

The Hijrah Institute

The visit of 1990 seals the beginning of the “Hijrah Project”, and prepares the way for the commencement of the children emersion into learning¹⁰. This important special publication is a minor reflection of a journey that took place over twenty-years linked to a myriad of stories. This brief introduction represents an overview of the voices of the “*Andu-Shahelian Peoples Journey*,” which sought to utilize Textual References¹¹, based upon those injunctions to establish a protocol of relationship founded on the principles of “Migrants and Helpers¹²” as seen in the Islamic history, in the two most important *Hijrahs* in the early lives of the Muslim in Mecca, with the first one to Abyssinia where they delegation fleeing from oppression was given asylum by King Najasi (Negus) who became Muslim, and the second one to Medina, which laid the foundation for the Islamic State and protectorate for the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) and these early Muslims. Given the vision of Sheikh Mourtada M’Backe and his commitment to connect with our community, this move on his part is consistent with the noblest traditions in respect of these endeavors. The Prophetic narratives as described in the Qur’an provides noted examples of such hospitality, as in the case of prophet Yusuf and Musa who lived with *Poitifer* and *Jethro (Shuaib)* respectively despite their peoples oppressive conditions, Allah (s.w.a) provided a solace for these men and their peoples. Touba itself, as this narrative will explain was built upon those notions of finding a sanctuary, and modeling ones life for success in this world and the next after the example of (*Rahmat’il Alameein* – a mercy for mankind, Prophet Muhammad-s.a.w). Additionally, his *N’Digel* (protocols on governance), is yet another example of this commitment, in that he produced two documents, in respect of this demonstration to a sense of representation, access, and equity, (1) was the letter taken to New York by *M’Muballigh Muhammad A. Al-Rahman* (as per the request of the Sheikh) in respect of Muhammad Balozi’s responsibility for the affairs of the community in the United States, and (2) a letter giving the director of The Hijrah Project the responsibility to organize and raise funds for this program, which also included some provisions for the building of the medical clinic in *N’Dame*, to which Doctors, Malik, Rasheed and Curtis journeyed to Senegal to establish.

The final version of this work that would be published at the end of this year will focus on the following areas in its examination, (1) The notion of a narrative linked to connections and continuum, (2) The dynamism of the varied Journeys within this narrative, (3) The *Hijrah* Institute, People, Place and Story, (4) Contemplations for the Present and beyond, (5) Conclusion, (6) Appendix, and a (7) Glossary of Terminology. The section on the photo narrative would



be included into this special publication, and some of the enclosures will begin to tell the story as in the old adage “a picture is worth a thousand words”.

As we contemplated the celebration of this journey, it is only fitting that this work and the fiduciary proceedings that we intend to raise be spent to rebuild this valuable program as a testament to the valued place that knowledge holds in Islam, and to Seringe Mourtada ideals to follow this noted injunction, as a recognition of the lofty place accorded to this noble grace and gift of knowledge in the *Hadiths* speaks volumes. According to one narration, “the blessings of this world and the next that benefits, a person after death are

three things. First an institution that benefits people, a child that follows righteous ways in this world, and a book that instructs people into the things are good and beneficial and keep them away from those things that are harmful and of no benefit”. We pray that Allah (s.w.a) gives us the strength, knowledge, insight, wisdom, vision, patience and resolve to accomplish this noble and noted task, and may HE (Allah-s.w.a), shower his blessings on this sage for his commitment to such a noble cause.

As we concluded a prelude to this noble effort, some issues are important for us to ponder, let’s take for a moment the titles of the magazines published thus far: “What is Muridiya: The Murid Brotherhood”, published (2001), followed by ‘Education: A key Function in Muridism’ (2002), ‘Islam as a Model of Society: The Example of Muridiya’ (2003), ‘The Universality of the Message of Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba’ (2004), ‘Responsibility of the

