrite, but the basis on which he was suspected was wrong. He was followed and some information was gathered about him which was presented to Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} and he was told that this

person had been suspected and followed for such and such reasons. Ḥadrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said, what you say is right but the inference you draw is wrong. His real hypocrisy is that he has dubious links with a certain person and that is why he has acted in this way. The way Khuddāmul Ahmadiyya has come to the conclusion that he is a hypocrite, is wrong, although this man is a hypocrite in another sense.

When such things keep coming from members on a daily basis, they are very useful. In this way our system of consultation remains established. Our Jamā'at should, therefore, be in the habit of conveying to the Markaz every idea, every suggestion, and anything which they consider to be inappropriate and against the norms of the Jamā'at. In this way they will have discharged their obligation.

The second form of Mushāwarat is the consultation for which we all gather here. By the grace of God, about five hundred members of the Jamā'at, belonging to all walks of life, hailing from different districts, and having different levels of education, gather here for Mushāwarat. Some of them did not have the opportunity to go to schools when they were young, but in the circumstances it was no fault of theirs. But they are godly people. They may not know how to write or to put down their signature, but it does not mean that they are uneducated. These people listen to the lectures and sermons delivered in our mosques, particularly on the occasion of Jalsa Sālāna, and for this reason they are considered educated despite being unlettered. Many of them can talk confidently to a graduate from Government College Lahore, and we see many such instances.

Thus people with all sorts of qualifications and experi-

ence come together at Mushāwarat. It is the duty of each one of them to put forward any good idea or suggestion that comes to his mind. By the grace of Allah, the delegates are free from the disease of hypocrisy. (Allah knows best.) So you should speak confidently, but also briefly and to the point. Do not speak about irrelevant things. Some members are fond of making speeches, and it is not a bad thing, but this is not the place for it. Member who like to make speeches should tell me, I will arrange for them to make a speech in the mosque. It is an admirable talent, but is not required on this occasion. Therefore, any proposal which the delegates wish to present must be brief and to the point. Speak freely and sensibly. Presenting your arguments point by point is also very useful. Long speeches confuse many people and irritate others. There is no reason to unnecessarily unnerve and annoy your brothers.

So let everyone speak, but briefly. And let everyone give advice, but in a concise manner and after proper thought. This is the main objective of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. Every idea should be presented in the form of a proposal, and if something is unclear it should be pointed out. If you do not understand something you are free to ask."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1973, pp. 10-14]

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR THOSE WHO TAKE PART IN THE DISCUSSION
 Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth gave the following advice to those who offer their views upon various issues in the Shūrā. He said:

"I want to advise those who offer advice in the Shūrā. An Ahmadī must have a very clear mind. At this moment a proposal has been presented before us and we have to

give our advice as to whether it is practicable or not. We have to focus our attention on whether or not adopting this idea will be useful for the Jamā'at. The third opinion may be that the proposal is irrelevant, and it does not address the actual problem. Hence the proposals in this connection should be specific, so that our time is not wasted. For instance, you can say that the proposal does not address the actual problem, and, therefore, does not offer the proper solution, and that such and such is the proper solution. Now there is no time to present this new solution as a new proposal and to give it a legal shape, but it will serve as a useful advice, and I believe there is no harm in stating this opinion."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, p. 67]

THE OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

When Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} formally established Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in 1922, he gave the following guidelines:

"Our aim is not to vote and make decisions, but, in accordance with Islamic traditions, our aim is to learn the various points of view and to discern the various aspects of the proposals, so that what is useful can be adopted. In this age people might say, "Why not base our decisions upon the votes?" But our religion has prescribed for us, إِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ i.e., 'Seek advice, but when you have made a decision, do not worry about what people will say.' This has all along been the practice in Islam. For instance, when an attack was launched on Persia, the enemy destroyed a bridge and many Muslims were martyred. Sa'd bin Abī Waqqāṣ wrote back that if immediate assistance was not forthcoming, the Muslims would be

defeated and the enemy would enter Arabia. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} sought advice in this matter, and everyone said that the Khalīfa himself should go into battle. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī^{ra} alone remained silent. When Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} noticed this, he asked him why he was silent and whether he was against this opinion. He said he was. When he was asked the reason, he said that the Khalīfa must not be involved in battles. His job is to aid the warriors. A nation which puts everything at stake, and no one is left behind to help it, is soon destroyed. Thus if the Muslims are defeated despite your presence, they will have nowhere to go and the enemy will conquer Arabia. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} agreed with him and did not go into battle.

It, therefore, becomes clear that the purpose of consultation is not to cast votes but to find out really useful ideas. In the end, the opinion of a few or even a single person might be accepted. This was the system followed by the Companions, and this is what we learn from the Holy Quran, and it should suffice for a man of insight. But since the opposite thinking is current these days, I will speak a little about the advantages of this system, which certainly are more than those followed by the Anjuman, and the defects that are cited in this system are present in that system as well. Majority opinion is, in fact, not the opinion of the majority; rather there is one man—the leader—who influences the opinions of others. It is not the majority but only a comparison of who is able to attract more votes. This is also what happens in the Parliament, where members vote to save the government. Not everyone is competent enough to form a correct opinion, therefore, most people follow others. Even those who have an opinion of their own are influenced by those

who are more powerful, and ultimately join them. Thus one party competes with the other and a constant wrangling goes on. But this does not happen in the Shūrā, for here there is no concept of group or partisanship.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1922, pp. 13-14]

THE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE RESULT ORIENTED

To see what role Majlis-e-Shūrā plays in accomplishing the aims and objectives of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya, we have to look at the results that come out of Shūrā. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} enlightened the Jamā'at about this aspect, and said:

“The sign of a foolish person in this world is that he wastes away his time, while the wise one uses his time to advantage. We all get together annually for this convention, where we have discussions and debates. Some even get carried away in their speeches, while others stress their opinions as if heavens would fall if they are not accepted. What we really need to see is the result that comes out of these discussions. If our faith and our fellow beings do not benefit from our discussions and debates, then this gathering cannot be the way to attain Allah's pleasure and His blessings. If we gather here just for fun, and go through the proceedings by force of habit, and then go back home like an opium-eater who takes his dose of opium and feels very satisfied, then this gathering cannot benefit us in any way, and it cannot be the means of attaining Allah's approbation. It cannot be of any good either for our own selves or for the Jamā'at.

The representative of every Jamā'at can himself realize how far this convention has been useful for the members individually and for the Jamā'at as a whole. It is quite

possible that this convention may be very useful for some Jamā'ats and for some individuals, but not at all for other Jamā'ats and other individuals. It is very difficult for me to decide how far this participation results in the spiritual progress of individuals and Jamā'ats; they alone can judge it. But there is one thing which each of us, who is informed enough, can judge; and it is the overall result of our efforts. But even from this point of view, the results of this Majlis-e-Shūrā have not been as good as they should have been, for we do not see the zeal and the fervour which the representatives should have inspired in the members of their Jamā'ats when they go back to them. In view of the overall results, I can say that our Majlis-e-Shūrā is not fulfilling the objectives which it ought to fulfil."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1936, pp. 2-3]

BUSINESS INSTITUTIONS OF THE JAMĀ'AT

Once a proposal was presented in Shūrā regarding the opening of branches or agencies of the Book Depot, and members discussed the conditions that should be placed on such contracts. Commenting upon this discussion, Haḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"In my opinion, we cannot allow this proposal to be presented before the house, for this will mean that the Shūrā will take over even the limited authority that is exercised by the workers of the Jamā'at. The Book Depot is also one of our Departments. We can instruct them to open new branches and to give books on loan, but to define the conditions for such transactions is not the work of Mushāwarat."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1927, p. 25]

WHEN THE KHALĪFA EXPRESSES HIS OPINION BEFORE THE VOTE

It is a normal practice that when the recommendations of the sub-committee have been discussed and the matter is yet to be put to vote, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ sheds light on various aspects of the issue. On one such occasion, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} expressed his views before the vote, but he also made it clear that this was his view and not his decision. He said, "I have often explained, and it is evident from the sunna of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, that he would at times express his own opinion before asking the advice of his Companions. People should not be unduly influenced by this; for a believer gives the opinion which he truly considers to be correct."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1939 p. 128]

After these preliminary remarks, Ḥuḍūr expressed his opinion upon the matter.

PROCEDURE FOR RAISING POINTS RELATING TO THE BUDGET

At times long discussions take place on the budget of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and various objections are raised in the process. In this regard, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

"I am sorry to say that the instruction I gave in 1929-30 has again been overlooked. I had directed that objections regarding the budget should be sent to the committee which deliberates upon the budget. But this has not been done and a lot of time has been wasted. This was not the time to raise such objections. These objections should have been sent to the sub-committee. An additional advantage in following my directive was that others would

also have an opportunity to ponder over the budget. Here only the delegates can deliberate upon it, and the delegates are not necessarily the only people who can come up with useful suggestions. At times even a child can have a very useful idea. Issues which should be raised here are those which relate to the structure of the budget, or to things that have not been properly understood, but it has to be directly related to the budget.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1939, pp. 151-152]

ADVANTAGES OF DEBATING THE BUDGET PROPOSALS

Ḥadrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} viewed the debate upon the budget, and its scrutiny by the members as a positive thing. He said:

“The discussion we have just had on the budget contained a lot of useful points. I feel that, by the grace of Allah, the Jamā'at has progressed considerably in this direction. In the beginning, the scrutiny would at times take the complexion of non-Ahmadīs whereby certain questions are put to an officer on the basis of their mutual friendship or antagonism. But this practice has now been reduced and we feel that the questions are necessary and appropriate. If we continue in the manner, we can remove the flaws in our system and improve it considerably. I have already said that we do not follow the procedure which is adopted by the outside world, and we certainly do not approve of it, for in that system opinions go beyond being an expression of ideas and become solid proposals. On the other hand, in spite of the fact that the budget proposals are examined and questioned by the delegates every year, and this is proving to be more and more useful, Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya has so

far failed to benefit from this process. The delegates are offering very healthy criticism, but the question is, how best can we make use of it. I will take up this question this year and will tell you how these discussions can prove useful.

The Private Secretary appoints certain people to record the proceedings of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. In view of the arrangements that have been made in this regard, it is the duty of the Private Secretary to produce a clear text of the debate upon the budget as soon as possible. Since this part of the proceedings is not very lengthy, it should be completed within two to three weeks. It is the Private Secretary's duty to send a copy of this part of the proceedings to the Investigative Committee, which shall be bound to deliberate upon it and send it to Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya within three months, with recommendations as to which of the points are acceptable and need attention, and which are not acceptable. Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya should then deliberate upon this report during the next three months and issue instructions to the relevant Departments regarding the suggestions which it considers to be workable. A report should then be submitted at the next Shūrā outlining the proposals that were recommended by the Investigative Committee and those which were adopted by the Anjuman, and the form in which they were adopted. The report should also specify which proposals were rejected and the reasons thereof. This report must be submitted in every next Shūrā. In this way the debate and criticism on the budget will not be in vain, and our arguments will be translated into practice and the procedure will pass through a defined course. The resolution will first be presented in the Shūrā, then it

will be considered by the Investigative Committee, which is the representative body of the Majlis-e-Shūrā, and then it will be presented before the Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, which is the body representing the Majlis 'Āmila. Both the bodies will then give practical shape to the recommendations after considering them, and detailed report will be submitted to the next Shūrā. This shall provide an opportunity for me and the delegates to know how far the recommendations have actually been implemented. If we observe that due attention has not been paid to a certain proposal, we may decide to include it in the future programme. I prescribe this procedure because by following it we can derive full advantage from the debate that is held upon the budget."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, pp. 129-131]

FORMATION OF THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE

Ḥaḍrat Muşleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} set up a Standing Committee comprising ten members to formally consider all the financial aspects of the proposals related to the budget of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and it later came to be known as the Standing Finance Committee. Ḥuḍūr laid out the following objectives for this committee:

"This committee has been set up to consider in detail all the aspects of the budget, so that we may not do anything that we may later regret. Quarterly meetings of this committee shall be held halfway through the year in Markaz. Its task shall be to thoroughly consider all the aspects which are likely to affect our budget in one way or the other. At the same time, it shall also propose schemes to augment our income. This committee will forward its recommendations to Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya on all the

different issues, after which they shall be submitted to the Khalifa for final approval. Thus every year the committee will fully scrutinize the budget proposals before they are presented to the Shūrā. During Majlis-e-Shūrā, the budget will also be considered by the sub-committee for Baitul Māl. Requests for supplementary grants received from various Departments will also be presented before the Standing Finance Committee so that it should bear that responsibility also. Nāẓir Sahib Baitul Māl will preside over this committee."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1950, p. 22]

PROPOSING INCREASE IN THE BUDGET

On one occasion, Ḥaḍrat Khalifatul Masīḥ IIIth outlined the objectives of the Standing Finance Committee, reviewed its performance, and laid out the procedure for proposing increase in the budget. Ḥuḍūr said:

"As I have just said, there are two aspects to the 1978-1979 budget: the budget and the income. Whenever Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya deliberates upon a scheme, it does so on the basis of the budget. Some time ago the Departments of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya would effect increase in the budget without any principle. I therefore issued directives that they may make only ten percent increase from the budget of the previous year. Thus the budget would increase by ten percent every year. And this is the method they have followed ever since.

This time when a detailed proposed budget was presented before the Finance Committee, it recommended a Rs. 1,600,000 increase from the previous year, and got their recommendation accepted. But when the budget was presented to me, I said that it was wrong to increase the

budget by Rs. 1,600,000. The increase should have been in keeping with the real income.

Each year the income exceeds the budget, and, whatever our budget, the income is sure to exceed it. But we have to adopt some rules for drawing out the budget. It is not right to close our eyes and say that today the budget is one crore, let us make it 4 crores for the next year. This would be wrong. We will have to base our budget on some principles and also hope that God will grant us even more income. Until a year ago, the practice was to increase the budget estimates by ten percent, irrespective of the income. This year the increase in the budget is twenty-two percent, instead of ten percent, and has been worked out on the basis of last year's income, rather than the estimated income of the current year. So, if the income increases, it will be good and there will be nothing to worry about. But if you increase the budget, let us say by Rs. 2,000,000, the Departments will start demanding various amounts and you will spend money according to the pre-determined estimate. So if you make a budget of the expenditure, but your income falls short of the exaggerated expenditure, it would cause a great deal of apprehension."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1980, pp. 37-38]

SADR ANJUMAN AHMADIYYA CANNOT CUT ITS BUDGET WITHOUT APPROVAL

On one occasion, while the budget of the Anjuman was being discussed in Shūrā, certain amendments were presented by a Department, which would increase the budget by Rs. 40,000. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} asked the delegates for their opinion. 153 supported the view that Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya should be given permission to ac-

quire this amount by reducing expenditure, not in specific heads of account, but in miscellaneous expenses. 83 delegates were of the view that the Anjuman should not be allowed this increase, not even through reduction in its miscellaneous expenditure. Two delegates were of the opinion that the Anjuman may be granted permission to increase the budget, whether or not they can reduce other expenditure. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave his decision in favour of the majority, and said:

“Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya may accommodate this expenditure by making a reduction in some other heads.” A delegate asked whether Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya can reduce expenditure by itself or it requires permission from Ḥuḍūr. Ḥuḍūr said: “Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya cannot cut expenditure on its own. It must obtain permission from me.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1950, p. 24]

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN VOTING

After general discussion and deliberation in the Shūrā, the next stage is to put the proposal to vote. At times certain amendments are made during the discussion, for which specific procedures and rules have been discussed in the previous chapter. After the general discussion, the delegates are given the right to vote. Shedding light on the importance and purpose of voting, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Please cast your votes keeping in view all the facts, and being aware of all the problems faced by you and your brothers and the whole Jamā'at. Do not overlook any as-

pect. I have noticed that on such occasions the opinion tends to slide one way or the other. Some people think that money is being demanded from them for the Jamā'at, and if they refuse it will be a sign of weak faith. The fact is that you will not be helping the Jamā'at by giving the wrong advice either, and you will put it into even greater difficulties. We create problems for the Jamā'at when we let ourselves be guided by our emotions. It is important that delegates should come up with proposals that are free from emotional considerations. If they are against the proposal, they must not be afraid to say so because they think that opposing it might be against the interests of the Jamā'at. On the other hand, if they express their opinion because they consider it to be appropriate and in keeping with current requirements, they will surely merit reward in the eyes of Allah. But if they vote in favour of a proposal while in their hearts they do not agree with it, they will not win Allah's approbation, despite their apparent consent."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1945, pp. 55-56]

THE RIGHT TO VOTE MUST BE EXERCISED

In the same Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said that the vote, whether for or against the proposal, must be exercised. Ḥuḍūr said:

"The proposals for increasing the income have already been presented, and the copies for the assessment of income have been distributed, which the delegates must have read. Now, those who say that the proposed budgetary income should be accepted may rise from their seats." (283 delegates stood up). "Those who think that assessment of income has not been correctly made and

they wish to oppose the proposal, may now stand up.” No delegate stood up. Ḥuḍūr then announced the decision that budget income was approved.

Ḥuḍūr expressed his surprise that 283 delegates had voted in favour of the proposal, whereas the total number of delegates was 385, which meant that either 102 members were absent, or some delegates had not cast their votes.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1945, p. 57]

People of sound judgement must offer their opinions. In this connection, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth addressed Qāḍī Muhammad Aslam Sahib and said:

“I want to question you as to why you preferred to remain silent. Does the proposal contain a definition of the word ‘*Muḥaqqaq*’? And does this question not come to one’s mind? If it has not been defined, then why did you remain silent. Why did you not enlist your name?... You should have given your name.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1976, pp. 37-38]

RECASTING OF VOTES

It was once proposed in Majlis-e-Shūrā that votes should be recast because mistake might have been made in the first voting, but Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau‘ūd^{fa} did not accept this suggestion. The argument he gave was that, although the possibility of error in the counting of votes cannot be ruled out, we cannot set a precedent for recasting votes. He said:

“Since the general discussion on the budget is over, I consider it necessary to say that the delegates who express their viewpoints can be divided into two types.

