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EDITORS NOTE ...

FROM ORCHARD CLOSE TO BROOKWOOD CEMETERY

The house at 3 Orchard Close, Woking is a well-known address from where the late Maulana S. M. Tufail carried on his religious and literary activities after he returned from Trinidad. It was from here that he published his monthly *Al-Ahmadiyya*, which became popular with a circulation of 1800 copies. He also continued his translation work of the books of the late Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, which he had started in Holland. This place became a virtual centre for his activities for more than fifteen years till his death in 1984. Significantly though, it was Mrs Nasira Tufail who worked behind the scene supporting her husband in his activities and also looking after the family and the house. The late Maulana Tufail dedicated all his time and attention to religious activities. His correspondence, publications and visitors came to this address.

Before leaving for Trinidad to join her husband, Mrs Nasira Tufail had taken a timely step and bought this house. After the death of her husband, she looked after her family with continued care and dedication. She kept the doors of 3 Orchard Close open for visitors, admirers, friends and relatives.

She remained active and visited regularly her children in the UK, the USA, and Pakistan. During the last few years when she was not keeping well due to dementia, she was still reasonably well, talking and sharing old memories.

Luckily, her daughter Roehie and son-in-law Mubarak Forgarty lived next door and were her constant carers during her last years.

Mrs Nasira Tufail rarely missed Sunday meetings and *Eid* congregations at 5 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, even when she was forced to use a wheelchair.

She was a noble, hospitable and hard-working lady and was well respected by all. She was always positive in her thoughts and actions. And, like her husband, she was always ready to meet death. During the last days of her life, she used to tell her children: “Please come and see me while I am alive as it would be of no use to me if you came to attend my funeral when I am no more. In the latter case, you will have to spend much more than what you will spend in ordinary times.” She used to say too that only three months were left. During this period, at one time she was almost in the throes of death but then she recovered and, as God had decided, she breathed her last exactly three months after she left her house at 3 Orchard Close.

Her body was carried from Woking to the Brookwood Cemetery. Almost all her children and grandchildren, and many relatives, friends and members of the community gathered there to pay their last respects. Mr Mushtaq Ali, a student of the late Maulana Tufail in Trinidad and at present Secretary of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Community in the UK, led the *janaza* prayers. Before conducting the service Brother Mushtaq Ali spoke highly of Maulana Tufail and Mrs Nasira Tufail. He also narrated some childhood experiences with them in Trinidad and later some happy memories in the UK. Dr Zahid Aziz and Brother Shahid Aziz recited prayers at Mrs Tufail’s grave after the service.
Of the grandchildren, the first to speak was young Yusuf Martin. He was followed by granddaughters Nisbah Hussain from the USA, Aliya Tufail from Harrow Gate, and lastly Sa’ad Tufail.

Mrs Fauqia Aziz spoke about the close friendship Mrs Nasira Tufail had with her mother-in-law, the late Mrs Aziz Ahmad.

At the funeral service more 250 men and women were present. Prayers were also offered for late Maulana Sheikh Muhammad Tufail.

While the *janaza* prayers were being offered, a train passed in the background. As one life came to an end and was being laid to rest, the train was carrying others who were to continue their journey of life.

After a life of dedication and love, Maulana Tufail and Nasira Tufail at last re-joined each other at Brookwood Cemetery after a separation of thirty-one years. They were buried side by side.

May Allah bless them, forgive them and take them under His benign and loving care!

* * *

_O Allah! Grant her protection, and have mercy on her and keep her in good condition and pardon her. And make her entertainment honourable and expand her place of entering and wash her with water and snow and hail and clean her of faults as white cloth is cleansed of dross._

_O Allah! Grant protection to our living and to our dead and to those of us who are present and those who are absent; and to our young and to our old folk and to our males and our females._

_O Allah! Whosoever You grant to live among us cause her to live in peace. And whosoever of us You cause to die, make her die in faith._

_O Allah! Do not deprive us of her reward and do not make us fall into a trial after her._
SOME REMINISCENCES....

MRS. NASIRA TUFAIL - OUR DEAR NASIRA BHBABI

S M KHALID IQBAL M.A.

My eldest brother, S. Muhammad Tufail had joined the missionary seminary of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman at the Ahmadiyya Buildings and was living in a room of late Maulana Aftab-ud-Din’s House. He got married and came to Delhi with the newly wed lady from Wazirabad in the year 1946.

My sister Qamar and myself as kids were very excited to have this pleasant addition, especially to hear a new story every evening from our first Bhabi. These stories were mostly from ‘Sunehri Kirnayn’ written by S M Tufail or she would tell us some of her own. We knew that her father died while she was young and her mother worked as a school teacher and brought up the family of three - two daughters and a son - the youngest in the family, Masood Akhtar at presentis living in Lahore. Before marriage Nasira Bhabi was also a teacher in her home town Wazirabad, Pakistan.

My late father Sheikh Muhammad Latif was an employee of the Central Government and naturally we were based in New Delhi. We used to have a baby goat and lot of chicken in the backyard. One day Nasira Bhabi gave us a challenge that if anyone could eat or swallow a raw egg she would give one Rupee as a prize. My elder brother Muhammad Afzal was so quick that he went straight to the hen cage, took a newly laid egg, broke it straight into his mouth and won the prize.

The fun of listening stories soon came to an end when the couple went back to Lahore after a week or so.

Then there was a gap and we met Nasira Bhabi in Lahore sometime around in 1948 when the family decided to migrate to Pakistan. For a very short time our whole family stayed with Tufail Bhai and Bhabi Nasira who at that time were living in the house of late Maulana Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad. Afterwards we moved on to Rawalpindi and were allotted a house in the Chachhi Mohalla.

My two older brothers S M Sharif, S M Afzal and Nasira Bhabi’s brother Masood Akhter lived with Nasira Bhabi in a house at Nisbat Road while studying at Government Hailey College of Commerce, Lahore.

I understand that she kept strict control on them till they finished their studies and got the jobs. She used to lock the doors after certain time at night under the instructions of her husband. One evening they were very late and found the upstairs door locked. They had to use a grill in the ceiling to climb up and went to their bedroom. One of my brothers said that that was the first and last time they did it.

From a very young age she helped her mother in looking after her youngest brother and doing various other duties in the house as her elder sister got married and lived with her in-laws in Rawalpindi.

After marriage while still a student at the Lahore Ahmadiyya Seminary and managing in the meagre amount of the stipend, a friend of his who was working as an insurance agent, introduced my
brother to do part time life-insurance. Luckily from the first case he did earn Rupees 900 whereas his earnings per month were around Rupees 90. He bought a motorcycle as a means of transport straight-away. He did the part-time Insurance work for a short while.

One day he asked Nasira Bhabi to decide as to what he should do about this job considering the flow of money to meet the ever-increasing expenses. She replied that she was willing to go along as he would like. She was fully aware of his passion and devotion for the cause of Islam. So he did the last Insurance case and stopped it. Later on he told her that he was testing his capabilities to work and now he was satisfied that if ever he got stuck he would be able to support the family. For the rest of his life he never did any other job till his death in 1984.

The greatness of the lady was that the couple lived happily together for 38 years within their means and survived well. She lived for 31 years after her husband’s death and looked after the family affairs as a widow mother of two boys and four girls single handed. Even before her husband’s death she was practically looking after the family for long periods while her husband was away in Trinidad and other countries.

There was a gap of several years and then the Tufail family moved to the Netherlands where they were together for the first time. There she coped well with the complex situation, being in a European country for the first time, with a foreign language and suddenly faced with a completely changed situation. She was a house wife wholly on her own, coming from an orthodox atmosphere and now she was suddenly to play hostess to VIPs, a mother of three girls of school going age. Then she had two children, a boy and a girl, in that country.

