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OBITUARY

"Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Rajeeun"

"To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return"

(Holy Qur'an, Surah Al Baqarah 2:156)

Alhaj Murtaza Ramzanali Jivraj (Murtaza Kerbala)



1946 – 2021

The Africa Federation (AFED) Secretariat received with deep sorrow and sadness the news of the sudden death of the Head of the AFED Archives Section Alhaj Murtaza Ramzanali Jivraj (fondly known as Murtaza Kerbala) which occurred at his home in Dar-es-Salaam on Friday 2nd April 2021.

Murtaza bhai was born in Ujiji, Kigoma on 3rd March 1946 and was the fourth child of his parents Ramzanali bhai and Mariam bai Jivraj who were blessed with twelve children.

Late Murtaza bhai completed his primary education in Kigoma before moving to Dar-es-Salaam in 1964 to pursue his secondary school. On completion of his education, he joined the Ministry of Statistics Department of Census in 1967 and in 1971 moved to Mwanza where he started his own business of Vehicle Spares Parts and Hardware. He then moved back to Dar-es-Salaam in 1975 where he and his brothers successfully established Photography outlet which over the years expanded to include Geo-Mirco and Photo Equipment Companies. Many members of the community will recall Murtaza bhai presence at all community occasions handling the videography of the functions.

He began his Community services at a young age in Kigoma by serving as a volunteer of the Jamaat and then served in the Jamaat Committee before being appointed as the Joint Secretary of Kigoma Jamaat in 1967. He played a major role in starting the Ashura Night Julus for the first time in Kigoma in 1969, a tradition which continues to-date by the Bilal Muslim Mission as most of our Community members have left Kigoma for settling in Dar es Salaam and other places. During his few years while in Mwanza, he served as a volunteer and was a Committee Member of Jaffery Sports Club.

In Dar-es-Salaam he joined the Ithna-Asheri Union Volunteer Corps (IUVC) in 1975 which offered services in various sectors of the Jamaat and also Ithna-Asheri Union and Union Sports Club. He was actively involved in various programs of the IUVC, which include the Rufiji Flood Victims Aid Program, Ashura night Julus organizing ad-hoc committee, Bagamoyo annual majlis, Hussain Day and Milad-un-Nabii (SAWW) programs in Dar es Salaam.

He served as the Principal of Husayni Madressa Boys' Section from 1983 – 1986 and was also the Chairman of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania from 2004 – 2007.

Murtaza bhai joined the AFED Archives Section as a member in 2007 and was appointed as its head in 2016 a position he held until the time of his death. He had a great interest in the history of our community; he also has a big personal collection of wide-ranging photographs of different Jamaats, Mosques, Imambarghas, people and glimpses of various occasions, which he has been collecting and preserving for many years.

He had a vision to establish a library and gallery at the upcoming new AFED offices being constructed in Dar-es-Salaam and had presented the full plan of it at the 82nd Supreme Council Session held in December 2020.

Marhum Murtaza Kerbala was bestowed the **Abbasi Medal** by Africa Federation Chairman Alhaj Shabir Najafi at the 82nd Supreme Council Session held in Dar-es-Salaam in December 2020, in recognition of his honorary and selfless services to the Community, Society and Humanity at large,

Extract of the Condolence Message from the Chairman of Africa Federation:

"The news of Murtaza bhai's sudden death has been received with profound shock in many parts of the world as evident from the huge number of messages we are receiving following of his death.

Marhum possessed an amiable, fascinating and inspiring personality, whose presence at any gathering would enliven the occasion by his immense recollection of history of the Community and his sense of humour he was gifted.

His sad departure from this world has robbed the Community of a person who had the history of the Community on his finger tips and his zeal and passion of sharing the information with the Community was unmatched.

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I am writing this letter to express our grief and deep sympathies to your mother, both of you, your sisters and all members of the family on this bereavement, which has fallen upon you".

Shabir Najafi

Extract from the Tribute by AFED Vice Chairman during the Funeral of Marhum Murtaza bhai on Friday 2nd April 2021 at the KSIJ Cemetery, Dar es Salaam.

"The news of his death this morning was quite shocking, until last night he was communicating with his family members in Dar-es-Salaam and also with his brother in-law in the U.K.

