

# SILK-E-HAYAAT

UMOOR MARAFIQ BURHANIYAH

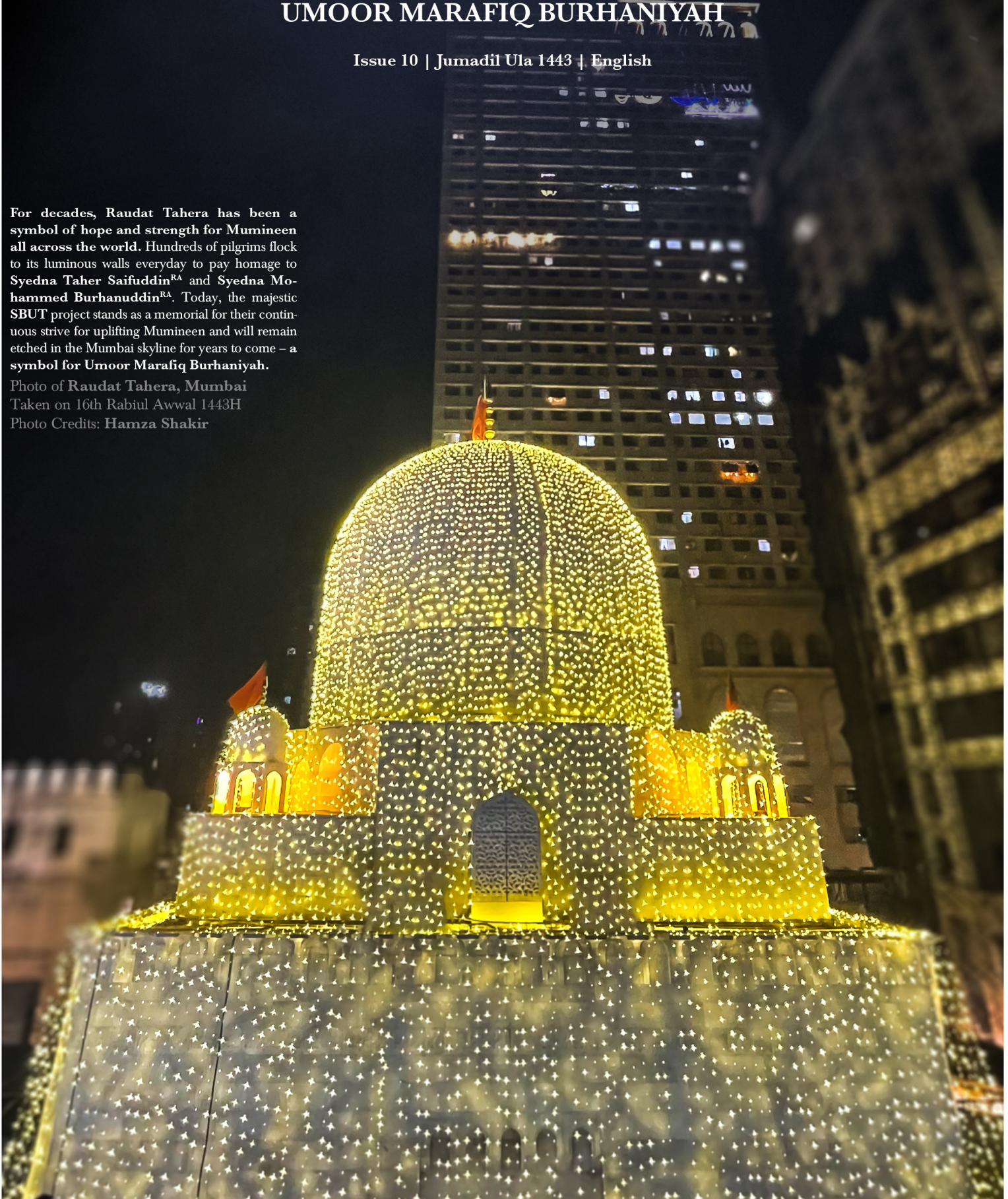
Issue 10 | Jumadil Ula 1443 | English

For decades, Raudat Tahera has been a symbol of hope and strength for Mumineen all across the world. Hundreds of pilgrims flock to its luminous walls everyday to pay homage to Syedna Taher Saifuddin<sup>RA</sup> and Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin<sup>RA</sup>. Today, the majestic SBUT project stands as a memorial for their continuous strive for uplifting Mumineen and will remain etched in the Mumbai skyline for years to come – a symbol for Umoor Marafiq Burhaniyah.

