

**‘Travellers in Faith’ or ‘Stealthy Legions’:
The Gurāgē role in the rise of
Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia**

by

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BTh (Evangelical Theological College, Ethiopia)

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Middlesex University

July 2022

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote. Other sources are acknowledged by mid-notes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic research deals with Tablīghī Jamā‘at, one of a Sunni Islamic missionary movements that focuses on faith renewal. The movement originated in India in the 1920s and came to Ethiopia in the 1960s, it operated in a similar manner to its mother movement in India. Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya was the Ethiopian pioneer and was its first leader (*amir*). His leadership in the ensuing rise and development of the movement was remarkable. There was also a significant contribution from a fellow compatriot, Haji Zayno Sheikh Muqina. The notable key role played by the Gurāgē ethnic people who embraced the movement without sacrificing their native Sufi practises is detailed.

In order to study and explore this Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement, Church-Sect and New Religious Movements (NRM) theories are used. Additionally live participant observation, oral history, interviews, and country visits were instrumental methodologies used in conjunction with secondary sources, to explore the evolution of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. Tablīghī Jamā‘at teachings, structures, and operation are studied and discussed in depth; these show a clear purpose to have local identity as well as maintain global connections.

The Ethiopian Tablīghīs shun politics as a group, this is their standard position, some individuals excepted. Thus far there has been no reported violence from the Tablīghīs. However, as there is an often-used slogan: ‘I want to see the supremacy of Islam in my life... in the world’, I would argue that seeking supremacy without political involvement is an unlikely peaceful pathway. This research locates the Ethiopian Tablīghīs as being inevitably and invariably involved in the current debate on faith and politics. Whereas the Wahhabis/Salafis see the Tablīghīs as a cult, the Sufīs and the Tablīghīs see themselves as an established movement within the Sunnis; others perceive them as a New Religious Movement within Sunni Islam.

Key Words: Tablīghī Jamā‘at, New Religious Movement, Church-Sect, Haji Musa, *amir*, *da‘wa*, *khuruj*, *jaula*, *ziyara*, *mashūra*, *ta’līm*, *Markaz*, Gurāgēs, economic migrant (*fano/fanonäti*), religious migrant (*musafir*), trade, Marcato, Abret Sheikoch.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to a very important woman in my life
who left a legacy of what resilience means to live for faith.

In Loving Memory of my Late Mother

Jämanäšī Gebremichael Mukhtar (1924-1998)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, my deepest thanks is given to my Lord and Saviour for His sustaining grace throughout the years and all the ups and downs of this research journey.

This study has not been possible without the continuous support and guidance from several people. I am enormously indebted to my supervisors, Drs John A Chesworth and Halkano Abdi Wario. I am also tremendously indebted to my PhD stage leader, Dr David Emmanuel Singh, for his continuous and strict but friendly follow-up and encouragement from the beginning through the end of this research journey. My thanks also goes to my house tutor, Dr Tim Keene, for his gentle reminder and support. OCMS Registrar, Rachel McIntyre, deserves my special thanks for all the hard work she puts in to organise all the necessary details with regard to the mock and main viva. Not only these areas, Rachel has always been in continuous contact with those in my email list. The prayer support and encouragement of Drs Paul and Liz Bendor Samuel, Director and Chaplain of OCMS, remains always in my heart. I cannot forget Dr Paul's visit to Ethiopia, my country where I reside. Paul met with 5 OCMS students and had fellowship over the dinner table with the Edward's family, one of whom is an OCMS student.

I would also like to thank Dr Duff Crerar, retired Instructor in History and Canadian Indigenous Studies, Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada, for his willingness to read and offer editorial suggestions. Pat Ring also deserve my special thanks for taking her valuable time to do the final copy editing.

My big thanks should go to my brother, Tamiru, the youngest (7th) in our family. I am the 5th. Tamiru (Tame, as I always called him) did a great job in collecting stories regarding my grandfather from our mother's side who is related to the Gurāgē Silte tribe. He did an extraordinary job by visiting the Silti Area repeatedly to contribute to a story which was related to my research. Countless people reinforced and remarked on this long research journey. To mention a few, Ayub Hailu deserves my special thanks as he has been with me for nearly a decade. Together, we have been studying Arabic Language studies at Awaliyā College and continued our Arabic Language studies at Addis Ababa University Department of Arabic Language and Literature where both of us are in the Graduating Class to obtain a BA in Arabic Language and Literature. Ayub's help and assistance was immense. It includes inviting and facilitating the necessary permission for my 40 days *da'wa* tour and his continuous support by updating me on the growth of Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia and any new progress. Muna Jamal, Ustadh Muḥammad Jamal (Muna's brother), Mubarek Desalegn, Ikram Musa (Haji Musa's daughter), Saleh Musa (Haji Musa's son), Haji Faraja (Haji Musa's friend), and many others aided this research by taking part as interviewees. Also, there were many women and men who were willing to be interviewed from the Tablīghī, Sufī, and Wahhabi affiliation of Islam. My special thanks goes to Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris Zeleke, who is President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council and his willingness to talk to me regarding his view on the Tablīghīs. Ustadh Abubakar Ahmad, one of the known national figures and opinion leaders amongst Muslim influencers regarding Islamic issues, also deserves my thanks for sharing his views with me on the Tablīghīs. The Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church and SIM Ethiopia and

International have also been very helpful and supportive of all my financial needs as God provided.

Thanks goes to the EGST Faculty, Staff, and Library for allowing me to study at the EGST PhD Centre and have my own carrel in order to finalise my writings. That was really a great help, especially during this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Drs Theodros Assefa and Seblewongel Daniel, EGST Deans of Studies, EGST Directors Drs Misgana Mathewos and Desta Heliso deserve my thanks for their encouragement to see this thesis done. The Ethiopian Studies Department at Addis Ababa University, where I am a member, helped me to access a large part of Professor Hussein Ahmed's writings, and of course other research papers including periodicals, proceedings, journals, Doctoral and Master's theses too. I am also grateful for Oxford Libraries, mainly the OCMS Library, Bodleian's-Social Science, and I cannot forget Middlesex Library use through my UniHub. Tablighī Jamā'at Movement leaders in Ethiopia, Kenya, Bangladesh, and India deserve my special thanks for all what they have done for allowing me to take part in the 40 days *da'wa* tour, visiting their headquarters (*markazes*), schools and offices.

I am grateful to Dr Bernard Obi, who resides in Burnham, outside London, for his commitment to read my chapters and made corrections on some of my English grammar. His wife, Carole Obi, also has been a great encouragement to me and my family, your home was like my home. To Girma Temesgen and Tigist Solomon my prayer partner since 2014, your prayer (*du'ā'*) has done a lot. You have been a blessing in many ways in the past 8 years and you deserve my earnest thanks. Dr Steve Bryan, your contribution was immense at the time of organising my proposal and your helpful comments. Though you are a New Testament Scholar, your comments to this field of studies were very helpful. The financial support from your father and mother as well as from your own family have been great. Dr Yoseph Mengistu, you are not only my friend, you are my brother and have been a great blessing in my research journey. Since the beginning of my research journey, your contribution as an elder brother and someone who has done the PhD research journey before me has been a tremendous help. Sharing not only ideas but the row meat at *dukāmi miḡibeti* Finsbury Park, London left an unforgettable memory. My thanks and appreciation goes to proof-reader Ralph Bates for investing his valuable time to check the English in the UK (British) standard. Aynalem Tibebeu our helper, your *širo* and coffee always remembered. And last, but not least, my family deserves my heart felt gratitude and deep admiration for your patience throughout the decade since 2012. My wife, Tiruwork (Tirushoa), you deserve my heart-felt gratitude for your gentle spirit, unshakable faith and patience with regard to taking care of our children. You have been supporting all the family members in so many ways. Mesay Worku, our eldest son, your brilliant, soft skills have been a great support throughout this long journey. Nahom Worku and Amanuel Worku, younger and youngest sons, thank you for gladly ignoring your needs, sometime holidays, while I was concentrating on my research. Sihin Yilma, our family friend for over 3 decades, your help at the end in organising the outline to be generated smoothly and professionally was unforgettable. While many contributed in various ways to making it a success, perspectives and analysis in the study are entirely mine and hence I take responsibility for any errors herein.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
FIGURES	xiii
TABLES	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xv
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	xvii
NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION	xxxii
CHAPTER ONE: Exploring Tablīghī Jamā‘at, ‘How Tablīghī Jama‘at in Ethiopia is Evolving’: Theory and Methodology.....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Research Background	6
3. The Problem Statement of the Research.....	14
4. Working Assumption	15
5. The Objective of the Research.....	17
6. Literature Review.....	18
6.1 Islam in Ethiopia	18
6.2 Islam in the Gurāgē area and Indigenous Traditions.....	20
6.3 Tablīghī Jamā‘at as Travellers in Faith and Renewal Movement Nationally and Transnationally.....	24

6.4	Tablīghī Jamā‘at as Stealthy Legions.....	25
7.	Scope and Justification of the Research	27
8.	Theoretical Framework.....	28
9.	Methodology.....	37
9.1	Ethnographic Research.....	37
9.2	Oral History.....	41
9.3	Interviews	44
9.4	Field Visits	44
9.4.1	Bangladesh.....	44
9.4.2	Kenya.....	46
9.4.3	Ethiopia.....	48
9.4.4	Eritrea	51
9.4.5	India	51
10 .	Conclusion: Tablīghī Jamā‘at, a New Religious Movement in Ethiopia	55
CHAPTER TWO: The Genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia		58
1.	Introduction	58
2.	The Origin of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, the South Asian Originated Sunni-Hanafi Islamic Renewal Movement	60
2.1	Birth, Family, and Early life of Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi.....	60
2.2	Tablīghī Jamā‘at: South Asian originated Sunni-Hanafi Islamic Renewal Movement 63	
2.3	Tablīghī Jamā‘at as Transnational Movement: A Global Islamic Renewal Movement.....	63
3.	The Genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia: Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya (1936- 2003), the National Leader (<i>amir</i>) for Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia.....	64

3.1	Birth, Family, and Early Life of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya (1936- 2003)	64
3.2	Haji Musa welcomed the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement	68
3.3	Major Contributions of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya towards the Growth of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia	69
3.4	The Visit of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya to Abret Sheikh, Sayyid Budala	70
3.5	The Death of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya (d. 2003)	76
3.6	Has Anyone from Haji Musa’s Family followed in his Footsteps?	76
4.	Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina (1923-2013), and the Hābāša Markaz	77
4.1	Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina in Relation to Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia	78
4.2	Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina and the Hābāša Markaz.....	80
4.3	Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina and Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya in Relation to Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement and the Hābāša Markaz	82
5.	Sheikh Engineer Alī Khadir: The Currently Assumed Leader (<i>amir</i>) and the Council (<i>Shūrā</i>)	83
5.1	The <i>Shūrā</i> (council), the Leadership Role for the Hābāša Markaz, and the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia	84
5.2	The Growth of Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement through the Leadership of Sheikh Engineer Ali Khadir	84
5.3.	Tablīghī Jamā‘at Response to COVID-19.....	86
6.	Conclusion.....	90
CHAPTER THREE: The Gurāgēs, Mobile Community: Traders and the Key Role Players of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia since the 1960s - From the Inception		
1.	Introduction:.....	93
2.	Gurāgēs: The Rural People	97

3. Gurāgēs: The Economic Migrant (<i>fanonāti /fano</i>).....	99
4. Gurāgēs: The Urban Traders.....	102
5. Gurāgēs Religiosity - Faith that kept up to Death: Biography of My Grandfather Fujata Mukhtar Wabiso.....	105
6. Gurāgēs: The Religious Migrant (<i>musāfir</i>).....	110
7. Gurāgēs Involvement in the First Three Mosque Buildings in Addis Ababa.....	111
8. Gurāgēs and the Kikiyans influence in trade at Marcato, Addis Ababa.....	115
9. Gurāgēs' Work Ethics and Solidarity	117
10. Gurāgēs: The Key Role Players in the Rise and Development of Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement in Ethiopia.....	119
11. Gurāgēs: The Main Organisers and Participants for the First Hābāša Ijtima.....	120
12. Conclusion.....	132
CHAPTER FOUR: Teaching, Structure, and Operation of Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia:	
Tablīghīs on the Move	134
1. Introduction	134
2. Tablīghīs Teaching in Ethiopia.....	138
2.1 The Tablīghīs Six Virtues/ Principles/ Points (<i>Sifatu Sita</i>).....	139
2.1.1 Kalīma Tayyiba/qal-tawhid	139
2.1.2 Prayer (<i>ṣalāt</i>)	142
2.1.3 Knowledge and Remembrance (<i>'Ilm and Dhikr</i>)	144
2.1.4 Honour for Muslims (<i>ikramel muslim</i>).....	147
2.1.5 Sincerity of Intention (<i>Ikhlaṣ Niyya</i>)	148
2.1.6 Spare Time Going Out in the Way of Allāh (<i>khurūj fi-sabilillah</i>) to make alive and extend Islamic Faith (<i>Dīn al-Islām</i>)	149
2.2 The Six Points of Tablīghīs Teaching with Regard to the Orthodox Islam	152

2.3	Ta'līm (study group) and Home-Based Ta'līm (the Breath of the Movement) ...	154
2.4	The 20 Etiquettes (<i>adabs</i>) of Tablīghīs: the Key Practical Manual of Tablīghī Jamā'at's Movement in Ethiopia (the do's and don'ts).....	159
2.5	Ya-Ubayy Firewoch ya-Qur'ān Hifz Maekel (Fruit of 'Ubayy Qur'ān Memorisation Centre)	165
3.	Tablīghīs Operation in Ethiopia.....	167
3.1	Leadership and Structure of Tablīghīs in Ethiopia	167
3.2	Council (<i>Mashūra</i>): the Heart of the Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement	168
3.3	Operation of Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia	171
3.4	Structure of Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia and beyond	172
4.	Conclusion	176
CHAPTER FIVE: Ethnography of Tablīghīs Mobility 'The People of Visitation and Call to Islam (<i>yaziyara-na yada'wa säwočī</i>): the Basis of the Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement.....		
1.	Introduction.....	180
2.	The 40 Days Da'wa Tour and Quarterly Meeting/Council (<i>mashūra</i>):	181
2.1	Introducing Myself as a Researcher to the Tablīghī Leaders.....	181
2.2	Permission Granted From the Tablīghī Leaders to join the 40 days <i>Da'wa</i> tour <i>jamā'a</i> (team)	184
2.3	Composition of the Team Members (<i>jamā'a</i>)	187
2.4	Pre-Da'wa Tour Guidance (<i>hidāya</i>) and Teachings for 40 days <i>Da'wa</i> Tour ...	192
2.5	Geographical Area Covered on the 40 Days <i>Da'wa</i> Tour and the Ethnic Gurāgēs Influence in the Areas.....	200
2.6	Post- <i>Da'wa</i> Tour Guidance (<i>hidāya</i>), Teachings and Concluding Remarks at the End of the 40 days <i>Da'wa</i> Tour.....	203
3.	<i>Nusra Jamā'a</i> (Team Helper)	216

4. <i>Masturat</i> (Women’s Da’wa).....	216
5. Visitation and Going Around (<i>ziyara</i> and <i>jaula</i>)	219
5.1 Types of Visitation (<i>ziyara</i>).....	220
5.2 Going Around (<i>Jaula</i>)	220
5.3 Etiquettes of Visitation and Going Around (<i>adabs</i> of <i>ziyara</i> and <i>jaula</i>).....	226
6. Conclusion	230
CHAPTER SIX: Locating the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā‘at in the Current Debate on Faith and Politics, Spirituality, Solidarity, and Secretiveness of the Ethiopian Tablīghīs	
1. Introduction	232
2. The Debate Between Tablīghīs and Wahhabis/Salafis.....	237
2.1 Debate on Mawlid Celebration.....	237
2.2 Debate on Islamic knowledge.....	239
2.3 Debate on Leadership and Ownership.....	240
3. Tolerance between Tablīghīs and Sufis	240
3.1 <i>Khat</i> Chewing Tradition	240
3.2 Tomb Visit.....	240
3.3 Saint Veneration	241
4. Spirituality, Solidarity, and Secretiveness of the Ethiopian Tablīghīs	241
4.1 Tablīghīs Spirituality: Commitment and Missional Identity	241
4.2 Tablīghīs Solidarity: Social Involvement	241
4.3 Tablīghīs Secretiveness: Mystical identity	242
5. Tablīghīs and Politics in Ethiopia	242
5.1 Apolitical Choice of Tablīghīs as a Political Choice.....	242
5.2 Individual Tablīghīs Involvement in Politics	242
5.3 Tablīghīs Involvement in Politics as a Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement	243

6. Conclusion	246
CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusion	251
BIBLIOGRAPHY	262
Primary Sources	262
1. Interviews with: Sufis, Tablīghīs, Wahhabis/Salafis, Ethnic Gurāgēs	262
2. Country visits	263
3. Archives	263
4. Forty days Da’wa tour	263
5. Oral Sources	263
Contributors	263
6. Focus Groups	264
Secondary sources	265
APPENDICES	- 292 -
Appendix I: Addis Ababa and Surroundings Tablīghīs Operational Reports	- 292 -
Appendix II.. Summary of Informants Data from the 28 interviewees	- 295 -
Appendix. III Summary of the 40 days <i>da’wa</i> trip participants: some of the details of the <i>Jāma</i> members as the focus group, 14 men.	- 297 -
Appendix. IV: Curriculum Correlation between 3 Islamic Schools, India,	- 299 -

FIGURES

Figure I -Gurāgē Zone Map showing Abret Sheikoch with Woredas	72
Figure II - Map of Gurāgē and Silti Zones	93
Figure III - 3-Months Council (Shūrā) Reports	124

Figure IV - Simplified Global Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure	172
Figure V - Kenya Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure	172
Figure VI - Simplified Ethiopia Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure	173
Figure VII - Addis Ababa Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure.....	174
Figure VIII Registration Form for the 40 days <i>da‘wa</i> tour (Amharic Version)	189
Figure IX: Registration Form for the 40 days <i>da‘wa</i> tour (English Translation with the Amharic Transliteration)	189
Figure X: Tablīghīs on the Move: Kakrail-Dhaka, Bangladesh	- 291 -

TABLES

Table 1 - Trimmingham religious classification in the Gurāge land	98
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CV1- BA	Country Visit 1- Bangladesh
CV2- KE	Country Visit 2- Kenya
CV3- ET	Country Visit 3- Ethiopia
CV4-ER	Country Visit 4- Eritrea
CV5- IN	Country Visit 5- India
EGST	Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology
EIASC	Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahido Church
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
NRM	New Religious Movement
OH1-AH	Oral History 1- Ayub Hailu
OH2-AT	Oral History 2- Abdulhadi Temam
OH3-IM	Oral History 2- Ikrām Musa
OH4-SM	Oral History 4- Saleh Musa
OH5-HF	Oral History 5- Haji Fereja
OH6-UAA	Oral History 6- Ustadh Abubakar Ahmad
OH7-MUI	Oral History 7- Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris Zeleke
TJ	Tablīghī Jamā‘at
Ar.	Arabic
Amh.	Amharic
Gur.	Gurāgē
Or.	Oromo
Hi.	Hindi

Ur.