Some of them only mean to direct the attention of the house towards a particular issue and do not necessarily want their suggestions to be implemented immediately. But there are others who badly want their proposals to be accepted. In other organizations, if their proposals are not accepted they have the right, under the rules and regulations, to either reject the budget proposals outright or to propose a reduction as a sign of their disapproval. This is not acceptable under Islamic principles. When we have decided to undertake something, it is not permissible to adopt an attitude of resentment which will hamper the work. Anyhow, when presenting their proposals, the delegates need not mention whether the budget should be accepted or not, they should instead point out if any changes are required in it. As I have said, members offer their suggestions for several reasons. Some may not want their suggestions to be voted on, and may only want to draw the attention of the delegates to a particular point. While others might want their proposals to be accepted. Therefore, delegates must only raise specific points during the discussion in Shūrā. As far as vote counting is concerned, there does exist the possibility of error, for I have noted that every time there would be different people counting the votes. It seems that the people who were given the task this time were not proficient enough. Still we cannot set a precedence for the recasting of votes on a single proposal."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 106-107]

PROCEDURE FOR THE APPROVAL OF SHŪRĀ'S DECISIONS

The factors which Ḥadrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} took into account when taking decisions in the Shūrā, and the arguments which he presented when he disagreed with the

majority, and the importance he gave to the decisions of the Shūrā, are all very interesting aspects of the Shūrā. Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Mirzā Ṭāhir Ahmad Sahib (Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth) shed light on these aspects in the second volume of *Sīrat Faḍl-e- 'Umar*:

How the Decisions are Approved: “Before arriving at the final decision, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} would give full freedom of expression to the delegates. At times he would urge people to express their views who possessed sound judgement but were by nature hesitant to speak before a gathering. He would also ensure that no one was left out when important matters were being discussed. Sometimes he would specially call delegates from rural areas to express their views. At times, delegates from cities or urban areas or from the business community would be invited. Sometimes technocrats, lawyers, doctors or teachers would be called by name and asked to give their opinion. The only restriction imposed by him was that no one should get entangled in personal matters or deviate from the moral norms. He would also exhort the members to save time and not to repeat things that have already been said. If he found a delegate inconsiderate in expressing his views, or exhibiting some egotism, or if he felt that a delegate was motivated by personal bias, he would either softly or firmly remind them that all their opinions should be for the sake of Allah, and no personal motivation should find its way into their opinions. When a matter was put

to vote in this atmosphere, and the delegates had learnt of the various aspects of the matter, more often than not they would adopt one view. Yes, at times the opinion would be almost equally divided. In either case, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} would mostly accept the opinion of the majority. The same procedure is in place even today. People who judge this spiritual institution of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya from a worldly point of view, at times wonder, 'What is the use of consultation when the Khalīfa has the final authority to accept or reject our opinions?' They even tend to see these consultations as a camouflage for dictatorship. A study of the proceedings of Mushāwarat, however, will be an eye-opener for such people. They will be amazed to see that in more than ninety-nine percent of the cases, the Khalīfa approves the opinion of the majority, and on occasions when he disagrees with them, he produces such incontrovertible arguments in favour of his opinion, so that not only the majority, but the whole house becomes convinced that his opinion is the best. In other words, this is a forum where either the one in authority accepts the verdict of the majority, or the delegates wholeheartedly and enthusiastically accept his decision. Nowhere in the whole wide world can we find an example of such unity. Moreover, members of the Jamā'at have been trained in such a way—and this is what actually happens—that when the views of certain members have been rejected by the majority, they do not attach even as much importance to their rejected views as they would to a scrap of

paper in a wastepaper basket. They disregard their own ability and understanding and join the majority in implementing the decision which has been sanctioned by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. This system, which we see being implemented in the institution of Mushāwarat so successfully, owes a great deal to the fifty-two years of tireless work by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra}. The legacy he has left behind for the Jamā'at in the form of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is an everlasting favour, which shall compel every generation of the Jamā'at to express its gratitude to this great reformer through heartfelt prayers till the end of time.

To stop the tides of thought from crashing onto rocky beaches, he instilled in people's mind the great Islamic principle that when you give advice you should do so with the fear of Allah in your heart. Far from being influenced by the opinions of the delegates, he taught us that, until the final decision has been reached, we should not change our honest opinion even in consideration for the opinion of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. The advice should be given for the sake of God and it should be in keeping with our own honest opinion. Once, in order to highlight this point, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} presented his own proposal before the house, and when he felt that some delegates were supporting it only because it had been presented by Khalīfatul Masīḥ himself, he remarked:

“Let me clarify that it is wrong not to deliberate upon a proposal merely because it has been presented by me,

and it is wrong to think that a proposal does not require our thought for it has been presented by the Khalīfa and must be a source of blessing. You should remember that, in your capacity as my advisers, you are duty-bound to give sincere thought to all the proposals under consideration. If you discover any flaw in any proposal, or if you think that its adoption might be harmful for the Jamā'at, and may increase our difficulties, you must boldly say so without any fear...Please do not hesitate to deliberate upon it merely because it has been initiated by me. The voice should come from the core of your heart, and if a change is required it must not go unexpressed. Express your viewpoints openly and confidently. If I find your proposal unacceptable, I will reject it on my own responsibility. But no dissenting opinion will be allowed once the suggestion has been accepted. At the time of consultation, however, everyone is free to express his opinion."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1938, pp. 9-10]

INSTANCES OF ḤADRAT KHALĪFATUL MASĪḤ II^{RA} DIFFERING FROM THE MAJORITY

Here we give a few instances whereby Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{RA} differed from the majority opinion. On every such occasion, Ḥudūr would mention his reasons for doing so, with the result that the delegates would be fully satisfied with his decision. Any reasonable person who reviews the record of the Shūrā even today, and scrutinizes the reasons offered by Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{RA}, will conclude that his rejection of the majority opinion was not only proper, but that the reverse would have had adverse consequences for the Jamā'at and its interests. Not in a single instance will the researcher find any

semblance of arbitrariness. All these facts have been preserved in the record of the Jamā'at and have been published in various magazines and newspapers, and invite everyone interested to deliberate upon them. Here we give a few examples:

(1) A proposal was put before the Shūrā, that if the provincial Amīr is present at a place where the local Amīr is also present, the local Amīr will lead the Friday prayer. The provincial Amīr may, however, lead the prayers after informing the local Amīr. When this resolution was put to vote, it was accepted by the majority. Commenting on this majority opinion, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} said:

“I believe that the majority opinion in this case is not correct. The provincial and local offices being separate, we shall have to ensure that wherever the provincial Amīr happens to be, he should have an opportunity to express his views. I, for my part, am able to convey my views to the people because the newspapers note my speeches and my sermons and convey them to the Jamā'at, but the provincial Amīrs do not have this privilege and what they say at one particular place is not conveyed to all the Jamā'ats of the province. Therefore, despite the fact that the majority opinion has gone the other way, my decision is that the provincial Amīr, wherever he may be in his province, will have the right to deliver the Friday sermon. The local Amīr, or anyone else, may lead the prayer only with his permission. But if the provincial Amīr is not present, and no Imam has been appointed by the centre, then the local Amīr will have the prior right to deliver the Friday sermon.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1936, p. 57]

(2) A proposal was presented in the Shūrā that one third of the Chanda should be given as local grant to the Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi Jamā'ats. This proposal was not appropriate considering the financial condition of the Jamā'at, but instead of exercising his prerogative and rejecting the proposal, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} gave arguments regarding its unsuitability. He said:

"If this proposal is accepted, it would mean a reduction of Rs. 200,000 from our income. Our total budget is Rs. 1,299,000 and a deduction of Rs. 200,000 would bring it down to Rs. 1,099,000, or even less. It is impossible for any organization to cover the expenditure of 1,299,000 with just 1,099,000. Anyhow, this issue of reducing expenses should have been put before the committee that was constituted to consider the expenditure. This proposal would mean closing down the college, the women's college, the guest house, Nazārat Umur 'Āmma, and sending home the staff of Nazārat Iṣlāḥ-o-Irshād, in order to bring down the expenses to Rs. 1,099,000. Reducing the income without curtailing the expenses is wishing for the impossible, just like a child wishing to catch the stars. To meet the expenses of Rs.1,299,000 with Rs.1,099,000 is also like catching the stars; it is simply impossible. Therefore, when you vote on this proposal you should consider properly whether it should be accepted or not, because it will be impossible to cover the expenses with reduced income. Some people have said that this money is badly needed (by the Jamā'ats), and I agree with them, but in case of such needs we should be looking to increase our income.

Keep praying, for God has the power to give us every-

thing. There was the time when I was elected the Khalīfa and the treasury was in arrears, with just 18 annas in it, but now your budget, including that of Tehrik Jadīd, has gone up to Rs. 2,900,000. Just try to compare 18 annas with Rs. 2,900,000! God indeed is All-Powerful!"

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1957, pp. 83-91; Sirat Faḍl-e-'Umar, vol. II, pp. 198-203]

(3) A proposal was put before the Shūrā that an Ahmadiyya flag should be prepared and hoisted at Jalsa Sālāna on the occasion of the jubilee. The majority was of the view that the Jamā'at should have its own flag, and only a few differed with this opinion. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave his verdict in favour of the majority, but he also acknowledged the importance of the minority opinion, and said:

"Mr. Sahib Dīn has not been able to present his idea very clearly. He thinks that the flag has to do with government, and since we do not run a government it would be improper for us to decide that we should have a flag, and it would be much like what the Congress is doing. Anyhow, he thinks that if we have a flag without our own government, it would be unrealistic and absurd. This seems to be the idea at the back of his mind. I do not say that I quite agree with him in this matter, but this is a question which does require consideration. Can we have a flag without a government? Let the scholars tell us."

Responding to this question, some eminent Companions^{ra} and scholars expressed their views. They said that the flag serves as a beacon, it is not a religious issue for it only serves as an expression of human nature. A flag used to be hoisted when the Holy Prophet^{sa} led the Eid

prayer in Medina. A flag symbolizes a big gathering. The Ahmadiyya flag is neither against the teachings of Islam nor an objectionable innovation. It has been mentioned in some prophecies that there would be flags for the Imam Mahdi. Hence, there is no harm in having an Ahmadiyya flag. When the proposal was put to vote, 376 voted in favour and 9 against. After the voting, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“I give my decision in favour of the majority which says that we should have a flag, but we must not ignore the opposing opinion either. The idea projected by Shaikh Sahib Dīn was not one which should have been brushed aside. The point he raised was very subtle and worthy of consideration. It is a proven fact that the Holy Prophet^{sa} used a flag during the wars. He personally ordered it to be prepared. Once during a battle the Holy Prophet^{sa} ordered some cloth and a pole to be brought and a flag was made. On the other hand, it is wrong to present the argument that we used a flag during the Malkana agitation and that Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya has a flag, for these decisions were not taken by the Shūrā. If such precedents are to be quoted as arguments, then instead of referring the matter to the Shūrā, we should go to Malkana to seek the solution. So any action taken at Malkana or by the Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya cannot be quoted as a precedent. Khuddāmūl Ahmadiyya forms a part of the Jamā'at and this organization comprises the youth. Therefore, any action taken by them, even if legitimate, cannot be cited as a precedent.

The Hadith which Mīr Muhammad Ishāq Sahib has quoted also helps to solve this question. The Holy Prophet^{sa} did not associate a flag with wars in particular. He once deliv-

ered a sermon standing under a flag. He used the flag on another occasion also, and I do not clearly remember whether it was on the occasion of Hajj or 'Umra. But it establishes the point that the flag was used on occasions other than wars."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1939, pp. 57-61]

ROLE OF SHŪRĀ IN ISSUES RELATING TO MARRIAGE

Marriage is an issue which has always demanded particular attention of the Jamā'at, and it has repeatedly been discussed at Shūrā.

In the beginning, the problems were of a different nature. Members of the Jamā'at were of the view that marrying non-Ahmadī women without permission from Markaz should be prohibited. A proposal to this effect was first initiated by Nazārat Umur 'Āmma and was put before Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in 1927. What prompted this proposal was the fact that non-Ahmadī relatives, impressed as they were by the piety of Ahmadīs and their adherence to Islamic values, preferred Ahmadī bridegrooms for their daughters. As far as Ahmadī girls were concerned, the Promised Messiah^{as} himself had bound them to marry Ahmadī men only. But since there was no such restriction upon Ahmadī men, they would marry non-Ahmadī girls and Ahmadī girls would go unmarried. This is what strongly motivated members of the Jamā'at to propose that, in order to safeguard the rights of Ahmadī girls, similar restrictions should be placed upon Ahmadī men also, so that they may marry

into Ahmadī families. This proposal was accepted by the majority in Majlis-e-Mushāwarat and Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} decided in its favour. He said that no one should marry non-Ahmadī girls without permission from Markaz. Ḥuḍūr said that this restriction would be in place for three years after which the matter would be re-considered in Shūrā.

The matter came before Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in 1932 and the restriction was extended for another three years with the approval of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra}. It was extended for a further three years in 1935. An extension was again accorded in 1938. On this occasion Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} decided that any Ahmadī who wanted to marry a non-Ahmadī girl would be required to get permission from Nāẓir Ta'īm. But, at the same time, Ḥuḍūr also instructed the concerned Department not to be niggardly in according permission where it could prove advantageous.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1938, p. 38]

The issue was raised at Shūrā 1941 for the fifth time. After listening to the views of the delegates, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} observed:

“You have listened to the views of different people, except those who did not give their names at the proper time and wanted to speak later on.

Now, delegates who want the present restrictions to be continued and who believe that Ahmadīs should not be allowed to marry non-Ahmadī girls without permission

for the next three years, may stand up.” (266 delegates stood up.) “Now, those who want this restriction to be withdrawn, and want to leave it to individuals whether or not to marry non-Ahmadī girls, may stand up.” (Only 24 delegates stood up.) “I decide in favour of the majority. Various members have expressed their views, both in favour of the proposal and against it, and they have mostly spoken from the point of view of the advantages or disadvantages of marrying a non-Ahmadī girl, which, in my view, was not the question before us. It is obvious that anything which God has not forbidden must have certain advantages in it as well. And even where He has forbidden some things, He has done so under the principle *إِنَّهُمْ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا* [Their sin is greater than their advantage.—Al-Baqarah, 2:220]...

But one point, which was basic to the discussion, has been left out. The fact is that today the number of males exceeds that of females. If this is true, it should be permissible to marry non-Ahmadī girls in certain circumstances.

The survey conducted by Nāẓir Umur ‘Āmma, as well as the one carried out by the Government, both establish that there are more males in the Punjab than females. For every hundred males there are 96 or 98 females. The figure may vary among different people, but these are the overall figures. So it will not be surprising if we also have more boys than girls in our Jamā'at. At least it is true of most of our prominent families. It is the same in our family: I have 13 boys and 9 girls. The same is true of Mirzā Sharīf Ahmad Sahib's family. Such a difference is also discernable in our grandchildren, but as they have only one or two children so far, we cannot make an accu-

rate assessment. In the country as a whole, however, the number of males is more than females. From this point of view, our decision should be to accept girls from outside, otherwise some of our boys will remain unmarried, and their morals will be adversely affected. Suppressing the sexual instinct that God has created in man can only be useful in rare circumstances, mostly it is dangerous and it is not advisable to block this natural flow. So whereas we should consider this issue in the light of the disparity between the number of boys and girls, we should also consider what will happen if we get girls from outside. If we reach the conclusion that such an action will be more harmful than good, then we should not open this door. The figures presented by Nāẓir Sahib Umur 'Āmma also need to be looked at from another angle. A good number of boys may not be eligible for marriage, we should keep these figures in mind as well. There could be some other factors, such as the morals of the young men, which could effectively make the ratio irrelevant. Unless we take all these factors into account, the statistics cannot be relied on. But even if we do not take them into account, the question we are discussing is not only whether we should accept girls from outside the Jamā'at or not, the issue is that if someone wants to marry a non-Ahmadi girl, he must first seek permission from Markaz. This means that the Department acknowledges the necessity (for such a marriage), but wants to keep the decision in its own hand as to whether a particular Ahmadi should be given such permission or not. It acknowledges the necessity, otherwise the proposal would have been to completely ban marriage with non-Ahmadi girls. This permission is required in order to ascertain whether such a marriage would be good or harmful for the Jamā'at. If

there is an Ahmadi man who is not steadfast and his parents are likewise weak of faith, and he marries a non-Ahmadi, the whole family will be cut off from Ahmadiyyat, or at least the boy will be at risk. On the other hand, if there is a devout Ahmadi whose parents are also sincere Ahmadis and he marries a non-Ahmadi girl, there is every likelihood that the girl will also be converted into Ahmadiyyat. Now the concerned Department desires that it should have the authority to allow or disallow such a marriage taking into consideration the circumstances of the young man and his family. If it appears, from the Ahmadiyya point of view, that the marriage to a non-Ahmadi girl will adversely affect the young man and his family, then it will stop such a marriage. But if it sees no harm, and expects positive results, it may allow them to go ahead. The Department will assess whether the coming of a non-Ahmadi girl into a certain Ahmadi household will be advantageous or not. This is why I decided in favour of the majority. The decision accepts the necessity for such a matrimony for the sake of preserving relationships, opening avenues for the propagation of Ahmadiyyat, and in view of the fact that there are fewer girls, but the decision has been entrusted to a Department which will decide in the interest of the Jamā'at. It will be the Nazārat's duty to see whether the person who is seeking such a permission and his family are devout Ahmadis or not, and to advise them accordingly. The Nazārat should also see to it that the permission should be granted in keeping with certain criteria... Giving permission does not mean that no restrictions should be placed whatsoever. In the case of my family, some of my wives have non-Ahmadi relatives with whom they enjoy good relations. I, therefore, thought that if we could bring

some of their daughters into our family, it would be useful. But I desisted from doing so when I noticed that Ahmadīs had the tendency of marrying their sons to non-Ahmadī girls. I thought that if I set such an example, others will follow suit, and while such a step might produce good results for one family from the Ahmadiyya point of view, it might do harm to thousands of others... So if we are allowed to marry non-Ahmadī girls, it is also a test of our prudence and wisdom, and we have to decide whether accepting non-Ahmadī girls will be useful in a particular case or not. I believe that in the prevailing circumstances it is necessary to keep the restrictions in place. The fact is that permissions given by Shariah can only prove useful when exercised prudently. There are times when people are inclined to avail themselves of the permissions, and it becomes necessary to impose restrictions. And there are times when the permissions are disregarded altogether and it becomes necessary to revive them. When a new nation emerges, people have the tendency to revert to the people they have come from, and it becomes necessary to place restrictions. But as time passes, the gap between them widens, and at such a time it becomes necessary to make use of the permission that allows them to come closer...

The situation prevailing now is that for every single Ahmadī there are ten non-Ahmadīs in a family. If, in these circumstances, we were to allow everyone to avail of this permission, there is every danger that the relatives who are in majority will together pull back a solitary Ahmadī. Members of the Jamā'at have written to me about many cases where non-Ahmadī girls, when married into Ahmadī families, converted to Ahmadiyyat. But the

advantage of a girl converting to Ahmadiyyat is nothing as compared to the disadvantage of an Ahmadī becoming a non-Ahmadī. Let us suppose that one hundred marriages are solemnized with non-Ahmadīs, as a result of which twenty young men leave Ahmadiyyat while eighty girls embrace it; the conversion of eighty women would not be as beneficial for us as the loss of twenty young men. It is wrong to risk even the smallest part of what God has granted to us on the pretext of procuring more. Our duty is to protect the faith of the people who have been given to us by God. It will not be our success if we get 99 people from outside and lose even a single one of our own. Our enthusiasm for our religion demands that we do not let even one person step out from our ranks, whether or not we get 99 others. Keeping these considerations in mind, I decide this issue in favour of the majority.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1941, pp. 29-42]

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE SHŪRĀ'S DECISIONS

The basic principle on which the decisions of the Shūrā are based, is as follows: Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya believes that the Holy Quran and sunna are immutable, and all else can change with time, age and circumstances. Hence such decisions of the Shūrā as are based on the Holy Quran, the sunna, and the instructions of the Promised Messiah^{as} are immutable, but in other subordinate matters, changes are inevitable according to the needs and requirements of the people. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, giving his decision about certain Waṣīyyat regulations, said:

“I hope that these regulations shall remain unchanged for sometime, for the fact is that everything is liable to

change, except the injunctions of Allah and the instructions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. No rule or regulation can be considered perfect. But this does not apply to the Holy Quran, which is immune from any change, and it also does not apply to the sunna of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, which no one can change. Similarly, the decisions which we have taken in keeping with the instructions of the Promised Messiah^{as} can also never change. All other decisions which are taken in keeping with the circumstances are liable to change. We have tried our best, and we pray that Allah may bless these decisions, and people may be able to follow them with greater ease and facility, and the spirit of Waṣiyyat may remain intact.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, p. 176]

FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE SHŪRĀ'S DECISIONS

The decisions of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ regarding various proposals discussed in Majlis-e-Shūrā are first announced in Majlis-e-Shūrā. Thereafter the decisions are presented to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ in writing for his formal approval, and are recorded for implementation by Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and the other organizations. Commenting on this process, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth said:

“It has been repeatedly mentioned in the report of the sub-committee for Iṣlah-o-Irshād that I, too, have approved the decisions. This is because the decisions pass through two stages: The first is when the Khalīfa gives his approval at the spot (during the Shūrā). The other is when all the reports have been compiled and submitted to the Khalīfa for formal approval. But since the previous reports could not pass through this second process and they could not be

submitted before Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth, it was necessary that when the decisions have been prepared the current Khalīfa should give formal approval.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1983, pp. 24-25]

INSTANCES OF THE DECISIONS OF SHŪRĀ BEING RESERVED

Two instances whereby Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} reserved his decisions are to be found in the unpublished report of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1947. Later events showed that this indeed was the best course of action.