Lately, Murtaza bhai was actively involved in the preparation for the Africa Federation Talk Show Program titled "Panjo Uganda" – a program by the Archives Section in collaboration with the Media Section of Africa Federation which is planned during this holy month of Ramadhan, it is almost similar like "Unguja Yetu" program. Sadly, he won't be here to participate in this Program for which he was so keen. This was his dream project and therefore we shall dedicate "Panjo Uganda" Program in memory of Marhum Murtaza Bhai.

Marhum until his death was the Head of the Africa Federation Archives Section and a Delegate of AFED from Dar es Salaam Jamaat, was a regular attendee of the Supreme Council Sessions and Conferences of AFED. He served for the cause of Islam till his last breath, his love for Ahlulbayt (AS) and Azadari of Imam Hussain (AS) shall remain enshrined with his legacy.

Marhum had vast knowledge of the history of our Community his passion to collect old photographs and books of the history of our community made him quite popular within

and outside our Community as a person who would respond instantaneously to enquiries because of his knowledge and record keeping.

Today we bid farewell to this great personality, a volunteer and a close friend whose immense contributions in the field of external Tabligh, PR with various Islamic and other Institutions, Islamic Scholars and his Community Services will be missed by all, and particularly by Africa Federation”.

Aunali Khalfan



Attending the Milad un Nabii (SAWW) program organized by the Dar es Salaam Region Sheikh Alhadi Mussa Salim in Mbagala Centre on 5th February 2016 in Dar es Salaam.

From L to R: Alhaj Murtaza Kerbala, AFED Archives Section Head, Alhaj Aunali Khalfan, AFED Vice Chairman and Syed Arif Naqvi who was then the Head of Tabligh in Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania.



August 2017 – Alhaj Hassan Ali M. Jaffer visits AFED Archives Section - Dar es Salaam

Above: Seated from left: Aunali Khalfan (Vice Chairman – AFED), Alhaj Hassan Ali M Jaffer (Writer & Khoja Heritage Historian from Mombasa), Mohamed Hemani (Hon. Treasurer – AFED).
 Standing from left: Murtaza Jivraj – Kerbela (Head – AFED Archives) and Hussein Karim (Hon. Secretary – AFED)



Above: Alhaj Murtaza Kerbala is seen with Dr. Sibtain Panjwani during his visit to the AFED Archives Section in Dar es Salaam on 17th September 2019 together with Archives Team Member Abbasali Abbas

A conversation with Alhaj Murtaza Kerbala in Dar es Salaam in September 2019 by Dr. Sibtain Panjwani of the Awakening Project who is based in the United Kingdom.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-0_YUK6OnQ



In Recognition and Appreciation of his dedicated and selfless services to the Community and Africa Federation – Murtaza Kerbala is bestowed the prestigious Abbas Medal

Above: Alhaj Shabir Najafi, AFED Chairman bestowing the Medal to Alhaj Murtaza Kerbala during the AFED Supreme Council in December 2020 Dar es Salaam. Seen also presenting the Citation to Murtaza bhai is Late Murrabbi Alhaj Mohamed bhai Dhirani, the past Chairman of AFED.



Group Photograph at the Farewell Appreciation Lunch for Mrs. Fatema Dharsee – Admin Secretary of CBG and Archives Section of Africa Federation

Standing from L to R: Zainul Chandoo, Alihassan Kassam, Aunali Khalfan, Ahmed Alloo, Murtaza Kerbala, Zaheer Abbas Hemani and Shabbirhussein Khalfan.

Seated from L to R: Sajida Master, Fatima Patel, Shama Dewji, Fatema Dharsee, Zaheera Raza, Mejabeen Khaki and Arifa Somji.

We convey our heartfelt condolences to Marhum's wife, sons Shaneabbas & Shabbir, daughters Sukaina and Sajida, his siblings, grandchildren and all family members.

We pray to Allah (SWT) to grant Marhum maghferat and place his soul amongst the blessed ones in the vicinity of the Chahardah Ma'sumeen (AS) and who continuously receive the mercy and grace of Allah (SWT), Ameen.

Sura-Al-Fateha is requested for Marhum Murtaza bhai and all the Marhumeen.

SECRETARIAT