Urdu

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Arabic (Ar.), Amharic (Amh.), Gurāgē (Gur.), Oromo (Or.), Hindi (Hi.), Urdu (Ur.)

‘ābid (Ar.) - one who performs much *‘ibāda* or worship.

‘aqīda (Ar.) - creed, belief or tenet of faith firmly based on how things are, distinct from the testimony of faith (*shahaāda*).

adab/adābi (Ar./Amh.) - etiquette of manner.

adab mashūra (Ar.) - etiquette of a meeting.

adab naum (Ar.) - etiquette of sleeping.

adab ta‘am (Ar.) - etiquette of eating.

‘adl (Ar.) - justice, fairness, equitableness, the mean between excess and failing short

aḥbab (Ar.) - love/brothers.

aḥwāl (Ar.) - progress report, condition.

‘ajnabi (Ar.) - foreign/not allowed to see.

ākhirā (Ar.) - the Hereafter, the next world.

akhlāq (Ar.) - ethics.

‘ālim (Ar.) - a man of knowledge, a scholar, especially in the sciences of Islam.

alkhalq (Ar.) - the Creator.

ajr (Ar.) - remuneration.

a‘māl/ amālī (Ar./Amh.) - virtue, character.

amariña (Amh.) - Amharic language.

arābiña (Amh.) - Arabic language.

Arsh (Ar.) - the Throne. It is the ceiling of all creatures and the greatest of them. The Throne contains immense expanses, height and resplendent beauty, but it is beyond the power of any human being to describe it or imagine its form. Knowledge of it is with Allāh alone. The light of the Throne is from the Light of the Noble Face of

Allāh. The Throne has bearers who carry it and Allāh Almighty is settled on it, in a way that is beyond definition or concept.

asbāb/asībabi (Ar./Amh.) - plural of *sabab*, cause, means of obtaining something. financial contribution for joining a *da‘wa* trip.

‘aṣr (Ar.) - obligatory afternoon prayer.

ayīdārisimī (Amh.) - not reach/get.

aye (Ur.) - is.

badrī (Ar.) - someone who took part in the battle of Badr.

balā/ bālāi (Ar./Amh.) - calamities, catastrophes.

badliya (Ar.) - beginning.

bano (Hi.) - be.

bāqārāwī (Amh.) - the rest.

barakah/bārāka (Ar./Amh.) - blessing.

barākallāh fīk (Ar.) - may the blessings of Allāh be upon you.

bātarikī (Amh.) - in the history.

bayān (Ar.) - clarification, elucidation: either of the substance of a meaning in the Qur’ān or of the meaning of that substance.

bida (Ar.) - innovation.

bitdaruj (Ar.) - little by little, gradually.

božä (Gur.) - god of lightning.

dājafi (Amh.) - gate.

dāmwamiti (Gur.) - the deity concerned with the health and well-being of the Gurāgē.

dā‘ī (Ar.) - a preacher, the one who does *da‘wa*, a caller, *Tablīghī* adherent.

da‘wa (Ar.) - a call to Islam.

dalīl (Ar.) - proof, indication, evidence; also a guide to Muslim homes.

deen (Ar.) - the life transaction, between the Creator and created.

dhākir (Ar.) - a person who does remembers, mentions the name of Allāh.

dhikr (Ar.) - lit. remembrance, mention. Commonly used, it means invocation of

Allāh by repetition of His names or particular formulae. Forms include: *dhikr al-lisān*, *dhikr* with the tongue; *dhikr an-nafs*, recollection of the self which inward and not audible; *dhikr al qalb*, the contemplation of the heart; *dhikr ar-rūh*, *dhikr* with the spirit; *dhikr as-sirr*, *dhikr* of the inner secret; *dhikr al-khafī*, secret recollection; *dhikr akhfā al-khafī*, the most secret remembrance of the secret.

Dīn al Islām (Ar.) - Islāmic faith.

du 'ā' (Ar.) - prayer, making supplication to Allāh.

dunyā (Ar.) - secular/worldly, not as a cosmic phenomenon, but as imagined and experienced.

fāṣala (Ar.) - say.

falāḥ (Ar.) - success, prosperity, the lasting attainment of that which one desires.

fanonāti (Gur.) - migration to urban area, mainly economic migrant.

fanonāti (Amh.) - migration to the bush, mainly political migrant.

fano (Gur.) - a person who migrate to other area, mainly economic reason.

fano (Amh.) - young combatant who migrate to the bush, mainly for war.

faqīh (Ar.) - a man learned in the knowledge of *fiqh* who by virtue of his knowledge can give a legal judgement.

farḍ (Ar.) - obligatory, an obligatory act of worship or practise of the *Dīn* as defined by the *Sharī'a*.

fāsid (Ar.) - irregular, invalid, corrupt.

fi-sabilillah (Ar.) - in the way of Allāh.

fatwā (Ar.) - an authoritative statement on a point of law.

fitna (Ar.) - temptation.

fikr/fikrā (Ar.) - reflection, seeking the meaning of things as manifestations of the Divine. Also

tafakkur .

fiqh (Ar.) - the science of the application of the *Sharī'a*. A practitioner or expert in *fiqh* is

called *faqīh*

gatā (Oro.) - tomb.

gaflah of *iman/gäfila* (Ar./Amh.) - depressed of faith, depression.

gweyītakwe (Gur.) - honourable.

Häbäša or *habāsha* (Amh. /Ar.) - Abyssinian Ethiopian highlanders or Ethiopians and East,

West and some parts of Central Africa.

Ḥadīth (Ar.) - reported speech of the Prophet Muḥammad.

ḥāfīz (Ar.) - someone who has memorised the Qur'ān.

Hajj (Ar.) - the annual pilgrimage to Makka which is one of the five pillars of Islam.

ḥalāl (Ar.) - lawful in the *Sharī'a*.

ḥalaqa (Ar./Ur.) - a circle of people gathered for the purpose of study.

ḥarām (Ar.) - unlawful in the *Sharī'a*.

ḥaqq/haqī (Ar./Amh.) - the Real, the Absolute Truth, Allāh, being the opposite of *Khāliq*,

creation. Right, and justice.

hay (Ar.) - live.

ḥayāt (Ar.) - life.

ḥayātu ṣaḥāba (Ar.) - lives of the companions of Muḥammad.

ḥidāya (Ar.) - guidance, active guidance from Allāh, debriefing.

ḥafīz (Ar.) - the one who memorised the Qur'ān.

ḥifz (Ar.) - memorization.

ḥikma (Ar.) - wisdom.

hiraṣa (Ar.) - guard.

'ibāda (Ar.) - act of worship.

īdime (Amh.) - age.

ikhilās (Ar.) - sincerity, pure unadulterated genuineness.

ikhilās niyya (Ar.) - loyalty and intention.

ikhtilaf (Ar.) - controversial questions, juristic disagreement.

ikhtilam (Ar.) - wet dream.

ikrām (Ar.) - gift.

ikramel muslim (Ar.) - respect to all Muslims, including all creatures.

'ilm (Ar.) - knowledge; science.

'ilm and *dhikr* (Ar.) - knowledge and remembrance.

Imām (Ar.) - Muslim religious or political leader, head of the mosque.

īmān/ (Ar./Amh.) - belief, faith, acceptance of Allāh and His Messenger. Belief consists of believing in Allāh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, the Garden of Fire, and that everything, both good and bad, is by the decree of Allāh.

infirād (Ar.) - solitude.

ingilizignā (Amh.) - English language.

'ishā' (Ar.) - obligatory evening prayer.

ishrāf (Ar.) - covet.

īsikā (Amh.) - until.

islaah (Ar.) - reformation.

isrāf (Ar.) - profusion.

istighfār (Ar.) - to ask the forgiveness of Allāh, especially by saying, '*Astagfiru llāh*', 'I seek the forgiveness of Allāh.

istinjā (Ar.) - washing the private parts with water.

istiqāma (Ar.) - integrity and straightness/rectitude, rightness.

istiqbāl (Ar.) - the team in charge of reception.

jahannam/jāhanamī (Ar./Amh.) - Hell, *Gehenna*.

jalla jalālhu (Ar.) - the formula said after the name of Allāh meaning great is His Majesty.

jamā'a/jāma (Ar./Amh.) - the main body of Muslim Community; also designates the group prayer, team.

jamā'at (Ar.) - team.

jam' (Ar.) - gatheredness, combining all into the whole and ignoring structures in existence in an undifferentiated field of awareness by witnessing Allāh.

Jāmanāšī (Amh./Ar.) - you are many, a meaning of my mother's name.

janna (Ar.) - the Garden, Heaven, Paradise.

jaula (Ar.) - going around for doing *da'wa*.

jihād (Ar.) - struggle, particularly fighting in the way of Allāh to establish Islam.

jihūd (Ar.) - struggle.

jumu'a (Ar.) - the day of gathering, Friday, and particularly the *Jumu'a* prayer which is performed instead of *zūhr* by those who attend it. Friday only acquired this name with the coming of Islam. Before that it was known as *al-'Arūba*.

ka'ba (Ar.) - the cube-shaped building at the centre of the Haram in Makka, originally built by the Prophet Ibrāhīm. Also known as the House of Allāh. It is towards *Ka'ba* that Muslims face when praying.

kāfir (Ar.) - a person who rejects Allāh and His Messenger.

kālelā (Amh.) - if not there.

kalīma toyba (Ar.) - the first virtue of *Tablīghīs* and main article of faith, there is no god, but Allāh.

karāmā (Ar.) - miracles, nobility, dignity.

khāliq (Ar.) - “creature”, both the act of creation or the result of the act, hence the cosmos.

khalwa/hälawa (Ar./Gur.) - spiritual retreat, seclusion, in order to remember Allāh.;

traditionally its considered as little grass-hut built in the main compound of Abret, recently changed to little tin-roofing huts.

khārijites (Ar.) - or *khawārij*, the earliest sect who separated themselves from the body of the Muslims and declared war on all those who disagreed with them, stating a wrong action turns a Muslim into an unbeliever.

khat/č’atī (Amh.) - a leafy stimulant for mild intoxication, it is commonly grown in the Gurāgē area, and Eastern part of Ethiopia, and also Yemen and Kenya. It is popular drug among Muslim communities in general, and in the Gurāgē community in particular. It is also called *miraa* in Kiswahili.

khayr (Ar.) - good.

khāzin/ (Ar.) - a treasurer, storekeeper, guard.

khidma/ mäkadämi (Ar./Amh.) - treating others, cooking and the like.

khilaf (Ar.) - differences in Islamic jurisprudence.

khmasmal (Ar.) - five main works.

khurūj fi-sabilillah (Ar.) - going out in the way of Allāh.

Kitāb (Ar./Oro.) - book.

la ‘ilāha’illa-llāh muḥammadun rasūlu llāh (Ar.) - there is no deity except Allāh, and

Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.

lāmāqāmi māsāweq/ lāmāqami masawäqi (Ar./Amh.) - inform to the area. (a combination of Amharic and Arabic).

lamazayr/ lāmāzäyärī (Ar./Amh.) - to visit (a combination of Amharic and Arabic).

läsinti gize näwi yämiwät’awī (Amh.) - for how long are you going-out.

Laylat al-Qadr (Ar.) - the Night of Power, mentioned in *Sūrah* 97 of the Qur’ān

maïkãli (Amh.) - centre.

maghrib (Ar.) - obligatory evening prayer.

malfoozaat (Ar./Ur.) - sound works/attractions.

maqãmi (Ar.) - site, part of *khmasmal* which is taking place on Sundays.

maqbu'd (Ar.) - held/grasped.

maqsid (Ar.) - intention, goal, end, objective.

marakiz (Ar.) - centre, *khuruj* to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

mashãikh (Ar.) - greybeard.

mãshã'llãh (Ar.) - interesting, wonderful, expressing joyful feelings.

mashûra (Ar.) - consulting with experts, consultative group, meeting and council.

masjid/mãsigidi (Ar./Amh.) - mosque.

masturat (Ar.) - spousal preaching team, women *khuruj/da'wa*.

masul (Ar.) - leader.

mawlãnã (Ur.) - senior man and master.

mayyit (Ar.) - dead.

mazhabs (Ar.) - schools of thoughts.

mãtawãqiya (Amh.) - identity card (ID).

mãdibi (Amh.) - group.

minda/mĩnida (Ar./Amh.) - income, salary/blessing.

mĩnĩtafi (Amh.) - carpet.

miskin/mĩsikinĩ (Ar./Amh.) - poor, polite.

mote (Amh.) - my death.

muballighin (Ar.) - a person who participates in *Tablĩgh*.

muhaba (Ar.) - love.

mu'min/mĩmãni (Ar./Amh.) - a believer, someone who possesses *ĩmãn*, who trusts in Allãh.

muraqaba (Ar.) - vigilance; recollection; an aspect of reflection (*tafakkur*); waiting on a spiritual presence; permanent state of awareness, not a spiritual exercise, Sufi meditation.

murid (Ar.) - disciple. He is the one who is stripped of his will (*irāda*) and hands himself over to his shaykh, his guide.

murshid (Ar.) - a spiritual guide.

musfāir (Ar.) - traveller, one who travels with his intellect through intelligible matters.

musleman (Ur./Hi.) - muslim.

muṣallā (Ar.) - a place for praying. *ʿId* prayers are normally held outside the mosque at *muṣallā*; the term is sometimes used for a prayer mat.

mustaid (Ar.) - prepared for a specific task.

mutakallim (Ar.) - someone who studies the science of *kalām*, the science of investigating and articulating religious belief; (spokesman of the team at *jaula*).

muta hajib (Ar.) - veiling women.

mutqalba (Ar.) - changeful.

naḥḥ (Ar.) - supererogatory or voluntary act of worship.

naḥḥ/naḥḥ (Ar./Amh.) - soul, ego.

najāḥ (Ar.) - success.

nāwiri (Amh.) - shame.

nii'ma (Ar.) - grace.

niqbāb (Ar.) - veil which covers the entire face, including eyes.

niyya (Ar.) - intention.

nūr (Ar.) - light.

panchāyat (Hi.) - a traditional meeting of the elders in a village/jury.

qābliya (Ar.) - capability.

qadīm/qādami (Ar./Amh.) - eternal, ancient; elderly, a person who has been there for longer time.

qalb/qālibī (Ar./Amh.) - heart; the faculty for directly perceiving spiritual realities which the mind cannot grasp.

qānī/qānočī (Amh.) - day/days.

qaylula (Ar.) - power nap, right after lunch.

qişsa (Ar.) - a popular story, connected narrative or piece of propaganda.

qiyāma (Ar.) - the arising of people at the Resurrection on the Last Day.

quwanīqwa (Amh.) - language.

radiya'llahu 'anhu (Ar.) - may Allāh pleased be with him.

radiya'llahu 'anhā (Ar.) - may Allāh pleased be with her.

radiya'llahu 'anhum (Ar.) - may Allāh pleased be with them.

raḥmat (Ar.) - mercy.

rak'a(t) (Ar.) - a unit of the prayer consisting of a series of standings, bowing, prostrations and sittings.

ramaḍān (Ar.) - fasting month.

ribā (Ar.) - usury, which is *ḥarārm*, whatever forms it takes, since it involves obtaining something for nothing through exploitation.

riyā (Ar.) - showing off, doing actions for the sake of being seen to do them.

rizq/riziqi (Ar./Amh.) - rations issued to soldiers provision, daily bread.

rūh/ruhī (Ar./ Amh) - the soul, vital spirit.

sabab/sābabī (Ar./Amh.) - cause, means of obtaining something.

ṣabr (Ar.) - patience.

ṣadaqa/sādāqa (Ar./Amh.) - charitable giving in the cause of Allāh, feast to feed people.

ṣaḥāba (Ar.) - the Companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, may Allāh bless him and grant him

peace. If a Muslim has seen the Prophet, or talked to him, at least once when the Prophet was alive, he is called *ṣaḥābī*. The plural form of *ṣaḥābī* is *ṣaḥāba* or *Aṣḥāb*. The word *ṣaḥāba al-Kirām* includes all those great people each of whom has seen the Prophet at least once.

sahih (Ar.) - true, correct, reliable.

sallā' llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (Ar.) - 'may Allāh bless him and grant him peace' the formula spoken after mentioning the Prophet Muḥammad.

ṣalāt (Ar.) - the prayer, particularly the five daily obligatory prayers. One of the five pillars of Islam.

sāwī (Amh.) - human.

sāwočī (Amh.) - people.

sayīramādu (Amh.) - without walking.

sayyidi (Ar.) - a descendant of the Prophet; also master.

sayyidinā (Ar.) - our respected master.

shafā'a (Ar.) - intercession, particularly the intercession of the Prophet Muḥammad on the Last Day.

shahaāda (Ar.) - bearing witness, particularly bearing witness that there is no god but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh. It is one of the pillars of Islam. It is also used for legal testimony in a court of law. It also means martyrdom.

shahīd (Ar.) - martyrs who dies fighting in the Cause of Allāh.

shāhid (Ar.) - a witness, another narration which supports the meaning of a *ḥadīth* which is being investigated with an entirely different *isnād*.

shar/šārī (Ar./Amh.) - evil.

sharḥ (Ar.) - commentary.

shayṭān/säyitani (Ar./Amh.) - a devil, particularly *Iblīs*, one of the *jinn*.

sharī'a (Ar.) - lit. road, the legal modality of a people based on the Revelation of their Prophet.

The final *Sharī'a* is that of Islam.

shirk/šārīki (Ar./Amh.) - partnering Allāh with something, partnership.

shukr/šukuri (Ar./Gur) - thanks giving.

shūrā (Ar.) - consultation, a council.

ṣifa (Ar.) - attribute.

silsila (Ar.) - the chain, in Sufism, the continuity of spiritual descent and transmission of wisdom from *shaykh* to *shaykh* from the Prophet.

ṣifatu sitta (Ar.) - the six points/virtues/principles of the *Tablīghī Jamā'at*.

siyāsa/siyasa (Ar./Or.) - rule, governance, as contrasted with Divine *Sharī'a*, political talk.

subhān wa ta'ala (Ar.) - Glorified He is exalted.

subhi (Ar.) - morning obligatory prayer.

sūrah (Ar.) - chapter of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is composed of 114 *sūrahs*.

sujūd (Ar.) - prostration.

sunna (Ar.) - the customary practise of a person or group of people. It has come to refer almost exclusively to the practise of the Messenger of Allāh and to the first generation of Muslims.

sunnī (Ar.) - the main body of Muslims, the *Ahl as Sunna wa'l-Jamā'a*, who recognise and accept the *Khulafā' ar-Rāshidūn*, the first four khalifs.

tablīgh (Ar./Ur.) - to convey, to reach a message.

Tablīghī Jamā'at (Ar./Ur.) - a Preaching Party, currently known as one of an Islamic religious movement.