Photo of Raudat Tahera, Mumbai

Taken on 16th Rabiul Awwal 1443H

Photo Credits: Hamza Shakir





# THE POWER OF EMPATHY

Author: Jafarus Sadiq Sk. Abizer Patanwala, Student of Aljamea tus Saifiyah

Do you know of Dr. Yahya? In all likelihood, you may not. He is a practicing doctor in a small hospital in Salamah, Syria. Every day, he sees patients with new injuries; kids, mothers, and sometimes, his own family members. Many times the injured come in truckloads from recently bombed places. Despite several warnings to leave the warzone to rescue himself, Dr. Yahya and his team of doctors have chosen to stay and devote their lives to treating their fellow citizens, day after day. Living in Syria he knows the pain and struggle each one of his grief-stricken patients have faced, and putting them before himself he continues with what he must.

What do you think drives Dr. Yahya, and countless others around the world working in conflict-stricken areas, war zones, and refugee camps, towards such selfless service to others?

Empathy and compassion; these embody the essence of humanity. To put yourself in someone else's shoes, to see what they see and feel what they feel, to immerse yourself into the reality of their suffering, and to exert all means possible to remedy their anguish is the vein that connects us to others regardless of race or religion, and makes us intrinsically 'human'. Empathy and compassion also have a major impact on how we function as a society. Scientists record more happiness and longevity in the relationships of people who share compassionate relationships with other people. They live happier lives and attract more friends. Commercially, empathy is also a key player in anticipating business trends and analyzing customer demands. These are just a few of the benefits linked to the characteristics of empathy.

History is one that, despite constant catastrophe, has been privy to compassionate

acts that have changed the world. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and other luminaries are famous for inspiring change by bearing the suffering of others on their own backs. Lawyer by profession, Mahatma Gandhi adopted the use of a short dhoti woven with hand-spun yarn and began to live in a self-sufficient residential community and eat simple food as a symbol of compassion, empathy, and a mark of identification with India's rural poor.

However, prejudice, anger, ego, greed, and other character flaws become barriers to compassion. How then do we learn to break down these walls and reinvigorate our sense of compassion, instilled but forgotten?

We find inspiration in the priceless guidance bestowed upon us by Mawali Tahereen<sup>AS</sup>, epitomized by their actions and edicts.

Rasulullah <sup>SAW</sup> famously proclaimed "Do not turn down a beggar, even if he comes to you on a horse"

Psychologists divide empathy into 3 levels – cognitive, emotional and compassionate. Cognitive empathy involves the desire to understand the other person, whereas emotional and compassionate empathy stimulate and motivate action. The Prophet <sup>SAW</sup> advocates for empathy to the highest magnitude, so that a beggar should not be rejected even if he owns so much as his own horse. He teaches us to be compassionate to everyone, to restrain our self-centeredness, and our own fallible judgment. More importantly, he teaches us to invoke emotional and compassionate empathy, to go beyond the situation and focus on the person, what they may be facing, and then act accordingly. Rasulullah <sup>SAW</sup> demonstrates this lesson firsthand when he visits a lady when she falls ill, who, out of sheer spite of the Prophet <sup>SAW</sup>, would throw trash onto him and

his pathway every time he passed. Rasulullah <sup>SAW</sup> overlooked her actions, seeing only a lady blinded by resentment, and visited her, sat beside her, and even prayed for her.

