

## Chapter Six

### **On the Country of Ahir, Those Who Reside There and Their Scholars**

**A**djacent to the country of Bornu in the direction of the north is the land of **Ahir**. It is an extensive country, which shares borders with Bornu. Those who reside there are the Tuaregs, a remnant from a union of the Sanhaja and the people of the *Sudan*. Previously this land was in the hands of the people of the *Sudan* from the people of Gobir, and then the Tuaregs took control. They were divided into five clans called:

[1] the Amakeet;

[2] Tamakek;

[3] Sandaare;

[4] Akdaalaa; and

[5] Ajdaarneen.

They conquered the lands and settled among them. Then they decided to appoint *amirs* among themselves, who would establish their affairs and ward off the strong from the weak. They chose a man from the people of Astafa. After sometime they deposed him from the seat of authority and sought after another. They continued in this way whenever their *amir* did not conform to their wishes they would overthrow him.

These Tuaregs were originally from a remnant of the Berber who diffused throughout these lands during the conquering of Ifriqiyya. It is said that the Berber were originally from the descendents of Ibrahim. It is said that they were from the sons of Yaafeth. It is said they were from the Gog and Magog who were barricaded by *Dhu 'l-Qarnayn*. This group issued from among them and introduced corruption that their forefathers had not done and committed outrages. They eventually intermarried among the Turk and Tatar.

It is also said that they are among the children of the *jinn*. It is said that a company of people went to the *Bayt 'l-Maqdas* and remained there living in a low plain. As a result the women became pregnant from the *jinn* of that area. Thus, the Tuareg were born. They are a community that had a propensity for shedding blood, seizing wealth and warfare.

It is also said that they were the ones who killed the Prophet Handhala, upon him be peace. It is also said that they were the one's responsible for killing Zakariyya and Yahya upon them be blessings and peace. They are said to be responsible for oppressing the *Bani Isra'il* and for driving them from their land. This continued until Talut fought them and then Dawud killed thier leader, Jalut. During this time they were in the country of Palestine from which they fled heading in the direction of the west until they reached the villages of al-Wabiya and Maraaqaba that are two villages in the western district of Egypt. There they survived from rain-water since the waters of the Nile did not reach that region. It was from there that they dispersed. The Zanaata and the Maghila traveled on to Morocco and settled in the Mountains. The Liwaata proceeded on and settled in the country of Antiolis, which is Cyrenaica. Thus, they spread throughout the *Maghrib* until they reached the regions of Suus. The Huwaara settled in the city of Badwa while the Nafusa settled in the city of Sabra. As a result of this those who were from among the Romans fled that region.

The Afaariqa, who were the clients of the Romans established a treaty which would protect them from those who conquered their country. They were originally the descendents of the Banu Faariq ibn Yansur ibn Haam. We will return to discussing the people of this region. They claimed that when the regions of Ifriqiyya were conquered the Berbers dispersed from that region in the direction of the *Maghrib*.

Some of them went into the southwestern regions on the borders of the *bilad 's-sudan*. They settled in the towns of Awjala, Fezzan, Ghadames and Ghaat. These above mentioned five tribes eventually set out from Awjala and settled in lands of Ahir driving out *Sudanese* who lived there prior.

The religion of Islam spread in this region extensively and the *baraka* appeared among its people and much good. There are among them many scholars and *awliyya*, so numerous, that only Allah knows their true number. However, their biographies have been lost because of the lack of written history in these lands, as mentioned previously. But we will cite a beam as evidence of this.



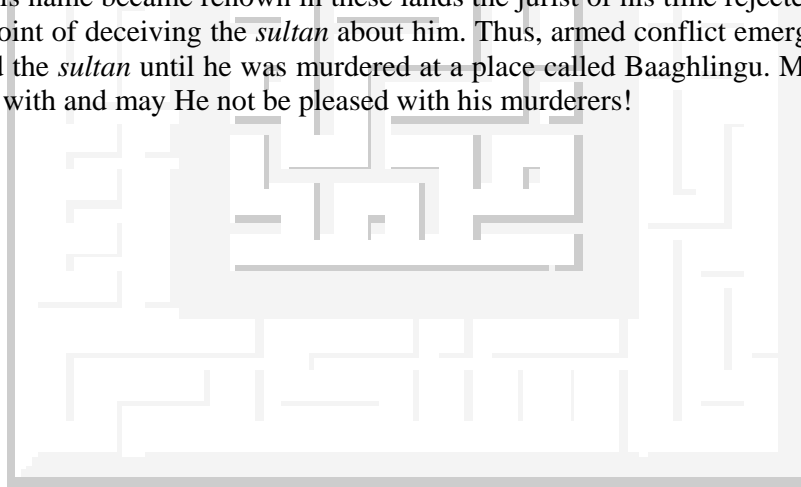
*Masjid of Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye' in Agadez, Niger in the lands of Ahir*

