



CHERISHED
MEMORIES OF
AFRICA

Munawwar Ahmad Khursheed

Cherished Memories Of Africa



Compiled by:

Maulana Munawar Ahmad Khurshid

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Gratitude

O Allah, Maker of things, Concealer
of faults, All Powerful;

O my Beloved, my Benefactor, my
Sustainer!

How should I thank You, O Bestower
of Great Favours?

Where can I find the words to express
my gratitude?

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani
The Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi ^{AS}



وقت تھا وقت مسیحا نہ کسی اور کا وقت
میں نہ آتا تو کوئی اور ہی آیا ہوتا

This was the time for the advent of the Messiah, and none else, If not me, someone else would have appeared as Messiah

Writings of the Promised Messiah ^{as}

Conclusive Argument

Thus, by raising this humblest of men in this age and bestowing upon me hundreds of heavenly Signs and vouchsafing to me miraculous secrets, and divine insights and verities, and furnishing me with hundreds of conclusive intellectual arguments, God Almighty has desired that He should publish and introduce the true teachings of the Holy Quran among every people and in every country, and that He may perfect His conclusive argument upon them Every one of my opponents will himself become a witness to his own helplessness and defeat.

(Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khazain, Vol I, pp 596-597)

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Divine Support

I declare with full confidence and firmness that I am in the right and that, by the Grace of Allah, in this conflict, victory is mine and mine alone. As far as I look into the future, I see the entire world in complete submission to my truth. It is close at hand that I shall gain a resounding victory. It is so because another voice speaks in support of what I speak and there is another Hand which operates to strengthen my hand. The world does not see it but I do. In me vibrates the voice of a heavenly spirit which instills life into each and every word that I speak.

(Azalah Auham Pt II: Roohani Khazain Vol. 3, p 403)

Dedication

To the simple and virtuous Ahmadi brothers and sisters of *Arze Bilal* (Africa), who believed in the blessed personage of the Imam of the Age (as) without seeing him and then wholeheartedly fell in love with His Holiness and his Khalifas, who in spite of their poverty and limited resources extended their hospitality to the missionaries during their stay abroad, and opened their hearts and homes to them, and became their helpers and comforters, day and night, through thick and thin, with extreme love and devotion, as they fulfilled their obligation of propagation of faith. As such they offered their life, wealth and honour in the way of Allah.

The incessant march of Ahmadiyyat in its quest for the supremacy of Islam continues with ever increasing advancement to its goal. These pious souls have played a prominent role in these unparalleled successes and unbelievable achievements. O my Lord, reward all of them with goodly rewards and grant them the status of excellence of 'You being pleased with them and they pleased with You' and grant their posterity the ability to guard their spiritual legacy with diligence, Aameen!

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

نُحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ وَ عَلَى عِيْدِهِ الْمَسِيْحِ الْمَوْعُوْدِ

خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ
هو الناصر



لندن

01-10-17 - K

پیارے مکرم منور احمد خورشید صاحب

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

آپ کا خط ملا جس میں آپ نے لکھا ہے کہ مکرم ڈاکٹر منور احمد صاحب نے آپ کی کتاب ”ارض بلال“ کا انگریزی ترجمہ کیا ہے۔ آپ کی یہ کتاب ماشاء اللہ بڑی اچھی اور مفید ہے۔ اب آپ نے اس کا انگریزی ترجمہ کروایا ہے تو اللہ کرے کہ اسے پڑھ کر انگریزی دان طبقے کی بھی علمی اور دینی حالت میں ترقی ہو اور یہ انہیں بھی فائدہ دینے والی ہو۔ اللہ تعالیٰ آپ کی کوششوں کو قبول فرمائے اور ان میں برکت ڈالے۔ آمین

والسلام

خاکسار
محمد اسحاق

خليفة المسيح الخامس

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ تَحْمُدُهُ وَ نُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ وَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْمَسِيحِ الْمُؤْتَمَدِ

By the Grace and Mercy of Allah

هوالنَّاصِر

London
01.10.2017

Dear Mukarram Munawar Ahmed Khursheed Sahib

Assalamo-alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu

I have received your letter in which you have stated that Dr Munawar Ahmed Sahib has translated your book - 'Arze-Bilal', Into English. Masha-Allah, your book is very good and useful. You have got it translated into English now. May Allah make it beneficial for those who know English and may its study increase their knowledge and faith. May Allah accept your efforts and bless them. Amin.

Wassalam

Signed: Mirza Masroor Ahmad
Khalifatul Masih V

About Author



Munawar Ahmed
Khurshid

Born, in 1950. Educated initially at Middle School, Fatehpur District Gujrat and matriculated from Muslim High School Gujrat. Later, graduated with Shahid degree from Jamia Ahmadiyya Rabwah.

The places where I served as Murabbi in Pakistan include Qila Kalar Wala District Sialkot, Kharian District Gujrat and Mianwali city.

Arrived in the Gambia as Muballigh in 1983 and worked as such at various places. Served as a teacher at Nasir Ahmadiyya senior secondary School for two years. In 1985 I was assigned the duty of supervision of Senegal mission. In 1994 I was appointed as Ameer of the Gambia, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Cape Verde. In 1997 the region was divided into three areas, each headed by a separate Amir. I was appointed Amir of Senegal, Cape Verde and Mauritania.

In 2005, I came to London following directive from Hadrat Ameer-ul-Momineen (may Allah be his Helper) because of ill health and served Senegal from there; that continued till 2012.

From 2008 to 2012 I had the good fortune of serving Jamia Ahmadiyya UK as ustaz. *Alhamdulillah*

About Translator

Born in 1937, matriculated from T. I. High School Rabwah and graduated in Medicine and Surgery from Nishtar Medical College, Multan. After working for two years in Pakistan and two years in Saudi Arabia (where he availed the opportunity to perform Umrah and Hajj), he



Dr Munawar Ahmed

he moved to the UK. He worked in various hospitals in NHS and attended a specialist course in Chest Diseases. When Hadrat Khalifatul Masih III (ra) launched Nusrat Jahan Scheme in 1971, he offered his services, initially for three years later extending indefinitely. He started his duties as waqf doctor in December 1973 at Ahmadiyya Hospital, Kokofu, Ghana which was the first medical centre established under Nusrat Jahan Scheme. In September 1975 he was transferred to the Gambia where he worked till May 1977. Then he was sent to Nigeria. In June 1986 he returned to the UK on leave because of personal reasons. He reported back for his waqf duty in January 2000 and was sent to the Gambia from where he finally retired in April 2007 after completing a total of twenty years under Nusrat Jahan Scheme.

During his stay in the UK he served as Secretary Umur e Aama UK for about two years (1997 – 1999). After retirement he settled in Oxford where he served as Sadr Jama'at for seven years (2007 – 2014).

**Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad
Khalifatul Masih V (atba)**



Review

(By Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V may Allah be his Helper)

May Allah the Almighty, accept your services to Africa and the Jama'at! By writing down these accounts you have made a good addition to the jama'at literature for the benefit of next generations and those who are not familiar with the devotees of Africa. May Allah the Almighty reward you!

Signed: Mirza Masroor Ahmad

میری یاد میں

اللہ تعالیٰ آپ کو ازلیہ
 اور جماعت کے اہل سنت کو قبول
 فرمائے۔
 - یہ حالت بکدر اظہار کیا
 ہے کہ انہوں نے لوگوں کے لیے
 جو اذیتیں کھائیں تو ہمیں جانتے
 رہنا اور ان جماعت کے لیے جو جہادیں
 منظور احمد خورشید (واقف اندلی) لکھا اخصافہ کی بات۔
 اللہ تعالیٰ جزاؤں کے
 خدا
 لندن

Preface

(By Muniruddin Shams Addl. Wakilut Tasneef London)

I had the opportunity of going through the book, 'Arze Bilal – My memories' written by Maulana Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib, *Muballigh-e-Silsila*, comprising of his memoirs. Many faith inspiring incidents have been recorded and I hope the readers will enjoy reading them and it will augment their faith.

When went on a tour of the Gambia, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone following a directive by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra), Respected Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib was performing his duties as the Ameer and Missionary In-charge of the Gambia and the neighbouring region. It was my personal observation that he had established good rapport with people in the SeneGambia region. Most remarkably he did not hesitate to, and was not afraid of, visiting even the highest ranking officials. He had a very loving and close relationship with the jama'at members. He mixed with them and shared meals with them and for that the local brothers respected him and listened to him. I travelled with him to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau and everywhere these features of his behaviour figured prominently. Although he was not a master of the local languages, he used them without hesitation and thereby won the hearts of the locals. During the tour, I also had the opportunity to see other missionaries and hold meetings with them and learnt how our muballighs continued to deliver the message of truth under most difficult circumstances.

During my tour of Senegal, I had the opportunity to address many Ahmadi MPs in the House of Parliament and to lead them in Zuhr and 'Asr prayers in congregation; that too was the result of efforts of respected Munawar Khurshid Sahib.

When I started studying his manuscript for proof-reading, I was amazed by the way he had remembered all the incidents during his period as Ameer. Anyway it is a good step that he took and compiled all those incidents. May Allah grant him a complete and speedy recovery and may the love of Tabligh that he had be granted to many and may all get the ability to render service acceptable to Him, Ameen!

Humbly Yours,

Muniruddin Shams
(Addl. Wakilut-Tasneef, London)
10 July 2015

Review

(By Ata-ul-Mujeeb Rashed, Imam Fazl Mosque London)

Arze Bilal is such an attractive topic that both hands automatically stretch out for this book. It is an interesting compilation of beautiful memories of practical experiences of Maulana Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib, the Jama'at Muballigh. Because (reword) Arze Bilal... of its simple and flowing style it is very captivating. It is amazing how the writer preserved these Tabligh and Tarbiyyat related incidents extending over such a long period in his memory and then penned them down with precise details. He states that his style lacks rhetoric but I must assert that it has such flowing and attractive quality that motivates the reader to go on and on and so often it feels as if the reader is riding with him.

Beautiful memoirs of practical experiences of a Muballigh, in addition to being faith inspiring, are a compendium of countless informations. I liked the manner in which the writer has detailed the sacrifices and efforts of the sincere and devoted Ahmadis of Arze Bilal. This book has preserved in history the sacrifices and selfless services of these unknown devotees of Islam. The book also gives a fair idea of the difficulties faced by the Ahmadi Muballighs in the field of Tabligh and continuous advance of these Muballighs steadfastly, inspite of all the problems and hinderances, under the canopy of Divine help and support. The scenes of Allah's help, support and security inspire living faith in

Living God in the heart of every reader.

In short, 'Arz e Bilal – my Memories' is a very faith-inspiring book. As I congratulate Maulana Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib from the core of my heart, I also express my gratitude to him for making a precious addition to the jama'at literature by compiling these memories. He has also rendered a great service by recording the incidents which were hidden from the gaze of history. May Allah reward him with goodly reward!

I pray that may Allah, the Almighty grant him good health and long life and bless him with the ability to render service to the jama'at in future as well, Ameen!

Humbly yours

Ata ul Mujeeb Rashed
Imam Fazl Mosque London
London 23 March 2014

Review

(By Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib)

I returned from Jalsa Salana UK 2015 with souvenir of love and kindness of our beloved Imam; added to that was 'Arz e Bilal - My Memories' a book written by Jama'at's murabbi – respected Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib, that he gifted me out of love and asked me to write a review on it. The memoirs of Arz e Bilal are so captivating that once you start reading them you would not like to stop. Accordingly, I went through most of it during my return journey from London. The diverse memoirs of our *Waqfe zindagi* brother and Jama'at Murabbi are faith inspiring indeed. His memory is praiseworthy. By writing the interesting details of his personal experiences, in a simple but skilful style, he has given an open challenge to the murabbis all over the world.

The motivation for preaching among the African nations was based on a Hadith that contained a prophecy about destruction of Ka'aba by an African. Fulfilment of such prophecies can be averted by prayers, charity and efforts. Looking at the activities of the jama'at for Islam in Africa, it seems that prophecy has been averted.

Respected Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib served as murabbi for 29 years in West African countries – the Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal. In his memoirs, alongwith his own activities, he has also given brief accounts of historical, geographical, economic and social conditions there making the subject matter more interesting and informative. He has made us aware of the situations he faced with reference to

the life-style, diet, customs and traditions, beliefs and religion of the Africans.

Moreover, he has also introduced and mentioned the services rendered by the previous and contemporary murabbis, teachers and doctors working in those countries during that period thereby preserving a large section of jama'at's history.

The author worked in those countries especially Cape Verde, Senegal, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau during the period when the jama'at was just beginning to take root there. Therefore, because of lack of appropriate resources, he faced unfavourable circumstances and hardships in transport, boarding and lodging. He confronted these difficult circumstances with immense courage and with spirit of a mujahid. More importantly, in addition to his own Tabligh and tarbiyyat incidents, by mentioning the sincerity and faithfulness of African *Muallims* and Ahmadis, he has given them kind of eternal life. It shows that when the hearts of our African brothers were enlightened with faith they did not lag behind us in vying for good deeds. In fact some of them have excelled so much that we feel envious towards them. Among these faith inspiring incidents, while it narrates the steadfastness and financial sacrifices of the sincere African Ahmadis, it states the fruits of their sacrifices as well. It also beautifully depicts the rapid gradual progress of the jama'at in those countries during his long stay there. It strengthens one's faith to observe the way Allah, the Almighty supports and helps the jama'at through the blessing of khilafat and that the jama'at and its devotees are making progress both in religious and secular fields.

The anecdotes include instances of special favours of Allah during travels. Also mentioned are some faith inspiring dreams and their magnificent fulfilment that increases one's faith. Going through the incidents of acceptance of prayers further increases one's faith in existence of Allah and acceptance of prayers. His narratives also arouse the zeal and passion for Tabligh. The favours of the khalifas and blessings of their tours during his period of service are beautifully described in the book. It is also a compendium of beautiful and interesting incidents of Divine support for a *waaqif-e-zindagi* in the field of his activity. Some rare historical photographs have been added as well.

(Daily Alfazl Rabwah, 27 November 2015)

Acknowledgements

من لا يشكر الناس لا يشكر الله

He who does not thank people, does not thank Allah

I am overwhelmed with gratitude to my beloved master, Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V (atba) for his prayers and loving kindness with regards to the completion of my book – Arze Bilal, my memoires. I am also indebted to Abdul Majid Tahir Sahib, the Addl. Wakilut Tabshir London, Muniruddin Shams Sahib, Addl. Wakilut Tasneef London and all the brothers who have assisted me and guided me in any way. May Allah grant them all a goodly reward and protect them with His Mercy always!

I am very grateful to all my family members, particularly my wife, Nusrat Jahan Sahiba and Nasir Ahmad Sahib; it would not have been possible without their co-operation. They stood by me throughout with devotion and love.

My special thanks are due to Dr Munawar Ahmed of Oxford, who despite his many personal engagements and health problems, translated this book from Urdu into English. May Allah grant him goodly reward and acceptance of his sacrifice and *sadqa jariyya* (on-going charity), Ameen!

Prologue

By the Grace of Allah, my lifespan has exceeded sixty odd years, bitter at times, sweet at times, now hot, now cold, with drumbeats of joyous occasions from time to time and endless chains of sorrows and sufferings at other times.

Once I enquired an African brother about his age.

He said: 'I am on a bonus these days'.

'What do you mean by bonus?' I asked.

He explained, 'You see Allah blessed the Chief of the Universe, Pride of the Creation, and the Best of mankind, Hadrat Muhammad (saw) with life of sixty three years. Therefore, that is the real age of man and anything more than that is a bonus'.

Every person faces good and bad experiences in his everyday life. If one starts writing all of those, it will fill hundreds of volumes. I glanced at a book in which the author writes that every person, even if he is a lowly servant, regards his daily incidents as interesting as those of a high ranking government official, a businessman, a national sportsman or any one who has attained the highest level in any walk of life. He writes: a man who was entrusted with the care of rabbits would narrate instances showing his intelligence, courage, smartness and ability to his household and friends everyday. For instance, the white rabbit is very naughty and keeps beating up the little one and I taught it such a lesson today that it sat aside all day with its tail between its legs.

Thus whole of his universe revolved around these rabbits.

Likewise, I have also made humble effort to write down some anecdotes, in rather inarticulate words, based on my own observations and hearsay information, during the days of my

work in the field.

Once I wrote an article about a very respectable and saintly person of the Gambia jama'at, the late Alhaj Ibrahim Abdul Qadir Jikini Sahib that was published in Jama'at's esteemed Daily Alfazl. Some time later a friend said: May Allah reward you, by writing this article you have brought Haji Sahib to life'. And wished: How nice it would be if you write down some of your interesting and inspiring memories from your work in the field.

May Allah reward the friend as he motivated me to write down the anecdotes that I could remember.

There is wisdom underlying everything that Allah does. I have suffered from heart disease, diabetes and hypertension for several years. In addition to three angiograms, I have had open heart surgery. Now the kidneys have also failed, therefore, I have to go to the hospital for dialysis three times a week, each session lasting for more than half a day. I spend spare time at home. I used that spare time to take up this project. Apparently it was quite difficult to scan the past, pick up forgotten events and write them down in a book form. Anyway God helps those who help themselves. He gave me the resolve to do it and made it possible for me. Alhamdulillah.

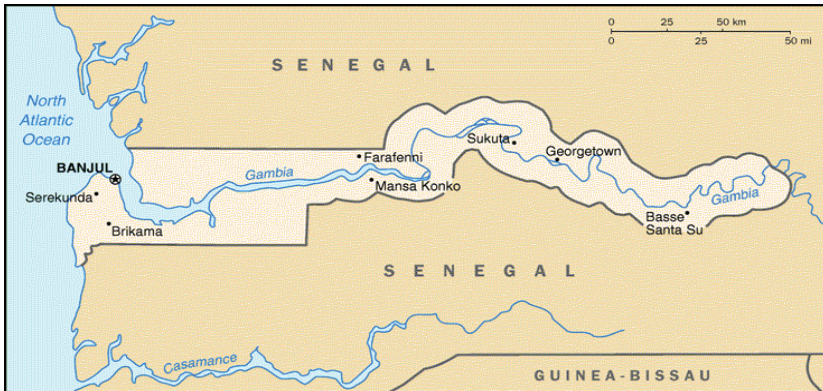
These few words are in fact a request for prayers that Allah give me good fortune to spend the rest of my life in rendering service to faith - service that is acceptable to Him, and the end is fortunate one, Amin!

Though I have little of rhetorician's art,
Maybe these words will sink into your heart

Wassalam
Humbly yours
Munawar Ahmad Khurshid, Waaqif-e-zindagi
(Life devotee)

Chapter 1

The Gambia



Introduction of The Gambia

There are seven continents in the world; Asia is the largest followed by Africa. Territorially, Africa is divided into five regions: East Africa, West Africa, North Africa, Central Africa and South Africa. The continent comprises of 55 countries. Africa is mostly inhabited by blacks. However, North Africa also includes some Arab countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Western Sahara etc. In West Africa, there are sixteen countries.

- Area and population wise, the Gambia is the smallest country in West Africa.
- Its population is 1.9 million.
- Its area is 11,295 square miles.

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- The Gambia is situated on either side of the Gambia River.
- Its capital is Banjul, a small island.
- Independence day: 16 February 1965
- Currency is named Dalasi
- Largest city Greater Banjul including Serekunda
- The Jama'at's headquarters, Nusrat High School and Ahmadiyya Muslim Hospitals are situated in this area – Serekunda.
- Important townships are: Banjul, Serekunda, Brikama, Soma, Ferafeni, Georgetown (Janjanbureh), Bansang, Basse, Fatoto, Kuntaur, Kaur, Kerewan and Bara.

The Gambians

- The people are very hospitable, noble-hearted and sociable.
- The Gambians are gentle by nature. They wrangle verbally but refrain from coming to blows.
- They are very enduring and contented - happy with what God has given them.
- They are largely free from evils like killing, plundering and kidnapping.
- Barring the capital, the crime rate in the countryside is very low.

The Geography

- Senegal surrounds the Gambia on three sides, with small coastline on the Atlantic Ocean marking its western extremity. Hence, the Gambians say that the Gambia is a dagger in the belly of Senegal. Whereas, the Senegalese would say that Senegal is a crocodile and the Gambia is like the tongue in its mouth; Senegal, like the crocodile, may close its mouth at anytime and you will see the

Gambia no more!

- The Gambia has no neighbours except Senegal and the sea; one has to pass through the Gambia to travel between one regions of Senegal to the other.

Religion

- About 94 per cent of the population are Muslims, the rest are Christians and adherents of other faiths.
- Before the advent of Ahmadiyyat, they were greatly influenced by Christianity as they were ruled by the British.
- Most of the educational institutes were run by the Christians. Therefore, most of the students had two names – a Muslim name and a Christian name given by the administration at the time of admission to the school.
- Compared to other countries, they are less afflicted by many evils because of blessings of Islam
- Common sects in the country are Tijaniyyah, Muridiyyah, Qadiriyyah and some organisations sponsored by some Arab countries.
- Faith is bonded with the seats and courts of well-known spiritual guides (*pirs*) and Muslim organisations in Senegal.
- These days Iran has also launched their programme of building madrasas and mosques to counter the Saudi block.

Gambia River

- The reason why this small, little known piece of land became the centre of extra-ordinary attraction for some major nations was this Gambia River and its exceptional position.
- The river is 1,130 kilometres (700 mi) long
- It originates from the Fouta Djallon plateau in north Guinea Conakry

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- It passes through Senegal and enters the Gambia through Tambacounda, runs through the middle of whole length of the Gambia to the Atlantic Ocean at the city of Banjul.
- From Banjul to Kaur the water is salty and not conducive to agriculture.
- From Banjul to Kaur the water flows towards the sea at times and in the opposite direction at other times. That is caused by the tides in the sea.

Travel by Ferry

- When I arrived in the Gambia, there used to be a ferry service from Banjul to Basse that people used for travelling with their bag and baggage. Those days, roads were as good as non-existent being in such a state of disrepair that made travelling impossible.
- Maulana Muhammad Sharif Sahib had used this service to visit some jama'ats of the country; arriving at Basse he stayed in the ferry for a few days.
- I also travelled by ferry from Basse to Georgetown once. Probably the same year, a ferry drowned in the river near Farafenni. Ferries were also used for postal service those days and we lost a lot of our post in that ferry. After that country-wise ferry service was discontinued.

Gambia River and the slave trade

- Gambia River provided an important route for the slave trade.
- There were many prisons for the slaves in some islands of the Gambia, of which Georgetown and James Island are well-known.
- The river is not very wide but is deep enough to be navigable for a few hundred kilometres for small ships.
- During fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, this river was used to ship about 3 million innocent humans to be sold

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like animals to their masters in the slave trade centres across the world.

Agriculture

- The land is very fertile; there is shortage of water because of limited resources.
- Important crops for the Gambians are groundnuts, millet, corn and rice.

The Rainy Season

- The rainy season starts in July and lasts till October. The agriculture depends on this season. They cultivate their crops during this season and harvest a few months later. It provides them grains for the year.
- Like the hearts of the Gambians, their land is also very soft. Ordinarily quite hard, it becomes soft with minimal rain.
- The farmers plough the land using a donkey, horse or an ox. A Pakistani farmer cannot visualise that because repeated ploughing is required in Pakistan, whereas the Gambians need doing it once only.

Peanuts

- Peanuts, a common product there is a Divine blessing for the nation. People consume it in different ways: roasted or boiled, peeled or unpeeled.
- Peeled peanuts are also ground into a paste that is used for cooking as an alternative to ghee or oil. They consume peanuts in different forms without any ill effects on their throats!

The Blessing of Fish

- The river and the sea provide fresh fish. They eat this Divine bounty abundantly. Moreover, it adorns the dining

tables of not only the neighbouring African countries but also the European countries thus bringing reputation and money to the Gambians.

Tourism

- Allah has blessed the Gambia with beautiful clean beaches. Therefore, many European investors have invested in hoteling there. Many tourists come to the Gambia and that is an important source of income for the country.

Weather

- The weather in the capital and the coastal areas is very pleasant. Even in winter you feel little need for warm clothing. Likewise, in summer, the weather is much better as compared to Pakistan, a fan is enough for cool air.
- However, as you travel up country, the severity of hot weather increases. Basse is the last town where, like other towns, there is no electrical supply sometimes throughout the year. During May and June, the temperatures in this area rise to 45 – 52°C.
- Once during Ramadan, I had to make a telephone call to Amir Sahib in Banjul. There was no telephone facility at homes those days. Therefore, one had to go to telephone exchange to make calls. When I got there, I saw the operator having his lunch. I said to him, “why are you not fasting?” He laughed and said, “Ustaz, I am from Banjul. For me one day’s fast in Basse is equivalent to four days’ fast in Banjul. Therefore I fast every fourth day”. Hopefully that gives an idea of the difference in weather between Banjul and Basse.

Education

By 1983, there were only five high schools in the Gambia run by Christians:

- Armitage High School Georgetown,
- Gambia High School, Banjul,
- St Joseph High School Banjul and
- St Peter's High School Lamin
- St Augustine High School

By the Grace of Allah, currently there are four high schools run by the Ahmadiyya Jama'at serving the nation in the educational field:

- Nusrat High School, Serrekunda
- Tahir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School, Mansa Konko
- Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim Senior Secondary School, Basse
- Masroor Ahmadiyya Muslim High School, Old Yundum and
- Mbullum Ahmadiyya muslim high school

There is still a need for more efforts in the educational field although; several new educational institutes have been established recently. A university has been established in Brikama wherein medicine is also being taught in addition to other important subjects.

Traditional Religious Madrassas

- Many Arabic madrassas belonging to different schools of thought have now started there. Their style of teaching and its effects are similar to those of the madrassas in the

Cherished Memories Of Africa

rest of the Islamic world. There is a lot of rivalry and jealousy amongst these madrassas.

- The students of these madrassas go house to house begging in the name of Allah. It fills the tummies of the students and keeps the teachers' pot boiling!

Languages

English is the official language of the Gambia. Other languages are Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola, Serer, Jahanka and Bambra.

Ahmadiyyat in The Gambia

'I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth'

'Let the politicians of the world do their job; My message is one of love, may it spread far'

Take the map of the world; cast your eyes on the continent of Africa and then think of a very small and relatively unknown country – the Gambia which is difficult to spot on the world map. Now visualise the means of communications that conveyed the message of Hadrat Masih Ma'ud as from the little known village of Qadian to this distant piece of land fifty years ago. The people there not only believe in his message but are also infatuated with his love without seeing him. A hint is enough for the wise. Believe it or not, this message could only reach there on the wings of angels in the fulfilment of the prophecy of God. Now I will present the story of advent of Ahmadiyyat in the Gambia. The just readers can draw their conclusions.

Message of Ahmadiyyat: A Gambian girl went to Sierra Leone for higher education. In a shop there, she found a book on Islamic prayers in which along with the Arabic text, its English translation and transliteration was also given. She had never seen a book like that in her country. She bought the book and sent it to one of her dear ones in the Gambia. The book had been published by Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya Qadian. A young man, Mr Bara Njie contacted the Jama'at in Qadian and requested for more books of religious knowledge. The jama'at obliged and told him of Jama'at's mission in Nigeria whom he could contact

for more books and information. Maulana Naseem Ahmad Saifee was the missionary-in-charge in Nigeria then.

First of all, Mukarram Hamza Sanyalu – a *Muallim* (teacher) from Nigeria arrived in the Gambia and he preached in Banjul for about one year. After him, a *Muallim*, Mukarram Jibreel Saeed, father of (late) Hafiz Ahmed Jibreel Saeed, Naib Ameer of Ghana Jama'at came for a few months. The Jama'at had not been established formally in the Gambia by then. Jibreel Saeed Sahib used to walk about with a bag, hanging by his neck and Ahmadiyyat inscribed on it. Thus in different ways, he attracted the attention of the people towards himself and delivered the message of Ahmadiyyat. Consequently many people in and around Banjul became acquainted with the jama'at, some of them very closely. Many educated youth established close contact with the jama'at centre at Qadian by post and started receiving periodicals regularly.

First Muballigh from Markaz (the centre)

Choudhry Muhammad Sharif Sahib came from Pakistan in 1961 as Muballigh and Missionary-in-charge of the Gambia. He went back to Pakistan after three years and Mukarram Ghulam Ahmad Sahib Baddomalhi arrived as Ameer of the Gambia.

First Jama'at Centre

Maulana Muhammad Sharif stayed at Mr. Bara Njie's house in Rankin Street in Banjul. As such we can call it the first Ahmadiyya Mission House in the Gambia.

Initial opposition of the Jama'at

After the arrival of Choudhry Muhammad Sharif Sahib, organised opposition of the jama'at started. The chief Imam of Banjul at that time was Alhaj Muhammad Lamin Bah. He led the opposition along with some selected people of the city. They complained to the Governor that a new faith has arrived in the city which was dangerous for everybody; therefore, it should be banished. How could he do that, asked the Governor who was an Englishman and a Christian. He called a meeting of all the prominent Muslim leaders and dignitaries and discussed the matter. They all expressed their opinion.

Conviction of Maulana Muhammad Sharif Sahib

Maulana Muhammad Sharif Sahib also attended the meeting. The opponents made many speeches; they used all sorts of tactics and threats. Choudhry Muhammad Sharif Sahib declared very confidently that 'by the Grace of Allah, we are true and devout Muslims. As we are true, Insha-Allah you will see that our jama'ats will be established throughout the country very soon. God forbid, if our jama'at is false, it will become extinct by itself.' The Governor asked for a list of those who were with the jama'at with their signatures within three days, for him to decide. Glory is to God that many educated youth and some of Imam's political adversaries joined the Ahmadis. Thus, within three days, papers signed by about one thousand persons were sent to the Governor's office. The Governor said how he could banish the Jama'at that had so many adherents in Banjul alone. The Imam and his associates clamoured a lot but in vain. In this way, by the Grace of Allah, the Ahmadiyya Jama'at was

miraculously established in the Gambia.

Thereafter sometimes in the fulfilment of Divine promise *يأتونك رجال نوحى إليهم من السماء* and sometimes acceptance of prayers and sometimes following an *istikhara* or logical and scriptural arguments the hardest hearts softened and the spiritual light passed on from one person to the next as a chain reaction and throughout the Gambia, many people fell in love with the Messiah. Then God's angels spread the light of truth to the neighbouring countries like Senegal and Guinea.

The Fortunate Ones, who served in The Gambia:

Complying with the directive from the khalifas many brothers had the good fortune of serving in different fields in the Gambia devoting their lives (*waqfe zindagi*) or part of it (*waqfe aarzi*). Everyone did justice to it sincerely and faithfully. They included young and old, but the zeal of every one was young.

An Elderly Doctor's Passion for Serving his Faith:

An elderly doctor arrived in the Gambia from Pakistan intoxicated with the passion for service to faith. His name was Dr Sayyed Zia-ul-Hassan. He had held the high rank of Brigadier in Pakistan Army. We can well imagine the life style of, and means and facilities available to a Brigadier. Answering the call of the then khalifa during the old age he bade farewell to all those facilities and jumped in to the field of jihad all on his own. Maulana Daud Hanif Sahib, the Ameer posted him at Basse. The hot weather of Basse and its location at country's remote end has already been mentioned.

Cherished Memories Of Africa

The doctor's clinic and residence were in the same rented building. There was a night club adjacent to started its programmes early evening and the noisy activity continued till morning. The sound of music and singing reverberated in the whole environment. Ordinarily it would be difficult to sleep in that house. Once a friend asked him, "Does this noise not disturb you?" He replied that he had got used to it so much that without that noise he could not fall asleep. The wife was obviously worried about him being alone in a foreign land in this old age while the family was in Pakistan. She wrote to him enquiring: 'who are the people around you and who cooks for him?' He wrote back: 'I have a servant. He wakes me up early in the morning. After prayers, he prepares breakfast for me, then he opens the clinic. When I come back tired he makes tea for me, then the lunch. Likewise he cleans the house. Then he cooks dinner and presents it to me. He looks after me really well. You need not worry at all. The name of that servant is Zia-ul-Hassan'.

NAMES: Names of brothers who served in various sections in The Gambia are listed below. Advanced apologies for any omissions.

Amirs and Missionaries-in-charge 1961 – 1997

1. Maulana Mohammad Sharif Sahib
2. Maulana Ghulam Ahmad Baddomallhi Sahib
3. Maulana Hafiz Basdhiruddin Ubaidullah Sahib
4. Maulana Abdul-Shakoore Sahib
5. Maulana Fazl Ilahi Anweri Sahib
6. Maulana Daud Ahmad Hanif Sahib
7. Maulana Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib (writer)
8. Maulana Inayatullah Zahid Sahib

Central Muballighs

1. Maulana Mohammad Sharif Sahib
2. Maulana Ghulam Ahmad Baddomallhi Sahib
3. Maulana Daud Ahmad Hanif Sahib
4. Malik Muhammad Akram Sahib
5. Malik Muhammad Iqbal Ghazanfar Sahib
6. Mirza Muhammad Iqbal Sahib
7. Rafiq Ahmad Javaid Sahib
8. Naseer Ahmad Cheema Sahib
9. Maulana Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib
10. Omer Ali Tahir Sahib
11. Hafiz Ahmad Shahid Sahib
12. Muhammad Suleiman Ahmad Sahib
13. Maulana Inayatullah Zahid Sahib
14. Tariq Mahmud Javaid Sahib
15. Muhammad Ahmad Shams Sahib
16. Tahir Mahdi Imtiaz Ahmad Sahib
17. Mansoor Ahmad Mubashir Sahib
18. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Sahib
19. Abdul Hamid Sahib
20. Fazal Ahmad Majoka Sahib
21. Muhammad Tufail Ghumman Sahib
22. Navid Ahmad Aadil Sahib
23. Muhammad Amin Cheema Sahib
24. Mir Abdul Majid Sahib
25. Maulana Hafiz Bashiruddin Ubaidullah Sahib
26. Maulana Abdul-Shakoor Sahib
27. Maulana Fazl Ilahi Anweri Sahib

Principals of Nusrat High School, Banjul, The Gambia; 1971 - 1997

1. Mr. Nasim Ahmad Sahib, the first Principal
2. Mr Anis Ahmad Aqeel Sahib
3. Mr Muhammad Mahmud Iqbal Sahib

Teachers Nusrat High School

1. Mrs Nighat Nasim Sahiba

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2. Mr Muhammad Mahmud Iqbal Sahib
3. Chaudhry Munir Ahmad Sahib
4. Mirza Abdul Haq Sahib
5. Mr Abdul Rashid Mangla Sahib
6. Sayyed Abdul Momin Sahib
7. Mr Basharat-ur-Rahman Sahib
8. Mr Ijaz Ahmad Sahib
9. Mr Nazeer Ahmad Bhugaloo Sahib
10. Mr Hameedullah Zafar Sahib
11. Syed Zafar-ud-Din Sahib
12. Mrs Syed Zafar-ud-Din Sahiba
13. Mr Muzaffar Ahmad Khalid Sahib
14. Mr Muhammad Tufail Ghumman Sahib
15. Mr Mubashir Ahmad Sahib
16. Chaudhry Bashir Ahmad Sahib
17. Mrs Bushra Bashir Sahiba
18. Mr Haidar Ali Uppal Sahib
19. Mr Muhammad Anwar sahib

Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School, Basse (1984 – 97)

1. Mr Saeed Ahmad Chattha Sahib, the first principal
2. Mr Mahmud Ahmad Sahib BT
3. Mr Khalid Ahmad Zafar Sahib
4. Rana Nadeem Ahmad Khalid Sahib
5. Mr Abdul Qadir Bhatti Sahib

Teachers Nasir Ahmadiyya High School

1. Mr Munawar Ahmad Khurshid Sahib
2. Mr Nazeer Ahmad Bhageloo Sahib
3. Mr Mumtaz Ahmad Virk Sahib
4. Rana Nadeem Ahmad Sahib
5. Mr Tauseef Ahmad Sajid Sahib
6. Mr Abdul Wahid sahib
7. Mr Naeem Ahmad Sahib

Tahir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School Mansa Konko (1988 – 1997)

1. Syed Jaleed Ahmad, first principal
2. Mrs Farhat Jaleed Sahiba
3. Mr Tahir Mahdi Imtiaz Sahib
4. Mr Tariq Mahmud Javaid Sahib

Teachers at Tahir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School

1. Mr Basharat Ahmad (Vice Principal)
2. Mrs Basharat Ahmad Sahiba
3. Muhammad Anwar Nadeem Sahib
4. Rana Irfan Ahmad Sahib

Doctors who answered the call of the then Khalifa 1977 - 1997

1. Dr Saeed Ahmad (Kaur/Farafenni)
2. Dr Anwar Ahmad Khan (Banjul)
3. Dr Munawar Ahmed Sahib S/O Dr. Swajuddin Ahmed (Banjul)
4. Dr Muhammad Hafeez Khan Sahib (Njawara)
5. Dr Tahir Ahmad Sahib (Soma, Basse) Kuinela
6. Dr Muhammad Ashraf Sahib (Brikama, Gunjur)
7. Dr Laeeq Ansari Sahib (Basse, Banjul)
8. Dr Umur-ud-Din Sidhu Sahib (Banjul)
9. Dr Brig Syed Ziaul-Hasan (Basse)
10. Dr Capt Alhaj Muhammad Khan Sahib (Brikama)
11. Dr Mahmud Ahmad (Kashmir, India)
12. Dr Munawar Ahmad Sahib S/O Ghulam Rasool Sahib (Njawara, Banjul)
13. Dr Laeeq Ahmad Farrukh Sahib (Njawar, Basse)
14. Dr Abdul Hafeez) Banjul
15. Dr Mrs Amatul Shakoor Sahiba wife of Dr Abdul Hafeez (Banjul)
16. Dr Muhammad Ashraf Sahib (Kaur, Farafenni)
17. Dr Naseeruddin Sahib (Basse)
18. Dr Naeem Ahmad Sahib (Kaur, Farafenni)
19. Dr Samiullah Tahir Sahib (Kaur, Farafenni)
20. Dr Abdul Momin Jadran Sahib (Basse)

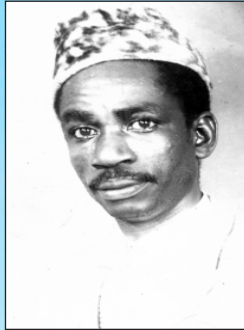
Dental Surgeons 1970 – 1997

1. Dr Ihtesham-ul-Haq Sahib
2. Dr Muhammad Ajmal Sahib
3. Dr Daud Ahmad Tahir Sahib
4. Dr Fareed Ahmad Sahib
5. Dr Mahmood Sultanghos Sahib of Mauritius
6. Dr Hameedullah Nusrat Pasha Sahib
7. Dr Hameedullah Sahib (Shaheed Karachi)

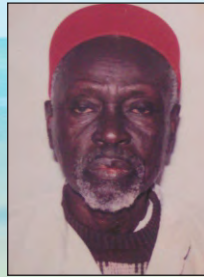
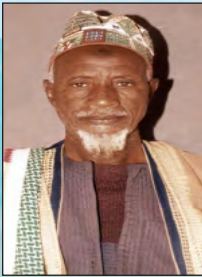
Miscellaneous Sections

1. Subedar Abdul Ghaffar Sahib Administrator
2. Malik Mahboob Ahmad Sahib Administrator
3. Mr Mahmood Anjum Sahib Dispenser
4. Chaudhry Abdul Aziz Dogar Sahib, Building construction
5. Mr Abdul Hameed Chhenna Sahib, Building construction
6. Mr Mukhtar Ahmad Sahib, Building construction
7. Mr Muhammad Amin Chenna Sahib, Building construction

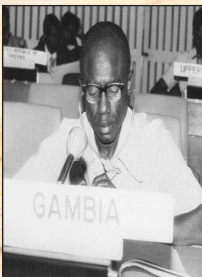
Some Sincere Members of Gambian Jamaat



First Ahmadi. Mr.Mbara Njie



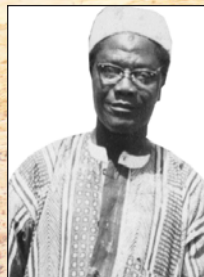
Alh.Ibrahim jikini Alh.Sir F.M Singhateh Bro. As Malik Ndoy



Bro. Alieu Bah



Bro.Wali Joof



Bro. Haroon Rashid



Bro .Iamin Jawara



Alh.Ibrahim Mbowe



Bro. Sana Cham.



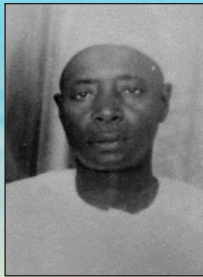
Bro.Salif keita



Bro. Muhammad Jane



Bro. Alieu Tourey



Bro Mamoor Bajane



Bro Momdou Mby



Imam Arfang Trawally



Imam Ismaila Tourey

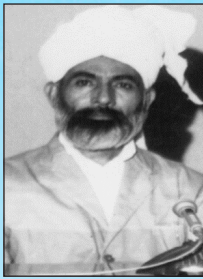


Bro Junkun Drameh

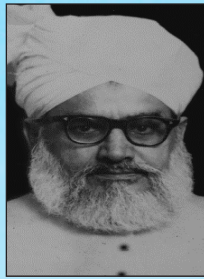


Bro. Omar Sonko

Amirs & Missionary Incharges



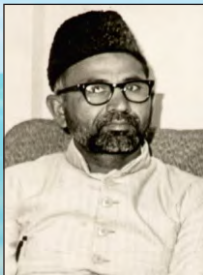
Maulana Muhammad Shareef



Maulana Ghulam Ahmed



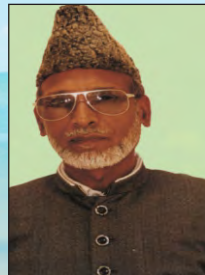
Hafiz Basheerudin Obaidullah



Maulana Abdul Shakoor



Maulana Fazl Ilahi Anwari



Maulana Daud Ahmed Hanif



Munawar Ahmed Khurshid



Maulana Anaytullah Zahid



Maulana Baba. F. Trawally

Visit Khulafa-e-Karam



Hazrat Khalifatul Masih Salis Rahmullah,
Sir Al Haj f.M. Singateh, Mirza Mubarak Ahmed



Hazrat Khalifatul Masih Salis Rahmullah,
Maulana Muhammed Shareed Sb, Imam of Banjul



Hazrat Khalifatul Masih Rabeh Rahmullah with
President of the Gambia, Dauda Jawara



Baitul salam Mosque in the Gambia

Local Missionaries



Oustaz Hamza Sanalo



Oustaz Alh. Ibrahim Jikini



Oustaz Ismail Trawaly



Oustaz Yobi Ba



Oustaz Ousman Ba



Oustaz Ilsa Joof



Oustaz Abubakar Touray



Oustaz Omar Ba



Oustaz Musa Ba



Oustaz Dauda Cham



Oustaz Ibrahim Ba



Oustaz Abdulla Njie



Ex President of the Gambia, Daouda Jawara, Maulana Tahir Mehdi
Imtiaz, Maulana Tariq Mahmood Javaid



Group photo of different devotees of the Jamaat serving in different departments in the Gambia



Hazrat Khalifatul Masih Rabeh Rahmullah with the Amir and Principals of Ahmadiyya schools and others

Chapter 2

SENEGAL



Introduction of Senegal

- Capital: Dakar, the largest city with a population of 4 million.
- Second largest city: Touba, centre of Muridiyyah sect; its population exceeds five hundred thousand.
- Ex colonial rulers: France
- Independence day: 23.06.1960
- Official language: French
- Government: Semi-Presidential Republic
- Population: 12,885,153
- Area: 196,712Km²(76000sq mi)

Cherished Memories Of Africa

- Currency: CFA franc; currently 1000CFA franc = 6.58 Euro
- Neighbouring countries: The Gambia, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali
- Weather: very pleasant in Dakar, rest of the country hot
- Source of income: Agriculture, fishing, tourism
- M'Bour city is the centre of tourism, has a very pleasant weather; is a city of hotels.
- Prominent Muslim Sects: Tijaniyya, Muridiyya, Qadiriyya, Lyon

Some Useful Information

The summary of my 25 years' stay in Senegal is:

- The country is known as 'teranga' (hospitable) – they respect the guests a great deal.
- They have a lot of human sympathy
- They are very well-mannered and sociable
- They are religiously-inclined by nature
- Every kind of good and halal food is available – unlike many other African countries
- Dakar is very beautiful city designed by the French government with special interest, it is about 40 km long and a few kilometers wide and is a peninsula.
- Senegal is greatly affected by Western Sahara, therefore, trees are scarce as one approaches Mauritania.
- At dinner time, they invite every one whether acquainted or a stranger.
- Politically, Senegal is looked at with respect by the neighbouring countries.

