

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

A brief report on the visit of

HIS EMINENCE SAYYID MURTADHA AL-KASHMIRI

The representative of Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali al-Sistani

To the United States and Canada

29 Rabi al-Awwal - 26 Rabi al-Thani 1432 AH

March 5 – 31, 2011



I.M.A.M.

IMAM MAHDI ASSOCIATION OF MARJAEYA

INTRODUCTION:

This report, in line with achieving the objectives of I.M.A.M., is an attempt to strengthen the relationship between the religious authority and the believers in the West by arranging targeted reciprocal visits between convoys of Western believers (including community and center leaders) and supreme religious authorities and scholars from the Islamic Seminary of Najaf. In addition, this project aims to coordinate and prepare focused meetings with leaders and centers of religious studies and the general believing public in many cities and states in America and Canada. We named this project "The East-West Bridge Project"¹ in accordance with the holy verse [Quran 49: 13]: "O people, we have created you from male and female, and made you peoples and tribes to know each other."

I.M.A.M. has hosted several scholars and teachers at the Islamic Seminaries, as well as representatives of religious authorities, to achieve these objectives and was successful with the help of Almighty Allah. Today, I.M.A.M. was honored to host the ambassador and special representative of Grand Ayatullah Sayyid al-Sistani for the West, His Eminence Sayyid Murtadha al-Kashmiri.

The visit of our distinguished guest included a series of public meetings with believers in many cities and states. These meetings included well-known personalities, religious scholars, and people of different cultures and backgrounds. Additionally, he participated in a series of special activities related to his mission and the nature of his work besides the grand opening of I.M.A.M.'s headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan.



¹ Click here to read more about this project.

VISITS AND MEETINGS

The activities of His Eminence Sayyid Murtadha al-Kashmiri occurred as follows, some of which were arranged through cooperation with other institutions and centers, with special thanks to them. We have listed them by date, place and attendees, as follows:



	Date	City / Country	Location & Attendees
1	March 5 th , 2011	New York City, NY	Meeting with dignitaries from the Afghani community
2	March 5 th , 2011	New York City, NY	Meeting with dignitaries from the Iraqi Community
3	March 5 th , 2011	New York City, NY	A general meeting with believers at Al-Khoei Foundation
4	March 8 th , 9 th , 2011	Detroit, MI	I.M.A.M.'s annual meeting of the Board of Trustees
5	March 10 th , 2011	Los Angeles, CA	Meetings with dignitaries and well-known social figures
6	March 11 th , 2011	Plano, TX	A public meeting with believers at the Knowledge Center in Plano, a suburb of Dallas, Texas, and a visit to see the construction of a new building.
7	March 12 th , 2011	Dallas, TX	Meeting with dignitaries from the Iraqi Community
8	March 12 th , 2011	Dallas, TX	Grand opening of the Imam Ali Center in Dallas and a public meeting with the community
9	March 13 th , 2011	Atlanta, GA	Meeting with students of Islamic Studies who were honored and guided to the school of Ahl al-Bayt (p)
10	March 13 th , 2011	Atlanta, GA	Visit to the City of Knowledge School and meeting with its officials
11	March 13 th , 2011	Atlanta, GA	Meeting with the administrative body of Dar-e Abbas Center
12	March 13 th , 2011	Atlanta, GA	A general meeting with the believers in the Center of Jafaria
13	March 13 th , 2011	Atlanta, GA	A meeting with supervisors of the Imam Educational Institute
14	March 14 th , 2011	Chicago, IL	A public meeting with the community at the IEC Husseini Center