Among them were the educator and jurist **al-'Aaqib ibn Abdullahi al-Ansamuni al-Masufi**. Ahmad Baba said in his *Kifaayat 'l-Muhtaaj Fi Man Laysa Fi 'd-Dibaa*j, "al-'Aaqib ibn Abdullahi al-Ansamuni al-Masufi was originally from the people of Takeda, a village which is inhabited by the Sanhaja, near the lands of the *Sudan*. He was a profound jurist, brilliant comprehension, with an ingenious intellect and immersed in knowledge. He had a cutting tongue. He composed an excellent explanatory footnote upon the words of Khaleel, "the designation of the intention of the one swearing". It is an excellent and beneficial work. He summarized it along with the ideas of others in a small monograph called *Tanbeeh 'l-Waaqif 'Ala Tahreer Wa Khussisat Niyat 'l-Haalif*. He also composed a treatise concerning the necessity of establishing the *juma`a* prayer in the village of Ansumun. Other scholars differed from him in it, however the truth was with him. He also composed his *al-Jawaab 'l-Mahmuud 'An As'ilati 'l-Qaadi Muhammad ibn Mahmud* and his *Ajwibat 'l-Faqeer 'An Ajwibat 'l-Amir* wherein he gives answers to some questions put to him by *Askiya al-Hajj* Muhammad. He composed other works as well. He took knowledge from al-Maghili, *Shaykh* as-Suyuti and others. There also occurred a dispute between him and Makhluuf 'l-Balbaali in certain legal issues. He lived around 950 A.H..

Among them was the professor **an-Najib ibn Muhammad Shamsudeen at-Takadaawi al-Ansamuni**. Ahmad Baba said in the above-mentioned text, "He was among the *shaykhs* of the age. He combined jurisprudence with righteousness. He composed two commentaries upon the *Mukhtasar* of Khaleel. The largest one was in four volumes and the other was in two. He also composed commentary notes on the *Takhmees 'Asriniyyaat 'l-Faazaazi* of Ibn Muheeb regarding commendation of the

Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He took knowledge from **Ahmad Sahuuliya**. He is still alive and has attained an advanced age.

Among them was the majestic *imam* and erudite *shaykh*, **Sidi Mahmud 'I-Baghdadi**, the possessor of innumerable virtues and exclusive miracles. He was unique in his time and unraveled. He was the *Qutb*, a reviver of the *Sunna* and destroyer of innovation. He invited to the Truth and spoke with the tongue of the *awliyya*. He was the *sultan* of the spiritual path and the living evidence of the *shari`a*. He completely submerged himself in worship and the remembrance of Allah. He entered the lands of Ahir illuminated with divine light and guidance. There rushed to him to acquire some of his light and guidance those who were in dire need and impoverished for someone who could take them from error to guidance, from darkness into the light, from ignorance to knowledge, from heedlessness to wakefulness, from being preoccupied with other than Allah to engagement with Allah and from corrupt passions to fearful awareness. May Allah be merciful to them and forgive them. Many of his companions took knowledge from him and were spiritually trained at his hands. Majestic *shaykhs* acquired their share of his light, which caused the traces of his *baraka* to persist along with their *baraka*. His students used to honor him and show him greatest esteem. They used to claim that he was the Awaited *al-Mahdi*. There were many traditions narrated about him, most of which were true and Allah knows best. The truth is he was a magnificent scholar and a perpetual savior. The *awliyya* of Allah foretold his appearance before he emerged. When his name became renown in these lands the jurist of his time rejected him, even to the point of deceiving the *sultan* about him. Thus, armed conflict emerged between him and the *sultan* until he was murdered at a place called Baaghlingu. May Allah be pleased with and may He not be pleased with his murderers!



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### **The Blameworthy Customs of Ahir**

Among the traits of the people of this land is that they were hardened in destructive customs, which they preferred above the Book and the *Sunna*. The most hideous of these customs is whenever there appeared a scholar or *waliyy* among them and he died, they would place one of his descendents in their place. They would follow him just as they had followed that *waliyy* or scholar or even more so than him. They did this even when the new charlatan was ignorant and knew nothing. Sometimes the new leader would be a disbeliever. However no one has been able to demonstrate the falsity of these customs among them. This is due to the extent that these customs have been implanted among them. This verifies what the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said, "*Indeed Allah will not snatch away knowledge all together, snatching it away from the servants. But He snatches away knowledge by the seizing of the scholars until no scholar remains. Then the people will take as their leaders ignorant ones. They will question them and they will give legal decisions without knowledge. They have gone astray and have led others astray.*" These destructive customs in truth must be eradicated.

Among these ugly customs is that gangs among them fail to inherit in accordance with the judgment of the Book and the *Sunna*. Instead the son of the sister inherits from the father. Among their repulsive customs which contradict the *shari`a* is they fail to retaliate according to the judgment of the Book and the *Sunna*. When one of them is murdered, they kill someone from the perpetrators' tribe in the same manner that he killed, just as the first did.

Among their horrid customs is they depose their *sultan* without any legal reason according to the *shari`a*, which has led to the weakness of their political authority and the perfusion of armed conflicts among them. These internecine wars have spread so much that none of their affairs have ever matured. Among them are so many other customs that they cannot be counted or enumerated.



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