Cherished Memories Of Africa

- *Pirs* (spiritual guides) rule the countryside.
- The first President of the country was a Christian although 94% of the population are Muslims.
- This is one of a few African countries wherein the army have not meddled in government affairs.
- These people are free of afflictions like fighting, murder and pillage and kidnapping.
- I have travelled through Senegal during days and nights for 25 years but never faced any hazard.
- Every one has religious freedom; Muslims and Christians live peacefully in the same household.
- Business is controlled by Lebanese who have settled there for several generations.
- Lebanese and Europeans constitute 1% of the population.
- Sellers ask for 20 times the actual price of the goods; newcomers get deceived.
- Grand buildings and precious pieces of land belong to *pirs* (religious guides) and their children; they are never subjected to accountability.
- They fully avail themselves of Islamic permission for polygamy.
- Of all African countries, Senegal is least affected by AIDS.
- No ruler has ever been kicked out of his office; there has been successful handover of power from respective head of states since the inception of modern Senegal.
- No ruler has ever been kicked out of his office; they relinquish power voluntarily.
- The former presidents are still well respected throughout the country.
- 'Dakar Rally' - the world renowned car race ends in Dakar.

Traditions

The advice given by a father to his daughter at her wedding: be like a sewing needle, not a goat, meaning do not start screaming like a goat over little things rather, as the sewing needle stitches two pieces of cloth together, you have to sew two families together.

Humour

They have a sense of humour in abundance. They have a tradition of inter-tribal witty exchanges. Where ever they meet a stranger, they ask his name. When the latter tells his name and his tribe and if he happens to be from the same tribe, they happily engage in a prolonged conversation. If he is from a rival tribe, then jokingly he is told, 'your name is good but the tribe is not good, you better change it' or ' that tribe are our slaves' or make some other negative remark. Both of them would start laughing and exchange further jokes as if they had known each other for a long time. Thus when you travel by public transport you will find all of them talking to one other unlike what prevails in Europe.

AHMADIYYAT IN SENEGAL

First Bai'at in Senegal

There was an old register with record of early bai'aits in the Gambia mission. According to that Mr Abdullah Gauye was the first to perform bai'at in Senegal, round about 1965. However, when in Senegal, I tried a lot to find him but failed. Later I learned from some sources that he was not in Senegal any more.

Mr Hamad Bah is the one whom we can call the earliest Ahmadi convert in Senegal. He is from Kampamant village in Late Mengui area of Kaolack region. He performed the bai'at in the presence of Choudhry Muhammad Sharif Sahib, the then Amir of the Gambia Jama'at.

He belongs to the Fulani tribe (they herd cattle and keep moving around to various pasturelands throughout the year). He belonged to Qadariya sect. He spent some time with spiritual guides (*pirs*) of this sect to gain knowledge. However, because of the character and deeds of these so-called scholars, rather than getting closer to them, he distanced himself from them. At last, he left them to search for some other source of truth. One day he went to Salekini - a village in the Gambia, where we have a very sincere and devout jama'at by the Grace of Allah. There he met an Ahmadi – Nuha Toure. Mr Nuha introduced him to the jama'at. He saw glimmer of truth in Nuha's talk. That gradually brought him closer to the jama'at. He wanted to go to the centre of the Ahmadiyya jama'at and find out more to satisfy himself, thus making it easier for him to decide.

He left the other programmes and went straight to the Ahmadiyya Mission in Banjul – the capital of the Gambia. Maulana Muhammad Sharif Sahib, the Amir lived there. Hamad Bah Sahib asked him some questions and, on getting satisfactory answers he joined the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. Then, by the Grace of Allah, he spent the rest of his life preaching the truth. The sole mission of his life, for which he has devoted his life, is that somehow Ahmadiyya Jama'at may spread in Senegal.

Early Devotees of Senegal Janma'at

When I went on my first trip to Senegal in 1985, there were a few Ahmadi families at four places in the whole of Senegal. The names of those places and of those historical devotees of the Jama'at are given below. It is possible that I may not be able to write the name of some brother because of my poor memory; I tender my apologies for that in advance. It matters not if the name does not appear in my writing, as it is safe and well preserved in Divine record. May Allah bless their sacrifices with acceptance and also make their next generations trustees and guardians of their spiritual inheritance, *Ameen*.

KAOLACK

Omar Aw and his four sons: Muhammad Aw, Ahmad Aw, Ibrahim Aw, Abdullah Aw

Mousa Jallow, Mari Bah, Kabo Njie, Ahmad Joof, Ibrihim Joof

NGUCH

Aliou Sow, Berom Bah, Sali Jabi

KAMPAMANT: Hamad bah

SARI BUNGARI: Omar Bah, Biji Sow, Muhamad Bah, Musa Bah

My First Trip to Senegal

In 1984, I was stationed in Basse, the Gambia as a *Murabbi*. Moreover, in compliance with Amir's order, I was also rendering administrative and educational services at Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School.

The Amir sent to me a young *muallim* Ahmad Ly from Senegal. He spent a few months with me in the Basse area. He told me a lot of things about Senegal that got me quite interested and inspired me to visit the country, if possible. After a while, it was time for summer holidays in the Gambian schools. I requested the Amir for leave to visit Senegal that he readily granted. Ahmad Lee and I set out for Senegal. The journey was long; it was rainy season and the tracks were in a terrible state. We travelled by a van to the nearby Senegalese town of Velingara. From there, we took another van to Tambacounda and then to Kaolack - our first destination that being the only area where there were a few Ahmadis.

We reached Sare jugari in the suburbs of Kaolack. The Jama'at had a small mud-brick mosque there and we spent our night there. It was an extremely poor locality. There was stagnant rain water all around and, therefore, the mosquitoes thrived. It turned out to be a long night as if there would be no morning. Anyhow, with the Grace of Allah, the night was over safely. Next morning we met some brothers.

After that we went to Kampamant village by local transport. There was only one Ahmadi brother there. His house comprised of one mud-brick room right in the midst of a corn field. We had

our lunch and dinner – millet and milk each time; we ate that with pleasure.

Millet and Yoghurt

They moisten the millet with water and grind it, rather pound it (into flour). A large vessel full of water is put on fire-place. The millet flour is put in a sieve-like container which is placed over the water-filled vessel under which fire is lit. The millet flour is thus cooked with steam. They put stew, milk or yoghurt (whatever is available) over it and eat. They have an easy way of preparing yoghurt: put the cow milk in a large, wide vessel and a few days later it turns into yoghurt. At first, seeing and eating it makes you feel uneasy, but when you are starving and realise that nothing else will be available the whole day in the whole area then it is delicious in its own right!

First Tabligh Meeting in Senegal

Hammad Bah organised a tabligh meeting in his village the same evening. Many people from the village gathered and I delivered the message of truth to the best of my ability. Question and answer session continued till late in the night. The attendees listened to the programme with interest and admired it. After the meeting we retired to our room in the corn field for the night. The host put a plastic mat on the floor in our honour and we lay on it. Enjoying the audios of the beasts, close atmosphere and musical tones of mosquitoes, now asleep, now awake somehow we spent the night.

*That night, when we had the oven to warm us, has gone
That night, when we had fur to cover us, has gone*

Interesting Journey by Cart

Next morning we planned to go to another village – Sare Bungari. Our host arranged a cart for that and both of us, along with the host, reached there. It is a small village comprising of small huts. We arrived at the house of Biji Sow, there were only three Ahmadis in that village. We spent a few days there and had several Tabligh discussions with the people. All the villagers respected us a great deal listened to our talk with interest. There was one villager and the other with me all the time. I was perhaps the first foreigner in their life who conversed or dined with them. They entertained us with the same dish i.e. millet and milk, each meal time – be it breakfast, lunch or dinner. Anyway, they offered to us with pleasure whatever they had. By the Grace of Allah, it became my favourite village. I spent many nights there. Now almost the whole village has joined Ahmadiyyat. A *muallim* lives there and there is a mosque too.

At Nguch

Our next stop was Nguch – a village situated on a national highway. An Arabic teacher Sali jabi lived there, as did Aliou sow a photographer, and Berom Bah We met all of them and told them about the jama'at to the best of our ability. We spent a few days there. There is now a very devout jama'at in that village, by the Grace of Allah. They have a very beautiful mosque. A weak plant of Ahmadiyyat in that village has developed into a huge tree, by the Grace of Allah.

At M'bour

According to the programme, our next destination was the famous Senegalese town – M'bour. We took the local transport to Kaolack and from reached M'bour. The town is situated on the sea-coast , therefore, has a very pleasant weather. Once there, we felt that we were not in Africa but in a different world altogether. It is a city of hotels; there are big and magnificent hotels. The hotels are owned by the Europeans but the workers are Africans. One sees European tourists roaming all around. Hammad Bah's younger brother, Asghar Musa Bah also lives there. He is still working as a driver in the Agriculture department. We arrived at their house. It was a fairly average house; like town houses, there were table and chairs in the room. As we entered the room, we saw framed picture of Hadrat Musleh Ma'ud ^{ra} on the wall. The sight of that picture was so pleasing that all the fatigue was gone. Musa Bah entertained us very much, he looked after us well and offered good food. During this trip, it was the first time that we had something other than millet and milk to eat. There was plenty of water for us to take bath and wash our clothes. Being at the sea coast, their courtyard was sandy. It was not hot and there were no mosquitoes or flies. We put out the mattress in the courtyard and lay on it. We had very pleasant sleep.

At Dakar

After that we arrived at Dakar. The biggest problem there was finding a place to stay. A distant relative of Ahmad Lee was a watchman in some department. We went to him. He welcomed us cordially. He resided in a large garage-like room with a

verandah outside. He offered that to us openheartedly. The verandah proved to be an unexpected blessing for us. There were carpet-like mattresses in the verandah; we laid on these. The family was very hospitable. In spite of their poverty they took good care of us. The couple was angelic in character. We introduced the jama'at to them; they listened to us attentively but did not perform bai'at.

Tayammum (dry ablution) on a Stone

The man was elderly and very religious. At Zuhr time many people came to his place and started praying in the same verandah. I noticed that whenever somebody entered, he would lift a stone placed on one side, rub his hands on it and put it back. I asked Ahmad Ly as to what they were doing. He told me that they were performing *tayammum* on this stone. Actually these people came from the villages close to the Mauritanian border. As such their habits are similar to those of Mauritians who are saharans. There is severe shortage of water there, therefore, they use water very carefully. It has become such a habit for them that even when on a river bank, they perform *tayammum*.

At DAKAR

Dakar is a very beautiful city. It's weather is wonderful. Neither hot nor cold throughout the year. I had acquaintance with a Pakistani Ambassador. Once he said that he had travelled around the world a lot, but had not seen a weather like Dakar's. Business is dominated by Lebanese. It is said that Lebanese are in the world to eat, drink and be merry. I had a Lebanese friend. One day he said, "*Ustaz, wherever you go in this world you will meet*

Lebanese, however, there is one place where you will not see any.” Surprisingly, I asked, “which is that place”. He said, “paradise”. As there is large population of Lebanese who have settled in this city for several generations, all luxuries of the world are available if one can afford.

We spent a few days with this kind watchmen, had his food, enjoyed sleeping in his verandah. Then unwillingly we left for Tambacounda, spent the night at the bus stand and next day returned to our town, Basse.

Appointment as Central Ahmadiyya Muballigh for Senegal

In 1985, Choudhry Hameedullah Sahib, the Vakil-e-A’ala, toured some countries of West Africa including the Gambia. He visited the jama’ats throughout the country for *tarbiyyat* purposes. Later he held meetings with different departments of the jama’at, including one with *Muballighs* and *Mu’allims* during which he reviewed their performance. During the meeting, he instructed the Ameer to send me to Senegal as a *Muballigh*. The Ameer complied. I made the necessary preparations, and set out for Senegal. According to the instructions of the Ameer I was to go to Kaolack because that was the only place in Senegal where we had a small jama’at. Other than that, there were just a few Ahmadis in the suburbs of Kaolack.

Arrival at Kaolack

Kaolack was counted as the second most populated city of Senegal then. All the Ahmadi brothers there were labourers.

Two Ahmadis had small houses in the slums of Sare jougari - (temporary dwellings consisting of a makeshift mud and timber hut containing one to two rooms built on land not properly allotted). Of the two, one was family of Umar Awo and the other of Musa Jallow. In the courtyard of Musa Jallow's house there was a small mosque made of iron sheets. Probably none of the other Ahmadis had a house of his own; they all lived in rented accommodations in different wards.

First Mission House in Senegal

None of the Ahmadi brothers in Kaolack had room to accommodate a guest. Therefore, I started looking for a suitable room straight away. I went around different wards in search of a room all day but in vain. Due to extreme heat, long journey and fatigue I developed fever. Sitting in an Ahmadi's shop, I was thinking where would I spend the night. A young Ahmadi went to a nearby restaurant to have meals. He enquired from the lady proprietor about a room. She told him that she had heard of one room being vacated in her house that day. The young man told me and we both went there, paid advance to the landlord and got the key. Thus, all of a sudden, I got a room – the labourer there was moving to another place that very day. There was no bed in that room. The room was built of mud, the floor was damaged and there was one old foam mattress. I was feeling weak because of fatigue and fever, therefore, I opened the room straight away and lied down on the mattress. I spent the whole night without any food. Allah showed mercy and by the morning I felt better, went to the nearby restaurant and had my breakfast.

There were ten rooms in that house, each occupied by a different

tenant. There was one shared bath room and toilet; getting to use it tried one's patience. The room was close to Dakar Garage (the stand for transport to Dakar) on the right of the busy Kaolack - Dakar road. The window opened towards that road and life seemed quite dynamic from there. The vehicle screaming along on the road only helped keeping you awake the whole night. However, after a while the noise and the screams lost their impact. There was a Sona Dis store (government shop for foodstuff) nearby. Its superintendent, Mr Faal was a very good natured person. I went to that store for shopping a few times, chatted with him on different topics and we became fairly good friends. He had an official accommodation, that was quite big with better facilities. Mr Faal offered me the use of his bathroom facility. Thus Allah resolved this problem for me. His courtesy for me and cooperation was exemplary. May Allah reward him abundantly. I had meals with him frequently and I used to render my services to him.

The landlord has demolished that house and built a bigger and beautiful house. However, in the heart of my heart that room still exists and no one can demolish it.

Electricity Bill for Mauritanian's Fridge

Once I got the room, the problem of residence was resolved, for drinking water I bought an earthen water-pot and that was it. There remained the issue of food. For that, I purchased a small gas cylinder and some essential utensils and started cooking myself in that room. I bought *roti* from the shop and cooked the curry myself. Cooking curry daily is quite a difficult task for a man as it consumed a lot of time. If I cooked surplus food, it

would rot by next day because of extreme heat. That was a big worry.

In the corner of that house was shop of a Mauritanian who had a big freezer there. One day, I requested him to kindly keep my food box in his freezer and I would take some of it as and when needed. He declined saying that he was already paying a huge electricity bill and my box would increase it further.

Visa Problem Solved

I had come to Kaolack but had no long stay visa and as such could be arrested and jailed by government agency. The Ahmadi brothers lived at quite a distance from my room. They worked all day long; I would only see some of them during Friday prayers.

Senegalese do not speak English and I did not know French. I would try to speak in a language something like French; most of the time people would stare at my face instead of listening to me. That made communication very difficult. Therefore, I would sit on a bench outside my house everyday and count the vehicles passing by!

One day I saw many children in uniforms walking along the other side of the road. I deduced that there is a school nearby in that area. I got up and went that way. After a short while I reached the gate of a primary school; the gate was open and I entered. The door of one room in the school building was open. That was Principal's office. I entered and saluted him. After exchange of customary greetings, I told him my name. He said his name was Abdussalam Bari. He spoke good English and that made conversation easy. I told him that I was a Pakistani, a teacher in a High School at Basse in the Gambia and had come to Senegal

to learn French. He said, 'how can I help?' I replied, 'I want to learn French in your school'. He said, 'this is a primary school'. I said, 'it doesn't matter. As I want to learn elementary French, therefore, not to talk of primary school, I should be in a nursery class'. He was much surprised and said, 'look you are a foreigner, therefore, I cannot enrol you in my school without approval by the education department.' 'Let us go there and get the approval', I said. Anyhow, Allah softened his heart and he accompanied to the Education Department nearby and told the officer concerned that I was a Pakistani teacher from the Gambia and wanted to learn French for a while, for which I needed his permission. He was surprised. After a while, he told me to write the application and assured me that he will grant the permission. I said that if I knew how to write French, I wouldn't be there. He instructed Mr Bari to write application for me and that he did. The officer typed the permit on the official letter-head, stamped it and gave it to me. That facilitated my travels in Senegal without any hindrance and I could also travel between Senegal and the Gambia.

In Nursery Class to Learn

Next day I was in the school. I asked the Principal to place me in the nursery class, that he did. He introduced me to the class. The innocent African children stared at me in surprise. Soon it was recess time. Scared at first, the children gradually started coming close to me and touching me especially my hair with their hands. I too shared their fun. Next day I went to the higher class and then the next. Thus I attended three grades in two weeks. It was very beneficial – I could speak a bit, school children started greeting me and became well acquainted with the teachers. After that I bade the school farewell. However, the bond with the school became strong. I studied there for a few weeks at first

and during the recess used to sit with the teachers in the staff room. Thus, I became acquainted with the teachers. Afterwards the routine changed. I started preaching to the teachers including the Principal about the jama'at and they listened with keen interest. Then some of the teachers started assisting me in different fields. May Allah reward them.

Divine Blessing

I started the work in such difficult and unfavourable circumstances. Then by the Grace of Allah, prayers and guidance by the Khalifa and cooperation and round the clock hard work by the muallims and preachers the efforts were blessed with success and we started getting its sweet fruits. Jama'ats began to develop throughout the country. Now hundreds of jama'ats have been established in the country, by the Grace of Allah. More than eighty mosques had been built by 2013. Alhamdulillah

SENEGAL

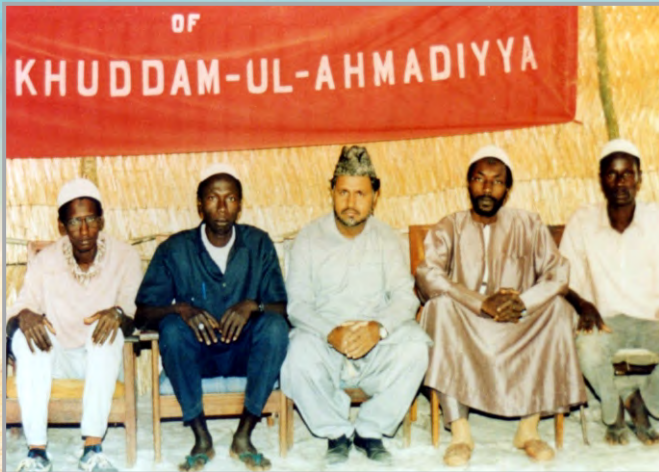
Early Devotees Of The Jamaat Senegal



Bro.Ahmad Bah



Oustaz Hamid Mabaye



Early Missionaries

Ahmad Jallow, Munawar Khurshid, Ahmad Ly, Hamady Gueye



Ahmadiyya Mosque, Baitul-Ahad, Senegal



Ahmadiyya Mosque, Misira



Prayers in Baitul- Ahad Nguch, Senegal



Tarbiyyati Class, Dakar



Missionaries with Hazrat Amirul-Momnin UK



Scene of regional Jalsa, Kaolack, Senegal



H.E Rashid Ahmed, (Ambassador of Pakistan) during visit to Senegal.



Ahmadi members of Parliament Senegal
with mayor of Heidelberg-Jalsa Germany 1995



Ahmadi brothers in Lisbon - Portugal



Ahmadi brothers in Praia Cape-Verde

Amir & Missionaries in Senegal : 2015



Bro. Nasir Ahmad Sidhu - Amir



Bro. Ahmad Bah



Bro. Ahmad Iy



Bro. Badra Sarr



Bro. Alieu Faye



Bro. Malick Gueey



Bro. Amad Jallow



Bro. Shekhou Sayang



Bro. Hamady Gueye



Bro. Omar Jallo



Bro. Ibrahim Aw



Bro. Sunkrou Bodian



Bro. Adama Ba



Bro. Dauda Tamba



Bro Tafsir Mara



Bro. Wali Njaie Bro



Bro. Aly Bah



Bro. Jbril Faye



Bro. Abdul Aziz Faye



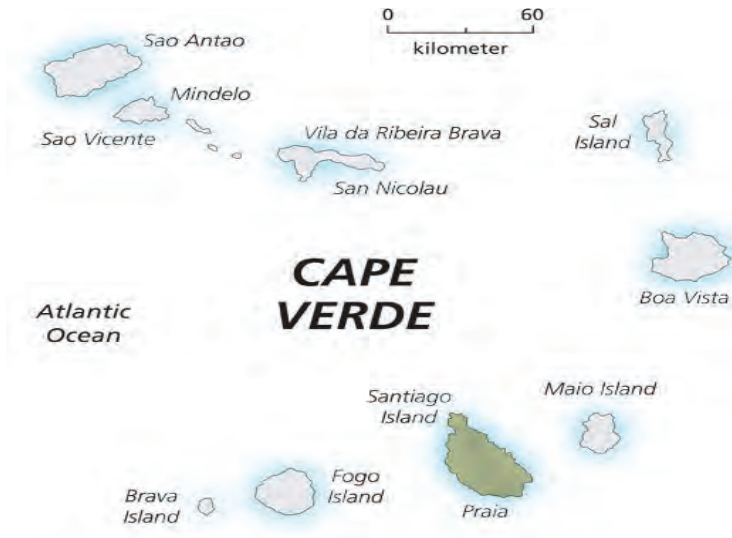
Bro. Jibril Jallow



National Amila - 2015

Chapter 3

CAPE VERDE



SOME USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT CAPE VARDE

- Country's name: Cape Verde
- It is an island country, not connected to any country by land.
- It comprises of ten islands as shown in the map
- Travel between the islands is by sea or by air.
- The capital is Praia and that is the big city.
- The fathers were Portuguese and mothers African. The current population is brownish.
- Past rulers: Portuguese
- Independence day: 5th July 1975
- Official language: Portuguese
- The other language is Creole, which is based on distorted Portuguese
- The system of government is Parliamentary
- Area: 1557 square miles
- Population: 523560
- Currency: Escudo
- Religion: Roman Catholic Christians
- Surrounded by sea all around
- Weather: hot
- Economy based on tourism and fishing
- Centre of tourism: Praia
- Economically it is better off than the neighbouring countries
- The country consists of more than ten islands in the Atlantic ocean
- The nearest human population is Senegal – 560 miles away

Cherished Memories Of Africa

- Literacy rate 85%
- The people are civilised and well behaved
- Crime rate is very low; because of small population the criminals have no escape route
- These islands were un-inhabited before 15th century
- The Portuguese army occupied it and it became an important centre for slave trade
- In nineteenth century when slavery was abolished, decline set in
- The locals started independence movement
- There was bloodshed and plunder; later they got independence
- The population is wholly Christian
- Some people have now moved in from neighbouring countries for business
- Some small mosques have also been built by Senegalese and people from Guinea Conakry
- In days gone by, Portuguese ruled over vast areas in the world. Currently the language is spoken in only five countries; Portugal, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Congo – all counted as poor countries in the world

Ahmadiyyat in Cape Verde

Beginning of Tabligh in Cape Verde

Allah, the Almighty had promised to Hadrat Masih Ma'ud^{as}, "I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth." For the fulfilment of this Divine promise, and to spread the spiritually regenerative eternal word of truth and reviving message of the Messiah so as to quench the spiritual thirst of nations the centre has assigned some neighbouring countries to different missions. The Gambia Jama'at was allocated Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Western Sahara and Cape Verde. As the Gambia shared borders with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, Allah the Almighty provided easy means of getting the message round the clock of Ahmadiyyat across and the work started there. Tireless efforts and prayers of the missionaries and Muallims bore fruit very soon and sincere and strong Jama'ats were established there, by the Grace of Allah.

Direction by Khalifatu-Masih IV^{rh}

When I was serving as a murabbi at Farafenni, the Gambia, Hazrat Khalifatu-Masih IV^{ra} kindly directed me to go to Cape Verde in 1989. In accordance with the Quranic injunction *سمعنا واطعنا* I started preparing for the journey.

First Journey to Cape Verde and Divine Support

It is a little known country; it is quite difficult to locate it in the world map. Hence, it was hard to get basic information about this country. (These days, internet has made such difficult matters very easy). I was totally unaware of this country's religious, political and economic condition. I kept on making and deleting mental pictures of cities, towns, streets and their inhabitants. Quite a lot of time passed by in that confusion.

I had never even heard of this country, therefore, I had no acquaintance there and there was no Ahmadi brother in that country either; no jama'at contact and no personal friend.

Where to go in Cape Verde, whom to go to, how to get there? These were the questions. There was no Embassy in the Gambia where I could get some information. The embassy was in Senegal and I had to go there to get the visa for Cape Verde. So I went there, got the visa and some informatory pamphlets mostly in Portuguese language that I did not know at all. There were some booklets in French which helped me get some basic information about the country.

The Language Conundrum

The second problem was my complete ignorance of Portuguese – the national language of the country. I can, by the Grace of Allah, converse in nine languages but not in Portuguese. How would I communicate with the Cape Verdeans – that worried me? Most of them speak Portuguese – their mother tongue and the official language. Then there is the creole – a distorted version of Portuguese language. There are few, if any, who speak

any other language.

One tries to acquire something because of its benefits and importance. Likewise, one learns a language for religious, economic or political interests and requirements.

This is a very small country, comprising of many islands. Inter-communication between these islanders is quite difficult. They can only meet one another by air or by sea; land route is non-existent. Not everyone can afford air or sea travel. There are few, if any, who speak any other language. Language was my big worry.

A Hilarious Experience of a *Muballigh*

Haji Ayyaz Ahmad Khan was sent to Hungary as a *Muballigh*. He did not know the local language then. He went to a restaurant in the town centre. As it was very cold, he thought, an egg would be a good idea. A bearer attended him for his order. Haji Sahib did not know what the egg was called in the local language. He made signs of a round object with his hands. The bearer fetched boiled potatoes. Haji Sahib shook his head to say no. Then he pointed to the table cover that was white and again indicated the shape with his hands. The bearer went away and returned with some sweet. Haji Sahib made several attempts with different signs but in vain. At last he hit upon an idea. He started crowing loudly like a cock. The bearer understood straight away, rushed to the kitchen and brought hot boiled eggs.

The Journey Begins

Anyway, I booked my seat, and according to the programme reached the Banjul airport accompanied by some Ahmadi brothers; with their prayers, I set out for my destination. It was a small aircraft of the Gambia Airways. By chance the passenger on the seat next to me was a Gambian youth. After customary greetings, he told me that he worked in Praia, the capital of Cape Verde. I started getting information from him and he kept filling me in about Cape Verde. Meeting the young man pleased me a great deal and I felt that he could be of assistance in carrying out my job. I took out my diary and wrote some 50 odd sentences in Urdu and noted down their Portuguese translation as told by the young man. Then I wrote down numbers one to hundred and starting memorising all that. The two-hour long journey was thus completed safely. The plane landed at Praia airport. The passengers reached the immigration desk. The Gambian youth was accustomed to the ways of the land and he soon disappeared and left me facing new problem.

Coincidentally, a meeting of an African Organisation was being held in Praia those days; I joined their queue. The immigration desk took me as one of that group and let me in without much interrogation.

Where to Go and How to Go?

I got out of the small airport and tried to calm my nerves. While I was thinking what next to do and where would I go, a taxi

stopped near me. The driver asked me, in his language, where did I want to go? I mentioned the name Praia – that was the only name I remembered. I consulted my diary and asked about the fare. He said, 'Cinco Escudo'. I had the Senegalese currency CFA which is used in all the countries neighbouring Senegal. I assumed that it would be acceptable in Cape Verde as well. The Taxi driver saw CFA in my hand and went away without saying anything. Afterwards ten to twelve taxis stopped near me and after similar conversation sped away. Thus almost all the airport taxis left and so did the airport staff because very few planes landed there. I stood there under the sun holding my two bags helplessly looking right and left. It is beyond me to describe that state of helplessness and homelessness.

A taxi then came to the airport from the city and stopped near me. Two passengers appeared from nowhere, they spoke to the taxi driver and entered the taxi. I asked about their well-being in English and they answered in English. That encouraged me a bit and I narrated my ordeal to them. They took pity on my destitution and one of them gave me five Escudos. I thanked him and told him that the Escudos solved only one of my problems. What else was there, he asked. I told him that I was a new comer to the town and asked him to guide me to a place where I could spend the night. The young men were very kind to me. They accommodated me in the same taxi and set off to Praia and dropped me at the gates of an average hotel. I thanked Allah the Almighty; at least I had a roof over me.

I went to the hotel reception and enquired about the room. The rent was more than I could afford. But there was no way out. I took the key, put the luggage in the room, changed my clothes

and set out to the shopping centre which was quite close to the hotel. I was very hungry. I could not afford to eat in that hotel; my budget would only permit filling my tummy in a small restaurant. Neither had I known the language nor the names of foodstuff. I kept roaming in the shopping centre for quite a while.

Boarding and Lodging Arranged

While roaming around, I passed several streets. The architectural designs of houses here are quite different from those back home. Because of shortage of space, there are usually no courtyards and doors of the rooms generally open into the streets. While passing in front of a house, I saw an elderly lady cooking food and some chairs nearby. I assumed it was a restaurant. I went in, saluted the lady in English. She responded in her own language which I could not understand. I gestured my desire to eat. She called somebody loudly and a young man came out of the room and enquired in his language. I told him in English that I could not speak Portuguese. To my utter joy, he started speaking in English. He told me that it was their house, not a restaurant. I told him that I was a stranger in the town and wondered if he could guide me to a restaurant. May Allah bless him, he went with me. I told him that I was a Muslim, therefore, would eat food without anything haram in it. He took me to an average restaurant. I ordered omelette. He sat with me; I invited him to share the food with me but he declined even when I insisted. I told him that I had two problems. Firstly I would stay in a cheap room, not a hotel. Secondly I am a Muslim; if somebody could cook food of my choice, I would pay for it. He suggested that we would go back and talk to his mother; hopefully she would agree to cook. He promised to resolve the

problem of residence as well. We went back to his house. His mother agreed to cook for me. I also got a room in a *serai*. Most of all, I got an interpreter in the form of that young man called Neelinto. I am not sure, but I think fourteen persons performed *Bai'at* during my stay there. When I was returning to the Gambia, many people came to see me off at the airport. May Allah keep them happy! I could not maintain contact with them afterwards.

Tabligh Efforts

Allah the Almighty, provided me with an interpreter, assistant and a sympathetic friend in the person of Neelinto. He used to come to me every morning and accompanied me all day long. We went to many governmental and non-governmental offices, schools and three embassies. We introduced Ahmadiyyat in all those places. We also arranged several meetings in different localities. By the Grace of Allah, we had some bai'ats.

Baiats

As a result of these individual and collective efforts, by the Grace of Allah, fourteen persons had the good fortune of performing bai'ats. Their names and addresses with detailed report were submitted to the Ameer of the Gambia Mission.

Hamidullah Zafar's Tour of Cape Verde

In 1997, Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IVth put the countries initially allocated to the Gambia, into fewer than three emirates (administrative units). Thus Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde were put under Guinea-Bissau emirate with Hamidullah Zafar as the

Amir. Hamidullah Zafar went on a two-week visit of Guinea-Bissau and worked arduously. He planned to go back there later but unfortunately after a few years, the situation became dangerous for the jama'at and he was exiled in a helpless condition.

Cape Verde under Senegal Emirate

After Hameedullah Sahib, I was assigned the responsibility for Cape Verde once again. I sent a Senegalese Muallim, who had qualified from Jami'a Ahmadiyya Ghana, rented a house in Praia and started the mission. Through his efforts, forty bai'ats were achieved in Praia and its suburbs. However, he had to return because of some difficulties. Thereafter, a Gambian - Mr Ba Sahu, who was resident there because of his employment, took care of the jama'at.

My Tour of Cape Verde

In 2011, I went on a tour of Senegal and had the opportunity to visit Cape Verde as well. I organised Tabligh and tarbiyyat meetings with Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis there. Moreover, distributed literature in the suburban villages for the first time and made new contacts. These were the last days of Ramadan and accordingly distributed some gifts among the deserving.

A Muallim for Cape Verde

Mr Alieu faye selected a young man who is being sent to Jama'at Ahmadiyya Ghana to get religious education. May Allah bless this scheme, Amin!

Cherished Memories Of Africa

Chapter 4

Guinea-Bissau



Introduction of Guinea-Bissau

- It is located in West Africa
- Its capital is Bissau
- It was a colony of Portugal till 1974, therefore, its national language is Portuguese.
- It is a small country with an area of 13948 square miles and a population of 1647000.
- Politically it is a republic.
- 40% of the people are Muslims and Christians, the rest are traditionalists [50% Muslims, 10% Christians, many residents practice syncretic forms of Islamic and Christian faiths,

combining their practices with traditional African beliefs.
Wikipedia]

- Neighbouring countries are Mali, Guinea Conakry and Senegal.
- Its important crops are groundnuts and millet.
- There are many cashew farms in the country.
- Currency CFA Franc; 1000 CFA = 6.5 Euro.
- It is counted among the poorest countries of the world.
- Important tribes are Balanta Fula Manjaca Mandinga Papel
- The country has been under the communist bloc, therefore, they are suspicious of everyone.
- Having been under Portuguese rule, the people have become fighters; they had to fight for their independence from the colonial powers.
- In the neighbouring countries, anyone seeking bribe talks of 'tea/water', however in Guinea-Bissau they ask for drinks (alcoholic). Drinking has taken away the radiance of their faces, whereas the people from Muslim majority regions have radiant faces. Because of frequency of drinking there is a kind of odour in the atmosphere of Bissau.
- In Bissau city a Muslim traveller faces lot of difficulty in getting halal food.
- The country is suffering from long standing civil war.
- The country is at the brink of ruin in every respect: it is in decline financially, morally, politically, educationally and religiously.

Ahmadiyyat in Guinea-Bissau

Dr Muhammad Ashraf

A patient from Guinea-Bissau, once came to see an Ahmadi doctor, Muhammad Ashraf for treatment for which he had to stay for a few days. During that period, he was engaged in dialogue with the doctor and other Ahmadi persons about Ahmadiyyat. His name was He liked the Ahmadiyya beliefs and teachings and he signed the Bai'at. As far as I know, he was the first Ahmadi of Guinea-Bissau. That young man was in the delegate from Guinea-Bissau, headed by the late Sana Cham that came to the Gambia to participate in the Jalsa Salana 1985.

The Late Sana Cham

Sana Cham was a very devout Ahmadi member of the Gambia. Some of his relatives had long settled in Guinea-Bissau and he visited them frequently and started preaching them. By the Grace of Allah, many fortunate ones responded positively and joined Ahmadiyyat.

Guinea-Bissau President Nino's visit of the Gambia

Guinea-Bissau President once came to the Gambia on an official visit. The Gambian President Sir Dauda Jawara accompanied him from airport to the State house. As their car passed by the magnificent building of the Ahmadiyya Hospital, President Nino enquired about the organisation that had built the hospital. President Jawara told him that it had been built by the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. President Nino said that he wanted them to build a

similar hospital in his country as well. His staff contacted the Ahmadiyya Mission in the Gambia and invited them to Guinea-Bissau. A delegate headed by Daud Ahmad Hanif Sahib then visited Guinea-Bissau; they met the President and some relevant ministers. As a result, programmes for Tabligh in Guinea-Bissau in an organised manner were chalked out.

Hameedullah Zafar

Hameedullah Zafar had been appointed as a teacher in Jama'at's educational institution Nusrat High School. The Amir sent him on Tabligh mission to Guinea-Bissau. He worked hard there, and by the Grace of Allah, his efforts bore sweet fruits.

My Visit to Guinea-Bissau

Thereafter, I, Omer Ali Tahir and the late Ismael Trawally visited Guinea-Bissau; organised some Tabligh meetings at several places and worked on the *ta'lim* and *tarbiyyat* of the existing Ahmadis.

First Ahmadi Muballigh in Guinea-Bissau

Hameedullah Sahib was then appointed by the centre as the missionary for Guinea-Bissau. He continued to work there while his family stayed in the Gambia.

My Term as the Amir

These countries were consigned to me from 1994 to 1997. During that period, I accompanied Hameedullah Sahib to Bissau and rented a house for the mission and his family was also sent to Guinea-Bissau. In addition, a good and pricy plot close to the National Assembly was purchased but unfortunately government

departments occupied it unjustly.

I toured the whole country for Tabligh and tarbiyyat.

I participated in several annual conventions in Guinea-Bissau. More than ten Assembly members also attended one jalsa with me.

I also toured Guinea-Bissau with Muneeruddin Shams Sahib, the Additional Wakilut-tabshir.

Hameedullah Sahib as Ameer

In 1997 Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV^{ra} divided the countries under the Gambia into three administrative units – the Gambia with Inayatullah Zahid as the Amir, Senegal as this humble one (Munawar Khurshid) as the Amir and Guinea-Bissau with Hameedullah Zafar as the Amir.

Hameedullah Zafar Sahib worked very hard. Jama'ats were established throughout the country. Three doctors, three muballighs and two builders also arrived from Pakistan.

However, unfortunately, these few years turned out to be very tough for Hameedullah Zafar Sahib. There was absolute anarchy in the country with frequent military coups and they had to take refuge somewhere. Once they stayed in Kolda, Senegal for several months and returned to Bissau when conditions settled.

Extreme Opposition – exiled to No man's Land

The opponents suddenly came alive to the progress of the Jama'at in Guinea-Bissau and all religious and political forces

joined hands against the Jama'at. One day, vehicles with armed soldiers arrived at the mission house, loaded them with all the Pakistani Ahmadis on gun point and drove them to No-man's land at the border with Senegal. I received the news of this distressing incident in Germany, where I had gone to attend the Jalsa Salana. I contacted an official at the Pakistan Embassy, Choudhry Manzoor Ahmad, who was kind enough to get temporary visas for Senegal. The refugees thus reached me in Dakar. After a few months' stay they went to Ghana and instructions from the centre.

Two Teachers sacrifice their Lives in Guinea-Bissau

Sacrifice is a pre-requisite for every success. In Guinea-Bissau, two of our most beloved *muallim* brothers offered their lives. Ismaila trawaly lost his life in a fire and Mr Yobi Bah died after a sudden illness in the field of *tabligh*. اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Under the Gambia Mission

After this distressing incident, the centre put the jama'at of Guinea-Bissau under the administration of the Gambian jama'at. Thereby, the Amir of the Gambia Baba F. Trawallay appointed Muhammad siniago as the missionary in-charge for Guinea-Bissau who is working there up till now.

Chapter 5

OPPOSITION AND HOSTILITY

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

[15:12] And there never came to them any Messenger but they mocked at him.

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَا كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

[61:9] They desire to extinguish the light of Allah with *the breath of their mouths*, but Allah will perfect His light, even if the disbelievers hate *it*.

Some incidents of Divine Support against the Opponents of Ahmadiyyat

Imam Alieu bayo

He was a resident of Dampha Kunda village near Basse. Most of the villagers belong to Jahanke tribe; they are mostly religious. The village is counted amongst the large villages, population wise. When Allah, the Almighty granted Imam Alieu Bayo the good fortune of accepting Ahmadiyyat, the villagers launched a campaign of strong opposition because of their arrogance of being knowledgeable and personal differences. However, all the efforts of the opponents of Ahmadiyyat and enemies of truth turned out to be fruitless and castles built on sand. None of their

savagery shook his steadfastness. After failure in religious debates and other actions, the adversaries planned a new trick. A marabout prepared, what he thought was, a dangerous talisman out of a horn of a goat and invited Alieu Bayo for a debate. Soon after the debate had started, the opponents started obscenities but Alieu Bayo kept his cool and continued the discussion judiciously. At last, the marabout brought out the dangerous talisman that he had prepared from the goat horn, pointed to Alieu Bayo and said, 'this will finish you off'. Alieu Bayo took the talisman, pointed to the marabout and said, 'God willing, this talisman will do me no harm but will definitely destroy you'.

Then the whole village witnessed that in accordance with the words of the Holy Prophet ^{saw} **الله اشعث اغبر لو أقسم لا بتره** Allah the Almighty, subjected the family of the marabout to exemplary punishment. The marabout suffered from a minor illness soon after this incident and passed away. A few days later his youthful son died as well. On the other hand, Allah blessed Alieu Bayo with extra-ordinary increase in wealth and household.

A Strange Desire of Mohammad Dibba

In 1989, the jama'at started a dental surgery in a rented building at Farafenni. Dr Hameedullah Shaheed was appointed by the centre to run the surgery. (He was later martyred in Karachi by the vicious enemies of Ahmadiyyat.)

Dignitaries from all over the region attended the opening ceremony. The Regional Commissioner from Karewan, Aki Bayo also participated. Various speakers spoke highly of the extra-ordinary educational and medical services rendered by the

Jama'at in the Gambia and greatly admired the Jama'at's projects for the development and progress of the country and the nation. At the end of the function, when the guests had left and the jama'at members were tidying up, I heard someone sobbing from one side, I went that way to find out who it was. I found Muhamad Joni Dibba crying bitterly like a child. I was greatly distressed and enquired if it was all okay or if he had a bad news. It took him a while to recover his composure. He said: "In our meeting today, many people made lengthy speeches in favour of the jama'at, in which they have heaped all sorts of praises upon the jama'at. The old times came to my mind when these very people used to stone us and used unpleasant epithets like 'monkeys' and 'swine' for us. However, today by the Grace of Allah they are full of praise for the jama'at of the Promised Messiah^{as}. These tears were tears of gratitude to Allah. Today, during this blessed ceremony, a desire was springing up strongly in my heart. Would that, our early devoted, saintly imam Lamin Janje and others were alive today; how pleased they would have been seeing this scenario. The opponents of Ahmadiyyat used to abuse and beat up those devotees in this very town. Would that those oppressed, deceased and saintly figures were alive today to witness the glory days of Ahmadiyyat; how pleased and happy would they be. O Allah accept the prayers of those oppressed ones in our favours and our prayers for them. Amin!

انى مهين من اراد اهانتك

'I shall humiliate him who designs to humiliate thee'

The days when was stationed as a missionary in the Gambian town of Farafenni, I had a Gambian neighbour named Ahmad. He was an officer in the customs department. As he was my

neighbour, we met each other almost daily. He appeared to be a well-mannered person. I had good neighbourly relations with him; he always met cordially.

Once I went to him for something. We spoke on several topics. One of his visitors asked me a few questions about the jama'at. As I started answering the questions, I could read expression of unpleasantness on Ahmadou's face. After a while, Ahmadou started talking to the questioner in his local Wolof dialect. He advised him that one should never talk with these people (i.e. the Ahmadis) as they are very shrewd and very easily convince one their wrong ideas. To further infuse hatred in him for the jama'at, he started narrating a false and offensive tale about the Promised Messiah^{as} fabricated by the Pakistani mullahs. His inimical and hypocritical attitude hurt me a great deal. I returned home but this distressful incident left a very deep impression on my mind.

A few days later, he went to Banjul to see his family there; as a routine he used to go to see his family every month. This time he did not return for quite a while. I continued to see his colleagues during this period. He returned to Farafenni after about two months. I noticed that he was reduced to a skeleton. He told me that while he was away to see his family, he got fever. 'When I went to see the doctor, he told me that I had developed the fatal disease, AIDS.' He was greatly worried on that account. After a short period he went to Banjul and never returned to Farafenni. After a few months he passed away.

Perished after Mubahala Challenge

In the Gambian jama'at, there was a saintly figure and a great religious scholar,

Alahaj Ibrahim Jikini. He was respected not only amongst the Ahmadis but also the non-Ahmadis. An adversary of Ahmadiyyat started broadcasting programmes against the jama'at on Radio Gambia, probably in 1966. Alahaj Ibrahim Jikini responded but the opponents of truth would never budge from their declared statement even if it is proven to be obviously wrong. Efforts were made to explain in different ways but it only aggravated the situation further. Ultimately he challenged him to a prayer dual – mubahala.

Glory be to Allah, after a short while, the *maulvi* fell seriously ill. Nature of his illness remained a dilemma. He was taken to several places for treatment but nobody could diagnose his illness. It appeared to be more psychological than physical illness. After a few months he passed away.

One day, I was in my office when Alahaj Ibrahim Jikini walked in unexpectedly. He lived in a village more than 200 miles from Banjul. Very well-dressed, with turban on his head (probably gifted to him by Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IVth), although usually he donned African cap, he came with an aura of splendour. I was greatly surprised to see him in that condition and asked him what the matter was. He said, "I am very happy today. Allah has passed His judgement in my favour". Then he told me about the mubahala challenge in detail. I asked him what he planned next. He said that he was going to Brikama, the home town of the

deceased maulvi and tell those coming for condolence about the Divine sign. I told him that it was not appropriate as the deceased had many disciples who could harm him. However, Ibrahim Sahib was adamant in his plan to go. Some of the others also requested him not to go that day and leave it for some other day. He had travelled a long distance with that intention and had that urge to go there. At this I said, "In my capacity as Amir, I command you not to go there on this occasion." He relented, and said that obedience to the Amir was foremost; then he did not go there. May Allah reward him abundantly!