Further illustrating this concept, we find inspiration in the response provided by Imam Hakim <sup>AS</sup> when warned by one of his treasurers that if he did not stop providing hand-outs to refugees, everyone in the world would soon come to his court seeking his bounties. Empathizing with the refugees he replied “Alienation (*al-Gurbat*) causes the head to bow down (in shame) and starvation has the most bitter of tastes (such are the immigrants) and sustenance is from Allah <sup>TA</sup>. Then spend upon them that which shall diminish with you but shall remain with Allah <sup>TA</sup> forever.”

This statement of Imam Hakim <sup>AS</sup> is one that reflects the fundamental concept of empathy which is the founding stone of the Fati-mi Empire. Firstly he understands the pain, hunger and shame they experienced and in doing so, establishes that true empathy can be achieved only by standing in the shoes of the aggrieved. Furthermore, he demonstrates how this empathy should translate into action. Imam Hakim <sup>AS</sup> chooses to welcome these refugees with endless charity, solely in the name of Allah <sup>TA</sup>.

Thus is the teaching of Islam, which considers all of creation as one family, where compassion and empathy for all are parts of our faith. Its founder, Rasulullah <sup>SAW</sup> states, “All creation is a family dependent on Allah Ta’ala. The most beloved of all creation to Him, therefore, is the one who benefits His family the most.”

Sadly, greed and an increasingly materialistic society, among other factors, have caused a decline in the ‘human connection’. In a society where the rich thrive off the deprivation of the poor and political divides govern every aspect of our world, empathy and compassion seem to be on the decline. Experts compared the collective empathy of the human

*“Alienation (*al-Gurbat*) causes the head to bow down (in shame) and starvation has the most bitter of tastes (such are the immigrants) and sustenance is from Allah <sup>TA</sup>. Then spend upon them that which shall diminish with you but shall remain with Allah <sup>TA</sup> forever.”*

race in 1979 to 2009 and recorded that people in 2009 had a quarter of the empathy people 40 years before them possessed.

Al Dai al Ajal Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin <sup>TUS</sup> continues to stimulate our sense of empathy and compassion every year through His vision of Upliftment and Fostership. Jamaats worldwide work together to help the needy and underprivileged and uplift their standards of living. Members of the community go to the houses of their brethren, inquire about every aspect of their lives, and provide whatever is needed, as they would for their blood relations, sometimes even more. This not only helps uplift people but also achieves the larger goal of building collective empathy amongst members of the community.

This exemplary vision drives us to reflect in our daily lives as well. During any conflict, how often have we tried to forgo our own emotions and thought about the other person’s perspective and feelings and made an effort to understand why they may have acted the way they did. This is but a small example of what compassion entails. May we keep striving.

## The Vision of Sighatul Marafiqil Burhaniyah

Shk Murtaza bhai Shk H.Yamani, Sighatul Marafiqil Burhaniyah



Sighatul Marafiqil Burhaniyah, one of the everlasting bounties of Al Dai al Ajaal Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin<sup>RA</sup>, was established on the advent of his 90<sup>th</sup> Milaad Mubarak in 1422H. Its vision is to reach out to and connect with those Mumineen who live in remote areas of the country and who, by the virtue of their circumstances and financial hardships, are not able to connect with the *markaz* of Dawat. Its goal is to uplift Mumineen residing in these areas in all spheres of their lives: spiritual, educational, economic, health and housing. It is an embodiment of Moulana's<sup>TUS</sup> concern for the well-being of all Mumineen, especially those who are distanced due to the vicissitudes of time and circumstances.

To begin with, upon reports received from Sahebe Dawat, at the time seven *mawaze* situated around the city of Burhanpur were adopted for the pilot project; two talabat who had graduated from Aljamea were dedicated for this *khidmat*. Thereafter, around 350 *mawaze* were surveyed by Mamureen, out of which 40 *mawaze* were shortlisted for the al-Marafiq al-Burhaniyah project. The ultimate goal was to bring these *mawaze* at par with other *mawaze* in attaining *barakaat*.