(1) During the last Shūrā to be held in Qadian, the majority was of the view that a substantial sum of money should be taken from the Reserve Fund to buy land for Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya, Madrasa Ahmadiyya and their hostels. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“304 delegates are in favour of spending Rs. 25,000 from the Reserve Fund for the purchase of land for Madrasa Ahmadiyya, Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya and their hostels, but I reserve my decision in this matter.”

(2) The Shūrā took up a proposal about the construction of a new building for Dār-ul-Qaḍā, upon which Ḥuḍūr remarked: “Delegates have expressed their views. Now, those who are in favour of allocating Rs. 10,000 for the construction of the Dār-ul-Qaḍā building, according to proposals no. 8, may stand up.” 317 delegates stood up in support of the proposal. Ḥuḍūr then asked those who were against the proposal to stand up, upon which 18 delegates stood up. Ḥuḍūr said, “The majority is in favour

of sanctioning Rs. 10,000 for the construction of Dār-ul-Qaḍā building, but I reserve my decision in this matter.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1947, pp. 19-30]

IMPORTANCE OF SHŪRĀ'S DECISIONS

(1) While drawing the Jamā'at's attention to the decisions of Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“It is the responsibility of Nāẓir A'lā to ensure that the representatives of all the Jamā'ats bring their reports regarding the implementation of the previous year's decisions of Shūrā. These reports will be taken up in the Shūrā. But if we go by the announcement just made, all our time will be spent in listening to the reports and no other work will be possible. With this in view, I have now suggested to the Nazārat that the reports from outside Jamā'ats should be submitted to them by October, and in no case later than December. Nāẓir A'lā shall then present before Mushāwarat a brief resume of those reports which will be discussed and evaluated, and it will be determined as to which Jamā'at efficiently implemented the decision and which lagged behind. There is also another proposal for this year. I shall draw up a summary of the actions that were expected from the Jamā'ats and I shall take them up one by one and ask representatives of Jamā'ats which have implemented them to stand up. Thus I will learn how many Jamā'ats did their work. Secondly, I will ask the representatives of Jamā'ats which have done half the work to stand up, and thirdly I shall ask those who have done nothing at all to stand up.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1924, p. 10]

(2) Various Nazārats present their yearly progress report in Shūrā. Once Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} made the fol-

lowing remarks about a Nāẓir Sahib's report:

"I would like to point out a couple of things in this report that I find objectionable.

The first is that Nāẓir Sahib kept raising objections against other Departments. He could have sat with the officers of those Departments and talked to them about his rights, but it is not proper to bring up such complaints in another gathering. It is against our norms and practices. Had this been the Budget Committee, he would be entitled to mention that he has not been given a clerk or a peon, but this meeting has nothing to do with the budget...

The second point which I want to make is that this report considers the decisions of Mushāwarat to be of secondary importance, and gives this as the reason for the failure to implement them. No Nāẓir has the authority to say such a thing. His duty is to implement every decision that has been passed by Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. The decision as to whether a matter is of primary importance or not can only be made by the Shūrā. The statement of the concerned Nāẓir indicates that he had time at his disposal to do the work, but he used his own jurisdiction to turn down the decisions of the authority whose decisions are binding...

The Nāẓir Sahib complains that some people do not respond to his enquiries, while, in fact, he himself does not care for the decisions taken by the representatives of the Jamā'at and by the Khalīfa. In response to some questions, he expressed ignorance, whereas he should have come here up to date with the facts."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1924, pp. 15-16]

In the same context, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

(3) "The decisions of Shūrā should be considered the

decisions of the Khalīfa, because it is he who takes the final decision after consultation. The decisions should be implemented in full. Unless the officials are imbued with the spirit of obedience to the authority, they will not be respected by others.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 36-37]

FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT SHŪRĀ'S DECISIONS

Now we present an example of accountability in case of failure to implement the decisions of Shūrā.

It was decided in 1930 that, in view of the ever-increasing burden of educational scholarships upon the Jamā'at, the amount that has been spent on previous scholarships should first be recovered, and it should be used to give scholarships for the next five years, and the Chanda should not be used for this purpose. But somehow the decision was not implemented. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} entrusted the matter to an investigative committee to establish who was responsible for the failure, and how the person should be penalized.

The commission put the responsibility upon a particular Nāẓir. Since his mistake had been discovered in the Shūrā, the committee decided that he should admit his mistake before the Shūrā and seek forgiveness from Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. Accordingly, the Nāẓir apologized and requested the members to pray that God may forgive him and his workers for their lapse. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} accepted his apology and remarked:

“I have said this before, and I reiterate that the Nāẓarat

has not understood the importance of Majlis-e-Shūrā. Perhaps they are being motivated by some feeling of rivalry or they just want people to come here and vent their resentments. The Nazārat has made the same mistake this year as it has done in previous years. All the blame has been shifted to Nāzir Baitul Māl, but the fact is that nothing substantial has been done to implement the decisions of Shūrā during the past few years, although there has been a lot of improvement. This year I particularly want to stress that decisions of Shūrā must be implemented, and I hope that due attention will be given to this matter in future. The fact is that no system can survive unless its rules and regulations are fully adhered to. I believe that 95% of the common people suffer from this fault, as is also evident from my Friday sermons. There are very few indeed who are safe from this malady. I believe that it is wrong to break the law and not to try to modify it. The people of Hindustan do not seem to understand that they should either follow an injunction or, if they believe that it is not possible to do so, they should have it changed. When they say that a certain thing cannot be done, they are only deceiving themselves, because there is a world of difference between something being difficult and something being impossible. When a thing is impossible, it implies that it cannot be done under the law of nature, but what such people actually mean is that they have not been able to discharge an obligation due to some difficulties. In fact they consider even a little bit of hard work to be 'impossible', whereas a truly impossible thing cannot be done by anyone. I am not sure about the Hindus, but I know about the Muslims—for I often come into contact with them—that they do have the tendency to declare every difficult thing to be impossible, and they tend to

put off everything, and this is a very dangerous tendency for any nation.

Along with the Nazārat, I would like members of the Jamā'at at large to attend to this matter and, as I said in my Friday sermon yesterday, try to free yourselves of this malady. The tendency to declare even routine work to be impossible is extremely wrong. What they actually mean is that they have some difficulty in doing their work."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1939, pp. 24-27]

Chapter X

MAJLIS-E- MUSHĀWARAT AND THE CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS YEAR'S DECISIONS

The decisions taken in Majlis-e-Shūrā are implemented during the course of the year by Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Tehrīk Jadīd Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and Waqf Jadīd Anjuman Ahmadiyya. Therefore, every year, before the actual proceedings of Shūrā begin, reports are presented by concerned Nazārats, Wakālat or Nizāmats regarding the implementation of previous year's decisions. Initially the delegates were permitted to comment on the reports, but on one occasion Ḥaḍrat Muşleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} felt that the comments had assumed an inappropriate tone. He immediately rectified this practice, and said:

“Many delegates do not understand what it means to comment on a report...The purpose is to point out any errors it may contain...The concerned Nāzīr is not answerable unless a definite decision has been taken...This is not a Parliament where one group has to stand against another. This is Mushāwarat, you can ask for clarification if something is unclear, but you cannot criticize someone. Such an impression is at times caused by person's tone. He may not be intending to speak the way his tone suggests, but it sometimes happens out of habit...Therefore, delegates who are in the habit of speaking aloud should try to tone down their voices.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1923, p. 26]

Ḥaḍrat Muşleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} also bound the Jamā'ats to

send their reports to Majlis-e-Mushāwarat through their representatives. They should specify in these reports what they have done to implement the decision of the previous year's Shūrā, and these reports will be put before the Shūrā for consideration. But it was later realized that a great deal of time would be spent on analyzing these reports, and no time would be left for anything else. Hence it was decided that the concerned Nazārats would start collecting these reports from October until December. A summary will then be prepared which will be presented in Majlis-e-Shūrā by the Nāẓir A'lā and it will be scrutinized."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1924, p. 10]

SHŪRĀ AND WORKERS OF THE JAMĀ'AT

The scrutiny of the reports regarding the implementation of the previous year's decisions slowly took the form of questions. The delegates were even permitted to raise questions about the working of the Nazārats, which would be answered by the concerned Nāẓirs. But when some people started raising questions which were against the spirit of Shūrā, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} remarked:

"I am going to put off my main speech till later. We will now take up the questions which have been raised. But I must say that I am disappointed. Those who have raised questions have not understood the objective of Majlis-e-Shūrā. I will speak about this later on and it is one of the reasons why I am deferring my speech.

You must understand that the Shūrā and the workers of the Jamā'at are two separate entities. The Shūrā only

takes up fundamental issues, and you can only ask questions regarding these. But the questions that have been raised now have nothing to do with Shūrā and they may only cause divisions.

I explained this point last year but the questions raised this year are even less desirable. I will comment on these questions later. At present I want to explain the rule that the questions raised here should relate to Shūrā and not to the worker's committee.

I have previously said that the Nāẓirs also need to be scrutinized. I also said that a committee consisting of some delegates of the Shūrā should be constituted, and it should present a report to the Khalīfa regarding their work. It would have been useful to have an independent committee looking into the work of the Nāẓirs and pointing out any shortcomings, and wherever the Khalīfa agreed with their assessment, appropriate measures could be taken. So what we should be asking here in the Shūrā is: What have the Nāẓirs done in respect of the decisions made last year?"

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1925, p. 7]

THE PURPOSE OF SCRUTINIZING THE WORK OF NAẒĀRATS

In Shūrā 1925, to which reference has been made above, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} explained in detail the functions of the Nāẓirs in relation to the Shūrā. He also directed that questions about administrative matters should not be raised in Shūrā, and the privilege of commenting on the work of the various Departments of the Jamā'at should not be misused. The objective of raising questions should be to understand things and not to de-

fame someone. Questions should only be asked for the purpose of correction, and they should not give an impression of partisanship. The Jamā'at must in all events be protected from mischief. A few selected portions of Ḥudūr's speech are reproduced below:

The Duties of Nāzirs: "I believe that it is very important for the Nāzirs to be able to express themselves clearly and beautifully. They should be able to convince others about the importance of their work. I have said repeatedly that the duty of a worker is not only to do the work himself, but also to be able to invite the attention and assistance of other people. Therefore, one of the duties of a Nāzir is to be able to speak fluently, and to be able to express profound matters in a simple and effective manner.

Now I would like to comment on the questions raised yesterday about different Departments. I think that the questioners crossed the limits. It was to avoid such mistakes that I named this Majlis 'Majlis-e-Mushāwarat'. Its very name reminds us of its objective. But it is unfortunate that some of the delegates have overlooked this fact and have even forgotten its very name. We must keep in mind that this is Mushāwarat (consultation), hence matters which are to do with administration should not be raised here.

There is an occasion for everything: I do not believe that administrative matters should be entrusted to a particular group of people and they alone should have a say in these matters, but, at the same time, I do not sanction continuous interference in these matters. There is a proverb, *ہر گن وقت و ہر گن مقامے دارد* [There is a time and place for everything.] The sign of a man of wisdom and sagacity is that

he recognizes the time and occasion. The same thing, if said on the proper occasion, seems wonderful, but it becomes unsavoury when said out of context. In everything that we do in this world, knowing the proper time and occasion is what will lend beauty to it.

Interference in the Work of the Jamā'at: I believe that everyone has the right to have his say in the work of the Jamā'at, but none has the right to do so in an untimely manner and in a way that causes discord between brothers and groups. He who does such a thing will be considered foolish if he is a believer, otherwise he is an enemy of the Jamā'at and is out to destroy it.

If friends who come from other places get an opportunity to work in Markaz, they will get a true picture of things. If they could read the letters I write to the Nāzirs and other workers, and could see how I reprimand them, they would admit that they themselves could not work as efficiently as these people are working. Everyone who checks out the office records will see that I have not received any complaint, even from the humblest of persons, which I have not taken note of, and if the complaint is justified I have never failed to make a strict reprimand. A student once had a complaint against a Nāzir. I fined the Nāzir and gave the student his due.

So, if somebody notices a flaw or shortcoming, it cannot be rectified by raising such questions in the Shūrā. The remedy is to inform me of the matter, and if it is still not corrected ...you may have the right to complain. But in such a case it would be advisable for you to think that perhaps you are yourself mistaken. On the other hand, you should also remember that I am not God, and I, too, am liable to make mistakes and to misunderstand things.

The Aim of Asking Questions: There are two reasons for asking questions. The first is to acquire accurate information about an issue, and the second is to vilify others. It is with these two objectives in mind that questions are raised in Councils and Parliaments. Questions are raised either to gain more information or to humiliate the other party so that one's own party comes into power. Your questions should not be motivated by the second consideration.

It is imperative that the questioner should go to the concerned Nāẓir and inform him of the flaws that he has noticed and ask him to correct them. But if the Nāẓir still does not pay heed, then the matter may be brought to the notice of the person who can rectify things. But if you do not follow this procedure and express your objections in public, then you are the one who is guilty. If everyone is entitled to know of his own shortcomings, I do not know why this right should be taken away from those who are working for the Jamā'at. Is it merely because they are serving the Jamā'at? If the Nāẓirs make mistakes—and at times they do make mistakes, and they themselves admit that they are liable to make mistakes, nor do I want people to think that they are above doing so—the person who detects any such shortcoming should first go to the concerned Nāẓir and ask him to correct the wrong. If the Nāẓir does not do so, then the questioner should report the matter to me, instead of speaking about it in public...

The real purpose of our questions should be to reform things and not to divide the Jamā'at into groups. If such questions continue people will be divided into two groups: the government party and the opposition. This will be the first step. The Khalifa will of course have to side with one group, or he will sometimes side with one

group and at sometimes with another. Then a situation may arise where a group might stress that its opinion is the correct one, but the Khalīfa may not agree. This situation could grow from bad to worse and we might end up even worse than Muslims. The Muslims are far greater in number, and we are nothing in comparison. According to the last census, there are 500,000 menials in the Punjab and only 28,000 Ahmadīs. If you do not maintain your strength and do not maintain unity, and let your strength dissipate, and weaken yourself, then remember that the menials will enjoy greater respect than you do. Just reflect on the proverb آدمی دے کے پیر شدی i.e., what strength have you attained that you have already begun squandering it?

Today our condition is more precarious than the tongue surrounded by 32 teeth. The tongue can still protect itself, but we cannot. Our condition is like the tongue that has been pulled out of its root, and is still told to masticate. It is indeed worse, for the teeth that surround us can move at will, and can crush us. Therefore, at this stage, we should close our eyes even to the most serious mistakes of our friends, and we should become united like the fortified wall mentioned in the Holy Quran. In fact, we need even greater cohesion, otherwise we shall be destroyed before the very eyes of our enemies, and no one will be left to mourn us.

Avoid Causing Mischief: Even if the Khalīfa does not pay heed to a complaint, or—God forbid—even if the Khalīfa supports the perpetrator of cruelty, even then I would advise you to be patient and not create mischief. If the Khalīfa is really cruel or supports those who are cruel, God will remove him. He appoints the Khalīfa and He has the power to remove him as well. Similarly, if an of-

ficial is cruel, God will remove him. Therefore, be righteous and try to rectify any wrong that you notice, not through mischief, but through prayers. And if you happen to be wrong, God will guide you and will help clarify your misunderstanding and will save you from being destroyed. And if you are right, then God will either discipline the evil-doers or will remove them from their position.

According to Islamic principles, the Jamā'at is under the Khalīfa. He is the highest authority appointed by God and his is the last word. Neither the Anjuman nor Majlis-e-Shūrā have this privilege. This was the point which was not understood and led to the Jamā'at splitting into two groups.

Although the election of the Khalīfa is apparently in your hands, and you have the right to make a decision about him, it is in fact all in the hand of God. He says that it is He Who appoints the Khalīfa, and it is He Who shall continue to raise Khulafā from among you as long as you keep improving your lot and do not forget the injunctions which lead you to the right path; and it is He Who shall grant you the purity which is essential for discharging such responsibilities.

I do not support the contention that the Khalīfa cannot make a mistake, but I am equally convinced that he cannot commit a mistake which results in the destruction of the Jamā'at. He may err here and there, but he cannot go wrong in everything. And even if he happens to make a mistake which is liable to lead to the destruction of the Jamā'at, God will Himself correct it, and He will produce good results from it. Such a degree of sanctity is not enjoyed by any other Jamā'at or Majlis.

I admit that Khulafā have made mistakes in the past and

they can do so again. Sometimes I myself make a decision and find out later that it was a wrong decision. But the question is: who is more immune from mistakes? Even Prophets are at times mistaken in understanding things, how then can a Khalīfa be immune from it? The Holy Prophet^{sa} once said: If two people come to me with their quarrel, and I decide in favour of the one who is better at expressing his views, while he is in fact wrong, he should not take the right I have given him, for in such a case he will only be taking a piece of fire for himself."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1925, pp. 17-24]

ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE QUESTIONS RAISED DURING SHŪRĀ

In the same Mushāwarat, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} allowed some questions to be answered which were, in fact, against the norms of Mushāwarat, and he did so because he did not want people to think that something was being hidden from them and this was the reason why their questions were not being answered. Ḥuḍūr said that he was sorry that the questions had been painful for some people, but at the same time he was not angry with those who had asked these questions, and he would pray for them so that God might guide them and they may not be ensnared by the hypocrites in future. Ḥuḍūr said:

"Although these questions were against the norms of Mushāwarat, I permitted them to be asked so that no one could say that the questions were not allowed or not answered because there was something genuinely wrong. This is not all, I will constitute a sub-committee comprising of the same delegates who raised these questions, and shall order all the relevant office record to be put at their

disposal so that they may look into the matter. But if the allegations do not turn out to be correct, the questioners will be considered guilty, and the ones who prompted them to ask such questions shall be expelled from the Jamā'at. However, if the objections turn out to be correct, the concerned Nāẓirs shall be removed...In this case the plaintiff shall be the judge and shall himself decide the case. What more can we do?...This was hardly the occasion for asking such questions, and what pains me even more is that the questions must have hurt the people concerned. It was an attempt to humiliate them, and they have been unjustly targeted. I appoint a sub-committee to investigate into the matter. The Nāẓirs shall provide the committee with all the relevant record. The committee should report its findings to me after completing its investigation. The list of the persons who came up with these allegations should also be appended to the final report so that an enquiry should be made about them as well..."

