

## [HararianForum] Harar Review Contn.

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For click here Part I

By Salah Khairo Contin.....

The power dynamics, which is exhibited in the surrounding areas of the office of Awe Basha Birign are quiet interesting to examine. The office and residence of Awe Haji Birign lie about 50 -60 strides south but to the left side of the main street called "Andegna Meged" from Duke Berr.

The power dynamics, which is exhibited in the surrounding areas of the office of Awe Basha Birign are quiet interesting to examine. The office and residence of Awe Haji Birign lie about 50 -60 strides south but to the left side of the main street called "Andegna Meged" from Duke Berr. The entrance to his office is in a recess and is adjacent to Awe Berqa Mosque which is frequented and administered by the advocates and relatives of Shaikh Abdulahi Al-Harari in particular Shaikh Abdurahman Tebalali, his supporters and students.

Opposite to the mosque is a huge building owned by Shaikh Yusuf Abdurahman which he uses in part as his office and in part as a commercial centre. Actually, that building used to be called "Demesse Asfaw Hotel" which was named after the owner, Ato Demesse Asfaw. I assume of that the hotel must be one of the first Hotels in Harar which furnished many rooms, food, liquors and prostitutes inside Jugal and so one of the first hotels meant to disrupt and corrupt our Islamic moral values and ethics.

Further more, Ato Demesse, was rich and industrious man but disliked Islam and muslims and if he had a chance he would have evicted us one after the other from that street. To some degrees he did succeed but could not complete his ambition for Allah had another plan for him and so he passed away leaving his assets and legacy to his only son.

Unfortunately, the son was unworthy. He could not pursue his father's wish simply because he was chronic berchoholic, alcoholic, and smokoholic. Consequently, qat, alcohol and smoking sapped everything out his body, soul and sprit to achieve his father's dream. It was then, I suppose, sold it off to the highest bidder, Awe Baha Birign and disappeared with shame for not honoring the legacy of his farther.

Awe Basha knocked of the old sign and replaced it with a new sign on to the front side of the building reading some thing like "Aftel Garad Forestry, Tourism and Recreation Pty Ltd" in Arabic, Amharic and English; parked his latest 4 wheel drive Toyota Land Cruiser behind the building, hired a number of attendants and easily walks to and fro

from his house which is a stone throw away. AftelGerad has always been closed when I was in Harar.

Interestingly, opposite to the AftelGerad and across the main street is a well known stationary store owned by Awe Alewi Bahrun and his associates including Shaikh Abduraham Tebalali and Shaikh Abdulkarim, a long time deceased brother of Shaikh Abdullahi Alharari. To the right and left of this stationary are few number of shops owned and frequented by supporters of Shaikh Abdulahi Alharari as well.

What makes it more interesting to examine the impacts of the presence of Shaikh Yusuf Al-harari exactly opposite to the most enthusiastic supporters and sympathizers of Shaikh Abdulahi Al-harari who has had bitter historical rivalry and oppositions the former one. The rivalry and competition between the two great Shaikh Al-hararis started off in this holy city of Harar, run for some 70-80 years and now seems to have come back not only to the city of Harar but a spot in Andegna Meged..

Shaikh Abdulahi is now passed away but he left a legacy of many years of Islamic learning, practice and teaching. The advocates to his teaching are widely seen in Harar and function under the leadership of Shaikh Abdurahman Teballali who narrates interesting stories about the greatness of Shaikh Abdullahi Alharari. I studied &ldquo;Safinatul Najja&rdquo; (the boat of salvation), a small little book of Fiqh for beginners, under the guidance of Shaikh Abduraham Teballahi for sometime when I was pretty young. I quitted half way to completion and moved to sheikh Abdulkarim who was rather more flamboyant and involving than Awe Teballali who speaks really fast, very serious and whom I had difficulties understanding his words. However, he has quiet appealing: tall and slender, very tidy and mostly wearing flashy and neat clothes and devote Muslim. He is quiet gentle but some believe that he could be quiet cunning.

Unfortunately, the approaches of Islamic teachings and understands that Awe Basha and the advocates of Shaikh Abdulahi Al-harari are hostile and intolerant to the existence of the other. As a result, the spot has become a battle filed. As a result, it is not uncommon to hear some stories of malicious harassments, threats and intimidations against each other between the generals, lieutenants and soldiers of the two parties both in civilized and traditional manners but mainly expressed in show of wealth, knowledge and wisdom, influence and fame and politics as exemplified in the following interesting case studies.

Pending court case A.