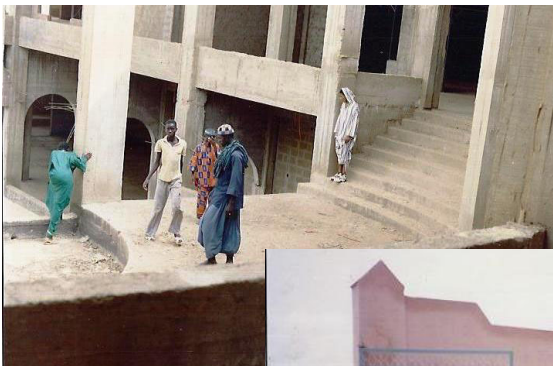
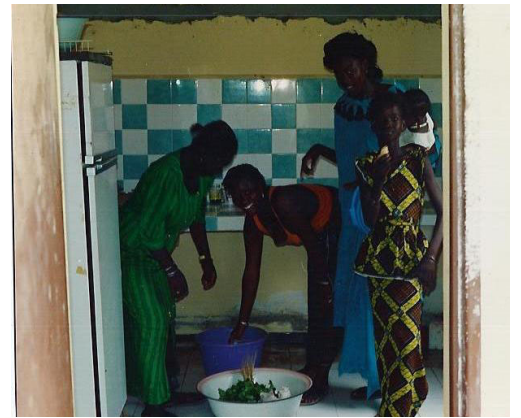
disciples towards the legacy of Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba: the Example of Sheikh Mouhamadou Mourtada M’Backe’ (2005), ‘Humanism and its Meaning in Cheikh Ahmadu Bamba’s Thought and Practices’ (2006), and ‘Contributions of the Diaspora in the Development of Muridism’ (2007)”.

In this anniversary year, one thing stands clear to a son of the *Andu-Shahelian Peoples*, is that Allah (s.w.a) testament via the “Covenant of Revelation” as is discussed in the Qur’an (chap.2, vrs.125-129), demonstrates to our community the fact that despite five-hundred years of disconnect from the lands of Africa we have not been disconnected from the mercy that’s found in divine guidance. If we just consider for a moment the millions of our peoples living in the Diaspora (in the lands of the Caribbean and the Americas) from this vast continent despite years of cultural genocides, genocidal conditions, inhumane treatment, and now that research now aptly demonstrates that our people suffer from “Post-traumatic Syndrome,” men of Seringe Mourtada caliber recognizes the value that we have as a

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people to the renaissance of Africa in this Millennium. Our story speaks to the scriptures and textual sources, especially about the seed of Abraham who would wonder in a foreign land without knowledge of self of its connection to faith and cultural practices. Our peoples history is filled with giants like Kojo and Nanny (Sahara), Sam Sharpe, Taqi (among the maroons of Jamaica), Luqman (Bookman) and Fatima of the Haitian revolution, Marcus Garvey (who met Duce Muhammad, the Egyptian), Tairk ibn Jabal (Al-Gibraltar-who laid the foundation for the renaissance brought by the Moors to Andalusia), Ahmed Baba (President of Sankore University), Mansa Muhammad Abu Bakari II (the ruler who left Mali 1310 to explore the lands of the Americas and paved the way for the rule of Mansa Musa), and the Sheikh Dawud Fisal, founder of the American Muslim Mission, just to mention a few, who connected with Sheikh Hassan from Grand Comoro Island (who created a study circles among the early pioneers of this group), which only indicated that our peoples efforts have remained constant in this effort for nexus with home. Thus from a metaphysical perspective Seringe Mourtada aptly demonstrated a

keen sense of that dynamic and he made it is “corner stone” principle that the Muslim Peoples of this region should be an integral part of that Murid Diaspora connection if change is to take place, and they should not be treated or not given that noted place in these endeavors if we are to see spiritual transformation. As such the question becomes, where are we in this understanding of such a lofty ideal after twenty-years?



Footnotes & References

¹ The work of the French astronomers identifies the existence of “Sirius B in 1995” speaks to this work.

² This project is sponsored by National Geographical Society and the IBM Foundation, and the goal is to record via six centers the Human Gene pool of the Global Village Culture.