Tābi'un/tābi' uoch (Ar./Amh.) - members of post *ṣaḥāba* generation. (combined with Amharic)

tafakkur (Ar.) - pondering, reflection.

ta'lim (Ar.) - study group, seeking knowledge.

tafrigh (Ar.) - spare time.

takfir (Ar.) - to declare that someone is a *kafir*. A practise introduced by the *Khārijites*.

takwīn/tākānawānā (Ar./Amh.) - bringing into being.

ta'lim (Ar.) - seeking knowledge at a study group.

tamīr al-masjid (Ur.) - a group of individuals who are willing to stay at a mosque and give guidance (*hidāya*) and support for those who arrived at the mosque.

tāqādami (Amh.) - prior.

tāqarābu/tāqarābu (Ar./Amh.) - come nearer.

taqwā (Ar.) - awe or fear of Allāh, which inspire a person to be on guard against wrong action and eager for actions which please Him.

tāra-qut'irī (Amh.) - serial number.

targhib (Ar.) - motivational talk.

tariqa-i-Tablīgh (Ar.) - the method of preaching.

tartīb/tāritībī (Ar./Or.) - proper sequence of actions in the prayer, *wuḍū'*, *ḥajj* or scheduling.

tashahhud (Ar.) - lit. to make *shahaāda*. In the context of the prayer, it is a formula which includes the *shahaāda* and is said in the final sitting position of each two rak'at cycle. sitting style at study group.

tasbīḥ (Ar.) - glorification, saying '*Subḥān Allāh*', 'Glory to Allāh'; prayer beads.

tashībḥ (Ar.) - anthropomorphism, comparing Allāh to created things or making Allāh resemble created things. Opposite of *tanzīḥ*.

tanzīḥ (Ar.) - transcendence, disconnecting Allāh from creation.

tawba (Ar.) - turning away from wrong action to Allāh and asking His forgiveness.

tawfiq (Ar.) - success given by Allāh.

tawajihu (Ar.) - direction/orientation.

tawakaltu (Ar.) - puts ones trust on Allāh.

tijaniyya (Ar.) - *tariqa* in the Maghrib founded by Abu'l-‘Abbas Ahmad at-Tijani (d.

1230/1815) in Fes... They are exclusivist, not allowing people to join any other *tariqa*, and advocate complete submission to the government, whatever it is.

‘*ulamā*’/*ulāma* (Ar./Amh.) - scholars, scholar.

‘*ulamā ziyāra*/*ulāma ziyara* (Ar./Amh.) - visiting religious leaders/scholar.

umma (Ar.) - the body of Muslims as one distinct Community.

ummat/ (Ar. /Or.) - Muslim community, people.

umumi ziyara (Ar.) - public visit, home to home visit.

ususi ziyara (Ar.) - selected a home to home visit.

usul (Ar.) - origins.

walī (Ar.) - someone who is ‘friend’ of Allāh, thus possessing the quality of *wilāya*.

wārī (Amh.) - month.

waswas/wāsīwasī (Ar./Amh.) - scruple.

wuḍū’ (Ar.) - ritual washing with water to be pure for the prayer of hands, mouth, nostrils, face, forearms, head, ears, and feet.

yāfitu (Amh.) - future.

yāhwalawī (Amh.) - past.

yā jamā’a/ya jāma (Ar./Amh.) - code of the team.

yākhārijin/yāharijini simi-ziriziri (Ar./Amh.) - list of names of a team member.

yälämī (Amh.) - no.

ya llāh musfāir/yālahi musafiri (Amh./Ar.) - Allāh’s traveller.

yamāsjid/yāmasjidu simi (Ar./Amh.) - the name of the Mosque.

yā-mimäläsubāti qāni (Amh.) - date of return.

yanažä täbärašä (Gur.) - who doesn't see Abret, spoiled.

yä qäni yākhārijin/yāharijinī jāmaī mākāwāña forimī (Ar./Amh.) - date--- the team
implementation form of
traveller.

yaqīn (Ar.) - absolute unshakeable certainty and certitude.

yā-tashkil bota (Ar./Amh) - place, where the trip will be.

yä -wät'ubāti qäni (Amh.) - date of going-out

Yawm al-Qiyāma (Ar.) - ‘the Day of Rising’, the Day of Standing.

yä-mät'ubätubāti kätäma (Amh.) - town came from.

yäzarenī (Amh.) - today (currently).

yrahimahu'llāh (Ar.) - may Allāh have mercy on him.

zawīya (Ar.) - a “corner”, small mosque, or religious retreat, often where the *shaykh* teaches.

zina (Ar.) - adultery.

ziyāra/ ziyara (Ar./Amh.) - visit to tomb or holy places, visiting homes and people.

zühr (Ar.) - noon obligatory prayer.

NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION

Amharic, and Gurāgē

1 st order	2 nd order	3 rd order	4 th order	5 th order	6 th order	7 th order	' <i>wa</i> ' letters
ha □	hu □	hi □	ha □	he □	h(ī) □	ho □	
lä □	lu □	li □	la □	le □	l(ī) □	lo □	lwa □
ha □	hu □	hi □	ha □	he □	h(ī) □	ho □	
mä □	mu □	mi □	ma □	me □	m(ī) □	mo □	mwa □
sä □	su □	si □	sa □	se □	s(ī) □	so □	
rä □	ru □	ri □	ra □	re □	r(ī) □	ro □	rwa □
sä □	su □	si □	sa □	se □	s(ī) □	so □	swa □
šä □	šu □	ši □	ša □	še □	š(ī) □	šo □	šwa □
qä □	qu □	qi □	qa □	qe □	q(ī) □	qo □	qwa □
bä □	bu □	bi □	ba □	be □	b(ī) □	bo □	bwa □
tä □	tu □	ti □	ta □	te □	t(ī) □	to □	twa □
čä □	ču □	či □	ča □	če □	č(ī) □	čo □	čwa □
ha □	hu □	hi □	ha □	he □	h(ī) □	ho □	hwa □
nä □	nu □	ni □	na □	ne □	n(ī) □	no □	nwa □
ňä □	ňu □	ňi □	ňa □	ňe □	ň(ī) □	ňo □	ňwa □
a □	u □	i □	a □	e □	ī □	o □	
kä □	ku □	ki □	ka □	ke □	k(ī) □	ko □	kwa □
hä □	hu □	hi □	ha □	he □	h(ī) □	ho □	
wä □	wu □	wi □	wa □	we □	w(ī) □	wo □	
a □	u □	i □	a □	e □	ī □	o □	

zä □	zu □	zi □	za □	ze □	z(i) □	zo □	zwa □
žä □	žu □	ži □	ža □	že □	ž(i) □	žo □	žwa □
yä □	yu □	yi □	ya □	ye □	y(i) □	yo □	
dä □	du □	di □	da □	de □	d(i) □	do □	dwa □
jä □	ju □	ji □	ja □	je □	j(i) □	jo □	jwa □
gä □	gu □	gi □	ga □	ge □	g(i) □	go □	gwa □
t'ä □	t'u □	t'i □	t'a □	t'e □	t'(i) □	t'o □	t'wa □
č'ä □	č'u □	č'i □	č'a □	č'e □	č'(i) □	č'o □	č'wa □
p'ä □	p'u □	p'i □	p'a □	p'e □	p'(i) □	p'o □	
s'ä □	s'u □	s'i □	s'a □	s'e □	s'(i) □	s'o □	s'wa □
s'ä □	s'u □	s'i □	s'a □	s'e □	s'(i) □	s'o □	
fä □	fu □	fi □	fa □	fe □	f(i) □	fo □	fwa □
pä □	pu □	pi □	pa □	pe □	p(i) □	po □	
vä □	vu □	vi □	va □	ve □	v(i) □	vo □	

Arabic

'=ء

a=ا

b=ب

t=ت

th=ث

j=ج

h=ح

kh=خ

d=د

dh=ذ

r=ر

z=ز

s=س

sh=ش

ṣ=ص

ḍ=ض

ṭ=ط

ẓ=ظ

'=ع

gh=غ

f=ف

q=ق

k=ك

l=ل

m=م

n=ن

h=ه

w=و

y=ي

t=ة

CHAPTER ONE: Exploring Tablighī Jamā‘at, ‘How Tablighī

Jama‘at in Ethiopia is Evolving’: Theory and Methodology

1. Introduction

I have been in contact with Muslims ever since my childhood. I have a mixed religious and ethnic background. My parents had both Islam and Christian heritage, with a mixture of Amhara, Gurāgē and Yemeni ethnicity. That is the reason to be involved in the study of Islam in general and Tablighī Jamā‘at Movement in particular. ‘How Tablighī Jamā‘at Movement is Evolving in Ethiopia?’ is the main research question of this dissertation.

Ethiopia is a country in Eastern Africa situated in a strategic position in the Horn of Africa. It is administratively divided into 11 Regions and 2 Chartered Cities, each region and city has its own governance. The Regions are divided mainly according to ethnic and linguistic identity, through adopted ethnic federalism. Ethiopia is the second largest populous country in Africa. Based on the 2007 population and housing census of Ethiopia the United Nations estimates the population of Ethiopia is 118,713,885. Ethiopia’s population is equivalent to 1.43% of the total world population and ranks 12th in world population. The population density in Ethiopia is 110 people per km². The total land area is 1,000,000 km². The urban population of Ethiopia is over 23 million which represents 21.1% of the total population of the country. The median age in Ethiopia is 18.8 (worldmeters.inf/world-population/ethiopia-population/2021). Ethiopia is a country with 88+ ethnic and language groups of varying sizes from the smallest Qewama, about (500), to the average Gurāgē (5 million), and to the largest Oromo (about 40 million).

Ethiopia is considered a home for African countries for several reasons. Firstly, Addis Ababa is Africa’s diplomatic capital where the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) established itself in 1963 with 32 Heads of independent African States signing the charter.

This name, OAU, continued until 1999 and was replaced by the name African Union (AU) in 2002 following a decision in September 1999. Currently the AU consists of 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. (African Union 2021)

Secondly, Ethiopia has never been colonised and serves as an example of freedom for Africa. Thirdly, African leaders consider Ethiopia as a mother. Recently (October 2021), when the Ethiopian Prime-Minster Dr Abiy Ahmad Ali was sworn-in for a new five-year term, the Kenyan and South Sudanese Presidents, in their congratulatory speeches, addressed Ethiopia as their mother. This again puts Ethiopia in a strategic position in Africa.

Ethiopia was the first to host Islam by providing refuge to the migrants who were companions (*ṣaḥāba*) of Prophet Muḥammad in the early days of Islam, 615. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at adherents claim that they are imitating the footsteps of the early days of Prophet Muḥammad’s companions through their *da‘wa* practise. So, Islam reached the Ethiopian soil prior to many African countries, which could also reinforce the strategic nature of Ethiopia with regard to Islam.

FIGURE - I Ethiopia: Map of 11 Regional States and 2 Chartered Cities



(Source: <https://www.google.com> Ethiopia, Administrative Divisions-es-colored.svg)

FIGURE II: Map of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPS)



(Source: Mursi Online): Zones of Southern Regional State

Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa at the East Africa Region. Ethiopia is a home for Christians and Muslims for over a thousand of years. Since the 7th century, Islam has been practised in Ethiopia by millions of people. Currently, about 35% of the total population are Muslims under Sunni Islam, mainly Sufis with Qādiriyya, 63% Christians with an Orthodox majority, followed by Protestants and with very little percentage of Catholics as well as indigenous traditions. Traditionally, Ethiopia has been considered a Christian island. However, this notion has been challenged¹. The 2007 census shows that Muslims accounted for 33.9 percent, Christians accounted for 62.8 percent (Orthodox 43.5, Protestant 18.6 and Catholic 0.7 percent respectively) and the remaining populations belong to different indigenous traditions.

The significant influence of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at as a transnational and global movement in general, and in Ethiopia in particular, will be assessed by later research, here entitled, ‘Travellers in Faith or Stealthy Legions’: the Gurāgē role in the rise of Tablīghī Jamā‘at

¹ (Ahmed H. , Coexistence and/or Confrontation: Towards a Reappraisal of Christian-Muslim Encounter in Contemporary Ethiopia. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36,(1), 2006) p.10, He noted: ‘The demonstrators called for the separation of religion from politics, publicly denounced the notion that Ethiopia was an island of Christianity surrounded by Islam, and declared that it was the home of the adherents of other faiths, including Islam. They submitted a petition to the currently formed government.’

in Ethiopia. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at, as a movement, has been found for over 5 decades in many Ethiopian people groups where Muslims reside, amongst the Gurāgē ethnic group in particular.

‘Travellers in Faith’ or Stealthy Legions’? These are the two views by scholars on the study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at around the world. Many of the scholars, including Khalid Masud, who viewed Tablīghī Jamā‘at as ‘travellers in faith’. Masud argues: ‘Tablīghī Jamā‘at exists mainly to focus on the renewal of Muslims and *da‘wa* (proselytising). (2000: xiii) Yoginder Sikand, suggests that the purpose of founding Tablīghī Jamā‘at was for the promotion and preservation of Islamic identity and faith. (Sikand 2004: 99) Barbara Metcalf has argued about the representation of Tablīghī Jamā‘at as: ‘an intensification of the original Deobandi commitment to individual regeneration apart from any explicit political program.’ However, Farish Noor suggests (Noor 2012: 195) Tablīghī Jamā‘at is a complex movement, ‘the object [Tablīgh] being discussed is truly complex and at times, confounding.’

But, a few of the scholars on this study viewed Tablīghī Jamā‘at as ‘Stealthy Legions’. Alex Alexiev is one of them, in his journal article, ‘Tablīghī Jamaat Jihad’s Stealthy Legions,’ in the *The Middle East Quarterly*, ‘The West’s misreading of Tablīghī Jamaat’s actions and motives has grave implications for the war on terrorism.’ Alexiev (2005: 99) Though it is a journalistic piece, it creates concern, and has been noted by Shireen Burki (Burki 2013) who also suggested a similar concern. Ziauddin Sadar (Sadar 2006) also shared the same concern, like Alexiev and Burki. Marc Gaborieau summarises that the objective of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, is ‘the conquest of the world’. The observation I made during the time I spent travelling with the Tablīghīs for 40 days accords with this notion.

Tablīghī Jamā‘at is one of the largest lay religious movements in the world. Formal training in the Tablīghī affiliated centres like Deoband, however, is encouraged.

According to scholarly sources quoted in Sikand (2002: 2), ‘By 1992, the TJ [Tablīghī Jamā‘at] had spread to around 165 countries’ (Faruqi 1992: 43). Sikand further suggests: ‘It would not be an exaggeration to say that the movement [Tablīghī Jamā‘at] is today active in almost every country where Muslims live.’ Siegler (2007: 97) also commented on Sufis: ‘the Sufi orders are found in every part of the Muslim world.’ Like Sufis, Tablīghīs practises are also similarly spread around the Muslim world. Despite this evident importance of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in the lives of millions of Muslims in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, no major intensive study of the movement has been made to date.

This chapter proposes a theoretical framework and methodology to find out how the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia is evolving and to understand whether they are ‘Travellers in Faith’ or ‘Stealthy Legions’. At the end of the research, we can locate the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā‘at in the current debate on faith and politics. Therefore, exploring Tablīghī Jamaat is essential.

Firstly, primary sources will be used as the main data from *da‘wa* participant observation during my 40 days *da‘wa* tour, including oral history, interviews, archives, and country visits.

Secondly, secondary sources: additional data comes from books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and Tablīghī teaching materials, *Faza'il-E-A'maal* (Tablīghī Nisab). The preliminary surveys in the study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia suggest that the Gurāgē ethnic group is at the heart of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. As Østebø argues, ‘Moreover, the issue of reform intersects with ethnic discourses, as evidenced by the way in which different reform movements are overlapping with ethnic groups.’ Østebø further commented on ethnic affiliation: ‘For example, [as] the Salafis were dominated by Oromo so is the *Jamā‘at al Tablīghī* [Tablīghī Jamā‘at] by the Gurage ethnic group.’ His opinion substantiates that ‘the *Tablīghī*’s ethnic character must also be seen as a way of

expressing particularity of the Gurage trading community in the capital, Addis Ababa (Desplat and Østebø eds, 2013: 14; Østebø 2007:14). The Gurāgēs affiliation with Tablīghī Jamā‘at may not be surprising in that it accommodates this movement without sacrificing their traditional culture, as has been observed in the Gujjars (Singh 2012: 171) and the Meos (Jamous 2003: 30) in India, where the Tablīghī Jamā‘at work began and has very strong roots to this date.

2. The Research Background

Timothy Furnish (Furnish 2010:1-3), states that Tablīghī Jamā‘at is a twentieth-century transnational movement originating from South Asia. According to Sikand:

The word *tablīghī* is derived from the Arabic root b-l-gh, which means ‘to reach one’s destination’, ‘to achieve an objective,’ ‘to come to hear’ or ‘to come of age.’ Tablīghī means ‘to convey’ or ‘to communicate a message.’ The word *jamā‘at* is best translated as ‘party’ or ‘organized collectivity.’ The term ‘Tablīghī Jamā‘at’, then simply means ‘preaching party’ (Sikand 2002: 65).

The primary objective of Tablīghī Jamā‘at concerns the renewal of Islam around the world. Khalid Masud, in his introductory chapter to the proceedings of a workshop held in London (7-8 June 1990) on ‘Muslim Transnationalism,’ Masud underlines Tablīghī Jamā‘at role as a pan-Islamic transnational movement. He maintains that Tablīghī Jamā‘at, ‘from its rise in a rural setting in Mēwāt in India to its global spread in less than a decade, illustrates a significant variety of Muslim transnationalism’ (Masud 2000: xiii). Although broader debates drawing on political science and international relations tend to read in it a fundamentalist opposition of ‘the nationalistic basis of the state,’ to Masud, it appears, Tablīghī Jamā‘at exists mainly to focus on the renewal of Muslims and *da‘wa* (proselytising) (2000: xiii). According to Sikand (2002:2), Faruqi (1992:43) and as seen across all continents, it appears in 35 of Africa’s 54 countries. Janson’s African estimate

comes close to this with Tablīghī Jamā‘at operations in 150 countries altogether (Janson 2009: 140). It is worth noting a significant concern raised by Janson’s: ‘Despite its worldwide influence on the lives of millions of Muslims, scholars have paid almost no attention to its spreading in sub-Saharan Africa.’ Janson (2006: 44). My research, among others, aims to address this gap in our knowledge of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in East Africa in general, and Ethiopia in particular.

In this thesis, I am aiming to explore the nature of the Gurāgē affiliation with Tablīghī Jamā‘at and the role this alliance plays in the growth of this vision of Sunni Islam in Ethiopia. However, I intend to go further in also exploring the Tablīghī Jamā‘at affiliated Gurāgē’s contact with the Salafi-affiliated Oromo. The aim is not just to understand and contribute to our understanding of Islamic transnationalism but also to contribute to our current knowledge of the extent to which local ethnic, religious and political interconnections (possibly conflicts) are contributing to the transformation of Islam in Ethiopia.

