

# Our speech for 2016

That is the speech of Sheikh **Mahmoud Merhej** thirty-five years ago! And we, in the Association and School of HOODAN-NOOR, consider this speech as a will that stems from the core of our lives, and we find in it the best approach to preserve the identity of our community in their residence place and that's why we are following its directions and pursuing its approach. And because we strongly believe in the spirit of this will, we established our association **HOODAN-NOOR (Guidance of the Light)** to help us implement this commandment.

This is our first year and we haven't said yet that we have succeeded although we have seen some success. We, instead, fully realize that it is a long and hard journey and that this is only our first step in this long and arduous path.



### ***In the name of Allah the Merciful the Beneficent***

Praise be to Allah, prayers and peace be upon Muhammad and his household until the Day of Judgment.

Dear Parents, Dear students, Assalamo alaykom, thank you for attending.

The reason we have all gathered here is our children and their future. Actually it is our sense of the great responsibility towards them, and our duty in the performance of our trusteeship towards them, we ask God to help us to fulfill our sincerity towards them.

In the eighties of the last century, our community in Australia was blessed by Almighty Allah, that sent them a scholar man who was a true example of the words of God Almighty ***{Whereby Allah guideth him who seeketh His good pleasure unto paths of peace. He bringeth them out of darkness unto light by His decree, and guideth them unto a straight path}*** (Al-Maeda\16).

That man extended to this community, pure hands (great value), and great favors, that noble People appreciate and do not forget.

That is the ***scholar Sheikh Mahmoud Merhej*** the mercy of Allah and His good pleasure be upon him.

I am not going to recite the sheikh's favours -since when starting, there will be no end- but I will convey to you an article of his words, which serves as a (commandment), that he addressed to a group of men of our community in 1981, thirty-five years ago.

I divided this commandment into seven paragraphs, and I gave each paragraph a title to show its meaning and clarify its premises.

I will read this commandment to you in Arabic, my son Alexander and my polite student Alyah will read it in English so we can relate between the past, present and future... We will read it and then continue the talk afterwards:





## The commandment

### **1- Our feeling toward this hospitable country Australia, which is our second homeland and the first for our children and grandchildren:**

“Brothers, how proud I feel to be here with you in this hospitable country that gives every citizen and resident their full rights provided they serve their full duties, since ‘who fulfil their duty earn their rights.’”

### **2- What is our duty towards Australia?**

“Every one of us has to be a practical person, productive and creative in the jobs we do.”

### **3- What is our duty toward our community?**

“Our structure should be firm, unshakable by the storms of intrusive foreign ideas, or the corruption of some who are sabotaging from within.

We should correct the internal corruption and resist the [wrong] foreign Ideas.”

### **4- What is the plan of action that will help us to do our duty toward our community?**

“We (immigrants & parents) in this expatriation must focus our attention on our children who are the products of the family and are the growing buds.

We should look after them with so much care and sincerity because we're their guardians and trustees.”

“We are stressed by the Great Creator to fulfill our sincerity towards those who entrusted us. We are our children guardians and trustees and we have duties to teach them: our language, rituals, customs and worshipping. This is the national heritage that was passed on to us by our ancestors.”

### **5- What happens if we don't work according to this plan of action?**

“And if we don't (fulfill those duties), then:

We'd have defied the orders of Allah. Our children would miss their national heritage.

Our children are rendered strangers among their people (of origin) if they went back to them, needing who translate for them their own mother tongue!

And who is held responsible for that?

We are, because we know the consequences of our actions and we then have no excuse.”

### **6- What is the result of our negligence to that plan work?**

“We have wasted: the faith, heritage, identity, and language of our children and that is a great loss. We are considered to have kept a page smeared by shame and disgrace.”

### **7- Then, what we are supposed to do?**

“We have to go back to the fold of God assuming our responsibility to the rising generation.

God blessings for what is righteous, He is the source of good luck.

May peace, God's mercy, and blessings be upon you.”

[end of commandment]



That is the speech of Sheikh **Mahmoud Merhej** thirty-five years ago! And we, in the Association and School of HOODAN-NOOR, consider this speech as a will that stems from the core of our lives, and we find in it the best approach to preserve the identity of our community in their residence place and that's why we are following its directions and pursuing its approach. And because we strongly believe in the spirit of this will, we established our Association **HOODAN-NOOR (Guidance of the Light)** to help us implement this commandment.

This is our first year and we haven't said yet that we have succeeded – although we have seen some success. We, instead, fully realize that it is a long and hard journey and that this is only our first step in this long and arduous path.

And here (at this occasion), I must acknowledge the efforts of all who are involved and particularly my small family, my wife and my children who believed in my mission and my will. The pressure was too big for all my family this year, but thank God when we see the joy in the eyes of the children who are coming to learn, we forget tiredness.

We tried as much as possible to provide a family atmosphere for our students. We do not want them to come against their will, and we managed, AlhamdoLillah, to make them love to learn Arabic language and religious teachings at the core of their heart.

Ramadan's spirit was the most beautiful in this year. we were all fasting, studying, praying, and then we would break our fast together. This has strengthened the ties between the children and made them feel like one big family.