Thrown out of the Mosque for accepting Ahmadiyyat

When by the Grace of Allah, many young men in Cumble village performed bai'at, their elderly started a campaign against them. These people had been blindly following the marabouts and spiritual guides and are enslaved by their oppressive practices since long; they dislike any attempt to release them from their bondage. Influenced by the malicious propaganda, and out of fear, of these spiritual guides, the elderly started opposing the Ahmadi youth including their own sons. Omar Jallow was thrown out of the mosque by his father who opposed him strongly. Some of these elderly remained firmly rooted in their old beliefs for the rest of their lives.

However, by the Grace of Allah, all young men stood firm by their pledge and did not give a hoot to worldly, family or blood relations against the spiritual relations. Then Allah, the Almighty blessed the jama'at with the ability to build a big mosque there; by the Grace of Allah, Friday prayer is also offered there.

The elders continued their opposition. Even their sons realized

that a seal had been set on the hearts and thick coverings had been cast over the eyes of their elders as a result of intrigues of the fake spiritual guides and deceitful marabouts – the cancers of their society.

Story goes: A wise, sympathetic and kind young man was passing through a market. He noticed a cage on an elevated place with many pigeons helplessly fluttering in it. He took pity on these imprisoned pigeons. He thought of trying for freedom of the poor birds that they may enjoy breath of fresh air in the vast space created by God. He approached the master of the birds and enquired about the price only to learn that he could not afford to buy them all. He thought of buying as many as he could afford. That he did and got some pigeons. Greatly excited he threw them up in the air. The pigeons flew away fast acrobatically, twisting and turning right and left, up and down and out of sight. The young man was happy in that he had the good fortune of being instrumental in gaining freedom for some imprisoned birds. He was relishing his success while standing there. Before leaving he looked up the sky to have a glimpse of the free birds for the last time. But, Lo and behold! The birds were coming back. One by one they came and perched on the same roof and after a while entered their cage and thus enslaved themselves. The poor young man was greatly perturbed as to why the birds had turned back from free skies to enslavement. After some deliberation, the dilemma was solved when he realized that they had become accustomed to enslavement so much that they feared freedom and enslavement had finished their instinct in freedom.

Opposition by Tijani Spiritual Guides

When Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IVth visited the Gambia, the blessed visit provided the opportunity for the ardent lovers of khilafat from Senegal in addition to those in Farafenni and the surrounds to satisfy their craving for seeing him.

A big gathering was organized in the community hall of Farafenni; that was addressed by Huzur. In addition to the Gambia, many participants had travelled from Kaolack, Senegal. Their arrival from Senegal and positive feedback about Huzur's visit attracted a lot of publicity. Omar Jobe was in-charge of the Senegalese police on the Senegambia border. I had close relations with him. He participated in that gathering and was seated close to Huzur. He was greatly impressed by Huzur's address and his personality.

After Huzur's visit, one day I planned to go to Senegal. I did not have entry visa for Senegal and the Senegalese authorities did not issue visas to Pakistanis readily. Therefore, I used to enter Senegal because of my friendly relations with the border police and their favour. I used to stay there for a fortnight so that I did not have to face the police again and again. I travelled mostly by motor bike and spent my nights in villages rather than towns. This time, as I reached the border and was talking to the policeman on duty, Mr. Jobe, who was in his office, instructed the official to send me in. I went into his office. After exchange of customary greetings, he told me that regrettably I could not enter Senegal. He had received instructions from Ministry of Interior to stop the Ahmadiyya muballigh from Farafenni from entering Senegal, he added. When I asked the reason why, he said he could not tell. (After a few years, he told me that the

Cherished Memories Of Africa

Tijani khalifa of Kaolack had lodged a complaint to the Ministry of Interior that led to the prohibition order). Mr Jobe further advised me, 'look, you are my friend, if you want to enter Senegal, do not go too far in; this area is under my jurisdiction, further afield another police officer will be in-charge and he could create problems for you'. I said that I did not want to get him in trouble and came back from the border.

After a few months, Mr Jobe met me in Farafenni and told me that the matter had cooled down and the authorities would have forgotten the issue, therefore, I could enter rather tactfully. Thus Allah, the Almighty removed the difficulties and paved the way for me to carry out the Tabligh activities.

Chapter 6

Acceptance of Ahmadiyyat

Some interesting and Faith Augmenting incidents

Plans to Attack Alhaj Ibrahim Abdul Qadir

Those were early days of Ahmadiyyat in the Gambia and opposition was at its climax. Jama'at was under attack from all directions. The religious leaders organized a meeting in which a programme to combat Ahmadiyyat in an organized way was hatched. Accordingly, Alahaj Ibrahim Jikini and another religious scholar Alhaji fadera were sent to the Ahmadiyya mission. Alahaj Ibrahim Jikini had prepared forty questions which he thought could not be answered by the Ahmadis. The consequent defeat will disgrace the jama'at throughout the country.

The delegate came to see Maulana Muhammad Sharif, the then Amir of the Gambia Jama'at. They were offered drinks but they refused. They started putting forward their objections. Maulana Sharif started answering the questions calm and patiently in the light of Quran and Hadith. He had dealt with only a few of the questions, Alahaj Ibrahim Jikini listened to these sound, satisfactory, logical and irrefutable answers. As he was inherently good natured and virtuous, the explanations untwined the cords of his heart, he took the oath of allegiance sincerely and entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat. The news was no less than a bolt of lightning for the religious scholars and especially for his household as the whole tribe had placed high hopes in him. The household tried everything to bring him back from the right path. All his brothers and sisters, his dear ones and near ones

and the renowned scholars and chiefs tried every conceivable trick. However, neither love nor temptations or fear could shake his conviction.

Then, everything changed dramatically. Love changed to hatred, friends became foes and the family distanced themselves. The dear ones and near ones who would previously lay down their lives for him turned into deadly enemies. According to the family there were only two options: leave the jama'at or face death. They tried their level best for the former but failed and gave up all hope; thereafter they planned to kill him.

Once Alhaj recognized the truth, he started its propagation straightaway. Not contented with only that, he devoted his life and spent all his life propagating the faith sincerely and with righteousness.

First Fruit in the Gambia through me: Governor Muhammad Jobe

When I went to the Gambia for the first time in 1983, the Amir told me to go to Georgetown. It is an island (in the river Gambia). It can be approached by ferry from the north with its terminal a few kilometers away from the town or from the south with its terminal close to the town.

One day I returned to Georgetown and ferried across the river along with many passengers. Most of the passengers took taxis to the town while some were still waiting. I was on the motorbike. I saw a young man with a bag in his hand waiting for transport. I stopped by him and picked him up on my motorbike. I told him that I was the muballigh of the Ahmadiyya jama'at and had recently arrived in Georgetown. He told me that he had done his O levels from Nusrat High School and was employed in the veterinary department at Kuntaur. I brought him to the mission house and entertained him. He was much pleased with my courtesy. He thanked me, invited me to Kuntaur and left. I visited him a few times later. I established friendly relations with many through him that proved to be very beneficial in the field of Tabligh. As he had studied at the Ahmadiyya School he was acquainted with Ahmadiyyat to some extent. I also told him about the jama'at, about the advent of the Promised Messiah ^{as} and importance of belief in him. Allah, the Almighty enlightened his heart about the truth of the Promised Messiah ^{as} and he entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat, alhamdlillah.

He was later transferred to Fatoto area. I remained in contact with him there and continued Tabligh in that region through him. Many Tabligh sittings were arranged in his house. He lived in the premises of the Fatoto chief. The chief also took oath of allegiance; one of his wives was the widow of Bara Njai who was the first Gambian to perform bai'at. She was very hospitable and was very closely attached to the jama'at.

When I went to the Gambia in 2009, I learnt that Mr Muhammad Jobe had been appointed as the Governor at Manso Konko in the current government. I spoke to him on the phone; he was much pleased. However, because of other commitments I could not see him.

Come to our boat – it is safe

A Senegalese muallim, Mr Hamid Mbaye was appointed in Farafenni. He too was a Fulani. Thus, they became acquainted with each other and that opened the way for Tabligh; Hamid Mbaye sahib would accompany him long way up to his village and before returning would advise him to pray to Allah (for guidance). That put Oustaz Yobi Bah in an awkward quandary. On the one hand the all the Farafenni people were calling Ahmadi's '*kafirs*' (non-believers) and on the other hand the Ahmadi muballigh always treated him with love, expressed sympathy for him and advised him to seek Divine guidance. Perplexed, he would exclaim, 'O God, what is the reality'? During this state of mind, he dreamt one night that he was travelling in a boat across the river Gambia near Farafenni. The boat was shaking violently in the middle of stormy waters causing him great distress. Then he saw another boat approaching him with

Alahaj Ibrahim Jikini (a well-known Ahmadi muballigh) in it beckoning to him and saying loudly, 'come to this boat, it is safe'. Then he extended his hand towards me and helped me on to his boat. Then I woke up. The whole dream scenario continued to play on my mind. I thought the dream was the result of my prayers and *istikhara*, and the safe boat boarded by the Alhaji was Ahmadiyyat that being the Ark of Noah of this age. Next day early in the morning he came to the mission house in Farafenni, filled the bai'at form and entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

Fire is our Slave

Everything was consumed by fire except the Photograph of the Promised Messiah^{as}

In the Casamance region of Senegal, we have a very sincere jama'at in Jabang near Binjona Bagnona Oustaz Dauda Tamba was working there as a *muallim*, engaged in teaching. He was housed by the jama'at in two small rooms close to the mosque.

One night the muallim went out leaving a burning candle in his room. Somehow the candle fell down on the floor and the papers there caught fire. (In most African countries, many people use candlelight at night). The fire spread all around and everything was burnt to ashes in no time. When the muallim and the other jama'at members saw the fire, they rushed to the room. The muallim was accompanied by a non-Ahmadi, Senegalese Arabic teacher. When they entered the room, they were surprised to note that everything in the room had been reduced to ashes except the wall-mounted picture of the Promised Messiah^{as} which remained untouched. The fire extinguished as it approached the picture.

This episode highlighted the truth of the Promised Messiah^{as} as broad daylight for all those who witnessed it. All praise be to Allah.

This astonishing miracle impressed the non-Ahmadi friend of Oustaz Dauda Tamba a great deal. Having witnessed that miracle he declared his acceptance of Ahmadiyyat and he remains a very dedicated Ahmadi.

An Old Bai'at Form

In 1998, while on a tour of Kolda region of Senegal, I arrived at a village Stere Yoro. By the Grace of Allah, we have quite a big jama'at there. Mr. Demba Mballo is the imam there. He is a courageous and fearless preacher. He told me that an elderly man Ahmadou Saïdy wanted to see me. Because of a tight schedule, I had little time at my disposal and suggested that I would see him on my next visit but Mr Demba Mballo insisted that I see him that day. Anyway, we went to the village of Ahmadou Saïdy ; he was about 77 years old. He was an Arabic scholar and imam of his area. We exchanged customary greetings. He was pleased to see us. We were seated in a small room. He took out some papers from his pocket. Out of these, he picked up a very old and decayed paper that had split into many pieces because of its age and showed it to me. It was a bai'at form that he had kept in his pocket for about thirty years. He told me that he had received that the year he was blessed with a son by Allah, the Almighty.

I asked him how he did he get that bai'at form. He told me that one of his cousins had gone to House of Allah for Hajj that year.

There he came across some Ahmadis and as a result of their Tabligh his cousin accepted Ahmadiyyat. He (the cousin) was resident of Guinea-Bissau and had passed away since. He had given that form to him and told him that if there was a true faith in the world it was Ahmadiyyat. 'Therefore, since then I had kept this form, duly completed, in my pocket. I have not been able to see any Ahmadi from the centre (*markaz*). It was my ardent desire to see a muballigh of the jama'at. You are first such person. I am so happy that Allah has fulfilled my desire.' He is a very sincere and devoted Ahmadi.

Fa Wooro Jallo performed Bai'at at 1 am

A young imam Omar Jallow of Koumbal village in the Kaolack region of Senegal was blessed by Allah with the good fortune of entering the fold of Ahmadiyyat. One day he expressed his desire that all his relatives join this true divine jama'at, therefore, he wanted me to accompany him to the relatives. I readily agreed. He decided that, first of all, we go to his maternal uncle Fawoora Jallo who lived in Palado village. Our delegate comprised of four persons – Omar Jallow, Ahmad Iy, Dr Naeemullah and myself. We reached their village after *Isha* prayers and went to Fawoora's house. After exchange of customary greetings, we told him the purpose of our visit. He appreciated that and agreed to talk. We continued to preach till about midnight; we gave him the introduction of the jama'at and answered his questions. Fawoora said that he was an old man, therefore, could not convert but any of his children was free to perform bai'at, if he so willed. His eldest son, who was married and had children, performed the bai'at. Question/answer session continued afterwards. About 1 O'clock I sought their permission to leave and suggested that we

pray together. At this Fawoora said that he also wanted to perform bai'at. That surprised me a great deal. I said, 'you had declined a short while ago, what has brought about this transformation?' He said, 'I am seventy years old. During my life, many people have come to my humble dwelling, situated in a little known place, far away from city and off the road by a long distance. They all came for personal interests and gains. You are the first visitor who has come to my house only for Allah's sake. Allah has inspired me to believe that yours is a divine jama'at, therefore, I join it. Secondly, I am one of the elders of the family. As such, it is my duty to deliver this message of truth to all the members of my tribe.' I was very much pleased to hear that. We planned to go with him to visit all his relatives and that led many of the fortunate ones to enter the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

Series of Bai'ats in Fisselarea

Who caused the Motorbike to break down?

Once I sent two jama'at muallims – Oustaz Alieu faye and Modou sarr to Fatick region on a preaching mission. They were on a motorbike. While they were passing through Fissel area, their bike suddenly broke down. They tried hard to repair it but failed to get it going. They somehow managed to take it to a nearby village. By chance, they ended up at chief's house. They introduced themselves to the chief and told him about the breakdown of the motorbike. The chief took pity on them and treated them respectfully; his household also extended full hospitality to them. The chief sent one of his workers to a nearby town to get a mechanic who would repair the motorbike. The

mechanic came after quite a while and spent several hours to repair the motorbike successfully.

The muallims had to spend several hours at chief's place. The chief asked the muallims who they were and where were they heading to. The muallims told him that they were Ahmadis and were on a preaching mission to Fatick region. The chief asked them: 'what is this Ahmadiyyat?' They told the chief all about Ahmadiyyat. This went on for several hours during which the muallims got the opportunity to deliver the message of truth to the chief, his household and the others who were present there in a very desirable manner. Allah blessed their efforts with His Grace in that the chief declared his conversion to Ahmadiyyat. The chief also wrote letters to all sub-chiefs in his chieftom and handed those to the muallims to deliver. He wrote in those letters that he had become an Ahmadi, by the Grace of Allah, and that they too should deliberate about Ahmadiyyat and decide.

Thus Allah the Almighty opened many avenues of preaching in the Fissel area as a result of the breakdown of the motorbike. Now the flag of Ahmadiyyat is flying in about forty places. May Allah reward these muallims abundantly! One of them, Modou Sarr has passed away; may Allah engulf him in His Mercy! May the planting of Ahmadiyyat in that region through him become an on-going rewarding charity for him, Amin!

Message of Ahmadiyyat in Koumpantoo area

When I was staying in Farafenni, the Gambia, and a stranger visited me one day. He told me that his name was Jibril Jallow and that he had come from Koumpantoo in Senegal, which is a long way away from Farafenni; it takes a full day's journey by train from there to Farafenni. He was a Fulani and could speak Arabic to some extent. I enquired the purpose of his visit. He told me that he had heard of Ahmadiyyat from a person who advised him to see me in Farafenni for further information. That was why he undertook such long and arduous journey. I was astonished; he had done all that in the way of Allah on his own expenses. The young man stayed with me for a few days and we continued to discuss (about Ahmadiyyat). By the Grace of Allah, he was fully satisfied and he performed bai'at with full conviction. Thereafter, he started preaching in his region. By the Grace of Allah, several jama'ats have now been established in that area. The credit of conveying of the message of Ahmadiyyat in that area goes to Jibril Jallow, his own village is about twenty miles from Koumpantoo in the thick of jungle with no proper track to get there. The people travelled on carts; I have been there several times. Just imagine how a soul arrived in Farafenni from a far flung area of another country, from a village score of miles away from towns all for the sake of Ahmadiyyat, returned to his area and engaged in spreading the message of Ahmadiyyat all around, day and night! Was that man's doing? Nay, never. This was all Allah's Will and His doing.

Introduction of Ahmadiyyat in Kousanar Area

While I was stationed at Farafenni in the Gambia, from there we conducted the preaching campaign in Senegal. It was apparently impossible to make contacts in Senegal from there. However, as Allah had promised that, 'I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth', He Himself provides the means for propagation of truth imperceptibly.

Once, Sunday market was being held in Farafenni, close to the Ahmadiyya Clinic on the outskirts of the town. I went to the market along with a muallim. On the way, I saluted one of my acquaintances. He was accompanied by a guest, who asked him about me. He was told that I was Ahmadiyya Ustaz. The guest expressed his desire to see me. Both of them came to my house, straightaway. Some muallims from Senegal were also staying with me at that time. They were able to meet them as well. Soon it was dinner time. In keeping with the Senegalese tradition, we all ate out of one plate. He was greatly impressed by that and remarked that he had never seen their own religious leaders eating together with others. They stayed with us till Asr prayers and we talked about jama'at. They prayed with us and, by the Grace of Allah, he performed bai'at. His name was Bamboo Jobe, thus, Allah the Almighty, planted Ahmadiyyat about six hundred miles from Farafenni, where it would have been impossible for me to go under normal circumstances. His house became a jama'at centre in that area. Later I sent muallim Sali Jobe to that area; he stayed in his house for a long time. Consequently, Ahmadiyyat was planted in many places in that area.

**Ahmadiyyat Arrives in (Rishard-toll) Area
III treatment of Mauritanian Police and Divine Bounties**

Before 1997, some neighbouring countries namely Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Mauritania were under the administration of the Gambian mission. With the Grace of Allah and blessings of Khilafat, there was expansion of propagation of Ahmadiyyat and thereby the Tabligh and tarbiyyat workload also increased considerably. Therefore, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{ra} divided the region in three administrative units – the Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Once we planned a Tabligh visit to some areas of Mauritania. I was accompanied by Ousman Darboe, the driver and two muallims – Modou sarr and Alieu Faye. We started from the Gambia early in the morning in our car and after a long journey reached the Senegal / Mauritania border. We got the ferry immediately and we crossed the river to enter Mauritania. We went to the relevant offices for essential formalities. They checked our passports and documents and permitted us to enter. Later they checked documents of our car and noticed that these were in the name of Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, the Gambia. The duty officer informed the officer in-charge about that and the latter ordered that we be sent back immediately. We asked the reason why but they behaved very rudely and physically pushed us to the ferry that brought us back to Senegal. All this happened so quickly that we could not figure it out. Anyway, we were back to Senegal. We were greatly perplexed

and distressed. It was getting dark. As we stood on the river bank in a bewildered and confused state of mind, Modou Sarr announced that he had left his identity card in the office of Mauritanian Immigration. He was sent across by a boat immediately. We waited for his return for quite a while but he did not return. It was quite dark by then and we had the problem of spending the night. We did not know anyone in that area. Nearby, there is a small town – Richard-toll; the only sugar mill of Senegal was based there and there were some hotels and restaurants as well. We decided to go there to spend the night and return next morning to receive Modou Sarr and then plan the next move. Ousman Darboe started the car. A few kilometers down the road, as we turned left, I saw a man standing there and asking for a lift in the car. I asked Ousman to stop and pick him up; that he did. The man said that his name was Biggy Sow that he lived in a village nearby called Crossmant and wanted to go to Richard-toll for an important task.

We spoke about various subjects for a while. On his inquiry, we told him that we were Ahmadis and gave him a brief account of the jama'at. Then we asked him if he could arrange for us to spend the night somewhere. At first he thought we were joking but we asserted that we were serious, that we had come to that area for the first time and new nobody there. He told us that his friend had a house in Richard-toll where he could arrange for us to stay. We accompanied him to his friend's house. It was a mud-house with thatched roof. We put some mats on the floor and rested there for a while. The host served us with some food comprising of millet and soup in a big dish. All of us ate out of the same dish together and thanked our God and the host as

well. Our companion Biggy Sow watched all that very intently.

All that time I was feeling uneasy at my heart thinking of Modou Saarr, who had gone across to Mauritania. How would the Mauritanian police treat him? He might have returned to Senegal in some boat late at night; where would he spend his night, where would he eat? Thinking that, I said to my companions, 'let us go back to the river-bank, Modou Sarr may come back'. Our companion (Biggy Sow said, he too wanted to accompany us back to his village. We resumed our talk on the way. The muallims told him (about me), 'he is our Amir'. He said that he had never seen a Muslim jama'at in Senegal with that degree of equality and human sympathy. 'Therefore, I request you to visit our village and tell all our village people about Ahmadiyya jama'at in detail.' I made a firm commitment to visit the village the following day, God willing and talk about the jama'at in detail.

After that we went to the river bank and waited for Modou Sarr but he did not turn up. Where to spend the night that was the problem. We approached the imam of the nearby village, told him that we were strangers and needed help to spend the night. He said he had no room to offer us. We said that we would sleep anywhere if he would only let us in. May Allah bless him, he agreed. He showed a verandah for us to sleep there, if we could. It was a God-send for us. We were dead tired, therefore, fell asleep very soon. They say, if you are sleepy you will doze off anywhere, in whatever condition you are in. We woke up in the morning, went to river bank and met Modou Sarr there. He could not come in the night because there was no boat available. We thanked God.

Despair turns into Delight

After that we went to Crossmant the village of Biggey Sow, It was a scantily populated small village. Biggey Sow introduced us to the people there and narrated all that had happened the night before. The Tabligh session then started. Myself and muallims spoke briefly about the jama'at Ahmadiyya and its teachings. That was followed by questions and answers session. Allah blessed the proceedings and the whole village converted to Ahmadiyya. I left both the muallims there; they started further ta'lim and tarbiyyat. Later, by the Grace of Allah, that village became the centre of our jama'at for the whole area and Tabligh was started from there. Within one year, eighteen jama'ats were established in the area. Through this village, bai'ats were achieved in Mauritania as many relatives of these people lived in Mauritania.

Divine Will Prevails

A non-Ahmadi Arabic teacher Omar Fanne in Farafenni used to come to our mosque for prayers at times. Once I gave him Centenary issue of jama'at's Arabic journal, 'Al-taqwa'. He took that journal with him to his village Chako and showed it to some imams and teachers there.

Once I was on a tour of that area. There I met an Arabic teacher who had introduction to the jama'at through 'Al-taqwa'. We had a lengthy talk, and Allah blessed him with His Grace and he performed bai'at. He said that he had a friend Oustaz Kokey Jaara in Kourki Bambra village who taught Arabic there. He

suggested that we went to him and introduced jama'at to him and hoped that he too will become an Ahmadi, God willing, and the light of Ahmadiyyat will spread throughout the area. We had come from the Gambia and having travelled for several days, we were dead tired. However, the desire, and the hope, that Allah may plant Ahmadiyyat in that area, prevailed and we set out for the village. After a long journey arrived there only to find out that our intended host had travelled elsewhere. That anguished us a great deal. Anyway, we spread out a mat in his courtyard and sat on it. Impending evening, exhaustion resulting from the journey and failure to meet the teacher made us think of moving elsewhere to have proper rest. It was very difficult to spend a night without finding an appropriate place. Moreover, we were complete strangers in that area.

In the meantime, having noticed our vehicle, people started coming there. The village imam, Ghousou Jallow also came. We introduced to each other. We told them that we were Ahmadis and had come to visit the Ustaz who happened to be away. Imam's arrival worried me as imams (maulvis) are more prone to oppose the jama'at and become obstacles in the way of Tabligh – they think that if they became Ahmadis, people would dismiss them from their position as imams, thus they would lose their source of income, and their status too.

On the other hand when laypersons are preached they respond that being uninitiated in religious matters, they would follow the decisions made by the maulvis. Thus most often each group fails to recognize the truth being wary of the other. When they attend a meeting or conference, the maulvis would assume a defensive attitude straightaway. They regard it a disgrace to give in to the

opinion expressed by the others – ‘what would the people say’. Therefore, they often resort to absurd reasoning and see nothing wrong in relying on falsehood. Thus the imam’s presence aroused the concern that he would not let the villagers listen to us. About forty persons had gathered there. The imam said, ‘you are our guests and you have said that you have brought the message of Ahmadiyyat. Please give us the message.’ I asked our Arabic speaking muallim, Sali Jabi to read out the conditions of bai’at. Sali Sahib read out the bai’at form in Arabic, explaining some points. That was followed by a question/answer session. The imam then stood up and said, ‘I have been searching the truth all my life. I have studied and observed many religious jama’ats and sects but none of them ever satisfied me. Today, I have heard the teachings of your jama’at for the first time and my heart tells me that this is the jama’at I have been looking for all my life.’ Then he declared that he was becoming an Ahmadi. Many of the others also performed bai’at with him. That was a wonderful experience – my concerns at variance with the Divine Will! I sought forgiveness for entertaining those concerns and thanked Allah for His bounties.

Change for the better **ABDUSSALAM Jallow**

In 1985, the Amir, complying with directive from the centre, instructed me to go to Laolack, Senegal. I took the local transport and got there. There was a Government Primary School near my house. I went to the head master’s office one day and introduced myself briefly to him. He told me his name was Abdussalam bari. Bari People are members of Fulani tribe, mostly from Labe area of Guinea Conakry. Bari was a nice and good natured person In

addition to French (national language of Senegal) he knew English quite well. (Very few of the Senegalese speak English). Therefore, I had little problem in communicating with him and that was a great blessing in Senegal. The school was only five minutes' walk from my house and I would visit him whenever I had time and spoke to him at length on various issues. Very prudently, I started introducing Ahmadiyyat to him. Initially he argued a lot, even resorting to absurd reasoning at times. However, he mellowed gradually with passage of time and was greatly impressed by the beliefs and international services rendered by the jama'at. I started giving him French translations of jama'at books, including 'Invitation to Ahmadiyyat' and 'Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran'. He was a well-educated person and free of prejudice. When he had studied those books, I prompted him in a suitable way to perform bai'at and gave him a bai'at form which he promised to fill in and send it to me in due course. I spoke to him about the bai'at form a few times, but he kept silent. I did not want to push the matter either. Several months elapsed but he did not sign the bai'at form. I felt that he avoided talking about the jama'at any further. Later, I came to know that his wife belonged to the family of a well-known religious guide in Senegal. I reckoned that his in-laws must have warned and threatened him, therefore, I adopted silence over the issue. But it hurt me very much because I had worked hard over him; he was an educated person and I had imagined and had hoped that his conversion would open up many avenues for the introduction and progress of the jama'at. His negative approach was quite a shock for me. Anyway, I always maintained good relations with him and he would help me whole-heartedly in any academic project wherein I needed his help.

A Better Abdul-Salam in Exchange

I grieved over Mr Abduslam Bari not becoming an Ahmadi. In fact, Allah had ordained to fulfil my desire in another way by converting another young man with the same name, from the same tribe and with similar, nay much better, virtues and character.

And this is how it happened:

During the same period, myself and Ustaz Ahmad Ly organised a Tabligh programme through an Ahmadi friend. Speeches were made followed by question/answer session. Allah, the Almighty blessed this meeting greatly and it led to many people performing baia'ts including one named Abdussalm Jallow He too belonged to the Fulani tribe, he was headmaster of a primary school and was well-versed in English language. By the Grace of Allah, from the very first day he became a sincere and faithful member helping and cooperating in jama'at activities. He is currently an active member of the national executive committee of Senegal jama'at. He has had the good fortune of attending Jalsa Salana UK.

Which Abdul-Shakoor?

I had a similar interesting experience in Mianwali town of Pakistan that I would share with the readers for augmentation of their faith. I started the construction of a mosque in Mianwali city. I contacted every member in the area and encouraged them to contribute to this blessed project; all of them cooperated fully by donating cash or promising to do so.

Those days there was a building contractor named Abdul Shakoor in the area who had secured several contracts there but had little contact with the mosque. Actually, he lived somewhere else but had his business in Mianwali and he came there only for his business pursuits and then returned to his town. Some of the friends told me that he was a very rich man and if contacted he would, hopefully, donate about five thousand Rupees that would facilitate our project. We tried to contact him over a long period without success as he was mostly away in connection with his work.

One day, I went to the court accompanied by a very devoted khadim (young Ahmadi) – Choudhry Munir-Rahman and there we met Abdul-Shakoor. After mutual introduction, we solicited his support for the mosque project. He promised to pay fifty Rupees. We had expected a contribution of Five thousand Rupees from him. Therefore, his response was very distressing and disappointing.

The same evening, I went to Air Force Colony along with Bashir Ahmad, president of Mianwali jama'at. A very sincere Ahmadi, Malik Abdul-Shakoor, Group Captain lived there. Lo and behold! As soon as we met Malik Sahib, he said, 'Congratulations, Murabbi Sahib, a friend of mine, Dr Abdul Shakoor of Sargodha has sent five thousand Rupees for the Mianwali mosque'.

We were amazed at all that. Allah, the Almighty had decreed that we would get Five thousand Rupees and that too from an Abdul-Shakoor but not from the one we had anticipated, but a different one! Allah, the Almighty taught us the lesson that this was His own project and He would arrange for it. The five thousand Rupees we expected from the former Abdul-Shakoor,

He provided us through another Abdul Shakoor!

Ahmadiyya Planted in Koumbal Village

In 1985, I reached Senegal as a *muballigh* for the first time. There were only a few Ahmadi families then. There was no mosque or mission house of the jama'at. Therefore, I rented a room in Kaolack, Senegal to start with and from there Tabligh was launched. From that beginning, today by the Grace of Allah, there are devotees of the Promised Messiah ^{as} in every nooks and corner of the whole country.

One day some Ahmadi members, seated on the floor of a mud-house, were planning Tabligh in the suburbs and villages of Kaolack and thinking how they could deliver the message of truth to these people.

One person suggested that the Gambia's jalsa salana was fast approaching and each one of us should invite some sincere, noble-hearted and influential person to the jalsa; if they accepted the invitation, he was confident that the spiritual atmosphere and the speeches based on truth would deeply affect the noble and pious souls.

All the friends admired his useful suggestion and promised that they would participate in this good scheme to the best of their ability, انشاءالله تعالى.

A friend Ilo Jallow of Kouttal town said that he had a very close friend samba Jallow in a village called Koumbal near Kaolack; he is my adoptive brother and has named one of his sons after me. 'If I invite him to the Jalsa in the Gambia, he will definitely

agree to go with me, انشاءالله تعالى, he said. I requested Ahmad ly and Ilo Jallow to go to Koumbal and invite Samba Jallow to the jalsa. Accordingly both of them went to village. Many young and elderly people of the village were sitting under a tree engaged in chit-chat. The visitors extended traditional greetings to the gathering and enquired about Samba Jallow They were told that there happened to be two persons with that name in the village; 'Which samba Jallow do you want to see?' they asked. When Ilo Jallow gave further details of his friend they told him that he had been away since many days.

One of those present said that if it was something important they would convey the message to him. Ahmad ly said, 'we are Ahmadi and we had come to invite samba Jallow to jalsa salana of the Ahmadiyya jama'at of the Gambia'. One of the audience enquired who the Ahmadi were. Ahmad Ly gave an introduction of the jama'at to the best of his ability; they listened to him intently. There were two Arabic teachers from the same village amongst the audience – Omar Jallow and Samba Jallow (the other one). One of the teachers asked, 'do you want to invite samba Jallow only to this jalsa or can anyone else attend the jalsa?' Ahmad ly answered, 'any one of you wishing to attend will be most welcome'.

The leading members of the village, after mutual consultation nominated both their imams Omar Jallow and Samba Jallow to attend the jalsa as their representatives to go and look into Ahmadiyyat and report back the whole truth.

In short, the two imams attended the jalsa. They witnessed the organisation of the jama'at, the discipline, scholarly speeches,

mutual sincerity, fidelity, love and sympathy of the Ahmadiyya fraternity, with their own eyes. Their good nature and blessed souls recognised the truth fairly soon and both of them declared their conversion to Ahmadiyyat at the end of the jalsa. Returning to their village, they told the people that all that they had heard about jama'at from the opponents and adversaries of Ahmadiyyat was based on lies and fabrications. They described their own observation and experience and declared that by the Grace of Allah both of them had found the truth and had joined the Ahmadiyya wholeheartedly.

After their disclosure, by the Grace of Allah the Almighty, many persons from the village performed bai'ats and, *Alhamdulillah*, a very devoted jama'at is established there; the jama'at has a mosque as well.

Strangely enough the samba Jallow that our Ahmadi delegate intended to see initially and expected him to perform bai'at immediately and then help and assist the jama'at could not perform bai'at. Although he was a nice man, he remained deprived of the blessing of Ahmadiyyat. Notwithstanding, he used to preach Ahmadiyyat to non-Ahmadis a lot and many entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat because of him. The reason why he himself could not perform bai'at was that he was greatly influenced by a religious guide (*pir*) of Soken town, so much so that he had named one of his sons after that pir.

The Dumb Preacher

There was an Ahmadi friend in Kaolack who was dumb; he was a tailor. He started preaching his dumb friend in his specific way using the pictures of the Promised Messiah^{as} and the khalifas,

pictures of jama'at activities and other means. By the Grace of Allah, his dumb friend performed bai'at. I wrote about that to Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV^{ra}; he was pleased very much and prayed for them. When Huzur visited the Gambia, both of these dumb friends came to Farafenni to welcome Huzur and had the honour of audience with Huzur. Huzur communicated with them using sign language; Huzur made a mention of that in a speech at Jalsa Salana.

'There is Mad Man in our Area' Story of a Preacher

In 1985, on a directive from the centre, I moved to Kaolack, Senegal. The number of members in the whole of Senegal was very small then; most of them were labourers while a few from the villages were farmers. My financial means and transport facilities at my disposal were next to nothing. Therefore, all the time I was worried how to start preaching and where from.

Near my house, an Ahmadi friend, Abdullah Aw had a small workshop for battery repairs. In my spare time, I would go and sit there, and talk about various jama'at issues. Thereby, I would also get acquainted with people visiting him and that provided me with the opportunity to convey the message of jama'at to them.

One day, I was sitting with Abdullah Aw when a maulvi type of person came to see him. Abdullah Aw introduced me to him as a friend visiting from the Gambia and muballigh of the jama'at. In due course, at the right moment, I started talking about the jama'at. He said that he knew about the jama'at. When I asked

him how he said, 'there is a mad man in our area, who keeps preaching about the jama'at all the time'. For me that was very interesting indeed; who was that Ahmadi who preached in his area so much that people had started calling him mad? I enquired the maulvi about this man and his whereabouts. The maulvi did not answer and tried to avoid the issue. As it was big news for me, I insisted and he told me that his name was Hamad Fatou Bah and he lived in a small village Chandeeeri near Ndofan . It was very pleasing news for me to hear that there was an Ahmadi in another area who was a well-known preacher. I broke the good news to muallim Ahmad Ly and planned to go to that village with him.

A few days later myself, Ahmad Ly and the late Ilo Jallow went to Ndofan from Kaolack and from there to that village. There were only a few houses in the village. We reached the house of Ahmad Fatou Bah and introduced ourselves. He was greatly surprised to see us and his happiness knew no bounds as it was the first time in his life for an Ahmadi to visit him. Our happiness too was indescribable as we had found our lost brother. We established a permanent and strong contact with Ahmad Fatou Bah and through him Tabligh in that area expanded very much and by the Grace of Allah many bai'ats took place and new jama'ats were established. There are three mosques in that area now. It is beyond human comprehension to see how Allah, the Almighty, creates means to propagate His vivifying message in all directions and blows winds that carry this message all over the world.

Honour of being first Ahmadi Village Chief in Senegal

There is a small village Sare Mari in Niore area of Senegal. A muallim of the jama'at Hasan Jallow lived there. He was a very noble person and a man of few words. He died young. May Allah, the Almighty have mercy on him, Amin!

Through Hasan Jallow I met the chief of their village Kaba Jallow. I preached him repeatedly but he kept avoiding the issue. After that I went to Banjul for a few months. One day when I returned home from the market, I saw a weak and emaciated man sitting near my doorstep. When I approached him I realised he was Kabba Jallow. He told me that he was sick and had come to me for treatment. I arranged his stay with a Gambian friend and requested Dr Laeeq Ahmad Ansari to give him treatment. The ultimate Healer (Allah, the Almighty) cured him, Alhamdulillah.

After a while I visited his village, he took me to his house and I spent the night with him. He offered the morning prayers with us. After the prayers, he asked me to take his bai'at. 'I have seen the truth and, by the Grace of Allah, I am an Ahmadi now' he said. He then performed the bai'at. He had the Honour of being first Ahmadi Village Chief in Senegal. He is not in this world anymore and his son is the village chief. May Allah, the Almighty grant him steadfastness, Amin!

Chapter 7

THE SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ [١٣:١٣]

Surely, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts.

Some Incidents of the Spiritual Revolution produced by Blessing of Ahmadiyyat

Gave up *Shirk*

African brothers have blind faith in talismans and charms; they travel long distances to get one. Forefathers of Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini, a well-known saintly figure of the jama'at were considered experts in this science, in addition to being religious teachers, for several generations. Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini, also learnt this skill from his elders and gained good reputation for that.

There is a small village Yalal Ba near Farafenni, the Gambia, where we have a very devoted jama'at. The chief of that village was a non-Ahmadi. He told me once that one of his friends was a Member of Parliament in Senegal. He needed a talisman for some purpose He was told that there was a very skilful talisman maker in the Gambia and that a talisman from him would achieve the purpose. That is why he had come to the chief for him to

contact Ibrahim Jikini and get the talisman. The chief told him that Alhaj had become an Ahmadi and stopped that business. The Senegalese insisted and the chief was compelled to approach Ibrahim Jikini with quite a large sum of money and told him the whole story. Alhaj replied, 'I respect you very much but cannot do that job because I have become an Ahmadi and with the blessing of Ahmadiyyat Allah, the Almighty has enlightened me with the truth; now I regard this thing a sin. However much you may offer me, I will not do it.' The Member of Assembly returned dejected.

Devotion for Khilafat

These farms of love and fidelity will never thrive without infusion with blood.

In 1988, Khalifatul Masih IV^{ra} arrived in the Gambia for an important and historical visit. Many Tabligh and tarbiyyat programmes were planned throughout the country during his blessed tour, including one at my place, Farafenni where he was to address the jama'at in the community hall. This town is situated on the Gambia-Senegal border. Therefore, a large number of Ahmadi men and women from Senegal coming to participate in that jalsa. Thus the largest gathering during Huzur's visit was expected to be in Farafenni.

Various duties were allocated to members of Farafenni jama'at for the event. Dr Khalil Nyangado was a very sincere and devoted Ahmadi; he was the only Ahmadi in his family. Allah had blessed him with affluence, more than anyone else in Farafenni jama'at. Moreover, his house was large and spacious that could accommodate hundreds of people at the same time. Therefore,

it was decided that all Ahmadi brothers will gather in his spacious compound and wait there for Huzur's arrival. Accordingly, Huzur was to come to the doctor's house first on his arrival in Farafenni.

It was part of Dr. Nyagado's duties to welcome the honorable guests befittingly at Huzur's arrival. He was also responsible for hospitality – an important department during such events. The food was to be prepared and served to the guests at his place.

“I will give preference to matters of Faith over worldly affairs”

However, it happened so that Dr. Nyangado came to my house that very morning and told me that his elder brother had passed away. (His brother lived in their ancestral village that was about 40 kilometers from Farafenni but the track was very rough). That made me anxious. He observed that and said, 'do not worry. I am going there now and will be back in an hour, انشاءالله.

Thereafter, he went to his village, met his relatives, expressed his condolences, paid for the funeral and other essential expenses and returned to Farafenni. (By the Grace of Allah, Dr Nyangado was quite affluent and used to assist the whole of his family financially). After his return he engaged himself wholeheartedly in the discharge of his duties. He did not give anybody in the large gathering an inkling of the tragedy he had faced.

Huzur's Compassion for Jama'at Members

After extremely successful event at Farafenni, Huzur proceeded to Njawara. There was an Ahmadiyya Clinic there serving the

humanity in the whole area under the supervision of Dr. Munawar Ahmed. According to the programme, Huzur was to stay there overnight and hold a detailed meeting with the central executive.

During the stay there, I narrated the episode to Maulana Daud Hanif. I told him how Dr. Khalil Nyangado had sacrificed his worldly relationships for the sake of his master, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IVth with love and devotion at the death of his elder brother who was the head of their family and had thus set a beautiful practical example of giving preference to faith over worldly affairs. Dr. Nyangado did not care for the family traditions or comments of family members in the way of complaints, reproach or accusations and did not participate in any event or ceremony related to his brother's death.

Maulana Daud Hanif narrated that to Huzur with a request for prayers. Huzur said, 'why did you not tell me when I was there. On the way back, we will go straight to his house'. Accordingly, Huzur went to his house and expressed his condolence to the household.

This incident presents a wonderful scenario of love and devotion for the khilafat; the way Allah, the Almighty has enlightened the Ahmadi with faith and instilled their hearts with the passion to offer every kind of sacrifice for khilafat.

Azan called in own House after Bai'at

There is a village Douta Boulo near Farafenni. A very devout and sincere Ahmadi Berom Bah lives there. He is extremely simple and noble person. He narrated to me the story of his conversion

to Ahmadiyyat as follows.

His village being close to Farafenni, he spent most of his spare time going to the market there. He belonged to Fulani tribe. One day as he was in the market, one of his acquaintances told him jestingly that one of his Senegalese tribesmen was preaching a new faith and told him to go and listen to him. Those days the Amir had sent muallim Hamid Mbai to Farafenni jama'at and he used to preach in the market. Berom Bah met the muallim. As both of them spoke the same language, a series of meetings ensued. Each time the muallim told him about the jama'at. Berom Bah was a noble person blessed with a fortunate soul. One day he decided to perform bai'at and became an Ahmadi. Then he returned to his small village. There was a small mosque close to his house. In the evening, Berom Bah called the Adhan loudly in his own compound. That surprised all the village people and after the prayers they came to him and asked the reason why he had called the Adhan at his home and prayed there. Berom Bah told them that he had become an Ahmadi and could not pray behind a non-Ahmadi imam. The news spread throughout the village. He was a fearless and brave person, therefore, he feared no one and at the next prayer time he called the Adhan again. The son of the village chief, Muhammad Kumba Bah came to his house and told him that he too had come to pray with him as he had decided to become an Ahmadi. Three of his brothers also joined the jama'at. They continued to pray in the house for quite a long time. With passage of time, as a result of their preaching other people also got enlightened with Ahmadiyyat. By the grace of Allah, the Almighty, now there is a very devoted and active jama'at in that village; they have their

own mosque and a mission house wherein a muallim is busy serving the faith day and night.

Deliverance of Muhammad Kumba Bah from his Ancestral *Pir* (spiritual guide)

As mentioned above, the village chief of Douta Boulo is Muhammad Kumba Bah, who is, by the Grace of Allah, a very devout Ahmadi. He once told me that his family was associated with the Qadiriyya sect and their pir was a sharif from Mauritania. The pir visited his murids (followers) in the Gambia and Senegal; he would pray for them, receive gifts and offerings from them before going back. His father entertained the pir with extraordinary hospitality. Goats and sheep were slaughtered for the pir and a cow for his murids and visitors. This tradition had been established in the family since long.

Muhammad Kumbah Bah added, 'Then, by the Grace of Allah, I accepted Ahmadiyyat. After that my father passed away. Later the pir came to my house; I welcomed him and served him with the food that we routinely take at home. I also told him that, by the Grace of Allah, we have become Ahmadis. You are our guest and respecting the guest are binding on us; but we cannot do any more. The pir just spent the night with us and left early next morning. Several years have passed since then, the pir has not come to our place and with the blessing of Ahmadiyyat many of our cows have been spared'.

Tested Recipe to Safeguard against Adversities

A young Gambian, Seedu Singateh, had a modest garments business in the market. I saw him there once and among other things enquired about his business. He said that he had no worries at all. I was surprised and asked him how that was possible. He replied, 'whenever I face a problem, I go to the mission house, give *sadaqa* and at the same time I write to Huzur requesting his prayers and the problem is solved. It is my experience that as soon as I post the letter, whether it reaches Huzur or not, my problem is solved.' I was greatly pleased with the knowledge, belief and conviction about the station of khilafat that the young man had. Soon afterwards he got the visa for America and went there. By the Grace of Allah, he is a devoted jama'at worker in America as well.

Became a Practicing Muslim due to Blessing of Ahmadiyyat

There is a small village Chandeeri near Ndofan town in Senegal. A long standing Ahmadi Hamad Fatou Bah lives there. When Senegal was assigned to me, he was the only Ahmadi in his area. He was fond of preaching from the beginning. I lived in Farafenni, the Gambia then. He used to bring his non-Ahmadi friends to me frequently for Tabligh. At times they stayed overnight and we discussed matters in detail.