A previous study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at has included India, by Yoginder Sikand, South Asia-Farish Noor, Australia-Jan Ali, Kenya-Halkano Wario and Gambia-Marloes Janson. However, so little attention has been given to Eastern Africa, leaving a knowledge gap in this part of the world which demands a study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in a country like Ethiopia. This research will be an addition to the growing literature on the study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at as a transnational missionary movement in general and within an Ethiopian perspective in particular. Methodologically, *da‘wa* tour² participant observations have been employed with an extensive ethnographic research to understand the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. This method will help to examine similar research in

² ‘*da‘wa* tour participant observation’: this is implemented in 40 days *da‘wa* tour participant observation by the researcher of this particular research, which needs to be developed as one of methodological tools in the study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at. (Mohammed: 2014 *da‘wa* tour participant observation)

Ethiopia and beyond. One can learn the practical and missiological aspect of the movement through participating observation. In this case, the participant acts as an observer, not in complete participation. At the end of this research, locating the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia into the current debate of faith and politics will be possible.

We know from the existing secondary sources that drawing on Deobandi³ Tradition, Tablīghī Jamā‘at was founded by Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi (1885-1944) in the early 1920s in Northern India for the promotion and preservation of Islamic identity and faith (Sikand 2004: 99). Sikand (2002: 130-31) explains too that ‘The method of *Tablīgh* was not of Ilyas’ own making and that it was actually inspired by God.’ While Ilyas was performing the Hajj (1925-26), he set apart three silent days of contemplation at the Mosque of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina. Ilyas claimed to have accepted his call for *Tablīgh* (preaching) through the Prophet Muḥammad. Ilyas returned to India having been ‘called’ in the way of the *tariqa-i-Tablīgh* (the method of preaching) and began his pioneering work in Mewat, near Delhi. His Deobandi formation clearly impacted the movement he founded. David Singh has argued that even though the Tablīghī Jamā‘at is ‘a mass movement of ordinary Muslim preachers,’ it is informed by ‘Deoband and its Ulema’ (2012: 25). ‘The Ulama of Deoband are Muslims. As a sect, they belong to the Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaah. By Madhhab they are Hanafee. In conduct, they are Sufis. Scholastically, they are *Maturidi* [mourning]. And in *Sulook* [behaviour], they are Chishti. Thus they combine all Sufi orders. And in *nisbat* [ratio], they are Deobandi’ (Kayum 2001: 20-211). Similarly, Metcalf (2002: 8) suggests, that Tablīghī Jamā‘at represents ‘an intensification of the original Deobandi commitment to individual regeneration apart from any explicit political program,’ Critical comments nevertheless

³ The Deobandi School is a complex movement rooted in the Dar al-‘ulum at Deoband. Deoband emerged in the aftermath of the failed mid-19th–century ‘war of independence’ or ‘Sepoy Mutiny.’ By the end of the 19th century, any hope of the recovery of the Muslim rule seemed impossible. Deoband therefore focused its attention on achieving a united front of Indian Muslims and made common cause with the Hindus for greater autonomy (later Independence) from Britain (Singh 2012: 17).

have been made about Tablīghī Jamā‘at and its activities by the followers of and ‘schools of thought’ inspired by Wahhabiyya⁴, such as the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth of the Indian subcontinent (Singh 2012: 30-34). One such source declares:

We declare that the Tableeghi Jamaat is, by its own admission, a deviant sect of Islam and that it is being used by the enemies of Islam to help them in their continuing battle to prevent governance by the laws of Allāh from being re-established in the world. (*TJ Exposed* n.d.)

Although, Tablīghī Jamā‘at has now planted many different bases around the world, arguably, it continues to remain connected to its original South Asian roots. Tablīghī Jamā‘at was introduced to Africa in the 50s. Masud (2000: 209), for example, points out that it arrived in South Africa in 1950s. Wario (2012: 80) shows that Tablīghī Jamā‘at came into Kenya in 1956, largely through contacts with Kenya's Asian Muslim communities from the Indian subcontinent. Janson's work (2006: 6) shows that Tablīghī Jamā‘at began operating in The Gambia from the 1960s but its significant growth occurred in the 1990s. Østebø (2007: 6) suggests, the work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at started in Ethiopia in the 1970s and is becoming increasingly more organised.

As is Tablīghīs practise elsewhere, its activists are reportedly being sent out from its Ethiopian headquarters in Addis Ababa to various other parts of the country on a 3, or 40, or 120-days preaching tours. Tours go out both in small and large groups. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia are known as the *fi sabilillah*’ (in the way of Allāh)⁵, and its history

⁴ (Voll J. O., 1987) ‘An Islamic renewal group established by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. AH 1206/1792 CE), the Wahhābiyah continues to the present in the Arabian Peninsula. The term *Wahhābī* was originally used by opponents of the movement, who charged that it was a new form of Islam, but the name eventually gained wide acceptance. According to the teachings of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, however, the movement is not a new Islamic school but, rather, a call or mission (*da‘wah*) for the exact implementation of Islam. The Wahhābiyah often refer to "the mission of the oneness of God" (*da‘wat al-tawhīd*) and call themselves "those who affirm the Oneness of God," or *muwahhidūn*.

⁵ ‘Jamā for *da‘wa* and Tablīgh started from India and spread to the whole world and our country [Ethiopia] became one of the beneficiary countries. Since this work [Tablīghī Jamā‘at] enter into our country, much result has been observed and the number of people who involved in "*fi sabilillah*" [in the way of Allāh]

started with the late Haji Musa Kikiya (d.2002), who was the first to affiliate with Tablīghī Jamā‘at. He went on to become its first national *amir* (leader) in Ethiopia. Similar to Mawlana Ilyas’ pioneering work among the Mewatis process of change, the *Abret-Sheikoch* (a religious place in the heart of the Gurāgē land) among the Gurāgē played a significant role. According to one of my informants and *amir* in my 40 days *da‘wa* tour: ‘When Haji Musa went to *Abret-Sheikoch*, in the 1960s, the Abret Sheikh sent people to receive and welcome Haji Musa while he was remaining of 3 hours walk for his destiny. The then *abret-Sheikh* considered as friend of Allāh (*walī*), who can see and understand the hidden and the unseen’ (Mohammed W. H., Field Notes: 40 days' da'wa tour, 2014, p. 58).

Sikand (2004:100) comments on Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s position in opposing tomb worship and other supposedly un-Islamic customs among the Muslim masses. The late Haji Musa, too, emphasised these in his first public teachings, and this remains central to Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s preaching here. Ethiopia, like many other African states, is experiencing a revival of its varied ethno-linguistically heritages. This creates tensions between people belonging to different ethnic backgrounds. Ethnic issues appear to predominate even among Muslims and within Islamic movements. Haggai Erlich underlines this as follows, as Desplat and Østebø write:

Today's Ethiopia restructured along ethnic lines composed of ethnic states and experiences active tensions between the main ethnic-linguistic groups. No less vivid, however, is the political revival of religiosity. Ethiopia's Muslims today are re-energised and successfully striving to fulfil their identity in Ethiopia as

increased, due-to this, at the end of his life, Haji Musa Kikiya (let Allāh have mercy up-on him), gave order of translation of this book in-to Amharic’ (Ustadh Muḥammad Jamal and Ustadh Abubakar Abdala, 2013) p.4.

they rebuild their connections to the core countries of Islam. (Desplat and Østebø 2013: 198)

It appears, too, that Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia remains connected with the wider Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. This happens through the Tablīghī Jamā‘at missionaries visiting Ethiopia from Kenya and South Africa (most of whom are ethnic Indians). This happens also through the representatives of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia participating in annual conferences in Bangladesh or Pakistan (Østebø 2007:8; Sikand 2002: xi) which ensure their continuing connection with the roots of this movement.

The research surveys suggest that the Gurāgēs are at the heart of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia. This is not surprising as they were the first to affiliate themselves to Tablīghī Jamā‘at through Musa’s pioneering work among them. It appears that they are also at the centre of the continuing Tablīghī Jamā‘at work in Ethiopia. My research aims, therefore, to focus on them as Tablīghī Jamā‘at adherents and their role in the growth of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. The Gurāgēs are mainly located in the mountainous area southwest of Addis Ababa. The location of this research, however, spanned Addis Ababa (this is where Tablīghī Jamā‘at headquarters/*markaz* is located), Wolkite (Gurāgē territory), and Jimma (Oromo territory). (Oromo dominated and represents the West Asian, Saudi Arabia orthodoxy, Salafi⁶).

It appears from the Gurāgē and Oromo examples that religious affiliations in Ethiopia are largely defined in terms of ethnicity and local geography. For example, the Northern Highlanders, Tigray, and Amhara ethnic groups, are Orthodox Christians, and the Lowlanders, Afar, Somali, Oromo, and Harari, are mainly Sunnī Muslims. The intra-

⁶ (Sageman, 2003) The Salafiyya call Muslims to return to Islam’s purest roots and aims to adhere to the teachings/examples of the *Salaf* (ancestors).

religious affiliations also appear to be linked to ethnicity. Thus, e.g. the Orthodox are largely from a Tigray and Amhara background; Catholics are mainly from Sidama, Oromo and Wolayta ethnicities. Ethiopian Muslims appear, too, to be largely differentiated along ethnic lines with the Oromos being mainly Sunni⁷ affiliated with Saudi Arabian, the West Asian Salafiyya, whereas the Gurāgēs are Sunnī but are mainly affiliated with Tablīghī Jamā‘at rooted in the South Asian Deobandi thought (Østebø 2008: 419-420 and 2007: 8).

Clearly, the nature of Islam in Ethiopia, like in other parts of the world, is far from being monolithic. This notion has echoes in South Asian Islam as Singh (2012: 171) has argued in focusing mainly on the Tablīghī Jamā‘at - Deobandi Islamization among the Gujjars (an ethnic group related to the high caste). Jamous, (2003: 30) too, suggests in his work on the Meos (another ethnic group from Mewat the place where Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s work began) that ‘Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s work among them does not jeopardize existing social traditions but is added to them and must, through certain of its manifestations, become a local fact.’ It appears, likewise, that the Gurāgēs have been making choices in favour of a particular model of faith represented by Tablīghī Jamā‘at arguably without sacrificing their traditional culture and social context. The Oromo on the other hand, as noted above, have been affiliated with the Salafiyya. These local expressions of Islam, in theory, (Sociology 250 - Notes October 9, 2002) seem connected with different visions of transnational Islam.

Ethiopia is a country with old religious heritages and traditions of both Islam and Christianity. The historical evidence justifies this truth of the country. Ethiopia, Africa’s second most populous country, situated in East Africa, was the first nation to welcome

⁷ Sunni: is the largest branch of Islam, its adherents are referred to in Arabic as *ahl as-sunnah wa l-ljamā ah* “people of the tradition of Muḥammad and the consensus of the Ummah or *ahl as-sunnah* (wikisunni, 2013).

Islam in Africa if not the world. Whenever the history of Ethiopia is mentioned, religious history will take the greater part. Ethiopian history is interwoven with the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwahīdo Church (EOTC) and Islam largely due to the socio-economic and political structure of the country. Currently, Islam and Protestant Christianity are growing in Ethiopia. However, the scarcity of well-researched and written historical material has been a problem for both religious growths. The problem is even worse in Islam. Except for a few early historical documents, it is hard to find any historical writings with regard to the current Islamic religious movements like the Tablīghī Jamā‘at as one of the global religious movements. Though they do some documentation of their travels and progress they are making in their cause, these records are not available to researchers who are interested in its history and growth. In so doing, the research on the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in order to study and preserve the history of the movement in Ethiopia and beyond would be a benefit to a study in the field.

Islam in Ethiopia is growing in general, the Tablīghī Jamā‘at as Islamic movement for faith renewal in particular. With regard to this growth, there is a huge gap of lacking documentation of the Tablīghīs movement which needs to be filled with research like this among others. As there are two views on the study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, the majority view consider the movement as ‘Travellers in Faith’, a pietistic faith renewal, and peaceful movement with an apolitical position. The minority view deem the Tablīghī Jamā‘at as ‘Stealthy Legions’, which is connected with terrorism and politics and will be the second essential part of this research. Tablīghī Jamā‘at as context-specific, how the movement operates in Ethiopia, will be investigated very closely using the proper research tools. In the process of this research, locating the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia and how it fits into the current debate on faith and politics will be done at the end of this research

3. The Problem Statement of the Research

Tablīghī Jamā‘at, as an Islamic religious movement, came to Ethiopia and was well-received by the Gurāgē people group through the pioneering work of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmed Kikiya in the 1960s. The Tablīgh movement came to Ethiopian soil where Muslims’ practise was dominated by Sunni-Shafī with a significant inclination to Sufi of the Qādirīyya *ṭarīqa* (path/way). The Gurāgēs were not only the first to welcome the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement, but they also became the key leaders, role players, and the main Tablīghīs who are taking part at all structural levels of the movement to this date.

As business people and traders, the Gurāgēs are scattered all over the country, particularly in Addis Ababa, Nazret, Jima, and other urban areas and small towns of all the regions of Ethiopia. They are doing their best to spread the Tablīgh movement wherever they are through negotiations for having rooms to be used as their *markazes* (headquarters) and with *Imams* (leaders of the mosque) and *qadīm* (the elderly) at their respective areas where the movement is operating. The Muslim community in Ethiopia, including the Gurāgēs and other people groups, are accommodating Tablīghī Jamā‘at without sacrificing their local traditions. For example, chewing khat, visiting tombs and holy places, celebrating *mawlid* (birthday of Muḥammad), by travelling to places like Abret Sheikoch, Qatbare Sheikh (religious centres in the heart land of Gurāgē), and looking for *karāmā* (special power) and blessings from the religious leaders and elderly are part and parcel of the religious practise of the majority of the Gurāgē Muslim community.

Tablīghī Jamā‘at penetrates through all these old traditions and tries to call Muslims for the renewal of Islam and making Muslims true Muslims. While the Tablīghī operate in towns and rural areas, they face opposition from the Salafis and Wahhabis who are well established amongst the Oromo people group. Salafis and Wahhabis consider Tablīghīs as a cult or a sect but Tablīghīs themselves consider their beliefs and practises as part of

Islam, with the exception that they view themselves as a group who work hard to bring Islamic renewal based on the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, and old traditions of the *ṣahāba* (companions of Muḥammad). This is done mainly through the *sifatu sitta* (six principles) of Tablīghī Jamā'at teaching which was developed in the 1920s by Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyās Khandhalwi and his successors. Ilyās' was the founder of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement and is considered as one of the warner's in Islamic history whose inclination was more Sunni-Hanafī. Ilyās was influenced not only by the Deobandi teaching where he studied, but his mother also influenced him in his learning.

How the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement in Ethiopia is evolving within the Sunni-Shafī spectrum as an Islamic renewal movement through facing serious opposition, negotiating with indigenous traditions, adapting new renewal teaching and practises, and viewing themselves and others shall be the main concern of this research. It is an attempt to discover the motivation, methods and operative machinery of this movement in Ethiopia. It is necessary that due account is taken of any significant factors that could be contributory to this main concern of an evolving process.

4. Working Assumption

- Tablīghī Jamā'at movement is becoming one of the fastest growing Islamic renewal movement of *da'wa* (a call to Islam) in Ethiopia among Muslim communities in general and in Gurāgēs community in particular. This is happening through inviting all Muslim communities to practise *da'wa ilalah khuruj fi sabililah* (a call to Islam in the way of Allāh), which is becoming effective to motivate men and women of younger and older generations across Ethiopia.
- The Tablīghī Jamā'at movement has its own structures as a means of communication to help its followers and to invite others in the day-to-day operation and is strategically organized from grass-root level to regional and

global connections (see *ibid*: pp. 171-172) terms such as *yabet ta'lim* (homestead study), *masjid* (mosque), *midibi* (group), country, regional, and global *markazes* (head-quarters).

- Tablīghī Jamā'at movement and its followers always proclaim that they are promoting and announcing an apolitical movement. However, individuals are active in politics and sometimes suggest critical ideas on situations in Ethiopian without representing Tablīghīs as a group.
- The Tablīghīs prefer non-confrontational relations with any of the Islamic Jurisprudences, including Hanafi, Malik, Shafi, and Hanbali. They consider these Schools of Law as 4 breasts of a cow. They are not even interested in discussing deep Islamic theology, for example, the nature of Allāh, and the issue of human responsibility and divine sovereignty.
- For the Gurāgēs who are the business people, traders and other people groups who are from the younger generation, the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement is very attractive to shape their behaviour, lifestyle and relationship with Allāh and to other people including their spouses. They find it as effective to protect them from any bad habits and addictions which are contrary to Islamic teachings.
- Arabic language, blended with Amharic language, is widely used in the Tablīgh movement. Of course, local languages are used as needed including Gurāgē, Oromo, and Somali. Translation is given at the *quarterly mashūra* (religious leaders gathering) at the Hābāša Markaz (National Headquarters for Ethiopia).
- The majority of the *jamā* (a team) members come from a Gurāgē ethnic background, and are mainly sent out to the Oromo ethnic group. The Oromos are Salafi dominant and oppose the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement. And, of course, the *jamā* are also sent out to neighbouring countries and distant places like India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Such travel resulted in participants being exposed to

additional teachings and practises which encourage the momentum of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement as a national and transnational movement to convince the world that Islam is the answer for the questions of life.

5. The Objective of the Research

- To understand how Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia is evolving this research must discover the motivation, methods and operative machinery of this movement in Ethiopia.
- To examine to what extent the Tablīghī Jamā‘at diverges from its normative image of faith renewal and *da‘wa* (a call to Islam/proselytization) of the ‘Travellers in Faith’.
- To investigate what role the Gurāgē interactions with Oromo (if any) play in transforming Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. What evidence, if any, can one find of Tablīghī Jamā‘at following a somewhat different trajectory than in other countries?
- To analyse Gurāgē affiliation with Tablīghī Jamā‘at and the role this alliance plays in the growth of this version of Sunni-Hanafī Islam in Ethiopia. I intend however, to go further in exploring the Tablīghī Jamā‘at affiliated Gurāgē's contact with the Salafi-affiliated Oromo. The aim is not just to understand and contribute to our understanding of Islamic transnationalism but also to contribute to our current knowledge of the extent to which local ethnic, religious and political influences and interconnections (possibly conflicts) are contributing to the transformation of Islam in Ethiopia.
- To locate the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā‘at into the current debate on national faith and politics.