She told us that while pregnant with the second child she started having pain in her appendix. This was the day S Muhammad Tufail was to address a big conference in the Hague. It was a very difficult situation. She told us that she was in severe pain while her husband was preparing his first speech for the session of the Netherlands Parliament (listed as the first speaker). He asked the landlady to call the ambulance and left for the lecture.

She further added that it was the first time in her life that she felt completely on her own in a foreign country where her husband also left her and gone to deliver his lecture. She sincerely prayed to God to protect her and the baby.

Surprisingly this feeling of concern was shared even by her mother in a dream some 6000 miles away in Wazirabad, where she saw her daughter in a place with two ladies clothed in white dress being looked after by them. When Maulana Tufail arrived at the hospital she was being taken to the operation theatre to remove the appendix. Luckily she was at the right place and had arrived at the right time. Couple of months later she delivered a healthy baby girl.

From Netherlands she came back to Pakistan with four girls and a boy. Here she gave birth to another boy. She remained in Pakistan till Maulana Tufail reached UK as the Imam of Shah Jahan Mosque Woking.

I met Nasira Bhabi again in August 1964 as wife of the Imam of the Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking. Here she was not only the mother of six children, but a hostess to hundreds of guests who used to
visit the Mosque every year. She coped well with this situation and worked tirelessly day and night. She was attending conferences and Garden Parties at the Buckingham Palace or various Abbeys and Cathedrals with her husband and children.

When she got married she did not visualise the enormity of burden she was going to shoulder. Luckily here she had another lady with her who was well groomed in working in such situations and more experienced. Mrs Mehmuda Abdullah the wife of Late Dr. S. M. Abdullah was like a role model for her.

It is not easy to write about her experiences as a house wife and a mother of six children in a western land, so I will confine myself to narrating only a few instances which will give a glimpse of difficult times she was through.

The time eventually came when the metal of Nasira Bhabi was put to test. Once again she had to move to another part of the world, Trinidad, in the West Indies. Here in the UK the family was settling down and was in school at various stages. But to move to Trinidad with the family where education was not as good as in UK was not less than a trial.

But for Maulana Tufail it was a new adventure and a new opportunity to take up a new challenge after having previous experience of three months’ successful lecture tour there. And his penetrating eyes could see the prospects of a brighter future, though he was conscious that he was being shifted from the Woking Mosque, an equally established institution where his work and voice was being heard throughout the West.

In short Nasira Bhabi had to move again and to make a start in uncertain situation in a country about which she knew nothing. This time she took a wise step of buying a house before leaving for Trinidad and took me in confidence. The plan was that in her absence I was to look after the house. I would stay in it and rent out the rest to pay the expenses etc. With this objective we started looking for a house.

Finally we found a property nearby and bought it before Nasira Bhabi and children left for Trinidad. In her absence I looked after the house. This house later became the centre of Maulana Tufail’s religious activities when ousted from the Shah Jahan Mosque, besides giving shelter to the Tufail family.

It is surprising to note that we see only a few wives of the Imams who lived at the Sir Salar Jang Memorial House, the residential house next to the Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking.

I could mention only three names which accompanied the Imams and lived at the Memorial House.

It is quite a coincidence that Dr. S M Abdullah, who belonged to the Sheikh family of Sialkot and who was instrumental in arranging the marriage to Nasira Begum from Wazirabad, 10 years later S. Muhammad Tufail succeeded him as Imam of the Shah Jahan Mosque. Dr. S M Abdullah died suddenly of heart attack in May 1956.

Sadly, the chapter of people who headed the Shah Jahan Mosque or had close relations with this Islamic Institution of world fame has almost come to a close and most of them lies buried in the oldest and famous graveyard – Brookwood Cemetery, Surrey U. K.

Mrs Nasira Tufail is perhaps the last person after the passing away of Maulana Abdul Majid, editor of the *Islamic Review* in 1977 and Sheikh Muhammad Tufail in 1984, who has been buried in the Brookwood Cemetery.

After arriving in the West Indies the Tufail family found themselves in entirely in a different situation and working condition. Mrs Nasira Tufail started working alongside her husband and took active part in the activities mostly organised by the San Fernando Muslim Women Association. She is known in that part of the world as Mrs. Tufail and it is creditable that she maintained that closeness and warmth of relationship till she breathed her last. She became the role model for the women as a motherly and a sisterly figure in more than one ways. She introduced the Shalwar Qameez with Dobattas. In this way she became the trend-setter and the ladies started wearing these clothes on special occasions such as Fridays, Eids and other religious functions. After a while it became a fashion and some of the ladies started bringing the whole or part outfits from UK and even from Pakistan.

Several years after the death of Tufail Bhai I happened to visit Trinidad and Tobago with my family and toured the country from one end to the other (thanks to Mr. Najm-ud-Din and Sister Vena) and felt proud to see the respect and appreciation people in the Trinidad have for Mr. & Mrs. Tufail and their family.

While she was in Trinidad some of her friends and families from UK also visited Trinidad and attended various conventions. She also participated to sing Urdu poetry with other ladies from the *Songs of Islam* and helped them in their classes. Mrs Nasira Tufail was fascinated by those songs so much that she would join singing if someone from Trinidad visited her while she was not very well. It seems that she never forgot her spiritual bond with the West Indies.

Mrs Nasira Tufail’s 31 long years after her husband’s death are replete with stress and struggle. She got all her children married, frequently visited her children in the UK and in USA. In fact she looked after the family, while doing a job in a local firm. I have never seen her complain about anything and she managed well her finances.

She did look after the family and put in all her efforts and financial support to publish the translations and other literary works left behind by her husband late S. Muhammad Tufail. During the life time of her husband she passed her driving test and got a car which was very handy for the family and especially when her husband needed to go to the Hospital in the end. She never thought that she would be left behind to look after the family. The only regret she had was that she should have known that her husband would go so soon. In the later part of her life when she was suffering from
dementia she would ask whether Tufail Sahib is still alive and perhaps gone for a lecture or busy writing a book etc..

At the start I mentioned that when Nasira Bhabi immediately after marriage came to Delhi in 1946 she used to tell us stories. And surprisingly in the year 2015 she still knew most of them. Alas! People around her were still eager to listen to those stories but unfortunately she herself went to eternal sleep.

This is perhaps what the poet wanted to express in the following couplet:

\[
\begin{align*}
Barey shauq se sun raha thaa zamanah \\
Hameen so gaye dastaan kehte kehte.
\end{align*}
\]

May Allah grant peace and comfort in her new abode. May Allah bless her for what she did for her family and the cause of Islam. Ameen.
IS THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT A NEW RELIGION UNDER THE FOLD OF ISLAM?

(TEXT OF A TALK GIVEN BY MAULANA S. M. TUFAIL, AT GASPARILLO, TRINIDAD)

I have been specially asked to speak about the Ahmadiyya Movement. What is the Ahmadiyya Movement, and why are so many people against it? Let us remember, right from the start, that it is not a religion; it is a movement for the defence and propagation of Islam. It is not a sect in the ordinary sense of the word, but it is meant to unite all the Muslim sects, because we truly believe that there are no sects in Islam. We believe in the Qur’an. We believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas). In fact, we believe in all the prophets of God. We believe in the institutions of prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage. These are the fundamentals of Islam, and Ahmadis do not differ in these basic beliefs, nor do the other Muslim schools of thought or sects.

Back to the Qur’an
Still, Ahmadis are different. The Ahmadiyya Movement is a progressive movement in this age and Ahmadis want to take Muslims back to the original pristine purity of Islam as is ordained in the pages of the Holy Qur’an and was practiced in the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (sas). In this way, Ahmadis have opened new windows through which fresh breeze has started coming into the religious thought of Islam.