In the concluding address, Ḥudūr said:

"Some friends think that I am displeased with those who raised these questions. But this is not my way. Of course I disliked what they did, and I also have complaints against those who were responsible and did nothing to stop such questions from being asked. But I am not angry with anyone. I have already prayed for them three times, and this shows that I am not angry. I will pray for them again. I am sorry that they were deceived by some hypocrites, otherwise they are sincere people. I am not angry with them and not even with the hypocrites, for our aim is to reform them, and we cannot do this if we are angry with them."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1925, pp. 36-37, 48-49]

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE SCRUTINY OF NAZĀRATS

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} kept a very close eye on the work of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. While he established an extensive system of Nazārats, he also directed them to present their annual reports to the Shūrā, so that the members may gain knowledge, and people who object to the establishment of these Nazārats may be satisfied. In this context Ḥudūr said:

“Delegates have listened to the reports of the Nāzirs which must have given them enough information to realize the importance of Nazārats, and to see that their work is improving. If you look at the correspondence which the Nazārats have had with the outside Jamā'ats, you will further realize how necessary they are. When the Nazārats were established, some people objected that it would involve too much expenditure. But I knew that the moral condition of the members of the Jamā'at would deteriorate further if such organizations as Nazārats were not established. The money being spent on the Nazārats is certainly more than that being spent on the outside Jamā'ats, and this is because we have to spend more on the Markaz initially. If we do not have enough money, we can restrain the branches from growing rapidly, but we cannot let the Markaz suffer, for it serves as the brain. If we do not take care of the brain, the whole body deteriorates. If you look at a baby, you will see that the weight of its head is proportionately greater than that of its whole body, whereas the head of a young man weighs nothing in comparison to his body. This is because the head needs greater protection in childhood, and it evolves into its proper size as the body grows. The same is true in our case. A time will come when we shall have many

missionaries abroad, and many offices and other facilities. At that time less money will be spent on the Naẓārats and much more on outside work. But in our present state, it is essential to strengthen the brain, which is the Markaz."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1925 pp. 70-71]

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR THE DELEGATES

Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} always stressed that the questions raised with reference to the reports of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and their answers should not take the form of a debate. He instructed the Nāẓirs not to take the Mushāwarat and its decisions lightly, and every decision of the Shūrā should be fully implemented. It is the work of those who are responsible to decide whether or not a matter is of primary importance. Ignoring the decisions of the Shūrā would amount to exercising self assumed powers and rejecting the authority of the Shūrā whose decisions are binding. He further said that at times some Nāẓirs complain that they do not receive replies to their requests, while they themselves do not care for the decisions which have been taken by the Khalīfa and the representatives of the Jamā'at.

On the other hand, he also instructed those who ask the questions not to turn it into a debate. The real purpose of raising questions is to gain information, and it is not proper to start a debate. He also directed that the questions should be sent in writing to Markaz at least a fortnight before the Shūrā, so that their answers can be prepared.

Regarding the decisions taken in Majlis-e-Shūrā, Ḥudūr stressed that they must be implemented. The responsibility for their implementation lies equally upon the Nāẓirs and the Jamā'ats. In fact, the purpose of addressing questions to the Nāẓirs and to the representatives of the Jamā'ats, is that they should both realize their responsibilities. The purpose of consultation in the Shūrā is not only to motivate, but to do the actual work.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1924, pp. 15-17,25]

UNDERSTANDING THE JAMĀ'AT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

In the same context, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said that some questions are raised because delegates do not properly understand the code of conduct. Ḥudūr said:

“All the questions have been answered, but there was one question which was raised due to a poor understanding of our code of conduct, I will, therefore, answer it myself. The Secretary of the Shūrā has already given an answer to this question, but it was not the true answer and was only meant to defer the question. Our code of conduct is that the Khalīfā is responsible for everything, and it is he who entrusts work to some people who form the Naẓārats, and are now known as Ṣadr Anjuman. This is why Majlis-e-Shūrā is called by the Khalīfā's Private Secretary, and it is not proper for Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya to call the Shūrā, for it is itself answerable about its work. The purpose of Mushāwarat is to receive suggestions regarding the framing of rules. Since the Islamic Shariah holds the Khalīfā responsible for all administrative matters, all matters that are placed before the Shūrā are such as the Khalīfā considers important for

that particular year. Since we have only one day to consider the proposals, and one day for the committees to do their work, therefore only six or seven questions are allowed. Of all the questions that are received, he chooses those which he considers most important, and no Naẓārat has anything to do with it. Since members of the Jamā'at do not have enough experience, they sometimes send questions which are related directly to the Nāẓirs and have nothing to do with the Shūrā. Such questions are therefore forwarded to the concerned Nāẓirs. Questions that relate to the Shūrā are earmarked for the Shūrā. It is wrong to urge people to ask questions, and I am strongly against this practice. Even in my correspondence with the Government, I emphasize that it is wrong to act in a manner as to make people impatient about their demands, and such an attitude could trigger agitation. Questions which automatically come up in people's minds keep coming before me...So if someone has a suggestion relating to a matter of principle, he should send it to the Khalīfa, and if he considers it to be of substance and thinks that it requires further deliberation, it can be presented before the Shūrā. And if it relates to the Nāẓirs, they can be instructed accordingly."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1926, Gazette, p. 18]

THE RIGHT METHOD OF RAISING QUESTIONS

Some delegates started attaching conditions with regard to the questions in Shūrā. This was not only wrong but was in contrast to the established norms. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} did not allow such questions, and said:

"Now that all the questions have been answered, it is time to constitute sub-committees to consider the various

proposals contained in the Agenda. But before we proceed, I wish to say a few words about the questions.

A condition attached to questions: A gentleman sent some questions, but said that these questions should be presented as they are, and, secondly, there should be a discussion about them after they have been answered. Otherwise, the questions may not be presented.

This request is wrong in principle and also from another point of view, which I shall explain later. It is wrong in principle, because nowhere in the world are people allowed to discuss such questions after they have been answered, for this results in an unending debate which can go on till the end of the world. So, the normal procedure is that a question is asked, and if something remains unanswered it can be asked afterwards, but it is wrong to start a series of questions and answers. Hence this condition is contrary to the established norms.

Only the Khalifa can allow a Question to be Asked: Since only the Khalifa has the authority to allow a question, it is wrong to lay down the condition that the question should not be asked if delegates cannot discuss it after it has been answered. The gentleman should have presented the question and should have sought permission to discuss it further, and I would have accorded permission if I thought it necessary. Thus he would have been satisfied and we too would have benefited from the question. It was wrong to say that the question should not be presented if it is not going to be discussed in detail. We just noticed that a useful point emerged from the questions (concerning the closing of the financial year), in respect of which an incorrect procedure had so far been adopted. Thus we do benefit from questions, whether or not they are discussed at length. If

there are no restrictions, the discussion would continue endlessly. Therefore, the best procedure is to ask a question, and if something has been left out (in the reply) it can be asked again.

Seeking Clarifications from the Departments: The offices are open, you can seek clarifications from them as well. And if they fail to answer you, you have the right to inform me that such and such an office did not answer your query. Then I will look into the matter and decide whether or not it is in the interest of the Jamā'at for the question to be answered. If it is, I will instruct the office to furnish the reply, but if the reply is likely to lead to mischief, or putting it in writing might cause us some problems, I will write to the person who has raised the question and tell him that I have satisfied myself upon the matter, and it is only proper for that question not to be answered.

What Questions can be Asked: I want to make it clear that only such important questions should be asked which help the interests of the Jamā'at, or give us some new information, or bring us some benefit, or remove some mischief. Asking aimless questions will only increase the burden upon the already overworked staff of our offices. They will have to look into the records and a lot of time will be wasted."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, pp. 30-32]

**RESTRICTION ON ASKING QUESTIONS:
ONLY PROPOSALS MAY BE PRESENTED**

Asking questions in the Shūrā was a useful exercise, but it took a lot of patience and forbearance to continue with this process. In practice, neither the questioners nor

those who answered them took the process seriously, nor did they try to benefit from it. For many years Ḥadrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} continued to guide those who asked the questions and those who answered them, and explained to them the aim and purpose of this exercise, but at last when he felt that it was adversely affecting the gravity and solemnity of the Shūrā, he decided that questions would no longer be allowed. On the other hand he said that there would be no restriction in presenting anything as a proposal. Ḥudūr said:

Two Decisions about the Shūrā: "I want to inform Majlis-e-Shūrā that I have made two decisions in the light of our past practice. When I established the institution of Shūrā, I said that it would not be advisable to formulate the rules at the very beginning, for they might create problems at a later stage. Let the process go on as it is and let us keep suggesting rules and regulations as and when required. Experience has shown that this was the right decision.

There is one aspect of the Shūrā which is adversely affecting the solemnity and decorum of Majlis-e-Shūrā, and it is the aspect of the questions. Despite my repeated exhortations, many of the questions that are asked look very much like the questions that are raised in government institutions. The words convey one thing, while the underlying intent is quite different. The purpose of such questions is not to correct or to rectify something, they are meant to ensnare those to whom the questions are put, and the latter consequently respond in a manner that is intended to ward off the criticism. This causes a rust in the heart of the questioner and also disheartens the workers. It also strikes at the root of honesty and righteousness.

Anything which adversely affects *Taqwa* and righteousness cannot be considered useful. Therefore, from now on I forbid the asking of questions.

The Right Method of Seeking Improvement: It is binding on anyone who notices any defect in the work of the Jamā'at, to inform me about it and to suggest changes. This is the proper method and this I will allow. What I can never allow is that someone should say one thing while he means another. Similarly, a worker cannot be allowed to conceal his mistake and concoct an answer to cover it up. In worldly organizations, the purpose of asking such questions is that the one who is being asked should not be able to answer them and should thus be seen as dishonest and incompetent. The intention of the respondent, on the other hand, is to make the objection appear false, even though it is true. But these things are very harmful as far as religion and *Taqwa* and righteousness are concerned. I am therefore doing away with this practice, and I forbid the asking of questions the way they have been asked till now. But I will not do away with the spirit of asking questions and the benefit that comes with it. Questions are useful, because assistance from other people is very helpful to the workers, and our workers need to be helped in this manner. But we have limited time in the Shūrā, and it is not possible to give everybody a chance to offer his advice. A method, therefore, has to be evolved which will make it easy for those who want to give assistance to do so.

At times the words even of an ordinary man can turn out to be very useful. Some time back when we were discussing improvements in our finances, a student from Madrasa High School wrote to me that hundreds of ru-

pees are spent every year in the purchase of earthen ovens for Jalsa Sālāna, but they are not taken care of and begin to crumble. If we could take steps to preserve these ovens, a lot of money could be saved.

It surprised me to hear such a suggestion from a student, and I thought he might be wrong. But when I sent the papers to a building expert and asked for his opinion, he accepted the suggestion and said that it could help to save money. Even if we have to pay a rent of Rs. 12 per year for the land where the ovens are fixed, we could still save hundreds of rupees.

So, not only older people but even children can come up with good ideas. In future, therefore, instead of offering your opinion in the form of a question, it should be presented as a proposal. And this will not be limited to the Shūrā; whenever someone has a useful idea during the course of the year he should send it to me. All such suggestions will be forwarded to a commission which will be set up every year or every second year to evaluate the work of the Jamā'at. When the commission approves of certain suggestions, I shall give my decision about them, and when it rejects some suggestions, and I also do not find them useful, I shall reject them also; but if I find them useful they will be accepted. The present method of asking questions only means meddling in the affairs of others, and it does more harm than good. While I am permitting the asking of questions this year, it shall not be allowed in the future. Henceforth, instead of asking questions, you may offer proposals that a certain Department is suffering from certain shortcomings and such and such steps should be taken to correct it. Thus, along with the defects, you will also be proposing the remedy,

which the commission will consider, and I will take the final decision.

The Right to Allow or Disallow the Presentation of a Proposal:

Now we come to the proposals. This has also become a difficult issue. I cannot think of a person who does not conceive a good idea, but if we were to consider every such idea, we would have a pile of them before us every year. And when somebody's proposal is rejected, he thinks that the whole exercise is in vain. Since the Jamā'at has not yet been trained in these matters, anyone who thinks of a proposal expects it not only to be taken up in Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, but to be actually implemented. The fact is that it is not easy to think of a scheme which can be implemented, considering all the prevailing circumstances. Even in governments, private bills are rarely presented, and it is mostly government officials who present the bills, because they have a better knowledge and understanding of the situation. In our case, it is usually the members of the outside Jamā'ats who come up with proposals, even though many of these proposals have already come to our own mind, but we could not implement them because of practical difficulties. For instance, we may not have the required financial resources, or they may undermine the projects that are already underway. For these and similar other reasons, such proposals cannot be implemented.

Please also remember that Islam gives the Prophet and his Khulafā the right to seek advice. No one can prove that anyone has been given the right to advise a Prophet or Khalifa. There is not a single instance whereby someone advised the Holy Prophet^{sa} and considered it his right. The procedure I had proposed was that proposals

would first come to me and I would adopt the ones which I considered useful. But what we see now is that when someone's proposal is rejected, he thinks that he has been denied his right!

I have therefore decided that in future no one will be permitted to present his proposals in the Shūrā. But every Ahmadi can send his proposals to me, and I will be thankful to all such people and will benefit from their advice. But if someone insists that his proposal should be presented before Majlis-e-Shūrā, I will not allow it to be presented in Shūrā that year, even if it is useful. So no one should send his proposal upon the condition that it must be presented in Majlis-e-Shūrā. It is for me to decide. I will present it to the Shūrā if I think it necessary, otherwise I will not send it and will make whatever use of it I can. It is not necessary to send proposals only at the time of Shūrā, they can be sent any time during the course of the year. If I believe that they need to be brought before Majlis-e-Shūrā the same year, I will do so, and if I believe that they should be postponed till next year, I will make a note of it. Anyway, it must be clear to all that the Khalifa alone has the right to present any proposal before the Shūrā. Hence, all the proposals should be sent to me and not sent directly to the Shūrā."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 4-8]

STREAMLINING THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATIONS

As stated above, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} stopped the procedure of asking of questions in Majlis-e-Shūrā in 1930, and allowed the sending of proposals. In the very next Shūrā, Ḥuḍūr further said that if someone notices a flaw in the working of the central organizations, he

should report it. Ḥudūr said:

“In last year’s Shūrā, I had stopped delegates from asking questions because some of them adopted the attitude prevalent in worldly organizations. Their questions were either meant as accusations or they had some other ulterior motive. But since we are a religious and spiritual Jamā‘at, all our actions should have the element of spirituality. If we leave this path, we will never be able to win the love of God and His approbation. This is why I stopped the asking of questions. But now I would like to say that all kinds of defects are likely to creep into human affairs, and they cannot be rectified unless they are pointed out by those who notice them. Defects tend to become worse if they are not pointed out. I, therefore, announce that whoever notices any defect in the working of any organization, should inform me during the course of the year and especially when the new commission is about to begin its work. Then, if I consider it necessary, I shall order an investigation about it. While it is wrong to go about looking for defects, at the same time, it is our duty that to overcome our shortcomings when we learn about them, and thus make progress in everything we do. So, whereas I do not approve of questions that are meant to ridicule someone, I also do not like our defects to go uncorrected. I, therefore, announce that anyone who notices any flaw in the working of any organization, instead of closing his eyes to it, should bring it to my notice. If it is important enough, it will be referred to the commission.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā, 1931, pp. 3-4]

SETTING UP OF AN INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE

During the Question-Answer sessions in the Shūrā, it became evident that the working of the Central Depart-

ments was not satisfactory, and was in need of improvement. Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafī-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} thought that it was necessary to look into the work of the Naẓārats, to ascertain whether the instructions were being properly followed. For this purpose, a high-level commission was set up which comprised of three members. It was required to inspect the offices of the Nāẓirs according to the following terms of reference:

(i) To see whether the amount allocated to the Nāẓirs is sufficient to enable them to discharge their responsibilities...If the money and staff is less than required, the report should recommend an increase. And if the amount of work is less, this too should be mentioned, and the duties of the Nāẓirs should be outlined.

(ii) The Commission should find out whether or not the Naẓārat abides by the guidelines (which have been sanctioned by the Shūrā with the approval of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ). Sometimes people do not abide by the laws passed by the state and this encourages people to violate laws. When the workers notice that the Naẓārat itself does not abide by the Khalīfa's instructions, they do not care for these instructions either.

(iii) The Commission should report whether the Naẓārats are making serious efforts to implement the decisions of Majlis-e-Shūrā.

(iv) The Commission should also examine if the workers use their authority in a manner that denies other people their rights.

(v) It should find out whether a Department is over-spending. It should inspect the offices and determine which of them is incurring unnecessary expenses and to what extent.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1929, pp. 68-69]

APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION TO OVERSEE THE WORK OF THE NAZĀRATS

The Investigative Commission presented its detailed report to Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{fa} at Mushāwarat 1930. Ḥuḍūr praised the Commission for its hard work and approved many of its recommendations, but took strong note of one of its recommendations which was related to Khilāfat. We shall discuss this in detail in the next chapter, for it sheds light on the relationship between Khilāfat and Majlis-e-Shūrā. Ḥuḍūr did not rely on the recommendations of this Commission, but constituted another one to examine the matter further and come up with more suggestions. Ḥuḍūr said:

“I hereby appoint another Commission to oversee the work of the Nazārats...I am sorry to say that the Nāzirs did not extend to the Commission the cooperation that was expected of them. Although the Commission has acknowledged their cooperation and has thanked them, this has been done more as a formality. The fact is that the Nāzirs did not cooperate. The reason they have given is that since people had been warned against trying to pressurise the Commission, they did not want to appear before it lest it should be influenced by them. But the members of the Commission are not infants that they should be pressurised in this way. What the directive

meant was that members of the Commission should not be approached personally, and administrative and office matters should not be discussed with them in private. Although the Commission has graciously acknowledged the Nāzirs' cooperation, they did not, in fact, cooperate. I hope they will do so in future.

Secondly, I expect them to get rid of their negligence and try to conform fully to the instructions that have been given to them. I am not satisfied in this regard. The new Commission should particularly see to it that everything is done strictly in accordance with the rules and regulations.

I also expect the members of the Commission to report any departure from the rules on part of the Nāzirs without fear or favour. The members of the Commission are my assistants, and they are the Khalīfā in a sense. They should courageously and fearlessly report any fault, and point out anything which needs to be corrected. If some office worker is incompetent and unable to perform his duties, this also should be brought to my notice so that he may be replaced."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 48-49]

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE JAMĀ'AT

A proposal from Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya Benin was presented in the International Majlis-e-Shūrā in 1988, which related to determining the responsibilities of the Amīr, the Missionary In-charge, and the President of a Jamā'at. The sub-committee report strongly recommended that a book should be produced regarding the rules and regulations which apply to these important offices. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth instructed Tehrīk

Jadīd to immediately start preparing this book. He also said that since this was an administrative matter, it should be dealt with at the administrative level. A female delegate suggested that the book should be made available to every Ahmādī in all countries, and particularly to new Ahmādīs. Ḥudūr said:

[English] "I know the background of this proposal. Benin is justified in expressing some doubts and misgivings regarding this, but unfortunately, as I told you earlier, they belong to just a small branch of Ahmadiyyat. What they saw there is not representative of what is happening elsewhere in the field. So I gave them the opportunity to express this here so that it will serve as a warning to Tahrīk Jadīd. It is the duty of the Centre to monitor the activities of all the missionaries. It is the duty of every Ahmādī to report such matters as they find contrary to Islamic traditions, or in some way censurable, to the local Ahmādī authorities. And if they find that no action has been taken they should report directly to me. If you are well informed and kept informed in time, then there is no possibility of the matter developing to a stage where it can cause damage. So the flow of information should be established, channels should be established, so that people know how to reach whom, in what matter. That also requires to be attended in the booklet which we are going to publish. Quote a few examples. Sometimes grave damage is done to the whole Jamā'at and all that is done by the missionaries. So do not think they are above censure or beyond committing mistakes. Some missionaries, of course, have been expelled from the Jamā'at. Why? Why were such severe measures taken against them?

But the unfortunate part of the story is that it came to be known very late when both the missionaries were destroyed, and before he was destroyed he had himself destroyed a large chunk of the Jamā'at where he worked. So this should not happen again. We will not permit this to happen, *Inshaallāh*. So a very efficient monitoring system, more than that, in fact a very efficient system of reporting things right at the initial stage of the offing should be made and established, and this book should enlighten the people on that...The matter is to be discussed at administrative level rather than at the level of Shūrā. So before somebody strays into this dangerous area, I should prevent that possibility...