When the project began, various issues surfaced in each *mauze*. A boost in spiritual awareness was required in some, while others, plagued with social grievances and discord, required a different approach and different solutions. Every year two to three *khidmatguzaars* were designated for this *khidmat*, which they performed with vigor and perseverance. With the *dua mubarak* of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin<sup>RA</sup>, and persistent efforts of al-Muqaddas Shahzada Abbas bhaisaheb Fakhruddin<sup>DM</sup> and al-Muqaddas Shahzada Huzaifa bhaisaheb Mohiyuddin<sup>DM</sup>, the following was also achieved:

- Those Mumineen who had not performed *ziyarat* of Raudat Tahera in the last 10 years were facilitated during *Urus Mubarak* in reaching Mumbai.
- Approximately 1000 Mumineen attended *Asharah Mubarakah* with Aqa Maula<sup>TUS</sup> in Mumbai.
- *Madaris* were established in many *mawaze*, and students were enrolled in schools for better education.
- Modern technology was introduced for farming and bore-wells were expedited.
- Programs for grooming and skill-development were organized for youngsters.
- Home-economy and budgeting practices were initiated and implemented.

Today, under the close guidance and supervision of Aqa Maula Syedna Aali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin<sup>TUS</sup>, al-Syed al-Ajaal Shahzada Taha bhaisaheb Najmuddin Saheb<sup>DM</sup> works tirelessly for the upliftment of Mumineen. Especially during the days of *Rafo Mustawa Maeshatil Mumineen*, he remains instrumental in steering the upliftment activities that take place in every city, town and village where Mumineen reside. In many a towns and cities, Maula<sup>TUS</sup> himself has visited the houses of a number of Mumineen and transformed their lives with his benevolence.

The vision and legacy of Marafiq Burhaniyah has progressed and evolved in the formation and establishment of Umoor Marafiq Burhaniyah in each *mauze* which is closely observed for its scope and standard by al Syed al Ajaal Shahzada Husain bhaisaheb Burhanuddin Saheb<sup>DM</sup>. The goal of which is to ensure that no Mumin is left behind in terms of *deen*, livelihood, housing, education, food or health and is able to truly prosper as per the desire of Huzur<sup>TUS</sup>.



### Reviving Memories of a Golden Past

Aziz bs Vaziri, Amil Saheb - Shareqa



Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin <sup>RA</sup> envisioned that every Mumin should be able to maintain a certain standard of living. Now, His *mansoos* Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin <sup>TUS</sup> has initiated a five-day Upliftment Drive every year throughout the Dawoodi Bohra community. The drive focuses on the '*khabar-giri*' of each and every Mumin, which involves inquiring about their well-being. For the past several years, an elderly care program has been launched under Maula's <sup>TUS</sup> guidance, which focuses on the well-being of the senior members in our community. The drive consists of personal home visits and recreational outings which bring health and joy to their lives. Over the past couple of years, Mumineen from all around the world have come forward to show their love and care for their elders. They have organized picnics and coordinated various activities. Several medical camps have been organized include professional sessions on physiotherapy and nutrition.

To make this drive a long-term program, continuous follow-up is required. In my previous *mauze*, we developed a file for every elder mem-

ber which had details of their medical reports, financial health, daily schedule, and everything related to their physical and mental well-being.

The beauty of this drive is that it made the elders feel connected once more and in process most of their unspoken wounds were healed. They regained the joy of their lives by the grace of Aqa Maula. <sup>TUS</sup>

Today, in the pandemic era when major restrictions have been imposed on the movement of elders, the memories of the pre-pandemic period of our elders enjoying their time brings an immense amount of satisfaction to their souls and to ours as well.

#### Providing Medical Aid in

### Khambhat



A health program was conducted at Saifee Maternity hospital. A team of doctors were present who attended and diagnosed the participants. They were also facilitated treatment after the lab reports confirmed their ailments. A total of 25 Mumineen enrolled in this medical drive. A similar program was conducted for Mumineen with orthopaedic issues at a local general hospital.