This, though, has disturbed those people who have kept the room closed for a very long time. They cannot tolerate the fresh breeze coming into the religious thought of Muslims, so they want to shut the window against it. We think they have kept themselves closed in a room and the windows of the room, which would have allowed in fresh air, have been shut for such a long time that the atmosphere has become stink due to stagnation. This is not what Islam means. Islam is a rational religion; it is a progressive religion, and it keeps its doors open to meet all the situations in the world in any age.

Allowing fresh air into the religious thought of Islam in the light of the Qur’an is a very disturbing factor to those who thought whatever interpretation of Islam was given regarding some matters a thousand years ago should still be considered valid. Ahmadis do not accept that position. Ahmadis consider the Qur’an as the final word of God, and then hold the Sayings of the Prophet (sas), which are in conformity with the Qur’an, as next in importance. Then comes the position of the verdicts of the Imams of various schools of thought which are in conformity with the Qur’an and the authentic sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas). But the Muslim world generally gives priority to the verdicts of the Imams, followed by the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas), and finally the Qur’an. Ahmadis in this age are the only Muslims who give priority to the Qur’an.

If you look at the syllabus of madrassas in India, you will see that they teach Islamic jurisprudence, and minor details of Islamic Law. They teach Hadith and the differences that exist between its various kinds and narrations. The Qur’an, however, is taught during the last year, and that, too, only some of its selected chapters and some grammatical points regarding it. In fact, no particular emphasis is laid on the message and the spirit of the Qur’an as a book of guidance. What does this show?
Allama Muhammad Iqbal, one of the great poets of Indo-Pakistan, was surprised that Ahmadis had such a great love for the Qur’an and that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was exceptional in composing poems in praise of the Qur’an. Please show me any person who has composed poem after poem in praise of the Qur’an. Islamic history is full of great saints and Sufi poets who have composed wonderful poems in praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas), but let us see how many renowned poets there are who have composed poems in praise of the Qur’an. The Founder expressed his love for the Qur’an in exceptional and passionate expressions, such as, “he would like to go around it as if it is his spiritual mentor.”

Show me in Islamic history where any poet has declared the Qur’an as his beloved Book.

Let me quote a couplet from a poem by Hazrat Mirza Sahib in praise of the Qur’an as a book of supreme guidance:

Ay azeezo sunoo keh be Qur’an.
Haqq ko milta naheen kabhi insaan.
Dear ones, listen! A person will never find God unless he goes to the Qur’an.

At another place he expresses his extreme love for the Qur’an thus:

Dil meyn yahee hai her dam teraa saheefaa choomoo
Qur’aan ke gird ghoomoon ka’bah meraa yahee hai.
It is my wish that I should kiss Thy scripture and go round and round the Qur’an
As if it is the spiritual centre like the Ka’bah for me.

This drive towards the Qur’an as the main source of guidance changed the entire atmosphere in the Muslim world, and this move towards the Qur’an brought a fresh breeze into the thought-process of the Muslim thinkers. This, unfortunately, also caused a wave of concern among the orthodox clerics who started to raise objections against this move, saying that the Ahmadiyya views and interpretation based on the Qur’an and the authentic Hadith overrule the verdict and interpretation of the great Imams which they had been following for more than past thirteen centuries. Ahmadis claim that the God of Islam is a Living God and their divine guidance – the Qur’an – is a living Book. The Founder said: “Woh khudaa ab bhi banaataa hai jisey chaahi kaleem.” (God still speaks to His chosen servants whom He loves.)

Muslims believe that God spoke to Prophets, Moses and Jesus, and that He spoke to Prophet Muhammad (sas), and that was the end of it. On the other hand, Ahmadis believe that God’s attribute of speaking is always operational. He spoke to prophets and non-prophets before and will continue to speak to His chosen ones for all times to come. The Qur’an also mentions God speaking to Moses’ mother, to Jesus’ mother and to apostles of Jesus. Muslim history mentions scores of saints and mujaddids with whom God communicated and who worked spiritual treats and who showed the light of Islam to thousands. Certainly these were not prophets.

God speaking to His servants other than prophets has been termed as mubashshiraat or good news in the Hadith. God speaking to His servants can be of various stature – acceptance of prayers, informing of coming happenings or events and even showing unusual support against opponents of
Islam. The *Hadith* also explains these as true dreams and news about the unforeseen. Muslims, however, not caring what the Qur’an or the *Hadith* or Muslim history say about such manner of Divine communication, took it as introducing a new element of prophethood into the Muslim religious thought. They outrightly declared it as heresy. To believe that God still speaks to people other than prophets as He spoke in the past was considered as heresy – an innovation – and such a believer was condemned as a non-Muslim.

**No Apostasy in Islam**
Ahmadis strongly emphasise that the Qur’an should be considered the criterion to decide all previous verdicts and interpretations and also to present issues arising out of new questions relating to modern activities. The orthodox view is that it is the *Imams* and past jurists whose ruling should be considered as right and final and should be taken as a guide for the future, as well. This is where the orthodox Muslims are wrong, as it is contrary to the teachings of Islam as the final word of God. For instance, the Qur’an says that “there is no compulsion in religion” (2:256). Religion is free for everybody. Everybody is free to enter the fold of Islam, and if somebody wants to go out of the fold, he is free to decide. It is common sense and freedom in the true sense of the word that if there is freedom to enter the fold of Islam then it should also be free to leave. It cannot be that entering is allowed and leaving is not. Unfortunately, Muslims generally believe that to enter into the fold of Islam is one’s free choice, but the door of going out, although it is also open, there is a condition that such a person is given a time limit of three days to think about it. If such a person decides to leave the fold then the sword is there to kill him for making such a wrong decision.

This is an anti-Qur’anic and anti-Islamic belief. It is an outright denial of freedom of religion which Islam so strongly upholds and has been practiced during its early period. Unfortunately, these Muslims, contrary to the clear teachings of the Qur’an, consider it as one of the religious duties of a Muslim to kill a non-Muslim or an apostate. And, sadly, many people have been killed on this wrong notion.

That is why Ahmadis raise their voice against this anti-Islamic practice – something strange and jarring –which they found absolutely against the teachings of the Qur’an. The orthodox Muslims protested that such Ahmadiyya interpretations are an interference with the law of God and the accepted practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas). The interpretation of Ahmadis on such ‘vital’ issues is altering the law of God. They are heretics. They are infidels. They are non-believers. They should not be considered Muslims at all because they are introducing such novel interpretations! But the truth is that it is these orthodox Muslims who are ignorant of the true teachings of Islam. They have forgotten what is the true message of Islam. They blindly follow the interpretation and views of the old *Imams* and jurists. They have accepted as true the wrong interpretation of the Qur’anic verses in this regard and they still believe that their understanding and interpretation of the Qur’an are correct.

**No Slavery in Islam**
Ahmadis believe that there is no slavery in Islam. Look at the Middle East. You can still buy slaves there. Slave girls are still available in the market. It is not done openly, but if you go to Saudi Arabia and study the conditions of servants working in various Royal families, you will see plenty of girls working there whose plight is miserable. Ahmadis believe that that kind of bondage is against the teachings of the Qur’an.
The mater does not end there. The *shaikhs* and other so-called elites believe that a Muslim is allowed to marry four wives, and on top of that, have an unlimited number of concubines. Do you think that this is Islam? Do you think that this kind of Islam is going to be accepted by the modern world? Ahmadis believe that all these kinds of practices which are done in the name of Islam are, in fact, un-Islamic. Look at the lives of these kings and *shaikhs*. They invariably have four wives and an unlimited number of slave girls. There is a story related about the late King Ibn-i Saud. He saw a pretty girl and told his secretary that he wanted to marry her. The secretary said: “Sir, you cannot have her.” The King responded: “How is it that I am the king of this country and I cannot have a girl of my choice?” The secretary replied: “Sir, she is your daughter; therefore you cannot marry her.”