³ The works of Professor Muhammad A Al-Rahman have argued for this unique voice in his cursory examination of this dynamism as was completed in his doctoral works at the Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁴ The notion of Andu-Shahelian peoples was also linked to the above sources cited previously, where Professor Muhammad developed a New Course of study called “Andu-Shahelian Thought and Culture”, which seeks to identify the relationship as it developed in the Island of Jamaica between the Muslim for West Africa (the *Sahel*) and the Muslims from Andalusia (the Iberian peninsula) that was expressed in the movement of the Maroons. Dr. Sultans Afroz’s works via the department of History and Archeology: Faculty of Humanities & Education, at The University of the West Indies at Mona, have now appropriately demonstrate based upon artifacts, names of places, treaties, and interviews with descendants of this formation presently residing in these areas once occupied by the Maroons that this formation was most unique in the annals of the cultural practices of the peoples of the Island of Jamaica. Her many published works, as in: **“The Invisible yet Invincible: The Muslim Ummah in Jamaica, the Jihad of 1831-1832: The misunderstood Baptist rebellion in Jamaica, and the Manifestation of Tawhid: The Muslim Heritage of the Maroons in Jamaica”**, are just a few examples of the research available on this topic. Additionally, Sayeed Samad (the late founder of *Mathaf: A Museum without Walls*), have shared numerous lectures and acted as a discussant with professor Muhammad on this subject matter for close to twenty years. Some of these lectures took place on “The Gardens of Tranquility: A Saturday Morning radio program hosted on City College Radio (CUNY). Local scholars like Dr. Muhammad Abdul Hakim, professor Yusuf Nuruddin, *M’Muballigh* Dawudu Haneef, the poet Abu Muhammad, Ishmael (the photojournalist), Ibrahim (the student linguist), the late

(Khalifa Braithwaite) were just a few of those who took part in these discussions. The Langston Hughes Library Lecture series, held during Black History month programming also attracted these discussion among the scholars like Dr. Mahidi Ibn Ziyad, Dr. L. Jefferies, who joined this entelechy called the Ahmad Baba Research Center (at the time), whose theme was called “The Islamic African-Perspective.” If the history has to be properly documented, it is should also be noted that it was in the home of Sayeed and Djamillah Samad, located in Brooklyn, New York that the first “State of the *Ummah*” Conference was held, and with the help of *M’Muballigh* Muhammad that the United Nations representative from Mali, Sheikh Cee Cee (the son of the grand Imam of great Mosque was of GOA was present), this took place in the early (1980’s). Additionally, other examples of this early nexus to this legacy will be included in this final publication of this important historiography and ethnology.

⁵ The “*Ananci and Itikuma* Fables” are an integral part of Antillean Culture as utilized in Jamaica, it played an important role as a “Parable and Paradigm” to transmit “Values and Cultural Practices” to most children in this cultural construct, especially from a pedagogical context in character development.

⁶ This religious *Diarra* (house) was the place that one could observe the entelechy that emerged to formulate a program of study for this Hijrah Project, and it was here that the formation of the Idea of “The Breadfruit Tree Project” as developed by Dr. Jeffery Goldson (Malik Muhammad), was shared and discussed with the group of families that visited this location regularly on Sundays. It was also here that the first intensive language program in Arabic and Wolof was taught to the children that were chosen to be a part of this program (Sheikh Ilman Sarr was the teacher). Based upon conservative estimates, you had about twenty families with approximately fifty-four children in attendance regularly on Sundays, and this provided the opportunity for Seringe Mustafa M’Backe to explain the teachings of Ahmadou Bamba to those in attendance from this local community. Among this group where key brothers who were linked to this project, Yusuf Obafemi, Dr. Abdul Rasheed, *M’Muballigh* Saeed Abu Jamal, Dr. Jeffery Goldson, Pape Ndiaye, and Ka-

shif just to name a few. The sisters were, Aminah Ndiaye, Khabeerah N’Drame, Bilquis, Umami Muttaqi, Fatimah Abdur Raheem, Latifa Umami Tariq, Amira A. Al-Rahman, Jawarah Hassan.

⁷ It is to the credit of Mahmoud’s first wife (Fathou) that the school program was able to link with a noble merchant in the market place for purchasing the fabric needed to make the uniforms that were designed for the children, as would be displayed in the photo narrative to follow in this publication.

⁸ Sheikh Mustafa Leye not only accorded us the appropriate space for utilizing as class rooms for our program, the first assembly held during the opening of school that year, he made it his responsibility to introduce the staff of the Hijrah program to his students and teachers gathered during this historic assembly. He also supported the model of education that embraced home instruction as a way to enhance matriculation of the children eventually into the *N’Dame* school system, which in many ways was most successful, and at some point in this narrative those milestones will be discussed.