There is no secret in Ahmadiyyat, absolutely. We are an open book, our budgets are open, everything is open. So this administration book, or our attempt to teach Ahmadīs...anyone can have access to it and use it.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1988, pp. 199-202]

RULES OF ŞADR ANJUMAN AHMADIYYA AND MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT

(1) During Shūrā 1943, a delegate asked whether the Shūrā has the authority to propose any changes in the rules of Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. Responding to this question, Ḥadrat Muşleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Though this might not be part of the written regulations, there are effectively two ways of presenting something before the Shūrā:

First, if a member of a Jamā'at sends a proposal which he considers to be important, it is sent to the concerned Department. The Nāẓir of the Department then consults other Nāẓirs and recommends that the proposal may be presented in Shūrā. Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya then

sends the proposal to the Shūrā with its approval. So, when every proposal is sent to Shūrā after Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya has approved it, the question does not arise as to whether the Shūrā has the authority to amend the rules of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, because any such proposal would be presented by Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and it would mean that the Anjuman itself feels the necessity for amending its rules.

In the second scenario, Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya may not agree with the proposal. The Anjuman is an executive body, and bodies that are responsible for implementing decisions at times shy away from certain responsibilities. The second rule, therefore, concerns the proposals that are sent to the Khalīfa, and he may order them to be presented in the Shūrā even though they have been rejected by Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. This happens when the Khalīfa considers a proposal to be important. Even if Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya does not adopt it, the Khalīfa uses his own authority to bring it before the representatives of the Jamā'at. In this case also the question raised would be invalid, because it is the Khalīfa who wants the proposal to be presented in the Shūrā. The objection that this would mean interference in the work of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, is also invalid. In short, no proposal can be presented to the Shūrā, in keeping with our accepted procedures, unless it has been approved by Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, or the Khalīfa has ordered it to be presented."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, p. 21]

ELECTION OR NOMINATION OF OFFICE-BEARERS

(2) In this connection, two amendments came under consideration. After the Amīr has been elected, he may

himself appoint his 'Āmila (executive committee). If the Amīr himself has appointed the office-bearers, he has the authority to remove and replace them as well. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} discussed both the positive and negative aspects of this proposal, enlightened the members about the injunction إِنْخِلَافٌ أُمَّتِي رَحْمَةٌ [*Differences among my umma are a blessing*] and finally decided that, instead of being nominated, office-bearers should be elected by the electoral college. He said:

"Though this seems to be a minor issue, it is in essentially very important, and there are both positive and negative aspects to it. While there is the need to invest more authority in the Amīr and to elect office-bearers who are competent, so that the work can go on smoothly and with mutual cooperation, some members have also raised the question that this could alienate some sections of the Jamā'at and they might be led to think that they are only asked to give Chandas but are not allowed to do any practical service for the Jamā'at. Another thing which we cannot ignore is that while this method will increase co-operation among you, there is also the danger that the spirit of cooperation despite differences—which distinguishes the Jamā'at today—might grow weak. Therefore, the members of our Jamā'at are trained in such a way that while they will cooperate in work that they are willing to do, they are also ever ready to do anything which they are asked to do by their superiors even if it is against their own will. But if we give an Amīr the authority to always choose office-bearers according to his own choice, the spirit of cooperation in the Jamā'at will suffer. We are working to establish *Imārats* in all the

Jamā'ats, and we have expanded this system, but if we give the Amīrs the authority to nominate office-bearers of their own choice, they are likely to select people who are already willing to work with them. In this way the Amīrs may be led to think that people are cooperating with them, while, in fact, they are not cooperating with the Amīr and are only working because they want to...

“DIFFERENCES AMONG MY PEOPLE ARE A SOURCE OF BLESSING”

If we make it a rule that Amīrs will appoint the office-bearers, the inevitable result will be that they will select people who can get along with them and with whom they feel comfortable. This will, of course, ensure that the Amīrs will get the cooperation of the office-bearers, but the spirit to submit to the order of an office-bearer against one's own will, will almost die out in the Jamā'at. Secondly, the Amīrs will be unable to hear contrary opinion. If an Amīr gives an order and it is not complied with, he realizes that he has yet to develop the spirit of obedience among his members, but if he always nominates people of his own choice, he will not have occasion to listen to contrary opinion. On the one hand, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said:

مَنْ أَطَاعَ أَمِيرِي فَقَدْ أَطَاعَنِي وَ مَنْ عَصَى أَمِيرِي فَقَدْ عَصَانِي

‘He who obeys my Amīr obeys me, and he who disobeys my Amīr disobeys me,’ but, on the other hand, he also said إِنْخِلَافُ أُمَّتِي رَحْمَةٌ ‘Differences among my people are a source of blessing.’ He did not say that once an Amīr has been appointed, all differences should be removed, rather he said that the presence of difference, despite the presence of an Amīr, is a blessing for the umma. If the differences are completely wiped out, it shall not be a

blessing but a matter of concern. Thus the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that the presence of differences is a source of blessings, and not their absence. This obviously does not mean that quarrelling and infighting is a blessing. Had this been his purpose, he would have said, *الْإِخْتِلَافُ رَحْمَةٌ* i.e., differences are a blessing; but what he did say was *الْإِخْتِلَافُ أَقْبَى رَحْمَةٌ* which means that differences, which remain within the system prescribed by Islam, are a blessing, and that difference and submission must go hand in hand to ensure the success of a Jamā'at. So, I believe that we need to modify this regulation of the Şadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya in a way that caters for both aspects of the matter. This, I believe, is the proposal that will serve us best. I have already expressed my opinion in this matter before the consultation.

MEMBERS MUST EXPRESS THEIR HONEST OPINIONS

Some people at times object that there is no point in consulting the members after the Khalifa has expressed his opinion, because the members feel bound to follow the opinion of the Khalifa, even if they do not agree with it. But I believe that this is necessary for the proper training of the Jamā'at. I believe that members of the Jamā'at should develop an attitude whereby, despite their resolve to submit to the decision of the Khalifa, they should express their honest opinion without being influenced by anyone, even if it is a Prophet who has asked them for it. It is on record that the Holy Prophet^{sa} would at times express his own opinion before seeking advice from others. This was because he believed that his Companions would not be influenced by anyone and would express their own honest opinion. I too at times express my opinion before asking others for theirs, but I do this to highlight various

aspects of the matter under discussion, and I expect members to offer their own considered opinion when asked for it. It is not right to change one's own opinion just because a Prophet or a Khalifa has expressed his. But if a person's opinion is truly changed after he has heard the arguments, then no one can compel him to stick to his previous opinion, for his opinion has been changed by the force of argument. Thus, if a person honestly changes his opinion, there can be no objection against him. But if he sticks to his previous opinion, he should present it honestly, even though the Khalifa differs with him. Since the matter under discussion was a vital one, I chose to express my opinion about it, but it does not mean that you, too, should express the same opinion. When you are asked for your opinion, you should say what you truly believe. However, if you have changed your opinion, then you have the right to present your altered opinion and discard the previous one."

(Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, pp. 20-29)

ELECTING OFFICE-BEARERS THROUGH THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

(3) The second question raised in this context was that, if the office-bearers are elected through an electoral college, people will be deprived of their right to vote, and this will not be fair. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} clarified the question and then mentioned the advantages of the proposed regulation. He said:

"I believe that this question is very important, but it becomes irrelevant if the Jamā'at abides by the instructions which I have been giving them from time to time.

There is no doubt that if only a few people are given the right to select office-bearers, the rest of the members will become like useless limbs and their power of reflection

and deliberation and their ability to resolve problems will suffer. So, if it is merely upon the few of us to decide that the rights of the people should be taken away from them and entrusted to a certain group of people, and we fail to take into account the overall opinion of the Jamā'at, this would result in some serious flaws, and the standard of our reflection and deliberation will surely suffer. The present practice is that members of every Jamā'at are intimated about the contents of the Shūrā's Agenda. The opinion of the members are then elicited and are finally conveyed to the Shūrā through their representatives...

Hence if the delegates had sought the opinion of the members of their Jamā'ats, and if the consensus had been in favour of the proposal that office-bearers should be appointed through an electoral college, then the objection—that the right of vote to be exercised by each individual has been taken away—will not stand. I am not sure whether the proposals were presented to the Jamā'ats or not, but if the majority of the Jamā'at voted for the suggested procedure, then the question of depriving individuals of their right will become invalid. When somebody willingly entrusts his right to another, we cannot say that his right has been taken away. But if the members of the Jamā'ats were not taken into confidence, and the decision was made arbitrarily, then this method would certainly amount to robbing people of their rights. But if the issue was actually taken up and discussed by the members of the Jamā'at, and the majority voted for entrusting the function (of appointing the office-bearers) to an electoral college, then this would not be depriving people of their lawful rights, but would imply that they have voluntarily delegated their right to others. So if all

members of the Jamā'ats were consulted on this issue and the majority supported the proposal, then electing a few persons from the Jamā'ats for discharging such a function would not mean that their right has been taken away from them, but if the proposal was not placed before them, it would be justifiable to say that the rights of people have been affected."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, pp. 22-23]

REPORTS OF THE CENTRAL DEPARTMENTS

As previously mentioned, reports about the implementation of the previous year's decisions of Shūrā would be read out before the actual proceedings of Shūrā. This would be done in two ways. Firstly, reports about the implementation of the Shūrā's decisions would be presented by the concerned Nazārats—this practice is ongoing to this day. Secondly, all the Nazārats would present their progress reports, which would be scrutinized and questioned in the Shūrā. This would take a lot of time and would affect the actual work of Mushāwarat. Little time would be left even for deliberating upon the budget. It was, therefore, decided that instead of being presented in the Shūrā, the progress reports should be published separately. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} approved this proposal and thereafter these reports were appended to the detailed report of Shūrā.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, p. 31]

MANAGEMENT OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

The Private Secretary to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ performs the vital role of organizing Majlis-e-Mushāwarat.

As Secretary Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, he supervises all its organizational and administrative aspects, and works under direct instructions from Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ.

The office of the Private Secretary begins preparations for Shūrā a few months in advance. First of all, the Central Departments are consulted regarding the dates on which the Shūrā should be held. After the dates have been approved by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ, they are announced in *Al-Fadl*. The Central Departments and the Jamā'ats are then requested to send their proposals within a certain period of time, and when these proposals are received they are sent to the relevant Departments for their comments. The three Central Organizations consider the proposals that are relevant to them. They see whether the proposals are in keeping with the rules and whether or not they need to be presented before the Shūrā. A consolidated report is then presented before Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ. The proposals which are accepted by him for consideration in the Shūrā are then drawn up in the form of the Agenda and published by the Private Secretary. The Agenda is also sent to the Amīrs of outside Jamā'ats and to the Central Departments with certain important instructions.

An announcement is made on behalf of the Private Secretary that Jamā'ats and Central Organizations should elect their representatives in keeping with the rules and should send their names to Markaz. Passes are then issued in the names of the elected representatives. Naẓārat

Umur 'Āmma extends full cooperation to the Private Secretary in this regard.

Arrangements have to be made for Majlis-e-Mushāwarat every year, and these include making seating arrangements for the delegates and Zā'irīn. In the beginning the delegates used to sit on the floor, but since it was difficult for them to stand up to speak time and again, it was, therefore, decided that chairs should be arranged for. The arrangement of chairs was also not easy, and they had to be hired or procured from the various educational institutions. Since their procurement and transport would involve a lot of work and expenditure, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} decided that essential items should be purchased and permanently stocked in the Private Secretary's office.

Another important aspect of organizing the Shūrā is the preparation and publication of the detailed report. This is also the task of the Private Secretary. He also records the important decisions of Mushāwarat and presents them to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ for formal approval. The Private Secretary is also responsible for intimating the concerned Departments about the decisions for the purpose of record and implementation. The Central Organizations work all the year round to implement these decision. Miscellaneous instructions given by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ during the course of Mushāwarat are implemented by the Central Organizations or the outside Jamā'ats, as the case may be.

THE LEGAL STATUS OF MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ [And their affairs are decided by mutual consultations]. This injunction of the Holy Quran can only be understood in the light of *وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* [And consult them in matters of importance] which defines the legal and legislative status of Majlis-e-Shūrā. Khulafā have time and again shed light on this. During Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“With regard to our consultations and deliberations in the Shūrā, one thing which I have said before, and which I hope the Nāẓirs and others will keep it in mind, is that, according to Islamic Shariah, only the Khalīfa has the right to decide. Others can only advise him. Majlis-e-Mushāwarat does not make decisions, it only offers advice. It is up to the Khalīfa to decide.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1928, p. 46]

Since the institution of Majlis-e-Shūrā in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya does, in some ways, resemble the Western system of democracy, it led some people to think that the status of a representative in the Shūrā is the same as that of a Member of Parliament or National Assembly. But when we look carefully, we find basic differences between the form and temperament of Majlis-e-Shūrā and that of Western democracy.

(1) In the case of Western democracy, a person offers himself for election as a representative of the people, and then his party gives him ticket and nominates him as its candi-

date upon the condition that he will support the party's policies in every matter when he goes to Parliament. In Majlis-e-Shūrā, no one can volunteer himself to be a representative, nor can he convince someone else to propose his name. Rather, the members of the Jamā'at choose the most suitable person as their representative, and they do so with sincerity and fear of God in their hearts.

(2) No one is allowed to canvass in favour of a person whose name has been proposed for membership of Majlis-e-Shūrā, while this is allowed in Western democracy.

(3) Anyone who comes to Majlis-e-Shūrā as a representative of his Jamā'at is free to give his own opinion, and he is not bound by the opinion of his Jamā'at. He offers his own honest opinion when he is asked for it. But, at the same time, he is also bound to mention the opinion of his Jamā'at if it is different from his own.

The opinion of the majority in the Shūrā is no more than a recommendation, which may or may not be accepted by the Khalīfa. God Almighty says in the Holy Quran: *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ* i.e., once you have sought advice from the believers and have reached a decision, you are then free to implement it, placing all trust in God.

In Ahmadiyyat, the Khulafā have given Majlis-e-Shūrā the same status as laid down by the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his Khulafā^{ra}.

Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} shed further light on this subject during Mushāwarat 1943. A delegate asked

whether or not the Shūrā is entitled to amend the rules of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya pertaining to the election of office-bearers. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} gave the following explanation:

“A delegate has raised a question as to whether the Shūrā has the authority to effect any change in the rules of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya regarding the appointment of the office-bearers. This is an important question which needs to be clarified, for it has risen due to lack of understanding. If we are to leave this question unattended it will create all kinds of misunderstandings. The fact is that the Shūrā never makes any decisions. This is something I have highlighted a number of times. I have repeatedly said that the Shūrā does not make any decisions, it only gives advice to the Khalīfā when he asks for it. Hence the Shūrā is not the one that decides, rather, in keeping with the Divine injunction *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* ‘Consult them in matters of importance’, it is the Khalīfā who asks for advice and uses it to reach a decision. The Shūrā does not decide anything by itself. So when you ask whether or not ‘we’ can change the rules of the Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, it implies that the Shūrā is a separate and independent body as opposed to Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and that both affect one another without any intermediary. This is absolutely wrong. There is no ‘we’ that can act or react directly. And if by ‘we’ you mean the Shūrā, and we take into consideration the fact that the Shūrā is presided over by the Khalīfā, and the Shūrā can only give advice when the Khalīfā asks for it, the question would become: Does the Khalīfā have the authority to change a rule of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya? This question is again wrong. Hence both aspects of this question are wrong. It is not

correct to say that the Shūrā is a permanent body which acts or reacts in contrast to Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. The Shūrā only gives advice, and that, too, when the Khalīfā asks for it in keeping with the Divine command. So, when friends offer any advice they do so in compliance with the commandment of God, and they give priority to the requirements of the Jamā'at and do not consider themselves a permanent body. Therefore, the very question as to whether we can make a decision or not, is wrong. The Shūrā does not make decisions like other assemblies. If by 'we' you mean the Shūrā, and we consider the fact that this institution works under the Khalīfā and he alone can ask people for advice, and it is he alone who makes the decision, the question would become: Does the Khalīfā have the right to reject or modify any rule of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya? It is wrong to raise this question because the Khalīfā is the higher authority and he has the authority to amend any rule of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya. So this question should not trouble anyone."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1943, pp. 19-21]

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth also shed light on this important question during Mushāwarat 1967. Ḥuḍūr endorsed an important explanatory note by Maulāna 'Abul 'Atā Jālandharī^{ra}, which accompanied the report of a sub-committee, and read it out in his concluding address. The note was as follows:

"Let it be clear to all individuals and Jamā'ats that only a Prophet or Imam has the right to consult the people. The Holy Quran says: *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* According to the Shariah, it is the prerogative of the Imam to seek advice in whatever manner, and from whomsoever he wishes.

Jamā'ats and individuals cannot lay down any conditions on how they want to offer their advice. Majlis-e-Shūrā is called by the Khalīfa and he has the authority to consult the members in whatever numbers and whatever manner he sees fit. We thought it necessary to make this clarification lest some new Ahmadīs should confuse the membership of Shūrā with the membership of some Western-style Parliament."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1967, p. 244]

Later, on the occasion of Mushāwarat 1970, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth delivered a Divinely inspired sermon upon the institution of Mushāwarat. Ḥuḍūr explained the meaning of this verse of Āl-e-'Imrān:

فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ
فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

"So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them in matters of importance; and when thou art determined, then put thy trust in Allah."

(Āl-e-'Imrān, 3:160)

and said that forgiveness is only to be exercised when it results in reformation, and the purpose of 'seeking forgiveness from God' is so that people are able to seek forgiveness for their own sins and are saved from the ill-consequences of their misdeeds. Although this injunction is primarily addressed to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, it is also addressed to his deputies. They, too, have been asked to deal with the Jamā'at in such a way that they are able to reform themselves, and are spared the ill-consequences of their misdeeds through repentance and seeking God's forgiveness.

Further elaborating this point, Ḥuḍūr said that although a Jamā'at of believers consists of sincere and devoted people, if any of them happens to make a mistake due to some human weakness, we should pray that Allah may forgive them and provide the means for their reformation.

Ḥuḍūr said that when Allah says, *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* 'Consult them in matters of importance,' it naturally follows that the Jamā'at is worthy of being consulted. Ḥuḍūr said that the Arabic word 'Mushāwarat' has its root in *شَارَعَ الْعَسَل* which means 'to collect honey'. Mushāwarat can also be likened to the bee which collects nectar from different flowers and then processes it with its own fluids to make honey. In Shūrā, the Khalīfā gathers the opinions of the representatives and, in keeping with the injunction 'When you are determined...', reaches a decision through his God-given wisdom and insight. The opinion of the members remains incomplete and unsubstantiated until the determination and decision of the Prophet or his deputy comes into play. The opinion of the believers is nothing in itself until it is accompanied by Divine guidance and by the prayers of Khalīfatul Masīḥ, for only then does it become *Qawwām* and becomes like honey which benefits and cures mankind.