15	March 15 th , 2011	Detroit, MI	Special meeting with religious scholars, students of religious studies, and clergymen who are interested in religious affairs
16	March 16 th , 2011	Detroit, MI	Grand opening of the new building of Imam Mahdi Association
17	March 17 th , 2011	Detroit, MI	Reception of social figures, delegations, and religious scholars
18	March 18 th , 2011	Saginaw, MI	General meeting with believers in Ahl al-Bayt Islamic Center
19	March 19 th , 2011	Saginaw, MI	Special meeting and dialogue with the leaders, heads, and officials of Islamic centers and Islamic associations
20	March 19 th , 2011	Houston, TX	General meeting with believers in the Messenger of Allah Center
21	March 20 th , 2011	Houston, TX	Special meeting with the Administrative Board of Al-Murtadha Center
22	March 20 th , 2011	Houston, TX	A visit to Ali School; spoke to students and saw their different activities
23	March 20 th , 2011	Houston, TX	Meeting and dialogue with students from the Gulf countries
24	March 20 th , 2011	Austin, TX	Meeting with the administrative body of Ahl al-Bayt Center in Austin (IABA).
25	March 20 th , 2011	TX	A general meeting with the believers at the Al-Murtadha center
26	March 21 st , 2011	Calgary, Canada	Meeting with the Administrative Board and officials of Al-Ghadeer Islamic Center
27	March 21 st , 2011	Calgary, Canada	A general meeting with the women of the community.
28	March 21 st , 2011	Calgary, Canada	Meeting with the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (p) in the Al-Ghadeer center
29	March 22 nd , 2011	Calgary, Canada	Visit of the Vice President of the Islamic Society, one of the Islamic figures operating in the region from the Sunni brothers, to the Sayyid and the accompanying delegation
30	March 22 nd , 2011	Calgary, Canada	Visit of the pastor, Noel Farman. of the Iraqi community in the region, to the Sayyid and the accompanying delegation

31	March 22 nd , 2011	Calgary, Canada	Visit of a delegation from the Lebanese community to the Sayyid and the accompanying delegation
32	March 22 nd , 2011	Calgary, Canada	Public meeting in al-Ghadeer Center in the presence of representatives and followers of different religions and sects
33	March 23 rd , 2011	Calgary, Canada	A meeting with university students of different nationalities and religions at the University of Calgary
34	March 24 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	Meeting with the secretaries and officials of the Khoja Ithna Ashari Jamaat at Al-Zahra Center
35	March 24 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	Meeting with community of the Al-Zahra Center
36	March 25 th , 2011	Seri, Canada	Held Friday prayers at the Afghan Hussein Association
37	March 25 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A meeting with the Mahdi Center (Ikhwan Fatimi), the first Shia institution in Vancouver
38	March 25 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A meeting with university students from different backgrounds and nationalities at Simon Fraser University
39	March 25 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A meeting with the president and members of the Friday imams and the Shiite community in Greater Vancouver
40	March 25 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A meeting with the Iranian community in North Vancouver, represented by groups such as Baserat, Al-Mahdi, Al-Nour, Al-Atra magazine, and others.
41	March 25 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A special meeting with senior Iranian community leaders in North Vancouver to listen to many important issues
42	March 25 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	Dr. Sulaiman Binahah, one of the intellectuals and teachers at UBC University, visited the Sayyid and the accompanying delegation.
43	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A meeting with the board of directors of Al-Mustafa School, a Shiite Islamic school in which about 80 students study.