Bahrudinuharari is a Harari nationalist who lives in Harar. I and many others in Harar consider him as hero and lion of Harar because of his fitting grace, stern gazes, tall and heavily built body with strong muscles. His personal attitude is cool, collected and very respectful but at times he will be very explosive like an African lion and run over his enemies like a bulldozer if he is agitated, intimidated or feels threatened.

Once he loves and trusts a person or finds that you are a harari being threatened, no matter how bad the case could turn out, he just says "Azow Anbe hedega" (leave that one for me) and takes the first steps in the matter. The people who are concerned his actions particularly close family members and friends advised him the fact that he can be used by those who can betray his love and trust. He never listened and so suffered the consequences his actions. Now he is recruited to advocate to the teaching of Shaikh Abdulah Alharari and is being trained to hate Wahabies, which is impersonated by Awe Basha Birign in Harar.

I believe that Awe Bash must have studied the acts and behaviors of this gentleman for quiet sometime as both live and work in the same area. It happened that on one occasion Bahrudinulharari intimidates and threatens Awe Basha, I heard, saying:

"I wish I could kill you" looking at Awe Haji with his scary and fearless eyes, which exerts a knee a jerk on anyone who looks at them.

"empty and talkative" replies Awe Basha without any fear or hesitation and gives him a lesson about Harari culture:

"do you know the meaning of this 'Welbqay' ( mantle) I wear in Harari culture?; adds the Shaikh, " you don't know it. .... it means a shroud to cover a dead body. You don't get it. Do you? You see when I get out of my house every day I always remind myself that I may not return home again and so I carry my shroud with me. You are talking empty. Why don't you do it now?"

After sometime I guess that Awe Basha must have decided that this lion must be tamed or stopped. He understands that this man is a real Harari lion that could run over and squash him like a tomato run over by a car if he is agitated. It happened that when they met in another instance, the old man summoned his witnesses and lay charges against him. However, Bahrudinulharari has been vindicated at three levels of the Harari courts following several periods of court proceedings and hearings. Then and there Awe Basha decides to take the matter to the highest court of the land.

Bahrudinulharari has now given up the spirit of fighting any longer and winning against one of the richest and influential man in Ethiopia ; and apparently regrets that he had started the fighting in the first place. Consequently, Bahrudinulharari expressed his desire to end the matter with peace through mediations promising that he will never turn his second eye on Awe Basha but so far failed.

Federal High Court proceedings and decision are pending

Traditional one: Wisdom teaching B.

Khafruddin alharari is another gentle man who has just immigrated from Canada or the USA to Ethiopia . He comes from a well known family in Harar. He was born and grew up in Harar; he is short and chubby guy with serious look and long

beard on his face. Many people they know him well think that he lonely and think that he has become quiet suspicious of everything he sees and hears.

I believe that he must have been a recent recruit to the group of Ahabashi in Harar, indoctrinated and trained to hate the Wahabies, once again, as personified by the character of Awe Haji Yusuf. I personally experienced his attitude of jumping into the discussions and responding to questions which are not addressed or relevant to him.

On one occasion he jumped into the presence of Awe Haji Yusuf and asks

“Are you the person by the name of Basha Birign?” ,

“yes it is me” said Shaikh Yusuf,

“Shaikh Abdullahi Alharari, in one of his video recordings that I watched declared that you are a Kafir” ;

“he won’t say that” was the reply he got from Awe Haji.

“if he said that here is the money, please go and get the video to me and then I will respond to that if there is something that substantiate your statement”

Khafruddin alharari immediately refused to accept the request but went further to intimidate and provoke the sheikh saying that "you are a Wahabie; Aren't you?" and starts making mobile calls to his friends to come along and help him with religious debates he has just started with Awe Basha Birign on the street.

Awe Haji waited awhile until the invitees came along. Once he realized that they have arrived Shaikh Yusuf provided his fatherly advice and question Khafruddin alharari saying:

"Oh my son, you see the religious debate around the doctrine of Wahabiyya, Habashiya or for that matter any others too far deep and wide to discuss with you here and now. And I see that you are not qualified to go that far at this stage. So my simple questions to you is how many letters are in the Arabic Alphabet?"

No response.

A couple of days later I went back to the office of Awe Basha Birign to get copy of the news paper article written regarding the rivalry and completions between himself and Shaikh Abdullahi Al-harari and a copy of the full version of his reply. He declined to provide me the copies himself but directed me to the publisher.