Such is the state of affairs in the royal families that the King does not even know how many daughters he has. They are more concerned about the sons as they are princes who form the backbone of the royal authority. Rulers, and the so-called *ulama*, have ruined the institution of marriage. They have degraded the status and honour of women. Ahmadis raised their voice against all such un-Islamic and anti-Qur’anic interpretations of the Qur’an. This kind of protest and corrections posed by Ahmadis disturb the orthodox Muslims, and instead of giving arguments and references in support of their wrong interpretation, the orthodox Muslims find it easier to declare Ahmadis as heretics and out of the fold of Islam.

**Tolerance towards other religions**

There are several other misinterpretations and misconceptions which are also against the teachings of the Qur’an and the ideal concepts of Islam that Ahmadis do not accept and they instead prefer what the Qur’an says. There are mosques in the Muslim world where it is written that Ahmadis are not allowed and there are some where Shias and members of other schools of thought are not allowed. Houses of worship which are only meant for the remembrance of God are denied to the very people who wish to remember God. The Qur’an says that he is the greatest aggressor who closes the doors of a mosque on Muslims: “And who is more unjust than he who prevents people from the mosques of Allah, from His name being remembered therein” (2:114).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas) once invited a Christian delegation from Najran to Madina. The delegation consisted of 60 members and was headed by Abdul Masih. There was no hall big enough to accommodate them, so the group was lodged in the Prophet’s Mosque (which is today called *Masjid-i Nabawi*). The Holy Prophet (sas) had long discussions with the Christians about various Islamic and Christian beliefs. Then came Sunday, the time for worship for the Christians, and the Holy Prophet (sas) felt that Abdul Masih was getting anxious about where to perform the weekly service. In response, the Holy Prophet (sas) allowed them to use a part of the mosque for their service.

This, therefore, was the spirit of religious freedom and tolerance that Muslims practiced during the time of the Holy Prophet (sas). We do not usually see that breadth of tolerance among the Muslims now. We are not inclined to allow People of the Book to come to the mosque and perform any sort of worship. Ahmadis, though, keep their places of worship open for the People of the Book. We believe that anyone who believes in God can enter any place of worship because it is one of the basic beliefs of the teachings of the Qur’an that prophets were raised in all nations and communities of the world.
Accordingly, we Ahmadis believe that Buddha, Krishna, and all such spiritual men who appeared in various parts of the world were men of God and deserve reverence. Generally, Muslims believe only in those prophets whose names have been mentioned in the Qur’an, in spite of the fact that they believe that prophets were sent to all the nations and communities of the world. The Qur’an says that every prophet was given a Book. It has been mentioned in an authentic hadith that a prophet was sent to India who had a dark complexion. In the light of the teachings of the Qur’an, Ahmadis believe that all these people who believe that their religious masters got inner enlightenment from God should be considered as People of the Book in the same way as Muslims believe the Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians are People of the Book and should be given the respect and tolerance they deserve.

This tolerant view of Islam or Islamic teachings by Ahmadis is considered by orthodox Muslims in Pakistan and other Muslim countries as introducing something new, something which is an innovation, which is considered against the accepted view of Islam. Their view is that the interpretation or views based on the Qur’an and the authentic Hadith should be overruled in view of the rulings of the Imams and jurists of the past.

Ahmadis should not be allowed to enter mosques and should be considered as non-Muslims. Some fanatics in Pakistan have gone to the extent of proposing that since Ahmadis have been declared as non-Muslims, they should therefore have no right to construct a mosque (as if non-Muslims also construct mosques).

We are faced with a strange anomaly here. If an Ahmadi goes anywhere in the world and says that he is a Muslim he is considered a Muslim on a simple declaration, but this is not the case in Pakistan. In Pakistan, if an Ahmadi says that he is a Muslim, he is told that he is not a Muslim but a non-Muslim and he cannot call himself a Muslim, and if he refuses to accept this verdict then he is committing a crime, which is punishable with imprisonment and a fine. Ahmadis are also not allowed to print the Qur’an and call their organisation as Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at-i Islam – Association for the Propagation of Islam. Ahmadis are not allowed to function as Muslims or even pose themselves as Muslims. In other words, Ahmadis are not allowed to pray as Muslims, and if they are found doing so, they can be punished for six months. These are some of the basic wrongs being done by the fanatics, which are not only contrary to the fundamental teachings of the Islam but have also disfigured the beautiful face of Islam.

The Ahmadiyya Movement was started by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad under the command of God to defend Islam against the misconceptions and misinterpretations of the orthodox Muslims. The verdicts and interpretations of the past Imams were against the clear verdict of the Qur’an. He warned the Ahmadiyya community that they will face many trials and tribulations in upholding the true teachings of the Qur’an. He assured them that this movement, which was started under the command of God, will ultimately succeed. Those who have started the mission of propagating and defending the cause of Islam with determination should continue this noble jihad. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said that those who find their feet soft and cannot bear the hardship of treading the strenuous path should not follow him as it is a great struggle to eradicate misconceptions and misinterpretations of the teachings of Islam.
No violence in Islam
I have explained earlier that there is no fundamental difference between Ahmadi and other Muslims. We consider this cause as essentially important to remove misconceptions and wrong interpretations from the fair face of Islam. Muslims are busy in the business of the world without caring what great harm is being done to the teachings of Islam. Ahmadi have undertaken a pledge to serve the cause of Islam in maintaining its true word and spirit. We uphold this cause over and above worldly matters and we shall continue to do so whether we are considered Muslims or not Muslims. That is beside the point. Religion is our priority. Islam must come first. We consider ourselves as soldiers of Islam who must not resort to violence but propagate and persuade through peaceful means.

Again, there is another charge against Ahmadi: that we do not believe in violence, the violence in the form of waging jihad against non-Muslims. This unprovoked jihad is against the word and spirit of the teachings of the Qur’an. The other day a lady was killed in Peshawar because people thought that what she was upholding as Islam was heresy and she was killed in broad daylight. The person who killed that innocent, young, enlightened lady considered that he had done a great service to the cause of Islam. This is not true jihad. It is brutality. It is an inhuman act of violence.

Similarly, in the time of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement an English man went to Qadian. He was very scared, so people asked him why. He said that he was afraid that someone might kill him as he was a non-Muslim. He was assured that nobody would do that because it was against the teachings of the Qur’an, and if any Muslim resorted to something which is different then it is un-Islamic and anti-Qur’anic.

True Concept of Jihad
Jihad, according to us, is a struggle, and that is the purpose of the Qur’anic teachings, as well. If you are attacked you are allowed to defend yourself. Jihad with the Qur’an is the greatest jihad. It is a continuous struggle against the insinuations of one’s inner self. It is not violence as practiced in the Middle East or anywhere else in the Muslim world. Iraq waged war against Iran and it continued for years. Both countries considered that they were doing jihad. We don’t believe in this kind of war being jihad. This view that is taken by Ahmadi is considered as something which is against the general view of jihad by other Muslims. Muslims consider this view of Ahmadi as abrogation of Jihad with sword. This, though, is what the Qur’an clearly says.

Role of Inter-faith Dialogue
We consider Islam as a message of peace and it is a source of inner peace for the spiritual elevation of Muslims and also guarantees peaceful co-existence for people belonging to other religions. We shall lay our lives to maintain such peace. I-S-L-A-M stands for I Shall Love All Mankind. This inter-faith exercise we are having does not mean that we do not have differences. Please don’t think that everything is alright with us. We have differences, and huge differences sometimes. It is just like a very broad stream: at some places the two banks come very close to each other; we are trying to bring those points still closer. Or you can understand it in this way: If you are standing at the bottom of the mountain and the other person is standing on the other side of the mountain and there is a vast distance between the two. If one person starts climbing up the mountain from one side and the other from the other side to reach the top, and they reach a point where they could extend a hand of cooperation and friendship to reach the top, that is what inter-faith dialogue does.
We have differences, but our point is that, in spite of those differences, we can be friends and cooperate with one another. We can be good neighbours. We can walk with each other, talking about things of common interest. And that is very important in this global age. There is a very good example of inter-faith cooperation. It is a story of three friends. They were travelling in a boat when suddenly a storm broke. The boat was going to sink and all except three persons got life-jackets. All three friends – a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Jew – had jackets. But when the captain of the ship announced that there was shortage of three jackets, the three friends gave away theirs. Then everybody jumped into the sea with their life-jackets, except these three, who put their hands together and said: “Pray to God in one’s own way,” and they, too, jumped into the sea. The ship sank. A church has been built in their memory in the United States. This is the spirit of inter-faith fellowship and this the objective of inter-faith dialogue: to foster a spirit of togetherness, love and amity.