44	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	Visit to Fatimiah Center and met Afghani community
45	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A meeting with the management and students of the Imam Sadiq (p) Seminary under the supervision of His Eminence Sheikh Al-Khaliq
46	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	Visited the Husseini Azaa Center and met Pakistani brothers
47	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	Meeting with a group of representatives of denominations and religions at the Interfaith Dialogue Council in Vancouver
48	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A public meeting with the believers at Al Kawthar Center
49	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A delegation from Child International, headed by Nuri al-Hassani and brother Michael Al-Kindi, visited and reported on the services of orphans in Iraq, especially in Basra
50	March 26 th , 2011	Vancouver, Canada	A delegation from the group of Iraqi poor, a group interested in building housing units for those lacking housing in Iraq, visited the poor. They provided a videotape of the guest's presentation. His Eminence gave them a gift.
51	March 27 th , 2011	Edmonton, Canada	The inauguration of Al Huda Charitable Society in the presence of the Minister of Services in the Government of Alberta, Heather Lemjek, and the Mayor of the City, Stephen Mandil
52	March 28 th , 2011	Edmonton, Canada	A meeting with Sheikh Massoud Biracha, chairman of the Council of Islamic Associations, Sheikh Shaaban Sharif, Imam of Dar al-Islam mosque, and Sheikh Mustafa Khattab, Imam of the mosque
53	March 28 th , 2011	Edmonton, Canada	Meeting with believers in the Pakistanis' Center
54	March 28 th , 2011	Edmonton, Canada	A meeting with the faithful in the center of Khoja in Malut
55	March 29 th , 2011	Saskatoon, Canada	Visit to a gathering of believers in outlying areas seeking to establish an Islamic center for their communities

SPEECHES, ADVICE, AND GUIDANCE

His Eminence Sayyid Murtadha al-Kashmiri's speeches and discussions dealt with many issues and points of interest, including the following:

- **Supreme religious authority:**

- Conveyed greetings, prayers, and the keen interest of His Eminence Sayyid al-Sistani, the supreme religious authority, who has long felt concern for the believers in the West and abroad as well as at home. Also conveyed his interest in education and youth.
- Conveyed His Eminence's keen interest in unity and caring for priority interests.
- With the strong efforts of the supreme authority and its wisdom and good management, Islam flourishes daily, with the praise of God and the blessing of the Imam of the era, Imam al-Mahdi (p), and with the commitment of the faithful who adhere to its guidance.



- **Imam Mahdi Association of Marjaeya, (I.M.A.M.) as a liaison office of supreme religious authority:**

- Arose from the guidance of the supreme authority to act as a central point of contact between the supreme authority and institutions, centers, and believers in North America.
- Is a complementary and supportive sponsor of the centers that religious funds built with the permission of the legitimate representatives (marja's) of Imam Mahdi (AJ).
- Works and cooperates with others by extending a hand to all individuals who strive to serve others.
- Is interested in all segments of society, especially youth and their ambitions.
- I.M.A.M. Foundation respects the laws of the land in accordance with the rulings of His Eminence, Sayyid al-Sistani, to protect and preserve the rights of citizenship and the believers.



- **Guidance from the supreme religious authority: The supreme leader, His Eminence Sayyid Ali al-Sistani, emphasizes that the believers should:**

- Observe good citizenship and integration with others, provided they maintain their religious identity and noble traditions. In addition, the leader strongly stresses preserving the Arabic language by teaching it to the new generation.
- Initiate public participation with other segments of society to demonstrate the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (p) and their followers, and invest in the principles of citizenship to find a respectable place for them among other communities.
- Preserve Islamic rituals and morality for new Muslim generations.
- Adhere to the instructions of the religious authority, because it is the best religious and moral role model for the believers and for preserving their rights and interests during the occultation era of the twelfth Imam (may Allah hasten his return).
- Exhibit intellectual and cultural openness with others to acquaint them with the school of Ahl al-Bayt (p), and to learn from experiences of those who formed civilizations and made historical achievements in the fields of science and technology.
- Coexist with others and respect the laws of the land with an emphasis on the prohibition of breaking laws.
- Open their minds and hearts to other human beings and serve them regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated one of the Islamic core values in these words, "people are two types, either your brother in faith, or counterpart in creation." Moreover, believers should express their kindness to their counterparts from other religious backgrounds as the Holy Quran recommends in chapter 60 verse 8 ("... treat with them kindness and equitably. God loves the equitable").

The supreme religious authority advises the believers, especially those serving the Muslim communities in the West, to open their minds and hearts to other human beings and serve them regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated one of the Islamic core values in these words, "people are two types, either your brother in faith, or counterpart in creation." Moreover, believers should express their kindness to their counterparts from other religious backgrounds as the Holy Quran recommends in chapter 60 verse 8 (... treat with them kindness and equitably. God loves the equitable).