My understanding was that he seems to be very conscious and watchful of the things he says and does. He won't let anything out unless he makes sure that it serves the right objectives. But just moments before I left his presence he said "Salahadin, all the things that you are seeing, reading and searching for have nothing to do with me and Abdullahi" but are beyond our differences.

"Be watchful, certainly, it will fade away" and then stood up from his chair and moved towards his car while advising me saying:

"You see I have left Medinatul Nabi, where our prophet was buried, and moved to Harar. Harar is nice because its weather is still the best. If you come back here either with wealth or knowledge you would benefit all"

When left I wished I had some more time with him. I wished that I had written the biography of this great and an amazing Harari gentleman, the walking university and a government combined.

I wished he were the President of Harari State, I wished him a longer life and departed.

I went out of his office, crossed the main street and headed towards the bypass street leading to Assmadin Beri while greeting friends and other people that I had known from both Harari and non Harari ethnic groups. This street is now a conglomeration of all ethnic groups in Harar.

to be continued

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The time was about 12:00PM which is "weqtul Harara" in Harar, the time in which Becholoahics are behaving abnormal, that is they do not actually know what they are doing and saying. As I was walking into the street I could see at a distance a man shouting at an Oromo lady. I think the lady was apparently caught up putting down a large basket of Guava on the street on which it has recently prohibited to sell vegetables and fruits. She must have arrived there carrying the large basket on her head from somewhere outside the outskirts of Harar, may be from one of the peasant associations outside the city.

As I close by, I could hear the angry voice of him giving her successive orders and frightening her with a swing of his hand saying:

&ldquo;Ama Kassi&rdquo; and repeats his orders again:

&ldquo;Kassin singaa&rdquo; and asks her again

&ldquo;Hikatu?&rdquo;

She agreed to his demands, bent down, and picked up the basket but as soon she placed it on the top of her head, the man graped the basket by the edge and shook her together with her load. All of a sudden she lost her balance and let the basket go off her head lest she fall together The basket flew off her head and landed on the street letting the Guava roll down on street. Her tears began pouring on her chicks knowing that her effort and hope of her day disappear in seconds. i believe that she is a mother of few kids who are waiting her to come back with something they enjoy. Who knows her situation?

She began crying bitterly asking the person:

&ldquo;What have I done to you so that you could do this to me&rdquo; and cries again and again with frustration not knowing what to do, where to go or say but ask again her only creator.

&ldquo;Ya Rabbi Teyya Maluman Sigote&rdquo;:

&ldquo;Oh my Lord what have done to you?&rdquo; ; A typical cry of Oromos around harar to show their deep sorrow, anger and pain.

Shop owners on the right and left side of the street simply watched the theatre unfolding while some casual observers bent themselves and collected some of the Guavas lying and rolling on the street. I confronted him and demanded that he should pay her compensation for the value of her fruits he had destroyed and demanded an explanation to what he did. I thought that he is one of the assistants to the shops to the right and left of the street but actually an officer to the City Council who monitors the street. Apparently, you can tell from his appearance that he is a Berchoholic and smokoholic, a walking skeleton and badly dressed. yet, his hostility and arrogance towards people is quiet staggering.

Later it has come to my attention that he is rather a rent seeker. He collects little bribes for every rule and regulation of the City council for monitoring the street he evades. Had she paid him 5 birr he would have allowed her stay like the others did and left unattended. As i talk with him he realised that I am well known to the area and so he slipped out sight like a rodent.

I had to pay compensation on his behalf and provide counselling to the Oromo lady and others that not all Hararis are like him. What story would these women tell to their families, to their villagers and peasant associations when they get back to their village?

Of course, Hararis are bad.

This is just an example but it is a very wide spread phenomenon in Harar. Three days later, I received news that some residential houses are being built on agricultural land owned by Hararis at one of the peasant association in the out skirts of Harar. In fact, there have been many reports of such instances of evictions and even physical attacks in many places in Harar. And in many of these cases the transgressors are not even heeding to court orders issues at Harari courts nor do submit to the law enforcing agencies.

There are many others reasons to that effect but I have no doubt that some of the reasons are associated with the way we make our businesses and deal with others in the city. If we are bad on the ground we should not expect any good out of our behaviours.

Is this relevant and does it have any substance in the context of the politics of Harari State ? Of course, it is relevant and has substance.

But Abba Mohammed Shash thinks otherwise; and may even it take this as "Wireyowire. " I want him to explain his part and the roles of his office has played in addressing such issues and what had been accomplished over the last 18 years.

I am looking forward to his reply

To be continued... .. .