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A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION …

BOMBING AT THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL AHMADIYYA CONVENTION, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, AUGUST 1983

SHAYAMA DEEN LEE CHONG

The year was 1983 and the excitement was building. Like the years before, there was always a buzz of activity every time the hosting of one of these international events came around. But, somehow, this year was to be different.

It was excitement of a different kind. My father, Kamalo Deen, was leading the Trinidad-based choir, Ahamadiyya Sangeet, which, by then, was a nationally-acclaimed group, having taken part in many local talent contests. The Ahmadiyya Sangeet had just released its second recording of the Songs of Islam, produced by Brother Wahid Omardeen. We were busy planning a grand stage musical, which was to be held on the night of the Convention’s cultural extravaganza.

As was the norm, a lot of the planning for many Conventions gone by was often done at the Gasparillo Mosque Hall and also at the home of Brother Wahid and Sister Sohaila Omardeen. Actually, their home and ours was the hub of many of these activities. The 1983 Convention was no different.

Maulana Tufail was, for our family, not just a missionary from Pakistan/England, but we considered him and his entire family as part of our own. No wonder we had such deep involvement in every aspect of Ahamadiyyat in Trinidad and Tobago, especially from the 1960s to the 1980s.
By the time of this eventful Convention, we had known of Maulana’s serious illness and we were all worried whether it would be his last visit to our shores. Thus, more emphasis was made by the then-President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at-i Islam, Trinidad and Tobago, Br Enayat Mohammed, and Br Wahid Omardeen and their organising committee to make this a grand affair. Never before was so much media attention given to a “religious activity”, and especially an event held by the Muslim community.

We had had many foreign guests attend our Conventions and other functions in the past, but this year was by far more internationally represented – Surinam, Guyana, America, Canada, Holland, England and Pakistan.

We had some prominent visitors likes Mian Farooq Ahmad, a highly-respected businessman from Pakistan; Mr Abdul Aziz Kashmiri, editor of the Daily Roshni, a newspaper from Srinagar, Kashmir, and President of the Editors Association of Kashmir; and Mr Suyud Ahmad Syurayudha of Indonesia, who had been in Trinidad for a number of months teaching the recitation of the Qur’an and also attending the imamat classes conducted by Maulana Kemal Hydal. Besides many foreign delegates, we also had several friends of Mrs Tufail, such as Mrs Choudary from England, who had come to Trinidad for the first time and who was so excited to be here. Also here was Maulana and Mrs Tufail’s son, Salman Ibni Tufail. Although by now he was considered a regular, yet his attendance on this great occasion was quite an added excitement. The occasion was a grand (re)union of friends and family coming together for the common cause of spreading the word of Islam through Ahmadiyyat.

So, we were on high gear. Preparation was in full swing; committees were set up, which included members from all of our affiliated Jama’ats. You could feel the excitement building. Everyone was on board and ready for a much-anticipated week of activities.

For the first time we had planned a grand cultural evening, to be held on the third night. As we had the use of the Marabella Senior Comprehensive School for any of the activities we wished to hold there, it was decided to have the opening and launch, and the cultural evening – a musical production written by Sister Sohaila Omardeen and directed by my father Kamalo Deen, with members of various Jama’ats using only the Songs of Islam – there, as the school had a large auditorium and stage.

As young people, we were very excited and this play was our main focus and involvement so we had taken the several weeks of rehearsals prior very seriously.

The opening was on the evening of Friday 12 August with an interfaith programme that included respected leaders of the Hindu and Christian communities coming to join our own esteemed dignitaries.

After Jumu’ah salah, all involved in the play gathered in the School auditorium for the last stage rehearsal and to go through all the songs that we were to perform during the week of the Convention. By now, we were all seasoned professionals and had had long practice.
Br Zaid Omardeen, who was our resident sound technician, accompanied us to the venue as he had to set up the sound system on the stage for the evening’s proceedings. He made sure that power outlets for extensions etc. were all working and that the microphones were placed in strategic positions for the various items on the programme.

We had started the rehearsal of our play when I discovered someone feverishly trying to open the door at the back of the stage, and being a past pupil of the school I knew that that door was not operational, so I called out this fact to the person and gave directions to go to the front. No one came, and when I looked from the front of the stage I saw a fair-skinned man dressed in football gear with a large sports bag walking away from the direction of the door. This seemed normal since it was a school and there was a group of men on the field who were taking part in football practice.

A few minutes later, a darker-skinned man came and sat in the audience area and was looking on at our performance and showing quite an interest in our activities. At one time, when we had taken a short break, the fair-skinned man joined the other one. They were both very friendly to us and even went on the stage and were walking around. I clearly remember my Aunty Sohaila Omardeen not being quite comfortable with this, but Uncle Wahid Omardeen, on the other hand, was busy inviting them to attend the week of activities. In hindsight, it seemed quite strange that we found no reason to be really worried. We were still so naive we saw no reason to be alarmed.

The time finally arrived for the opening of the Ninth International Ahamadiyya Convention. I was asked to accompany Br Zaid Omardeen early to the venue to assist in the setting up of the rest of his sound system. Salman Ibni Tufail went along, as well, making it three of us.

When we got there and Br Zaid started to power up his equipment we noticed some of the previously-working lights and outlets on the stage were now without power, so we asked the security guards who were there for assistance. They were quite baffled about the loss of power, stating they were clueless about what had happened since the last people in the auditorium were those connected to us. I distinctly remember one saying the last guy left was the one wearing the gown. It did strike a nerve, but, again, I was totally unaware that this could mean something disastrous. Br Zaid Omardeen, with the help of the security and the maintenance people, made some quick fixes with the use of extension cords and got power from other outlets. Still, we were complacent about how these perfectly working fixtures of just about two hours prior could now be non-functional, but the evening’s proceeding were drawing near and business had to go on.

The programme was set to begin at 7:15 p.m. We had a lovely full auditorium of not just our members and well-wishers, but of others, too, so that it truly reflected an interfaith gathering. Everyone was dressed in their finest, and the sound of greetings and laughter filled the air. We knew that this was going to be a week we would never forget. As everyone started to settle in their seats I could see Aunty Sohaila Omardeen on the outside just being very nervous and making sure all was in order with the dignitaries and the other important guests who were all seated in the front row. We had escorted the main speakers to the head table on the stage.

The proceedings were called to order by the President, Br Enayat Mohammed, and we had the opening du’ā and a lovely Quranic recitation done by our Indonesian brother, Suyud Ahmad Syurayudha. Then Maulana Tufail took the microphone and introduced the theme of the night’s proceedings,
after which he was about to call on the children to render a song when a very loud and resounding explosive-type sound rocked the auditorium. No smoke or dust or anything like that accompanied the sound, so almost instinctively we all turned to Br Zaid Omardeen wondering if it may have been one of his speakers or something electrical.