Sayyid Murtadha al-Kashmiri

- **Some of the goals and mechanisms of the work of I.M.A.M.:**

- To serve the American and Canadian communities and serve the development of Shiites in North America under the guidance of the Supreme Religious Authority.

- The duties of I.M.A.M do not include advocating for a specific religious authority, even the authority of His Eminence Sayyid al-Sistani, based on his directives.
- The services provided by I.M.A.M. are free of charge, and the employees equitably serve anyone in the North American community, whether Shia or not.

- **Managing financial and religious dues:**

- Khums is a financial obligation on every believer who has met its requirements. The Jurist or his representative usually handles this religious obligation to ensure proper disbursement and to take the burden off the believers.
- It is highly recommended to contribute towards enduring charity; thus, we encourage the dear believers to partake in this sacred activity.
- We have spent khums in the United States and Canada for many years. We have not sent a single dollar abroad, despite the urgent need for it there, except for khums that was conditional on supporting My Orphans project or Feeding the Needy fast project. Thus, I.M.A.M. serves as an intermediary and trustee in delivering and allocating financial dues.
- According to the directives of the supreme religious authority, believers may spend their khums in their country of residence if necessary, especially for supporting youth projects. However the Jurist or his representative must authorize this after review of the spending details.
- The financial statement of I.M.A.M. is available in full detail at the request of the contributor.



REFLECTIONS:

Based on the different backgrounds and comments of the people and believers that met with the guest, we classify the reflections of the visit into three levels:

- General public
- Leading individuals, such as directors of centers and institutions, and dignitaries
- The guest

General public:

- **The believers expressed the following comments:**

1. They noticed continual care by the supreme religious authority and the Islamic seminary, through their visits and sharing of the believers' concerns.
2. The need for repeated visits by the representative of the supreme religious authority since the visits play a practical role among our beloved followers and increases their spiritual growth and affiliation.
3. Expressed their high expectations of I.M.A.M. since it links with multiple religious authorities and scholars, as well as important figures in the seminary of holy Najaf.



- **Leaders:**

1. Many leaders and directors of Islamic centers and social foundations expressed their interest in longer visits.
2. Many leaders highlighted the increasing demand for English language speakers and the need to establish an institution to graduate missionaries who can meet the needs of the believers in the West in terms of language and understanding the prevailing systems, customs, and traditions.
3. Through these visits by the representative of the supreme authority there is a great recommendation to study the possibility of establishing a mechanism for the inclusion of Shiite centers and institutions in a common framework that elevates them to a level that would achieve the ambitions of Shiites in the West. The exclusiveness of each center in its religious and social programs and its differences with other centers and institutions has



very negative effects on new generations. In addition, it lays the groundwork for chaos in the establishment of centers and institutions that do not have a firm foundation, thus affecting the name and reputation of Shiism in general, in addition to other negative impacts that result from such chaos.

- **Characteristics and impression about the guest:**

The North American region has witnessed several visits in the past by the respected guest, however the recent visit left important impressions among the believers including and not limited to:



1. His diligence in respecting the religious authority was obvious along with his strong caution in mentioning the name of His Eminence Sayyid al-Sistani and keeping him distant from any affair that would exploit His Eminence.
2. He manifested fatherhood in his speeches and directions to everyone, guiding his listeners towards the public interest of the believers and avoiding insignificant issues.
3. Humbleness and magnanimity were obvious in his character, and his spirituality that encouraged his audience towards the Islamic seminaries and scholars of Islam.
4. His conversations and dialogues touched on a broader and a more comprehensive vision of the needs of the believers and what suits them as citizens living as an integral part of Western societies.
5. He was very keen to stabilize relations between the Shia Muslim community and other communities using social and strategic interactions, since Islam is for all people.
6. He addressed crucial issues that brought his audience from the local level to the worldwide reality and focused their attention to the most important Shia Muslim issues at the global level.
7. He was unique in his hard work, patience, and forbearance. He bore the burden and fatigue of travel in addition to following up on the matters of the believers and responding to programs without boredom, despite his age and his need for rest and recreation.
8. He dealt wisely with existing issues, some of which are critical and took extra caution to help believers solve their problems peacefully.

