

50th Anniversary of African Independence

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On 13th November 2010 the UK Jama'at celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Independence of 17 different African countries who attained their independence in 1960. The event was organised by the Pan-African Association UK at Bait-ul-Futuh. Dignitaries representing a number of African States attended the function that took place at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in Morden, Surrey. The highlight of the event was the attendance and address given by Hudhur Aqdas.

After recitation of the Holy Qura'n by Hafiz Sulayman Dawodu, guests were welcomed by Issah Ahmed Wemah the Chairman of the Pan-African Association who stated that the Association had been set up over 20 years ago to assist and help African members of the Jama'at in both spiritual and worldly matters.

During the course of the event a number of dignitaries took to the stage. His Excellency, Mr

Edward M Turay, High Commissioner of Sierra Leone spoke of the 'strong roots' that the Jama'at had developed in Sierra Leone and the great services it had provided in the education and health sectors. Mr Alhaji Ahmed Umaru, Head of Chancery at the Nigeria High Commission, spoke of how Nigeria was proud of the strong Ahmadi community in Nigeria. Mr Alhaji Bawah G Ayembillah representing the Ghana High Commission said that Ahmadi Muslims were spread all over Ghana and that they were amongst the best citizens of the country and were excelling in all sectors. Representing the Ivory Coast was the Deputy Ambassador, Mr Dodo Yapi who thanked the Jama'at for its continued services on behalf of his nation. Mr Morris Barsee representing Liberia said that the Jama'at had contributed in many ways to the development of Liberia, particularly through the schools and hospitals that it runs.

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(Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V)



ul-Momineen in which he spoke about his great love for the people and the continent of Africa. This love developed during the eight years he spent living in Ghana and was also founded on the contribution of Africa and Africans in early Islam. It was an African country, now known as Ethiopia, which gave shelter to the early Muslims fleeing persecution from Makkah. Moreover, the respect and regard shown by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to a former African slave, Hadhrat Bilal was well documented and evoked a similar sense of respect for Africans. Hudhur said that the Holy Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) respect for Bilal was illustrated by the fact that at the time of the victory of Makkah, he announced that whoever came under the flag of Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) would be guaranteed protection. Indeed the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)'s regard for Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) was so great that Hadhrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) referred to him as *Syedna* Bilal using the prefix *Syedna* to indicate high respect.

Hudhur then went on to speak about the need for honesty and justice to prevail and for lessons to be learnt. This was all crucial to the future wellbeing and progress of Africa. He said:

"It is a sign of living and progressive nations that they always keep their past history in view and learn lessons from it. As a result, they are able to strengthen and prepare their future. Good traditions and practices are maintained on strong foundations, and to avoid mistakes and errors great planning and effort is undertaken."

Hudhur said that in his estimation Africa could lead the world as long as its leaders and citizens were all willing to put aside their own interests in order to strengthen and consolidate the national interest. Natural resources had to be used with justice and honesty. The West had developed at

a rapid rate, not due to any greater abilities but simply due to its virtues of hard work, loyalty and honesty. Africa too was a continent filled with capable people. Hudhur pointed out:

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Hudhur mentioned the long standing commitment to Africa displayed by the Jama'at. The Jama'at had longstanding communities in many African countries and its schools and hospitals were constantly engaged in serving the poor and needy.

Concluding his address, Hudhur spoke of how peace was essential for Africa's progress and development. He said:

"For the sake of the progress of a country, mutual love, affection and brotherhood are also extremely important. Without this peace cannot be established in a country. And without peace, progress cannot be achieved... Those who fight wars in the name of religion are wrong when they say that they are fighting due to their relationship with God. Islam forbids fighting wars in the name of religion. Thus developing a true relationship with God is a means to end all wars."

Dinner was served at the end of the proceedings and Hudhur held informal sittings with the dignitaries afterwards.