At this point people started becoming a bit agitated, with some standing and some attempting to leave, when Maulana Tufail went back to the microphone and told everyone to settle down, saying: “Stop playing with the electrical wires. It looks like we are starting out our Convention with a bang.” For some reason I walked over to the back of the room where Br Zaid Omardeen was and I could see the very puzzled look on his face. He told me his equipment, including the speakers, was working fine. At that point, another slightly smaller but still teeth-chattering explosion rang out. I spun around because this time we heard screams as fire and smoke started to come from under the stage. Aunty Sohaila ran into the hall saying to get the people out immediately: “Please everyone, run. We have been sabotaged.” Then two more loud explosions rang out in succession. We could see shrapnel flying and smoke and fire everywhere. I saw my aunt being thrown in the air by the force of the explosion. She had been standing at the front of the stage where the explosions went off, trying to assist the older ladies who were sitting there, one of them being her mother. People were scampering about and everyone was looking to help one another get out as quickly as they could. It was chaos like we had never experienced. The place was on fire and I remember seeing some of the men quickly pulling huge hoses, running in to put out the fire, not even thinking it was a bomb and that they could be in danger and maybe that there could be more explosions. I also recall seeing the father of Sister Nadara Khan, Mr Manawar Khan, lifting Aunty Sohaila and running to a car with her.

Still in a daze from the blast, I was frantically looking for my grandmother since she, together with Mrs Nasira Tufail and others, were in the row directly in front where the explosion had taken place. But we seemed to be in a war zone: children screaming and the sound of horror everywhere; it was a chilling atmosphere.

By this time the police and fire department personnel were already on site but I still could not find my grandmother when people started to pull cars and vans up to the building to take the injured to hospital. Ambulances had no time to get there. Our members were moving like clockwork. I saw a group of people surrounding someone, saying: “Take her quickly.” It was my grandmother, with blood everywhere, her hand wrapped in multiple dupattas. She was almost fainting, but still asking for her daughter: “Where is Sohaila? Where is Sohaila?” Imagine my horror at that point. Salman Ibni Tufail reassured me that his father and my grandfather were okay and that people had assisted them into vehicles headed to the hospital.

At this point, I, too, got into a car that was immediately behind the one taking my grandmother to the hospital. Up to this day I cannot remember whose car I was in or who were the other occupants. All I could recall is getting to the hospital. I had no shoes, no handbag, no dupatta. It was also amazing to see almost all the people had gone to the hospital. There were about twenty people injured, with my grandmother being the most serious. Thankfully, she did not lose her hand, but her finger was almost blown off and had to be stitched back. It healed but with a noticeable injury, which she took to her grave.
Among the others injured was Sister Vena, who had come from the London Jama’at. We thank Allah no one died, although Mrs Nasira Tufail probably came closest to being a fatality as we discovered her handbag in the auditorium the next day with a big hole in it with a piece of very heavy shrapnel lodged inside. She had had that bag on her lap.

Those four bombs together with a fifth which was miraculously disarmed by some mysterious force were actually wired to all go off simultaneously. It is said man can plan but Allah is the Ultimate Planner.

The next day, when the Police and the Bomb Squad personnel interviewed all of us who were present at the site prior to the function, to get our account of what we had seen and remembered, it became apparent to the authorities that the two men we had encountered on that day were responsible for the explosions. It became clear too that our presence there had thwarted their efforts and the bombs, even though strategically placed, were not set up properly and so they went off prematurely. The authorities continued their investigations, but, sadly, thirty-two years, no one has ever been held.

Our house and that of Maulana Kemal Hydal and of Br Enayat Mohammed were given police protection for the rest of the Convention since all the prominent leaders of the various delegations were staying at those locations. My family had at least three of the injured: Mrs Nasira Tufail, her friend Mrs Choudhary, and Sohaila Omardeen. My grandmother, Mrs Zool Deen, spent a few weeks in hospital recovering from blood loss and surgery to her hand.

It was decided that with police escorting us everywhere, we should continue the activities of our Convention. We had full attendance at every venue with a renewed spirit of excitement and determination to spread the word of Islam and the message of Ahmadiyyat and to stay true to our theme: Promote Ethical and Spiritual Values for the Welfare of Mankind.

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“Aunty Sohaila ran into the hall saying to get the people out immediately: “Please everyone, run. We have been sabotaged.” Then two more loud explosions rang out in succession. We could see shrapnel flying and smoke and fire everywhere. I saw my aunt being thrown in the air by the force of the explosion. She had been standing at the front of the stage where the explosions went off, trying to assist the older ladies who were sitting there, one of them being her mother.”
AFTERMATH OF THE BOMBING AT THE LAHORE AHMADIYYA CONVENION IN TRINIDAD 1983
We first met Mrs. Nasira Tufail in 1967 when she and her four children came to Trinidad to join her husband Maulana S M Tufail and her son Basharat. The four who came with her were Aini, Asma, Anisa and Ibni. Roehi did not come. The night they arrived is still very clear in our memory. They had a long flight from London and were very tired. Mrs Tufail did not seem to mind that so many of us had gone to their home in San Fernando to welcome them. She said that we made her feel as if she had gone to her homeland of Pakistan. She lived in Trinidad for two years until July 1969. During that time our family developed a close relationship with hers. We were frequent visitors to their home. Mrs. Tufail and our mama Mrs. Zool Deen became good friends. She and her daughter Aini visited our home in Gasparillo very often. Mama was a good seamstress and they came to sew with her. We have many lovely memories of her in Trinidad. On one occasion because of an almost island wide shortage they were without water. According to Mrs. Tufail they did not even have one drop stored. When our papa found out about this he filled every container that could fit in his car and took the water to them. Mrs. Tufail was very grateful. She said that Allah had sent “an angel” to save them. Mrs. Tufail visited Trinidad twice after 1969. In 1983 for the Ahamadiyya Convention when she, Maulana Tufail and their son Ibni were our guests.

Maulana Tufail died in 1984. Mrs Tufail and her daughter Roehi came to Trinidad in 1985 to attend 10th anniversary celebrations of the Ahamadiyya Anjuman. They stayed with Zakeya and Fyzool as all others in our family were out of the country. Zakeya recalls that it was indeed a very memorable visit. They had a very hectic time attending functions, entertaining friends and sightseeing. They shared many hilarious moments with Fyzool. A highlight of that week was a trip “down the islands”. They went to spend a day there with some relatives. They had a fabulous time. Mrs. Tufail really wanted to go into the water but she did not take any extra clothes. So it was Fyzool to the rescue. She used his clothes. His T-shirt looked like a kameez on her! Roehi expressed her gratitude to Fyzool as she said it was the first time since her father died that she saw her mother smiling and laughing. Zakey recalls sadly that that was the last time they saw her.

Over the years our family has maintained close relationship with the Tufails. In 1984 after Maulana Tufail died seven members of our family visited England. The seven were Zakeya and Fyzool, Shyama, my husband Wahid (Doolie) our children Ruhee and Idrees and me. We spent lovely times with them in Woking and Mrs. Tufail and Ibni went with us to Lockerbie, Scotland.

During the last few years of her life we (Wahid and I) were very fortunate to be able to visit her fairly often. I believe she was glad for our company especially Wahid’s, he sang songs of Islam and played his harmonica for her. She loved it. The last time I saw her was in December 2014. Wahid, Shyama and I visited her in Woking. Although she was not well she was her usual warm and wonderful self.

Some people just have the ability to make a lasting impression. Mrs. Tufail was one such person. She was a gem. We consider it a great blessing to have known this lovely lady. Truly she was an
inspiration to so many of us. May Almighty Allah continue to shower His mercy and blessings on her soul and keep her among His righteous ones in Jannah.

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A TRIBUTE TO DEAR AMMI

‘LOSS LEAVES A HEART-ACHE NO ONE CAN HEAL, BUT LOVE LEAVES A MEMORY NO ONE CAN STEAL’.

ASMA MARTIN, CAMBRIDGE.

One of Ammi’s favourite phrases was: “Dil ko dil say raah hooti hey.” It is usually said when a close friend comes to see another close friend. It is an expression to show extreme love which both friends have for each other.