6. Literature Review

6.1 Islam in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has often been described as a ‘Christian nation’ because of the importance of the Ethiopian Orthodox [Tāwahīdo] Church and its connection with the power structure since the 4th century (Robinson D. 2004). The late emperors, King Menelik and Häyiläsilase (1889-1913; 1930-974) claimed that Ethiopia is a Christian island, while the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwahīdo Church (EOTC) also claims that the state and Christianity are the two faces of a coin (Sumaya 2012: 7; Samuel 2008). That notion has been challenged. Islam, in Ethiopia, was introduced in the 7th century with the so-called Axumite *hijra* through the Red Sea areas and along the Gulf of Aden. Ethiopians were, therefore, the first to embrace Islam after the companions (*Ṣaḥāba*) of Prophet Muḥammad who first accepted it along with others encircling the prophet Muḥammad. Some also have suggested that the Prophet Muḥammad had chosen Ethiopia (the Axumite Empire) to become a home for the refugee *Ṣaḥāba* in the year 615 (Ahmed 2006: 4). This was after they were persecuted by the Quraysh authorities in Mecca. The prophet Muḥammad told his followers ‘If you go to Abyssinia you will find a king under whom none are persecuted. It is a land of rightlessness where God will give you relief from what you are suffering’ (Hisham 1937: 347). The *Ṣaḥāba* were advised by Muḥammad himself to seek refuge across the sea, in the empire of Axum, where a ‘righteous king would give them protection.’⁸ The Axumite king of the time had welcomed them and permitted them to freely practise their faith. The practical effect was that on the authority of the Prophet himself, Ethiopia was not to be seen as a target for *jihād*. ...However, there were various armed clashes between Ethiopians and Arabians (Abbink 1998: 11). Jon Abbink further

⁸ Tradition cited in Trimmingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, 1952: 44.

commented that Ethiopia, as one of the first countries to receive Islam, developed Islamic learning centres in different parts of the country, including Eastern, Harar, Western, Jimma, and Northern, Massawa towns. Massawa is a coastal town in Eritrea where the late Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya, the first leader (*amir*) of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia was born.

Consequently, since the lifetime of prophet Muḥammad, Ethiopia has a special place in the history of Islam. However, Orthodox Ethiopian leaders have suppressed Islam, considering it an alien religion. This suppression had a strong impact on the lives of the Ethiopian Muslims which led them to seriously struggle for their freedom and equality. The April 1974 demonstration in Addis Ababa, which involved people from different religious backgrounds, can be mentioned as part of that struggle. Muslims protested the joint single religious mission of the State and its benefactor, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwahīdo Church (EOTC). Until the 1974 socio-political revolution in Ethiopia, the EOTC was considered a state religion. But since 1974 the new political system has arisen with the name of ‘*yator hailoch astabbabari darg*’ (a coordination committee of military force), which introduced a Communist ideology to the country. The 1974 socio-political revolution overthrew the feudal elites. From then on, the state and religion were separate entities so that the state and religion were not complementary relations (Ahmed 2006: 10). Unlike other regimes, The Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) promoted flexible Federal Rule to secure the right of the people. The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution also realised that the state could not interfere in religious affairs and vice versa. (FDRE Constitution 1995: 4-5) The (EPRDF), who has been instrumental for the new constitution, had introduced a much more flexible policy to secure the rights, freedom, and equality of ethnic and religious communities. Terje Østebø states:

However, the laws pertaining to the registration of religious organizations may also be seen to contradict the constitutional provisions of religious freedom and equality. The EOC [Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahädo Church (EOTC)] is still exempt from registration by the Civil Code of 1960, whereas for all others registration is a legal mandate. The Penal Code of 1957 and its replacement, the 2004 Criminal code, contain punishments for participating in, or leading the activities of an unregistered association. Furthermore, the Legal Notice of 1966, which still governs the process of registration, states that an application may be denied if the purpose of the association are found to be “unlawful or immoral”, or “against national unity and interests”. However, so far there is no indication that applications have been denied for anything formal reasons (Jörg Haustein & Terje Østebø 2011: 757)’.

But currently (July 2020), the longstanding request for recognition of Ethiopian Muslims has been addressed satisfactorily by the Ethiopian government following the decision of the Council of House of Representatives proclaimed on 4th July 2020 (Ethiopia Nagarit Gazette: Proclamation No. 1207/2020 4th July 2020: 12,613-15). This proclamation provided legal personality for the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs General Council. As a result, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs General Council does not need annual or biannual registration. This automatically puts Islam like the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahädo Church (EOTC), which operates without annual or biannual registration. Evangelical Christians likewise obtained provision of legal personality with a name ‘Ethiopian Council of Gospel Believers Churches and Members’ on the same day with a proclamation number 1208/2020 (Ethiopia Nagarit Gazette: Proclamation No. 1208/2020 4th July 2020: 12,616-18). Such proclamations will provide more freedom of expression for Muslims and Evangelicals like the EOTC.

6.2 Islam in the Gurāgē area and Indigenous Traditions

The Gurāgē, one of the 88+ ethnic and language groups of Ethiopia, mainly live to the southwest of Addis Ababa, in the Gurāgē Zone, practising Islam, Christianity,

or indigenous traditions. The Gurāgē people comprise 4.5% of the total population of Ethiopia, which is currently estimated to be about 115 million based on the 2007 Ethiopian national census according to World Population Prospects (2017 Revision) United Nations Populations estimates and projections.⁹ The Gurāgē ethnic group is one of the major mobile communities in Ethiopia. In the early 19th century, the number of the Gurāgē ethnic people who moved to Addis Ababa were estimated to be a couple of thousand. However, in the 21st century the Gurāgē ethnic people living and working in Addis Ababa (the capital) numbered hundreds of thousands (Worku Nida 2000:). Currently, based on the 2007 census projection, the Gurāgē population in Addis Ababa is estimated to be about one million, which represents 16.4% of the total population of Addis Ababa. The Gurāgēs are well-known in operating businesses consisting of small kiosks up to big stores, including import-export businesses, as a mainstay in the life of Ethiopian trade.

Bilal bin Rabah al Habāshi, according to pseudo-literature/legendary and a few oral traditions is identified as the first Ethiopian *mu'adhdhin*, (a caller to prayer) and Gurāgē convert, born in Gurāgē land at a place called Guma-Jinjar.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Islam was not adopted widely as a religion for the Gurāgē people until the 12th century. It was believed that the advent of Islam began during the 12th and 13th century, among East Gurāgē speaking groups (Wondwosen Tilahun 2015:8).

⁹ Projections, 201.

¹⁰ Oral traditions claim that Bilal was from Guma-Jinjar. 'When I went to a place called Enaqor, I arrived at Mugo rural village. I found one of the Hābāša mountains which stood straight. I climbed up to Mujaja and observing wonderful views and stayed there for seven days. Because of what I have seeing, I was amazed and felt that I have been there not for a week but just for a day. Then I saw people gathered under a special tree. The tree situated at Wolane and people came to visit (for *ziyara*) me. They said, 'Bilal Ibnu Rabah was born at this particular place, we are visiting the place to have blessing...' Let Allāh knows the detail, that's how Bilal was born from the Gurāgē. (Wolane Shiekh: Tirona p.23)

Wondwosen further commented, ‘In the 19th century, after the rise of Hasen Enjamo, it [Islam] has been widely spread throughout the Gurage land.’ However, at the beginning of the 16th century, Islam and Christianity were both introduced by Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi [1506-1543] [nicknamed Ahmad *Gragn*, meaning the left handed] and the Abyssinian King Galawdios. Both used forced conversion of the Gurāgē people to Islam or Christianity. Before Islam, indigenous traditions and beliefs were deeply rooted in the Gurāgē culture. Mubarek Muzwa (2014: 7-25) suggests that in the 16-18th centuries, the Gurāgēs were under the chain of worship called ‘belief of *bože* (god of lightning)’ which respected the firstborn of the cultural worship leader should be the next leader in the chain. This chain contained 7 generations of leaders under the title of *goýtakuya* (honourable) including Mulu *goýtakuya*, Debrey *goýtakuya*, Diraga *goýtakuya*, Gobisa *goýtakuya*, Kapergne *goýtakuya*, Agaz *goýtakuya*, and Niqye *goýtakuya*. According to Mubarek Muzwa’s explanation, (Muzwa, 2014: 26-27) in about the 1850s, after Niqye *goýtakuya*, his son, Sayid Ibrahim, broke the line of worship of the god of lightning (*bože*) and the deity concerned with the health and well-being of the Gurāgē (*damwamwit*) (Bekalu Molla and Digafe Feleke June 1996). Instead, he accepted Islam through a dream and went to Geto Woreda, Yeqonet Sheikh, and Sheikh Yusuf to have Islamic religious teachings.’

When Sayid Ibrahim’s first son, Sayid Bushra, was born in 1878 in the Western part of Gurāgē, he continued Islamic practises. Sayid Bushra had Islamic teachings from the Walane Sheikh around the Gurāgē area and also went to Wallo, Dana, a well-known place in the teachings of Islam to be trained in the *Qādirīyya tariqa* (the Qādirīyya order). Sayid Bushra followed his father, Sayid Ibrahim’s, footsteps not only in Islamic traditions but established Abret as an Islamic teaching centre and a place of worship (Muzwa, 2014: 21, 147) and became the first Abret Sheikh.

The second Abret Sheikh, Sayid Budala, was born in 1915 in the Gurāgē Zone Eža Wereda at Sefa-Atat, while Sayid Bushra was with his wife at *fi sabililah* [in the way of Allāh] (Muzwa, 2014: 88). Sayid Budala became the final Sheikh at Abret and his contribution in the spreading of Islam has been immense, though indigenous traditions have been deeply rooted amongst the Gurāgē community. That is why the place is called Abret Sheikoch (sing. Sheikh Amh.). Sayid Ibrahim laid the foundation of Islam, Sayid Bushra strengthened Islam through the establishment of Abret, and Sayid Budala made Abret a famous religious centre. At the time of these three Sayyids, Islam was spreading among the Gurāgēs.

The last *Sheikh* at Abret, Sayid Budala, was visited by Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmed Kikiya, who was the first leader (*amir*) for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. In 1966¹¹ Haji Musa introduced the Tablīghī teaching to the then Abret Sheikh and the people around him. After a while, the Abret Sheikh Sayid Budala, impressed by Haji Musa’s approach and teaching, decided to visit Haji Musa’s mother who lived in Addis Ababa. Sayid Budala, the Abret Sheikh, visited Haji Musa’s mother in Addis Ababa because he heard that she was *ḥāfīzal-Qur’ān* (memorised Qur’an) just like the mother of Sheikh Ilyas. Haji Musa had said that a Muslim should have his own *Sheikh*, and Musa considered Sayid Budala, the Abret Sheikh, as his own *Sheikh*.

Based on this narrative, since the 19th century Islam has been becoming a religion amongst the Gurāgēs. Of course, the practise of Islam was and is interwoven with indigenous traditions, including tomb worship of the previous Sheikhs to this date.

There is an annual celebration at Abret which takes place in the beginning of the

¹¹ Interview with Saleh Musa Kikiya on Musa life history 2018.

month of *Rajab* (the seventh month of Islamic Calendar). It was at the end of March, in 2019, called *Abret Mawlid* (birthdate of Muḥammad). About 100 thousand people gathered at a place called *Abret Sheikoch* for this annual celebration. Despite the persistence of some older customs, the *Tablīghī* people always try to teach the people, to lead them to a more formal practise of Islam, which could be seen as a renewal in their faith.

6.3 *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* as Travellers in Faith and Renewal Movement Nationally and Transnationally

Since the 1970s *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* became attractive for academic research and dissertations have been done by scholars, including *Anwārul Haq* (1972), *Moḥammed Aslam* (1976), *Jacobus Lodewicus Cilliers* (1983), *Mohammad Zain b. Husin* (1984-1985), *Mohamed Tozy* (1984), ‘*Abdul Khāliq Pīrẓāda* (1990), *Yoginder Singh Sikand* (1994), *Elke Faust* (1996), *Barbara Metcalf* (1996), *M. Amer* (1999), and *Khurram Mahmood* (1999): (Masud 2000: viii). Many of the scholars state that *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* is a faith renewal movement.

The existing secondary sources, drawing on *Deobandi*¹² tradition, state that the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* was founded by *Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi* (1885-1944) in the 1920s in Northern India for the promotion and preservation of Islamic identity and faith (Sikand 2004:99). Sikand (2002: 130-31) further explains that ‘the

¹² The Deoband School is a complex movement rooted in the *Dar al-‘ulum* at Deoband. Deoband emerged in the aftermath of the failed mid-19th-century ‘war of independence’ or ‘Sepoy Mutiny’. By the end of the aftermath of the failed mid-19th century, any hope of the recovery of the Muslim rule seemed impossible. Deoband therefore focused its attention on achieving a united front of Indian Muslims and made a common cause with the Hindus for greater autonomy (later independence) from Britain (Singh 2012: 17).

method of *Tablīgh* was not Ilyas' own making and that it was actually inspired by God.' While Ilyas was performing the Hajj (1925-26), he set apart three silent days of contemplation at the Mosque of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina. Ilyas claimed to have accepted his call for the *Tablīgh* (preaching) through the Prophet Muḥammad. Ilyas returned to India having been 'called' in the way of the *tariqa-i-Tablīgh* (the method of preaching) and began his pioneering in Mewat, near Delhi.

Ilyas' Deobandi formation clearly impacted the movement he founded. Singh has argued that even though the *Tablīgh* is 'a mass movement of ordinary Muslim preachers', it is informed by 'Deobandi and its Ulema' (2012: 25). Similarly, Barbara Metcalf (2002: 8) suggests, that *Tablīghī Jamā'at* represents 'an intensification of the original Deobandi commitment to individual regeneration apart from any explicit political program.' Metcalf considered the *Tablīghī Jamā'at* as 'an apolitical, quietist movement of internal grassroots of missionary renewal (Metcalf 2002).

6.4 *Tablīghī Jamā'at* as Stealthy Legions

The term 'Stealthy Legions' was introduced by Alex Alexiev in 2005 in his writing in a journal article in *Middle East Quarterly*: 'The West's misreading of *Tablīghī Jamaat's* actions and motives has grave implications for the war on terrorism' (Alexiev 2005: 3-11). He argued this from his study of recruitment of *Tablīghī* members for military training in Pakistan in the 1980s and *Tablīghīs* involvement in a terrorist bombing in Casablanca in 2003. Though a journalistic piece, it created concern. Alexiev condemns the *Tablīghīs* direct involvement of sponsoring terrorist groups. His explanation for the condemnation, however, is based on Pakistani and Indian observers. According to Alexiev, these observers believe that *Tablīghīs* were instrumental in founding *Harakat ul-Mujahideen*, which is a militant Islamic organization in Pakistan in the 1980s [1985] and the founders were original *Tablīghī* members. Alexiev adds that in the 1980s over 6,000 *Tablīghīs* got their training in

Harakat ul-Mujahideen Camp for the Afghan war and joined Al-Qaeda. He also mentioned similar stories in North Africa.

Another journal article by Shireen Khan Burki (2013): 'The Tablighī Jama'at: Proselytizing Missionaries or Trojan Horse.' in *Journal of Applied Security Research* 8 (1): 98-117, also expresses concern. Burki suggests that careful scrutiny is needed to study the Tablighī Jamā'at:

The growing linkages between exposed terrorists and the TJ, however, does raise questions which require a careful scrutiny of the organisation, rather than tendency (in certain academic circles) to take them [Tablighī Jamā'at] at face value and to accept their pro forma statements which condemn violence in the name of Islam Burki (2013: 98).

Ziauddin Sadar commented that change is inevitable in the life of organisations, whether conservative or not, which includes an organised movement like Tablighī Jamā'at. He suggests:

Conventionally, the Tablighīs are seen as an unchanging, conservative, benign, global network of simple preachers. This, I think, is a serious mistake. Organizations do not remain static. Simply because Tablighī Jama'at has followed exactly the same course for decades, no one thinks it can change. It has. Drastically (Sadar 2006).

Khalid Masud extends the idea that the movement be considered as a potential threat for the world. It is true that Tablighī Jamā'at 'has sometimes been regarded as a potential threat to nation-state politics. Some see it as another pan-Islamic movement, others as a fundamentalist Islamic movement opposing the nationalistic basis of the state' (Masud 2000: xiii). Barbara Metcalf cautiously, however, has commented, 'Some observers assume that participation in the peaceful jihad of Tablighī Jama'at is a first stage toward militant *jihad*, or at least toward more active

political forms of organization. That assumption, like the more extreme position that Tablighī Jama‘at serves as a cover for terrorists, remains to be demonstrated’ (Metcalf 2009: 243).

Michael Nazir-Ali, Washington DC (May 2017), in his recent address at the ‘World Summit: Persecuted Christians’, refers to Tablighī Jamā‘at in Pakistan where the Tablighī Jamā‘at Headquarter at Raiwnad, Nazir Ali was Bishop in Pakistan, before he became Bishop for Rochester. He states, ‘They say [the Tablighī Jamā‘at] they are not violent. I believe them. But the question is, does their form of extremism which may not be violent in itself, but then lead people to involvement in violence? It does, for not everyone, but a small number, that’s enough.’ So, researching Tablighī Jamā‘at very closely at a worldwide level in general and in eastern Africa and Ethiopia in particular, is absolutely vital.

7. Scope and Justification of the Research

This research does not aim to study all the Islamic reform movements in Ethiopia but is limited in scope to focus on the Sunni Gurāgēs engaged in the Tablighī Jamā‘at movement. This research also will not try to cover the whole of Ethiopia where there is evidence of Tablighī operations, but will focus on Addis Ababa, Gurāgē, Wolkite, and Jimma zones. There is some evidence to suggest Tablighī Jamā‘at is rapidly growing in the country and establishing connections with Tablighī outside Ethiopia through annual participation of transnational gatherings. Halkano Wario (2012:94) reports that in 29th December 2011-1st January 2012 in Nairobi, there was a large gathering named ‘Specialised Gatherings for Active Tablighīs’, which was attended by participants from other countries, including Ethiopians. Amharic, which is the working language of Ethiopia, was used as one of the many languages in this gathering, along with Borana,

Somali, Swahili, Arabic, and Baganda. Clearly, Ethiopian Tablighī adherents are making their mark on the regional African gatherings of Tablighī Jamā‘at.

The main reason for doing this research is to understand it in its local Ethiopian context and to locate Ethiopian Tablighī Jamā‘at in the current debate on faith and politics. Due to Ethiopia’s strategic position in Africa in general, sub-Saharan and East Africa in particular, and its historical contact with Islam, this research is vital. Halkano suggests: ‘it’s phenomenal growth in East and Central Africa has gone unnoticed due to its avoidance of publicity, doctrinal debates, and socio-political activism, its focus on spiritual matters and its popularity among the ordinary Muslims, rather than religious scholars’ (Wario 2012: 99). This research is not just to understand and contribute to our understanding of Islamic transnationalism but also to contribute to our current knowledge and debate of the extent to which local ethnic, religious and political inter-connections (possibly conflicts) are contributing to the changes/transformation of Islam in Ethiopia in general and Tablighī Jamā‘at in particular.

8. Theoretical Framework

The religious resurgence in the society is a common phenomenon, which can be expressed as a sect or a cult which is cut off from its main branch and replaced with new beliefs and practises or with no major differences or contravene with the previous belief and practises. At times, a New Religious Movement can remain within its main branch, however, with few additions of beliefs and practises without contradicting the main beliefs and practises of the old. Of course, this might lead to religious innovation. According to Stark and Bainbridge: ‘there are many other new religious bodies that do not arise through schisms. Instead, they represent religious innovation’ (Stark and Bainbridge 1979: 117-8). Stark and Bainbridge further have argued that these new

religions are also called sects. But, identifying new religious movements must remain with anyone who wants to theorize the New Religious Movement (NRM).