Ḥuḍūr described in detail the process through which a bee makes honey, and then said that Allah desires the Jamā'at of believers to possess sound judgement, and not to be overcome by emotions. Be meek and full of devotion, and when you make a suggestion do not be

afraid of the responsibilities that will fall upon you as a result. Be ready to offer every necessary sacrifice, even to the extent of starving yourselves and your children. When you are motivated by such a spirit of sacrifice, your opinions will become alive. Just as flowers offer their nectar to the bee, so does God desire the believers to be pure and righteous as flowers, and become a living manifestation of Islam. Just as a flower presents its nectar to the bee, in the same way, the believers should present the essence of their thoughts to the Imam. This is the true spirit of Mushāwarat. Concluding the sermon, Hudūr said:

“God says, create a Jamā'at and seek advice from it, and add your own prayers and determination to their advice; thus you will reach the limit of human endeavour...God says قَتَوْنِي عَلَى اللَّهِ i.e., your trust should be upon Him and not upon your own schemes...Do not imagine that you will succeed even when your opinions have combined with the determination, endeavour and prayers of the Prophet's deputy. Remember, you will not succeed despite all this, unless you put your trust in God...If God comes to your aid, the whole world together cannot defeat your purpose, and if He does not come to your aid, no power on earth can help you succeed...So, after you have taken your endeavour to the limit, you should not put your trust in what you have done but you should put your faith in God...If you have faith in Him, after you have carried your endeavour to its limit, and attach no importance whatever to your own efforts, then you are sure to receive God's help. This is the guidance and the teaching we have been given regarding Mushāwarat.

Therefore, whenever you are asked for advice, you should offer it selflessly.”

[Friday sermon, 27 March 1970]

In his inaugural address to Majlis-e-Mushāwarat on the same day, Ḥuḍūr said:

“May God enable you and me to offer to Him the quintessence of our intelligence, our insight and our devotion!”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1970, p. 4]

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MUSHĀWARAT AND WESTERN DEMOCRACY

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth also spoke on this subject during Majlis-e-Shūrā Belgium. Ḥuḍūr said:

“When Majlis-e-Mushāwarat was initially introduced in the West, we were faced with some problems because most Westerners and Africans confused Mushāwarat with Western democracy, while, in fact, Western democracy comes nowhere near Mushāwarat. Their aims and their methods and their manner of speaking is quite different. They do not even have the concept of offering opinions purely for the sake of God. Shūrā is not a democratic institution, rather it is a heavenly institution which comes from above and flows downwards. It does not flow upwards from the roots as does democracy.”

[Address to Majlis-e-Shūrā Brussels, 9 September 1992, p. 2]

Ḥuḍūr further said:

“The true Majlis-e-Shūrā is the one envisaged by Islam, in which you are not allowed to ask for votes, or to form parties. It is for the people to choose as their representative one whom they see as righteous and God-fearing in their daily lives. And there is an efficient system of checks and balances, for which reason it is called Majlis-

e-Shūrā and not Parliament. Representatives are entitled to offer their advice, but the opinion of the majority will not necessarily be accepted.” (ibid, p.7)

Hudūr also said:

“The Islamic system of Mushāwarat has no equivalent in any of the worldly systems. You will not find anything remotely like it anywhere in the world. It is a firmly established system which comes from God and is based on *Taqwa*. That is why the one who offers an opinion never insists that his opinion should be accepted. He knows that he has done his duty, and has offered the opinion which he honestly thought to be correct. In the same way, the one who receives the advice reaches a decision with the fear of God in his heart, and God blesses his decision.” (ibid, p.8)

Although this basic aspect of the system of Mushāwarat in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya has been discussed in various chapters in this book, it is now being discussed separately as a chapter because of its great importance. The Khulafā have repeated it time and again, and have constantly reminded members of Shūrā and members of the Jamā'at that Shūrā does not make any decision, it only offers advice, which may or may not be accepted by the Khalīfa. The major purpose of this book is to remind the Jamā'at of this vital point, so that they may not be influenced and led astray by the non-Islamic consultative systems, and the representatives may not deviate from the true spirit of Islamic system of Mushāwarat, and may strictly follow the system of Mushāwarat established in Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya and reap its blessings.

PROPOSALS RELATING TO ḤADRAT KHALĪFATUL MASĪḤ

This delicate issue first came up for discussion in 1926. The question being discussed was whether the Shūrā can take up a proposal in which Khalīfatul MasīḤ is asked to tour certain Jamā'ats for the purpose of Da'wat Ilallāh. There was a long discussion in which the majority were in favour of such proposals being presented, while a few thought that it would amount to restricting the Khalīfa and was even contrary to his dignity. Here we reproduce some extracts from Ḥudūr's decision which he made after listening to both points of view:

“This is a very unusual proposal both with regard to its nature and the varied reaction it has invited. There are currently 105 votes in favour of the proposal and 75 against. When the resolution was presented, some delegates spoke against it and it seemed as if everyone was against it. But when some people started speaking in favour of it, it seemed as if everyone was of the same view. Thus the balance continued to tilt one way and the other, and it was difficult to say where the people's emotions would lead them. I believe that, instead of deliberating upon the matter in a cool and logical manner, as should have been done, members allowed their emotion to dominate them and the discussion that ensued was consequently based on emotions rather than on thought and reflection. Some objectionable words used by some delegates also show that they were being led by emotions, and the cool and calm that is peculiar to believers had left them for a time. I hope that in future members will control their sentiments and will not use words that are undesirable and cause rift among people.

Now I come to the point. I will take up the original proposal which could not be presented on legal grounds. The proposal was that the Khalifa should make a tour of various cities. Chaudhary Zafullāh Sahib said that the wording of the proposal implied an insult to the Khalifa. He suggested that a vote of censure should be passed against those who had used such words. But Chaudhary Sahib should remember that those who made the proposal are sincere people and they never intended an insult to the Khalifa. Nor did Chaudhary Sahib imply that they had meant to insult the Khalifa. He only said that the words used in the proposal were undesirable, and suggested that a note of censure be passed against them. But since such a note is used when something has been intended, therefore, in order to dispel the impression that has been created, I would like to say that the words were undesirable, and since Chaudhary sahib has already clarified this point, I will do no more than to remind you of his comments.

I agree with Chaudhary Sahib that, in the context, the language of the proposal was derogatory, because it implied that members of the Jamā'at should knock at the door of the Khalifa and ask him to go out and preach. Before I speak of how the Holy Prophet^{sa} would go out for preaching and how the Khalifa should do so, let me say that there is a world of difference between the Prophet or a Khalifa going out somewhere for Tabligh, and in his followers telling him to do the same. Is there not a lot of difference between a King going somewhere and him being told to go? Is there no logical difference between the King going to the house of a subject, and his being told to go there? In one instance, he goes of his own accord,

while in the other instance he is asked to do so. There is a world of difference between the two, according to the accepted norms. An obvious example is that the Promised Messiah^{as} went to Delhi, Lahore, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Sialkot, but when he was told that a certain Raja wanted to meet him, he did not say that since he had been to Delhi and other places, he could go and see this Raja as well; instead, he said, "The thirsty come to water, water does not go to them." This shows the difference between the two situations. It is said that the Promised Messiah^{as} did go to some places at people's request, but this was more by way of accepting an invitation. I too am invited by rich and poor alike to dine with them, and if I can spare time and am in good health I do accept their invitations. Such arguments, therefore, do not hold water. There is a precise difference between accepting an invitation, and being told to go somewhere...In response to the objection that such a proposal would amount to restricting the Khalīfa, it has been said that it was only meant as an advice. I agree that the resolutions presented here are only in the form of advice and it is wrong to infer that they can be used to restrict the Khalīfa. But, on the other hand, we also have to view the context in which something has been said. At times even an apparent request carries an inherent decision. Everyone has experience of situations whereby something is said in the form of a request while it is in fact a command. I believe that even this kind of interference is not permissible in matters relating to the person of the Khalīfa.

The Khalīfa is responsible for all the affairs of the Jamā'at, some of which he assigns to other people, while others relate to his own person and to no one else. Pre-

senting these kinds of proposals in the Shūrā—though they may not be intended to restrict the Khalīfa—might with time encourage people to start placing restrictions upon his activities. And since this proposal relates directly to the activities of the Khalīfa, it is admittedly against the accepted norms. The discussion was obviously not meant to insult anyone, but if we start discussing the activities of the Khalīfa and this process is allowed to continue, it is quite possible that at one time someone may come up with a proposal that the Khalīfa should be requested to reply personally to a certain kind of letters. The result would be that the same Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, which the Khalīfa alone can choose whether to call or not to call, will start placing restrictions on him!

I do not at all say that this was the intention of those came up with the proposal, but I agree with what Mr. Zulfiqār 'Alī Khan Sahib has said, and it is one of the points I had noted down for my speech. The sincerity of those who have presented the proposal is beyond question, but if an outsider were to look at this proposal, he would conclude that it is an attempt by a weak power to remind a powerful ruler of his duties which he appears to have neglected. So the question is: what conclusion people will draw from such a proposal? I do not question someone's sincerity or intention, but anyone who hears of this proposal will think that the Khalīfa is being unmindful of his duties and this is why he is being reminded of them.

Thus it is wrong to say that those who presented the proposal intended an insult, unless this can be proved from their other actions. As long as they are sincere in every-

thing else, we never believe that they meant an insult. But it is also true that, despite all good intentions and all sincerity, people sometimes say things which are harmful...

Now that friends have vented their emotions, and both sides have proved their sincerity, for how can we say that the people, who believe that if the Khalīfa goes to certain places thousands will become believers, are in any way lacking in sincerity or intend to insult the Khalīfa? On the contrary, it proves their devotion to Khilāfat. And those who say that I should not go, for it would demean my status, are also sincere. Now that everyone has expressed his feelings, and I, too, have expressed mine, we will close this chapter."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1926, pp. 26-30]

SHŪRĀ CANNOT ADVISE THE KHALĪFA TO UNDERTAKE A TOUR

Once, while the budget of Tehrīk Jadīd was being discussed in Majlis-e-Shūrā, a delegate said that the time has come for Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IIIth to visit all the countries where the Jamā'at has been established. Ḥuḍūr forthwith replied:

"It is not for Majlis-e-Mushāwarat to tell Khalīfatul Masīḥ whether or not he should visit a country. This issue was raised once before, and it resulted in heated exchanges among the members. On that occasion, Ḥaḍrat Muṣṭafā-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} decided that Shūrā will not discuss any proposal relating to the Khalīfa. The Shūrā should not discuss what the Khalīfa should do or not do, nor should it recommend anything in this regard."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1966, p. 218]

THE SHŪRĀ CAN ONLY ADVISE THE KHALĪFA IN BASIC ISSUES

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} appointed an Investigative Commission to suggest improvements in the working of the Central Departments. Ḥuḍūr appreciated the hard work put in by the commission and approved a number of its recommendations. But in one of its recommendations, the commission had failed to pay due regard to the status of Khilāfat, and since this gave a wrong perception about the basic precepts of Islam and Ahmadiyyat, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} rectified it at once. He rejected the idea with forceful arguments and highlighted the true status of the Khalīfa. He said:

“It should be remembered that Shūrā is not the executive body of the Jamā'at. This was the point of contention between us and the *Ghair Mubā'i'in* [Lahori Ahmadis], that they were in favour of giving the Anjuman all the responsibility for running the Jamā'at, while the responsibility in fact rests with the Khalīfa. And he has divided it into two parts. The first part is related to administration. The Khalīfa appoints the office-bearers, and Majlis-e-Shūrā has no authority or control over them. This was the practice at the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and at the time of Khulafā Al-Rāshidīn. The Holy Prophet^{sa} appointed Usāma as the Commander of an army while people were opposed to it, but he did not care for what they thought. And when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} relieved Ḥaḍrat Khālid^{ra} as Commander of the Muslim Army, Majlis-e-Shūrā was against this decision, but he did not even feel obliged to give them his reasons.

The second part of the Khalīfa's responsibilities is related

to formulating principles, for which he consults the Shūrā. So, Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn assists the Khalīfa in administrative matters, exactly as Shūrā assists him in matters of principle. The two have no link with one another except through the Khalīfa. But the commission has ignored this fact and has made certain suggestions which are, in a way, critical even of Khilāfat."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, p. 44]

While analyzing another recommendation made by the commission, Ḥudūr said:

A question which cannot be ignored: "First of all I thought that since this was the first commission which had done some concrete work, I should not turn down their recommendations as far as possible. But I also knew that, as a matter of responsibility, my expression of approval might be harmful, and I also thought that since the members are educated and competent people, they will happily accept my criticism. Once they have pledged Bai'at to me, it means that they have given me their complete submission. Nonetheless, I learnt that one of the members was greatly perturbed at my remarks, and this has greatly disturbed me. Anyhow, this was an issue I could not ignore, and had I done so I would be guilty in the eyes of God. The commission has made some observations—not intentionally but unintentionally, (for when they owe allegiance to me and accept me as the Khalīfa, they are bound to pay due respect to the office of Khilāfat)—which lie beyond their jurisdiction, and even go so far as attacking the status of Khilāfat. This is why I thought that if I were to approve of their work today—for whatever reason—it might be said in future that this is the status of Khilāfat which had been accepted by the Second Khalīfa.

The Status of Khilāfat: Before going into further detail, let me explain the status of Khilāfat, for whose sake we had pledged not to fear any opposition. At the demise of Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ I^{ra}, I met the people who had broken away from the Jamā'at and had established their own Anjuman, and told them that there could be no second opinion about the election of the Khalifa, and I was willing to accept as Khalifa anyone whom they chose. At that time I also assembled the members of my family and told them that if the other party insisted that the Khalifa should not be from amongst those of our way of thinking, we should accept their choice for the Khalifa in order to maintain the unity of the Jamā'at. At this someone said, how can we accept as Khalifa someone who does not conform to our beliefs? I said that if you cannot tolerate this, then how can they tolerate that one of us should be the Khalifa? If you do not accept the person of their choice, I will leave you and accept him as the Khalifa. Thus it was decided that we should try to elect as a Khalifa someone who has not expressed opposition to our beliefs, and has the confidence of the other group. The names of Mīr Ḥāmid Shāh Sahib and Maulawī Muhammad Aḥsan Sahib were proposed, and we agreed that if they chose any one of them as the Khalifa, we would readily accept him. But (I said) if they insist that Maulawī Muhammad 'Alī Sahib should be made the Khalifa, even then we should agree with them, otherwise I will part company with you. I took this pledge from everyone and then I said to Maulawī Muhammad 'Alī Sahib, "If you want anyone from your group to assume the office of Khalifa, we are ready to accept him, but if you say that there should be no Khalifa, this we will never accept, and our ways shall

part.” This was the reason why we had to leave them and it did not in the least worry us.

This was the issue which caused us to leave the people who were considered the leaders of the Jamā'at. We told them in so many words that we would have nothing to do with them if they did not accept Khilāfat.

Ignorance about the True Importance of Khilāfat: Some friends have told me that people do not understand the reality of Khilāfat, and are becoming more and more ignorant of its importance. The report of the commission also shows that people are growing increasingly ignorant of this issue. This is why I need to go into more detail.

There can be no compromise with those who deny Khilāfat: Let me say it in clear words, that we cannot be one with people who do not agree with us on this issue, even if they are our brothers or sons or relatives. And if any member of the Jamā'at does not agree with us, he should be honest with himself and should leave us and establish his own system. We will not think ill of him. But if someone remains among us and accepts Khilāfat, and still disagrees with it, this we will not tolerate.

Our Doctrine of Khilāfat: The basis of our belief is that the person who has been accepted as the Khalifa and with whom we have pledged Bai'at should be obeyed in keeping with the injunctions of Shariah. Anyone who thinks that he accepted Khilāfat and pledged Bai'at due to some misunderstanding, is free to leave us. We will have nothing to do with such a person, nor shall we think ill of him. The reason why we think ill of the *Ghair Mubā'i'in* is not that they have turned away from Khilāfat, but because they insult the Promised Messiah^{as}. Otherwise we see them as our brothers.

Khilāfat—an Integral Part of Faith: The first thing I want to clarify is that Khilāfat is not a political system, rather it is an integral part of our faith. But at this moment I will not produce new arguments to prove this point. Some may not agree, but it is our belief that the Holy Quran has prescribed Khilāfat, and thus it is a religious issue in which I am not prepared to admit any change. I believe it was Khan Sahib Zulfiqār 'Alī Sahib who once brought a message from the *Ghair Mubā'i'in* that we should sit down and resolve our differences. I told him that if the differences relate to worldly matters, I am willing to give up everything, if they relate to some property, I am willing to forego it, but since Khilāfat is a religious issue, how can you expect me to make a sacrifice of that, when even the slightest change in religion amounts to infidelity. So all I can say is that let them try to convince me and I will try to convince them, and whoever turns out to be upon the truth should be accepted.

Thus Khilāfat is a religious matter. It is an integral part of our faith that the Khalīfa represents the Prophet, who in turn represents God. After giving certain commandments, God authorizes a Prophet to make decisions in consultation with the people, and his followers are bound to accept his decision without any hesitation. No one has the right to question his decisions and to turn away. The Khalīfa has, similarly, been given the right to make decisions after consultation.

The Status of Majlis-e-Shūrā: In worldly consultative bodies, every member can say, 'You should listen to me, whether or not you agree with me.' But in Khilāfat no one has the right to say even that. It is the Khalīfa's prerogative to ask for advice as and when he sees necessary, and the

Shūrā has to advise him accordingly. The Shūrā has no more right than to advise the Khalīfa in whatever issue he wants to be advised. The only other right the Shūrā has is to select a new Khalīfa when the previous one has passed away. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} selected six people to elect the Khalīfa after him. We have followed the same tradition, and have decided that, after the death of a Khalīfa, Majlis-e-Shūrā will make a decision, in keeping with public opinion and the laws of Shariah, as to who will be the next Khalīfa, so that through him Allah's voice can spread in the world. This is the only prerogative of Majlis-e-Shūrā, and apart from this it can never interfere with the work of the Khalīfa...

Election of Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn: The commission has also suggested that members for Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn should be selected from among the members of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. It says that since the members of Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn are workers of the Jamā'at, they cannot be the true representatives of the Jamā'at. And since Majlis-e-Shūrā is the true representative of the Jamā'at, the members of Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn should be elected from amongst its members.

The fact is that it is the Khalīfa who is truly responsible for the Jamā'at, and he is the final authority in its administration. It is he who appoints Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn and it is he who appoints the Shūrā. Both of them represent the Khalīfa in their own right. If Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn was to be under Majlis-e-Shūrā, it would mean that the Khalīfa would also be bound by the decision of the Shūrā and he would have to make do with people who have been appointed by Shūrā... The recommendations of the commission are such that they would

even take away the rights of the nominal kings in worldly governments, for even they are not subjected to the restriction which the commission has sought to place on the Khalīfā. The commission did realize this, and thought that perhaps it would amount to restricting the Khalīfā, this is why it has also written that further deliberations are required regarding the procedure for the election of Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn.

THE KHALĪFĀ ALONE CAN APPOINT THE OFFICE-BEARERS

I want to make it clear that only the Khalīfā has the right to appoint the office-bearers. In the case of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, there is no evidence that he ever consulted people when making such appointments. Nor do we see his Khulafā consulting people in this matter. Almost everyone advised Ḥaḍrat 'Umar^{ra} not to remove Ḥaḍrat Khalid^{ra}, but he still went ahead and appointed Abū 'Ubaidah^{ra} in his place.

These are the words of the commission:

"In principle, it does not seem right that the Administrative Council should consist only of the Nāzirs. Since the Administrative Council—which works under the Khalīfā—is the owner and caretaker of all the property of the Jamā'at, it should represent the Jamā'at in the true sense. The Nāzirs, who are the employees of the Jamā'at, cannot be considered the representatives of the Jamā'at. We believe that the members of the Administrative Council should be elected by members of Majlis-e-Shūrā."

These words are an attack on Khilāfat, because they imply that the choice of the Khalīfā does not truly represent the Jamā'at. And this assumption implies the following:

1. Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn owns and manages all the prop-

erty of the Jamā'at, although it is subordinate to the Khalīfa.

2. It is not right for the Khalīfa to appoint Nāzirs as members of Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn.

3. Members of Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn should not be appointed by the Khalīfa, but should be elected by the members of the Jamā'at.