A devoted companion
Married to a noble person who was dedicated to the cause of Islam, presenting universal teachings of Islam to the people in the West he could be termed an international person with a universal perspective. So began Ammi’s adult life beside him and her partnership with him in a humanitarian and public service in different parts of the world. She arrived at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking with 6 children in winter of 1959. She worked with a commitment promoting peace and harmony through selflessness and hospitality. She was not daunted by this role in any way. However it was no small feat for a Pakistani woman of a humble background to be faced with such a mammoth task. She was not trained in such matters having been a teacher briefly before her marriage, but her courage, sociable nature, optimism, open mindedness and integrity helped her to become a successful ambassador for her husband as well as of a Pakistani woman abroad.

A gracious host
She was not daunted by her tasks at the Mosque, undertaking the role of being a gracious host at the Shah Jehan Mosque to people from all walks of life - leading religious leaders of different faiths, High Commissioners, academic and religious scholars, ambassadors of different Muslim countries as well as local people and those from her own community. Sundays was ‘open day’ and she never knew how many people would be visiting the oldest Mosque in England but she and Mrs Mehmudah Abdullah would be ready to welcome guests with tea and refreshments with a sense of calmness and enthusiasm.

Ammi loved ‘mehman nevaze (hospitality and serving people). So our home in Holland, the Woking Mosque, Trinidad and again Orchard Close in Woking would always be blessed with relatives, friends, my father’s Jama’at colleagues or those that visited informally to enquire about Islam.
Comfortable in diverse cultural situations
Ammi must have believed in ‘adjusting the sails of her boat whenever change occurred’. In Holland she was thrown into a different culture, language, custom, yet never complained. She quickly learned enough Dutch to get her and her 3 daughters out and about, settled into school, communicate with teachers, neighbours, shopkeepers. Our neighbour soon became our Tante (an auntie). In the evenings she always had exciting stories to tell my father about her day’s experience. She adjusted with ease, and despite responsibilities of a busy mother, also hosted my father’s Dutch and Malaysian guests at home.

In the mid 60s my father’s vocation led him to Trinidad leaving the comfortable life she had known at the Woking Mosque, England. She was very active outside the realms of supporting my father’s missionary work commitments and being a mother. Ammi adjusted into the Trinidad community quickly and amazingly well. She made contributions in many ways. Actively participated in Ahmadiyya conventions in Trinidad and travelling to inter-faith meetings in Barbados, Guyana and Suriname. In Trinidad she was a keen member of the San Fernando Muslim Womens Association. As always her sociability, flexibility, optimism and cheerful approach made her very popular. Ammi adjusted with ease in diverse cultural situations that other women would have shied away from. Whether in the UK, Holland or Trinidad the differences in language and culture would not dampen her feelings.

Tremendous stamina to adjustment
When we returned to Woking to a more humble abode at Orchard Close, which remained her permanent home and being only a stone’s throw from the Mosque, Ammi once again settled herself and her family with enthusiasm, energy and optimism, making a new start. She always loved her garden, encouraging us to make sure there were flowering shrubs in the garden and rose bushes which were her favourite. The lawn was kept neat and she made sure that the birds were fed and had water. These little things were a source of great pleasure and contentment for her. She loved nature’s different seasons and observed keenly the changes these brought to the flowers and trees. Ammi soon made many new friends, picked up where she had left off with old ones and continued to support her husband in his many varied literary works. It is only as adults we realise what a capable and unflappable person she was.

A constant source of inspiration and service
When my father became ill she would not hesitate to drive him through busy London traffic to hospital appointments, welcome visitors at home from the Jama’at and also support his translation works and commitment to inter-faith meetings. She dedicated and sacrificed her time more profusely. Her strength was such that despite being overwhelmed at times by looking after her terminally ill husband she continued to provide solace to all those who visited him until he died in April 1984.

Ammi was 9 years old when she lost her father. She was greatly influenced by the strength and determination of her own widowed mother who continued her education to become a teacher and worked her way to become headmistress of a school in Wazirabad. This left a lasting impression on Ammi and made her the strong, resilient woman she became, able to achieve so much, and when time demanded, to be very supportive and also a great comfort.
Her own health started to deteriorate in 2008 when she could no longer travel independently. She loved travelling and never lost her love of ‘being on the go’ for kith and kin after my father's demise. She travelled to India, Pakistan, Trinidad as well as extensively within the UK.

Despite Ammi’s advancing disease she still expected too much of herself, always worrying about others’ comforts. She should have celebrated how very far she had come more often. I am very glad we managed to be with her as much as possible so she was never left alone although her cruel illness would mean she would forget who came, how long they stayed or whether anyone came at all despite our reassurances. She was surrounded by the love of us all but towards the end she surrendered to what was happening.

Trust in Allah
Ammi often talked about birth and death as if they were of the same coin. She never feared death and in her last year she would often remind us all that she did not fear death but in all things she put her Trust in Allah often quoting ‘surely we are Allah’s and to Him we shall return’. Even when in pain and the discomfort disturbed her she would remind herself that to put your Trust in Allah was best. Her bravery and ‘the will and strength to hold on’ through the many years of illness inspired us all. We all tried to spend as much time with her despite the distances and it became apparent that she manifested a true expression of a Muslim’s resignation under trials and she was also a spiritual inspiration. Ammi still managed to show interest and amazement in the beauties surrounding her and was thankful to Allah for such small mercies continuing to be brave and strong.

I made sure whenever I visited she had many Mosque visits and outings nearby. In the spring and summer Ammi liked sitting in her garden watching the birds, squirrels, trees, flowers – deeply engrossed in Allah’s simple blessings - but the Mosque would always be her favourite.

Love of Nature
Last August she commented on the red and yellow rose bushes in the Mosque garden whilst bathed in warm sunshine rays of summer and said, how merciful Allah was. She sat in silence most of the time contented to be in the garden with me, Anisa and her grandson Yusuf, maybe remembering when she was a young strong mother herself or a healthy young woman working as a teacher. A couple of men assisted us with taking the wheelchair inside the Mosque and for some time Ammi sat in total silence, then started softly reading the kalimah boldly written inside, in the alcove. She read it several times and we joined in. She also noticed and read other Quranic inscriptions on the walls. It was food to her soul as well as brought happy memories of her time here as the Imam’s wife.

When loved ones die, they don’t go, they leave a certain energy behind which is recreated in many other ways. Her presence in this world is still very strongly felt and her smile, laughter, strength, expectation of the door bell ringing, the people she helped as a ‘Mother to a child’ – of people she gave strength, hope and encouragement. She did not let the negative things in her life like her illness, spoil the good things that were still there for her. She was blessed by family and warm feelings of her community nearby, the love, care and devotion of all her children, grandchildren, daughter in laws and friends.

On 18th April she was laid to rest at Brookwood Cemetery beside her husband. It was a beautiful spring day and as her grandson appropriately said ‘.. But if Naanjian were a day, then she would be
a beautiful warm spring day, like today, brightening up all our lives. .. But that sun has set now; for everything changes'.

**Love leaves a memory**

Many people wanted to tell anecdotes of their experience and relationship with Ammi. Some were friends from the Mosque days. Their message was the same that Ammi had become not only a good friend to them but a mother figure, even a grandmother to their children. Even though she was a devoted mother of 6 she still found the strength and patience to help many less fortunate. So after the funeral her house was full with people who had come to pay their last respects to a great departed soul, a Khidmat Sister and Samaritan, who had a blessed well lived life. Her house was an example of peace, harmony, community, social cohesion and exemplified ‘mehman navazi’.

For me: ‘Loss leaves a heart-ache no one can heal,
But love leaves a memory no one can steal’.

‘So Allah rewarded them for what they did with gardens [in Paradise] in which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. And that is the reward of doers of good.’