I.M.A.M. is the liaison office of the supreme religious authority which arose from the supreme authority's guidance to act as a central point of contact between the supreme authority and institutions, centers, and believers in North America.

Sayyid Murtadha al-Kashmiri

9. He was very keen in solving family issues and responding to them immediately without delay or boredom.
10. He was very honest in expressing the truth with determination and steadfastness and without favoritism or flattery.

It is necessary to dispense religious dues based on certain priorities, such as giving preference to community needs over sending the money abroad. I.M.A.M. is doing all it can to educate, develop, and meet the interests of the believers, Islamic centers, institutions, and activities within the United States and Canada, and to send nothing abroad, unless specified for orphans or for feeding the poor.

Sayyid Murtadha al-Kashmiri



A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE GUEST

His Eminence Sayyid Murtadha al-Kashmiri is the son of H. E. Sayyid Ali Naqi, son of Ayatullah Sayyid Murtadha al-Radhawi al-Kashmiri, who is known for his miracles.



- Born in Najaf, Iraq, in 1944.
- Studied at the Islamic seminary in Najaf, Iraq under well-learned scholars, such as:
 - Sayyid al-Tankabuni
 - Shaykh Ameen Fakhruddin
 - Shaykh Ahmed al-Bahadli
 - Sayyid Izzuldeen Bahrululoom
 - Sayyid Muhammed Hussein al-Hakeem
- Graduated from the College of Jurisprudence in Najaf, Iraq, in 1970
- Attended the higher studies seminars of jurisprudence taught by:
 - His Eminence Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Qassim al-Khoei
 - His Eminence Ayatullah Sayyid Ahmed al-Mustanbit
 - His Eminence Ayatullah Sayyid Ali al-Sistani
- Studied Hussein public speaking under Sayyid Baqir Sulaymoon, Shaykh Mohammed al-Kashi, and the very well-known speaker Shaykh Dr. Ahmed al-Waeli
- Has some printed and manuscript works, including the book "Lights on the life of Sayyid Musa al-Mubarqah", the son of Imam al-Jawad (p) and descendants of al-Mubarqah, Abu al-Hinna and al-Ridhawi. He also has a manuscript entitled "In Jurisprudence and Astronomy" and other books.
- Has received the attention and trust of great religious authorities. He was a representative for
 - Late Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Qassim al-Khoei
 - Ayatullah Sayyid Gulpaygani
 - Ayatullah Shaykh Aaraki
 - Ayatullah Sayyid Ali al-Sistani
- Under the Authority of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali al-Sistani, and as his general representative, Sayyid al-Kashmiri established many centers and institutions in several parts of the globe, especially Europe, Canada and America.
 - Imam Ali (p) Foundation in London, UK, as an official liaison office representing the supreme religious authority in Europe.
 - Imam Mahdi Association of Marjaeya (I.M.A.M.) in the United States as a liaison office for the supreme religious authority in North America.
 - Al-Turath center in Berlin

- Al-Kawthar center in the Netherlands
- Al-Ghary center in Belgium
- Imam al-Muntadhar (p) Center in Sweden
- Al-Sadiq (as) school in Paris
- Imam Ali (as) Center in Cardiff
- Imam al-Hassan (as) Center in Madagascar



IN CONCLUSION

We prepared this report to record the efforts of scholars and workers to achieve the benefits of visits and meetings and to help in the planning and success of other anticipated visits with the permission of Almighty God. We ask Almighty Allah to grant us success and blessings and make this work accepted.

15th of Jumada al-Awwal 1432

April 19, 2011