One of his friends, Ousman Cham accompanied him once. He stayed with me for two days and we talked about various topics. Allah, the Almighty opened his heart to the truth and he performed bai'at and went back to his village. His elder brother

was the village chief; he noticed that Ousman was offering prayers at home, something he never did before.

His elder brother asked him one day, 'why do you pray at home?' He replied, 'I am an Ahmadi now.' His brother did not know much about the jama'at; he had only heard that these people were infidels and very dangerous. He advised Ousman, out of sympathy, to adopt any faith other than Ahmadiyyat as 'that jama'at is no good'. Ousman told his brother that he had started offering salat regularly and was trying to act upon other Islamic teachings while he did not do that earlier and that it was all because of Ahmadiyyat. The brother tried everything to dissuade him but failed.

The family belonged to Tijaniyyah sect. Ousman's brother approached the scholars, told them that his brother had become an infidel and requested them to have words with him. A Tijani Marabout visited Ousman and started discussing with him about his conversion to Ahmadiyyat. When enquired about his beliefs, Ousman recited the kalima and briefly stated his beliefs. The Marabout said that they believed the same so what was the difference. Ousman told him that he believed in Imam Mahdi^{as}. The Marabout asked him if it was written in the Holy Quran that Imam Mahdi would come. Ousman said, 'yes it is'. The Marabout asked him to show where it was written like that. Ousman replied, 'the verse that states that Sheikh Tijan will come, the next verse tells of advent of Imam Mahdi. You show me the verse about Sheikh Tijan and I will show the verse about Imam Mahdi'. The Marabout was perplexed and told Ousman's brother, 'he has gone mad, leave him alone as he is incurable.'

‘I have become a Muslim now’

There is a small village Palado in Kaolack region of Senegal. An elderly person Gatam Jallow there performed bai’at. Gatam Jallow belonged to Fulani tribe. In addition to farming, he also practiced traditional veterinary medicine and prepared talismans. After becoming an Ahmadi, he gave up all un-Islamic practices. Once a veterinary doctor from Kaolack came to him and requested him for a talisman to safeguard animals against a disease that was rampant in the area. Gatam Jallow replied that he could not do that. The vet friend of his was greatly surprised and asked the reason. Gatam Jallow replied that he had become a Muslim. The vet remarked that he was a born Muslim. Gatam Jallow told him, ‘by the Grace of Allah, I am an Ahmadi Muslim now and regard this business (of talisman) unlawful in the light of Quran and Hadith’.

‘I shall burn down your house to Ashes instantly’

One is perplexed to see the *pirs* and *faqirs* of Senegal engaged in deception in the garb of religion. With their fraudulent and deceptive practices they mercilessly defraud the poor and the simple people. However, when these people enter the fold of Ahmadiyyat, by the Grace of Allah, they become enlightened and acquire the ability to differentiate between the good and the bad.

A Fulani farmer in Kounjal area became an Ahmadi. Previously he owed allegiance to a pir based in Mauritania who used to visit his followers in Senegal and received gifts from them every year. After his conversion to Ahmadiyyat, the pir visited him as

usual. (The pir is called Sharif or Haidra in their local dialect). The Ahmadi friend entertained the pir to the best of his ability. The Fulani herd cattle; each member of the family has his own cows and that is their property. The pir went along with this man to see his cattle and demanded the best cow. The man refused in spite of pir's insistence. The pir became furious and threatened to burn down his house to ashes that very day. The Ahmadi, after having converted, firmly believed that the pir could do him no harm and was just bragging. The Fulani spend all their time in forests with the cattle; therefore, they always keep daggers for self-defense. The Ahmadi took out his dagger and said, 'before you burn my house, I will finish you off with this dagger.' The pir fled head over heels and never returned to that area again. Because of this incidence, the others who worshipped these pirs became aware of their reality and their fake powers.

A New Convert's Belief in the Truth of Promised Messiah

A conference was organised by the jama'at in Jabang town of Senegal. At the end of the conference, a delegate that had arrived from Bignona region, were standing by the roadside waiting for transport. After a long wait, a vehicle did arrive and they signaled for it to stop. When it stopped many of the other passengers hurried onto it. However, of the Ahmadis only one elderly person, Mr Baji could board it with great difficulty and the vehicle moved on. The remaining Ahmadis were left behind including the person who was supposed to pay for the fare. After a short while, the conductor demanded fare from Mr Baji; he replied that the person who was to pay the fare could not board and that he would pay the fare on arrival at Bignona. The

conductor did not believe him and insisted on payment. Mr. Baji told him that he was an Ahmadi and had come to attend a conference at Jabang and that the Ahmadis do not lie. 'I will pay the fare on arrival at Bignona, انشاءالله.' The conductor continued to insist on payment. Mr. Baji said, 'I have accepted the Imam Mahdi; by his blessing I will get the fare as soon as I reach Bignona, انشاءالله. The other passengers also requested the conductor to let the old man reach Bignona and see whether he was telling the truth. When the vehicle reached the Bignona bus stand and as soon as the old man got out, the conductor demanded the fare. At that very moment, a young man came rushing to Mr. Baji and enquired about his well-being. The conductor repeated his demand. The young man heard all about it, and immediately paid the conductor. Mr. Baji then said, 'I told you that I am a believer in Imam Mahdi ^{as} and because of his blessing my fare will be arranged and that will be a sign of his truth.' All those who witnessed that were amazed by the way Allah had fulfilled his statement.

CHAPTER 8

Spending in the Way of Allah

Signs of those who are near to God

By Hadrat Imam Mahdi ^{as}

Only those love God truly,

Who spend all they possess in His path,

Day and night, they have only one concern,

To please their Beloved at all cost,

Even after offering their life and wealth to Him, again and again,

They still fear that they are worthless,

Only those, whose heart is set on that Holy One,

Depart from this world in a state of piety.

Faith-inspiring incidents of Financial Sacrifice

He only needed two yards of Land

It is narrated that once a king was greatly pleased with one of his servants over something that he did and told him to go around certain part of his kingdom and that any area that he covered between sunrise and sunset would belong to him.

The servant was really excited. He went to area and started walking from a particular point in a particular direction. Then he realised that at that speed he would cover only a small area, therefore, he should increase his speed to acquire larger piece

of land. By mid-day he decided to run to claim still greater area. By mid-afternoon, he estimated that running at that speed he would not make it back to the starting point, therefore, he started running faster and reached his destination in time. However, the extreme exertion left him so exhausted that he fell down and gave up the ghost.

The writer comments that actually all he needed was just two meters of land (for his grave)!

Financial Sacrifice of a Sincere Poor Ahmadi

There is an elderly Ahmadi, Muhammad Trawally in Basse, the Gambia. He is extremely poor, financially straitened, without any source of income and has a large family. One evening I visited him. It was dinner time. He told me that they were having dinner but could not invite me to it. When I asked the reason, he told me that they only had boiled rice and were using salt and pepper dissolved in water as soup. That gives a fair indication of his financial condition.

In a Friday sermon, once I proposed to the jama'at to set up an agricultural farm. Most of the members being traders, it did not have the desired effect. After the Friday prayer, Muhammad Trawally came to my room and asked me to see him the following day in his farm in a particular village. When I asked him if everything was okay, he replied that he would tell me there. Accordingly, I reached there the following day. Mr Trawally was ploughing in his farm. He took me to the middle of the field and said, 'half of this farm is mine and the other half I give to the jama'at. I will do the farming and the income will go to the

jama'at.' His devotion left a deep impress on my mind till today: how a poor Ahmadi made an offering to increase jama'at income. By the Grace of Allah, his financial condition is much better.

Devotion of Dr Nyangado

In Farafenni, the Gambia, lived a very pious, righteous and prayerful doctor regular with five daily prayers named Khalil Nyangado. He passed away a few years ago. Throughout the African countries that I have been familiar with, I do not know of anyone like him in financial sacrifice. In addition to the obligatory chandas he paid Zakat according to the prescribed rates. Moreover, he paid all the interest that he received from the bank to the jama'at. Our mosque was under construction in Farafenni. It was largely funded locally, as assistance from the centre was minimal those days.

The main hall of the mosque was completed and we started praying therein but we could not build the enclosure because of lack of funds. One early morning the doctor came to me and said that we needed to build the enclosure soon as the stray animals entered the courtyard and defiled the sanctity of the mosque. I told him about lack of funds. He said that he would pay the total cost of the construction but he did not want anybody to know that. It was quite a big project and he got it completed on his own. This devotion, love and sacrifice is the result of blessings of the Messiah. May Allah grant him place in paradise!

Foday Sabali

Farafeni is particularly significant town of the Gambia in the history of the jama'at. That is the town where Alhaj Sir Farimang Singateh ran his clinic before taking over as the Governor General of the country. By the Grace of Allah, there is a very devoted Jama'at there.

Alhaj Singateh had a fairly large piece of land on the roadside near the market where he had his pharmacy. It is narrated that once Maulana Ghulam Ahmad Baddomalhi, the then Amir of the Gambia jama'at visited the area. The jama'at did not have its mosque those days. Maulana Baddomalhi prompted Alhaj Singateh to donate a part of his plot to the jama'at and he marked that area with his stick for the mosque. Alhaj Singateh complied with Maulana's request. The jama'at members built a small rectangular mosque with mud blocks. This was the mosque where many devotees of the jama'at would have shared their secrets with their Lord.

In about 1990, I felt that with the passage of time the condition of the building had deteriorated, and, by the Grace of Allah, increased membership of the jama'at made the mosque too small. Therefore, a more spacious place was needed where a mosque and Murabbi house could be built. By now a mosque, mission house and beautiful guest house has been constructed.

I was serving as a murabbi in Farafeni those days. I appealed to everyone to contribute in excess of one's capacity for the construction of the mosque. No worthwhile assistance was provided by the centre for building mosques those days and it

was done with financial sacrifice by the jama'at members. I requested all the members, individually and collectively, to partake in this project.

That night a devoted young man Foday Sabali came to see me. He worked as a tailor and took the garments, he prepared during the week, to a weekly market in a nearby town every Saturday. The source of income was quite limited. He said that he wanted to donate some money for the mosque. I expected something like fifty or one hundred Dalasis (the Gambian Currency) from him. However, he presented exactly one thousand Dalasis which I handed over to Dr Khalil Nyangado, the finance secretary. In view of his financial condition, I could not believe it. Rather surprised, just to make sure that he was not mistaken, I asked him if all that was to be receipted. He affirmed and explained, 'I had saved this money for a purpose. When you launched the campaign for mosque today, I thought I will do Allah's job, He will do mine'.

A few days later he met me at the evening prayer. He was very happy. He said, 'Ustaz, Allah has refunded me all the money with profit'. 'How was that?' I asked him. He said, 'I had piled up a lot of prepared garments ready for sale. I took them along several times but did not get any customer. Going to the market today, I took all the garments with me to sell them off at whatever price. While I was still organising my goods, a customer approached me and enquired about the garments. As usual, I told him rather inflated price. He readily agreed, paid for all the garments, picked them up and went. When I calculated I realised that I had made goodly profit and got the fruit of several months' labour in a few moments. Allah, the Almighty, instilled in my heart firmly that it was the result of the deal that I made with Him'.

Blessing of Chanda: Lost Luggage Found

An honourable friend from Senegal, who had been a member of parliament over a long period and had rendered several other services at national level, called Diabite Kabine Kaba came to me one day and said that he had not paid chanda for quite a while. He asked me to calculate the amount due to him as chanda; that I did and he paid the amount. I said *jazakumullah* (May Allah reward you). He said, 'actually I should be saying *jazakumullah* because you prompted me to take part in this good deed, therefore, I should be thankful to you'. Then he left for his town which is about 475 kilometres from Dakar.

Next day he rang me and said, 'jazakumullah'. I asked what for? He replied, 'After setting out for Tambacounda from Dakar yesterday, I reached Gosas by the evening. There I offered *Maghrib* prayer by the roadside, had some dinner and restarted the journey. After about one hour's drive, I asked the driver for my briefcase. The driver searched for it in the car but it was not there. I got very worried. I thought that I forgot it on the spot where I had prayed. So returned to the spot but there was no sign of the briefcase. I was worried a lot but could do nothing but endure it. Next morning somebody rang me and after confirming my identity asked me if I had lost anything. I said yes, I had lost a briefcase that contained an airline ticket for Saudi Arabia, a passport, some important documents and one million CFA (equivalent to 250,000 Pakistani Rupees). He told me that he was an Engineer touring our region and had found a briefcase on the roadside the night before. When nobody answered his

calls, he picked it up, opened it, found the items I had mentioned plus my address and phone number on which he contacted me. He reassured me, told me about the hotel he was staying in where I could collect my briefcase. I could not believe it; the whole scenario looked like a dream. People here take the lost property as a bounty and use it without any qualms. Who was this angelic person who contacted me himself and delivered the goods safely! Then I thought it was the blessing of the *chanda* which I had paid, consequently Allah, the Almighty saved me from the worry and the loss.'

Jama'at should not walk on foot

Dr. Laeeq Farrukh, who was in-charge of Nusrat Jahan clinic in Basse, the Gambia narrated a very beautiful anecdote to me one day. I share it with you.

In the town in Ghana (Swedru) where he served as a doctor there was an elderly Ahmadi called Alhaj (father of Ibrahim bin Yaqub – an Ahmadi muballigh). He walked to the mosque for prayers over several days. One day I asked him, 'Alhaj! Why do you not come by car?' He replied that the car was out of order and he did not have the money to get it repaired. After a while, a jama'at meeting was held in the mosque in which jama'at's Tabligh programme was discussed. Among other things it was mentioned that mission's car had been out of order for quite a while and that was causing problems in Tabligh work. Next day Alhaj bought a new car, brought it to the mission house and presented it to the jama'at for Tabligh work, as a gift.

Later, the Alhaj started coming to the mosque on foot again. The

doctor asked him why he was not coming by car. He replied that the car was out of order and he did not have the money to get it repaired. The doctor reminded him, 'you had said the same before but later purchased a new car and gave it to the jama'at'.

The Alhaji replied, 'My financial condition was not good those days. Then, out of the blue, one of my gardens was sold. I planned to buy me a car with that money. At the same time, in a jama'at meeting it was stated that the Tabligh work had slowed down because of lack of transport. I thought that me walking on foot does not matter but Messiah's jama'at should not walk on foot.'

This saintly figure attended the Jalsa Salana in London once. I went to see him especially. May Allah, the Almighty increase his love and devotion for the jama'at and reward him abundantly for that, Amin!

Chapter: 9

Faith-augmenting journey of Ahmadiyyat

Inspiring story of Doctor Sambou Jan Bah

Blessings of Wasiyyat

The other day while reading the daily Al-fazl I saw the declarations of new Musis (testators). My gaze got fixed on one name as it was very familiar. It was the name of a Gambian youth, Dr. Sambou jan bah I was very happy on his enrolment in the Wasiyyat system. I read the details of his movable and immovable property which far exceeded those of an average Gambian. While it was surprising, it was also very pleasing to note that Allah, the Almighty had enriched our brother with worldly blessings in addition to the religious one.

Introduction: I visualised the life and times of Dr. Sambou Jan bah like a movie. His father lived in a village Yallal Bah near Farafeni. He was a fairly ordinary farmer. He had no issue from his first wife but was blessed with a son from his second wife whom he named Dr. Sambou Jan Bah.

Acceptance of the right religion: Dr. Sambou Jan Bah socialised with Ahmadi friends from his early adulthood. Thereby, Allah, the Almighty opened his heart and he accepted the message of the Imam Mahdi ^{as} wholeheartedly.

Opposition and hostility: When his father came to know, he tried to admonish him softly softly but the young man refused to take his advice. The father tried in several other ways even harshness to turn him away from Ahmadiyyat but in vain. Then he used the ultimate weapon: ‘leave Ahmadiyyat or get out of my house’.

Trust in Allah: Putting his trust in Allah, Dr. Sambou Jan Bah took up the second option and bade farewell to his parents and house. Young, empty handed, disowned by parents, no one else to stand by – it all led to his pitiable financial condition. All the same, he never held out the begging bowl to anyone.

Farming, the Gambian way: It is customary in the Gambia that the poor, the labourers and the jobless people go to different areas during the rainy season, acquire a few acres of land from the landlords and start farming there. The same landlord is responsible for their boarding and lodging. At the time of harvesting the income from the farm is shared between the two according to agreed terms. Likewise Dr. Sambou Jan Bah packed up his luggage and went to a faraway region, acquired a piece of land from a landlord and started farming, that is usually millet and groundnuts.

Reconciliation with the parents: During that period, the two mothers suffered such grief that they cried their hearts out because he was their only son. However, the father was not moved at all. Some of the relatives continued to look for him on behest of the mother. Ultimately the parents came to know his whereabouts and requested him to come back. He agreed to return on the condition that no one meddled in his religious affairs.

Divine succour arrives: There was an Ahmadiyya clinic in Kaur, near Farafeni those days. Our friend, Umar Ali , an Ahmadi muballigh, liaised with the doctor in-charge to have Dr.Sambou jan bah employed there. He had never attended any school. However, he was blessed with intelligence by Allah, the Almighty, therefore, he had acquired some understanding of English by socialising with English speaking friends.

Further progress: In the company of the doctor, he gained the knowledge of English, experience of patient care, general information and ever increasing circle of acquaintance. He learned giving injections. He soon became doctors interpreter and then dispenser. Now he is known as Dr. Sambou Jan Bah in Farafeni.

Last year, on my way from Senegal to the Gambia, I stopped by his private clinic to greet him. I saw a large number of patients waiting for the doctor. As I wanted to go in, I was stopped by a young man saying that the doctor was very busy, therefore, I could not go in. I had no choice but to sit and wait outside. By chance the doctor saw me and took me in. In the evening we met in the mosque. While talking, he repeatedly burst into tears. He mentioned the favours and blessings of Allah, the Almighty and said it was all the fruit of belief in the Promised Messiah ^{as} - faith, honour and worldly gains far more than the rest of family members. What an exposition of انى معين من اراد اعانتك

Bro. Muhamad joni Dibba...Journey to Ahmadiyyat

(Former president of Ahmadiyya Jama'at Farafeni)

Introduction: He was a very sincere and devoted member of the Farafeni jama'at and a very dear friend of mine. He passed away a few years ago. He was equally popular among Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis of Farafeni. He was chief of his town and an influential political and social figure of the area. Allah, the Almighty had blessed him with an imposing and attractive personality.

Acceptance of Ahmadiyyat: With the incursion of Ahmadiyyat in the area, people started talking against the jama'at all around. The opponents started spitting venom against the jama'at. As Mr Dibba was a noble-spirited young man, he listened to all about the jama'at with patience and deliberation instead of getting worked up. When he was satisfied, he performed the bai'at wholeheartedly without any fear. It was his early adulthood. He had not acquired any worthwhile education but Allah, the Almighty had blessed him with wisdom and insight. His father was counted amongst the dignitaries and the town was dominion of the family. Therefore his tribe, because of its political influence and authority, was in the forefront of severe opposition of the jama'at.

Opposition and persecution: When his father came to know of his conversion he got extremely distressed as he thought that the news would become a cause for embarrassment and disgrace for the whole family. His father tried to admonish him; he invoked the matter of family honour saying that it would undermine their worldly and political reputation and honour

but he persevered with his decision. His father tried all possible tactics but in vain. He then disinherited him. Mr Dibba was engaged but not married by then. The father brought about the annulment of the engagement. However, all this oppression and undue hardship, instead of dispiriting him, increased his faith.

After this improper treatment by the family and disinheritance, he picked up an axe and went to the nearby forest. A lot of area in the suburbs of Farafeni was a forest then. He started clearing the forest from one end. According to the then laws of the land, any farmer could clear a part of the forest for his needs and farm therein. That piece of the land became his personal property and he could use it as long as he wanted to but could sell it. He was young, well-built, strong and determined. After a short period, with his continuous hard work, he cleared a sizeable piece of land for his farming. That surprised all the villagers.

Islamic Brotherhood: One day, he declared in the mosque that if any Ahmadi brother needed a piece of land he could take a part of the land prepared by him.

Divine Bounties: He started farming on his own and never held a begging bowl to anyone. Witnessing all that the family realised their fault and reconciled with him but did not join the jama'at.

Because of his family's political influence and his personal nobility and good character he acquired respect in the whole town. He always remained an important member of the town's central social welfare committee. Because of his nobility and honesty, everybody respected him.

Because of his good reputation, he also became the chief of the town. However, he maintained the never-ending relationship of love and devotion with the jama'at and rendered every service to the jama'at with amazing humility and submissiveness.

President of jama'at: He was also the president of Farafeni jama'at. He regarded service to the jama'at as an honour and fulfilled all his duties with sincerity, devotion, passion and gratitude.

Two of his sons are in America; both of them are devoted Ahmadis, by the Grace of Allah.

Mr. Ousman Darboe

In 1988, Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IVth made an historical visit to the Gambia. About the same time, the centre sent three cars to the Gambia mission through the Japanese mission. Drivers were urgently needed for these cars. The driver of the Ahmadiyya Hospital, Saini, told that his nephew, Ousman Darboe had arrived from Guinea-Bissau about the same time; he knew driving but was an atheist. The Amir called him to find that, other than the Guinean language, he could only speak Mandinga. In view of Huzur's visit, a driver was urgently needed, therefore, he was temporarily employed and sent to Hafeez Ahmad Shahid, the murabbi at Georgetown. He accompanied Hafeez Ahmad to many places to prearrange everything for Huzur's visit. During that it was noticed that he was a noble and obedient person and a competent driver. Prompted by Hafeez Ahmad Shahid, he performed bai'at and became an integral part of jama'at workers.

He later worked with Maulana Daud Hanif for a long period and

then with me as a driver. He worked sincerely, faithfully and honestly. Whenever I set out on a tour, I handed him all the money at the start of the journey. He handled all the expenses and accounted for every penny when we returned. I never had any worries in that regard.

The young man who was an atheist got enlightened with Ahmadiyyat; was very hard working, was unlettered, was a foreigner, he learned English and accounts after coming here. Now he is entrusted with many important jama'at responsibilities and is regarded most trustworthy by every jama'at member. He has joined the institution of wasiyyat, ماشاء الله. His uncle (on whose recommendation he was employed as a driver) worked as a driver in the Ahmadiyya Hospital all his life, but remained deprived of the light of Ahmadiyyat and religious and worldly blessings all his life; his children did not achieve anything either. By contrast, the status and honour granted to Ousman by Allah, the Almighty is really a miracle and a shining sign of truth of Ahmadiyyat.

A Christian lady worked with jama'at muballigh, Maulana Mansoor Ahmad Mubashir. She was very virtuous, she performed bai'at and got married to Ousman Darboe. She proved to be a very successful wife. Allah, the Almighty blessed them very nice and virtuous children; they are receiving good education and upbringing and are on the threshold of adulthood. May Allah be their Helper and Guardian and grant them the ability to tread on the path of Ahmadiyyat always, Amin

Brother Malick Gauye

Last year when I was on a tour of Senegal, a very dear friend of mine told me that he had started building a new house in Daker and asked me for prayers. Dakar is one of the most costly cities in Africa and not everybody can afford to build a house in its good area. Anyway I was pleased to hear that and fulfillment of Divine promise of help for those who made sacrifice in the way of Allah made me happier still.

Introduction: There is a local jama'at muallim Ahmad Gauye in Senegal, who hails from Kaolack. In 1998, he sent his younger brother malick gauye to me in Dakar to find some sort of job for him. He was about twenty years old then. I employed him as a servant in the mission house. I found him to be very hard working as well as intelligent in addition to being honest and sincere.

Travel for fulfillment: One day I advised him to look for a job appropriate for his age and qualification as the existing job could be handled by even an elderly person with little education. I said that I did not want him to waste his talents sitting there. I counselled him at length but he was afraid lest he did not get another job and lose the boarding and lodging facility that he enjoyed working with me; that is a great bounty in big towns. I assured him of continued boarding and lodging with me and urged him to look for a job anywhere. Anyway, he bought some goods and went around selling those as a street vendor. Then he realised he was better off doing that job than the earlier one; he had freedom, increased acquaintance and friendship with different people and familiarity with the streets of the town. In his free time, he used to come to the mission house, prayed with us and rendered any other service required by the jama'at willingly.

Suggestion of Wasiyyat: One day I suggested to him that if he wanted affluence he should make a deal with Allah. He asked, 'how?' I explained, 'it is Divine promise that if you spend in the way of Allah, he would reward you ten-fold, so the best way is that you make the Will (wasiyyat)'. He did that the same day and started paying one tenth of his income (CFA 500) honestly and sincerely. It was apparently a meagre amount, but Allah, the Almighty does not look at the face value of the sacrifice but at the intention that underlies it.

Fruits of Divine promise start: After a few months, one of his friends, who worked in the security section of a press, had to go on leave and this young man filled in temporarily. His income doubled and he doubled the chanda accordingly. The owner of the press was impressed by the character, honesty and educational ability of the young man and gave him a better job leading to further increase in his pay. Thereafter, he started paying chanda that was five times the amount that he paid initially. Those days, a non-Ahmadi friend of mine was manager of a bank. I spoke to him and commended the young man to him for employment in his bank. He called him the next day and after a brief interview employed him in the bank. The young man worked diligently and attended several banking related courses with the help of the bank.

Just imagine, he started paying CFA 500 as chanda wasiyyat and now, by the Grace of Allah, he is paying CFA80000 monthly اللهم زد فزد and is thereby inducing faith in Divine promises in other brothers as well. He is also working as central finance secretary of Ahmadiyya Jama'at Senegal.

CHAPTER 10

Some Interesting Dreams

Huzur's Blessed Dream about Senegal

An international trade fare is held in Senegal every two years, in which businessmen from all over the world exhibit their country's products. Millions of people of different colours and races participate in the fare.

Ahmadiyya has had the good fortune of participating in this fare. The only Islamic stall in the whole of the fare is that organised by the jama'at; no other sect or jama'at has had that privilege.

The Amir instructed me to prepare for participation in the fare. We were in the early stages of the preparation when we received a letter from Huzur through Choudhry Hadi Ali, the Additional Wakilut Tabshir, London. It mentioned a dream seen by Huzur in which words – **Dakar, Dakar, Dakar** flowed from his tongue. As planned I reached Dakar accompanied by Dauda Bah, Ibrahim Bah and a driver, whose name I have forgotten. These stalls are like shops with signboards indicating the names of the proprietors. We put up the signboard of Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission.

Ahmadi visitors from Abroad: Only one day had gone by, when a friend Saeed Hodraj came there and said that he was an Ahmadi and was head of a trade delegate from Sierra Leone. I

was pleased to see an Ahmadi brother and invited him in. He came in and after a while asked me if I was aware of Huzur's dream about Dakar. I answered in affirmative. He added that Huzur had written that dream to Amir of Sierra Leone.

Glory be to God! What a remarkable conviction Huzur had about the Divine source of the dream. What loving, sincere and trusting relationship he had with Allah, the Almighty; something an ordinary worldly person cannot conceive of!

An Ahmadi Visitor from Benin: Another person came to the stall and told me that he was an Ahmadi from Benin and was in Dakar for some exams in Dakar University. It was nice to see him too.

Another friend came there; he was from Mali, an Ahmadi and cousin of the muballigh there, Oustaz Moaz Qulbali .

The sale of our books far exceeded the sale in previous years and we were able to deliver the message of truth to thousands. All these chance occurrences were wonderful and unprecedented. Obviously, the manifestations of Huzur's dream had started unfolding.

Arrival of an Ahmadi Ambassador: During the fare, I went to the Embassy of Pakistan and learnt that an Ahmadi Ambassador was expected there. He did arrive after a while. He was very devoted and fond of preaching ماشاء الله.

He told me that he had been appointed as Ambassador to an Arab country, but a political maulvi told the Prime Minister that being a 'Qadiani' my appointment in an Arab country was not appropriate; the maulvi proposed the name of one of his

relatives instead which was approved. That is how the Ahmadi friend got appointed in Senegal. Consequently, he was rather subdued, thinking that his right had been usurped because some countries have more facilities and are financially more rewarding than others. He wrote all that to Huzur for prayers. Huzur advised him to proceed forthwith because that was in fulfilment of his dream. A great revolution has taken place after Huzur's dream; the following incidents are just the beginning.

A Wonderful Dream – Grand Fulfilment: Senegal had been very unproductive for a long period in that many Tabligh efforts there were unsuccessful bearing occasional fruit here and there.

Kaba Jallow - village chief of Sare Mare in Nioro area of Senegal once performed bai'at. That gave me a lot of pleasure and I took pride in telling many people that a village chief in Senegal had become Ahmadi. That clearly depicts the situation regarding Tabligh and its meagre results in those days. One day, a Senegalese muallim came to my house in Farafenni, the Gambia and among other things, he narrated one of his dreams, which was as follows:

'A meeting is taking place in the National Assembly of Senegal in its capital Dakar. The hall is full of dignitaries. The meeting is presided over by an Ahmadi youth named Abdullah from Kaolack'.

I heard his dream and jokingly said, 'Ahmad Ly what are you talking about? You are dreaming big; the ground reality is that even an ordinary person is not prepared to listen to our preaching and you are talking about members of parliament'!

Now see how Allah the Almighty fulfilled his dream:

A few years later, by the Grace of Allah, Assembly members of Senegal started accepting Ahmadiyyat and over a short period, more than forty Assembly Members performed bai'at.

- Complying with Huzur's directive, five Assembly Members came to London to participate in Jalsa Salana UK.
- The same year, again complying with Huzur's directive, twelve Assembly Members participated in Jalsa Salana of Germany.
- I had a meeting with fourteen Members of Parliament in the National Assembly building.
- A delegate comprising of twenty five Members of Parliament participated in the Jalsa Salana of the Gambia; Huzur addressed the Jalsa Salana through MTA.

Visit by Central Representative: Maulana Munir-ud-Din Shams

Additional Wakilut-Tabshir London

Munir-ud-Din Shams, Additional Wakilut-Tabshir London came to the Gambia on official visit. He visited all the jama'ats in the Gambia with me. He had meetings with the executive committees, reviewed their performance and gave them necessary instructions. He held meetings with all the muballighs, reviewed their performance and guided them as necessary.

He visited Nusrat High School, Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School and Tahir Ahmadiyya High School, reviewed administrative matters and gave necessary instructions.

He met some important Government Ministers, delivered Huzur's greetings and discussed some important matters.

Later, we went to Guinea-Bissau where Hamidullah Zafar was working as jama'at murabbi. Shams Sahib addressed a gathering at Farim. There was a fairly large gathering there. Shams Sahib admired Hamidullah's work. He then went to Bissau and reviewed jama'at work there.

It is Easy to Change Rooms but difficult to Change Houses

There was a respectable Christian lady member of Senegalese Assembly, who had been health minister of the country. She had very close contact with the jama'at and was an Ahmadi at heart. One day she said, 'it is easy to shift from one room to another in a house, but transferring from one house to another is fairly difficult. Therefore, it is easy for a Muslim to join Ahmadiyya but moving from Christianity to Islam demands a lot of sacrifice; you have to give up a lot for that'.

I wrote that to Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV^{rh}; Huzur was delighted, admired her sentiments of love for the jama'at and advised her to deliberate before taking any step.

When Maulana Munir-ud-Shams visited the Gambia, Huzur sent special greetings to this Christian lady because of her love for Ahmadiyyat. In compliance with Huzur's directive, on our way

back from Guinea-Bissau, we went to her city, Ziguinchor, delivered Huzur's greetings. She was very pleased with Huzur's appreciation and expressed her good wishes for Huzur.

A Speech in The National Assembly and Leading the Prayers

Ahmad Ly had dreamt of Abdullah Aw addressing the members of the National Assembly. Maulana Munir-ud-Din Shams, the representative from the centre, once addressed the Ahmadi members of assembly in the assembly hall and led Zuhr and Asr prayers, thus fulfilling Ahmad Ly dream to the letter. There were more than twenty-two Ahmadi Members of Parliament in the hall of the National Assembly.

Dream of Honorable Ahmad Mukhtar Ndaw to the Letter

Honorable Ahmad Mukhtar had been a prominent member of Senegal's National Assembly for fifteen years. For participation in the Jalsa Salana of Germany a delegation of Members of Parliament was formed Ahmad Mukhtar was contacted in that regard and he indicated his readiness. He told me that the night before he had seen a strange dream. 'I saw that I am sitting in front of pious person with extremely luminous face and he is praying for me. He is not African and I had never seen him before in my life; he also spoke to me.' He narrated that dream to his driver and his daughter while travelling in a car. The same day he was invited to the Jalsa.

When the delegation arrived Germany, Huzur had come for inspection of the preparations for the Jalsa in May Market, Mannheim. Our delegation was conducted straight to Jalsa Gah.

When Huzur was informed of the delegation's arrival, he came over and shook hands with all the delegates. When Huzur shook hand with Ahmad Mukhtar, he uttered impulsively, 'he is the personage I saw in the dream'. When international bai'at was taking place, Ahmad Mukhtar was seated close to Huzur. After prayer Huzur asked me who that person was. Huzur did not enquire about anyone else.

Ahmadiyyat planted at Bismillah

Tabligh campaign was launched in Faric area of Senegal. There was no Ahmadi there before. Eight muallims were sent there for tabligh. They were instructed to start from a place called Bismillah and spread out to east, west, north and south in groups of two muallims each. Being unwell, I could not accompany them. However, I told them that four days later we would meet at Bismillah, review the situation and chalk out further plan.

Senegal jama'at did not have a car those days; so I reached there by bus. I was received by the muallims alongwith another person. That new person welcomed me very nicely and took me to his house. He entertained me very well and treated me very respectfully. During the conversation, he told me that his name was Ibrahim and that he had planned a trip to Dakar a few days earlier but saw in a dream that some special guests were coming to his house; he told the dream to his wife in the morning and postponed his trip.

After a short while, the muallims also joined us, they delivered the message (of Ahmadiyyat). Ibrahim converted to Ahmadiyyat and through him new avenue opened for spread of Ahmadiyyat in that area.

Ahmadiyyat planted in Sobem

During the Bismillah campaign, two muallims, Dauda Bah and Omar Jallow went to nearby village Sobem early in the morning. They entered the house of the village chief, introduced themselves as Ahmadi muballighs and told him that they had come to him with the message of Imam Mahdi^{as}. The chief said that he was waiting for them. He said, 'after the morning prayers, I lied down and saw in a dream that two persons had come to my house with a Divine message, then I woke up and now you have arrived. Therefore, the dream was true and so is your message and I accept Ahmadiyyat.' His household also entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat with him.

A dream about the death of Zia-ul-Haq

In 1988, I had the good fortune of attending the Jalsa Salana UK as representative of the Gambia mission for the first time. After the jalsa, with Huzur's permission, I went to see my parents in Pakistan for the first time. I had come to the Gambia alone in 1983, my family joined me 1987.

When I returned to London from Pakistan, I met my long standing dear friend Choudhry Rashid Ahmad. He hails from Kharian in Pakistan and is currently living in High Wycombe, UK. When he heard of my arrival, he came to the Fazl mosque and took me to his house. I stayed with him overnight. That night I saw a strange dream that has left a vivid impression on my mind till today.

In the dream I heard a loud voice saying, 'we have got him! we have got him!' I asked, 'who is it that you have got? The voice said, 'one who killed our sheep'. In the dream I interpreted it to

mean Zia-ul-Haq. Then I woke up. I remember the dream scenario and the words exactly. On the breakfast table, I narrated the dream to Choudhry Rashid and he told his wife about that immediately. Then we went to the mosque in Southall. The topic of conversation there happened to be Zia-ul-Haq as well. Rashid Ahmad Sahib mentioned my dream to the friends. Rashid Ahmad then took me back to guest house at the Fazl Mosque. There we learnt, the Zia-ul-Haq's plane was burnt to ashes. We saw that every Ahmadi man and woman was engaged in the praise of Allah, the Almighty for manifestation of His help following the mubahala challenge by Huzur ^{ra}.

A non-Muslim's dream fulfilled

Once we spent a night with Bambou Jobe in the Kossanar area of Senegal. He told me that his maternal uncle named Samba bah lived in a small village nearby and that he was the village chief and an atheist. He hoped that if we went to him and introduced Ahmadiyyat to him he might convert. So Mambou Jobe Oustaz Ahmad Ly and myself went to the village. It was morning. We went to the house of Samba Bah, bamboo Jobe, told him about us and about the jama'at. After hearing that Samba said, 'I have been waiting for you for a long time'. We were greatly surprised; he never knew us, why would he be waiting for us. He explained, 'many have been visiting me and asking me to become a Muslim. However, I once had a dream that I am converting to Islam through a non-African person. Seeing you today, I have remembered my dream, therefore, I will become a Muslim through you'. Then he performed bai'at and declared his conversion to Islam.

CHAPTER 11

Acceptance of Prayers

الدَّعَاءُ مَخَّ الْعِبَادَةِ

Prayer is the essence of worship

وَ إِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ
أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا
لِي وَ لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِئِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ [٢:١٨٤]

[2:187] And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: 'I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.'

Allah, the Almighty has promised his righteous servants that He answers their humble supplications and entreaties. By the Grace of Allah, the Almighty such miracles take place daily in the households of Ahmadis all over the world that reinforce their faith and steadfastness. Some of such faith augmenting incidences of acceptance of prayers are presented herewith.

Some inspiring incidences of acceptance of prayers

A very devoted member of Senegal jama'at, formerly Member of Parliament, is now President of Tambacounda region. The office is equivalent to governorship.

In 1999, when he was Member of Parliament, he had a row with one of the ministers, consequently the President of Senegal refused to give him the party ticket for the next election. He tried his best and used all sorts of contacts in vain and was utterly disappointed.

At about the same time, I told him in detail about the importance of financial sacrifice in the jama'at. He promised to pay £25 monthly. I told him to ponder over it as it was not something impulsive, rather the payments would have to be made regularly. He replied that he was determined to pay regularly, انشاءالله.

The following month he came to Dakar and phoned me to visit him in his hotel as his car had broken down. I went to see him. He opened his briefcase and paid the chanda for the whole year. His sacrifice and devotion surprised me and at the same time pleased me as up till that time no Senegalese Ahmadi had made such sacrifice. Immediately, I faxed a letter to Huzur in which I wrote that in spite of the fact that he was facing problems and had lost the support from his party, he had made such a substantial sacrifice. I received Huzur's reply a week later, saying that he had prayed for him and Allah, the Almighty will bless him with a status higher than before. About two weeks later he rang me to tell that the President had appointed him as his special

adviser – a position with more privileges and greater dignity than that of a member of parliament. Thus Allah, the Almighty fulfilled Huzur’s prayer to the letter.

**God-given Farsightedness of our Beloved Master
Hadrat Amirul-momineen Khalifatul-Masih V – May
Allah strengthen his hands**

I had the good fortune of participating in Jalsa Salana UK from Senegal in 2008. My father in Pakistan was very sick those days. I requested Huzur for leave to go to Pakistan after the jalsa that was granted by beloved master with loving kindness, Alhamdolillah.

As planned I went to Pakistan and after spending my leave period returned to London. Next I had to return to Senegal and had booked the return flight on 24th October. On 22nd October I had mulaqat with Huzur; I went to see him along with my family. On Huzur’s enquiry, I told him about the planned departure to Senegal on 24th October. Huzur told me to stay it bit longer. I told Huzur that I had not been able to go to Senegal for several months therefore wanted to return soon. Huzur, very kindly suggested postponing the booking. I submitted that that was the last date for using the ticket; it would not be valid thereafter and jama’at would have to buy a new ticket, therefore, I would rather use the same ticket. Huzur said, ‘Ok, you may go but take things easy’. Anyway, I took Huzur’s leave, got up to go out. I had just made it to the door, when Huzur called me and asked, ‘Khurshid Sahib, have I given you the ‘Alaisallah’ ring?’ I replied, ‘I have had countless favours from Huzur, but have not received

the ring so far'. Huzur called me back, took out a ring from the drawer, stroked his blessed hand over it and put it on my finger. Then he called my wife and said, 'you too are murabbi's wife' and gave her a ring as well.

After Huzur's courtesy, we returned home in a cheerful and delighted. My flight was due next day. I had done most of the packing already. However, for a journey the packing goes on up to the last minute so I set about the final touches. My departure for Senegal was planned on the third day after mulaqat with Huzur. That very day about 9 O'clock in the morning I experienced pain in my left arm and the back of my left shoulder that kept increasing with time. I informed the Tabshir office in London about this situation. Abdul Majid Tahir Sahib advised me to call the ambulance straightaway and go to the hospital. My wife rang for the ambulance and before she finished the call the ambulance had arrived. May Allah the Almighty reward this government that has provided all possible facilities for its people. The team performed the initial check-up at home, gave first aid and transferred me to the hospital nearby. More detailed examination there showed that it was a serious heart attack with blockage of three arteries. Just imagine, according to the plan, I was to go from London to Lisbon, Portugal and after a few hours' break on to the Senegalese capitol, Dakar. Had I started the journey and suffered en route what would have happened! Stuck in a blind alley!

This is such an unforgettable incident that has made deep imprint on my mind. Everyone who hears that becomes a witness to our beloved imam's relation with Allah, Divine Assistance and Guidance. It appears that Hadrat Amirul-Momineen had had full

perception of what was coming my way. He was trying again and again, to stop me (the naive one) from undertaking this journey to save me from this calamity and because of my ignorance I failed to grasp it. Then I also understood the wisdom underlying the **ليس الله بكاف عبده** ring given by Huzur. May Allah, the Almighty grant our benevolent and loving master a long life, Amin!

Tug of War

The annual sports of Jami'a Ahmadiyya UK were held in Hadiqatul-Mahdi two years ago. Various competitions were taking place between the students. The students and the teachers were lucky that our beloved master graced the event with his presence and encouraged the competitors by watching all programmes with keen interest.

An interesting competition of tug-of-war between the teachers and workers of Jami'a Ahmadiyya was planned. As per directive by Huzur all the teachers were obliged to take part in that. I had suffered from heart disease and was feeling a bit uneasy since that morning. When it was time for the tug-of-war to start and the teams took their positions I faced a dilemma: on the one hand I was not feeling well and on the other hand it was Huzur's directive that all teachers take part. In compliance of the directive, I reached the rope and held the part of the rope in front of me. Just when the competition was about to start, Huzur, (may Allah strengthen his hands) came to me and said that I should not participate and come out. Only God knows how Huzur perceived the condition of my heart. Obviously it is God's gift. I complied with the directive and joined the spectators. The

Jami'a workers got the upper hand. After the competition Huzur said to me amusingly, 'do you think that your team would have won if you were in it'.

Visas issued on Sunday with Allah's Help

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV directed me to bring a delegation of Senegal's Members of Parliament for Jalsa Salana Germany in 1995. This directive was given in July 1995 during Jalsa Salana UK with only a month to go for the Jalsa in Germany. I packed up immediately and set out for the Gambia. From there I went to Senegal and contacted Hon Niak Jong (who was the then Deputy Speaker of the Assembly). By the Grace of Allah, a delegation of twelve members National Assembly of Senegal agreed to go. Being members of the National Assembly and having diplomatic passports they did not require visa to enter France. They assumed that visa for one European country was good enough for most of the other European countries; therefore, they did not require visas for Germany. The agency, from which the tickets were purchased, suggested the same.

We purchased the tickets for Air Portugal and started our journey. At Dakar Airport two different departments checked our documents and granted permission to board without let or hindrance. When we landed at Lisbon airport in Portugal, from where we were to take our flight to Frankfurt, the immigration department there stopped us. The reason: as we did not have the visa for Portugal, therefore, we could not get out of the airport or go to Frankfurt and would be repatriated to Senegal. We argued at length but they would not listen.

It was about 12 midnight, only a few airline offices were open. We spoke to Air Portugal but they would not listen and continued to blame us for the error. We tried our best but in vain. We continued to remonstrate with them till late in the night but they refused to relent. Those moments were very distressing. As I had organised the programme and made all arrangements, I was greatly perturbed. If the delegation could not make it to Germany for Jalsa, in addition to financial loss to the jama'at, it would cause Huzur a great distress, all because of my fault, I thought. Everyone was worried, but only I could know the agony that I was in. Devastated by the situation, I went aside to a solitary place and burst into tears over my helplessness and implored Allah, the Almighty humbly and earnestly, 'O Allah, You are solver of problems, deliver me from this misery'. That had soothing effect on me.

I went back to the office of Air Portugal and told them that:

- “The error was made by your office and not by us because when we purchased the tickets from your Dakar office, we did enquire about the visa requirement and were told that we did not need one; you can confirm that with the person concerned at the Dakar office.
- The officer in-charge checked the documents before permitting us to board. If the documents were not in order, we should have been stopped there. Thus you cannot blame us for the error and the fault lies with your office and your airline staff is responsible for creating all that problem and if repatriated you will be responsible for the consequences.
- The passengers are Members of Parliament and going to take part in an important meeting. You will be held responsible for their non-attendance and compensation for failure of

the meeting.

- You will be liable to pay all the travelling expenses.
- Articles will be written to Senegalese newspapers
- We will bring a lawsuit against you for deception in Senegalese courts.”