Thank you, dear parents, for your good trust in us. Your support, your material and moral encouragement helped us overcome the difficulties of this year and so we hope for your continuous cooperation with us and we always welcome your suggestions, guidance, and your remarks that help our journey to reach its fruitfulness. And we will always, God Willing, strive to achieve the best for our children in line with what we read in this commandment.

It behooves us, and in fact it is our duty, like we acknowledged the virtue of our past sheikhs, to recognize the merits of the present ones since we weren't able to succeed at all if we didn't rely in the religious education on a curriculum that includes morals, Holy Qur'anic science, and the Prophet's life. That curriculum was prepared and has been taught for years by sheikh Tammam Ahmad, may God protect him for a long life and benefit us with his knowledge. We are honoured that he trusted and authorised us to teach his curriculum to our children and so we and our children owe him our sincere gratitude and appreciation of his virtues and favours.



This is the first teaching curriculum in the history of the Alawite Muslims and its goal is to preserve the Alawite Islamic identity which has been losing its characteristics even in our mother lands. Sheikh Tammam Ahmad (God protect him) said in one of his Friday sermons, on January the 10th 2014, and I quote:

**Sheikh Tammam Ahmed**



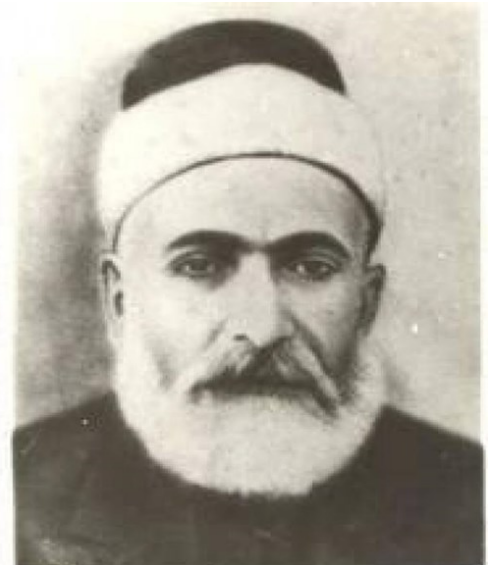
***“O brothers, go back to what with you save your history, your literature, and your identity, or else:***

***If we've been hit by some looseness, our children will be gobbled by it and killed by that chaos. One of the evidences on the loss of values and the decline of morals is what came out of this generation whose part of their brain is distorted and spoiled. I ask God Almighty to help you for what is good.”***

It's the duty of every faithful to this Alawite identity all over this world, women, men, young, adults and elders, all of us without exception, to feel the serious responsibility because the danger is imminent on us. So let's roll up our sleeves, shake the dust of laziness and sluggishness off ourselves and we all go back to the fold of God, as sheikh Mahmoud Merhej said, and let's be as the Prophet, the Imams, and our master sheikhs want us to be. Imam Jaafar Al-Sadiq <sup>(peace be upon Him)</sup> said: ***“Be a beauty for us and don't be a disgrace to us.”***

The great scholar Sheikh Suleiman Ahmad <sup>(mercy of Allah and His pleasure upon him)</sup> says in one of his poems, I quote:

***“Ohhh you people!  
Everyone has woken up and you are like asleep amongst those who are awakened.  
They made their efforts while your time is wasted between audacity and reluctance.  
Oh, my woe, I see you inferior to others and that's what ignites my sufferings.  
And when I remember your past, it doubles my grief, distress, torment, and sicknesses.  
A memory that almost melts the heart with sorrow for nights and days you wasted.”***



**Sheikh Suleiman Ahmad**



Breathe to science O good people, **“Knowledge is life.” “Knowledge is the lamp of the intellect.” “There is no treasure more profitable than knowledge,”** and **“There is no source of dignity like knowledge,”** as Imam Ali <sup>(AS)</sup> said.

And **“He who goes out to seek knowledge is indeed on the path of Allah until he returns,”** as The Prophet Mohammad <sup>(Peace & blessings be upon him & his family)</sup> said.

I will conclude with the words of Sheikh Abdul-Latif Saaoud <sup>(mercy of Allah and His pleasure be upon him)</sup> from his poem praising the scholar Sheikh Suleiman Ahmed in the “Golden Jubilee.” He said:



**Sheikh Abdul-Latif Saaoud**

**“Gentlemen’s attending this ceremony, your celebration is highly due.**

**Honor science so you are honored, praise it so you are praised, and ignore the captious.**

**Venerate all its folks, from the teacher in his art till the youngest student.”**

It's time to take responsibility, time and dedication to science, dedication to work, dedication in returning to the fold of God, And sincerity in obedience to God in all what he imposed...

This is the guidance of light (**HOODAN-NOOR**), and thus it achieves and maintains our identity.

God blessings for what is righteous, He is the source of good luck.

Allah's prayers and peace upon Muhammad and his household. May peace, God's mercy and blessings be upon you.



**Sleiman Mouin Harbouki (Abu Iskander)**



16/12/2016