

TRIBUTE TO THE TWO GREAT VOLUNTEERS

Alhaj Gulamhussein Saleh Allarakhia (Golo Saleh)



In the annals of Zanzibar Khoja Ithnashri history the name 'Golo Saleh' (Gulamhussein) gets inscribed with golden letters. He was born to the family of Saleh Allarakhia (Saleh Madawa) whose spices/herbal medicine shop in one corner of Vaddi Bhajar (Hurumzi) was a household word. Such was its impact that to date shops dealing in herbal medicines in Zanzibar are referred to as 'Saleh Madawa'.

Interestingly Ithnashri zealots of yesteryears in Zanzibar nicknamed their sons 'Golo' out of fervency and devotion to their Imams. Incidentally Gulamhusseinbhai was born on the day of 10th Muharram (Ashura). His devotion to *azadari* and pioneering feats in the services of the community were some of the contributory factors to the popular acclaim Zanzibar had attained as the staunchest in the Khoja World.

No doubt the name 'Golo Saleh' remains synonymous with Zanzibar's spectacular Matam Njiani (Julus), *Khushali Bankro*, *Husain Day* and any community related event since the days of 1930s.

The scene wherein the 'Zuljanah' in all its majesty was being brought out to the accompaniment of Golo Saleh has had an everlasting impression of Zanzibar *julus* on old timers.

His presence at the Night School Fez where he was a 'maalim' exuded discipline and made him role model for the youths. Mostly seen in coat and red tarboosh cap he projected an imposing personality. Recording majlis/marshia/nauha was a passion with him and his shelf

stacked with his collection of tap spools. The visits to Zanzibar by Allama Rashid Turabi, Abbas Rizvi and several others had an overwhelming effect on the islanders and Gulamhusseinbhai covered on his tape recorder all their *majlises* which were later relayed at the Taziakhana at night continuously amid huge gathering.

Sadly, Gulamhusseinbhai remains no more. In his 80s he passed away in Dar es Salaam on Thursday, the 25th of June 2010, 12th Rajab 1413AH.



Zuljanah ready for the Julus.

Left: On the left is Hussein Dawood (Kadudu), on the right Gulamhussein Saleh Allarakhia (Golo Saleh) behind Golo Saleh is Raza Karim (box) – Ashura night Julus.

Right: On the left Raza Karim (box) Right Gulamhussein Saleh Allarakhia (Golo Saleh) – Arbaeen Julus.



Alhaj Mohamedhussein Hassanali Ahmed (Mamsen Khokoni)

Perhaps the mainlanders will remember Mohamedhusain Hassanali Ahmed as an old timer reciting ‘*Ya Husain na bewatan...*’ at the *kabrastan* on the *Ashura* day or being brought to the mosque or *mehfil* in a wheel chair hardly realizing that in his hey days he was the very epitome of Zanzibar Khoja Ithnashries’ zealousness.

The Zanzibaris had penchant for calling people by way of nickname and that made Mohamedhusein "*Mamsen Khokoni*" as he resided in the Khokoni corner of Malindi. Since childhood he exuded great confidence and even adjudged Zanzibar's best scout in the British colonial days that won him a gold medal. He along with Golo Saleh (the late Gulamhusein Saleh) formed the community's most imposing personalities. Their names remain associated with Zanzibar's spectacular *Matam Njiani (julus)*, *khushali bankro* or *Husain Day* since the days of 1930s.

He was one of the most ardent *azadar*. First Muharram onwards he would attire himself in black till the twelfth and always availed himself of his leave during the 12 days to devote it to *azadari*, even whilst with NBC in Dar-es-Salaam where he was a Security Officer in the Administrative Services Department and resided on the top floor of the famous City Drive Building.



Above: Mohamedhusein Ahmed reciting.

One of Mohamedhusein's most distinguished features was his extraordinarily powerful voice. His rendering of *kalema* during a funeral procession in Zanzibar generated tremendous emotions and the scene still etches on the memory. His recitation of '*jab akhri rukhsatse Husain ae haramme...*' and '*Ya Husain na bewatan....*' to this day remain unmatched. In *saf matam* his presence was striking up till the end of the *matam* which would culminate with salutations (*ziyarat*) of the Martyrs of Kerbala.

The late Husain Sultan Nathani had the knack for emulating his mentor when the *saf matam* climaxed with the rendition of '*çhalie Madina...*' or the final stanza '*ruswaio*'. Sadly, both remain no more.

How could we ever forget Mohamedhusein's soulful '*kehte hai Zainulaba leke alam ayah u, utho Rasule Khuda leke alam ayah u...*' resounding through the *Kiponda* vicinity in the return leg of the *Chehlum julus* en route from *kabrastan* to *imambara* as the sun would set in the Zanzibar of by-gone days and the emotions of the devotees raised at fever pitch. Ah for those days of Zanzibar!

Mohamedhuseinbhai, aged 86, passed away on Thursday, the 9th of June (6th Rajab), 2011.

Written by: Abdulrazak Sheriff Fazal of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



Chehlum Day Julus in Zanzibar - 1963: Holding the flag on the left is Marhum Amir Alimohamed (Amir Futo) and on the right is Marhum Bashir Kassamali Habib, behind him is Marhum Maalim Mohamed Ebrahim Jivraj. Carrying the board is Marhum Abdul G. Walji (Biremi). The first onlookers on the left is Murad M D Kermalli and on the left Mustafa Mamado Nasser.

Photographs by courtesy of:

- Br. Mohamedraza G. Saleh of Dar es Salaam.
- Br. Noorali Nasser of London, U.K.
- Br. Murtaza Jivraj (Kerbala)

We request our readers to remember and all the past volunteers and all the Marhumeen with Sura-e-Fateha. May Allah (SWT) grant these dedicated volunteers maghferat and by His infinite grace and mercy place them in high station in the proximity of Ahlulbayt (AS), Ameen.

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