“O soul that are at rest, return to your Lord, well pleased, well-pleasing. So enter among My servants and enter my Garden”. (89:27-30).

**CONDOLENCE MESSAGES**

**LINK TO FUNERAL ON LIVESTREAM**

HTTP://LIVESTREAM.COM/VIRTUAL-MOSQUE/EVENTS/3980236
(COURTESY: MUDASSAR AZIZ, UK Jama’at)

Dr Zahid Aziz, Nottingham, UK

It is with very great regret and sadness that I announce the death, early this morning 11th April 2015 in UK, of Mrs Nasira Tufail of Woking, *innaa lil-laahi wa innaa ilaihi raaji`un*.

She was wife of the late Sheikh Muhammad Tufail Sahib (d. 1984), former Imam of the Woking Mosque and Mission from 1960 to 1965. Since Mr Tufail went abroad from Pakistan in the early 1950s as Lahore Ahmadiyya missionary, Mrs Nasira Tufail accompanied him all the while, first in Holland in the 1950s, then at Woking from 1960 to 1965, then in Trinidad, and back again in UK from 1970. She sacrificed much for her husband’s missionary work and suffered many privations purely for the sake of the service of Islam. She successfully brought up the family under these circumstances. She was a regular visitor to our present UK centre in Wembley, until falling ill. Mrs Tufail was also a very good friend of my mother, the late Mrs Akhtar Aziz, with whom she stayed many times.

May Allah grant her forgiveness and protection, admit her to His great mercy, grant her to join His righteous servants in His gardens of bliss, and enable those left behind to emulate her noble example! *Amin.*
Captain Abdus Salam Khan, USA
May her soul rest in the highest reaches of heaven. Amen.

May Allah grant forgiveness and mercy in the next life and grant reward for the dedication and sacrifices she made for the cause of Islam.

Shaukat Ali, Bangkok, Thailand
We are deeply saddened to learn that our dear sister Mrs. Nasira Tufail has left this world to meet with our Maker. Inna-lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi rajoon.

We pray that Allah ta’ala grants her soul eternal peace and a place in the highest pedestal in Jannat-ul Firdous among His chosen ones - aameen.

We are aware that Marhooma had made many sacrifices and had served the community well and she as well as her late husband will be remembered for all the good works that they did.

We pray that Almighty Allah grants the surviving members of her family and all her loved ones strength, solace and sabr to bear this sad loss. Please convey our heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolences to the members of her family as well

Arshad Alvi and Bushra Alvi, Lahore, Pakistan
We are extremely grieved at the passing away of Mohtarma Mrs. Nasira Tufail. Inna lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Rajoon.

Her love for Jamaat members and the missionary work in Woking with her husband Mohtaram Sh. Muhammad Tufail (who was a fast friend of my late father) will always be remembered.

May Allah Ta’ala with His infinite mercy grant the departed soul a high place in Jannatul Firdous. May He also grant the bereaved family patience and fortitude to bear this irreparable loss. Ameen. Everything rests in the hands of God.

Umer Suhail Tareen, Ludhiana, India
May Allah grant her a comfortable place in jannatul firdous, and sabar to her family.

Br. Haroen Badloe, The Hague, the Netherlands
May Allah reward her with a place in His jannatul firdaus. Also, my deepest condolences to Anisa, Ibni and other children.

Shabir Buksh, Secretary, AAIL, South Auckland, New Zealand
We are sorry to hear about the sad demise of Mrs Nasira Tufail. “Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji’un.”

Please convey our deepest condolences to the family and may the family have sabr during this difficult time. We will, Inshallah, pray janaza ghaibana at our next Jumu’ah prayers.
Javaid Adnan Meer, Sri Lanka.
Please convey our deep sympathies and condolences to the members of the bereaved family. May Allah reward our dedicated Sister’s dedication to the cause of Islam.

Firoz Razab-Sekh, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
All our members and I, the chairman of AAIIR, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, pray and conode the sad demise of Mrs. Nasira Tufail. We pray to Allah to grant the family and all her loved ones sabre jamil in these days of sorrow. May the Almighty help them to bear this loss and grant Mrs. Nasira Tufail an elevated place in Jannah.

Selim Ahmed, Slough, UK
I am very saddened to learn of Mrs Tufail’s passing away. I shall be sending condolences to Roehie Tufail, her daughter and Bro. Mubarak Forgarty, her son-in-law.

Mr. Usman Nazir, General Secretary, AAIIL, Lahore (Pakistan)
We would like to inform you that our very respected and venerated Mrs. Nasira Tufail passed away yesterday morning in the UK. “Surely we are for Allah and to him we return.”

Hazrat Ameer Dr. Abdul Kareem Saeed and all members of AAIIL condole her death and pray that may Allah bless her soul in the heaven of eternity. We pray that may Allah grant her elevated place in Jannat-ul-Firdaus. May Allah help all family members of the deceased to bear this loss with patience and perseverance.

Bro. Enayat Mohammed, Fireburn, Trinidad.
On behalf of myself and my family, we extend to the family of Mrs. Nasira Tufail, our heartfelt condolences on her return to Almighty Allah after spending 88 years here on Earth. She spent most of her adult years supporting her husband, the late Maulana Sheik Muhammad Tufail in all of his missionary activities in Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname and finally in England, where he is buried. My family and I spent time with her and her family at Orchard Close, Woking. This was the time when the late Maulana was at the height of organising inter-faith conventions in the Western Hemisphere. But I was also with him in Woking when he was struggling with the disease but still working on his manuscripts even on his bed in the hospital. His commitment and devotion even in those fading days were inspirational. We will always remember those days when Mrs. Tufail knowing the nature of her husband’s illness was very composed and was very accommodating at all times. We became very close with her and her family – a period we will forever cherish.

She was a highly religious person and brought up her children in the highest tradition of submission to the will of Allah. Because of the life she lived, we feel sure that her place in the hereafter will be in the highest heaven – Firdaus – where she joins her husband, Maulana Tufail who would have been awaiting her - a promise of Allah for all of His servants who submit to His will on Earth. For all her children and grandchildren whom she has left behind, we wish that they will continue to live a life seeking the pleasures of Allah always – a wish which will make their parents proud.

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THE ONLY THING CERTAIN IN LIFE ...IS DEATH

YUSUF MARTIN’S MOVING CONTRIBUTION AT THE BROOKWOOD CEMETERY

It would be a misconception to believe that white is good and black is bad, or that day is good and night is bad; they are pieces of a natural cycle. But if Naanijan were a day, then she would be a beautiful warm spring day, like today, brightening up all our lives.

But that sun has set now; for everything changes. A time comes when life becomes a thing of cruelty and then death may perhaps brings peace instead.

Towards the end of her life her mind could not always hold all of our names; but I thought that her heart would never falter in being big enough to hold all of us.

She loved people, she loved people to be around. Even when she came out of her coma she was so happy to see so many people around her, perhaps suspecting that there was a wedding; and later on she told some of us off for not calling before we came to visit, because she hadn’t had time to cook for us yet.

I would like to thank everyone for coming to pay last respects to our dearest Naanijan.

I think death is a thing ... the only thing in life which is certain. Everything else ... who knows what will happen in life. One thing which is certain is death ... but ... and yet it still took me by surprise.

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"..You will find the nearest in friendship to the believers to be those who say, We are Christians. That is because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not proud. And when they hear that which has been revealed to the Messenger you see their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognise" (5:82-83).
3 Orchard Close, Woking.

Mrs. Nasira Tufail at 3 Orchard Close during her last days.
Mr. Yusuf Martin from Cambridge.
Nisbah Hussain, USA.
Aliya Tufail, Harrow Gate.
Mrs. Fauqia Aziz, Nottingham.

Nisbah Hussain, USA.
Mr. Yusuf Martin from Cambridge.
ISLAM stands for: I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND

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