That frightened them a bit and they promised to find some solution. Our connecting flight was due at about 9 O'clock next morning. I do not know how they did it, but they contacted the administration the same night and obtained 24-hour visas for us. The next morning a special member of the airline staff accompanied us to Germany. On arrival at the airport, somehow he bypassed the immigration control and brought us out to the luggage. Thus we arrived in Germany safely and, by the Grace of Allah, participated in the Jalsa, Alhamdulillah.

You do not know the etiquettes of shedding tears; that water does wonders though!

Life extended by four days by Allah

A young Arabic teacher, Abdullah Jallow lived in a small village Keur Wali Penda in Passy area of Senegal. He came to Dakar to join a tarbiyyat class there. He had become Ahmadi a short while ago. The tarbiyyat class came to end according to the programme. After prayers, I instructed muallim Mahmood Balde to organise the return of all the participants and returned to the mission house. About midday I was out in the town when I received a call from Mahmood Balde that Abdullah Jallow has not gone back because he was sick. I told Mahmood Balde to take him to a nearby clinic for treatment. After a while Mahmood Balde rang

back to tell me that the doctor had diagnosed Meningitis which could not be treated locally and suggested to take him to the principal hospital; he was sent there immediately. The disease was rampant those days and many people were dying of it within 24 hours of contacting it.

The situation caused me great concern because of the following reasons:

1. Because I did not have any permission for Tabligh in Senegal, the police could even imprison me being 'guilty' of an illegal activity. For tarbiyyat classes and meetings, I had hired a little known premises. Although in Dakar, the house was rather isolated, away from populated area and located in a farm. It had no electricity and the water was obtained from a well. Therefore, nobody knew what was going on there. In this situation, death of the young man could give the opponents an opportunity to take advantage.
2. Abdullah Jallow was a new convert. His death would be taken as a bad omen by the ignorant people of the area – 'he became an Ahmadi, went for tarbiyyat class and died there'. Those who were weak of faith would be affected.
3. Moreover, his death while staying with me would create many problems for me. The police would come into action against our Tabligh activity that was not legally permitted and ban it. I could be exiled. The janaza (funeral prayers), getting certificate from the hospital and many other things would pose problems. I had Gambian passport but my family were staying in Senegal illegally; I was greatly worried about them.

I was driving home and my mind was occupied by countless worrying and frightening ideas. I pulled my car aside and crying uncontrollably I prayed to Allah, the Almighty, 'O Benevolent Master, have Mercy, if his death is revocable, avert it and if it is unavertable, prolong his life by at least four days so that he meets You after reaching home. After a long prayer I set out for home. Lo and behold! When I reached home, I saw Abdullah Jallow sitting in my courtyard and smiling. He said, 'Amir, I am alright now, send me home'. I sent him home with a muallim. His village was about 250 kilometres from Dakar. Thus he went home. In his village, he told all his friends that Ahmadiyya jama'at was really true Divine jama'at. He added that when he fell ill, the Amir helped him a lot.

Four days later, a muallim Yousaf marra rang me to tell that Abdullah Jallow fell ill that day suddenly, he was taken to Kaolack Hospital but he passed away there soon afterwards **انا لله وانا اليه راجعون**. What great Benevolence of Allah, He accepts the prayers of even the weak humans!

Miraculous New Life

Ahmad Ly is a long serving member of the jama'at. He had the good fortune of entering the fold of Ahmadiyya jama'at in 1983. He devoted his life in 1984 for serve the faith and is fulfilling his promise sincerely and faithfully.

A few years back, his young child fell very ill. The sickness became serious so much so that one night he was in agonies of death. It was night time, he lived at fairly long distance from the town, there was no doctor nearby, and he could not afford transport to

the hospital. It was very worrying moment with desperation all around.

During these agonising moments, he laid out the prayer mat and started his lamentations to Allah, with a grieving heart and dozed off during prostration. He saw a dream that an angel presented a paper to Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah strengthen his hands). The paper had list of those who were about to die and on top of the list was his son's name. Huzur looked at the list and with a pen crossed off his son's name. Then he woke up and rushed to his son to see that he had improved a lot, by the Grace of Allah and miraculously recovered soon afterwards.

CHAPTER 12

Some devotees of the Gambia

Alhaj Sir Farimang Singateh

‘Kings will seek blessings from thy garments’

In 1868 or 1869, long before Huzur claimed to be Imam Mahdi, there was severe opposition to the Ahl-e-Hadith in Punjab. When any mullah found out that some Ahl-e-Hadith (Wahabi as they called them) had offered prayers in that mosque, he would have the floor undone or washed. Mohammad Hussain of Batala had returned after finishing his studies under Maulvi Nazir Hussain Dehlvi a short while earlier. Most of the Muslims had very strong feelings against him. Huzur happened to be at Batala where one person persuaded Huzur to go to Maulvi Muhammad Hussain’s house for exchange of views. His father was also there. A large audience was anxious to hear the debate. Huzur sat in front of the maulvi and asked him about his point of view. The maulvi replied, ‘my viewpoint is that the Holy Quran had precedence over everything else followed by sayings of the Prophet ^{saw} and that anything that contradicted the Book of Allah and the Hadith of Messenger of Allah ^{saw} carried no weight.’ Hearing this, Huzur said spontaneously, ‘your belief is reasonable and unobjectionable. Therefore, I see no need for a debate with you’. The crowd went wild and shouted, ‘vanquished!’

The man who took Huzur with him was also furious for 'letting us down'. Huzur was unaffected like a mountain of dignity; he did not care for all that uproar by the people. As he had given up that debate purely for the sake of Allah, during the night, Allah the Almighty expressed His pleasure in a revelation: Thy God is well pleased with what thou hast done. He will bless thee greatly, so much so that Kings will seek blessings from thy garments. Thereafter, in a vision he was shown the kings, not less than six or seven, who were riding upon horses.

(Hayat-e-tayyeba page 31)

Divine Way

When Huzur ^{as} claimed that he had been ordained by Allah, fatwas of disbelief started being declared from all around assuming that they will not stop short of uprooting this humanely planted tree. The agonising situation can be ascertained fully from the writings of Huzur ^{as}.

However, during those difficult times, Allah. The Almighty promised Hadrat Masih Maud^{as} I shall cause thy message to reach the corners of the earth. Not only that, He also gave the news that Kings will seek blessings from thy garments.

Now, think of those difficult circumstances and lack of means at the disposal of Hadrat Masih Maud^{as} and consider the Divine promise. An ordinary worldly person would call it mere madness, however, the divines know otherwise.

If you deliberate on the wording of this revelation, there is special emphasis on the word 'I'. That is to say, Allah, the

Almighty has promised the fulfilment of the mission HIMSELF; that He will create means to achieve the purpose by His unseen hands and that will be far beyond human thinking and planning. And that manifested itself in the form of an interesting, beautiful and inspiring story in the Gambia.

Alhaj Farimang Singateh: the first to verify the Prophecy

Daud Hanif Sahib told me that before his assignment to the Gambia in 1966 he was working in the Tabshir office in Rabwah on a temporary basis. When Britain decided to award independence to the Gambia, four names were under consideration for appointment of its Governor General including that of Alhaj Farimang Singateh. Alhaj Singateh wrote to markaz for prayers; prayers were offered for him. The happy news of his appointment as Governor General were received, while Daud Hanif Sahib was still in Rabwah.

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The prophecy, 'Kings will seek blessings from thy garments' was fulfilled in a magnificent way.

A Blessed Dream

Alahaje Jikini a local muallim was a great scholar and saintly figure blessed with true dreams and visions. He is narrated to have seen the dream. The dream was set in the Ahmadiyya mosque of Farafenni. The mosque was close to the market. There was a tree on the right side of the mosque in the adjoining compound. Most of the friends who had free time used to rest

under the tree after zuhr prayers and would go home after Asr prayers. I am not sure whether the tree is still there or has perished with passage of time.

The Alhaj said that he saw in the dream that he was digging the place. 'I found two golden turbans from there; of these I put one on Alhaj Farimang and the other on myself.' The following day, after the zuhr prayers, the people were sitting and chatting under the tree as usual and listening to the radio as well. It was news time and the first news that the newscaster read was that Alhaj Farimang Singateh had been appointed as the Governor General of the Gambia. Thus Allah, the Almighty fulfilled the dream of Alahaje Jikini in a magnificent way. Alhaj Fariman Singateh often took Alahaje Jikini with him on official tours.

Alhaj Farimang Singateh was born in Georgetown, the Gambia on 10 November 1912. On independence from the British rule in 1966, he got the honour of being the only Gambian citizen to take over as the Governor General of the country. When the country became a republic in 1970, the office was abolished, and the Prime Minister, Dauda Jawara became an executive President. Alhaj died on 9 (19 in Wikipedia) May 1977 in Banjul and was buried with full state honours.

Alhaj was an Ahmadi Muslim, by the Grace of Allah, and was president of the Gambia Jama'at. A street in the capital Banjul, was named in his honour.

Alhaje Ibrahim Jikini

Those were early days of Ahmadiyyat in the Gambia and opposition was at its climax. Jama'at was under attack from all

directions. The religious leaders organized a meeting in which a programme to combat Ahmadiyyat in an organized way was hatched. Accordingly, Alahaje Jikini and another religious scholar Alahji Fadera were sent to the Ahmadiyya mission. Alahaje Jikini had prepared forty questions which he thought could not be answered by the Ahmadis. The consequent defeat will disgrace the jama'at throughout the country.

The delegate came to see Maulana Muhammad Sharif, the then Amir of the Gambia Jama'at. They were offered drinks but they refused. They started putting forward their objections. Maulana Sharif started answering the questions calm and patiently in the light of Quran and Hadith. He had dealt with only a few of the questions, Alahaje Jikini listened to these sound, satisfactory, logical and irrefutable answers. As he was inherently good natured and virtuous, the explanations untwined the cords of his heart, he took the oath of allegiance sincerely and entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

Severe Opposition: The news was no less than a bolt of lightning for the religious scholars and especially for his household as the whole tribe had placed high hopes in him. The household tried everything to bring him back from the right path. All his brothers and sisters, his dear ones and near ones and the renowned scholars and chiefs tried every conceivable trick. However, neither love nor temptations or fear could shake his conviction.

Then, everything changed dramatically. Love changed to hatred, friends became foes and the family distanced themselves. The dear ones and near ones who would previously lay down their lives for him turned into deadly enemies. According to the family

there were only two options: leave the jama'at or face death. They tried their level best for the former but failed and gave up all hope; thereafter they planned to kill him.

Once Alhaj recognized the truth, he started its propagation straightaway. Not contented with only that, he devoted his life and spent all his life propagating the faith sincerely and with righteousness.

Elder brother's plot to kill: Alahaje Jikini was sent to Basse as a muallim. The family were in a state of intense anger. His elder brother wrote a letter to a relative who lived in a village near Basse. Those days teaching of English language was not common and those who knew Arabic corresponded in Arabic. Therefore, elder brother of Alahaje Jikini wrote the letter in Arabic. The relative to whom the letter was written did not know Arabic. It happened so that nobody in the whole village knew enough Arabic to read that letter. The man took the letter and set out for Basse early in the morning. On his way he met Alahaje Jikini and after exchange of greetings, he requested him to read out the letter to him. In the letter, the elder brother had written to this relative: As you all know, our brother has become a Qadiani, as such he is an infidel and is a disgrace for the whole family; he is working as a muballigh of that jama'at in your area, get him murdered there somehow or the other. Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini read out the whole letter, word for word, to that relative and said, 'here I am, murder me'. At this, he reproached the elder brother. Thus, Allah, the Almighty miraculously destroyed the wicked plan of the enemies through his special Grace.

Murder plan in Farafeni and Divine support: In spite of country

wide opposition Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini continued his preaching activity day and night. While he was in Farafeni for the preaching, the opponents planned in a meeting that one person from each tribe should be selected and then all of them should jointly kill Alhaji, thus no one person would be held responsible; all the details of the plan were settled. It so happened that one of them went to the shopkeeper Pa Jafnee who had not converted yet but was convinced of the truth of Ahmadiyyat at heart. During the conversation, the topic of jama'at and Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini cropped up. Inadvertently, he blurted out that plans to dispose off Alhaj had been finalised and he would be assassinated on such and such day. Pa Jafnee immediately informed president of Farafeni jama'at, Ba Sheikhou Dibba who reported to the police. The chief constable, who was an honest person and a gentleman, immediately called Pa Jafnee and recorded his statement. Then he called the person who had disclosed the secret and subjected him to rigorous interrogation. He gave the names of all those who were involved in the plot and the chief constable called all of them to the police station. They pleaded guilty and the chief constable warned them that if the Alhaji came to any harm anywhere you would be the first to be charged. Thus Allah, the Almighty, through His special Grace, saved Alhaj from their dangerous designs and all the enemies were unsuccessful.

انى مهين من اراد اهانتك

Allah, the Almighty has jealous regard for His servants. Once, Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini along with some other Ahmadi friends went to Bansang area for preaching. When the Alkali (village chief) heard of that, he was very furious and told Alhaj to get out of that village immediately and added, 'let me not see you again in this area'. Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini responded spontaneously, 'Allah,

the Almighty will not leave you capable of seeing us'. After a while the Alkali lost his eyesight, and thus Allah, the Almighty fulfilled the words of Alhaj in a marvellous way.

Calling towards Allah – jealous regard for faith

Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini was madly fond of calling towards Allah. Allah, the Almighty had endowed him with special expertise in ilm-al-kalam (science of discussion). He used to overwhelm the question/answer meetings. In addition to the Quranic verses, he quoted the Hadith ad-lib in a way that gave the impression that he was hafiz of Quran as well as Hadith. He had jealous regard for the jama'at. It was inconceivable that somebody raised an objection against the jama'at and he would not respond. His speech was always an inseparable part of any jama'at meeting. One could not imagine a jalsa without his speech. He used to represent jama'at in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau jalsas in addition to that in the Gambia. The audience were greatly impressed by his speeches. Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini had many admirable qualities. **متين طبع**. His life was devoid of formalities. He dealt everyone with love and sincerity. Allah, the Almighty had blessed him with an honourable position among friends and strangers. Even the opponents recognised and confessed his admirable qualities.

Death: The terminal sickness of Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini started during Ramadan and he met his Lord a few days before Eid-ul-Fitr. From the day he performed the bai'at to his last moment he remained occupied with service of faith. People from all over the country, Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis came to offer their condolences, From among the dignitaries, in addition to many government officials, the Regional Commissioner also came and paid his tribute to Alhaj Ibrahim Jikini

Oustaz Yobi Bah

Remembrance of an Angelic Friend who was in love with the Mahdi of the age

A simple and plain young man, wearing ordinary slippers, hair seldom touched by comb wearing a simple African cloak that had not known ironing, however fostering such a deep relationship of love with Hadrat Imam Mahdi ^{as} and his blessed khalifas that he carried some book of the Promised Messiah ^{as} with him all the time, recited the Holy Quran or was on a prayer mat in some mosque or engaged in Tabligh with someone— that was Oustaz Bah Yobi. He was indeed a world apart from millions of people well-dressed with high class attires but unfamiliar with pure heart's blessing that was beyond expectation and mercy that was unparalleled.

Oustaz Yobi Bah belonged to the Gambia's well-known Fulani tribe. Like his ancestors, he also belonged to the well-known Tijaniyya sect in Senegal and the Gambia. He received his early religious teaching from schools of the same sect; therefore, he was well-versed with Arabic language. Allah, the Almighty had blessed him with proficiency in several languages. Therefore he could speak English, Mandinka, Fula, and Wolof and used to perform the duty of an interpreter elegantly for speeches during the Gambia's Jalsa Salana.

Introduction to Tijaniyyah

Tijaniyyah is widespread in several African countries. It was founded by Sheikh Ahmad al-Tijani. He was born in Ain Madhi, Algeria in 1737. Most of the population of Senegal and the

Gambia belong to this sect. The followers of this Tariqa have split into several small groups. Some of the well-known khalifas and their centres are in Kaolack. One of them was Abdoulaye Niass. After his death, the group has split into two groups – one with its centre in Madina Baye Niass and the other in Yasan in the same city; the former is more powerful. Chenab, Madina gounas, Nioro and tiwaoun are centres of other Tijani khalifas. Considering the number of its followers, the sect has the potential to be the strongest group in the country, but because of mutual differences and internal rift they have failed to get the political influence in the country.

Mode of Teaching in Religious Schools

Parents hand over their children to the Arabic teachers. The children lit up a bonfire, by burning a heap of wood, sit around it and memorise their lessons. Their book consists of a plank of wood on which the teacher writes chapters of the Holy Quran, which the students memorise loudly, and rocking back and forth, as we memorised the multiplication charts at the primary schools; rocking more than memorising!

With dawn approaching, all the students spread out in groups carrying their bowls, knock at every door and call out loudly, (in the name of Allah). Whatever the householder gives them is presented to the teacher honestly. Any student who does not present the specified cash or commodity to the teacher because of his negligence is held accountable.

Arabic Teachers

The students do not learn much over a long period but perform

the duty of earning livelihood for the teacher and his household very well. Thus, larger the number of students a teacher has, better off he will be financially. Therefore, these teachers regarded the western style education a deadly poison for Islam and counselled the parents accordingly lest their innocent children fell victims to the ferocious and evil influence of Atheism or Christianity. However, by the Grace of Allah, because of modern style of teaching and awareness the old inhuman system is on its last legs.

Ironically, there was a time when the teachers from these countries would not like to hear the name of a European as 'these anti-Islamic elements posed grave spiritual and religious dangers'. However, goodness knows what beauties the same scholars have now discovered in European nations that they have fallen madly in love with them and for superior spiritual upbringing of their next generation they are using all tactics to get them settled in their holy environment! Nowadays, the descendants of these African spiritual guides, using their financial and political contacts, have got themselves well entrenched in Europeans countries.

Acceptance of Ahmadiyyat

Worship and Religious Exercise: He had a loving relationship with congregational prayers. During early days, when he was the only Ahmadi in his village, he used to walk to Farafeni to join congregational prayer there. He happily rendered his services for dars.

Persistence with Tahajjud Prayer: He offered tahajjud prayers regularly. Once I sent him on a tour of Kaolack in Senegal. I

arranged his stay with a non-Ahmadi friend Mr Faal. After a while I went to Senegal and met Mr Faal; he told me that of all the Ahmadis that he hosted, this guest was unique. I asked him, 'how'? He said, 'notwithstanding the late hours that he may go to bed, he gets up for tahajjud without fail'.

Translation of Huzur's Khutbaat: Once I assigned to him the duty of translating the khutabas of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV ^{ra} in local language. I saw him performing ablution at 9 in the morning, one day. When I enquired why was he performing ablution at that time, he replied, 'I have read somewhere that when translating the words of a spiritual leader, one must be in that state and should also seek Divine forgiveness (*istighfar*) and pray because translation is a very delicate job that carries a lot of responsibility, lest one fails to convey the intended meanings of the sayings'.

Teaching of Quran: He was the only Ahmadi in the village. He used to teach the Holy Quran to some youth. In addition, he continued to do ta'lim and tarbiyyat work in the jama'ats nearby like Farafeni and Duta Bulu voluntarily over a long period. Consequently, the youth were greatly impressed by his high morals and good model. *Jazahumullah ahsanal jaza'*.

Jama'at established in Yalal Bah: His continuous efforts and prayers bore fruit and, by the Grace of Allah, all the youth gradually entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat and a devoted jama'at was established in his village. Later a mosque was built there. It is a fact that, after the Grace of Allah, it was the fruit of day-and-night efforts and prayers of Yobi Bah.

Zeal for preaching: Yobi Bah was ardently devoted to the jama'at. He named one of his sons Bashir-ud-Din after the name of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih II ^{ra}. He was very simple by nature. He treated everyone affably and respectfully. He delivered the message of truth everywhere as and when appropriate. Over a long period, he carried out the sacred duty of Tabligh and tarbiyyat in the Gambia jama'at, with sincerity and devotion in most effective way. Likewise, he was in the forefront of Tabligh jihad in the neighbouring Senegal and Guinea etc. I had the opportunity to serve the jama'at as a murabbi at Farafenni and met him almost daily. He used to come to my house daily and had a very loving relationship with members of my family.

Devoted his Life: When I first went to the Gambia as a murabbi in 1983, I noticed that he had only one purpose in life and that was to serve the jama'at in ta'lim and tarbiyyat and ta'lim-ul-Quran all the time like a murabbi. Allah, the Almighty granted him the good fortune of offering himself for waqf. That was probably in 1987. Then he served the jama'ats at various places in the Gambia in Ta'lim and tarbiyyat according to the Amir's directives.

Tabligh in Guinea-Bissau: In 1992 Amir Sahib sent Oustaz Yobi Ba to the neighbouring country Guinea-Bissau (that was under the administration of the Gambia mission then) for Tabligh. He worked hard diligently and fervently there. Pleased with his performance, Amir Sahib proposed his name for participation in UK Jalsa Salana to Huzur, which he kindly approved.

Tragic death: The Amir called him back from Guinea-Bissau and started preparations for him to go for Jalsa Salana UK. The Amir,

Daud Hanif Sahib and I were in Dakar for some important jama'at matters. One day we rang Banjul mission from there to learn that Yobi Sahib fell ill suddenly that day and passed away. أَنَا اللهُ وَأَنَا أَلِيهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Impressions of non-Ahmadis: His death was so sudden and unexpected that the news took quite a while to sink in. I had spent a long time with him. Allah is my witness, I never saw him quarrelling with anyone. He treated everyone, Ahmadi or non-Ahmadi with love and sympathy. Even if a non-Ahmadi jested him harshly, he would smile and ignore it. That is why, we saw everyone grieved with sad face and tearful eyes. Everyone was full of praise for his excellent qualities. Most of the non-Ahmadi friends joined us in the janaza (funeral) prayers of this saintly personage.

Imam Alieu bayo

Talking about a Darvesh being a personal witness to acceptance of his prayers and his Relationship with Allah

In 1983, I went to Basse (a town situated about four hundred kilometres from the Gambian capital Banjul) accompanied by Maulana Daud Hanif Sahib – Amir of the Gambia. There I met a few jama'at members including a saintly figure of Alieu Bayo. Bilali appearance, tall, strongly built, with signs of prostration on the forehead, approximately fifty years of age as suggested by streaks of grey hair – that was Alieu Bayo He was resident of a village called Dampha Kunda situated about two kilometres from Basse.

He belonged to well-known religious tribe Jahanki. They have

monopoly on religious teaching and order (system of *murshids* and *murids*). Let alone the poor Africans, if you happen to visit France you will find many full-bodied, bearded men wearing African dress and a traditional cap, swiftly fiddling with the beads of rosary. They have come there in pursuit of their amulet-related business. Many beautiful, multi-storeyed buildings in the Gambia vouch for the success of their business. Surprisingly many well-educated French people get entrapped by their deception. Most of such *murshids* and *murids* belong to this tribe.

However, Allah, the Almighty works in mysterious ways. In keeping with *يخرج الحي من الميت* He lit the hearts of many fortunate and angelic souls with such light of faith and insight that enlightened many dead souls with guidance.

Barefoot Fanatic

I particularly noticed that he was walking around barefoot. I was greatly surprised and asked Daud Hanif Sahib about him and I was told that he did not use shoes. Consequently, the skin of his feet had hardened so much that stones and thorns did not hamper his resolve. I thought that it was possibly because of poverty but I later found out that, by the Grace of Allah, he was in the forefront of the *jama'at* in financial sacrifice.

Religious Knowledge

As already mentioned, his family belonged to a learned tribe in the country. Therefore, Alieu Bayo was well versed with the knowledge of Quran and Hadith. In addition to reading Arabic, he was proficient in speaking and writing in Arabic.

A wonderful incidence of Divine Support

In August 1983, on the request of imam Alieu Bayo the Basse jama'at organised a Tabligh programme in his village Dampha Kunda. Such meetings were held at night those days as most of the people were busy with their farming. Therefore, the meetings started after isha and continued till late in the night. We reached the village in the form of a small delegation including Dr Naseer-ud-Din, in-charge of Ahmadiyya Medical Centre, Basse, Omar Sonko and some other members. We started the jalsa in an open place in the neighbourhood of Alieu Bayo Speeches were delivered on various topics followed by an interesting session of questions and answers. However, a young man from the same village, who had probably settled in Germany tried to disrupt the meeting in a vulgar manner using extremely uncivilised and indecent language that dissipated the atmosphere. Some gentlemen from the village intervened to put an end to it and suggested that, as it was getting quite late, we should bring the meeting to a close. The situation caused us a lot of distress. We called for the closing prayer. The people requested us to pray for rain as it had not rained for many days and the farmers were very worried. We started our supplications collectively; those present also joined in. That young man and his companions left angrily. After the prayers we set off for Basse. Allah the Almighty manifested His Omnipotence, he heard the entreaties of our distressed hearts. We were still short of our destination, when it rained so heavily that our homeward journey became difficult. Thus we saw the fulfilment of Divine promise **اذا سالك عبادى عنى** **فانى قريب** with our own eyes. The sudden appearance of clouds of Divine Mercy enhanced our faith and the villagers also

witnessed the wonderful and inspiring scene of Divine support for the Ahmadiyya Jama'at.

When we reached the house of the doctor after midnight we were very tired. The doctor sahib said that it was quite late and advised us to sleep at his place; we did that. When I emerged from the house early next morning, I noticed a young man sitting outside the clinic with a small girl. When I looked carefully, I realised that he was the same young man who had used indecent language in the meeting the night before. After exchange of greetings, I asked him the reason for his coming so early. He also recognised me and appeared very shamefaced. He replied that during the night his daughter fell very ill and consequently the whole household spent the night in agony. Therefore, 'I have brought her to you for treatment'. I went in and told the doctor about him. It was not yet time to start the clinic but Doctor Sahib, May Allah reward him abundantly, opened the clinic before scheduled time, examined his sick daughter amicably and gave her the treatment. He never suggested to him (by words, action, gesture or style) his folly and indecency the night before. As he had returned from Germany, he was financially well off and tried to pay for the treatment. However, the doctor declined to accept any money and thus presented a brilliant example of excellent morals of the jama'at and practical demonstration of jama'at's motto, 'love for all, hatred for none'.

فجزاه الله احسن الجزاء-

On the other hand, the condition of that young man was worth watching. He was extremely ashamed of his behaviour the night before. He admitted that he 'had committed an error for which Allah had punished' him. He apologised repeatedly. May Allah

have mercy on him and forgive him, Amin!

Thus the Ahmadi brethren of Basse jama'at witnessed two wonderful incidents of Divine support during the same night.

Tarbiyyat of Children

Imam's younger brother was named Ebrima Bayo. He was fifth year student in a Primary School. He was a pious boy since early age. He used to come from his village for juma prayers with his father. They say, 'a precocious child shows the man inside him'. At this tender age this pious little soul decided to have a copy of the Holy Quran instead of toys.

One day the boy came to Basse mission house and wanted to buy a copy of the Holy Quran with English translation. Considering his age, financial condition and academic status, I told him that the Quran would cost five Dalasis and offered to give him some other book free because that amount was a bit too much for a child. Rather surprised, I asked him wherefrom did he get that amount. He told me, 'I used to help my father with farming and he has given me that as prize money. I had already decided to buy copy of the Holy Quran as and when I had the money. Now that I have got it, I have come straight for the Quran, and that is what I will have.' Without any delay, he took out the five-Dalasi note and put it in my hand. I was greatly impressed by his passion. Later over a long period, whenever I visited their house I found the copy of the Holy Quran on the table in his room.

Privilege of serving the jama'at

Allah's Grace, Imam's good company, his tarbiyyat and prayers

bore fruit. All his children are very devoted and sincere, by the Grace of Allah. In particular, Allah the Almighty developed the pious child who took the Quran into a unique gem – he is now gracefully serving as the Principal of the well-known educational institution, Masroor Ahmadiyya Senior Secondary School. كان الله معه

Death

A few years ago this dervish passed away, leaving behind a legacy of blessings of Ahmadiyyat, sincerity and devotion (resulting from his ta'lim and tarbiyyat) for his children. May Allah, the Almighty grant him high ranks in paradise, Amin!

Ustaz Abubakar Touray Shaheed

When I arrived in the Gambia for the first time, Abubakar Touray worked in the office of the Amir. After elementary education in the Gambia, he went to Ghana for religious education; he spent three years there. After his return, he served as the right hand man for the Amir.

He belonged to a very sincere and devoted jama'at of the Gambia at Saba. His elder brother, Ismael Touray was probably the first Ahmadi in his village. The family had made many sacrifices for the jama'at in the region.

His first marriage was solemnised with a lady who lived in my town. He used to visit her frequently. One day he came to me rather worried. He told me that he had a strange dream in which he was reciting *أنا شأنك هو الابر*. 'From that I understand that I will have no issues', he said. He tried to reassure him. Then it so

happened that he separated from that lady, married a second time and was blessed with a son by Allah, the Almighty.

He was very devoted, hardworking and well versed in account keeping. He used to serve as interpreter during Khutbas and Jalsa speeches amicably. He had the good fortune of serving in Guinea-Bissau for some time.

He died quite young in a car accident. اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَاَنَا لِيَه رَاجِعُونَ May Allah grant him forgiveness and be a Helper of his progeny.

Ismael Trawally Shaheed

He was a dervish-like, lovely and devoted young man. He belonged to a well-known Gambian jama'at at Salikenni. After his preliminary education in his village, he went to Ghana for religious education and returned from there after three years. He served in several jama'ats as a muallim.

He was contended young man; was sociable and sympathetic to everyone and an excellent muballigh.

Once he learnt that a muallim had criticised the *Nizam-e-Jama'at* because of his personal weaknesses. It distressed him a lot; he went to the muallim who was older than him and advised to desist from such talk because it creates disturbance in the jama'at. He told him that he was behaving like the sons of the Khalifatul Masih I^{ra} and should be aware of their end.

He was stationed at Farim, Guinea-Bissau as a muallim and was discharging his duties in an excellent manner. One early morning he was preparing to set out on a Tabligh tour. He had a motorcycle which caught fire and burnt most of his body. He spent a few

days thereafter in a critical condition but succumbed to it ultimately. كل من عليه فان ويبقى وجه ربك ذو الجلال والاكرام
May Allah, the Almighty grant him high ranks in the heaven, Amin!

Sana Cham Shaheed

I arrived in the Gambia for the first time as a murabbi in 1983. Our mission was located in a narrow street in Banjul. Daud Hanif Sahib was the Amir then. He had a small scantily furnished office which could hardly accommodate four chairs in addition to a simple chair for the Amir. I saw a young Gambian man coming to the mission. He had only one arm. He was introduced to me as Mr Sana Cham; he lived in Sukuta town and was a teacher in a school. I observed that he came to the mission house almost daily and continued to work for the jama'at till late in night. The transport system was very problematic those days and the journey to and fro probably took a minimum of two hours. It was difficult to figure out how and when he reached his house. It appeared that he had devoted himself to the jama'at. He had the honour of being member of the executive council uninterrupted. He was Sadr Majlis Ansarullah for a long time and had the good fortune of serving well.

He never let anyone realise that he only had one arm. He was a brave and courageous person and was in the forefront of every activity. He was in-charge of the finance department of the jama'at. He performed all his duties diligently.

Credit of Ahmadiyyat in Guinea-Bissau

Sana Cham used to visit Guinea-Bissau quite often. He had contacts with all sections of the society. He was greatly interested

in politics and had personal relations with many ministers. He was very fond of Tabligh. Ahmadiyyat was planted in Guinea-Bissau through him; it later grew into a big tree.

Army Chief of Guinea-Bissau

One of his near relatives, Mr Mane, was chief of staff of the armed forces in Guinea-Bissau. Once Amir Sahib and myself visited him accompanied by Sana Cham. He treated us with great respect; he used to send meals to us in the hotel we were staying in. Later he was killed during a military coup.

Fatal Accident

He was chairman of Humanity First (the Gambian Chapter) over a long period. One day as he stood outside the Computer training college a car ran into him causing spinal fracture. Because of inadequate facilities in the Gambia he was brought to Senegal. I had the opportunity to look after him and serve him. He did not live very long and died as a result of the accident. During his terminal stage, I always found him smiling. What a wonderful man he was! May Allah grant him Jannah, Amin!

Loving kindness of Khalifatul Masih ^{ra}

Huzur always showed regard for the devoted workers of the jama'at. Huzur had particular compassion for Sana Cham. He arranged for him an artificial limb under his personal supervision.

One of his sons is studying at Jam'ia Ahmadiyya UK. May Allah grant him the ability to follow the footsteps of his father, Amin!

Dr Khalil Nyangado of the Gambia

In Farafenni, the Gambia, lived a very pious, righteous and prayerful doctor regular in the five daily prayers named Khalil Nyangado. He passed away a few years ago.

In all the African countries that I have been familiar with, as far as I know, he ranked among those who were at the forefront in making extraordinary financial sacrifices for their faith. In addition to the obligatory chandas he paid Zakat according to the prescribed rates. Moreover, he paid all the interest that he received from the bank to the jama'at.

May Allah, the Almighty grant the Khalifa multitude of devoted and faithful disciples and may we continue to receive the maximum blessings of khilafat forever, Amin!

Bro. Alieu Bah

He was one of the early members of the jama'at. He was, by the Grace of Allah highly educated and held the post of Chief Customs Officer of the Gambia. In recognition of his excellent national services he was awarded the title of 'Justice of Peace'. He was very noble and simple by nature. In spite of being the head of such an important department his personal life was very simple. From the very beginning he served the jama'at in various capacities such as Financial Secretary, member of the central executive committee and National President of the jama'at. There was a small mosque built in his compound; Mir Masood Ahmad Sahib had laid its foundation stone.

Baba F Trawally

The current Amir of the Gambia also hails from Salikini jama'at. He is a very hard working man. He moved from Salikini to Banjul for education at higher school level at an early age. He came in contact with the jama'at there and being inherently virtuous he recognized the truth and performed bai'at. He remained the only Ahmadi in his family for a long time. Only recently his brother has also performed bai'at. He later went to America for further education. On returning from there, he started his job in the customs department and rose to the highest post. As regards the service to the jama'at he has been Sadr Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya, Afsar Jalsa Salana, Secretary Maal, National President and latterly Amir Jama'at.

A non-Ahmadi acquaintance of mine of Pakistani origin who is doing business in the Gambia once told me that he was much impressed by our Amir who 'is a very virtuous person'. He told me that one day he went to the Amir's office in the customs department. He said, 'I observed that unlike other employees in the section who hanker after money, the Amir was engaged in recitation of the Holy Quran. I told the Amir that a member of his jama'at owes me some money but he keeps dilly dallying and I requested the Amir for his help. The Amir picked up the phone straight away and rang the person concerned and told him to pay up immediately and ring him back to confirm. The man paid me the same day.'

By the Grace of Allah, the jama'at is taking big strides under his leadership. The Guinea-Bissau jama'at is also under his supervision.

Ba Sekou Dibba

He was a well-known saintly figure of Farafenni. He served as president of the jama'at for a long period. He was a very devoted and faithful friend. I never saw him coming late for any salat; he always came to the mosque early. He was regarded as one of the leaders of the town. When he died, one non-Ahmadi commented, 'one pillar of the town has broken'.

Pa Muhammad Jagne

He lived in Lamin near Banjul. He was employed in a school. He was very good-natured and pious man. Although financially straitened, in making financial sacrifices he always stayed at the forefront. Humility was deeply rooted in his nature. Responding positively to jama'at's calls had become his second nature. May Allah have mercy on him, Amin!

Salifu Keita

Salifu Keita was also one of the elders of the jama'at. He was an educated person. He was very humble person. He was headmaster in a primary school. He lived in a village located on the other side of Brikama, long way away from the mosque; he used to come for jumaprayers regularly from there.

Imam Ismail Touray

Saba jama'at in the Gambia is well known for its devotion. That is the place from where Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IVth launched the second phase of the Nusrat Jahan Scheme. Saba jama'at was founded by Ismail Touray who used to teach in the village. When he accepted Ahmadiyyat, all his students, impressed by his good

character, followed suit. The jama'at faced many hardships but they stood firm and their generations too are sincerely attached to Khilafat.

Imam Arfang Trawally

Salikini is counted amongst the biggest villages of the country. There too, by the Grace of Allah, a very devoted jama'at is established. The Jama'at has witnessed many periods of opposition. All the Ahmadis there stood firm in their faith. Many members of the Banjul jama'at have their roots there. Imam Arfan Trawally is the motive force behind this jama'at. In Mandinka, Arfang means a scholar. His services in establishment of the Salikini jama'at are outstanding. He is a very sincere and devoted person. He had written several poems in Mandinka on the truth of the Promised Messiah ^{as} that were recited during the Jalsa Salana which the audience listened very enthusiastically. This jama'at produced many servants of the jama'at.

Sekou Omer Dibba

Sharif Dibba was the Deputy to the former President of the Gambia, Dawda Jawara. He later left Dawda Jawara's government because of political differences and formed his own political party. His younger brother, Sekou Dibba accepted Ahmadiyyat during his student days. The whole family opposed Ahmadiyyat, but this young man stood firm on the truth. He had the good fortune of serving the jama'at in various capacities such as member of the executive council, Administrator of Ahmadiyya Hospital and several other offices. One of his sons, Abdullah

Dibba is studying at the Jami'a Ahmadiyya UK. May Allah grant this family the opportunity to render outstanding and acceptable services to the jama'at, Amin!

Sidi Muktar Hydara

Sidi Muktar Hydara was once President of Georgetown Jama'at. Originally from Mauritania he had settled in the Gambia long time ago. The family is highly esteemed in the country. His wife, named Zainab was the sister of the former President Dawda Jawara. She was a very devout lady. Sidi Muktar was one of the founding members of the Georgetown jama'at and local imam. He was well versed with Arabic in addition to Mandinka, Fula, Wolof and English languages. He performed the duty of interpretation during jalsas and gatherings very well.

Abubakar Fatimi

Keba Fatimi lived in Kerewan. He was the only Ahmadi in the village. The nearest jama'at was in Saba; he used to go there every Friday for prayers. He had reserved one room in his house for jama'at guests. Whenever we went visiting jama'ats in that area, we stayed there. He was a very sincere friend. He has passed away now. May Allah's Mercy be on him always, Amin!

Alhaj Lamin Jawara

Alhaj Lamin Jawara hailed from Brikama. He was blessed with the good fortune of performing bai'at during his student days. He received higher education in England. He was appointed as director of an important government department GPMB. He also rendered jama'at service to his level best in the capacity of

Secretary Maal, General Secretary, Afsar Jalsa Salana and more. He was the first fortunate Gambian to visit Qadian. He also went to Pakistan on an official visit and was the guest of jama'at in Lahore. He also went to Rabwah and met Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih III ^{ra}. He also performed Hajj, something that very few could do.

He had family relations with the former President Dawda Jawara. After the army takeover, he was in trouble and passed through a very difficult period. When he got the opportunity he migrated to Canada. He is busy serving the jama'at in Canada too.

Alhaj Ebrima Mboe

He is a very devout member of the Gambia Jama'at. He is well-educated and received higher education in USA. He served as principal in educational field. He also had the good fortune of serving the jama'at in various capacities such as member of the executive council and the deputy Amir of the Gambia jama'at.

Once a person from his tribe deserted the jama'at and many leading members approached Ebrima Mboe to follow suit. Alhaji Ebrima rejected their suggestion point blank and argued that the person who had deserted probably had different reasons to join the jama'at in the first place. Thus they turned back unsuccessful.

Chapter: 13

Some Devoted Members of Senegal

MR. HAMAD BAH - A Fearless Preacher

Mr Hamad Bah is a fearless and courageous Ahmadi, by the Grace of Allah. He has spent most of his life travelling. It has become his second nature to deliver the message of Ahmadiyyat to everyone who comes across.

He wears his African cloak all the time and carries a gun and a cutlass under the cloak even in his old age. One day our local muallim, Hamid Mbye went to preach a pir in his region. The pir could not answer him. His disciples got hold of our muallim and tried to kill him. Hamad Bah moved away a bit and pointing the gun to the pir and shouted, 'you touch our muallim and I will shoot your pir'. That frightened them and they let go the muallim.

Many people at several places in Senegal have been blessed with Ahmadiyyat through his Tabligh. Because of old age, he has become very weak now. May Allah grant him a long and healthy life! He is, by the Grace of Allah, an historical figure and a hero of Ahmadiyyat in Senegal.

First Senegalese Muallim

The first Senegalese muallim is named Ustaz Hamid Mbye. His

ancestral village is located at the Senegal Mauritania border. He belongs to a well-known Fulani tribe – Tukolor of Senegal.

He received his religious education in the elementary madrasas of his area initially and in higher madrasa in Dakar later on. He gained proficiency in Arabic writing and speech. He is a scholarly person. After completing his studies he started teaching in a school in Dakar.

In the Fold of Ahmadiyyat

During those days, he received some Arabic literature about Ahmadiyyat. He studied the books and decided that was the right path and believed in it.

Waqf (Life devotion)

He came to see Maulana Muhammad Sharif, the then Amir of the Gambia jama'at, at Banjul and offered his services for the jama'at and was accepted as such. He was sent to Kaolack region in Senegal in the beginning. He spent most of the time with Kaolack jama'at and served to the best of his ability. In 1985, Maulana Daud Hanif, during his tenure as Amir, transferred to Misra in the Gambia, where he continued to serve as muallim for a long period. One of his sons, Muhammad Mbye is currently studying at Jami'a Ahmadiyya UK. Two of his sons are serving the jama'at as muallims.

Oustaz Ahmad Lee

A Senegalese Arabic teacher – Ahmad Lee had the good fortune of accepting Ahmadiyyat through muallim Hamid Mbye. After performing bai'at, he offered his services to work as muallim in

the jama'at. The Amir accepted his application. As he was a new convert, the Amir sent him to me in Basse for a few months for his ta'lim and tarbiyyat. I found him to be a very noble and virtuous young man. He is said to be related to the family of well-known religious and spiritual personage Sheikh Umar Futi. (Some ignorant people believe that Sheikh Futi did not die but has just disappeared). Ahmad Lee is tall adhering to salat and fasting as well as tahajjud. In addition to the local Fulani language, he speaks Wolof very well and is well versed with Arabic.

He is from Podor town in Senegal situated on the banks of river Senegal that forms the border between the two countries; it has the distinction of being the longest riverine border in the world. On the other side of the rivers lies Mauritania – an Arab state; even in this modern civilised age their lifestyle, customs and dress remind one of the old days. The people living across the river travel between the two countries on small boats. Consequently the residents of these border areas of Senegal bear marks of their neighbours on their daily lifestyle, social setup and routine conversation. Many Arabic words have found their way into their language and have become its integral part.

During my stay in Senegal, Ahmad Lee helped me abundantly in my Educational, tarbiyyat and Tabligh efforts and truly speaking he played a big role in the fruits borne by those efforts. May Allah reward him abundantly and be the Guardian and Helper oh his children in religious and worldly matters and grant them all sorts of success, Amin!

Governor Lamin Badji Shaheed

He was born in village Snjan near Bignona in Ziguinchor region. He belonged to a well-known Senegalese tribe - Jula; most of the population in this region is from this tribe.

Education and Early Life: He received his primary education in his village. Later on he was educated in the educational institutes in Bignona. He started his practical life with teaching and served as a teacher in various schools. Afterwards he got interested in politics and joined Senegal's opposition party. He gained prominence in his party because of his outstanding services, excellent performance and profound interest and was, therefore, awarded the ticket as the party's candidate from Bignona in the general elections for national assembly. As a novice in the political field and that too from the opposition party he was pitched against a polished and influential politician of the ruling party. However, in the election despite inexperience and against heavy odds he was blessed with success by the Grace of Allah. Thus he entered the assembly as representative of his people for the first time. He continued to represent his region successfully as member of the assembly for the rest of his life.

Appointment as Governor: In the general elections of 2007 and the opposition party came to power with overwhelming majority. The new president, Abdoulaye Wade in his new government, appointed Omer Lamin Badjie as the governor of Ziguinchor region.

Honour of being the first Ahmadi Member of Parliament in Senegal: Lamin Badjie's ancestral village is located in the Foni

area at the Senegal-Gambia border region. Most of the population in the area belongs to Jula tribe. Inayatullah Zahid was then the muballigh in Foni area. He had arranged a tarbiyyat class for his region's newly converted teachers and imams. The participants included some guests from the bordering towns of Senegal; they had some Ahmadi relatives who used to convey the message of Ahmadiyyat to them according to their knowledge and ability. One day, one Senegalese Ahmadi friend invited Lamin Badjie as well which the later accepted whole-heartedly and attended one of the classes. Inayatullah Zahid gave him an introduction of the jama'at. He was noble-hearted person and soon the truth dawned on him and without any hesitation he entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat. Thus Allah blessed him with the historical distinction of being the first Ahmadi members of National Assembly of Senegal.