All these conclusions are contrary to our concept of Khilāfat and are also against the constitutions of the world. There is no Parliament that appoints ministers, but the commission tells us that our Majlis-e-Mu'tamadīn should be appointed by Majlis-e-Shūrā. At the same time, the commission says that it cannot go into the details of how the election should be held. The commission is also silent as to the number of members, and how often the election should be held, and what will be the percentage of nominated and elected members. What exactly is the commission aiming at?

A Recommendation contrary to the Status of Khilāfat: This recommendation is clearly against the status of Khilāfat, and I believe that it is a result of lack of understanding. Otherwise, considering the wholehearted manner in which the President of the commission and another member have received my comments on their report, there is no reason to think that their suggestions were intended to harm the status of Khilāfat. Since it was a wrong notion, which was presented inadvertently, I have rectified it. I think that the members of the commission have made this mistake unintentionally."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 39-46]

STATUS OF THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION

Clarifying a misunderstanding which had arisen with regard to the Investigative Commission referred to above, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} said:

“Here I wish to clarify another point. The commission is not a substitute for the Shūrā. Some people, including some members of the commission, have been mistaken in this regard. The fact is that Majlis-e-Shūrā has no inherent authority. The Shūrā is only convened when I call it to give its advice. And Shūrā shall always be convened at the call of the Khalīfa, and only then will it advise him. The Shūrā has no right to advise the Khalīfa on its own. The commission was appointed by the Khalīfa to assess the work of the office-bearers, whose supervision is the duty of the Khalīfa. Since the Khalīfa is too busy to personally keep an eye on all the office-workers, I therefore appointed the commission to satisfy myself that they are doing their work properly.

Thus the commission was appointed by the Khalīfa. The only difference was that the members were appointed from within the Shūrā because everyone happens to be present on that occasion. Hence, the report of the commission has to be presented to the Khalīfa, and he will decide what to do about it.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1930, pp. 12-15]

PROPOSALS PUT BEFORE MAJLIS-E-SHŪRĀ BY THE KHALĪFA

The Khulafā at times put some proposals before the Shūrā. Once when Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} presented a proposal before Majlis-e-Shūrā, the members thought that since it had come from the Khalīfa himself, it must

be a beneficial one, and it should be accepted without any deliberation. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} did not approve of this attitude. He said that Mushāwarat is an advisory body, and it must honestly deliberate upon all such proposals, and must bravely point out any flaws that it may contain. Ḥuḍūr said that it must always be kept in mind that the decisions of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat serve as a foundation on which the superstructure of our faith is going to be built. He said:

“I also wish to make it clear that it is wrong not to deliberate upon a proposal simply because I have presented it. It is also wrong to presume that since the proposal has been presented by me, it must be blessed and there is no need to reflect over it. Please remember that God has given me the right to make the final decision, but it is your duty, as my advisors, to consider the issues honestly and then give your faithful opinion as to whether the proposal has any defects, or whether it might harm the Jamā'at in any way or might create any difficulties for it. The Holy Prophet^{sa} has said: **الْمُسْتَشَارُ مُؤْتَمَنٌ** i.e., one who is consulted about a matter is a trustee. Just as it is dishonest to squander someone's money, it is similarly dishonest not to give one's honest advice. So please do not hesitate to consider a proposal simply because it has been presented by me. If you, from the bottom of your hearts, feel that it needs to be amended, you must say so and you must express your opinion boldly and frankly. If I do not agree with the suggested amendment, I will reject it on my own responsibility. When the proposal is implemented, there will be no room for dissent, but when advice is being sought, everyone has the right to speak his mind. In view

of the sensitivity of the issue, it has been suggested that though I will not personally attend the sub-committee meetings, the committee can meet me to discuss the issues if it thinks it is necessary. The whole committee can meet me if it wishes to, otherwise, it can select some of its members for the purpose, so that all objections on this scheme can be resolved beforehand. If the committee understands my point of view after the discussion, it can change its opinion, otherwise it can present its proposals to Shūrā as it sees proper. The advantage of this process will be that we will not have to present everything during the main session of the Shūrā. Moreover, mutual discussion might also produce some ideas which may not have crossed our minds beforehand. If the sub-committee decides to hold its session here in the school, they can talk to me by phone. And if it is necessary for me to talk to all the members of the committee, I can either come down here, or some representatives of the committee can come to me.

Now, let me say to those who are not working on any committee, to keep praying, for these are delicate matters and need a lot of care. Even a minor mistake made by us today might lead to grave results. I have often related an incident, that it was once raining when Ḥaḍrat Imam Abū Ḥanīfah saw a boy who was about to slip and fall. He called out to him and said: 'Be careful boy, lest you should fall.' The boy was small but very intelligent. He turned round, and when he saw that it was Imam Abū Ḥanīfah who was warning him thus, he said: 'Sir, it is you who should tread carefully. It does not matter if I fall down, for I would only hurt myself. But if you were to fall, the whole nation would go down with you.'

So, you who are apparently weak and so small in num-

bers! you are the foundation of mighty governments of the future. You are the cornerstone on which shall be erected the superstructure of Islam. Hence any defect that finds its way in you today will leave its mark for a thousand years. So bow down before Allah, and pray and pray, and seek His help so that He might shower His blessings upon you, and you be saved from taking any step which might lead to your destruction. And seek His help lest you should fall on the path that leads away from God!"

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1938, pp. 9-11]

MEMBERS MAY FREELY DELIBERATE UPON THE KHALĪFA'S PROPOSAL

Further elaboration of this point is to be found during Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1984, when Ḥaḍrat Khalifatul Masīḥ IVth made the following remarks about a proposal that he had presented:

"This is an absolutely unacceptable practice, and the Jamā'at should firmly bear in mind that when a proposal has been presented by the Khalīfa for deliberation, no one has the right to stop others from speaking against it just because it reflects the desire of the Khalīfa. The reason why the Khalīfa has put the proposal before you is that you should openly express your opinions about it. It was absolutely wrong to stop the committee from speaking against the proposal because it had been presented by the Khalīfa. This was absolutely unacceptable, and it renders the recommendation of the committee unworthy of consideration, for it was made under a wrong influence."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1984, pp. 69-70]

ANOTHER PROPOSAL PRESENTED BY THE KHALĪFA

A proposal presented in Majlis-e-Shūrā Pakistan held in

1990, is also worth mentioning in this context. This proposal was presented under instructions from Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, and it covered all the issues related to marriages, such as extravagance, eradication of unwanted innovations and traditions, and restrictions upon serving food to the guests by the family of the bride. The delegates freely expressed their views about these issues, but some of the comments made were deemed improper. Many delegates thought that the proposal was meant to remove some of the prevalent restrictions, and some even spoke against this proposal and said that the restrictions should continue. A delegate later wrote to Ḥuḍūr that though members had been free to express their opinions regarding the proposal presented by Ḥuḍūr, some of them had misused this privilege and had openly or impliedly criticised the proposal to permit the bride's family to serve food to the guests. Some of the comments were even disrespectful of the Khalīfa.

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth examined the recorded meetings of the Shūrā and the speeches that had been made on the occasion, and commented on them point by point. Ḥuḍūr strongly rejected the idea that a reception by the bride's parents, as a token of hospitality at the occasion of marriage, is a bad or irreligious practice. On the other hand, he said that it would have been reasonable if members had pointed out that there should be no extravagance on these occasions and people should not spend more than their means.

Ḥudūr also rejected the thinking that the decisions taken by previous Khulafā were more realistic and enduring, and the Khalifa should not even think making any changes in them. Ḥudūr explained the consequences of such thinking, and said that no distinction is to be made between the representatives of God as far as obedience is concerned. The circumstances, due to which Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} imposed restrictions on receptions given by the bride's parents, have changed with the passage of time. The living standards of the members of the Jamā'at has improved considerably, by the grace of God, and members of the Jamā'at are now so well off that they vie with one another in making greater financial contributions for the Jamā'at. These increased financial sacrifices are an indication of their improving financial condition. In keeping with the altered circumstances and the modern requirements, some form of hospitality by the parents of the bride should not be deemed as violation of the restrictions, and should not be seen as something meriting punitive action.

NEED FOR UNITY AND UNIFORMITY IN THE JAMĀ'AT

Ḥudūr said that the proposal was neither meant to permit such hospitality, nor to encourage it. Its aim was to deal with the issues that had come up with changing circumstances, to create uniformity and unity in the Jamā'at, to stop the Jamā'at from following undesirable traditions, and not to compel them into disobedience. In these times, when people are stopped from certain things, they

tend to adopt others which put even greater burden upon them. Members had been invited to think of ways to stop such practices, and they were expected to propose a balanced scheme which could enable the parents of the bride—whether poor or rich—to serve the guests within their means.

During the discussion, some delegates started speaking in terms of rich and poor and made comments that were calculated to stir the feelings of some sections of society. Huḍūr took strong exception to this, and said:

“I have been shaken by the extremely volatile things that members have been saying again and again. Are these the ideas that are becoming prevalent in our Jamā'at? Perhaps these ideas were subdued in the past due to the presence of the Khalīfa, and have now come out because the Khalīfa does not personally preside over the Shūrā and it is presided over by his representative. Even some officials of the Central Organization have spoken as if they were Marx or Lenin speaking about the social divide...They have wronged both sections of society. Instead of educating the members in the right manner, such attitudes will breed socialist tendencies and will produce results that are contrary to the teachings of Islam and the example of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. We need to inspire our members with a high resolve, which will give them satisfaction regardless of the difference in their financial status, and we need to give them the confidence to look up rather than look down. They should not suffer from any sense of deprivation when they see that their brothers have been endowed with greater wealth...Some delegates have referred to verses of the Holy Quran,

without even reading them, and have made some grievous inferences from them. For instance, they have implied that anyone who entertains the idea of offering a cup of tea or other refreshment to his guests on the occasion of his daughter's marriage, shall be a brother of Satan and shall invite God's displeasure. These wrong interpretations have nothing to do with the teachings of the Holy Quran... To say that the affluent person who offers some hospitality to his guests on the occasion of his daughter's marriage is a follower of Satan, is such a foolish notion that it can never be permitted to take root in the Jamā'at. Such things will lead the Jamā'at to destruction. Majlis-e-Shūrā is not the forum for expressing views about class differences and prejudices."

[Unpublished Report Majlis-e-Shūrā Pakistan 1991]

AN APOLOGY BY MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT

The above extract has been taken from a detailed message that Ḥudūr sent to the delegates of Shūrā 1991. When the audio cassette was played before the members, they were all filled with great remorse, which translated into the following apology addressed by the members to Ḥadrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Sayyedī!

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

We, the members of Majlis-e-Shūrā, confess our shortcomings and our sins, and present ourselves before Ḥudūr with bruised and heavy hearts and anguished souls.

We are sorry for the wrong we have done, and we beseech our Imam, with feelings of true remorse for our sins, that

you may have mercy on us and forgive us, and pray to the Gracious and Benevolent God to turn to us with mercy and forgive us our sins, and cover us in the mantle of His forgiveness, and enable us to make true repentance.

Sayyedi, our beloved Imam! our hearts grieve and our souls bleed with anguish for the pain that our mistakes have caused you, and the grief you have suffered for our mistakes. We make a confession of our wrongdoings before our Gracious and Merciful God, and ask for His forgiveness. We also humbly solicit Him to heal the wounds that we have caused to our Imam, and request Him to alleviate the pain that resulted from our behaviour. May Allah bless us with His kindness and may we never ever cause any pain or sorrow to our Imam. May everything we say and do be a source of joy and happiness for our beloved Imam. May we offer him nothing but satisfaction and get from him nothing but love and kindness.

Our beloved Imam! Even in this hour of pain and sadness, our hearts are full of gratitude to Allah, Who, out of His sheer kindness, has conferred on us the great blessing of Khilāfat. He has placed us under the benign care of a mentor who is loving and caring as a mother, and guides us with prudence and wisdom. He corrects our every error of thought and understanding. He warns us against the pitfalls and dangers of the way and guides us. For our ease and comfort, he works through the days, and spends his nights praying for our good.

Our Imam and our Mentor! As an expression of our gratitude for this limitless favour, and as a confession of our sins, we humble servants of God, and people who have long been separated from Huḍūr, and have come together for Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1991, once again pledge our al-

legiance to you. We humbly implore that Ḥudūr may grant our request and honour us by accepting our pledge of obedience. We also solicit Ḥudūr to pray to Allah that He may also confer His blessings on us, may overlook our faults, may forgive us our sins, and cover our faults in the mantle of His mercy.

We offer this heartfelt prayer to God:

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ
لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّثْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ رَبَّنَا
لَا تُرِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

O God, we wronged ourselves, and we confess our sins. We, Your worthless and sinful servants, humbly solicit Your forgiveness and seek Your mercy. O Lord, forgive us our sins, cover our faults, and bestow Your affection on us. Āmīn

*Even though we are no good, and not even worthy to look at;
We still seek your mercy, for we belong to your house.*

Ḥudūr's humble servants,

Delegates of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat

Referring to this letter of apology in his message to Majlis-e-Mushāwarat Pakistan 1993, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IVth said:

“During the years that I have been separated from you, I have felt that the new generation which is now joining Majlis-e-Shūrā does not only stand in need of more training, but even deserves to be reprimanded at times. I had to express my displeasure on one such occasion, but, by the grace of God, the reaction was a very positive one

and everyone assured me that I would not hear such painful news from the Shūrā in future. I hope that this will be so. I pray to God that He Himself may guide you and protect you, and your advice may always be accompanied by the Holy Spirit.”

[Unpublished Report Majlis-e-Shūrā Pakistan 1993, pp. 3-4]

CHAIRMANSHIP OF SHŪRĀ IN THE ABSENCE OF THE KHALĪFA

The question of the chairmanship of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat assumes great importance if the Khalīfa is away or is unwell. Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} came for the opening session of Shūrā 1954, despite ailing health. After collective prayer, Ḥuḍūr said that he would leave after delivering a short speech due to his ill health. The sub-committees, he said, would be formed afterwards and would prepare their reports. These reports, along with the views expressed by the delegates would be sent to him continuously, and he would make the final decision about them.

Ḥuḍūr then said a few words of advice to the delegates and left the Shūrā after appointing Mirzā 'Abdul Ḥaq Sahib, Amīr of the Punjab, to preside in his place.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1954, p. 1]

During Shūrā 1955, (the following year), Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} was in Karachi, on his way to Europe under medical advice. He, therefore, formed a panel to preside over the sessions of the Shūrā, and sent the following instructions from Karachi:

“If Chaudhary Sir Muhammad Zafrullāh Khan Sahib ar-

rives in Rabwah in time, he will preside over the Shūrā. If he is unable to make it, Chaudhry Muhammad 'Abdullāh Khan Sahib, Amīr Jamā'at Karachi, will preside. If he too is unable to attend, then Mirzā 'Abdul Ḥaq Sahib, Amīr of the Punjab, will preside over the Shūrā."

Since Chaudhry Sir Muhammad Zafrullāh Khan Sahib could not come to Rabwah on this occasion, and Chaudhry Muhammad 'Abdūllah Khan Sahib also informed through telegram that he would be unable to come to Rabwah on those dates, Secretary Mushāwarat requested Mirzā 'Abdul Ḥaq Sahib to preside over the Shūrā. He presided over all the sessions of the Shūrā during all the three days.

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1955, p. 1]

MAJLIS-E-MUSHĀWARAT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE KHALĪFA

It was the first occasion in the history of Ahmadiyyat that Mushāwarat was being held under a Chairman who had been nominated by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ to represent him. In view of the delicacy of the situation, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad Sahib^{ra} brought some issues to the attention of the delegates through a written note. We reproduce this note here, for it relates to the relationship between the Khalīfa and Majlis-e-Shūrā:

"1. Ḥuḍūr's illness has placed much more responsibility upon the Jamā'at's shoulders. The Jamā'at should realize this, should fear God, and should beware of any mischief that might be spread by people, from within or without, and should keep Markaz duly informed.

2. The function of the Chairman in this Shūrā will not be

to make decisions, but only to maintain order and record the views of the delegates.

3. If the opinion of the Shūrā coincides with that of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, it will be taken as the final decision, for it is not proper to burden Ḥuḍūr with too many issues in his current state of health. But if the general opinion of the delegates differs from that of Ṣadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, and the Anjuman sticks to its viewpoint, then Ḥuḍūr will be requested to appoint a board to make a decision about such a proposal, or, if Ḥuḍūr is in a better state of health, he will be requested for a decision.

4. The main item in the Agenda this year is the budget. The other proposals are not of a critical nature. The budget, therefore, needs to be deliberated upon seriously and with the sole intention of improving the work of the Jamā'at. Since Ḥuḍūr has already had a look at the budget of the Anjuman, we should try not to effect any increase in it, unless it is absolutely necessary. In that event it will also be necessary to suggest an proportionate increase in the income.

May God protect the Jamā'at and the Shūrā, and may He guide them on the right path."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1955, pp. 2-3]

On this occasion, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} sent the following message, which was read out in the Shūrā after the sub-committees had been formed:

"The first thing I want to say is that the Shūrā is being held in my absence. Last year I could not fully participate in the Shūrā because of the wound, and although that should have prepared you, I still feel that members are

not yet capable of properly discharging their responsibilities in my absence. May God give you the ability, and grant me complete recovery so that, with your help, I can lay the foundation of the victory of Islam...I advise the delegates to give serious thought to the budget and the other proposals.”

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1955, pp. 8-9]

INAUGURATION OF SHŪRĀ WITH A WRITTEN MESSAGE

Even during the period of his protracted illness and despite physical weakness, Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} continued to preside over Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. But when he became too weak to attend in person, he asked Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad Sahib^{ra} to preside over it, and sent an inaugural message for the delegates which was read out by Ḥaḍrat Miān Sahib^{ra}.

The sad moment finally came in 1961, when the Great Reformer, who had founded Majlis-e-Mushāwarat and had nourished it till it had grown into such an institution, sent his final written message to the Shūrā from his sick bed. He wrote:

أَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

By the Grace and Mercy of God

‘He is the Helper’

Dear Brothers,

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

I was a young man when I laid the foundation of Majlis-e-Mushāwarat. Now I am ill and weak and cannot sit in Ma-

jlis-e-Shūrā for a long time, nor can I actively participate in it as I used to. I am unable to participate at all in this particular Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, but, in order to open this Shūrā with prayers, I am sending this brief message through my dear Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad, despite my illness.

I wish to remind friends that the only truly blessed advice is that which is offered with sincerity and best of intentions, and focuses on the interests of Jamā'at, and is in keeping with the will of Allah. If this is the motivation behind the advice you offer, Allah will ever bless you and your advice shall produce good results. But if you start giving priority to what someone else thinks over the interest of the Jamā'at, the element of blessing will disappear, your advice will become a mere formality, and you will lose Divine support. A great responsibility, therefore, lies on your shoulders. When you come together to give advice, you are in fact treading a path which is thin as a hair and sharp as a sword. Offer your advice with thought and care, and pray to Allah that only the truth might flow from your tongues, and you may be able to make decisions that are beneficial for the Jamā'at and serve to improve its religious, spiritual, organizational and financial condition.

I am sorry to say that serious attention has not been given to my continuous exhortations that our budget should be increased up to Rs. 2,500,000. The fact is that, let alone 2,500,000, even 250,000,000 is not enough for us to accomplish the stupendous task of Tabligh that has been assigned to us. We have been charged with the responsibility of winning the whole world over to Islam and Ahmadiyyat, and to spread the message of the Holy Prophet^{sa} to all four corners of the world, and to assemble

mankind under the banner of One God. Considering the present numbers of our Jamā'at, however, we should try to raise our budget to Rs. 2,500,000 as soon as possible.

