

## Memories of Golden Jubilee

This is something I want not only to record but share with others. A month before Golden Jubilee started, I was fortunate enough to participate in a residential Broadening Horizons Youth Convention organized by Aga Khan Youth and Sports Board Karachi and Balochistan. We had scholars like Ms. Shelina Kassam from Institute of Ismaili Studies, from ITREB Mr. Jan-e-Alam Khaki, Mr. Aziz Kabani and motivators like Shams Apa (Chair for AKYSB, Pakistan), Shama Dossa, Noman Nasrullah and their whole team. It was a great gift for everyone, even before Golden Jubilee (the celebration for completion of 50 glorious years of Imam) started. We celebrated diversity as we had Ismailies representing different parts of Pakistan and countries across the globe like UAE, Kenya, France, Afghanistan and UK. We also had a representation from differently-able people and it was so fun interacting with them and learning sign language. We learned not only by discussing but by cultural activities, art and folk dances. It did prepare all of us in some way to contribute towards understanding not only Ismaili Tariqah in the larger context of Islam but also civil societies we live in. Our motto became Blame No One, Expect Nothing, Do Something!

The countdown towards Golden Jubilee started and so did the preparations in Religious Education Centers and Jamat Khanas (the prayer place for Ismailies). More than opportunity, a gift and blessing to offer Time and Knowledge Nazrana (TKN) was bestowed by Imam where one can work for the benefit of Aga Khan Development Network institutions. Then Golden Jubilee came. I still remember the Golden Jubilee Irshad, I still remember how everyone felt and the tears in everyone's eyes when Imam said about putting his hand on every murid's shoulder followed by blessings. Nothing so comforting ever experienced. Then there were rasuras, dandiya, sagridham and what not. A range of beautiful memorabilia and Ismaili Pakistan magazine editions were made available so we can cherish these auspicious moments for lifetime. All over the world, there were programs. Some were international like Heritage Discovery Project, Ali to Karim, The Mystical Journey etc. Each region and the areas under them, celebrated our unity of faith in Hazir Imam in their diverse ways. In Pakistan there were programs like Golden Jubilee Speech Competition where I was fortunate enough to participate in area and local jurisdiction level. A range of topics were addressed for not only to appreciate talent of the participants but also to convey the messages throughout Jamat. ITREB, P also organized National Golden Jubilee Youth Convention where youth from different Jamat Khanas visited Northern Areas to add on their knowledge base about our cultures and Tariqah. Then there were competitions like Friends for environment and National Golden Jubilee Quiz for children. At regional level there were also exhibitions on Imam's 50 initiatives, Ginan Mehfil and inter-institution model competitions organized throughout Karachi. Every institution in each area through out Karachi and elsewhere had their own celebration programs. I along with many friends who had a dream of continuing our religious education after HRE were accepted in Advanced Religious Education Professional Program by ITREB Karachi and Balochistan where now we are studying subjects like Muslim philosophy, history, culture and literature from prominent faculty. We just got our result for our first trimester result and most of us our really very content. One more addition to the overflowing basket of bounties.

Imam at the age of 71 and even with an injured shoulder traveled throughout the world for Darbars only for his murids and bestowed us with his benevolence guidance and the contemporary interpretation of Islam. He joked to make us happy and wanted that all the murids live in unity and celebrate to the fullest. To say the least, we cannot thank enough.

I with my family had the chance of attending Darbar in Bangladesh and more than anything, I so wanted it especially for my parents. Darbar is a gift that Imam bestows. It was my first

flight ever and what I experienced was Golden Jubilee Greetings from Pakistan International Airlines pilot every 30 minutes and from the minute the plane took off till the landing we all passengers were just singing geets and clapping. Btw that was a flight whose ticket we got just two days before by the grace of Mowla, it was all out of sudden. While I was there, I didn't know who was sitting beside me? What is his name? What his profession was? Or any such thought. The only thing mattered was he was an Ismaili brother. Everyone from volunteers to the visitors went out of their way to help each other. In darbar hall, while my parents were sitting on chairs far at the back and I was sitting alone. But was I really alone? I still remember there was a volunteer, Doctor by profession who came from Canada. He had a duty somewhere else in the hall but for some reason he came and sat behind me. While everyone was settling and performing intezaari, he said I want to stretch my legs because I am feeling pain but we have a deal that if you feel tired then you can hunch back for support. I don't think I would forget that moment ever. Intezaari, Imam came and the experience cannot be expressed in words.

Wherever I went whether the convention, the celebrations or the Darbar in Bangladesh, and whatever I saw, I felt so proud to be part of such diverse and compassionate Jamat of a living Imam and his shelter of love and light over us. Today while writing this and wishing everyone on auspicious occasion of Salgirah Mubarak I cannot believe it started just one and a half year back and we are towards closing of Golden Jubilee. We all had *the unique fruits of it on collective level and individual level*. If we all look back to the smallest moments, we have only gained at every level. Above everything else, we should be thankful that we were born in this period and are alive to experience all this which will support us throughout our life time. Though Golden Jubilee is ending, we still have a TKN opportunity for five years so it is not over that soon. Life is full of Miracles and we should share the happiness as being a blessing. Mowla Bapa we all love you from the bottom of our hearts and mere words cannot do the right justice.

**Raheel Lakhani**  
**Member of Karachi, Pakistan Jamat**