#### Shifting to Better Neighbourhoods in

### Jogeshwari

When Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin TUS visited Jogeshwari, he immediately expressed his wish that all of the Mumineen who lived in compromised living areas be shifted to better and spacious places. A project was built by Maulana's TUS farmaan in Boisar. It is a business hub which ensured good financial opportunities for Mumineen shifting there. Until now, more than 30 families have migrated to Boisar and are leading a happy life.

# PUNE

Crowd Funding is a contemporary approach towards collecting funds in which a large number of people come together and contribute as much as feasible, differing from the traditional methods where a few bear the brunt.

The crowd funding platform run by the Umoor Marafiq team in Pune consists of approximately 200-250 youngsters in various avenues of *khidmat* and focuses on small contributions from volunteers.

Their process is as follows

1. The applicant approaches the Marafiq team. The team then hands over the case to another team of four who are experienced in working with such cases. They conduct their research and file a report with their recommendation on whether or not the application fits their criteria.
2. The report is duly presented to the Amil Saheb who then grants *raza* and may make any recommendations as seen fit.
3. Once approved, the case and target amount is pre-

sented on the communication platform of trusted Marafiq Burhaniyah members who accordingly make online payments and post proofs of their contribution.

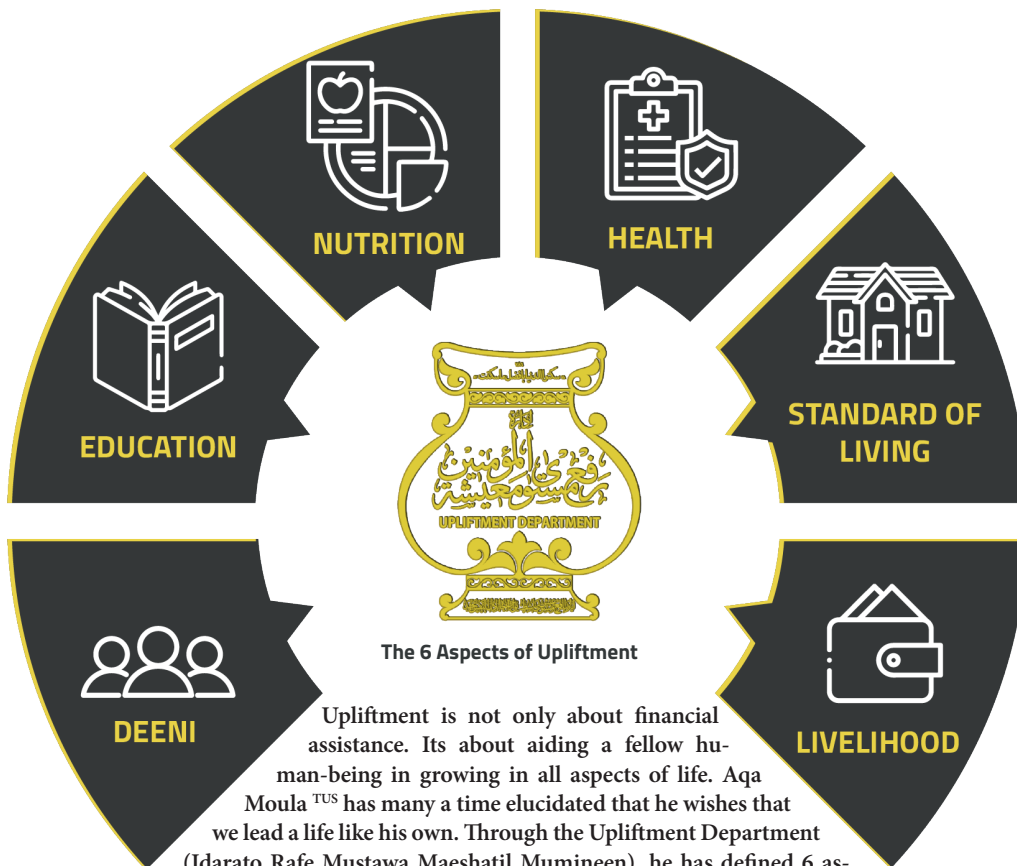
4. The accountant keeps track of the payments and presents an hourly update on the amount collected on various groups while another team of Marafiq Burhaniyah members supervise and close the case as soon as the target is achieved.