A New Religious Movement erupts amongst the followers of a specific religion through enigmatic individuals. This could be expressed through dreams and visions, ie ‘Someone has a novel religious insight and recruits others to the faith’ (Stark and Bainbridge 1979: 117). At times it is through one of the charismatic¹³ personalities who are keen to see and bring meaningful change in the lifestyle of its religious community. Sheikh Ilyas was one of them who established a movement ‘*tariqa iman*’ (order of faith). This was the concept of Ilyas. Even though Ilyas had no plan to give it a name, the name of this movement was called Tablīghī Jamā‘at, and Ilyas was fine with the new name. It was started in India, Mewat¹⁴ with a simple pronouncement and call, ‘O Muslims - Become Muslims’. The Tablīghī movement is operated under the major branch of Islam, Sunni with an orientation of Hanafi Islamic law.

The Church-sect theory has been for so long in the study of the sociology of religion by theorists including Max Weber (1864-1920), who introduced the notions of church and sect, ‘mode of membership’ by birth (church) or decision (sect). Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) who was Weber’s student, was the first to delineate them into three types of religious behaviour: churchly, sectarian, and mystical (Swatos: Encyclopaedia of Religion and Society; Stark and Bainbridge 1979: 122). H. Richard Niebuhr (1894-1962) notes that church and sect are as poles of a continuum. Niebuhr has argued that the sect is an unstable type of religious organization which, through time, tends to be transformed

¹³ ‘New religions are rarely initiated by a committee. Although sects may be formed by a group of dissatisfied persons breaking away from a larger body, several of the movements have, had, a founder or leader who is believed to have some special powers or knowledge, and whom his (or, occasionally, her) followers are expected to believe and obey without question. (Barker 1989: 13).

¹⁴ Mewat is a place in India, where the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement started as an Islamic renewal movement by the late Maulana/Sheikh Ilyas Muḥammad Khandhalwi.

into a church. Niebuhr further argued, ‘a new sect, which then is transformed slowly into a church, thus to spawn a new sect: an endless cycle of birth, transformation, schism, and rebirth of religious movements.’ Niebuhr’s concerns are more on schismatic religious movements.

There are non-schismatic religious movements which represent cultural innovation and cultural importation (Stark and Bainbridge, 1979: 123-5). According to Benton Johnson (1963), ‘A church is a religious group that accepts the social environment in which it exists (Stark and Bainbridge 1979: 123). Johnsons’ reconceptualization also permits clear definition of two other important concepts: religious movement and religious institution’ (Stark and Bainbridge, 1979: 123).

According to Stark and Bainbridge, ‘sects have a prior tie with another religious organization.’ To be a sect, a religious movement must have been founded by persons who left another religious body for the purpose of founding the sect. The purpose of founding a sect is not to form a new faith or religion but to re-establish or renew the old one from which the old one ‘drifted’, as Luther claimed, that the need for reformation in Christianity was vital. ‘The church-sect conceptualization is too limited to serve fully the needs of a theory of religious movements’ (Stark and Bainbridge, 1979: 118). Therefore, we need something like a study of New Religious Movements (NRM) in conjunction with a Church-sect theory which can accommodate the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement.

In light of the Church-sect theory, Islam also has been passing through and accommodating different types of sects, sub-sects, and movements around the world. The three major sects include Sunni Islam, Shia Islam, and Khariji Islam. Hanafi, Malik, Shāfi’ī, and Hanbali School of Law are the main Islamic jurisprudence for Sunnis with their distinctiveness. From this, the Tablīghī Jamā‘at came out and followed the Hanafi

School of Law which is known for having room for individual understanding and interpretation of the law which can be seen as comfortable for Tablighīs with Deobandi Sufi practises. On the one hand, Tabligh could be seen as a sect or a cult (at least by the Orthodox Sunni) under Sunni Islam with the Hanafi School of jurisprudence and on the other as a reform (at least by the Tablighī themselves) and new religious movement in Sunni Islam.

Tablighī Jamā'at, as a new religious movement, was started in the 1920s. However, Jan Ali argues, a new religious movement connotation might not fit with Tabligh, because there is not a difference in their beliefs which contradict with the fundamental beliefs of Islam, and the Tablighīs do not want to separate from mainline Sunni Islam (Ali 2012: 58).

However, Tablighīs understanding and practise of Islam is based on the *siffa sitta* (the six principles of Tabligh) which are the main teachings of the movement having been coined by Sheikh Ilyas, who was trained at Dārul Uloom Seminary in Deoband with Hanafi Islamic law and yet the Ethiopian majority of Islam is related with Shāfi'ī Islamic law. I argue that Tablighīs fit in a new religious movement framework due to their inclination of South Asian Hanafi Islamic Law and because of the Salafis consideration of Tabligh as a new innovation (*bidā*).

To develop our theoretical framework in order to advance this research, Church-sect theory and New Religious Movements studies should be assessed, examined and criticised. New Religious Movement studies are interdisciplinary in nature which utilises anthropology, history, psychology, sociology, and religious studies. The Church-sect theory has been part of the sociology of religion for quite some time by scholars like Weber and Troeltsch. In so doing, we can develop a theoretical framework a bit from

Church-sect and from NRM. The sect¹⁵ is a term that has been widely used to denote a group or faction holding common views or having the same leadership. Thus, it has been applied to philosophical and political groups, as well as to the religious. The word ‘sect’ is from the Latin *sequi* (“to follow”) rather than to *secare* (“to cut”), and hence it carries no necessary implication of schism. Although, frequently, it carries a negative connotation. The reason we framed a theory of a combination of Church-sect and NRM, is that some see Tablīgh as a sect or cult because it is considered as *bidā* (innovation) by the greater circle of Sunni Islam, particularly by the Salafis, and some as a new religious movement.

Roger Finke and Patricia Wittberg (2000: 160) have argued relative to how sects are effective in marketing their faith: ‘Sects have proven highly effective in marketing their faith. Their members’ willingness to “share their beliefs” with others, to devote resources of time and money.’ Though this line of argument is focused on the church-sect, it is very true amongst the Tablīghīs. However, Tablīghīs have more considered themselves as part of the main branch of Sunni Islam, nothing else and nothing more. Of course, a clear protest is observed from the larger circle of Islam by the Tablīghīs with a clear call to bring renewal in Islam and making Muslims purer, like the early days of Islam.

Joachim Wach (1967: 169) categorises the types of protest in religion in three areas:

‘There are three major categories of protest: dissent in the field of doctrine, criticism of the cultic expression, and objection to the nature or development of the organizational structure. In most cases, the tendency is to revert back to the original experience of the founder of the early community.’

¹⁵ ‘Sect is a term that has been widely used to denote a group or faction holding common views or having the same leadership; thus it has been applied to philosophical and political groups, as well as to the Latin *sequi* (“to follow”) rather than to *secare* (“to cut”), and hence it carries no necessary implication of schism, although frequently, it has been used with such a negative connotation.(Hill 1989: 154).

The above three categories don't fit with the case of Tablighī. The Tablighī are aloof in dissent of doctrinal issues or Islamic School of Jurisprudence (*madhhabs*), and criticism of any of the religious structures. However, the conclusion made by Wach clarifies the tendency of the three categories: 'to revert back to the original experience of the founder of the early community' fits with the Tablighī practise and effort which has been going on since the 1920s. Since then, the Tablighī Jamā'at are known as one of the Islamic renewal movements. The Tablighīs are working hard to return to the true Islam similar to the early days of the Prophet Muḥammad and the *saḥābas* (Companions of Muḥammad) and trying to imitate their lifestyle.

As Elijah Siegler suggests: 'Whatever they are called, New Religious Movements are defined by outsiders, not practitioners' (Siegler 2007: 17). This statement fits the followers of Tablighī Jamā'at movement. Yoginder Sikand (2002: 2) states: 'Like any other social movement, the TJ [Tablighī Jamā'at] has undergone a process of evolution over time... in its present form the TJ shares some features with Islamist movements, though their differences are perhaps more striking than their similarities.' For Sikand, the Tablighī Jamā'at movement is considered as a social movement with a significant difference from other Islamist movements. *Kharijites*¹⁶ are considered as the first sectarian movement in Islamic history, as Jeffery Kenney (Kenney 2006: 19) describes in his book, *Muslim Rebels*.

According to a strict Sunni adherent of Muslims¹⁷, Tablighīs are considered as to be an exclusive sect: 'Tableeghi Jamaat wants to be an exclusive sect of Muslims, which

¹⁶ 'The Kharijites are one such particular in the Islamic tradition. They represent, or were fashioned to represent, an attitude toward authority and violence that the ascendant Sunni orthodox wanted to preserve as a negative paradigm' (Kenney 2006: 20).

¹⁷ See *Islam Academy: Tableeghi Jamaat Exposed*, (Academy, Islam Academy: Tableeghi Jamaat exposed, n.d.). The Tablighī Jamā'at definition to other Muslims, clearly and erroneous and far removed from the one which Allāh gives in the Qur'ān.

excludes all other Muslims.’ Though other Muslims have said so, Tablīghīs never considered themselves as a sect. That’s the reason for combining both the Church-sect theory and NRM. Yes, of course, the Tablīghīs are forming their own believing community which shares significant values of Tablīghī teaching and lifestyle from its South Asian roots. However, the long-term plan of Tablīghīs is uniting Islam within one umbrella of faith through the effort of *da’wa* at a large scale both in-country and cross-country.

New Religious Movements in general, and Islamic movements in particular, are growing in Ethiopia including Salafism,¹⁸ Wahhabism,¹⁹ Muslim Brotherhood,²⁰ Takfiri,²¹ Sufism, and Tablīgh. According to the findings of Anwar Berhe (Berhe June 2015: 61-62), ‘The Salafi Movement in Islam...in Addis Ababa...’ in his MTh thesis, states:

The *takfīrī* Muslims reject the relevance of Western education completely because they believe that it does not bring justice to the community. Their leaders claim that Western civilization and Western education pose various challenges in the life of both Muslims and non-Muslims, which leads them to worldliness and immorality. Thus, they reject sending their children to primary schools; rather, they send their children to *madrassa* because they believe that the study of the *Qur’ān* and *Ḥadīth* is the source of wisdom and religious piety. They further argue that religious education helps the children to gain the true understanding of the world.

¹⁸ Salafism, ‘...three generations—sometimes with additions from later times—have become known among many Sunni Muslims as “the pious predecessors” (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*). In defining whom modern-day Salafis are and what they stand for, we could therefore say that Salafism, as a worldwide trend in the 20th century, represents those Sunni Muslims who claim to be “like the *salaf*” and, as such, say they emulate the “pious predecessors” as closely and in as many spheres of life as possible’ (Wagemakers Aug 2016: 2).

¹⁹ ‘influential to the Arabian movement started by the religious reformer Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (1703–1792) that proved to be a great source of influence to modern-day Salafism’ (Wagemakers Aug 2016: 5).

²⁰ ‘Muslim Brotherhood, Arabic al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn, religio-political organization founded in 1928 [similar time with the establishment Tablīghī Jamā‘at] at Ismailia, Egypt, by Hasan al-Bannā’. It advocated a return to the *Qur’ān* and the *Ḥadīth* as guidelines for healthy modern Islamic society. The Brotherhood spread rapidly throughout Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and North Africa.’

²¹ ‘Takfiri: A branch of Salafi Islam in Addis Ababa, which follows an isolationist ideology and declares other Muslims as apostates. It is also called *Madkhalīyya* group’ (Berhe June 2015:XIV).

In any of the movements, there is one common agenda. The one agenda, or the glue that unites Islamic movements, is a call to return to Islam. John Esposito (1984: 37) states: ‘Muslims must return to the pure Islam of the first generation of Muslims, the righteous ancestors.’ Salafi, Wahhabi, Muslim Brotherhood, Tablīghī, with its motto, (‘O Muslims - Become Muslim!’). However, the ways of that return to pure Islam are different. Some of them instigate the physical *jihad*, unlike Tablīghīs, which is more on the inner or greater jihad (*jihad Akbar*), which is a struggle within one’s ‘self’.

Though the Saudi Wahhabi influence in Ethiopia has been enormous, ‘in spite of such influences, it seems that most Muslims in Ethiopia’s capital have remained loyal to their own apolitical traditions’ (Erich 2015: 179). Erlich’s statement fits the Tablīghīs whose standard position is apolitical. However, whenever they get a chance to speak publicly, they proclaim their apolitical position.

Esposito writes: (1984: 33)

‘Islamic revivalist movements like the Wahhabi in Arabia, Mahdi in Sudan, and Sanusi in Libya were forerunners of both twentieth-century Islamic modernism and contemporary Islamic revivalism. As such they reveal much of the pattern of modern Islamic movements in their worldview, ideology, language, and methods.

Esposito further summarises in his chapter, *Revival, and Reform*:

Despite their individual differences and characteristics, pre-modern revivalist movements provided a common legacy to modern Islam in both their ideology and their methodology. First, they brought into sharp focus the weakened and disorganized condition of the community. Second, they provided the diagnosis and cure: departure from true Islamic belief/practise and thus the need for a return to Islam. Third, they reasserted a belief Islamic monotheism meant the unity and totality of God’s will for both the individual Muslim and the Islamic community. Religion is integral to all areas of life - political, social, and moral. Fourth, Islamic reform required the rejection of a blind acceptance of tradition, that is, a recognition that the medieval synthesis of Muslim life, contained in the corpus of Islamic law, included un-Islamic historical accretions.

Fifth, they maintained that the restoration of true Islam necessitated personal interpretation that was based on the sole authoritative foundations of Islam – the Qur’ān and the prophetic practise as found in the early community. Sixth, these movements reemphasised the belief that the socio-moral revival of Islamic society required political action, an activism epitomized by *jihad*, the exertion to realize God’s will through moral self-discipline, and, when necessary, military combat or warfare’ (pp. 42-43).

Esposito’s summary mirrors clearly the Tablīghīs movement and operation by mentioning the poor condition of the community which demands a return to Islam, Islamic reform as a requirement, personal devotion, and moral revival of Islamic society and, of course, physical *jihad* excepted.

Tablīghīs in Ethiopia has created a community of believers with close attachments, as evidenced by them calling each other brother or father. As Eileen Barker (1989: 27) suggested: ‘As with more traditional communities, the metaphor of The Family is frequently employed, members calling each other brother or sister and the leaders Mother or Father.’ Arsalan Khan has argued that, Tablīghīs created a hierarchically structured world. To justify this, Khan (2016: 101) illustrated how the Tablīghīs apply the family titles: Tablīghīs add the title ‘brother’ (*bhai*) before each other’s names and they confer paternal authority on the leaders of the movement, whom they refer to endearingly as ‘the Elders’ (*buzurg*). This way of adding ‘brother’ as a title before the names of believers in the Ethiopian context is also common among Protestant Christians in general, and Pentecostals in particular. Tablīghī Jamā‘at, as a group who are practising NRM, in their own eyes, are adherent of a new religious movement which can speed up to an Islamic renewal. Ibrahim Moosa (2000: 212) suggests ‘They [Tablīghīs] experience a new kind of religiosity in Tablīgh work.’ Tablīghī Jamā‘at in the eyes of Salafi/Wahhābī are considered as a sect or a cult. That is why NRM and Church-sect theory are deployed to examine the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement.

9. Methodology

The methodology employed includes ethnographic research through participating observation, oral history, interview, and field visits. The nature of the study is interdisciplinary, as different methodologies and approaches have been incorporated as is explained in the next part of this chapter, including *da'wa* participant observation, oral history, and country visit. While I was doing the 'participant observation' in my 40 days *da'wa* tour, I managed to take field notes every day. These notes are included in another section as needed.

In those 40 days, the number of masjids (mosques) visited including the Hābāša markaz were 11. When we were visiting the 11 mosques in our *da'wa* tour, we were travelling as a *jama'a* (a team) for 40 days. Travelling for 40 days is highly encouraged in the Tablīghī practise. Doing the 40 days *da'wa* tour three times in one's life is considered to bring blessings. We had an *amir* (a leader) with 13 *jama'a* (team) members, mainly of Gurāgē ethnicity, the younger generation, high school level of education, single, and some from a business background, and of course, from different *masjids* (mosques).

9.1 Ethnographic Research

In terms of data collection, ethnography usually involves the researcher participating overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson, May 1986: 3). In my ethnographic research to watch the Tablīghīs, to listen to them, and to observe their day-to-day life and activities, *da'wa* tour participant observation took place for 40 consecutive days with spending enough time to live and walk with them.

Draper J (2015) explains ethnography research: ‘It is a research methodology concerned with describing people and how their behaviours, either as an individual or as part of a group, is influenced by the culture or subcultures in which they live and move.’ In light of this explanation, *da‘wa* tour participant observation was used as a main ethnographic research method. *Da‘wa* tour participant observation is an excellent research tool which has been practised by some of the researchers in the study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at including Halkano Wario (2012: 32) and Jan Ali (2012: 85). Following their footsteps, I extended the consecutive days of my *da‘wa* tour a little bit more to understand the Tablīghīs in Ethiopia.

My mixed religious and ethnic background, my family history, and various contacts helped to implement participatory observation and access to the necessary data. My contact with Muslims is not a surprise due to the connection and relations I had.

My mother, Jāmanāšī, was born in Addis Ababa. Her mother, Ejigayehu Wube, was an Orthodox Christian of- Shoa-Amhara heritage, but her father Fujata Mukhtar Wabiso, on the other hand was a Muslim whose own father was of Silti-Gurāgē²² ethnicity. In spite of this curious mixture of religious and ethnic diversity my maternal grandparents still managed to find mutual love that led to a marriage partnership. However Ejigayehu who had a strong faith in her orthodox Christianity influenced her husband Fujata to convert to Christianity. Fujata got baptised in Saint George (*Giorgis*) Orthodox Church and was given a new [baptismal] name of- Gebremichael. Whether his conversion was genuine or coercive is open to question (see *ibid*, pp. 105-9).

²² See *ibid* pp. 99-102 ‘Gurāgēs Religiosity-Faith That Kept Up to Death: My Grandfather’s Biography’ who was from Silti-Gurāgē. Silti-Gurāgē is one of the ethnic groups amongst the Gurāgēs. Silti-Gurāgēs are the main key role players in Ethiopia towards the spread of Islam in general the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in particular. See where the first Hābāša Ijtima took place in December 2019.

My father Musa was born in Gondar. His mother Biritu was an Orthodox Christian from a Gondar-Amhara ethnic background and his Muslim father Mohammed was a Yemeni-Arab who emigrated from Yemen via Massawa to Gondar where he met and married my grandmother Biritu. My father Musa later moved to the capital city Addis Ababa as a Muslim. It was there that he met and married my mother Jämanäšī who was an Orthodox Christian, their religious backgrounds notwithstanding. Musa had envisaged converting Jämanäšī to Islam after marriage, but this failed to materialise; but instead his wife Jämanäšī won him over to Orthodox Christianity. She took him to the Saint George (*Giorgis*) Orthodox Church to be baptised - just like her mother Ejigayehu had done to her husband Fujata. Musa became baptised and took Hailemariam as his Christian baptismal name; this was the origin of my middle name (Worku Hailemariam Mohammed)!