A wave of bai'ats among the Members of National Assembly:

Before 1997, there was no jama'at in Dakar. Therefore, for any visit to Dakar we had to arrange the stay there with some acquaintance privately and that was quite difficult and tested ones perseverance. Allah solved that problem later. It so happened that the government of Senegal had built a hostel for Assembly members in Dakar where each member is allocated one room. Omar Badji, being a member of the assembly had one room there. Whenever we needed a room in Dakar we used his room with his permission if he happened to be away.

Once Maulana Daud Ahmad Hanif Sahib, the former Amir of the Gambia Jama'at and myself went to Dakar for some jama'at business. We sought Omer's permission to use his room; that he granted happily. When we reached the hostel we were told by

the administration that another MP Mr Njek Jeng had taken the key and was resting in that room. Anyway we went to the room; we introduced ourselves to Mr Jeng and explained the purpose of our visit. He vacated the room and moved to some other room. Mr Jeng was the deputy speaker of Senegal's National Assembly those days. We met him several times during our stay and introduced the jama'at to him. By the Grace of Allah, Mr Jeng performed the bai'at and through him several other MPs also entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

Participation in Jalsa Salana UK: Mr Omer Badji had the good fortune of attending Jalsa Salana three times. During these Jalsas he addressed the audience twice in the presence of Hadrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV ^{rh}.

Love for Khilafat: He met Hadrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV ^{rh} a few times. He used to mention those fortunate moments frequently. When he constructed his new house in Bignona, he put a big framed photo of Hadrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV ^{rh} in the main hall. He introduced the jama'at to every visitor with reference to that photo. He delivered the message of Ahmadiyyat to people of all levels.

Travel, hosts are waiting for you! In addition to the one in his village, he had a house in Bignona as well. Whenever I went touring that way, I stayed in that house. The household looked after me to the best of their ability. May Allah reward them abundantly, Amin!

The last time I went on a tour to that area, he was the governor of Ziguinchor. I told him about my plans to tour his region. He

was very pleased and arranged for my stay in a good hotel in the town. I spent the days in jama'at programmes and returned to the hotel at night. I stayed there for a few days; he paid all the cost.

Because of some important official engagements, he could not join me during the tour. However, he compensated that by sending five important personalities to accompany me in his official car; they remained with me throughout. There has been a separatist movement going on in the area for a while that has destroyed the tranquillity of Cassamance region. The rebels attack any township whenever they get the opportunity, slaughter the innocent citizens and make away with their goods. These rebel groups disappear easily into the forests nearby. Their barbarous activities have destroyed the peace of the area. It is said that if the rebels are victorious they wear crowns on their heads but if captured they have gallows around their necks.

Account of Martyrdom: Like the rest of the Islamic world, Eid-ul-Azha is celebrated very enthusiastically in Senegal as well. All the people try to go back to their family homes and share the festivities of Eid with their household. Mr Lamin Badjie gave Eid greetings to his colleagues a day before Eid and set out for his village. He also sent his staff away to celebrate Eid with their families. He arrived home at night and met his family. Relatives and friends came to see him and after customary greetings continued to chit-chat till late in the night. It would not have crossed anybody's mind that this was Lamin Badji's last night with them. Next morning, everybody started preparing for Eid, so did Lamin Sahib. While he was sitting in the hall, the rebels suddenly surrounded his house. Some of them entered the

house, captured him and mercilessly cut his throat with a dagger. Lamin Sahib immediately passed on to meet the Lord. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'oon.*

The sad news was broadcast over the radio and TV throughout the country. The President and all the ministers reached his village by helicopters. They all expressed their heart felt sorrow over this fatal incident. The newspapers throughout the country strongly condemned this barbaric and shameful activity.

The endnote: When this incident took place, I had already returned to London. I was deeply grieved to hear this heartrending incident. Whenever I think of that, I remember my dear and sympathetic friend a lot and spontaneously pray for him from my heart.

Choudhry Daud Ahmad Hanif Sahib

In my treatise, Daud Ahmad Hanif Sahib has been mentioned repeatedly because I had the opportunity to work under his supervision and guidance over a long period. Like a well-wishing elder, he always guided me with good advice and sound counselling. May Allah reward him abundantly, Amin!

Daud Hanif Sahib arrived in The Gambia in 1966. Allah, the Almighty granted him the opportunity to serve the jama'at for a long period starting with Salikeni and Georgetown. Later he served as the Amir and Missionary-in-charge.

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Allah, the Almighty made him an energetic, hardworking and

tireless person. During his tenure as Amir a lot was accomplished, by the Grace of Allah, including the construction of two senior secondary schools and a hospital.

In addition to The Gambia, jama'at in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau also became firmly rooted. I accompanied him in tours of the Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau frequently. We always travelled in a friendly atmosphere, not like an officer and subordinate but like brothers. These journeys were usually very demanding as there were no mission houses built in all these places, therefore spending nights and meals were always a serious problem. Many a times we had to manage with millet and yoghurt. In spite of all that, he went through these journeys willingly.

A lot can be written about him but in view of *ma qalla wa dalla* I leave at that.

Mrs Bushra Hanif Sahiba

It is said that behind every successful man there is a woman. The wife of Maulana Daud Hanif Sahib, Bushra Hanif Sahiba, whom we, the centre's workers called 'Baji'- a title for elder sister, was blessed by Allah with many good qualities. The successes and achievements of the Maulana Daud Hanif Sahib as a muballigh and later as Amir and Missionary in-charge were inseparably linked with his wife.

She was very hospitable. In the Gambia, many people, including several African brothers in addition to the Pakistani jama'at workers, enjoyed food at their dining table every day. They lived in the Ahmadiyya mission house in Banjul. It was a small house.

The ground floor was used for salat and the Amir used a small room there as his office. Their residence was on the first floor. It consisted of three small rooms with a balcony at the front. Many a time, these rooms were occupied by the families of the visiting muballighs and their own family moved to the balcony behind a curtain. That continued throughout the year because the devotee doctors, muballighs and teachers from all over the country had to come to Banjul for different purposes.

She looked after all the workers like her younger brothers. She treated our children particularly with love and kindness and has maintained her relationship of a loving mother with our children till today. May Allah be with them, Amin!

A Remarkable Young Man – Fazal Ahmad Majoka

Fazal Ahmad Majoka Sahib came to The Gambia from Pakistan as a murabbi in 1997. An anti-Ahmadiyya campaign was launched there the same year. Consequently the jama'at's Pakistani staff had to emigrate. Fazal Ahmad Majoka Sahib and Muhammad Tufail Ghumman were sent to Guinea-Bissau. After a short period there was an army coup in Guinea-Bissau resulting in strife and bloodshed. This made it impossible for the mission staff to stay there and they moved to the neighbouring Kolda region in Senegal. Because they had entered Senegal from Guinea-Bissau as war migrants they could not be evicted by the Senegal government. Taking advantage of that concession, we sent Fazal Ahmad Majoka Sahib to a village in the Kolda region. We rented a room in the house of a non-Ahmadi friend there. It was devoid of any basic amenity.

Fazal Ahmad Majoka Sahib stayed in Senegal for some time. As he had no visa, he could not get any employment there. He worked sincerely and diligently (for the jama'at). May Allah reward him abundantly! In addition to ta'lim and tarbiyyat he had many mosques built in the Kolda region. Muhammad Tufail Ghumman was sent to Sedhiou area. He also served there to the best of his ability.

Sali Jabi

When I went to Senegal for the first time, I went to Nguch village. There were three Ahmadi friends –Sali Jabi, Berom Ba and Alie Sow the photographer there. Mr Saali Jaabi's house was situated on a well-known road. I spent many nights in that house over a period of about twenty years. Sali Jabi was an Arabic teacher. During my stay in Senegal as a muballigh, he worked with me as a muallim and maintained that relationship faithfully throughout his life. He stayed with me in Dakar most of the time. I had to travel frequently and he used to look after my household while I was away and I did not have to worry about them. He was a very honest and sincere friend. He was very helpful in my duties of tabligh and tarbiyyat. He also had the good fortune of participating in Jalsa Salana UK once. He passed away a few years ago. Hadrat Khalifatul Masih V (atba) offered funeral prayers in absentia for him and also eulogised him. He was a very sincere and virtuous friend, more like a member of my family. He stayed in my house like a sincere, beloved and sympathetic brother for a long time. May Allah, the Almighty have mercy on him and bless him with high ranks in heaven, Amin!

Hassan Jallow

I was stationed in Farafenni which is situated at the Senegambia border. A few kilometres from there in Senegal is a village called Medina Sabakh. An Ahmadi friend Ustaz Alieu Faye Alieu Faye lived there. There was a government primary school in that village. The teachers of the school lived in a rented accommodation. I frequently visited those teachers accompanied by Ustaz Alieu Faye and often talked about the jama'at. Consequently, a teacher Mr Muhammad Kanute performed bai'at. (These days he is headmaster of a primary school in his area bordering Mali).

After that another teacher Mr Ansu Jallow also performed bai'at. Thus the bond with those teachers strengthened further. One day Ustaz Alieu Faye and I, along with Ansu Jallow went to his village Sare Mari. We held a Tabligh meeting there which resulted in some conversions. Among the new converts was a simple young man Mr Hassan Jallow. He was extremely noble hearted and disposed to obedience. After the bai'at he used to come to my house in the Gambia quite often. Later, I kept him there to work as muallim with me. He was very sympathetic and gentle by nature and had a very sweet tongue, something that was very effective in preaching. By the Grace of Allah, through him jama'at was planted in many places. He worked with me for nearly ten years. Then he suddenly fell ill. He had a lot of treatment in Senegal but with no improvement. Then I sent him to Dr Laeeq Ahmad Ansari at the Ahmadiyya Hospital the Gambia for treatment. He treated him very sympathetically but the

Divine decree prevailed and he passed away. May Allah grant my remarkable companion high ranks in heaven, Amin!

A devoted preacher Abdul Qadir Bhatti

Death is sure and inevitable that no living being can escape. Notwithstanding, untimely death of certain loved ones leaves many a hearts grieved. Mr Bhatti's departure like this during his youth aggrieved many friends and dear ones. But

راضی ہیں ہم اسی میں جس میں تیری رضا ہو۔

Towards the end of December 1998, as I was preparing to set out on my routine trip to Senegal, three young men came to my place. I was acquainted with one of them i.e. Nasir Ahmad son of Mahmud Ahmad BT, the Principal of Nasir Ahmadiyya High School, Basse. The other two were complete strangers. One of them was Rana Nadeem Khalid and the other Abdul Qadir Bhatti; Both had come to join Nasir Ahmadiyya High School as teachers.

Their sudden arrival like this worried me a bit as they had come a long distance to see me while I was leaving for Senegal. Anyway I told them of my programme. They were very pleased to hear that and enquired if they could accompany me to Senegal. I told them that travelling in the area that I was going to was very hard as there was no proper arrangement for food or lodging. Bhatti Sahib reassured me saying that they would not cause me any worry nor complain about anything. During this trip we visited more than fifteen places in the remote area. We organised small meetings at every place where these guests also delivered speeches.

Calling towards Allah

Bhatti Sahib was fond of preaching. Many incidences can be narrated to illustrate that but I will be contented with one episode which is a shining example of his passion for preaching and obedience to the khilafat. In 1992, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) announced international bai'at under Divine design and launched a worldwide campaign for preaching in strong and magnificent words. Everybody responded to that call with a renewed passion and fervour according to one's ability. Those days, Bhatti Sahib was serving as a teacher in Ahmadiyya High School in Basse. The Gambia is quite a hot country and that area is particularly known for its hot weather. During very hot weather and without any transport facility at his disposal, Bhatti Sahib selected a remote area across the river for his preaching expedition. He had to cross the river on a boat or a ferry every time. Banking on Divine support, he started his preaching during extremely hot weather travelling several kilometres to reach remote villages mostly on foot. By the Grace of Allah, through his preaching many fortunate souls quenched their thirst at the spiritual fountain of the Promised Messiah (as). May Allah, the Almighty bless Bhatti Sahib's efforts with His acceptance and reward him abundantly. It is my heartfelt prayer that the Generous Lord may have special mercy on him, grant him high ranks in the heaven, grant all his relatives steadfastness, be a helper and guardian of his widow and two little daughters and resolve all their problems, Amin!

Chapter 14

Some interesting Tabligh episodes

A debate with Ustaz Yusuf in Ndofan

While I was stationed in Farafenni, an Ahmadi friend from Ndofan (situated in Senegal about sixty miles from Farafenni) told me that a young man who had returned from Saudi Arabia after religious education there and was spitting venom against Ahmadiyya jama'at. I promised that I would soon be visiting Senegal and would talk to the Ustaz. One day, I accompanied by an Ahmadi Muallim ustaz Alieu Faye, reached Ndofan on my motorbike. It was Sunday and a popular market was arranged there every Sunday. Many people from the surrounding area used to come there for shopping. When I reached the market, an Ahmadi friend from a neighbouring village was there as well. Those days, there were only a few Ahmadis in the whole area scattered in various villages. When I told him that I had come there to talk to the Arabic teacher, he got scared. He said that the mullah group was very strong there and they could harm both of us. I reassured him and told him to stay away; just point at him from a distance and I will take care of the rest. He pointed towards a shop and told me that he was sitting there. Ustaz Alieu and I reached the shop. We greeted those present there and enquired about the Ustaz. The Ustaz responded that he indeed was the one. I introduced myself saying, 'my name is Munawar Ahmed, I have come from the Gambia and I am the muballigh of Ahmadiyya jama'at. I hear that you have some doubts and

suspicious about the jama'at. If you deem proper, you may clarify with me'. He said that the shop was not the right place for that. I suggested that we could move to the place of his choice. He started avoiding the issue but my friends prompted him. He stood up angrily, got hold of my arm and took me to an open space near the market. He started speaking with a loud voice. Within a few minutes hundreds of people gathered there. We started discussing in Arabic. His style was that of Pakistani maulvis which he had learnt in Saudi Arabia. We debated for about one hour. He spoke with anger, while before responding I recited darood every time. That impressed the audience very much. In that situation his anger was noteworthy. In view of gravity of the situation some people intervened to end the debate. The ustaz went away but I stood there. Several people came to me enquiring about the jama'at. One person standing there heard the debate. When everybody had left, he came to me and said that he would like to be an Ahmadi because listening to your debate I have concluded that you are on the right path. Although, the debate was conducted in Arabic and that man was just a farmer who probably never attended a school in his whole life. His village was near Nidofan. Thereafter, by the Grace of Allah, several persons performed bai'at in that village. After a few months, when Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (ra) visited my area in the Gambia, he also came there and performed waqar-e-amal for several days and witnessed the blessings of true khilafat with his own eyes and always took pride in that.

Maulana Sa'adi has narrated a beautiful anecdote of similar type:

“A court of justice held its proceedings daily in a town. The two

parties would present their arguments and the judge would give his verdict. A butcher would attend the court daily after finishing his job, listen to the proceedings carefully and make his own judgement in his mind. One day one of his friends asked him that being an illiterate person how could he make his decision? The man replied that it was easy. "If the neck veins of the person get swollen while speaking, I know, he is telling lies."

It seems that the villager while listening to our debate decided in favour of Ahmadiyyat on similar lines!

Ustaz Ahmadou Bigge Sow wants to become an Ahmadi but ...

In Ndogan there was an Arabic teacher by the name of Ahmadou Bigge Sow. One of his maternal uncles Alnabbi Jallow was an Ahmadi. I had several discussions with the ustaz but he did not accept Ahmadiyyat. Once he sent a message through an Ahmadi friend that he wanted to see me. Once I happened to be on a tour of his area. I went to his house accompanied by a friend and in my car I brought him out of the town and asked him about the purpose of this meeting. He said, 'I swear by God and declare that Ahmadiyya jama'at is true, therefore I want to become an Ahmadi but I have a condition. You know that I am working under a well-known international Muslim Organisation. As soon as they know that I have joined Ahmadiyya, they will dismiss me from the job. And you know very well that I have no source of income other than teaching. Therefore you should employ me as a muallim'. After hearing all that I replied, 'I think that you cannot become an Ahmadi because bai'at should be without any pre-conditions. Ahmadiyya jama'at is engaged in a Jihad

against shirk (associating any partner with God). You think that if you left the job of that organisation you will starve to death. Does a child get any guaranties for his feeding arrangements before its birth? We believe that Allah is the provider'. That silenced him but he did not perform bai'at. Many people of that type used to come for bai'at.

Spread of Ahmadiyyat in Kolda region

By the Grace of Allah, in Kolda region of Senegal there are more than forty jama'ats. In 1998 an Arabic teacher from there went to Guinea-Bissau where he got information about the jama'at. Once I was travelling from Dakar to Guinea-Bissau area. The village of ustaz Omar Saidy is situated on the road to Guinea-Bissau. Somehow he came to know about my travels and the date of my return to Dakar. Completely unknown to me, the ustaz, with many of his friends, was waiting for me at one spot. On my way back to Dakar, I stopped my car on the way for some reason. A young man came running to me and asked me if I was an Ahmadi. I answered in the affirmative. I was surprised; how did he know that I was an Ahmadi while there was no Ahmadi in hundreds of miles around that area. The young man told me that many people were waiting for me. I accompanied him in a state of uncertainty. We soon reached a house and found about twenty young men. They received me cordially. Questions and answers session followed. By the Grace of Allah, they all performed bai'at. Through these young men jama'at started spreading all around. The jama'at faced stern opposition in the area. However, the progress of the jama'at continued unabated. The jama'at is very strong and firmly established and has five mosques in the area.

Spread of Ahmadiyyat in Velingara

Velingara is a medium-sized town in the Kolda region of Senegal, situated about twenty kilometres from Basse in the Gambia. Because of police and customs check points at the border, the communication between these towns is minimal. The road is untarred and stony making travelling very difficult.

Once Velingara's Member of Assembly came to Nasir Ahmadiyya High School Basse with a large delegate on my request. An elaborate Tabligh meeting with the distinguished guests was organised there which resulted in bai'at by many dignitaries of the area. Amongst the guests was an Arabic ustaz Alhaj Yoro Balde who had returned from Saudi Arabia after religious education; he also performed bai'at and continued with Tabligh duty diligently and enthusiastically. His influence initiated development of new Jama'ats in the whole area. By the Grace of Allah, now there are several big mosques in the area and muallims are busy in the service of religion day and night. When Yoro Balde was blessed by Allah with his first son he named him Ghulam Ahmad after the name of the Promised Messiah (as). He was quite young when he fell ill with a disease that did not appear dangerous. However, it proved fatal and he died a few days later. May Allah grant him high ranks in heaven, Amin!

'I am already an Ahmadi' – Imam

Once a tarbiyyati class was organised in Sare Bungari near Latmegui which was attended by many members from that area. Classes were held during daytime and in the evening they were sent to nearby villages for ta'lim, tarbiyyat and preaching. One

day, when one of those delegates returned from their village in the morning, they told me that an Arabic teacher used foul language against the jama'at the night before. I planned the same day and set out for that village accompanied by two friends to talk to that ustaz. When we reached there, we learnt that the ustaz had left the place. We spoke to the villagers for a short while and delivered the message of truth to them and started our journey back. As we were passing through a village one of the friends told me that a lady related to him had passed away the day before and asked if it was possible to visit them for condolence. We went there. My friend introduced me to the household and we offered our condolences. Quite a lot of people had gathered there. One of the household told me about an elderly person that he was the imam of a nearby village. We exchanged the greetings and I told him about the Ahmadiyya Jama'at briefly. He said, 'I have been Ahmadi since long'. I was surprised and asked him how? He said, 'a long time ago I read jama'at's publication Al-Qawl asareeh القول الصريح that convinced me of the truth of Ahmadiyyat but did not have contact with any Ahmadi. Now that I have seen you that need is also met. Alhamdulillah.' It is impossible to describe the joy that we had. It is amazing how Allah, the Almighty provides the means for the propagation of His faith. We developed a strong bond with the Imam since and we organised meetings and jalsas in his village several times. The name of his village is Dongre and imam's name is Alhaj Muhammad Suware.

Acceptance of Ahmadiyyat by Youth influenced by Christianity

Maulvi Umar Ali Tahir Sahib's first appointment was at Farafenni. The area was populated by Mandinka speaking people, therefore he learnt the Mandinka language. There were a few Ahmadi members in a Fulani village – Duta Bulu near Farafenni. Many of the village youth were inclined towards Christianity. Umar Ali Sahib started Tabligh programmes in that village very prudently. He established individual and collective contacts with the youth who were inclined to Christianity. Allah blessed his efforts with success and gradually all those young men entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat. Similarly in Yallal Ba village some young men entered Ahmadiyyat; their parents were strongly opposed to Ahmadiyyat but the steadfastness of these young men was admirable.

Tabligh Video Cassettes bear Fruits

By the Grace of Allah, there is devoted Jama'at in Salekini. There was a young man – Sharif Koli, who held a high post in a Gambian organisation. He acknowledged the high morals of the Ahmadis but disputed some of the jama'at beliefs. I had discussions with him several times but he was not satisfied. In the meantime he was posted at Basse where Maulvi Umar Ali was the muballigh. Maulvi Sahib gave him some Tabligh cassettes prepared by the Gambian jama'at. Allah blessed maulvi sahib's efforts and satisfied Sharif Sahib who accepted Ahmadiyyat whole-heartedly and that transformed his life in no time. His devotion and faithfulness for the jama'at increased a lot. He responded positively to all jama'at instructions; became regular with salat

and paid chandas regularly according to prescribed rates. Allah blessed him with the opportunity to perform Hajj. Sadly he fell ill while still young and the illness became severe. He was transferred to Dakar, where I had the opportunity to serve him, as I was in Senegal those days. However, he did not survive and died in Dakar. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'oon.*

Ustaz returns from Saudi Arabia after specialising in 'Qadianiyyat'

Once a tarbiyyat class was arranged in Dakar and was attended by new converts from all over the country. Among them was a young Arabic ustaz who had come for the first time. Ustaz Ahmad Gaye told me that he had returned recently after his studies in Saudi Arabia; he studied 'Qadianiyyat' as his speciality subject there. He was greatly displeased to learn that some of his friends in the area had converted to Ahmadiyyat. He was greatly displeased with them. They told him that they were going to a tarbiyyat class in Dakar and suggested that he joined them to get the answers to his questions there and satisfy himself. That is how he ended up in that class. I realised that his heart was brimming with prejudice. Whenever questions and answers session started he would ask many questions acting as the leader of the classmates. We would answer according to our ability. Several days passed by but his intensity did not abate. His objections were becoming sharper day by day because he did not try to understand, rather he raised objections for objection's sake. Whereas my previous experience about non-Ahmadis attending the class showed they were inclined to right path after a few days but this ustaz was increasing in malice and enmity.

One day when I started the questions and answers session, I said

that you ask me questions every day, today I will ask you some questions. 'I will give my car to one who answers my questions correctly'. All of them were greatly surprised and told me to go ahead. I pointed to that ustaz and asked him to answer the question which is, 'is Muhammad (saw) true prophet of Allah'? Everybody was surprised and said that they were all Muslims and that was their basic tenet. I said it was correct but answer my question and take the car. The ustaz recited the Quranic verse -- محمد رسول الله -- loudly and said, 'you see, the verse stated that Muhammad (saw) is the Messenger of Allah'. One of our muallims said, 'ustaz, will the person who does not believe in the prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet (saw) believe in the Quran? Is a Quranic verse acceptable to a non-Muslim?' The ustaz was greatly flummoxed and did not know what to say. Everyone was looking at him. All the pomp and show of his knowledge and Arabic language had vanished.

After that I asked him, 'Is Quran the word of God?' He said, 'indeed, Allah says in the Holy Quran ...' That brought us back to the same question: How could a person who does not believe in the Holy Prophet (saw), believe in the book brought by him?

Ustaz had made a spectacle of himself. He admitted, 'it is beyond my understanding, you tell us'. I elaborated on the truth of the Holy Prophet (saw) in the light of 'introduction of the study of the Holy Quran' by Hadrat Musleh Ma'ud (ra) and put forward the arguments proving the Divine origin of the Holy Quran. The ustaz stayed in the class for a week after that more like a novice. On the last day he said, 'By God, I learnt nothing but Arabic in Saudi Arabia; I have learnt ABC of religion in this class only.' And he performed bai'at.

We are the real Murids

A young man in a village near Kaolack became an Ahmadi. Majority of his village belonged to Muridiyya sect. They are very rigid in their attitude. They do not tolerate any dissenting views or any comment against their *pir* (religious leader); they will not stop short of an assault. They could harm you if you deny their beliefs or miracles by their religious leaders. They hold one well-known belief that the founder of their sect - Amadou Bamba used to ride a lion. Also when French army arrested him for alleged rebellion and exiled him to Gabon by ship, en-route he was not allowed to offer his salat on the ship, he spread out his prayer mat over the sea water and offered his prayers there.

I told the new convert to arrange a Tabligh meeting in the village. Knowing that they were Mourides and violent, he was rather afraid. I told him not to worry as nothing untoward will happen insha-Allah. You take me to the open space near the mosque after maghrib prayers. He agreed and as planned we reached there after maghrib prayers. The young man introduced me to the audience saying that I was the Ahmadi muballigh and also told them about the jama'at briefly. Some of the audience said that they were not in need of anyone as they were mourides and Amadou Bamba was sufficient for them.

Mourides are very hard working people and would do any work. On the whole they are poor, but the Caliphs and their descendants are amongst the richest in the country. Governments form and fall on their beckoning.

I told them that in fact I am also a mouride. Because mouride is

one who acts upon the teaching of Amadou Bamba. They all started to listen to me. I said that there is only one picture of Amadou Bamba that every mouride is hanging down his neck or in his house, in which he is holding a copy of the Quran in his hand. That is why he is known as 'khadimul-Quran (servant of Quran). That is the mission of the Ahmadiyya jama'at too – we are publishing Quran throughout the world.

I asked them, 'when people offered money to Amadou Bamba, did he pick it up or throw it away'? All of them said, 'he threw it away'. I asked, 'his inheritors today do they take it or throw it away'? Some of them said, 'they snatch it'. I said, 'Ahmadiyya jama'at spends money in the way of Allah'. I said that the ladies of Amadou Bamba used to observe purdah while their ladies do not observe it any more whereas Ahmadi ladies observe it. For propagation of Islam Amadou Bamba left his house for remote areas and that is exactly what the Ahmadi muballighs are doing. All the audience listened to us attentively and concluded that Ahmadiyya jama'at are truly Muslims. Thereafter we had very good relations with that village.

Friday Prayers in Kumbal

In Africa people joining Ahmadiyyat from other Muslim sects have a serious problem praying separately from other Muslims, especially if Ahmadiyyat has been introduced there recently.

Similarly, bai'ats were performed in Senegalese village Kumbal, but the new converts continued to pray along with the others. We tried to counsel them but because of fear of social backlash they could not do it. Friday prayer was especially problematic as there were only a few Ahmadis in the village and could not think

of Friday prayer in their room. They believed that Friday prayer could not be offered anywhere other than a jami'a mosque.

I urged the Kumbal jama'at to offer Friday prayers separately many times but failed. Ultimately I decided to go there personally on a Friday. I reached there with two Gambian Muallims and told Umar Jallow Sahib that we were going to offer Friday prayers in their village. He got frightened thinking that the villagers might attack us. I reassured him saying that most of the people of that village were their relatives and were unlikely to attack them. They might attack me being a foreigner and as I would lead the prayers, I said. I used to keep a long plastic prayer mat in my car; I took that out and spread it out under a tree and asked one of the muallims to call the adhan. After the adhan, the Ahmadis started coming one by one. I led the prayers. The villagers also saw us praying but showed no reaction. After the prayers I took promise of all the Ahmadis on oath that they would definitely offer Jum'a prayers in congregation after that day. They all promised. That is how the jum'a prayer was started in Kumbal. By the Grace of Allah, there is a big mosque there now and Jum'a prayer is offered there.

Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran

There is a town Medina Sabakh at the Senegambia border. One of our muallims – ustaz Alieu Faye is a resident of that town. He gave 'Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran' by Hadrat Musleh Ma'ud (ra) to his friend who lived in the same town and was a professor in a college. After some time, while returning the book, the professor said: 'When I was studying in primary school, amongst my class-fellows there were some Christians

and some Muslims. I used to mull over the question who were on the right path, Muslims or Christians. I had no argument supporting the Muslims other than the fact that my parents, friends and those in that locality were Muslims. The question kept bugging me during my college days. When I went to the university, I had some Christian class-fellows there as well. However, I did not get the answer to that question. Whenever I asked I put that question to any imam, he would advise me to desist from such questions as that might lead to disbelief. Now that I have studied this book, it has given me clear and strong arguments supporting the truth of Islam. Now I can say with full conviction that I am following a true religion'. Hadrat Musleh Ma'ud had indeed done a great favour to the whole world in the field of knowledge.

Allah mellowed an enemy

Once a tarbiyyat class was arranged in Dakar. As a routine, some ustaz brought some non-Ahmadi friends from their area along with them who would stay with us for a week or two and engage in questions and answers. In addition to Tabligh and tarbiyyat speeches several other programmes were organised that bore good fruit by the Grace of Allah.

Once a young man from Rosso area of Mauritania came to visit his relatives in Richard Toll, a town in Senegal. (Some Senegalese migrated to Mauritania long time ago and have since acquired customs, characters and religious trends of the local Arabs. Like those Arabs they have become quite violent. Moreover, because of constraints imposed by the Mauritanian Government, Ahmadiis cannot enter Mauritania. Therefore, these people have

no contact with the jama'at and as such they know nothing about the jama'at except hatred, rancour and prejudice).

The Mauritanian young man was greatly distressed to learn that his relatives had become Ahmadis; he expressed his displeasure to them and spoke ill of the jama'at. Per chance, tarbiyyat class was about to start in Dakar those days, which was to be attended by some of his relatives. They advised him to go to Dakar and find out about the jama'at himself. He agreed and accompanied them to Dakar. We met the young man. He was very quiet. The Mauritians keep their faces covered most of the time and that is what he did.

After a few days ustaz Ahmad Gaye told me that the Mauritanian young man had come to the class with very dangerous designs. He had been greatly hurt thinking that his relatives were drowning in the sea of disbelief and error because of us. He had come to the class with a dagger to attack us. He had heard from the mullahs that killing the Ahmadis was very meritorious act and he had come here with that intention. When he came here, he saw that we had wall-mounted many chapters and verses of the Holy Quran. He also observed our adhan, method of performing wudu and offering salat with his own eyes. He met several Ahmadi ustaz and listened to the speeches. He was surprised by the contrast between what he had heard about the jama'at and what he saw. That removed the poison of hatred from his heart and replaced it with love and truth of the jama'at. He, therefore, performed bai'at and promised that he would go back and deliver the message of truth to his people, insha-Allah.

An Ahmadi Brother's House built with millet stalks

During my tenure at Farafenni in the Gambia, I was assigned the duty of Tabligh in Senegal. Senegal authorities did not issue visa to Pakistani citizens. I used to enter Senegal with the help of Senegal's border police and would spend two weeks there because crossing the border repeatedly was difficult. I had to spend the nights mostly in villages as in towns there was risk of police action. A few times I was captured by police but Allah saved me miraculously each time.

There is a village Chako in Kaolack region. A poor Ahmadi Demba Jallow lived near that. He had built two rooms with grass and millet stalks in the outskirts of the village. I used to sleep in one of those rooms because there was no threat from police there. Demba Jallow was a very poor but sincere Ahmadi. I still remember his hospitality in the form of millet and yoghurt. I used to help him as much as I could. May Allah reward him abundantly, Amin!

Dawud Bah declares Ahmadiyyat on the wall

Sare Gaory is a small town in Kaolack region of Senegal. An Arabic ustaz Dawud Bah lived there. He belonged to the Qadiriyya sect. Once our muallim Alhaj Jannee visited him for Tabligh. However, he refused to listen to him on the basis of hearsay. The muallim gave him an Arabic publication by the jama'at **القول الصريح** for study. Dawud Bah accepted it and studied it carefully. Allah made that book a cause for his guidance. (**القول الصريح** is a very useful book written by the Ahmadiyya muballigh Maulana Haji Nazir Ahmad Mubashir. It comprises of refutation of all the allegations against the jama'at. The Arabic teachers in Senegal have benefitted from this book a great deal).

Once I was on a tour of that area. There were just a few houses in the village; all mud houses. The village is situated on an untarred road treaded by numerous people on foot or on carts. His father was the village chief. While passing that way I noticed that on the wall of his house facing the street was written in bold Arabic letters: 'this is the house of ustaz Dawud Bah Ahmadi'. The message of Ahmadiyyat reached many places in the area as a result of his Tabligh. We staged meetings and jalsas many times in the village participated by gentry from all around.

By the Grace of Allah, a mosque has now been built in the village and Friday prayers are offered there as well. I spent many nights in his house. Allah has blessed him with very competent sons. Two sons are studying at the Dakar University; they used to stay at my house initially. By the Grace of Allah they are in the forefront of service of the jama'at.

Bai'at Form on the Tree

Near Sare Gaory village in Senegal there is another village wherein a young man was being preached to by ustaz Dawud Bah. Allah illumined his heart with the truth and declared his entering the fold of Imam Mahdi's jama'at. Many members of the household and his friends counselled him against it but he stood firm on his faith. He submitted his bai'at form to Huzur in London. After a while he received the reply from Huzur. He stuck Huzur's letter on the trunk of a tree in an open space near his house. Whenever somebody came to see him, he told him to read that letter and point out anything wrong or un-Islamic in it. His bravery, courage and announcement of Ahmadiyyat led many fortunate souls to guidance.

Prophets or Iblis – which group do you belong to?

Tanaf is a town near the border with Guinea-Bissau. Near Tanaf there is a small village. A renowned Hyadara family lives there. Their murids (followers) are spread all over Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. I had good friendly relations with the head of the family Muntaqa Haidra. The saintly figure was a noble person and an admirer of the jama'at. Whenever he visited Dakar he would come to see me without fail, would pray with us and said, 'I know that Ahmadiyya jama'at is on the right path'.

Once I was on a tour of that area accompanied by Fazal Ahmad Sahib Majoka and some imams from Kolda. Hydara Sahib received us cordially. In a big room he had me seated by his side; he had informed his friends about my visit and the hall soon filled up. Hydara Sahib introduced me to the audience. I later spoke on the teachings and beliefs of Ahmadiyya Jama'at.

While that was going on, a young man entered the room; he looked like a mullah. He stood there for a while and then asked Hydara Sahib, 'who are they?' Hydara Sahib said, 'they are a delegate of Ahmadiyya jama'at and they have come from Dakar to see me'. The mullah, who was actually a relative of Hydara Sahib and had returned after studying in Saudi Arabia said, 'you do not know that these people are *kafir* (infidels). The government of Pakistan has declared them as kafirs and thrown them out. Their khalifa is in London these days. The head of our neighbouring country the Gambia has also turned them out of the Gambia'. He added, 'you know that we have very friendly relations with the head of the Gambia. If he came to know of our contacts with the Ahmadiyya jama'at, it will have a negative

impact on our relations'. He spoke a lot more in a belligerent mood. Although he was Hydera's nephew, it seemed with him he had an axe to grind.

After he had spoken to his heart's content, I said, 'you have said a lot. Now, please allow me to say a few things.' Then I addressed the audience and said, 'I am aware that you all know that Adam (as) was confronted by Iblis. Tell me: did Adam turn Iblis out (of heaven) or was it Iblis who turned Adam out?' They all said, 'Iblis turned Adam out'. Again I asked, 'did Moses turn Pharaoh out or Pharaoh turned Moses out?' They all said, 'Pharaoh did.' Again I asked, 'did Hadrat Muhammad (saw) turn Abu Jahal et al out of Mecca or was it Abu Jahal who did that?. All of them said, 'Abu Jahal did'. I said, 'now it is up to you to decide. Ahmadiyya jama'at turned out of Pakistan and out of the Gambia. History is before you; those who turn out are associates of Iblis, while the prophets and the righteous are ones who are turned out.' All the audience were agreeing with me. The young mullah was very much ashamed and went out quietly. Our Tabligh programme continued for quite a while after that and the audience listened to us eagerly and wholeheartedly.

Prostration with thanks

مالی دا کم پانی دینا، بھر بھر مشکاں پاوے
مالک دا کم پھل پھل لانا لاوے یا نہ لاوے

The gardener's job is to water the plants with skin-bags full of water,

It is up to the lord to allow fruits and flowers to grow.

Once a Senegalese friend Hamad Bah came to see me in

Farafenni. He told me that there is a town in Senegal called Guinguineo located at quite a distance further away from Kaolack and a few miles from there is a Fulani village comprising of a few houses. In that village he had a relative who wanted to get information about the jama'at. I promised that we would definitely visit him, insha-Allah and convey the message of truth. Accordingly, one day Ahmad Ly and myself boarded a vehicle from Farafenni and reached Kaolack. From there we got on to another old vehicle and set out for Guinguineo. Half way down the track, the vehicle broke down and could not be repaired. After a long wait, we carried our bags and walked to Guinguineo in extremely hot weather. From there, we reached the village on a cart and went to see the man, probably named Mari Bah. He could speak a bit of Arabic. He welcomed us and then we started talking about the jama'at till late in the night and restarted in the morning. Mari Bah appreciated the talk but said that he could not become an Ahmadi. We returned rather disappointed. We walked to Guinguineo and then, changing several vehicles, reached Farafenni. Food was a big problem throughout the journey. It was hot weather and lack of a transport facility added to our worries. Moreover, we had worked hard for one person and he did not become an Ahmadi. However, that was an everyday experience.

Then through Divine Grace, about twenty years later started a series of bai'ats at several places. Two MPs from the area became Ahmadis. They invited me repeatedly and accepting that I went on a tour of the area. I told my companions that first of all we will go to Sare Mari and that is where we went. There were only a few broken-down houses. We spread our prayer mats under a

tree and some residents of the village joined us. I told my companions, 'twenty years earlier, myself and Ahmad Ly made a very arduous trip to this village with the message of Ahmadiyyat and nobody accepted it. However, we did not despair and now the Creator and the Master has opened the hearts of this area for us. Therefore, we prostrate to Him in gratitude at the same spot in the same village that we visited twenty years ago.' All the audience and the gentry were greatly impressed.

Service to Humanity

Once Maulana Daud Hanif Sahib and I were on Tabligh and tarbiyyat tour of the Kaolack jama'ats in Senegal. Those days, passing time during the day was not all that difficult because one was busy travelling, meeting the people and conducting various programmes. Thus one hardly noticed the day pass by. However, going through the night was a difficult proposition. Those days jama'ats in Senegal were very few. Moreover, most of the Ahmadi brothers were in villages; they belonged to Fulani tribe who herded cattle and did a bit of farming. Their houses were not even made of mud but made of grass and reed only that were just large enough to house their families only. They had no concept of proper bedstead; they just put some wood pieces together to form a bed and filled sacks of cloth with grass to use as mattresses. In early days, the murabbis also used the same mattresses.

We travelled for several days continuously. We spent our nights sleeping on the prayer mats in somebody's courtyard sometimes and in our car at other times. One night, we had a meeting in Plado – a village near Kaolack, after isha that finished after

midnight. An Ahmadi youth lived on the roadside in the village. He belonged to Serer tribe; these people have better houses. I requested him to let us spend the night at his house and he readily agreed.

We went to our room and entered into our beds. Exhausted over several days, it was the first time on the tour that we had a peaceful and comfortable place to sleep. Therefore, we fell asleep right away. After a short while, the young man came to us. He appeared very worried. He told us that one of his sisters was in labour and in great pain and that it was a life and death situation. He requested us for some treatment or prayers to alleviate the problem of the unfortunate lady. It was impossible for them to get transport at that time or to afford it if, at all, they could get one. We had been travelling for several days and were overwhelmed by fatigue and sleep considering that we had got a suitable and comfortable room after many days. I told Daud Hanif Sahib about the whole situation and requested to help the household. He got ready immediately. We reached Kaolack at about 3 O'clock with that lady and had her admitted in the hospital and helped them financially as well. A few hours later, Allah blessed the lady with a son. That is how we spent the night, rushing around. The boy is now grown up. The villagers remember the episode till today and frequently mention it with admiration.

Helplessness of one bitten by Snake

Once ustaz Ahmad Ly and I were on a tour of Kirma Jebil area of Senegal. We conducted Tabligh and tarbiyyat programmes in various jama'ats throughout the day. As usual spending the night

was a difficult proposition. Ahmad Ly said that there were some Ahmadi households in a village about seven to eight miles from Kirma Jebil where we could spend the night.

It was rainy season and there were millet farms all around. The roads were untarred with puddles of rain water here and there. The car nearly got stuck in the mud at several spots. We reached the village with great difficulty in the darkness of the night.

Our intended host was Ahmad Bah. We reached his place to learn that the poor fellow had been bitten by snake that day and was lying in his bed. We approached him. I notice that he was greatly worried and apprehensive.

I asked his family why did they not take him to hospital in Kirma Jebil. They mentioned lack of funds. I told Ahmad Ly that we will take him to Kirma Jebil right away. We put him in the car and set out for Kirma Jebil. It was dark and there were puddles everywhere. By the Grace of Allah, we made it to Kirma Jebil about 11 O'clock in the night. We went straight to the clinic but it was closed. We found out doctor's address, reached his house and requested for the anti-venom injection. Doctor told us to see him the following day. We cajoled him into going along at that time. He demanded 20,000 Francs for the injection but agreed to half that amount which I paid. Then the doctor came to the clinic and gave the anti-venom injection. That is how Allah inspired us to go to that village to save the life of that young man. That also resulted in creating sentiments of love and sympathy in the hearts of the village people.

Hospitality by a Pir

Tijaniyya in Senegal has divided into many sub-sects each with its own khalifa. Although Tivaouane is given the title of Khalifa General but because of internal rifts each group has acquired a separate identity now. One of these groups have their centre in Medina Gounass near Velingara. Their Khalifa is Ahmed Tijan. Once I was on a tour of Velingara area, accompanied by my family. I had planned to see the khalifa and convey the message of Ahmadiyyat to him. Accordingly I reached his place. The Pir was in the company of his mourides in a big hall; he was seated on a comfortable sofa while the mourides (followers) were sitting on a carpet on the floor. I informed him of my arrival. The Pir sent all his mourides out of the hall and had me seated next to him on the sofa. After customary greetings, I detailed him about the advent of the Promised Messiah (as), his claims and the worldwide religious services of the jama'at for about one hour. He continued to repeat one Fula word 'kugonga, kugonga' meaning that's true. He expressed his pleasure over the meeting. Later I sought his permission to leave. In the meantime, he called his mourides and then all of us came out of his house. A man with a herd of sheep approached us. The Pir said, 'because of shortage of time you have not dined with us, therefore, I want to present a sheep to you as a gift'. One of his mourides handed over a sheep to me. I thanked him for his hospitality and appreciation and said, 'I will be travelling to many places on my tour, therefore, it will be very difficult to carry the sheep along. I would like to present the sheep to your mourides'. The mourides were very pleased and thanked me. I have not been able to visit them since because of my ill health.

Truthfulness of a Mauritanian Youth

Mauritanians are generally obstinate and ignorant people. Being Arabs, they regard themselves to be the only true and strong Muslims. However, there are some virtuous and noble-minded people amongst them who do not hesitate in calling a truth a truth and do not make it an issue of their ego. This episode pertains such a youth who when he discovered the truth admitted it in very beautiful words.

There was a young man named Muhammad living in Dakar. He was a Mauritanian, studying at Dakar University. He lived in the same locality as me. He was a thorough gentleman. He used to visit me frequently and we spoke on various topics.

Once I wrote two booklets for religious knowledge in a questions and answers style in Arabic and French languages. I said to Muhammad: 'I have written this Arabic booklet. I am not an expert in Arabic language. By the Grace of Allah you are a Hafiz of Quran, an Arab and an educated person in secular matters as well. Please review this booklet to see if there is any error that may be corrected'. He took my notes with him. Next day, he came to me and said: 'Ustaz there is one major error in this booklet'. I asked him to point that out. He replied: 'You have written one question asking if a prophet can come after the Holy Prophet (saw) and replying it said: yes. That is absolutely wrong.' I said, 'it is not wrong, it is absolutely correct.' He was perplexed. I said: 'My friend, you are an Arab, your language is Arabic and you are Hafiz of Quran and all your relatives, according to you, are scholars and Hafiz. What we do is that I recite a verse of the Quran and you translate it.' I recited the following verse:

يٰۤاٰدَمَ اٰتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ ءَايٰتِيۡ لَمَنْ
اَتَّقٰ وَاَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

[Al-A'raf 7:36] O children of Adam! if Messengers come to you from among yourselves, rehearsing My Signs unto you, then whoso shall fear God and do good deeds, on them *shall come* no fear nor shall they grieve.