⁹ The first class of children numbered fifteen (15), followed by the second group that included international students and adult learners which numbered twenty-seven (27) bringing the total to forty-two (42) in the schools history in its four years existence. Most importantly as well, is that the children also lived in a compound that housed seven (7) Senegalese teachers which ran the local *Dariah* that had approximately forty (40) residential students and about two-hundred (200) children that came from the village daily to learn *Qur’an*, four (4) scholars from Al-Azhar, Egypt, a support staff of four (4) with community family support residing in this location and the director of the program and his teaching staff of (4) experts. In a move that further demonstrates is commitment and resolve, Seringe Mourtada M’Backe, appointed Professor Muhammad A. Al-Rahman as the head of this complex and requested that all the various division work with him to maintain an appropriate sense of governance and mutual respectability. The instruction was for this protocol was given directly to Seringe Khasim M’Backe to inform all concerned of these orders. In addition, Seringe Mamour M’Backe (the eldest son) of Sheikh Mourtada, kept constant communication with the

school and its progress, and he also facilitated one of the most important meetings in his office in Dakar, for the designing of the community clinic that was to be built and he made an architect available for this purpose who met with this team of doctors at this location. Akin as well, was his instructions to Seringe Bara M'Boge that he should become a member of the staff of the program, and his contributions to the success of the early efforts to facilitate the children's successful matriculation into the *N'Dame* system, his tutoring, and supportive administrative activities deserves notable mention. With respect to Seringe Fadl Fall, his presence in the school demonstrates the extent of the commitment here as well. This scholar of repute lived and studied in Mauritania, Sudan, and Egypt, and he taught Arabic and Tajweed in Saudi Arabia. Of note here is that based upon observations the scholars of Al-Azhar paid notable respect to him and on many occasion refused to lead him in prayers during our moments of congregational worship in the compound's Mosque. Mongone N'Diaye, as a teacher of Wolof provided moment of entrée to the children by taking them to the local village to provide moments of language emersion with the local peoples. Sohna Muslima M'Backe (the daughter of the present) Khaliif general, Seringe Bara M'Backe also played an important role with respect to the educational of the girls. It is here that the wife of Seringe Mourtada M'Backe, Sohna Rahama Lo, played an integral part in facilitating the faith and cultural practices of insuring that the girls received the most appropriate care.

Equally as well, was the role of the late Sohna Hawa N'Diaye and her family who provided support to this program in its infancy.

¹⁰ In terms of learning and accomplishments, The upper level students of this program had memorized three to four (*juz*) of the Holy Quran, memorized forty (40) Hadiths and beyond, learned Arabic and Wolof morphology, Fiqh, History, Sciences, Geography, Math, Astronomy, French, Ethics (*Adab*) and Tajweed. The children of the middle level were able to memorize the first and portions of the second (*juz*), and of note, five members of the upper group were able to attend advance classes with the Senegalese children in the *N'Dame* system where the instruction was in the Arabic and Wolof languages. Akin to this accomplishment, is one of due notoriety, where two children of Sister Amina N'Diaye (Suliman and Ayyub), had left for Senegal earlier than this group and they were studying in the Dunga Dariyah school of Sheikh Kairah (*Touba, Daru-Quddus*). One of the boys (Ayyub) memorized the Holy Qur'an, and wrote two from memory and presented one to Sheik Moustafa M'Backe Guide Fatima. Upon completion of their early religious education these two boys were attending the Maajalis Circle in Touba Mosque, which organized itself like a University system as is employed within the learning traditions of West African Islamic circles and other regions of the Islamic world.

¹¹ Textual references seek to connect the

reader to the *Qur'an*, Hadiths literature, as primary sources in the corpus of works utilized in Islam.

¹² Here, a comprehensive discussion would not be provided on the notions of "Migrants (Muhajihrs), and Helpers (Ansaru)", due to the discourse that would be provided on this subject upon completion of the final text. However, it should be understood by the ideas that these notions had from its conceptual foundation a clear sense on the part of this group of "Andu-Shahelian Peoples", as a basis for this move to take their children to Senegal to study, and considerable number discussions were held for a time-period before the decision to send the first group was made. Additionally, other scholars approached Professor Muhammad to request the he consider sending the children to their location, places like Pakistan, and Fouta Touro, Senegal, and Northern Nigeria. Chapter IV, vrs.97-99, and Chapter VIII, vrs.72-74 (of the Qur'an), were the sources examined as a part of the context to aid in the group's decision. It also provided the basis on which the notion of a "health project" as in the "Breadfruit Tree Project" obtained its genesis as away for these peoples to give-back to their ancestral home-land.



This is an excerpt from the soon to be published manuscript by Muhammad A. Al-Rahman, PhD. (ABD), PsyD (cand.), LMFT, entitled:

Trifocal Islamic Peoples Cosmology.

For additional information about this academic work and the fund to support the Hijrah Project contact: cmacint@hotmail.com.



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