I, Worku Hailemariam Mohammed was born in 1962 in Addis Ababa²³, Ethiopia, at a place called Italian-Safar, the city centre. I grew-up in an Orthodox Christian family until the end of my high school. In 1980 I became converted to Protestant-Evangelical Christianity in which my eyes were opened to an experience of a totally new life in Christ. My salvation through Christ was - and remains – assured. Sit

I am a trained cartography technician which includes data collection, in relation with housing and population census, a theologian and a researcher in the area of Islam. Since 1981, I have worked for various organisations in different capacities: Cartography Technician for Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency, Youth and Bible School Ministry Coordinator for the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC), Theological Education Coordinator for Society of International Ministries – now known as Serving In Missions - (SIM), Registrar and Development Officer for

²³ Addis Ababa is the sit of the African Union (AU) and considered as African capital.

Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Leadership Ministry at Regional level with SIM. I have worked an average of 9 years with each of the organisations. I studied Theology and obtained a Bachelor of Theology (BTh) in Academic Ministry from Evangelical Theological College and Master of Theology (MTh) in Systematic Theology from the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. My research topic for my MTh, ‘Folk Islam in Wallo: An Examination of Folk Islam Beliefs and Practises in Comparison with Charismatic Evangelicals’. In 2022 I completed PhD in Islamic Studies from Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) with Middlesex University London, focusing on the Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement in Ethiopia. My research title: ‘Travellers in Faith’ or ‘Stealthy Legions’? The Gurāgē Role in the Rise of Tablīghī Jamā’at in Ethiopia. And Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA) in Arabic Language and Literature from the Addis Ababa University (AAU). I am involved in teaching Understanding Islam, Islāmic courses, and basic Qur’ānic Arabic at Theological Colleges in Addis Ababa where I reside. In 1991 I married with Tiruwork from Sabat-Bet Gurāgē ethnic background and have 3 boys Mesay (28), Nahom (27), Amanuel (14) and 1 granddaughter Ambrosia (5).

My family history of ethnic and religious background,²⁴ my religious affiliations have proved instrumental in my research journey I developed trust that enabled access to the various key leaders, places, gatherings, and documents. In the process of employing ethnographic research, I have used participant observation as a methodology. In so doing as a participant observer, I have carefully kept safe distance from immersing in what the people were doing, and so protect myself from any bias which could affect the result of the research being conducted. I have not been involved nor participated in any of the teaching/preaching sessions at the mosques nor outside

²⁴ See *ibid.* pp. 1-3 and 103-106.

of the mosques. It is hoped that this healthy and fruitful relationship with Tablīghī friends will continue so that my further research is not impeded.

I am writing this thesis in a very difficult period in the history of my country Ethiopia. In the past few years tens of thousands of people have lost their precious lives due to ethnic and religious conflicts throughout the country - mainly in the northern part of Ethiopia. Thus the issue of ethnic identity is becoming crucial in Ethiopia. Personally I find it difficult to identify my exact ethnic background because of my mixed Silti-Gurāgē, Yemeni-Arab, Shoa and Gondar Amhara roots. In a country like Ethiopia where ethnic identity is a major issue, I find myself somewhere hidden in the spectrum of ethnic diversity. So I would prefer to identify myself simply as an Ethiopian; and do my best to be loyal to the country as well as to the more than 88 ethnic and language groups.

In the process, as a participant I was and I am and continued to be as a participant as an observer to provide enough distance in order to facilitate fair observation. I did not use a complete participant approach. Firstly, as a non-Muslim researcher, I cannot be a complete participant. Secondly, being a complete participant might lead to jeopardise the research process. Thirdly, I had been asked to accept Islam before joining the *da'wa* team, to which I said “No, I am here to do my research, not to accept Islam. If I do so, that will create a clear bias in my assessment.”

9.2 Oral History

I used oral history in light of triangulation techniques. As researchers, Adami and Kiger (Maria Fenech Adami and Alice Kiger, 2005) have argued in the introduction of their article on ‘The use of triangulation for completeness purposes’: ‘Triangulation in research refers to the use of multiple techniques for gathering and/or handling data within a single study. The original purpose of triangulation was to seek confirmation of apparent findings. There now appears to be support for a second purpose –

completeness.’ This is what I tried to accomplish through talking to the children of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya, the first *amir* for Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia, his friend, Grand Mufti and President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, and to other people who know about the late Haji Musa.

Yoginder Sikand, who has done extensive research on the origins and development of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in India as a cross-country movement suggests: (Sikand 2002: 5) TJ [Tablīghī Jamā‘at] is deeply rooted in oral traditions.’ So, I used oral history as one of my research methodologies in exploring the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. The deep-rootedness in oral traditions demands a similar approach to understand how things are working; particularly, how it is evolving in the other contexts unlike India, and in my case, Ethiopia. Thus, that is why oral history is needed as a research method for data collection purposes. I found oral history as one of the best methods to explore how Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia is evolving.

Ethiopians’ religious traditions in general, and Tablīghīs movement in particular, are both deeply rooted in oral traditions as it is normal in the majority of the world including Asia and Africa. Halkano Wario, in his thesis: ‘A Study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at among the Borana of Northern Kenya’, related that one of his informants confirmed the importance of oral tradition to preserve the Tablīghīs practise by saying: ‘Once something has been written it becomes dead. ...But if it remains oral and practical, you learn it through mobility and effort of *da‘wa*’ Wario (2012: 34) David Russell, (n.d.: 2) writes: ‘Oral History as a methodology based on a number of academic disciplines, including history, sociology, anthropology, law, journalism, and psychology.’ Russell further added:

The skilled practitioner must remain impartial, *listen*, and stay in the background. And yet he or she must also serve as a catalyst and direct the line of inquiry by asking questions that probe

areas of interest, clarify ambiguous statements, and produce transitions for the reader...to create primary documents from which historians can construct the past (p.1).

In so doing, I followed this method and have utilized an oral history with 7 of my informants. Two of them are active Tablīghīs, one was our *amir* (leader) in our 40 days *da'wa* tour, and the other one is a friend and also will serve as an *amir*, whenever he joins a 40 days *da'wa* tour. The other two are children of the late Haji Musa Kikiya, the first national amir (leader) for the Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia. Another informant is a friend of Haji Musa, the other one is President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, and the last one is one of the national figures within the Muslim community in Ethiopia.

Linda Shopes, as quoted by Andria Hajek, writes: 'Oral history is also applied more frequently as a research method in academia, as well as in the study of communities (Hajek 2014: 4). To study a community of believers like the Tablīghī Jamā'at, deploying oral history as a methodology is very important. I took enough time to listen to the stories of people who are part and parcel of this community. I am also aware of the use of my data from oral history in the future either by myself or someone else beyond this PhD research. Hajek also commented, 'Yet, when doing oral history interviews, it is important to think about if and how you want to use the outputs beyond your PhD thesis' (2014: 10).

9.3 Interviews

- Interview with Sufis: in the structural interview, 9 Muslims with Sufi inclination had been interviewed.
- Interview with Tablīghīs: in the structural interview, 12 Muslims with Tablīghī adherents had been interviewed.
- Interview with Wahhabis/Salafis: in the same structural interview, 7 Muslims with Wahhabi Salafi inclination had been interviewed.
- Interview with Ethnic Gurāgēs: 3 Gurāgēs from Sebat-Bet and Sodo tribes had been interviewed to understand the meaning of the term ‘Gurāgē’.

9.4 Field Visits

The country visit will bring a significant contribution to a study like Tablīghī Jamā‘at. Studies of the Tablīghī Jama‘at as a Transnational Islamic Movement, which took place in London in June 1990 and involved leading scholars around the world and presented cases from countries where the movement is operating and growing shall be an excellent example for conducting a country visit to explore such a movement.

The purpose of the country visit I did was to see and understand the transnational nature and connectivity of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at as the one movement both in practise and in the training aspect of it. Similarities of the building they use for the work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement could also be observed. Country visits also helped a lot to observe the role of the ethnic Gurāgēs commitment and mobility towards the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia.

9.4.1 Bangladesh

Bangladesh, Dhaka: Wednesday 17 August 2016 - The place where I stayed for 3 days: 4/14 Humayun Road.

The Bangladesh visit took place in August 2017 and the purpose of the visit was to see how Tablīghī Jama‘at was functioning in connection with training. The following points will help us to see few things about Dhaka, Bangladesh.

- Wednesday 17 August 2016 I went to visit the National Markaz of Bangladesh in Dhaka to a place called Kakrail with my friend, Remon. Kakrail Mosque is situated at Hare Road near Ramna Park. Kakrail Mosque is not only the National Markaz for Bangladeshis, it is also a training centre for many young people. There is a Madrasa with 500 students and 25 teachers. The age of the students includes 12-15 as well as a few students 6-8- years-old. Students are from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and other countries. The unfinished building of the Markaz, with 4 stories, has some similarities with the Ethiopian Hābāša Markaz in Addis Ababa at Quoas-Meda which is also under construction.
- I took a few pictures outside of the compound while the Jamaat is going out for *Chila*²⁵/*khurūj* with their *amir*/leader. Remon (my friend who took me there) told me that his grandfather had done 3 *Chilas*. While they are walking with their backpacks, they were in line and carefully listening to their leader (*amir*). I took a protected, nice picture of them at the back while they are walking.
- In Dhaka, there are 12,000 mosques (estimated), including little ones. Islam is more traditional with a more Sufi order (*tariqa*).
- Dhaka is known as ‘a city of rickshaw’, with over an estimated million.

²⁵ One *Chila* is 40 days and 3 *Chilas* are 120 days, which is 4 months, required for cross country travel for *da‘wa*. 3 *Chilas* are required for the Tablīghīs.

- I visited a school called '*al jamaah al rahmaniya al Arabiya*', at Muḥammad-Pur in Dhaka, with Nail, my friend who lives in Dhaka. We also visited a mosque known by 7 domed mosques (Saat Gumbad Masjid) in Muḥammad-Pur Dhaka.
- The school *al jamaah al rahmaniya al Arabiya* uses a curriculum in Arabic.
- Al Jamiah Rahania Arabia Dhaka is a distinguished Qawmi Islamic University in Bangladesh. The Jamiah was established in 1986 in Muḥammadpur, Dhaka, by Sheikhul Hadith Allama Azizul Hoque, a famous Islamic scholar of the Subcontinent and the first Bengali translator of Sahih al-Bukhari. The School has 12,000 students and as of 2011, with 70 qualified teachers.

9.4.2 Kenya

My visit to Kenya on Saturday 1 April 2017 had a similar purpose, which was to see and understand the transnational nature and connectivity of the Tablighī Jamā'at as the one movement both in practise and training.

- Nairobi Baitul Maal Markaz - visited on Saturday 1 April 2017 11:50 am-12:30 pm (this is my birthday: 55)
- I went to Eastleigh to visit Nairobi markaz with my friend Khasay who lives in Nairobi. When we arrived at the main gate of the compound, we asked permission from the guard to get in. We met Sheikh Orgonzeb Ali, 70, a Pakistani elderly man, married with two wives and has 4 boys and 1 girl. He is educated, with good English and Arabic languages, as well as religious knowledge.

- Orgonzeb welcomed us cheerfully and invited us to sit. We sat down in the shed in front of the main Mosque. I introduced myself as a researcher and introduced my friend, Khasay, and told Orogonzeb that we came to visit this *Markaz* which we heard a lot about. Sheikh Orgonzeb started his talk by emphasizing *dīn* of Islam is the main thing in life. If we work hard accordingly or we strive day and night for the *dīn*, we will be blessed and successful both here on earth and the hereafter. If not, we will fail here and the hereafter. This was almost the main theme for the talk of Orogonzeb.
- *Sheikh* Orgonzeb came to Kenya with a group of 7 people for 7 months. They made a total contribution of 2 million Pakistani Rupees which is the equivalent of \$20,000. Orgonzeb and his Jamaat/team tried to go to Uganda, Ethiopia, and other eastern African countries, but they couldn't get a visa to travel to these countries. He and his *Jamaat*/team decided to remain here in Nairobi and do their *da'wa*/travel in and out of Nairobi in Kenyan counties.
- Orgonzeb told me that 26-28 April 2017 there will be an annual gathering/Ijtima which includes participants from Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia, Tanzania, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and some other countries. According to Orgonzeb's explanation, this gathering is considered as one of the international gatherings.
- Orgonzeb also mentioned about how the Tablīghī Jama'at came into Kenya. Maulana Jimisi, an Indian who died a year ago in Pakistan at the age of 80 and is also buried in Pakistan was amongst the people who first brought Tablighi Jamaat in Kenya. While we are talking I just saw 3 young men with their backpacks who were leaving for 3 days *da'wa*.

- Finally, I told them that I will try to come at the end of April to see the gathering. (I couldn't make it due to other responsibilities.)

9.4.3 Ethiopia

My visit in Ethiopia included Abret Sheikoch and the training Centre. The purpose was to understand and see how the indigenous tradition is interwoven with Islamic practises and the transnational nature and connectivity of the Tablīghī Jamā'at work with elsewhere in the world.

- My first visit to Abret Sheikoch was in 2015 with my wife just to see the area. I left my wife and my little son Amanuel, 7, at Emdibir town and went to visit Abret by myself. I did a simple tour to explore how I could come again and make connections.
- My second visit to Abret was in 2016 with my friend, Ayub, who is active in the work of Tablīghī Jama'at. This time we went into the main compound of Abret Sheikoch and talked to the main Imam and a student under him. After I got permission, I managed to make some recordings while the Imam was teaching his student.
- My third visit to Abret was on 7 April 2017 and went by myself to participate at the annual Abret Mawlid celebration. It was estimated that 100,000 people were coming.
- I left Addis Ababa for Wolkite on the 7 April 2017 at 11am and arrived in Wolkite at 2:00 pm. I had a quick lunch and went to the Gurage Zone Culture and Sport Office. Before I proceeded to Abret, I stopped at Wolkite and visited the Gurage Zone Culture and Sport Office in the afternoon around 3:00 pm. I met Mengistu, who is responsible for the Culture and Language Department.

- Mengistu, very nice man, welcomed me by greeting me with bottled water and did his best to connect me with other people we thought we could not visit.
- Mengistu had very little knowledge about Abret Sheikoch, so he gave me names: Haji Mohammed Amin, who led me to Abdulkarim, who is a Judge in Sharia Zonal court at Wolkite. I tried to call them, but I could not get hold of them.
- Mengistu also told me about his childhood. He remembers that he visited Abret as a kid, and the purpose of his visit was just to see the then Sheikh, Sayyid Abdalah (Aba Ramuz). Mengistu told me that he heard that Abret Sheikh was uniquely big, and the size of the ear of Sayid Budalah was so big. That was why he went to confirm. Mengistu managed to see the ear and of course, he said that it was big,
- I could not find any written material on Abret from the Gurage Zonal Culture and Sports Office. Mengistu told me that there is a plan to have a visit from the Federal Office, Addis Ababa on Monday 10 April 2017 to go to the Abret Sheikoch and do research.
- According to Mengistu, Abdulkarim, the Zonal Sharia Court Judge could be very helpful and Haji Mohammed Amin could also be the best way to reach Abdulkarim. Mengistu gave me Haji Mohammed's contact information. Mengistu also connected me with another person in his office, a Muslim. This man encouraged me to go to Abret and find out from the elderly people there at Abret.
- Abret Sheikoch was Friday-Sunday 7-9 April 2017. I entered the main area starting Friday and the main celebration would take place on Sunday. It will be finished by sacrificing animals brought by the people

to the congregants. According to my oral report: 21 camels, oxen and sheep which could be counted in the hundreds should be slaughtered. All was slaughtered and allocated and distributed to all the people who are there. This tradition takes place once in a year.

- On Sunday afternoon the congregants leave for *Quba* (a place near Abret) for Ziyara to go to the tomb of Sayid Ibrahim Bushra (grandfather of Sayid Budala).
- People come from the near and far, including the capital Addis Ababa as well as other towns like Jima.
- The celebration takes place once a year, in the month of Rajab, according to the Ethiopian Calendar. It goes back by 15 days every year. For example, this year Megabit 29-Myaizya 2 2009 so next year will be 15-17 Megabit 2010 (according to the European Calendar first and second week of April 2018)
- The celebration is known as ‘Yabret Mawlid’. Sons of Abret Sheikh (Sayid Budala’s sons) and those who attend this celebration will come and join and sit at the place called ‘*Hadra*’ which is in the Centre of the compound.
- The main person who received all the gifts, the first born of the Sheikh (Sayid Budalah), Sayid Lukbas, who is in his 70s, receives the gifts and will do *dua* (prayer) for those who brought the gifts.
- Everybody brings his or her own sleeping materials/bags/ or mats. Though the celebration ends on Sunday, some will stay until Tuesday.
- My fourth visit took place in Ethiopia including Hābāša Markaz, and *Yaubay Firewoch Ya-Qur’ān Hifz Maekel* (Qur’ān Memorisation Study Centre) at CMS Addis Ababa.

9.4.4 Eritrea

My visit to Eritrea, Massawa-Hirgigo, was on 28 December 2018. The main purpose of this visit was to check the birth place of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya who was the first *amir*, Leader for Ethiopian Tablighī Jama‘at Movement, Turkish descendant and Eritrean origin, then living in Ethiopia. I visited a place called *ganda-kikiya* where Haji Musa was born and there are a few remnants of the Kikiyan family at the place called Hirgigo which is 17 km from the Massawa portal town. In Asmara, there is a travel agent by the name ‘Kikiya Travel’.

9.4.5 India

My trip to in India was on 7 August 2016 to visit Deoband Darul Uloom University and the Global Tablighī Jama‘at *Markaz* at Nizamudin, New Delhi.

- I arrived in New Delhi, India. The taxi took me to the hotel and I collected my train ticket for Deoband and left immediately for the train station at Old Delhi Train Station by 4:30 am. The train left for Deoband by 5:30 am and arrived at Deoband by 9:13 am.
- I met a person who is in charge of the Deoband Guesthouse who helped me to take a rickshaw to go to Darul Uloom, and he also told me to pay 20 Rp. for the rickshaw. When I arrived there, I asked where the office of administration of the Darul Uloom, and for someone who could understand English, in order to get help to look around. Then they connected me with Abdulwasi, who speaks English well. He took me around and I visited the main library and archive. I saw the whole Qur’ān with 2 pages only, with 30 pages only, and with 52 pages only, of course in Arabic. Every page is started by *harf/vacuoles* “9”. The Qur’ān was written in 984, and Hijra with 1294 pages. The Qur’ān has 222 pages and was written by Multani Pakistani, in 1854.