I started reciting the verse and asked him to start translating word by word at the same time. After I had recited the verse, I said that I would recite it again and he should translate again. I started reciting again slowly while he translated word by word at the same time. I noticed that his facial expression was changing. After that I said that I would recite the verse once again for him to translate it. I saw that he was in a peculiar state. After we had recited the verse, he said: 'Today my condition is similar to that of Hadrat Umar Farooq (ra), when he drew his sword at the time of demise of the Holy Prophet (saw) and said that he would sever the head of one who said that the Holy Prophet (saw) had died. At that Hadrat Abubakar Siddique recited the vesre:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ اِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ الرُّسُلُ اَفَاِنْ مَاتَ اَوْ قُتِلَ
اَنْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلٰى اَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلٰى عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللّٰهَ شَيْئًا
وَسَيَجْزِي اللّٰهُ الشَّاكِرِيْنَ

[3:145] And Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily, *all* Messengers have passed away before him. If then he die or be slain, will you turn back on your heels? And he who turns back on his heels shall not harm Allah at all. And Allah will certainly reward the grateful.

Hadrat Umar (ra) felt as if the verse had been revealed that very day. Similarly I felt that this verse (3:76) has been revealed today, although I had recited it countless times before’.

A Pir’s Confession of Reality

A Senegalese MP, who is from the lineage of the Holy Prophet (saw), said to me during a meeting: ‘The picture of academic, moral and political subjugation of the Muslims that you have painted is absolutely correct. However, as you know that the system of Peeri Mureedi (the religious mentors and their disciples) has been established in our family for centuries and who would know the ups and downs and secrets of this system better than we. What should we do for the formation the Muslim society? I will try to explain the importance, the features and the remedy for this spiritual ailment to you with an illustration. Nature has blessed us with a body that needs cleansing every day. If it is not cleaned appropriately on time it gathers dross and if it is not cleaned over a long period several layers of dross are gathered that turn into scabs. To remove that sort of filth, practical skill, care and essentials of high quality are required. There is a risk of damaging the skin by a hasty action. That is the state of our Islamic society now. All sorts of shirk, superstitions, deceit and fraud have taken root so firmly that a lot of patience like that of Hadrat Ayub (as) is required to uproot all this. The centuries old dross and filth has hardened into crusts and hasty action will ulcerate our skin and the ulcers will become infected with formation of pus. Therefore, a lot of care is required.’

An interesting Journey in Guinea-Bissau

A Tabligh delegation was on a tour of various jama'ats in Guinea Bissau. They were travelling on a mission's car. The car had a dangerous accident during the trip; it was badly damaged but Allah miraculously saved the passengers. The car was beyond repair but it was necessary to bring it to the Gambia for insurance claim. Driving the car was impossible. Hiring a truck for the purpose was very costly. From Guinea-Bissau we had to pass through Casamance in Senegal to reach Banjul, the capital of the Gambia. The accident took place near Farim on a spot quite a distance from the main highway. The track was untarred and difficult.

Murabbi Tahir Mehdi Imtiaz Sahib (who by the Grace of Allah, is used to handling every difficult job diligently) and I reached the site of accident in my car. We tied the damaged car to my car with thick ropes. I started driving my car while Mehdi Sahib controlled the steering of the other car. Putting our trust in Allah, we set out on this long and arduous journey – untarred tracks, a foreign country, unfamiliar people and dusty atmosphere. We had covered our heads to protect from the dust. That made us look rather strange.

It was evening time while we were still in a town in Guinea-Bissau. Therefore, we decided to spend the night there. How do we, the foreigners, spend the night in the village? That was the question. Per chance, we met a person on the roadside. We told him our unfortunate experience. He took pity on our miserable condition and allowed us to spend the night in the verandah of his house. We laid down on a board. Despite of lack of a

Cherished Memories Of Africa

comfortable bed we slept very well. In the morning, we set out on the next part of our journey. We were stopped by the police time and again; after satisfying them we carried on. We crossed borders of three countries and passing through their immigration and customs checkpoints we reached our destination the next evening. We were a spectacle; not easily recognisable! Anyway we completed the whole journey safely, Alhamdo-lillah.

Some Pleasant Memories of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh)

بچھڑا کچھ ادا سے کہ رُت ہی بدل گئی
اک شخص سارے شہر کو ویران کر گیا

I am writing here some pleasant memories of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra). A lot has been written about his holy personage and will be written for a long time. In his person he was a scholar and a cosmos too. He was a beautiful congregation. He was a bouquet that emitted fragrance of flowers from every colour and race.

The Blessed Face

There was a small village comprising of a few houses called Plado in Kaolack region. We went there on a Tabligh mission once and got some converts, Alhamdolillah. A few days after our return, we received a message from our Ahmadi friend, Ahmad Bah, that a friend from Plado Gatam Jallow, wanted some information about the jama'at. When we went there next time, we met him and introduced the jama'at to him. After quite an extensive discussion he said that he would consider about it later and when he got a convincing evidence he would perform bai'at.

It so happened that Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (ra) visited the Gambia a few months later. His tour itinerary included Farafenni in the Gambia. Accordingly I circulated that information to all the places in that region of Senegal and advised the people to

reach Farafenni.

By the Grace of Allah, the largest gathering during Huzur's visit took place at Farafenni, where most of the audience were from Senegal, including Gatam Jallow.

After the jalsa, the participants returned to their places. After a while, I went on a tour of Gatam Jallow's area and met him there. He declared his acceptance of Ahmadiyyat immediately. He said, 'I have got the evidence now. Huzur's blessed face is enough of a proof. Only those who are dear ones of God have such a spiritually radiant face.'

Prophetic radiance on his face

Once a minister from Guinea-Bissau met Huzur; I was there as interpreter. Huzur received him with extremely loving kindness and gave him priceless advice on several issues. Huzur pointed out the problems faced by the world especially the African countries that were apparently independent but were, in fact, shackled in chains of slavery and deprived of all types of independence. Huzur elaborated on that with examples and told him of the solution of those problems. He listened to that very attentively and studied Huzur's facial expression thoroughly. He told me, 'he is no ordinary person; if there is anyone who can confront the Christian world today surely it is him.' He added: 'Prophetic radiance is apparent on his face.'

I conveyed the minister's remarks to Huzur. Huzur said, 'this is not prophetic radiance, rather it is the light achieved through love and obedience of the Holy Prophet (saw) and following him'.

A Panacea for Progress of the African Nations

The minister asked Huzur: 'How can the African Nations progress?'

Huzur replied: 'As long as the African nations do not stop taking aid from other countries and are not contented with their own resources, however meagre they may be, they cannot make progress. Such aid is like AIDS; just as in AIDS the viruses take control of the body systems and let not any diet or drug have any effect, similarly the nation or the country that gives aid takes full control of the internal system of the recipient country. They have their own agenda. The recipient country can never make any decision independently and remain under the yoke of dominance by others. Thus, the only way to your independence and progress is to be self-sufficient.'

Gender Equality

A lady member asked Huzur, 'I am a politician and cannot observe *purdah*. What should I do?' The lady was wearing African robe and had a chadar on her head. Huzur said, 'your dress is quite appropriate. It is proper *purdah* indeed.' Huzur explained the status of woman in a beautiful way. Huzur added: 'The Europeans clamour about equal rights of men and women while they do not practice it. Have you ever seen men's football team playing against a ladies' team? That is not possible because Allah has created them with different powers and capabilities.'

Try to stop smoking gradually

One MP, Hon Muhammad Mustafa, told Huzur that he smoked heavily and requested prayers to help him stop smoking. Huzur advised him to try cutting down gradually.

Huzur told Choudhry Haadi Ali that a member of the Senegalese delegate was a smoker and directed him to get cigarettes for him. That he did. The people were greatly impressed by Huzur's extraordinary kindness.

Loving Kindness Unlimited

It was probably in 1995 that Huzur was in Germany for participation in the Jalsa Salana. My parents requested for mulaqat with Huzur that he granted kindly. My parents entered for the mulaqat. Huzur received them with love and kindness. At the end of the mulaqat, Huzur said, 'let us have a photograph'.

My mother was quite heavy. When she tried to get up, our kind master said, 'you keep seated on the chairs, I will come and stand behind you'. That their master should stand behind them while they remained seated on chairs was unusual and unnerving for my parents. Therefore, they tried to get up again. Huzur told them again to remain seated as he walked and stood behind them and the photograph was taken. Later Huzur told my parents, 'send a copy of the photo to our Munawar'.

Glory be to Allah! All instances of such kindness and love by our master for the disciples cannot be described; that was exclusively his magnificence.

Glad Tidings in Advance

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) arrived for a tour of the Gambia in early 1988.

Mansa Konko is a regional headquarter in the Gambia. It has a state rest house where Huzur was to stay for some rest on his way back from Basse. My family (my wife, my son Ataul Qadeer and my daughters Sultana and Attiya) and the wife of Daud Hanif Sahib - the former Amir of the Gambia, were already there. Huzur enquired from the wife of the Amir Sahib as to who were the girls. She told Huzur that they were daughters of Munawar Khurshid. Huzur asked, 'has he got three daughters.' Amir's wife said, 'no Huzur, he has two'. Huzur said, 'no, he has three'. My wife was expecting those days. A few months later Allah granted us a daughter – Tooba'. Thus Huzur's words were fulfilled verbatim.

Similarly, once I went to attend the Jalsa Salana UK with my family. We had good fortune of mulaqat with Huzur. During the mulaqat, my daughter Tooba told Huzur that she had headache. Huzur replied, 'you want another brother.' Huzur repeated these words twice. Later Allah blessed us with another son.

The Supreme Visiting the Lowly

During his 1988 tour of the Gambia, Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) came to Farafenni. My wife and children had the good fortune of setting up the room for him. After his address at the community hall, Huzur was to set out for Salikini and later spend the night at Njawara. When Huzur's entourage set out for Salikini after his address, as planned, it passed by my house that

happened to be on that route. When Daud Haneef Sahib told Huzur that the house was that of Munawar Khurshid, he asked the entourage to stop. Huzur, along with some guests from markaz, came to my humble dwelling. Huzur's coming to my house was sudden and unexpected. My wife and children were extremely busy with hospitality for the occasion. Huzur entered the room and greeted everyone with salam and said 'let us have tea'. While the tea was being prepared, we sat with Huzur. Huzur loved the children; he called the youngest daughter, Attiya and kissed her. He said, 'let us have a photograph'. Huzur's unannounced visit made history for the whole of our family, who will remember this blessing and honour for generations to come.

A Memorable Prize

During his tour of the Gambia Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) was scheduled to travel through the whole country. On his way back from Basse, he was to make a short break at Monsa Konko. Jama'at had not been established there by then. It is a regional headquarter with Commissioner's guest house there and that is where the entourage was to sojourn. (The place is now occupied by Tahir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School).

Some people had come to Farafenni from Guinea-Bissau. They were under my Tabligh and intended to perform bai'at. My family had assigned the duty of providing refreshments for Huzur and the entourage.

A large room in the guest house was arranged for bai'at. The people from Guinea-Bissau spoke Fula language. Huzur enquired; 'who will interpret? I replied that I would. Accordingly, I translated Huzur's words in Fula language. Huzur led the prayers afterwards. Huzur was greatly pleased with the bai'ats and my interpretation.

Huzur entered his car to start the next leg of the journey. I was standing near the car. Huzur put his hand in his pocket and put some dollars, without counting, in my hand saying, 'have sweets for that and share with others as well'. I still visualise that show of love and honouring this humble one. That is the most cherished treasure of my life.

Demise of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra)

One day you shall depart this mortal world

Everyone is bound by the Divine Decree

In 2003, we had chalked out a programme to hold our regional jalsa salana at Sare Mari village of Niore region of Senegal. About forty villages had been informed of that.

Two days before the Jalsa, a friend told me that Muridiyya, one of Senegal's Muslim religious organisations, were planning a big conference near the spot marked for our Jalsa. This is Senegal's strongest jama'at, founded by Amadu Bamba. After his death, a system of caliphate has been established which is in the form of hereditary leadership. It is a radical jama'at. Even the governments get established with their co-operation. When Abdullahi Wade became the president of the country, the first thing he did was to visit their caliph to pay homage and sat on his feet in his court. That photograph graced all the newspapers of the country.

Under the circumstances it was expedient for us to postpone our jalsa to some other appropriate date to avoid any unpleasant situation. Accordingly, all jama'ats were informed of the postponement immediately.

Because of the postponement, I returned to my base in Dakar. I happened to be in the office, when Ataul Qadeer rang me from London and told me weepingly that Huzur had passed away. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'oon*. Some muallims were sitting in the office then. I broke the heart rendering news to them and

they were all grieved.

When Sali Jabi Sahib heard the news of Huzur's demise, the poor fellow fell on the floor out of grief and remained in this distressful state for quite a while. He had attended the Jalsa Salana UK, met Huzur and became his devotee. He, too, has passed away since. May Allah grant him paradise, Amin!

A Dream that became a Reality

When I received the news of Huzur's demise, I conveyed the sad news to all the jama'at centres throughout the country and some of the jama'at members. Hon Kwabene Kaba was in Dakar. He came to me straight away and told me that his son had narrated a dream to him that morning. In the dream somebody was telling him: 'one of your saintly leaders has passed away'. 'Soon afterwards I received your phone call about Huzur's demise', Kwabene Kaba said.

Birth of Tahir Ahmad

It is customary in some African countries that people name their children after their dear ones, whether related physically or spiritually. The day Huzur passed away, possibly about the same time as Huzur's soul was departing the physical body, I received a phone call from a member of the Kaolack jama'at – Ahmad Aw that Allah had granted him a son whom he had named Tahir Ahmad after the name of Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh). In the meantime, Maulana Ata-ul-Mujib Rashid Sahib, Imam Fazl Mosque London informed me of the sad demise of Huzur and meeting for the election of the next khalifa.

Wonderful Incidence of Divine Support

I prepared for the journey and went to the airport. Hon Kabne Kaaba MP accompanied me. It was Saturday and all the offices in the town were closed. I enquired from the airline offices at the airport but no seat was available in any airline. I was greatly disappointed. We came back home by the evening. We both went to the airport next day, approached all offices and got the same reply, 'no seat available'. One airline office told me that they had one seat but for twice the normal price. I contacted the Tabshir office and was told to get the ticket and arrive soon.

When we went back to that office to buy that ticket, I was told that it was gone. I was distressed. One office clerk told me that there was one more ticket available but at thrice the normal price. It was beyond my buying capacity. Reconciled to the Will of Allah, I decided to go back. Kabne Sahib advised me to buy the ticket as it an historical occasion. I told him that I could not afford it. He offered to buy it for me. That brought tears to my eyes. How devoted and willing to make sacrifice for the sake of jama'at that African brother was! I replied that I did not want to burden him. I picked up the luggage and set out to return. We passed by an airline office as we were leaving the airport. A clerk called me and beckoned to me to come in. He told me that a ticket at normal price was available and the plane would be leaving in two hours. I thanked Allah, paid up, got the ticket and was airborne within a few hours. All that happened so quickly that I could not believe for quite a while the way Allah resolved the problem with His support.

Chapter 15

Miscellaneous

Imam Mahdi in Senegal – Layene sect

During the previous century, a man called Imam Laye claimed to be the Imam Mahdi. He is said to be an uneducated fisherman. He had no book. Once I managed to get hold a booklet consisting of about 30 pages and, according to the compiler, comprising of Imam Laye's sermons. One sentence in it read: 'I am Imam of this age, however, if a greater Imam Mahdi comes he should be accepted.' His descendants believe in him as a prophet as well. Even his son is believed to be a prophet i.e. father as Imam Mahdi and son as Isa.

His disciples are comprised of his descendants only, mostly in Dakar, and some fishermen from the same tribe, Lebou. Being fishermen they are mostly settled in coastal villages. They have only three mosques in the country, situated in two localities of Dakar.

Ahmadiyya Booklet published in a Senegalese Newspaper to Support their Truth

Imam Laye died in 1909. After 100 years of his claim, his followers planned centenary celebrations. They did not have any literature or any other worthwhile thing to present on this occasion. They had Ahmadiyya booklet, 'The truth about Khatme-nabuwwat'. They got that entire booklet published in a renowned Senegalese newspaper La Soleil as their support. The details are as under:

An international trade fair is organised in the capitol of Senegal

every two years. Traders from all over the world erect their stalls there. This humble one had the good fortune of organising a jama'at Tabligh stall several times. Customarily we exhibited various jama'at publications in French and English. Visitors who visited our stall would look at some of the books; some would buy while others just moved on. Some visitors would enquire about certain books and if we did not stock them we tendered our apology.

One day a Senegalese friend came to the stall and enquired about the booklet 'The truth about khatme nabuwwat'. I told him that I did not have it. Several other visitors also enquired about the same booklet. I was much surprised as non-Ahmadis do not usually buy a book like that, rather we present it to others for Tabligh purpose.

I enquired one such person as to what interest did he have in that book. I avoided answering that but another person told me that the entire booklet had been published in the daily 'Le Soleil'. I was greatly surprised. The newspaper had their own stall in the trade fair. I approached them and enquired about the issue containing the specific article. As I did not know the date precisely they could not help me and I came back.

At the end of the fair we passed through Kaolack on our way back to the Gambia. I thought of greeting our Ahmadi friend Muhammad Jobe who was a shopkeeper there. When I met him, among other things he told me about the publication of our booklet in Le Soleil. He took out that paper from his cupboard and handed it to me. I was overjoyed to get that paper out of the blue.

The article was on the front page of the paper. At the start of the article there was a small photograph of a Senegalese person followed by the headline, 'A prophet can come'. Under the headline it read: 'M. A. Dard, Imam London Mosque writes' and then the entire booklet was quoted verbatim. However there was no mention of Ahmadiyyat at all.

'Assalamo-alaikum, O Prophet of Allah' at Imam Laye's Grave

One day I went to the Jami'a mosque of the Layene Brotherhood at Fajr time along with one of our muallims. The mosque is situated in the Yoff area of Dakar. There were about twenty worshippers at Fajr prayer. After the prayers, all of them set out to the grave of Imam Laye situated near the sea coast. We accompanied them. After about 100 metres walk, they entered a big field surrounded by a wall. Being at the sea side it was sandy. We were told that it was sacred land. Then they entered a room that housed a grave. As they entered the room, they all said loudly: *السلام عليكم ورحمة الله يا نبي الله* (Peace be unto you and His Mercy, O Prophet of Allah). Then they prayed in their own ways separately and set out for their homes. There is no opposition in the country to this sect. They hold a fair every year which is participated by all other sects. They regard the Ahmadiyya Jama'at off the right path for believing in the prophethood of Promised Messiah (as) while there is no opposition to this sect in spite of their belief in two prophets after the Holy Prophet (saw). Please note that this sect comprises of members of one family.

**A Non-Ahmadi Pakistani Friend and Tahajjud Prayer
by Ousman Darboe**

The hate created by Pakistani mullahs in the public frequently abates when they are overseas and Pakistani brothers meet with love and frequently praise the Ahmadiyya jama'at generously and even blow off some steam against their mullahs.

One day I went to the Embassy of Pakistan in Senegal. Another Pakistani was also sitting there. After customary exchanges, he told me that he had tailoring business in Dakar. I told him that I was an Ahmadi murabbi. That cooled him off a bit and he left after completing his job there. After a while, I also left and went to the town centre where I ran into him again. While chatting, among other things, I told him that I had come from the Gambia and visited Senegal frequently and asked him if he needed anything from the Gambia. He said: 'I hear that lentils and pickles are available there. I will be much obliged if you could bring some for me'. On my next visit to Dakar, I carried along some of these items for him. When I went to his house to deliver these things, he said, 'as long as you are in Dakar, my house is at your disposal; you can stay here.' I thanked him and told him that I was staying with another Pakistani friend but would be much obliged if he could accommodate my driver.

It was the month of Ramadan. He offered me food; I told him that I was fasting. I left Ousman Darboe with him and went to my residence. That led to daily meetings with the young man. One day he said, 'Respected brother, if you do not mind, may I ask you a question'. I replied, yes, by all means'. He said:

'You asked me for a prayer mat and went to the other room and offered salat there. With due apologies, I peeped at you while you were praying to see what was your salat like; being 'non-Muslims' what was the mode of your worship. I saw you offering the full salat and it was not different from our salat in any way. The day you met me for the first time, you told me that you were fasting. Moreover, I have noticed that your driver Ousman offers tahajjud in addition to other salats and that too like us, the Muslims. I am really perplexed. What is all this? Is all that I have been hearing about the Qadianis from our maulvis all my life untrue? Or is your salat and fast different in some hidden way?'

I explained to him the character of the maulvis, jama'at's beliefs and teachings in detail. That surprised him a great deal.

As long as the young man, Safdar Ali, stayed in Senegal he read the 'Alfazl' newspaper regularly. Once a cargo ship docked at Dakar port. There were some Pakistanis in its staff. Safdar Ali went to the ship to see them. One of them told Safdar Ali that they had been on the voyage for a long time and were getting bored. They requested him for any Pakistani newspaper or magazine in Urdu. Safdar Ali told them that he only had some issues of Ahmadiyya Jama'at's 'Alfazl' to offer, if they would like. Thus he gave quite a few issues of the 'Alfazl' to those seamen that they accepted happily.

It is nearly fifteen years since. He respects the jama'at very much, seeks my advice in his personal matters till today and gives me kind of respect that is due to an elder brother. The purpose of narrating this episode is that when one is abroad, his mental attitude changes. The environments influence people a

great deal; as long as they are in good environment they behave positively but when they are under the influence of maulvis they become dangerous and venomous like them. It is like the matchbox and the matches – as long as these are encased there is no fire. However, when one of these matches strikes against the box, a flame results sometimes with disastrous consequences. They say that one of the matches can burn down the whole jungle to ashes just like Abdullah bin Sabah's venomous personality and seditious mentality had plunged a tranquil and peaceful environment into a bloodbath.

Khalifa is made by God

What a wonderful reply by the Christian President Leopold Senghor that silenced the ulema! When Senegal gained independence from the French, Leopold Senghor had the honour of being the first president of the country. The population of Senegal is largely Muslim, Christians constituting about 5 percent only. Most of the Muslims were uneducated, while Christians although small in number had more educated persons. Senghor, although a Christian, became the president. The Muslims accepted him wholeheartedly.

Once it occurred to the ulema and elders of Senegal, or somebody gave them the idea that as they were Muslims they should have a Muslim president. However, there was no Muslim talented enough to be familiar with the intricacies of governance. They hit an idea that a delegation of ulema and elders should see the president and request him to convert to Islam befitting the head of a Muslim state and that would be to their advantage. Accordingly, the delegation had an audience with Senghor and

presented their request. Senghor was a very intelligent and shrewd person. He said: 'I am very pleased to see you and am grateful for your proposal and promise to accept it'. The delegation were glad over their success. 'But there is a little problem', Sengor added after a little while, 'if you could help me in this respect, I will have no objection. The problem is that Muslims in Senegal are divided in so many sects. If I join Tijaniyyah, the Muridiyyah, Layenes and other sects will be unhappy with me and if I become a Muride the other sects will be offended. Thus instead of love they will develop hatred for me. I wish that you go and elect a khalifa as leader accepted by all the Senegalese Muslims. I will immediately perform his bai'at.' The delegate left in silence and never approached Senghor for that purpose again. Senghor ruled the country for a long period peacefully and comfortably and then abdicated. The Senegalese regard him as their great leader till today and many important national buildings are named after him.

Ambassador of Sierra Leone Speaks the Truth

The President of Liberia was due as a special guest for independence-day celebrations of the Gambia. The Gambian ministers, Ambassadors of various countries and VIPs from different departments were waiting in the VIP lounge to welcome the honourable guest. I was also there in my capacity as Amir of the Jama'at. Different persons were sitting at different places. The place where I was sitting also had Mauritanian Ambassador there and the Ambassador of Sierra Leone, Hon Mr Fofana nearby. The Mauritanian Ambassador said to Mr Fofana: 'You are a very good Muslim and because of your love for Islam, I think, your next posting will be in Saudi Arabia.'

Mr Fofana said, 'that is not possible. I would never like to go there because I think the Saudis are not good Muslims. Had they been good Muslims, we the Africans would never suffer from such deprivation and despondency. They are engaged in pleasing the big governments only. I will never feel ashamed of telling you that the service to Islam and humanity rendered by the Ahmadiyya Jama'at is unparalleled. These days many governments and organisations have arrived in Africa and are beating the drum for their services there but the Ahmadiyya Jama'at reached us when there was nothing except hardships and we did not get a look-in by anybody. It was during that period that the jama'at selflessly rendered service to humanity and Islam for our country and nation in a way that is unparalleled. I respect this jama'at from the core of my heart and salute them for their services'.

Hon Fofana's reaction was so sudden and realistic and he expressed his thoughts in such an emotional and sorrowful tone that everybody was affected.

The Mauritanian Ambassador was a very bigoted person; his condition was worth seeing and he was speechless. I submitted the report of this incident to Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (ra) and he admired Mr Fofana for his courage and speaking out truth.

Divine Sign of Forty Thousand Arabic Root Words

French translation of the Holy Quran was published under the aegis of Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra). Huzur directed that it be gifted to all the Muslim ambassadors in Senegal. To comply with the directive some of us went to Dakar because all the embassies are located there. One day our delegation went to Lebanese

Embassy to see their ambassador. We introduced ourselves to him, told him that we belonged to the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, that our jama'at had translated the Holy Quran in many languages, more recently in French and that we had come to present that to him. And thus we presented a copy of the Holy Quran to him.

He stood up and received the blessed gift very respectfully. Then he enquired about our beliefs and we gave him a brief introduction of the jama'at. He said: 'We are receiving loads of literature against your jama'at from the government of Pakistan these days. You should also present your viewpoint to everyone.' Therefore, he was given further information about the jama'at.

He inquired if we had any book written by the founder of Ahmadiyyat. By chance, we had Hadrat Masih Ma'ud's Arabic writing – Al-istifta with us that was presented to him. First of all, he looked at the photograph of the Promised Messiah (as) carefully. Then he opened the book and started reading it. He was engrossed in the book so much that he became unaware of his surroundings. After quite a while, he came out of that spell and in astonishment asked: 'In which Arabic university was the author educated?' He was told that he did not go out of his village for learning. He would not believe that and said, 'it is beyond the capability of a non-Arab to write that type of Arabic'. In short, he was greatly impressed and gave our delegation a lot of respect.

A Childish Wish Granted

Sometimes very interesting incidents take place in everyday life. I narrate one such incident here to illustrate how Allah, the Almighty grants small wishes of His humble servants.

I was once travelling from Pakistan to the Gambia. The Turkish airliner had taken off from Karachi airport and was to fly over Dubai on its way to Ankara. In due course an announcement was made that we would be passing over Dubai shortly.

I had never been to Dubai but had heard a lot about its spaciousness and beauty from my friends. Suddenly, I had a wish that somehow Allah cause the plane to make a stop at Dubai airport during the journey. It was a strange childish wish that developed in my heart; it has puzzled me till today.

After a short while, another announcement was made by a lady that because of technical problems the plane was going to land at Dubai airport and that the passengers could go to the airport lounge during that stay. Soon we were strolling in the Dubai airport. We were there for about two hours. We saw the shopping centre, did some shopping. It was the first opportunity to see the Arabs so closely. The grandeur of the airport was adorable and worth seeing. This journey became an historical and unforgettable one as it showed that there is an All-hearing, All-knowing God who fulfils the wishes of sinners like us in this way, Alhamdolillah.

Divine Camera

I went to a village Msira Yahya in Kolda region; I was accompanied by our muallim Sheikh Mbalo. The village imam was well advanced in age and was well respected in the area because of his knowledge and wisdom. When I had met him, he said: 'I have taken your photograph that I will keep with me for the rest of my life'. I was surprised, what photo, who took it and when, and who gave it to him? It was my first meeting with him and that

too in a small room. I asked him: 'what photo'? He said, 'Maulvi Sahib, Science has made big strides these days. Many inventions that baffle human mind have been made. However, Divine creation is unparalleled. I have taken your photo with my eyes and saved it in my heart. Nobody can take it away from me as long as I live neither can time disfigure it in any way. Whereas a photo taken by an ordinary camera loses its original quality after sometime. How humble and helpless human intellect is compared to Divine creation!'

Talisman Mafia

Pirs are the richest people in Africa. All big buildings and important plots belong to them. As the people are superstitious they take talismans from them to make gains and avoid loss. The ruling class are also indebted to them. The former president went to Pir sahib soon after winning the elections. The pir was seated on the sofa and the president expressed his allegiance by sitting in his feet.

Handshake with left hand –odd belief

Dibbi Trawallay, a native of Mali was a school watchman. He was about to leave for Mali during school's annual leave and was bidding farewell to his friends. I also went along to see him off. I presented my right hand for handshake to which he responded by putting forward his left hand. I thought he probably had some problem with his right hand. When I enquired, I was told that they held the belief that when embarking on a long journey if you bade farewell by shaking right hand you would never meet again. Therefore, it was customary to shake the left hand before setting off on a long journey.

When the Pir transforms into a Lion

In the Gambia, Senegal and other neighbouring countries the fake pirs and saints have established such a network of trickery, deception and fraud that one is baffled. I used to teach Islamic studies in the high school at Basse. The students used to ask questions on different topics and answered to the best of my ability. As most of them came from superstitious society, their questions usually related to the jinn, talismans and miracles of their pirs. One day a student called Kemo Jobateh from a nearby town – Georgetown asked me if a man could transform into another form of creation. I answered in the negative whereupon he said that that was not right. As evidence he mentioned that a man in his town transformed into a lion at times.

Georgetown is a small island about 60 kilometers from Basse. The people there knew each other well. The jama'at there was under my supervision and visited them frequently.

I asked the student the name of that person. He was a bit scared at first but, on my insistence, he told me that his name was Sulaiman Haidara. (In the indo-Pakistan subcontinent, they are titled Sayyed but in the Gambia and Senegal they are called Sharif or Haidara. They are held in respect by the people. Most of them ensnare the folks in their network and mercilessly suck their blood, figuratively speaking).

I was well acquainted with Sulaiman Haidara. He was not an Ahmadi but greatly respected the jama'at members. His elder brother Sidi Mukhtar Haidara was the local jama'at president. I promised my dear student that on my next visit to Georgetown

I would see Sulaiman Haidara to find out the reality of this secret and would let him know.

After a while I went to Georgetown on Jama'at tour. One day I visited Sulaiman Haidara. After customary greetings, I told him the purpose of my visit i.e. to find out the reality behind his transformation into a lion. He burst into laughter and went on laughing for quite some time. Then he said: 'Ustaz, if we do not scare these fools with stories like this they will devour us. So we have to play various tricks with these people'.

All Talisman into the Fireplace

A Gambian youth, Dr Khalil Nyagado went to Germany for education. In keeping with Gambian tradition, everyone expressed his love by putting a juju (talisman) around his neck to bring about outstanding success and ward off sufferings, trials and tribulations. When he reached his college, he noticed that his fellow students were bereft of the blessing of talismans and he was the only one wearing them. Notwithstanding, they were more intelligent and capable than him while, because of the talismans, he should have been the best. When at home he was afraid lest they harmed him. Many days passed by in that state of uncertainty. home, he used to think: were they all in error or was he being foolish for wearing those. After deliberating for several days, he decided to throw them away. However, being rather superstitious There was continuous struggle between heart and mind. Ultimately he decided one day that it was absolute deception, therefore, must get rid of them. The question was how to finish them off? If he just cast them off, perhaps during a moment of weakness he would pick them up again and wear them.

One day he picked up all the talismans and threw them in fire; they were burnt to ashes. On his return from Germany, he came in contact with some jama'at members. He was virtuous by nature and had a blessed soul. As such, he soon entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

Some Memoires of Early Days

First Eid Prayer Abroad:

I was directed by markaz to proceed to the Gambia, West Africa in early 1983. I arrived at Banjul, the capital of the Gambia in May, the same year. The summer was at its hottest that time. Ramadan was due to start in June. Amir Sahib directed me to go to Georgetown jama'at and organise Dars and Taraveeh prayers during Ramadan there.

Under the leadership of the Amir Daud Hanif Sahib, we reached Georgetown in a small car of Brother Umar Sonko (registration number GO 6400). Georgetown is situated about 375 kilometers from Banjul. We reached near Georgetown after several hours. There is a small river before the town that is crossed by a ferry. The ferry is driven by any engine. There is a long iron rope tied over the ferry and all the passengers jointly pull on it and the ferry moves along gracefully carrying the passengers to the other end. When we boarded the ferry, most of the passengers started pulling the rope while some stood on the ground watching the river. I also stood aside enjoying the experience of this wonderful journey that was first of its kind in my life.

Amir Sahib advised me to join the other passengers in the act lest they looked at me as an arrogant person who assumed to be

superior to them; giving that sort of impression was not appropriate for a muballigh. May Allah reward him for that! I made his advice an integral part of my policy. Whenever I travelled on a ferry like that, I always tried to join those pulling the rope. In fact, I tried to join in all their activities and that was very beneficial in practical life.

We reached Georgetown soon thereafter. It is a small town, in fact an island. Even its present rundown condition is reminiscent of its glory days. It was an important centre during the British rule. Its underground chambers tell the terrible tales of Europe-bound slaves. The river Gambia was an important route for human trade.

There was a small but devoted jama'at in Georgetown. Most of those elderly members have passed on. May Allah shower His Mercy on them, Amin! We arrived at the mosque and mission house of Ahmadiyya jama'at. When the members got the news, they all came to the mosque eagerly including Siddi Mukhtar Haidara, Bala Jatta, Alhaj Kousa Kajera, Alhaj Sahu and Mr Sayang. These elderly brothers welcomed us cordially. Then food was served in a large tray and all brothers ate out of that. Amir Sahib gave me some necessary directives and left for Basse.

In Georgetown I had no acquaintance at all; unknown people, new language, different culture and completely alien environment. My ability to speak in English was next to nothing and the elders of the local jama'at were no better at that. Ramadan started the next day. It was June and summer was at its hottest. It was quite difficult to venture out of the house while fasting. I performed the duty of dars to the best of my

ability, led the taraveeh prayers and started ta'lim-ul-Quran classes for children. I started communicating with the members and thus gained some fluency in speech.

Amir Sahib had directed me to celebrate Eid at Georgetown after which I was allowed to go to Banjul. Banjul was the capital town. Moreover, a large number of central functionaries, doctors, and teachers with their families lived there and there was a lot of hustle and bustle there.

Away from the family, severely hot weather, ignorance of language, difficulty in communicating with friends and new style of food! I longed for someone who spoke the same language. The only desire I had was to get over the Eid and go to Banjul to meet the Pakistani colleagues. Anyway, I went through Ramadan quite well, led Eid prayer and set out for Banjul. Because of Eid I could not get any transport. Therefore, I picked up my bag, walked to the ferry terminal that was a few kilometres from the town. I ferried across the river and walked a few kilometres more to reach the roadside. It was the longest and the only road in the country. There were no buses in the Gambia those days. However, occasional wagon-like vehicle did make trips.

Anyway I reached the main road and started waiting for transport. From morning till noon, there was no sign of any vehicle. Occasionally a truck passed by throwing up dust. It was Eid day, had nothing to eat since morning, standing by the roadside, nobody to help, time passed till it was Asr time, hunger, tiredness, despair, nowhere to go, unable to stay! Only one who has had such experience can visualise the vexing condition that I was in.

Suddenly I saw an apparition which assumed the form of a vehicle. I got up immediately and moved on to the roadside and waited anxiously for that vehicle. As it approached near, I realised it was a truck carrying goods. I beckoned the driver to stop and he kindly did stop. After customary greetings I told him that I wanted to go to Banjul. (In the Gambia, if you enquire anything from a stranger without salutation he will not respond with pleasure). I told him that I wanted to go to Banjul and would be much obliged if he took me along. He said that there was no room on the front seat and on the back there were sheep and goats. I said: 'never mind, let me sit on the back'. May Allah reward him, he agreed to let me sit among the sheep where I sat sheepishly. After about seven hours' long journey at about 11 pm I reached Ahmadiyya Hospital where all Pakistani members had gathered to watch a video received from markaz. A video was received only occasionally those days and if electricity was available it was watched collectively. I thanked God, met the friends and had breakfast, lunch and dinner all in one. That is how I spent that unforgettable and memorable Eid, Alhamdo-lillah.

**Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim High
School Basse, The Gambia**

Allah, the Almighty says in the Holy Quran: 'if you try to count the favours of Allah, you will not be able to number them.' One of these countless favours is the eye with which one sees this beautiful and colourful world, fascinating excellences and mind-ravishing wonders of mysterious organisation of this universe. Then a sensible person uncontrollably sings the praises of grandeur and omnipotence of creator and master of this

unparalleled system. This physical eye can only lead us to what is within its reach and scope.

Beside this eye Allah has blessed us another eye that we call the reflective eye. That too is a wonderful favour of Allah. A few years ago I had a heart operation. After the operation, in addition to the essential treatment, the hospital staff also conduct some physical exercises under their supervision.

In one exercise, all the patients are made to lie on the floor. They are told to close their eyes and relax their bodies completely. They are told to visualise a beautiful garden or some other beautiful spot, observe its lovely scenery, tall green trees, countless kinds of multi-coloured, sweet-smelling flowers, dancing water-falls, birds singing enchanting songs and pleasing pranks by innocent children. After a while they would feel cheerful and freshened in themselves.

In fact there are many things that we cannot see with our eyes open. One has to visualise those things with one's eyes closed. That way, you can reach any far-flung corner of the world in no time. Not only that but state of every moment of past life, its setting and the people concerned with that incident as it occurred at that time appear before your eyes.

Human life is a journey, at times bitter, at times sweet. In it you come across beautiful, attractive and pleasurable scenes as well as thorny bushes and pointed stones. One reminisces bitter and sweet memories of the past at times during free periods and gets spiritual distress or happiness as the case may be.

His Grace turned a drop into a river

A few years ago, on the way back from a tour of Casamance in Senegal, I happened to pass through Basse town of the Gambia. I spent the night at the Principal's house and went to see the Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School. I was overjoyed to see the vast and spacious building of the school comprising of more than forty rooms of different sizes, science laboratories and all appropriate modern facilities. Then suddenly I visualised the initial journey of the school like a movie.

I had arrived in the Gambia in 1983. Those days cement blocks for construction of the school were being prepared under the supervision of Omer Sonko Sahib – an official in agriculture department. He is a very virtuous and devoted Ahmadi. I reached Basse during that period. Amir Sahib allocated the duty of construction of the school to me. Thus I had the opportunity of building the first block, Alhamdulillah.

Basically the building consisted of two classrooms. As a large number of students got admission to first year, they were divided into two groups – one group for each classroom. In addition there was a large room which was used for various purposes. Within that large hall there were two small rooms, one used as Principal's office and the other as store room.

The building of the first block was completed just in time for the start of the academic year and admission for the first class was started. The Principal arrived in the Gambia from Pakistan the day opening ceremony of the school was planned. He travelled about 400 kilometers straight from the airport to Basse and participated in the auspicious ceremony.

The Beginning of the School

Like all other Divine communities, opposition to Ahmadiyyat has been going on since day one. The jama'at faces opposition at different levels in the Gambia as well. When the jama'at decided to start a new high school in the Gambia and the government granted permission to start a school at Basse, the local administration started putting hurdles in acquiring a piece of land. The local chief, Mr Qurbally Sahib was particularly influenced by the local opposition and their malicious propaganda. Therefore, he refused to give land in his locality.

In this critical situation, Ahmadou Manneh Sahib of Manneh Kunda, who was a very sincere, courageous and influential Ahmadi exerted vigorously and gaining support of local dignitaries, succeeded in acquiring a vast piece of land near Mansajang Kunda; that is where the beautiful and spacious building of Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School now stands.

Initial Staff

Saeed Ahmad Chattha (Principal); Munawar Ahmad Khurshid (Murabbi); Muhammadou Bah (Teacher); Clive (Teacher VSO) N'day Gassama (Secretary); Jara (Messenger); Dibbi Trawallay (Watchman)

Financial Condition of the School

Once I was returning to Basse, accompanied by the school principal, Saeed Ahmad Chattha. On the wayside we saw an old car that had been badly damaged in an accident. Everything except its body had vanished. Chattha Sahib said: 'We could get

a part of its side cut off by a welder and prepare a big sign board for our school that we could put on the main gate of the school. Every passer-by will come to know of the school.' For obvious reasons the proposal could not be acted upon. However, it does reflect the poor financial condition of the school.

Some Sweet Fruits of Nasir Ahmadiyya Muslim High School

Alhaji Bah: Recently I came across Alhaji Bah who currently holds a high ranking post in Education Department of the Gambia. He met me with great love and respect. He had come to participate in Jalsa Salana UK. Seeing him I took a trip down memory lane. Some twenty five years ago I was with our Muballigh Omar Ali at Farafenni. We were sitting in the mission house which was in a rented building. Three village boys took permission to enter. Omar Ali Sahib told me that the three were Ahmadis, Alhamdulillah, from nearby Duta Bulu jama'at and were studying at the secondary school in Farafenni. (In the Gambia, students who do not get good grades in the primary school final examination get admission to secondary school instead of high school). The boys appeared very good to me. Back in Basse, I spoke to Chattha Sahib about their admission to the high school the following year and he readily agreed. Thus all three of them were admitted to Nasir Ahmadiyya High School Basse and, as long as was there, they stayed with me. They were good, sincere and hard-working. By the Grace of Allah, all three of them passed the high school exams; one of them was Alhaji Bah.

After high school, Alhaji Bah went to college for higher education.

These days, by the Grace of Allah, he is holding a high ranking post in Education Department of the Gambia and is an active member of the National Amila (executive council) of the Gambia Jama'at. His family was villagery and absolutely unlettered. Now, by the Grace of Allah, they are counted as an educated family throughout the area. One of his brothers is a teacher and another one a muallim of the jama'at.

Demba Bah: He was also one of the three boys and had stayed with me for quite a long time. After passing out from Nasir Ahmadiyya High School, he went to Russia for higher studies and got his masters there. He is currently holding a high ranking post in government services. He has been a very good natured person from his early days. By the Grace of Allah, he is a very devoted, capable and active member of jama'at and an ardent member of the Gambia's national amila. He is serving the jama'at sincerely to the best of his ability.

Ebrima Bayo: This young man also came from the Gambia to attend the Jalsa Salana UK recently. He is currently serving as the Principal of Masroor Secondary School and is an important, useful, ardent and active member of the Gambia jama'at. He hails from Dampha Kunda, a village near Basse. His father was a very sincere and devoted Ahmadi.

I saw him in his childhood. He used to accompany his father from his village to the mosque in Basse for Friday prayers. He was very good natured person from his early days. Once he came to me while he was still a student at primary school and asked for Holy Quran with English translation. In view of his age and level of education, I asked him if he had the money to buy it.

He put his hand in his pocket, took out a five Dalasi note and put it in my hand. I was much pleased with his enthusiasm and devotion and gifted him a copy of the Holy Quran that he kept with him for a long time.

Later he got admission in Nasir High School. I had the opportunity to serve him in his education on behalf of the school and the jama'at. It gives me a great pleasure to see him now as head of a great institution, Masroor High School.

Ameen Ceremony: Because of malicious propaganda about Ahmadiyya jama'at by the mullahs and Arabic teachers, the people in Basse area appeared afraid and cautious. We started teaching 'Yassarnal-Quran' from the very beginning in addition to the curriculum approved by the Education Department. After completion of the primer we taught reading of the Holy Quran to all the students as well. We named the annual prize distribution ceremony as 'Ameen Ceremony'. During the proceedings, many students recited various surahs (chapters) of the Holy Quran. Later an interesting quiz programme on religious knowledge was also presented. That had a very favourable effect on the audience.

Travelling is Hellish

Once I set out on a tarbiyyat trip accompanied by two muallims – Ahmad Jallow and Ibrahim Drammeh. According to the programme we offered maghrib prayers at Salikini. After that we had planned to offer isha prayers with Saba jama'at, hold a meeting there and then move on to spend the night with Dr Munawar Ahmed. We started our journey from Salikini by car. The road was untarred and studded with potholes.

A few kilometres from Salikini we found that the road was in a pathetic condition. Thereby the vehicles were passing through the fields alongside the roads. Big buses took the same route thus making the ground very soft. Because of the huge tyres of the buses the place had become very soft although appeared fairly good. I also followed the bus track with my car. We had not gone far when our car refused to move forward. We got out and noticed that the car chassis was touching the ground. The more we accelerated deeper it sank into the mud. It was night time and there was jungle all around. It was unlikely that any passerby would pass that way at that time. The muallims pushed the car several times as strongly as they could. Instead of moving forward, the car only sank deeper. All our efforts led to nought. It was getting quite late in the night. I had always kept a cutlass in my car which was quite useful during travels. I took it out and started cutting down the bushes and tree branches from the jungle and brought them to the car. We would raise one side of the car at a time with great difficulty and spread out those cuttings under the tyres. We also spread those cuttings on the road ahead to prevent the car getting stuck there again. We hoped that the car would start and we would be out of that misery.

When we started the car, it refused to start. Because the lights were kept on for long time, the car battery had run down. Nowhere to go, unable to stay! We were exhausted with hunger, thirst and fatigue. The jungle all around, pitch darkness and sounds of the beasts created a very spooky atmosphere. We tried to have a nap in the car. When we shut the car doors it became very hot and close inside and when we opened them

mosquitoes and insects moved in. Anyway we spent the night now sleeping, now awake. We had not taken any food and hunger was troublesome and our lips had gone dry because of thirst.