As I understand it, the people who are to blame for this deficit in the budget are the non-subscribers who, because of their lack of sincerity and devotion, do not participate in financial sacrifices even though they are a part of the Jamā'at. Then there are those who do not make financial contributions at the prescribed rate, or those who do not try to clear off their arrears. These people also adversely affect the interests of the Jamā'at. I also wish to remind the Presidents and Secretaries of Jamā'ats to concentrate not only on the spiritual and moral development of their members, but also to discharge their obligations regarding those who make no financial contributions or do not contribute at the prescribed rate. They should try to infuse in such people the spirit of sacrifice so that they too may stand with their brethren in conveying the message of Islam to the four corners of the world and may become deserving of Divine reward.

With these few words I declare the 42nd Majlis-e-Mushāwarat open, and I pray to Allah that He may bless our work, enable us to discharge our obligations with zeal and sincerity, and help us to make the right decisions. Āmīn.

Mirzā Maḥmūd Ahmad
Khalīfatul Masīḥ II
 20/03/61

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1961, pp. 4-5]

SHŪRĀ DURING THE ILLNESS OF ḤAḌRAT MUṢLEḤ-E-AU'ŪD^{ra}

During the time when Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} was unable to attend Mushāwarat due to his failing health, Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad Sahib^{ra} continued to preside over Majlis-e-Mushāwarat according to Ḥuḍūr's instructions. At the demise of Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Sahib^{ra} in 1964, Ḥuḍūr instructed Ḥaḍrat Shaikh Muhammad Ahmad Sahib Maẓhar, Amīr Jamā'at Faisalabad, to take over the responsibility. While inaugurating Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, Shaikh Sahib made a brief speech in which he reminded the delegates that, in view of the circumstances, their responsibility had increased manifold. He said that though Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra} was unable to attend the Mushāwarat because of his illness, it was the duty of the delegates to uphold the admirable traditions which Ḥuḍūr had established, and to offer advice in a cool, calm and dignified manner. Shaikh Sahib said:

“This is our 45th Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, and there are a few things which I want friends to remember in view of the prevailing circumstances.

Ḥaḍrat Sahib has been unable to come due to his illness. Last year we had Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad Sahib^{ra} among us and we benefited from his guidance, his prayers and his experience. But it is Allah's will that both of them are not with us in this Majlis-e-Mushāwarat, and our responsibility is all the greater for it. I hope that everyone here will appreciate his responsibility fully and will not forget it. Whether we are suggesting names for the various sub-committees, or are deliberating upon

matters in the sub-committees, or are discussing the recommendations, we must always remember that there is greater responsibility upon us than ever before. Today we are working in a completely different environment. Today we have to prove that we have not forgotten the lessons we have learnt from Ḥaḍrat Sahib for the last 45 years. The proceedings of the Shūrā shall have to be conducted in a calm and dignified manner, and I hope that all the delegates, as well as the workers of the various Departments of the Jamā'at, will cooperate in this regard and will bear these things in mind."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1964, pp. 2-3]

FIRST SHŪRĀ IN RABWAH AFTER THE MIGRATION OF ḤAḌRAT KHALĪFATUL MASĪḤ IV^{rh}

After Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth was forced to migrate in 1984, the first Majlis-e-Mushāwarat in his absence was held in 1985. Ḥuḍūr nominated Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Mirzā Maṣṣūr Ahmad Sahib to preside over this Shūrā. In his inaugural address, Ḥaḍrat Sahibzāda Sahib made the following remarks regarding the feeling of deprivation that had overwhelmed Majlis-e-Mushāwarat due to the absence of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IV^{rh}:

"As you can see from the programme, all the sessions will be held as usual. We are, no doubt, feeling greatly deprived because we are not going to benefit from our Imam's direct guidance, but we pray that this period of deprivation may be a short one. (Āmīn)

There is no way we can make up for the loss, but we can alleviate it somewhat if, as members of the Shūrā, we understand our responsibilities and fulfil them accordingly."

[Report Majlis-e-Shūrā 1985, pp. 19-20]

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS REGARDING CONSULTING THE KHALĪFA

During the third year after his migration to London, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IVth sent a message to Majlis-e-Mushāwarat Rabwah in which he detailed the subject of consulting the Khalīfa in the light of two verses of the Holy Quran. Ḥuḍūr said:

“The philosophy of the Quranic injunction *وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ* [*And their affairs are decided by mutual consultation*] is very deep and comprehensive. In fact, it covers all aspects of human life. We should make it our habit to consult others, and the more you consult before coming to a decision, the better it will be for you and for the Jamā'at. I came to know of several letters that were written by people in their individual capacity. Had I been consulted about them, I would have stopped them or would only have allowed them to be sent with some changes.

But this does not mean that I have to be consulted in every matter. This is a very interesting subject which I would like to share with you. Consulting the Imam, in fact, means asking his permission. It may apparently be a matter of consultation, but when the Imam gives an advice, it is not a common advice but assumes the status of a command. The injunction *شَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ* is addressed to the Imam, and it is he who is required to consult the people and not vice versa. This is because this injunction is followed by *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ*. Thus when the Imam reaches a conclusion, after having consulted his followers, his conclusion becomes the decision, that is to say, the purified form of the consultation assumes the form of the final verdict.

The Khalīfa may be consulted in certain circumstances, but I am personally inclined to believe that when you

consult the Imam and he gives you his advice, it is not proper to ignore it, unless, instead of giving a pointed advice, the Imam explains the various pros and cons of an issue and leaves it to the person to make a decision accordingly. This is what I do most of the time when I am asked for advice. And I do so because I believe that my advice is not like any other advice; if I were to express a pointed opinion and the person chose to ignore it, this would involve an aspect of disrespect which would adversely affect his spiritual life.

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ II^{ra} has repeatedly spoken about this in his sermons and other addresses. He once expressed his displeasure at some people who asked his advice in a certain matter, and when he gave his advice, they chose not to follow it and did what they themselves wanted to do. He expressed his displeasure and said, 'I am upset, not because I take it as a personal affront, but because such an attitude is harmful for your own selves.'...

I do not approve of the way people are increasingly seeking the advice of the Imam even in trivial matters, and their aim is only to gauge his opinion, which they might or might not adopt. This practice should not be encouraged. On the other hand, if you put before the Imam all your affairs in which you are unable to decide on your own, and present him with all the details of the matter, and are prepared to accept and act upon any decision the Imam makes, this will surely be the highest degree of submission, and you will receive Allah's blessings—not only the blessings which relate to consultation but also those that result from obedience...But, as I have already explained, issues that relate to the Jamā'at are far more important, and it is better that I should be left free to ad-

dress those. In your personal matters, you should consult among yourselves and make a decision after consulting people of sound judgement and members of the Jamā'at, with the exception of important matters which require the guidance of the Khalīfa.

But as I say this, there is another thing that comes to my mind. It has long been the habit of some people that they do not take any step without seeking guidance from the Khalīfa. If now I were to order them to stop doing so, it would hurt their feelings, and it is the last thing I want to do. Some of them have inherited this habit from their fathers and forefathers, so I cannot order them to stop, nor would it be proper for me to do so. They have grown up with these habits and have become deeply attached to them. They are, therefore, permitted to refer all important matters to me and obtain guidance from me as before. But, as far as possible, they should try to refer the fewest cases to me, and should try to make decisions about their routine matters through mutual consultation..."

Ḥudūr concluded the message with the following expression of deep love and affection for the members of the Jamā'at:

"So, pray to Allah and have full faith in Him and keep marching forward. By the grace and mercy of Allah, you are destined to be victorious. You have come to Rabwah for consultations under the protection of God, may you go back to your homes under His protection. Try your best to convey to every Ahmadi the message that I have given you.

It is impossible for me to tell you how desirous I am of your well-being, and how every particle of my body is

intermingled with a longing for your welfare. Any sad news that comes from you lies heavy on my heart, and every good news from you infuses a new life into me. May God be with you! May God be with you! May God be with you!"

[Unpublished Report Majlis-e-Shūrā Pakistan 1987 pp. 14-18,28]

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AND THE DAWN OF THE SECOND CENTURY OF AHMADIYYAT

By the grace of Allah, the year 1989 came with extraordinary blessings for the Jamā'at, as it celebrated its first centenary.

The first Mushāwarat of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan in the second century of Ahmadiyyat took place in Rabwah in March 1989. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth sent an important message to the delegates on this occasion, in which he shed light on the status of the Shūrā that was being held in Rabwah, which is the Markaz of the Jamā'at. Ḥuḍūr also shed light on the circumstances resulting from the distance that had come between the physical Markaz and the actual Markaz, and urged the members to pray that the gulf may soon be bridged. With reference to the extraordinary importance of the Mushāwarat being held in Pakistan, Ḥuḍūr said:

"In one aspect, this Shūrā is of extraordinary importance, for it is the first Mushāwarat of the second century of Ahmadiyyat being held in Rabwah—the Markaz of Ahmadiyyat. This Mushāwarat requires that you should participate in it with extraordinary prayers and treading the path of *Taqwa*. A whole century lies before you, and

at the head of this century you have come together to demonstrate the best example of Islamic Majlis-e-Shūrā.

But from another aspect, this Shūrā cannot be rightly called the first Shūrā of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya in the second century, despite the fact that it is being held in Markaz. This is because it does not enjoy the presence and participation of Khalifatul Masīh. Although Rabwah is currently called the Markaz of Ahmadiyyat, we can never ignore the fact that Qadian is, and shall remain, the eternal Markaz of Ahmadiyyat. Why is it then that the events which take place in Rabwah are taken to represent the world-wide Ahmadiyya Jamā'at, rather than those of Qadian? The reason is that, although Qadian was and continues to be the physical Markaz, the Markaz—for all practical purposes—shifted to Lahore, and then to Rabwah, when Khalifatul Masīh migrated from Qadian. So, both in the physical and spiritual sense, the Jalsas or Majālis-e-Shūrā that are held in Markaz in the absence of the Khalīfa, cannot be considered Markazī Jalsas or Markazī Majālis-e-Shūrā. So, although this can be considered the first Shūrā of the second century from one point of view, from another point of view the first Shūrā will be the one in which the Khalīfa is able to participate, by the grace of Allah.

I am not saying this to hurt you in any way or to lessen the importance of this extremely important Majlis, I only want to make you realize that you should always keep your eyes focussed on the essence and spirit of things and should not get entangled in the mere physical aspects.

I also make a strong appeal to you to join me in prayers so that the (physical) distances which have come between the real and the virtual Markaz may be bridged, and may

the Khalīfa be able to participate in all the important occasions and Majālis that are held in the formal and physical Markaz of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya.

It is my heart's desire that this may only be a temporary will of God, and may there not come a time when we are forced to remove even our formal headquarters from Pakistan and establish them in some other land.

From this point of view, this year seems to be a very important one. I see extraordinary events unfolding before this year is out, and these events will have consequences reaching far into the new century. The events that are going to characterize the next century are going to be defined in the very first year of the second century of Ahmadiyyat. You should therefore offer special prayers during these blessed days of Mushāwarat, so that whatever is decreed for us may be good for us both outwardly and inwardly. And may God soon bridge the distances that have come between us and my participation in your meetings may not just be spiritual, but physical as well. And may I not see you only through the eyes of imagination but may derive satisfaction by seeing you with my physical eyes also.

The extraordinary patience and resolve and determination which has been shown by the Jamā'at in Pakistan is going to be written in the history of the Jamā'at in golden letters, and with time these letters will become even more brilliant and luminous. By the grace of God, you have earned great honour which has brightened your otherwise obscure future. This period of hardship is a temporary one, and it is indeed in its last throes. But your time of contentment and happiness shall be an interminable one, whose dividends you shall reap in this world as well as in the hereafter, and whose blessings your children and your

future generations shall continue to enjoy. The distinction which your Shūrā enjoys is not shared by any other Majlis-e-Shūrā in the world. May its spiritual, moral and intellectual distinction remain forever intact.”

[Unpublished Report Majlis-e-Shūrā Pakistan 1989, pp. 3-5]

A MESSAGE OF FELICITATION AND A RENEWAL OF THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Majlis-e-Mushāwarat 1989, which was held in Rabwah in March, unanimously passed a resolution addressed to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IVth, consisting of a message of felicitations and a renewal of the pledge of allegiance on the occasion of the centennial thanksgiving celebrations.

Many delegates spoke in support of the resolution and paid their homage to their Imam and expressed their love for him. Such was their expression of love and devotion, that neither the speakers nor the listeners could restrain their emotions and their eyes glistened with tears. Delegates were most saddened by the long separation from their beloved Imam, yet they were prepared to accept what God had destined, and every heart was praying for the early return of Ḥuḍūr.

Mujīb-ur-Raḥmān Sahib, Advocate, Amīr Jamā'at Rawalpindi, made the following preliminary remarks before presenting the resolution before the Shūrā:

“I would like to present a resolution before the house, with the permission of the Chairman Majlis-e-Mushāwarat.

The first Mushāwarat of the second century of Ahmadiyah has almost come to a close. Proposals were presented, sub-committees were formed, they deliberated upon the

issues, their recommendations were put before the house for discussion, the decisions were finalized, and the Shūrā was concluded. But a question still remained written on the faces of the delegates, and it seemed as if they were missing something. Our Imam and our Mentor, to whom we offer our humble suggestions, is not physically present among us, though is always present in our hearts and minds.

Likewise, our hearts are aglow with countless lamps of gratitude upon the successful completion of 100 years of our Jamā'at. We do congratulate one another, but the one who most deserves to be congratulated is not among us, and you must all be desiring to convey your felicitations to him. Just as we came together in our respective Jamā'ats to reaffirm our oath of allegiance, so does each of you desire that we, as a Jamā'at, should extend our congratulations to the Imam and re-affirm our oath of allegiance to him. I will read out before you a presentation in this regard and will then request the delegates to express their own views about it, so that a collective message can be conveyed to Ḥuḍūr on behalf of the whole Jamā'at.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ وَعَلَى عَائِلَتِهِ الْمُسَبِّحِ الْمَوْعُودِ

We, the servants of Ahmadiyyat, who are participating in the first Mushāwarat of the second century, (held in Rabwah, Pakistan, from 31st March to 2nd April, 1989), are grateful to Allah for the innumerable blessings He has showered upon us, and extend our heartfelt felicitations to Ḥaḍrat Khalifatul Masīḥ IVth on this auspicious occasion. As we thank God for our steadfastness and sacrifices that we have been able to offer during the past 100 years, we

also pledge that we will endeavour to keep the sacrifices of our forefathers alive and shall try to pass them on to our succeeding generations, and we also pledge that we shall always be ready to offer every sacrifice for Khilāfat and shall be ready to shed our very lives for its sake.

As a gratitude for the strength and stability which the Jamā'at has gained during the past 100 years through the blessings of the Khilāfat, we renew our pledge of obedience to Ḥuḍūr, and solicit him to pray that passage of time may not render our objectives any less brilliant. May we be purged of our weaknesses and shortcomings, and may we attain the heights of faith and righteousness that were destined for those who would first pledge their allegiance to the Promised Messiah^{as}—that illustrious son of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Our dear Imam! We, who are so full of anguish for your absence, wish that we could have offered this gift of sincerity, love and devotion to you in person. May the Almighty God fulfil this heartfelt desire of His servants. May the distances disappear and may our wishes be granted, and may we, who always have you close to our hearts, have the honour of your physical nearness once more. May our eyes have the satisfaction of seeing you and may our ears listen directly to your words.

O Kind and Merciful Lord! we, Your poor servants, beseech You in these very words of the Promised Messiah^{as}:

Give us prosperity and confer on us Your Blessings!

Save us from all troubles and relieve us of all pain!

Come Yourself to my aid. Lord, never put me to test!

O Lord, may this be so! O Lord, may this be so! O Lord, may this be so!”

A DISTINCTION OF THE JAMĀ'AT

In the next Mushāwarat, Ḥudūr sent the following reply to the resolution passed by the delegates of Shūrā:

God be thanked for once again giving you the opportunity to come together in Markaz Rabwah, to deliberate upon issues that relate to the progress and strengthening of Islam. As I have often said before, there is no institution in the whole wide world which can match our Majlis-e-Shūrā. The Parliaments of the greatest countries of the world come nowhere near Majlis-e-Shūrā in respect of manners and procedures. The discipline, the decorum, the mutual trust, the dignity and the decency with which consultations are held in Majlis-e-Shūrā of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya is a distinction of our Jamā'at which no other Jamā'at enjoys...As I listened to the proceedings of last year's Shūrā, and heard your expressions of pain and anguish, my feelings were much the same as yours, and I was able to virtually become part of the same atmosphere and the same prayer...

I am sure that even your emotional sacrifices have been so blessed by God, and He has accorded them such acceptance, that there can hardly be any room for ingratitude. In fact, you will not be able to thank Allah adequately even if you were to thank Him all your lives.

On this occasion, I want to give you a good news which shall wipe away your tears, turn your grief into joy, and give you real encouragement. The great tidings is that, by the Grace of Allah, the year of centenary celebrations has become a beacon of light from the point of view of Tablīgh. This is the first time that, within one year, we have already received 108,000 Bai'ats and more are still on the way. You may, like last year, fill the Shūrā hall

with prayers and heartrending cries, but your tears and cries should be drenched with feelings of gratitude, rather than of deprivation. May Allah be with you, and may I always continue to receive good news from you. Āmīn.

I have already informed Nāzīr A'la Sahib through a fax, that I have received some auspicious dreams which lead me to think that things will soon turn round and the season shall change. *Inshaallāh*.

Wassalām

(Signed)

Mirzā Ṭāhir Ahmad

Khalīfatul Masīh

THE LAST WORD

By the grace of Allah, Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya has been able to demonstrate before the world the Islamic concept of Mushāwarat. It is not possible to detail the distinction of the Ahmadiyya system of Mushāwarat as elaborately as Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīh IVth has done in an extract we have already produced.

According to the teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as} and the Khulafā, Ahmadiyya Majlis-e-Mushāwarat is the same institution which was established by the Holy Prophet^{sa} and was nurtured by his Khulafā, and was rejuvenated 1400 years later by the Promised Messiah^{as}. The spirit and essence of this institution lies in the love for the Imam, which results from true obedience, and brings all kinds of success to the believers. This motivating spirit of Islamic Mushāwarat is, by the grace of Allah, to be found in the Ahmadiyya system of

Mushāwarat in all its manifestations. Under heavenly directions and the leadership of the Khulafā, this spirit continues to soar to new heights. By the grace of Allah, this consultative institution of Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya is growing by the day. In all the countries of the world where Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya has been established, this system of Mushāwarat has also been introduced in keeping with the high Islamic traditions.

From this point of view, our Majlis-e-Mushāwarat also serves as an unparalleled training institution, and plays the important role of keeping the Khalīfa and the obedient servants of Ahmadiyyat united as one body. In no other school of thought, whether worldly or religious, do we find a consultative institution which keeps the leader and the followers together in such bonds of love and unity. And why should this not be so, when Allah has established this Jamā'at through the Promised Messiah^{as} to ensure the victory of Islam, and He Himself has laid down its foundation. And this is the Jamā'at which is busy day and night in formulating and implementing new schemes for spreading the word of Allah, and is ever ready to make sacrifices in this cause.

To conclude, we pray that this Islamic system of consultation may always remain alive with all its beautiful and high traditions. Generation after generation, Jamā'at-e-Ahmadiyya has been able to safeguard the distinction of the Shūrā. The Jamā'at should never forget the instructions that have been given to us by our Khulafā—and

particularly by Ḥaḍrat Muṣleḥ-e-Mau'ūd^{ra}—for running this institution in a wise and sagacious manner. Not only should we not forget them, we should do our very best to raise this institution to the loftiest heights, so that, both in body and spirit, this system of consultations should remain forever alive in all its grandeur and brilliance. Āmīn!