5. The fund is consequently transferred mostly to the hospital / school or to the person who has assisted the applicant in financial distress with Qardan Hasana.

The entire process is completed within 3-4 hours. The collection is convenient, and contributing small amounts does not burden any one individual. Thus, even those who are not yet earning substantially can partake in this blessed *khidmat*.

To date, they have supported 35+ Mumineen through their hardships, using this expedited, simple, and convenient method.

## The 6 Aspects of Upliftment



Upliftment is not only about financial assistance. Its about aiding a fellow human-being in growing in all aspects of life. Aqa Moula <sup>TUS</sup> has many a time elucidated that he wishes that we lead a life like his own. Through the Upliftment Department (Idarato Rafe Mustawa Maeshatil Mumineen), he has defined 6 aspects for the Upliftment of each and every Mumin. May we continually strive to uplift ourselves and others in all 6 aspects - to achieve his *khushi*!



## A Word From Our Readers

### Being Grateful to Faiyze Enyate Amakin al-Anwar

Al Dai al Ajal Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin <sup>RA</sup> did *niyyat* of uplifting the living standards of 9200 families of Mumineen in 1424H in Madagascar. Today, his successor Syedna Aali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin <sup>TUS</sup> is carrying his vision forward to new heights. Every year, hundreds of Mumineen move into new houses. Till date, more than 13,500 houses have been constructed, repaired, and renovated. Under the guidance of Sadaat Kiraam <sup>DM</sup>, Fayze Enayate Amakin al Anwar (Housing Dept) has the *sharaf* of doing this *khidmat*.



*Our new house did not only give us a new place to live, but it gave us a completely new life! Not just for me but for my parents and children as well. We have seen remarkable growth in our business and hifz. Only Moula TUS has the capacity to change someone's life so fast!*

Husain bhai Vaziri,  
Surat



*Through Moula's dua and aid, I moved from Malad to Boisar. The house that I used to live in was very small, and many of us lived together. My daughter did not have any place to play outside. Now, through the blessings and benedictions of Moula, we live comfortably in a big home, with lots of space for my daughter to play- inside and out*

Mustafa bhai Lightwala,  
Boisar



*I have had the blessing of living in Boisar after shifting from Palghar one and a half years ago. Ever since we moved as per Moula's wishes, our lives have changed entirely. Many Mumineen have moved here as well, and the greenery and open air have benefited our lives in multiple ways - Moula gave us new lives!*

Shabbir bhai Rampurawala,  
Boisar



*To uplift us mentally, physically, and emotionally, Moula took on the task of elevating our living standards by shifting us from Bhandarwala (Marol) to Neral, Burhani Park. Earlier, I used to work for somebody else. Now I have my own business and I work for my own growth. All of this change also inspired me to do the khidmat of Dawat as well, thus I have been uplifted in every way possible.*

Mohammed bhai Ratanpurwala,  
Burhani Park - Neral



*Upon shifting to Burhani Park - Neral, I found the peace which I had long forgotten - being caught up in the fast-paced, rat-race of the world. Burhani Park is like a beautiful oasis, populated only with Mumineen. We have seen the benefits of it in the health of our senior citizens and children alike! We have connected with our souls spiritually, and with nature physically.*

Aliakber bhai Rampurawala,  
Burhani Park - Neral



*We are ever grateful for Aqa Moula <sup>TUS</sup> who has always kept us under his wing. He has settled us in Bustan which seems like heaven on earth! Since we have shifted here, we've seen barakat after barakat in every aspect of our lives!*

M Yusuf bhai Tohfafarosh,  
Bustan