For Sake of Peace: About Fajr time I heard the sound of a tube well. I started walking towards the point that I guessed the sound was coming from. There were millet fields all around. After quite a long walk I saw some people at one place. When I reached them, I learnt that a German national had established a vast agricultural farm there. I was surprised to see a European in that jungle. I asked him why he had left Europe to settle in such a desolate place. He said: 'I come from Germany. I got fed up with machine-like life of Europe. Therefore, I have settled in this jungle for peace of mind.'

I told him of my night long woeful experience and requested for his help. He sent some of his workers with me immediately, He advised me that when the car started I should not stop the car anywhere rather head straight to the Kerewan ferry terminal and get the battery charged by ferry staff there. His workers pushed the car long enough for it to start. We went straight to the ferry terminal that was a few kilometres from there. We requested the ferry staff to charge the battery for us and they did that willingly. May Allah reward them!

Thus we completed half-hour journey in about twelve hours and reached the residence of Dr Munawar Ahmed who had waited and fretted for us all night.

Necessity is the Mother of Invention

The markaz arranged, through Japan mission, three second hand cars for the Gambia jama'at for the first time in early 1988. In the Gambia it is right-hand drive but the cars that we received were all left-hand drive which, under the laws of the country, we could not drive.

On the other hand, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) was due to arrive soon for an historic tour of the Gambia. The cars were badly needed to prepare for that, rush around and contact the jama'ats. Necessity is the mother of invention. We consulted a local mechanic. He, very skilfully, cut front parts of the cars and transferred the steering to the other side. The cars served the jama'at for many years.

A few days before the arrival of Huzur, the Ameer Sahib gave me one car with Usman Bah Sahib as its driver and directed me to tour the jama'ats of the Gambia and Senegal. I did not know driving those days. I used a motor cycle.

According to the programme we set out from Banjul in the afternoon. We had a builder with us and a lady who was related to Usman Bah Sahib. We hoped to reach Saba jama'at by evening. From Banjul to Bara we were to go by ferry. When we reached the riverside we learnt that the ferry had already left. We waited for a long time but the ferry did not return. Usman Bah said that he would go across by a boat and request the ferry staff to return and hoped that they would come back to ferry us across. So he left by a boat. We waited anxiously for him on this side but he did not return for a long time. It was getting dark and all the

people around us, except some shop-keepers, carried their luggage and left for their homes. We were on the river bank with no sign of houses nearby and we were wayfarers and strangers in that area. The car was parked on the riverbank facing the river. The driver was not with us and I had developed some fever too. The situation caused great worry.

It was gone past isha time. The darkness of night rendered the river water invisible. The hope of Usman's return also dwindled away. I requested my companions and those few who were there, rather apprehensively, to push my car back. They complied and I took the car about 200 metres away from the river and turned it around to face the other way. Usman Sahib had not taken the car key with him. I tried to start the car; it would start and then stop. One of the men told me to keep the clutch pressed for it to start. I tried that a few times and, by the Grace of Allah, succeeded. As I was used to driving the motorbike, in similar manner, I started driving the car slowly. It was night time and the road was wide and without any traffic. The nearest village was about five kilometres away. We got there and spent the night with school's headmaster. It was morning. I had learnt driving the car forward but did not know how to reverse. With a little effort I familiarised myself with the reversing gear. With that success, I drove the car back to the river with greater confidence. Usman Sahib had returned by then. He had his own story for not returning the night before.

One outcome of this worrying situation was that I became a driver. We usually travelled to villages on untarred roads with little traffic. Therefore, during this trip I had ample opportunity to drive and I became a confident driver.

'Amir Lives on Petrol and his car goes on Prayers'

Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan was a very devoted and faithful member of UK jama'at. He came to the Gambia twice with his wife. He was a skin specialist. During these trips he organised medical camps in big centres of jama'at and, by the Grace of Allah, served the people abundantly. His wife also fully supported him in this good deed. May Allah reward them!

Once he brought many motorbikes as a gift to the Gambia jama'at which were given to the muallims.

He had great zeal for preaching. He tried his best to deliver the message of truth to all and sundry. By the Grace of Allah his efforts bore fruit and several bai'ats took place through him.

In 1998 he came to the Gambia for the first time. The Ameer had gone to Pakistan on and I was serving as his deputy.

Those days I had an old car that malfunctioned most often. Firstly it was old. Secondly its steering had been changed from left to right because the Japanese mission had sent us left hand drive cars by mistake while in the Gambia and Senegal it was right hand drive. Moreover, as it was driven on the untarred and wretched roads of the Gambia and Senegal it had developed many faults.

I planned to take Doctor Sahib and his wife to several jama'ats. Dr Ansari's father-in-law, Mr Chughtai Sahib was also in the Gambia those days. When Dr Ansari and Chughtai Sahib heard about the plan, they also decided to join us.

We planned to ferry across to Bara first. We reached the ferry

terminal. Weather was very hot and there was no way to escape its severity. Many vehicles from Casamance region of Senegal (in the south) cross the river to go to other towns of Senegal (in the north). Thereby, an extraordinary traffic usually builds up there. Consequently we had to wait there for a few hours. Severity of heat, clothes drenched in sweat and thirst made it very difficult to pass that time. We were used to such situation but the condition of the visitors was quite worrying.

Eventually the ferry did arrive and we crossed the river. The track ahead was very bad and had deteriorated further because of the rainy season. It was studded with potholes filled with rain water. That created diverse problems for the driver and the passengers.

We had not gone far when the car suddenly stopped. I tried to start it my way but it did not move. They say 'only a mother will understand what her dumb son says'. I was familiar with my car's ailments to some extent. I thought that its petrol was blocked. I removed the petrol pipe and brought it close to my mouth. Doctor Sahib was watching all that. He got worried and advised me not to do that as it was very dangerous. However, for all of our muballighs it was a routine procedure because when the vehicles breakdown in the middle of jungles we hit upon different ideas and procedures. I inhaled forcefully through the pipe, the petrol blockage was removed and the car moved. I had to repeat that drama several times during the journey as the car kept stopping repeatedly and there was no mechanic on that route.

Anyway, we visited many jama'ats on the way to our destination – Farafenni. We had several other experiences of similar nature which were strange for Doctor Sahib and showed Divine support.

When Doctor Sahib returned to UK after completing his programme in the Gambia, he submitted his report to Huzur in which this journey figured most prominently. He told Huzur:

‘Amir in the Gambia lives on petrol and the car goes on prayers’.

Huzur was greatly amused and mostly kindly said, ‘I will send a new car soon, inshaAllah.’ Accordingly, a new car arrived in the Gambia mission.

Dr Saeed Ahmad Sahib once delivered a speech on Tabligh during Jalsa Salana UK, most of which was based on that journey.

Invaluable Diamond – Dr Abdus Salam

Dr Abdus Salam was such an invaluable diamond whose light illuminated the whole world, and became a source of introduction and fame of Pakistan for every country, nation and region.

Senegal is situated faraway from Pakistan. I present a few incidences from there which are insignificant in view of the dignity and status of Dr Abdus Salam. Many voluminous books have been written on his academic achievements; these books adorn libraries all over the world. By comparison these anecdotes are of trivial nature. It is like holding a candle to the sun.

However with reference to this country one cannot deny their importance either as they show how Allah the Almighty spread his fame far and wide.

1. One day I went to a doctor in Kaolack for treatment. I introduced myself as a Pakistani and a muballigh of Ahmadiyya jama’at. Immediately he said, ‘Pakistan is a great

country; people there are very learned and intelligent'. I asked him, 'what is the basis of your statement'. He had before him a French magazine with photograph of Dr Abdus Salam on its title page; it also gave the details of getting Noble prize by him. He showed me that magazine and said, 'all the us, the Muslims, are proud of this great hero'

2. Once I had gone long way away from Dakar, deep into the countryside for something. I came across a Pakistani friend there and we went to a restaurant for a cup of tea. A European was sitting on the adjoining table having tea. We started chatting with him. He asked which country did we came from. We told him that we were Pakistanis. 'From the country of Dr Abdus Salam' he said. God knows how pleased I was to hear the name of Dr Salam echoing in such remote area! (That person was Italian).
3. Hon Kabne Kaba, a sincere and devoted member of Senegal jama'at, once came to my house accompanied by his cousin, who was also named Kabne Kaba. The latter, I was told, was a Professor of Physics in Dakar University and also taught in an institution in France. He was also associated with politics and was mayor of his city those days.
4. During the conversation when he told me that he was Professor of Physics, I asked him if he had heard the name of Dr Abdus Salam. He said: You have asked a strange question. I believe that a person who is not familiar with the name of a great personage like Dr Abdus Salam during this century does not deserve being called a human being'.

5. It seemed that he was an ardent admirer of Dr Salam. Almost all the time he continued to talk about the knowledge and services of Dr Salam such as he was a close relative of Dr Salam. He spoke from the core of his heart. He also mentioned that Dr Salam had rendered great service to the African countries and that a department of the Dakar University was benefitting from the institution in Italy established by Dr Salam. ذلك فضل الله يعطيه من يشاء.

Did not complete the school – took promise from Allah: Cause me to die when it is completed

Once a Malaysian Ahmadi elder Nooh Handson visited the Gambia. I took him along on tour of Senegal. We booked a hotel in Dakar. TV facility was available in the room. When we switched it on we saw Mir Mahmood Sahib giving Hadith dars. It all seemed unbelievable. Anyway it made us very happy. However, we were surprised. How did that come about? After a few months the programme stopped. (This was before MTA progressed further). When I made enquiries, I found out that a Senegalese youth receives programmes from famous channels of the world and telecasts them from Senegal. I once went to see him along with my friend Muhammad Drammeh. He received us cordially. We spoke to him about MTA. He told us: 'one day I saw a programme on MTA. I did not understand it at all but realised that it was a Muslim channel, therefore I started transmitting it. Later some mullahs told me not to transmit it. That scared me and I stopped the programme. We introduced ourselves to him and requested him to restart the programme. He said he would have no objection if we could get him a written

permission from the concerned ministry; that was not possible. He was very frank and sympathetic and entertained us very well.

He told us that he had started building a big Arabic School with a hostel. Most of it had been completed but a part has been left unfinished since long. When we asked the reason, he explained: 'I had prayed to Allah for affluence. If granted, I promised to Allah that I will build a big school with the request to keep me alive till the mission is completed. Allah heard me and granted me a lot of money. I have started fulfilling my promise and have completed most of it but left a part unfinished because I took Allah's promise to keep me alive till it is completed. You see, I am still young and if the job is completed ...'

Heavenly Hospitality 'Manna from heaven'

In August 1992, we (the whole family) were going to Pakistan on leave. From the Gambia we went to London, attended the jalsa and then went to Germany to see our relatives there.

We returned from Germany by Philippines Airline, which being the cheapest, was favourite with the Pakistanis. However, its planes were in a bad shape and dangerous. We arrived at Frankfurt Airport early in the morning for the flight due to leave at 8 am. On arrival at the airport, we were told that the flight was delayed by two hours, therefore the passengers could go to the restaurant and have breakfast worth eight Mark per person. We had seven tickets, therefore got so much to eat that the relatives who had come to see us off also enjoyed this heavenly hospitality.

Later the plane arrived and we reached London. The connecting

flight by Gulf Air was due to take off by that evening. We checked in and got our boarding passes. We were waiting to hear about boarding the plane when an announcement was made that Gulf Air flight for Sharja was delayed by two hours because of technical fault. It apologised for the delay and advised the passengers to proceed to the restaurant for refreshments. After the refreshments we came back to the lounge. It was announced later that because of technical fault the plane cannot fly any further and, therefore, the flight is cancelled till further notice.

They arranged a beautiful bus that took us on a sightseeing tour of the city and later to a beautiful, five star hotel where we were allotted three wonderful and comfortable rooms full of countless divine goodies. We wished that the plane remained faulty for the whole week for us to enjoy that Godsent hospitality to our fill. Anyway we spent two days in the hotel very nicely. The children enjoyed very much. For children from Africa it was really unexpected blessing that we got that grand hotel with all the facilities free of charge. Under ordinary circumstances we could not even think of that.

Against our wishes, the plane was ready and the passengers were told to board the bus to the airport. From there we took the Gulf Air flight and reached Sharja. The connecting flight to Pakistan had left on schedule. We were, therefore, accommodated in a very good hotel and enjoyed the second help of heavenly hospitality.

At Karachi airport, some members designated by the local jama'at had been to receive us as per schedule, but because of delayed flights went empty handed. We had tried to inform

them of the changes in the schedule by phone but could not do so because the lines were not working. How to get to the guest house from the airport? That was the problem. Anyway we collected our luggage and came out. While we stood there not knowing what to do, I saw a young man who appeared to be an Ahmadi because he was wearing Jinnah cap. I greeted him. On my inquiry, he confirmed that he was Ahmadi and had come from the guest house to receive a friend who had not arrived. I introduced myself and told him that I too was guest of the jama'at. He said, 'we had come to receive you a few days earlier but as you did not arrive, we went back empty handed. Alhamdulillah, I have met you. Now let me take you to the guest house'. Thus, by the Grace of Allah, we got another helping of heavenly hospitality unexpectedly.

**Nobody knows who has found favour with Generous
God: You or him!**

Service of an Ahmadi Builder

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) directed construction of central mosque in the Gambia. Two workmen were sent under the leadership of Choudhry Abdul Aziz Dogar. One of them was Mukhtar Ahmad who did carpentry and Abdul Hamid Chhenna who was for building work. Ameer Sahib assigned the duties of repair of various institutions and construction of Baitus-Salam mosque. They did that energetically and wholeheartedly. The building of the mosque was like a hall. Once a non-Ahmadi friend visited me. I told him about our new mosque. He said, 'the one that looks like a church'! Actually it was a big hall without minarets. The minarets could not be built because, in the Gambia, experts who could build minarets were scarce.

One day, a few friends were sitting in the mosque. They said it would look like a mosque only if the minarets were built. Abdul Hamid Chhenna was sitting with us. He asked, 'which type of minarets would you like to have, like those of Aqsa mosque or like those of Mubarak mosque in Rabwah?' Nobody paid much attention to what he said because he was a fairly ordinary type of builder and, probably, had never been to school. Next day, Abdul Hamid Sahib turned up with draughts of various types of minarets on a paper. We were all surprised to see that because

the sketches looked beautiful. He started building the minarets, thereafter, and worked very hard and devotedly. We saw a new aspect of his workmanship every day. Somehow he built magnificent minarets that became the centre of attention for people all over the Gambia. The tourists would sometimes come and take their photographs. As they could be seen from a distance, they attracted the passers-by and became a source of introduction of the Ahmadiyya jama'at. Later on Chhenna Sahib had the good fortune of building mosques in Liberia and Guinea-Bissau. Thus Allah, the Almighty made an unlettered man accomplish such a big job that dwarfed highly educated persons. This is Allah's doing; He gets jobs done by whomsoever He pleases!

Some interesting episodes of Divine Help

The Tides at Poto and Divine Help

About 200 kilometers from Dakar on the way to Mauritania is a town called Louga. A road on the left from there leads to Poto – a small and relatively unknown town situated on the right coastline of Atlantic Ocean. On the other side of the ocean is the major world power, America.

There is a small Fulani village situated on the coastline about 25 miles from Poto. Some new converts were achieved by Ahmad Gaye Sahib. An Ahmadi friend, Ahmad Bah Sahib, lived there. He was well-versed in Arabic language and was an influential figure in his area. He had come to me in Dakar to participate in a tarbiyyat class.

The tides have a set pattern on the coast. The water starts receding during the early part of the day and it moves back by quite some distance. It leaves behind wet sand that hardens enough for vehicle to move without getting stuck therein. The locals start using it for traffic purposes. You would see tourist vehicles running around along with carts of the local villagers and old cars of various sizes in state of disrepair screaming, screeching and emitting smoke. Late in the afternoon the water starts advancing slowly to the sea coast. During the night the waves continue to increase in severity and speed. Especially during the moonlit nights the sea waves leap up in their frenzy as if trying to touch the moon unsuccessfully. Thereby sea water takes over vast area of the coastal land.

Cherished Memories Of Africa

Once I went on the tour of that area accompanied by a local muallim. We planned to spend the night over there. About 5.00 pm we reached Poto near the seaside. The return of the tidal wave had started slowly but the traffic on that track had continued. My destination was about 25 kilometres from there which was about one hour's drive.

With the name of Allah, I started driving along the sea coast. There was an element of fear though, because my car was quite old and broke down frequently. With sea waves on one side and sand on the other, I drove very carefully. About 5 kilometres on the track I noticed that the car was slowing down progressively. I got really worried. It was not wise to continue further, therefore I turned the car around towards Poto and reached there driving very carefully at slow speed. Surprisingly as the car reached at a safe distance from the sea, the engine went silent. We tried our best to start the car but it would not budge. Ultimately we contacted a mechanic a distant town Louga; he came and towed our car to his garage in Louga. Then after one week's effort the car got going.

Even today, when I think about the episode, I bow down my head with glorification of, and gratitude to, Allah. How He helped us and saved us miraculously from an apparently impossible situation! Just imagine if the car had broken down and stopped on the coast, the upsurge of the tide during the night would have engulfed it and while receding subsequently would have taken the car with it into the sea. I get amazed even today; how Allah the Almighty, with His Grace saved us from that disaster. فالحمد لله

لله على ذلك

Allah Granted their Wish

An Ahmadi doctor, Sayyed Mir Mashhood Ahmad, was serving in Liberia under the blessed scheme of Nusrat Jahan. The rebels caused civil war in the country leading to widespread bloodshed and pillage. Doctor Sahib's family was taken hostage. He spent many days in that distressing situation. He witnessed bloodshed everyday. Later arrangements were made to transfer them along with Muhammad Akram Bajwa Sahib, the Ameer of Liberia and a non-Ahmadi family to Senegal by helicopter.

I was in the Gambia those days. I received a directive from markaz to arrange their boarding and lodging. Manzoor Ahmad Qureshi was the first secretary in the Pakistan Embassy at that time. Alongwith him I went to the airport to welcome the guests. They had been robbed of all their belongings before they arrived in Senegal. I arranged their accommodation at several places.

Doctor Sahib's wife was pregnant and delivery was expected after a few days. I arranged their accommodation in the hostel for MNAs in the town centre. Each MNA is allocated one room in that hostel; two Ahmadi MNAs gave us two of their rooms. That evening I took Doctor Sahib and his wife in my car around the city for sightseeing. Dakar is surrounded by sea and there is a road all along the coast. We returned after a while. At about midnight, Doctor Sahib knocked at my door and told me that his wife was unwell and wanted to take her to an hospital. I took them to a hospital, where she was admitted. I spent the whole night in the car. In the morning, Doctor Sahib told me that the

pain had some other cause and she had been discharged.

That evening again I took them out to the seaside. On our way back to the hostel, we passed by a grand building of a private hospital. Doctor Sahib said, 'it will be better if the delivery can be arranged in this hospital'. I told him that as it was a private hospital, therefore, it would be quite costly, however, there is no harm in trying. The Hospital belonged to a Lebanese. I spoke to him and told him that they were my guests and had come as refugees from Liberia and requested for some concession, if possible. Very generously, he reduced the expenses by half. I faxed to Huzur straightaway seeking his approval for the expenses. His approval was received the next day. She needed to be admitted the same day and was blessed with a daughter.

Many Ahmadi MNAs were present in Senegal those days. They performed the Aqiqa of the girl and a goat was slaughtered. In keeping with traditions of Senegal, the girl was named Hawwa after the name of an Ahmadi MNA - Hawwa Jobe.

Doctor Sahib told me that his wife had mentioned to him that the first day we went out and as we passed the hospital, she had wished that her baby be delivered in that hospital. Then Allah created the circumstances that led to the delivery in that hospital as she had wished.

Money Deposited in the Central Account before Central Grant

I never had the opportunity to see Dr Saeed Ahmad Sahib, neither did I have anything to read about him. However, I heard a lot about his reputation and good works. I present some faith-

inspiring anecdotes in that regard. He was the pioneer in the field of medical services rendered by Ahmadiyya Jama'at.

I noticed that when I was at Farafenni, that the brothers there used to mention Dr Saeed Ahmad Sahib with great respect and love. One of Ahmadi brothers here, Mr Shekhu Dibba, had named his son as Dr Saeed after him. Thus his name reverberates in Farafenni even today.

During the blessed times of Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih III (ra), it was planned to send doctors and teachers in the fields of health and education in Africa under Tahrike jadid. Many fortunate souls responded positively and presented themselves to the Khalifa. One of those fortunate ones was Dr Saeed Ahmad Sahib. I heard that Dr Sahib was working as MS (Medical Superintendent) of Mayo Hospital, Lahore those days. He bade farewell to that high ranking post on the call of the then Khalifa and complying with his directive arrived in the Gambia.

Markaz had earmarked £500 (five hundred Pounds) for him to start the clinic in the Gambia. He arrived in the Gambia and started waiting for the funds from the markaz so that he could buy the essentials to start with. During that period he came across a Gambian doctor who ran his personal clinic. He was much impressed by Dr Saeed Sahib. Per chance the doctor had planned to go away for some time and he requested Dr Saeed Sahib to run his clinic during his absence. Dr Saeed Sahib agreed and started working there temporarily during that period. That proved to be very useful in the way of introduction to the people and awareness of the diseases prevalent among them. Moreover, Allah provided a source of income in this way.

Dr Sahib opened a bank account in the name of jama'at and deposited £500 (five hundred Pounds) in it from that clinic's income. Thus £500 was deposited in the account before the arrival of central grant. That gives a glimpse of Divine help and unique sacrifices of the devotees of Ahmadiyyat.

Later he was posted at Kaur – a small town where few amenities available. Doctor Sahib used to run a clinic at Farafenni once a week. (The clinic belonged to Alhaj F. M. Singateh)

He worked diligently at Kaur. Despite unfavourable circumstances, Allah supported him and blessed his work so much that with the income from that small and mediocre clinic a block of Nusrat High School was constructed.

Reward of a few days' Service

Kaur was once an important town in the Gambia. During those days a ferry was used for transportation throughout the country. After drowning of a ferry, some of the old places lost their importance. Other means of transportation replaced the ferry and the routes changed accordingly. Kaur was thus cut off from other towns. The road was untarred and in a terrible state. A good road has now been built though.

A young doctor, Muhammad Ashraf was serving in Kaur. Once I went to see him. He appeared very happy. When I enquired, he told me that had written to Huzur describing his condition. He wrote, 'dear master, there is no electricity in this town; no sweet drinking water available either. I have to fetch drinking water from forty miles every week. It is very hot here as well. I will be much obliged if Huzur would approve a gas fridge'

Huzur granted his request which made him very happy. That reflects his resources, financial condition and other problems.

These days he is living as a very successful doctor in America. Allah has blessed him with affluence. I hear that he has built a hospital in Sialkot district for service to humanity.

A few years ago, doctor sahib came to London where I met him. We spoke of the old days. He said, 'I think that all these Divine blessings are the result of my few days service in Africa – a reward of service in the way of faith.'

Miraculous Cure

Hameedullah Zafar Sahib was appointed as murabbi in Guinea-Bissau under the administration of the Gambia Mission. He is a very hard-working and untiring young man. (He was later appointed as Ameer of Guinea-Bissau in 1997). Once he arranged a meeting with some MPs and tabligh and tarbiyyat programmes in some jama'ats. He invited me to participate in these programmes.

I was suffering from severe gout those days. (I have suffered from gout since 1998. Sometimes I get severe attacks of this malady. The pain starts from the big toe and the whole body is affected by it. It becomes difficult to walk).

Apparently it was difficult to travel in that condition. However, I thought I was just lying in the bed at home. I could lie on the back seat of the car, if I went on the journey. The family also strongly advised me against it saying that the journey was very long, going to Senegal first and then to Guinea-Bissau and that it

would be hard for me. Anyway I decided that, come what may, I would definitely participate in those programmes.

Mahmood Iqbal Sahib, Principal of Nusrat High School had come to my house. I requested him to take me to the market in the car so that I could buy a some items for myself and for Hameedullah Zafar sahib. Iqbal Sahib started driving the car and we set out for the market. It was evening. I noticed that our Sadr Lajna, Jojo Cham was going somewhere on foot. I told Iqbal Sahib to stop and ask her as to where was she going. She said that she was going home and because she could not get any transport she was going on foot. We picked her up to carry her to her home. During the conversation, I told her that I had severe pain in my foot and requested her for prayers and that I was heading to Guinea-Bissau the following day. She told me that she had a medicine that might benefit me. When we reached her home, she gave me some tablets which I took as per directions. A short while after that the pain had miraculously disappeared. I thanked Allah for the way He provides means. Next day we started the journey comfortably. The tour lasted many days and went peacefully. After attending jalsas and meetings at many places returned home safely. *Alhamdulillah.*

Travel and Hosts aplenty

Allah arranged for boarding and lodging in unfavourable circumstances. Probably in 1993, Khalil Ahmad Mubashir Sahib was the Ameer of Sierra Leone jama'at and the neighbouring country, Guinea Conakary was also under supervision of Sierra Leone for jama'at purposes. Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih IV directed him to tour Guinea Conakary for tabligh and tarbiyyat purposes.

Cherished Memories Of Africa

I was also told to go to Conakry because I could speak Fulani and French. Moreover, I had Gambian nationality that entitled me to travel to African countries without visa. According to the programme we were to meet in Conakry and Ameer of Sierra Leone was supposed to organise everything in Guinea Conakry.

I set out from the Gambia and arrived at Conakry airport. I came out of the airport and looked around but did not see any familiar face. Anyway I took my luggage and stood aside hoping to see someone who would kindly take me somewhere to stay. I waited for quite a while without any luck. It was a small airport and planes landed there occasionally. Besides me there were a few workers and some taxi drivers.

I enquired if there was any hotel nearby. I learnt that a seminar of foreign ministers of Islamic countries all over the world was being held in Conakry those days and many hotels had been booked for them. Moreover, an international trade fair was also going in Conakry for which the traders, industrialists and associated personnel had occupied the remaining hotels. Therefore, finding hotel accommodation was almost impossible.

One taxi driver told me that he knew of an hotel where a room might be available. I reached that hotel with him. It was a mediocre hotel but the charges were more than good hotels because of the prevailing situation.

I thought that I would have a cup of tea first and then assess the situation before making any decision. I placed the order for tea and while I waited for it, for some reason I opened my bag and saw a small diary in it. In the diary I found telephone number of

a Saeed Sahib in Guine Conakary. I did not know the person but I dialled the number. Someone answered and said, 'Saeed speaking'. I introduced myself. He told me that the Ameer of Sierra Leone was also expected but he could not make it because he did not get the visa for Guinea Conakary.

I told him that I was at the restaurant of such and such hotel. He told me not to book in the hotel, that his employee would come shortly and pick me up. I had not finished my tea when the man arrived and took me straight to Saeed Sahib's factory; he received me cordially. I remembered that I had met him a few years earlier at the international trade fair in Dakar. Saeed Sahib took me to his house which was quite big. He prepared one particular room for me with appropriate facilities. He told me that I could spend my day wherever I liked but must return home and dine with him. Then he put a chauffeur driven car at my disposal for the whole period that I was to stay at Conakary. I stayed in Conakary for ten days and I can never forget the sincerity and love with which Saeed Hodraj treated me. I was surprised by the way Allah provided me help and support.

I conveyed the message of Ahmadiyyat to the people as much as I could. There were Ahmadis at two places in Conakary; I visited them. Likewise, I had the opportunity of going to government offices with Saeed Sahib for tabligh and gave some literature to some digatories.

Brother Saeed Hodraj is a Lebanese settled in Sierra Leone. His mother is African and father a lebanese. His father entered the fold of Ahmadiyyat during the time of Maulana Nazir Ahmad Ali Sahib. He has a big business in Sierra Leone and had started his

business in Conakary those days.

Plane landed safely – Divine protection

For returning from Guinea Conakary, I boarded the Gambia Airways plane as per schedule. After completing the routine formalities the plane took off. After cruising for fifteen minutes it was announced that because of technical problems we were returning to Guinea Conakary. In due course the plane landed safely at the airport. When the passengers came out that had a real fright to see that there was a big hole – at least two feet wide, in one of plane’s wings. We were told the plane collided with a bird. Had the plane gone any further, there would be no airport with easy reach. Thus Allah saved all the passengers.

Police Warrant and Divine Help

I was residing in Dakar with my family. One day I had gone out for something. When I returned, I found a muallim waiting for me. He told me that a policeman had come to see you and that he delivered a letter addressed to me. When I read the letter, it was summons for me from the police office.

The letter worried me a lot. My family did not have the visa for Senegal. There was opposition to the jama’at as well. Several ideas like that came to my mind. I rang up one of my friends – Omar Jobe who was a police inspector and told him about the letter. After listening to the subject matter and name of the issuing authority, he said it was from the section dealing with murders and terrorism, therefore, it was something very serious. I asked him if he knew someone in that section to get some more information and plan accordingly. I immediately faxed to

Huzur giving all the details and risks and humbly requested for his prayers.

I gave necessary instructions to the muallims to deal with any eventuality. I did not inform my family to avoid worrying them. I prayed myself and requested Huzur for prayers.

I reached the relevant section of the police headquarters at the appointed time as per instructions. The in-charge inspector was busy. So I was told to wait outside. It was the first time in my life that I had come to a police station complying with summons and that too in a foreign country. I was working in Senegal for the jama'at that had not been registered there. Moreover, my family was staying there without visa. One can well imagine the condition of my mind in that situation. After a while a policeman beckoned me to go into the office. With pounding heart and prayers I proceeded to the room.

When I entered the room I saw the policeman seated in a chair and a lady and a man sitting before him.

As the police officer saw me, he stood up and hugged me warmly. That police officer had been in-charge of the check point at the border of Senegal and the Gambia. I lived nearby at Farafenni in the Gambia. It was a small town where all the people knew one another. I had good family relations with the police inspector; we visited each other and exchanged gifts.

The inspector thought that I had perhaps come to him for a social visit. They asked me when did I come to Dakar and enquired about the welfare of my family. I told him that I was there in compliance with summons from his office. He was really

surprised. Then he asked me if I knew the lady and the gentleman sitting there. I replied in the negative. He said to them: 'This man is missionary of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at; I have known him for ten years. It seems you have some misundersatnding'. He told me that one of their young relative, who lived near my house had disappeared several days earlier and search for him was going on. I had some acquaintance with the young man as we lived in the same neighbourhood and he used to visit me at times. It was a Christian family from some neighbouring country and young man's father was a bank employee. They had thought that I was from Palestine and I probably had camps in the jungles and that beguiled youth to those camps for military training and send them to Arab countries for so-called jihad. The inspector told them that I was not a Palestinian but was a Pakistani and was known to him over a long period and they were certainly mistaken.

Both of them apologised to me. The inspector also expressed his regrets for being summoned like that and apologised. Thus Allah provided support for me. Any other inspector might have locked me up without proper investigation creating problems from jama'at perspective.

Omer Jobe (Police Inspector) - as an Angel

In 1997 some leading figures in the Gambia started severe opposition to the jama'at on intimation by anti-Ahmadiyya powers. The circumstances deteriorated to grievous proportions. Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV directed all the markazi (central) workers to leave the Gambia and they all complied accordingly.

I, with my family, was in Pakistan on leave approved by markaz; such leave was granted to central employees every five years. I had not completed my leave period when I was directed by markaz to proceed to the Gambia immediately. (I had the Gambian Nationality). Complying with the directive, I arrived in London, met Huzur and left for the Gambia. There was no Pakistani Ahmadi brother in the Gambia; all of them had been called back in view of the gravity of situation.

I stayed in the Gambia for one week and then went to Senegal. Previously I had resided with my family in the Gambia because of some legal issues. I performed my duties of tabligh and tarbiyyat from there. Anyway I reached Senegal, rented a house in Dakar and started my tabligh and tarbiyyat activities with cooperation by some Senegalese muallims.

My family was still in Rabwah. I visited a Gambian minister who had come to Senegal and was staying in an hotel in Dakar. We spoke on various topics. During the conversation the minister said that if I needed any help for anything he would happily help. I returned home after the meeting. One day I rang the minister and after exchange of customary greetings, I told him that I was a Gambian national and my family who had Pakistani passports needed entry visa so that they could join me. The minister said that I could see him in his office any time I wanted to and he would arrange visa for my family the same day.

A few days later I went to the Gambia and reached the minister's office. He received me warmly, called his secretary and, pointing to me, told him to do my job immediately, and that I would stay in his office till the job was done. After this emphatic order, the

secretary prepared the visas for my family quickly and handed over to me. Ordinarily that would take several months. فجزاهم الله

I took those papers and went back to Senegal. I wrote to Huzur in detail about getting visas. Huzur directed me to get the family over.

I had shifted to Senegal. For Pakistanis getting entry visa to Senegal was as difficult as getting American visa by one from a poor nation. Therefore, it was apparently impossible for my family to get visa for Senegal. Thus I faced another dilemma: me in Senegal and my family in the Gambia, no other Pakistani Ahmadi family in the Gambia, how to look after the children, what about their education and tarbiyyat and so on! The family could not join me in Senegal because they did not have the visa and I could not stay in the Gambia because of duties assigned to me.

In the meantime, my family had arrived from Rabwah to Karachi from where they were booked on Ethiopian Airlines on a long route to Dakar, Senegal. From there they were going to take the connecting flight on to the Gambia, without seeing me. The members of the Gambia jama'at were going to receive them and arrange their accommodation. I was greatly perplexed and did not know what to do.

During that predicament, I had to go to the town for something urgent. While I was passing through a street, somebody put his hand on my shoulder. Turning around I saw that it was my old friend Omer Jobe, the Police inspector. He had been in-charge of the Sene-Gambia border check post for several years. I was

residing in the nearby town, Farafeni, those days. Therefore I had very friendly relations with him.

He asked me, 'Ustaz, when did you come to Dakar.' I told him that I had in fact moved to Dakar. He was much pleased. He was accompanied by another police inspector. He introduced me to him. He told me that they are quickly going for an important case. He gave me his visiting card and told me to contact him if need be. After this chance meeting he went hurriedly in pursuit of his mission.

After finishing my job I returned home. The family problem occupied my brain and I could not see any solution. Suddenly, it occurred to me to discuss the problem with Omer Jobe; he might find a way out. I contacted him on the telephone number given on his visiting card. He answered and I requested him to come to my house as I needed him urgently. He came to my house same evening. I told him the whole story and said that I needed the entry visa for Senegal for my family by next day. He said that it was very difficult for Pakistanis but he would try. I knew that he had good relations with the interior ministry. May Allah reward him abundantly, he had somehow arranged the visiting visa for my family by the following evening. The next day my family was due in Dakar. Omer Jobe accompanied me to the airport, he went up to the plane, helped my family to go through the immigration formalities and then came to me and said, 'Ustaz, your family had reached you, now permit to leave'. Till today, I am grateful to Allah for help me, providing solace and comfort to me.

Chapter 16

Waqf - Devotion

My mother used to tell me that when I was about two years old, I fell seriously ill. The sickness was so severe that it appeared that end of my life was nigh. My mother was alone at home while my father and grandfather were at the farms. My mother sent one from the neighbourhood to my father at the farm with the message to come home immediately as the child was critically ill. My father and grandfather returned home. My condition was fairly hopeless. My grandfather was a companion of the Promised Messiah (as) and He was well known for piety and righteousness. He told my parents: 'if you want him to live, dedicate his life (in the way of Allah). Allah will provide means for his recovery'. Both of my parents solemnly pledged to dedicate my life in the way of Allah and they fulfilled the pledge despite unfavourable circumstances and adversities. فجزاهم الله احسن الجزاء.

Allah Provided Means for Cure

It so happened that as my grandfather came out of the house, he saw Khuda Bakhsh – a physician from the neighbouring village Alam Gadh, passing through our street, riding on a horse. He greeted my grandfather and enquired about well-being. Grandfather replied, 'I am ok but my grandchild is very sick.' He came to our house, saw me and gave some sachets of powdered medicine. It worked like magic and I recovered rapidly.

They Fulfilled the Pledge with Allah

My parents dedicated me from childhood. I was the eldest of all my siblings. My younger brother was ten years junior to me. When I matriculated my father used to do farming. Our means were limited. The household were destitute. At the same time, some sickness affected our cattle and some of them died. It was a desperate situation.

I was planning to go to the jami'a. In view of the prevailing circumstances, some of our relatives, out of sympathy, advised my parents: 'Your son has matriculated and he is young, Find a suitable job for him to improve your circumstances because your financial situation is very critical. If you must send someone to jami'a, send one of the younger sons.'

My mother was very annoyed with that relative and said: 'if this son dies, who will help me? I have pledged to dedicate this son in the way of Allah and I will certainly fulfil that.' She sent me to jami'a and fulfilled the pledge that she had made with Allah.

Blessing of Waqf – Poverty to Affluence

The year I got admitted to jami'a, our financial situation was very critical. My father had continued farming as usual.

After a few months at the jami'a, during the vacations I went home. The family were much pleased to see me. One of our Ahmadi neighbours, Sayyed Bashir Ahmad Shah was employed in the police and appointed at Gujranwala. An Ahmadi brother at Gujranwala, Malik Muzaffar Ahmad had agency of Shizan. He required a reliable person to supervise his business. Shah Sahib

told him: 'I have a friend called Basharat Ahmad Sahib; he is a devoted Ahmadi, knows 3 R's. I am sure he will be able to manage it well'. My father had served in the Furqan Force. In addition to Urdu, he knew some English as well. After serving in Furqan Force, he worked as a contractor in Sindh for quite a while. After some heavy losses in the business he returned home and started farming. Malik Sahib asked Shah Sahib to call Basharat Ahmad Sahib for interview one of these days. My father went to Gujranwala on the specified day.

Allah, the Comforter

It was summer. After lunch, I had a nap. I dreamt that my father had entered the house smiling. When my mother enquired about the job prospects, he replied, 'interview has taken place and they told me that they will let me know later'. Then I woke up and narrated the dream to my mother.

Before sunset, my father returned home smiling and it happened exactly as I had seen in the dream. We were all pleasantly surprised.

Telephone facilities were not available those days. After a few days, a message was received through Shah Sahib for my father to start the job on such and such day. My father reported for duty. After a short period, by the Grace of Allah, Malik Sahib made a reasonable increment to my father's salary. Allah showered his blessings in such a way that our financial situation started changing rapidly. First of all, one of my brothers went abroad. Then my father went to Bahrain. Then over a short period, all family members spread out to various countries all over the world. الحمد لله.

Two Angelic Personages

When I was a student of class II at the jami'a, I fell seriously ill. I was treated by several doctors and hakims at Rabwah but without any improvement. I took leave from the principal to go to parents at my hometown.

I was treated by some doctors in Gujrat city but the condition continued to deteriorate. I became very weak and lean. That worried my parents very much.

One day Muhammad Din Sahib, who was posted as murabbi of Gujrat those days, came to our village. He was my old friend and also had jami'a connection. He got concerned when he saw me and told me to get ready as he was going to send me to Jhelum. Dr Sayyed Ghulam Mujtaba was in-charge of Jhelum hospital at that time. He wrote a note for him in which he introduced me and explained the reason for sending me over to Jhelum.

Next day, I reached Government Hospital, Jhelum, enquired about Doctor Sahib's office and went there. The gate-keeper stopped me from going in. I gave him the letter and asked him to pass it on to Doctor Sahib. Doctor Sahib called me in straightaway and received me with love and kindness. He called one of the staff and instructed him to admit me immediately, perform certain tests and report back.

I had come to Doctor Sahib for check-up only and had thought that I would return home after a couple of days. I requested Doctor Sahib to allow me to go home to bring some relative to look after me and also inform my parents about the whole situation. Doctor Sahib told me to send the message to my

parents by some means telling them that I had been admitted in to the hospital. He added: 'You need not get anybody here (to look after you). I am everything to you and will take care of you. My servant will bring food for you from my house or if you like you could come home for meals'.

Anyway, Doctor Sahib's kindness and love, like of which is rare in this world, held me back. I received special treatment for ten days with daily check-ups, repeated lab tests and plenty of medicines. I got good food from Doctor Sahib's house. In this way, the Grace of Allah and Doctor Sahib's hard work led to significant relief from sickness. One day, seeing the way Doctor Sahib took care of me, another doctor asked me if Doctor Sayyed Ghulam Mujtaba was closely related to me. I replied: 'Yes, very close relation, far greater than usual relationships'. Thus, as a result of sympathy, guidance and efforts of these two angel-like persons, Allah restored my health. After two months 'treatment I had recovered fully. Alhamdulillah. During all this time, I suffered no expenses other than the fare.

We are Resigned to Your Will

From 1983 to 2008, I stayed in the Gambia, Senegal etc. During this period of more than 25 years, I could not attend any marriage ceremony of my relatives.

Life and death is an on-going process in the world. During that period my parents, parents of my wife, many elders among our relatives, elders of the jama'at and many friends passed away and we could not participate in their janaza (funeral prayers).

Heart Rending event of my mother's demise

In 1997 I was on leave in Pakistan. (Those were the days when all the markazi (central) workers had to emigrate from the Gambia). My parents were in Germany at that time. After a few months, I was directed by Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) to go to the Gambia immediately. Complying with that I returned to the Gambia. A short while after that my parents went to Pakistan, therefore, I could not meet them.

A few months after arrival in Pakistan my mother passed away. انالله وأنا اليه راجعون. I was in Dakar, Senegal that day. Pakistan Standard time is five hours ahead of Senegal. My mother died in the morning; it was about midnight in Senegal. I was all alone at home when I received the sad news. My family had arrived in the Gambia but because of certain constraints they could not come to Senegal and because of my responsibilities, I could not go to the Gambia. Thus I was all alone in Senegal and the family in the Gambia. That already was cause of concern for me. On top of that, my mother's demise really shook me. The whole night I cried on my own and consoled myself. A muallim, Saali Jabi lived with me. At Fajr prayers I told him about my mother's death. People from neighbourhood and jama'at members came; they consoled me and comforted me. May Allah reward them abundantly, Amin!

End of Edition One

Glossary for Arz-e-Bilal

- **Arz-E-Bilal**- African countries
- **Mobaligh**- Missionary
- **Mobaligheen**- Missionaries
- **Ustaz/Oustaz**- Teacher/ Scholar
- **Vakeel- E-Tabshir**- Head of Foreign Mission
- **Rabwah**- Ahmadiyya Centre In Pakistan
- **Qadian**- Town/City where The Promised Messiah (A.S) was born and Ahmadiyya centre in India.
- **Jamia Ahmadiyya**- Educational Institute where Missionaries are trained.
- **Vakil-E-Ala**- Chief Controller of finances in the mission.
- **Pir** - Religious person in the area.
- **Chanda** - Financial Contribution for religious purposes.
- **Hakim** - Local doctor
- **Madrasas** - Religious schools
- **Inshallah** - God Willing
- **Mashallah** - God has willed
- **Pirs**- Spiritual person who guides people religiously
- **Tayammum**- Ablution
- **Katchi Abbadi**- Area where there is Mud bricks
- **Mualims**- Local missionary

- **Baiat's**- Individuals converting to Ahmadiyya
- **Jalsa**- Annual gathering of Ahmadi's for religious festival. Happens worldwide.
- **Ahmadi**- People who have accepted Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (A.S) as the Imam Mahdi.
- **Murids/Mourids**- followers
- **Huzur**- Spiritual leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, the current head of the movement is Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah strengthen his hand)
- **Janaza**- Funeral prayers
- **Amir**- President of an Ahmadiyya mission in a certain region or a country.
- **Jumma prayers**- Obligatory Friday prayers
- ***Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'oon.***- "We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return."
- **Khalifa**- Succesor's of Imam Mahdi (A.S)
- **Hadith**- saying of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W)
- **Dars**- Small sermon delivered usually after Namaz (prayers)
- **MTA**- Muslim Television Ahmadiyya
- **MNA**- Member of National Assembly
- **MS**- Medical Superintendant

Munawwar Ahmad Khursheed

Born, in 1950. Educated initially at Middle School, Fatehpur District Gujrat and matriculated from Muslim High School Gujrat. Later, graduated with Shahid degree from Jami'a Ahmadiyya Rabwah. The places where I served as Murabbi in Pakistan include Qila Kalar Wala District Sialkot, Kharian District Gujrat and Mianwali city.



Arrived in the Gambia as Muballigh in 1983 and worked as such at various places. Served as a teacher at Nasir Ahmadiyya senior secondary School for two years. In 1985 I was assigned the duty of supervision of Senegal mission. In 1994 I was appointed as Ameer of the Gambia, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Cape Verde. In 1997 the region was divided into three areas, each headed by a separate Amir. I was appointed Amir of Senegal, Cape Verde and Mauritania.

In 2005, I came to London following directive from Hadrat Ameer-ul-Momineen (atba) because of ill health and served Senegal from there; that continued till 2012.

From 2008 to 2012 I had the good fortune of serving Jami'a Ahmadiyya UK as ustaz. Alhamdlillah.

**CHERISHED MEMORIES
OF AFRICA**