- I visited the school, Darul Uloom. The number of the students were 6,000 with 200 teachers. I also collected the curriculum of the school just to check with a similar school in Ethiopia at CMC area called ‘*yaubay Firewoch Ya Qur’ān Hifz Maekel’*
- *Hadith*, Islamic Jurisprudence, *aqīda* are part of the curriculum.
- *Ilm Munzer* (debate and philosophy) are the part of the curriculum
- The 6,000 students stay in the same compound and eat two times a day. Many students are from India. However, there are some from the USA, Canada, Afghanistan, Nepal and other countries.
- This school is Sunni: *ahlal sunna wal Jamaah* and *Hanafi Mazhabs*. (Abdulwasi is one of the students of Darul Uloom. He is in the graduating class).
- The new library is under construction.
- The name of the *masjid* in Deoband: Darul Uloom Rashid Masjid. It’s very big, and it’s named after Hazrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, a great man and reformer and cleric who was a teacher/mentor for Sheikh Ilyas, the founder of Tablīghī Jama‘at.
- Abdulwasi also told me that there is one Ethiopian student who is studying in Darul Uloom.
- The School is run and operated by Majlis *Shūrā* in a democratic way.
- The traditional syllabus is maintained.
- Criteria: Entrance exam, no age limit, women are not permitted to attend the school
- The main objectives are teaching original Islam, Holy Qur’ān, *Hadith* and *Fiqh* according to *Sunna al Jamaah*, *Hanafi Fiqh*, as well as *Ashari* and *Maturdis*, combined theology.

- Many students come from a Tablīghī Jama‘at background. 5 years or so after the graduation the *alims* (scholars) are expected to spend one full year in *da‘wa*.
- Abdulwasi and I visited a Medical Doctor who is active in Tablīghī in Deobandi town. His name is Wajih Ashraf (MD), and he is well known and respected in that small town of Deoband. Wajih told us how he loves the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement and his involvement whenever he gets time.
- I also met an Engineer, Nasim Ahmed, 50, an ex-Air Force member, who has been in Congo for one year for Tablīghī Jama‘at work of *da‘wa* but had not graduated from the Deoband school.
- Another school in same town of Deoband, called Darul Wukuf, has 2,000 students. It is a branch of Deoband, with the same purpose but with a different administration. Lots of construction is going on in this school.
- There are 300 *masjids* in that little town of Deoband. 5 of them are in Darul Uloom and one of them is very big.
- There are also 200 *madrassas* in Deoband and those who cannot join the Deoband School can go to these madrassas. I ended my visit of Deoband and left for New Delhi.
- I also visited Nizamuddin where the global *markaz* is, on Saturday 13 August 2016. I took a train from the city center to Nizamuddin. After a few stops I left the train and took a rickshaw to get to Nizamuddin. I arrived at 10:00 am and I went in and asked where the office was. Someone led me to the *istiqlal* (reception). I met a responsible person there. I introduced myself, where I came from, more stressing the term *Hābāša*, which is another form of Ethiopia (the term *Hābāša* is well known by Muslims). This way of introduction always gives me favor before the people I met, particularly with the *Markaz* people.

- The *istiqbal* (reception) office asked me the purpose of my visit at Nizamuddin and asked to see my passport. He mentioned a few of type of visits, including *ziyara* (simply visiting), *da'wa* 3 days, or 40 or 4 months. Then I said, I just came for a brief visit/*ziyara*. I also told him that I am a researcher in the field of Tablīghī Jama‘at. When I got to the Nizamuddin area, I already purchased a few books related to the Tablīghī Jama‘at Movement and Maulana Ilyas. When he saw the books, he encouraged me to read more and to understand more about the Tablīghī Jama‘at. The *istiqbal* also invited me to one of the *ta'līm* (study group) which was going on here and there at the *Markaz* in different languages including Arabic, Hindu, and English. I sat down for a few minutes at *ta'līm* in English and Arabic. At both places they were doing *Faza'il al amal* (a Tablīghī Nisab). Finally, I went back to the *istiqbal* office and asked him if my name was on their list, because I had done 40 days *da'wa* tour in Ethiopia (I hear that all names will be sent to the global *markaz*). But the reality is different. For those who did their *da'wa* in India, it can be traced and found. But for those who did their *da'wa* in their respective countries, the data/names will be kept in their respective countries.
- At the end, the *istiqbal* introduced me to 3 Ethiopians who came for 4 months. I sat down for some time with them and asked them a few questions, like from which part of Ethiopia they came from and from which ethnic group did they belong. The first one is from Negele Borana, while the second was from a town called Shashamane, and the third, from Addis Ababa, the capital. However, three of them were from the Gurāgē ethnic background.
- Though I was asked to stay there for a day or two by the *istiqbal*, I left around 12:00 noon for my hotel to prepare for my return back home.

- The name of the *masjid* at Nizamuddin: ‘Banglawali Masjid’. Next to this masjid there was Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah, which I could not get time to visit, and Hazrat Nizamuddin *Awaliyā*.

The building design and construction for *markazes*, going out for *khurūj*, and similarities in curriculum design and courses were observed. Particularly, the practical aspect of it, before graduation, going out for *da‘wa* is extremely important and part of the graduation requirements. However, I am aware of the limitations of this research with regard to the educational piece except trying to see building design similarities and curriculum correlations amongst headquarters (*markazes*) and the training centres.

10. Conclusion: Tablīghī Jamā‘at, a New Religious Movement in Ethiopia

To explore how Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia is evolving demands critical research with a clear theoretical framework and appropriate methodology.

A New Religious Movement (NRM) in a combination with Church-sect was selected as a theoretical framework. Keeping in mind that the Tablīghī movement is over 50 years old, it is fair enough to consider it as ‘new’. As a methodology, ethnographic research, employed with participant observation, oral history, and country visits. Critical observation has taken place in the data collection process. In so doing, a theoretical framework and methodology employed in this chapter will help to explore the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia and at the end of this research, we can possibly locate this movement in the current debate on faith and politics.

Islam, historically, has never been far or detached from politics. The main call from the founders of Tablīgh is ‘to become a true Muslim’, and this automatically demands a political involvement. In the *da‘wa* tour with the Tablīghī thinking and claiming the rule of Islam all over the world through the *da‘wa* effort is highly encouraged, and even must be repeated now and then by the members. The Tablīghīs think from the lower portion of the society to the top of the leadership through a continuous *da‘wa* exercise. Position, including being apolitical, by itself is a political choice. My working assumption is questioning the Tablīghīs apolitical position, because prayers and meetings, including *mashūra* and *ta’līm*, did, by having the world map in their midst of the adherents, instil a deep longing for the supremacy of Islam all over the world. One can say, this is a clear political interest according to the formal teachings of Islam which can be justified by *Sharia* law. In the next chapter, I explain the genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at and how in Ethiopia it was started and its global connection from the inception through its South Asian roots.

CHAPTER TWO: The Genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia

1. Introduction

The genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia has its own history which is connected to, and yet distinct from India and the Indian *shaykhs* (*mashāikh*) where it was born. A historical review can help our understanding of the current situation as well as help to shape our future perspective. Reviewing history has its own benefits. Understanding the past history of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement from its origin will help us see the bigger picture of the growth of the movement with contributing factors of the growth. Some people are not interested in the past, and only interested on the present and the future. Unless we understand the past, it will be difficult to move on in the present and the future. One of the famous national singers and respected as one of the figures among the Ethiopian singers, Artist Teddy Afro, in his Amharic lyrics, recently sang: ‘*yāhwalawī kālelā yālāmī yāfitu; sayīramādu bātārikī minītafti, sāwī ayīdārisimī yāzarenī dājafi*’ (If no past, no future; man without walking on the carpet of history, he could not reach at the gate of today’) (Teddy Afro 2012: 2nd track). Without walking through the past history of Tablīgh, no one can understand and get to the current trends and traditions.

History can show how the lesson learnt from the past events in a community can influence current social, economic, and political behaviour of that community. Cultures, traditions, religious belief and practises, as they are part of history, are also relevant. Unless we learn from history, it will be difficult to understand the present practises and new phenomenon in the life of such a community as the Tablīghī Jamā‘at.

Tablīgh was practised in the early days in Mewat,²⁶ India, the birth place of the movement and home to its pioneer missionaries. The word Tablīghī Jamā‘at comes from two Arabic words: *tablīgh*: ‘to

²⁶ Mewat is one of the districts of Haryana state in India. Muslims in Mewat were not strict adherence of Orthodox Islam. The livelihood of the people based on agriculture (India.com 2016: Mewat District Map).

reach the message’ or ‘propagation of the message of Islam’ and *jamā‘a*: ‘the main body of the Muslim community’ (Bewley 1998: 121). The formation of any religious missionary movement in a community mirrors how that community accommodates that movement in structural and functional ways. In the case of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, the rustic Mewati people in India had played a significant role from the inception of Tablīghī Jamā‘at as a movement. Sikand suggests that ‘It was only from late 1933 onwards that the *Muballighin* [a person who participate in Tablīgh] of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at began roving the Mēwātī countryside’ (Masud 2000: 10). Mawlānā Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi was the founder of the movement and his first choice for *da‘wa* (missionary) tour was Kandhla, his home town and a well-known religious and educational centre for Muslims. In the month of Ramadhan²⁷, a team (*jamā‘a*) of ten Mewatis [Mēwātīs] went to Kandhla (Nadwi 2012: 49). According to Masud, the purpose of this tour was to seek the support of the [scholars] (*‘ulama*) for their ideas (Masud 2000:10). The Tablīgh work expanded into the entire territory of Mewat by organising 16 *jamā‘at* (teams) to do *da‘wa* tours with a leader (*amir*) and a leader of leaders (*amirul umara*). (Nadwi 2012: 49)

The Ethiopian beginnings were like those in Mewati, India, through the pioneering work of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmed Kikiya. Haji Musa first affiliated in 1960s with Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia and made his first Tablīgh tour to one of a well-known traditional Islamic religious and education centres in the heartland of the Gurāgē ethnic people, at Abret. This was where the famous and respected Abret Sheikh, Sayyid Budala stayed. The livelihood of the Gurāgē people, like the Mēwātī, is based on agriculture and their Islamic practises were highly interwoven with the traditional Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*), mainly *Qādirīyya*.

The Gurāgē Sufi are mainly connected with the chain of Qādirīyya (*silsilatul Qādirīyya*). The Gurāgē Islamic tradition claims that *silsilatul Qādirīyya* came from Allāh to Jibril, and to Muḥammad (*Rasul*) and then up to Abret Sheikoch which is considered as Abret *ṭarīqa*. (Muzwa 2014:152) However,

²⁷ *Da‘wa* tour often done in the month of Ramadhan by the Ethiopian Tablīghīs.

Abret Sheikoch not only remained faithful in its affiliation with *Qādirīyya*, the *tijaniyya* order was also introduced and has a strong base through a marriage alliance with Jimma Oromo, the Oromos whose strong affiliation were the *tijaniyya*.²⁸ (Muzwa 2014: 139) Before exploring the genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia it is helpful to explore how Tablīghī Jamā‘at became established in India in the 1920s and spread to the rest of the world in the 1950s and 60s.

2. The Origin of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, the South Asian Originated Sunni-Hanafi Islamic Renewal Movement

2.1 Birth, Family, and Early life of Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi

The origin of Tablīghī Jamā‘at has a connection not only with Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi (1988-1944), but also with Dārul ‘Ulūm Deoband, one of the oldest Islamic schools in India where Ilyas’ undertook his theological training. It was established in 1866 with the Sunni-Hanafi Islamic jurisprudence. According to the Deoband School explanation, ‘Deobandi, it’s neither a creed nor a sect. Deobandi is the name of every rationalist religious man’ (Dārul Uloom-Deoband.com: 2018). Timothy Furnish suggests: The Tablīghī Jamā‘at founder, Ilyas, graduated from the central Deoband *madrassa* in 1910 but eventually developed the idea that a Deobandi-style education, while necessary, was insufficient to revitalize Islam. In his view, only through physical movement away from one’s place could one leave behind one’s esteem for life and its comforts for the cause of God (Furnish, ‘The Tablīghī Challenge’, 2010; Masud 2000). So, going

²⁸ The Tijaniyya w founded in 1781 by Ahmad b. M. b al-Muktar at-Tijani. He was very active in the Maghrib spreading his order and his emissaries acquired a great following in the Western Sudan. Al Hajj Yusuf of Jimma, who was initiated whilst on pilgrimage in Mecca by the West African Khalifa, Alfa Hashim, who was a *muqaddam* [first] of the Tijaniyya,... [Hajj Yusuf] introduced this order [Tijaniyya] into the Jimma Abba Jifar kingdom early in the present century (Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia 1952: 246).

out to reaching Muslims at their destination is the very essential part of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement.

The word Tablīghī Jamā‘at²⁹ communicates, ‘to reach out the message’ or ‘propagation of the message of Islam’ and *Jamā‘a*: the main body of the Muslim community’ (Bewley 1998: 121).

The Qur’ān³⁰ also depicts the meaning and the work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at: ‘Be a community that calls for what is good, urges what is right, and forbids what is wrong: those who do this are the successful ones’ (Haleem 2005: 42). Based on this Qur’ānic verse, Muḥammad Fazlur Rahman Ansari argues: ‘The Holy Qur’ān has ordained it as an important social duty. This duty has been conceived to function at two levels, within the Islamic social order and outside the Islamic social order where entire humanity comes under its purview’(Ansari 2013: The-True-Meaning-of-Tablīgh). Ansari further commented on the operation and the impact of Tablīghī³¹. This is exactly what Tablīghī Jamā‘at means and the main purpose of the movement as Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi, the movement’s founder coined it in the 1920s.

Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi was born in 1888. His childhood was spent in his maternal grandfather’s home in Kandhla, with his father Mawlana Muḥammad Ismail at

²⁹ Communication of a message or revelation; fulfilment of a mission. Interchangeable with da’wah (propagation of faith) in modern usage. The Qur’ānic use of related words signifies that proclamation of the message is sufficient for fulfilment of the mission; a preacher is not responsible for conversion. Muḥammad Rashid Rida (d. 1935) believed that Tablīgh was a duty of all Muslims; Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (d. 1979), the founder of the Jamaat-i Islami, stressed that humans are free to choose between truth and falsehood and that Tablīgh does not entail coercion (prohibited in Qur’ān 2:2:256). It forms the spiritual imperative behind the largest contemporary Muslim transnational movement, the Tablīghī Jamaat. (Oxford Dictionary of Islam, Islamic Studies Online accessed 26 October 2018).

³⁰ The Family of ‘Imran (3:104).

³¹ The end it serves are: 1. Preservation 2. Development, and 3. Perpetuation of the Islamic Community and that in service to cause of humanity (3:110) the dimensions of this duty are: 1. Education of new generations of Muslims in Islam 2. Improvement in Islamic Knowledge and inspiration of the grown-up Muslims. 3. Dissemination of the knowledge of Islam among non-Muslims all the non-Muslims of the world wherever they may be found- in order that they may know the Divine Message that has come for them and those among them who are seriously dedicated to Truth may accept it for their own good; while, in the case of others, correct knowledge about Islam among them goodwill for Islam-which, in itself, forms a genuine contribution to the promotion of the intercommunal and international goodwill. Thus Tablīgh stands out as duty towards other individuals’ in respect of their spiritual and moral progress. Also, it contributes simultaneously to the spiritual and moral development of the persons who undertake it and thus it becomes a duty to self. (Ansari 2013: The-True-Meaning-of Tablīgh: Uploaded by bradia_03686330 on Sep 08, 2013, (2013) accessed 26 October 2018).

Nizamuddin. The mother of Ilyas, Bi Safia, had memorised the Qur'ān by heart and she was called *ḥāfizal* Qur'ān. Ilyas was her favourite child and she used to say to him, 'Ilyas, I feel the aroma of the holy Companions in you.' Sometimes, she was placing her hand on his back and would say, 'How is it that I see figures resembling the holy Companions along with you?' (Nadwi 2012: 7-11).

Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas stayed for 9 years with his teacher/mentor Mawlana Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi, and Ilyas felt no peace without Mawlana Gangohi. The death of Ilyas' teacher, Mawlana Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi was the second shock for Ilyas following the death of his father, Ismail. Three years after Gangohi's death in 1908 Ilyas went to Deoband and studied Tirmizi and Sahih Bukhari from Mawlana Mahmood Hasan. Ilyas had other mentors including Shah Abdur Rahim Raipuri and Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. In 1910, Ilyas started teaching at the Madrassa of Mazaahirul Uloom. In 1912, he married the daughter of his maternal uncle, Mawlana Raful Hasan. In 1914, 1925, and 1932 Ilyas went on Pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca and returned to India with renewed enthusiasm and a greater faith in his mission.

Ilyas started the Tablīghī Jamā'at in 1926 right after his second *hajj* in Mewat through his pioneering work. Upon his return from the third *hajj*, Ilyas accelerated the pace of the work and undertook two tours of Mewat with a large body of companions (Nadwi 2012: 44-45). In 1934, Mawlana Ilyas presented a programme of action that consisted of fifteen points, at a traditional meeting of the elders in a village (*panchāyat*). There were approximately 107 notables of the area. The fifteen-point programme was written and signed by all the participants. The meeting defined four objectives of the *da'wa*: (1) universal participation of all classes of Muslims, (2) focus on action and physical movement, (3) adoption of learning, teaching, serving and promoting religion as a way of life, (4) temporary migration from one's native place as a religious obligation (Masud 2000: 10-11). Since 1934, when the Islamic renewal movement Ilyas started, Tablīghī Jamā'at grew stronger in the local area and has now become one of the largest Islamic renewal movements in the world amongst Sunni Muslims.

2.2 Tablīghī Jamā‘at: South Asian originated Sunni-Hanafi Islamic Renewal Movement

Tablīghī Jamā‘at is an Islamic movement for faith renewal and was born in the Indian soil. It is part of the main branch of Islam, Sunni, and affiliated of the Hanafi Islamic School of jurisprudence. Sunni³² is the largest of the main branches of Islam, claiming an estimated 85% of Muslims all over the world. The Hanafi School is more Asian. It allows for personal reflection and practises and these can be considered as principles and a sort of guidance which sometime becomes the way of religious practise or path (*ṭarīqa*). In this case, it was a practise very much observed in the life of Ilyas as the founder of Tablīgh and his followers.

Tablīghī Jamā‘at is an exercise inside Sunni Islam by the Deobandi school of thought that invites Muslims into active Islamic circulation through a Sufi inspired method. Tablīghī Jamā‘at has played an important role in the re-awakening of a particular form of religious piety meant to be the authentic basis of an Islamic society.

2.3 Tablīghī Jamā‘at as Transnational Movement: A Global Islamic Renewal Movement

Tablīghī Jamā‘at is not only a national movement, it is indeed a global movement and well known for its mobility and impact throughout the world. In 1946 the Tablīghīs sent their first delegations to England and the Arabian Hijaz (Noor 2012: 33) and in the late 1940s and early 1950s the movement had extended to South Asia, Europe, and North Africa. From 1956, Southern and

³² The Sunnis are the largest branch of the Muslim community, at least 85 percent of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims. The name is derived from the Sunnah, the exemplary behaviour of the Prophet Muḥammad . All Muslims are guided by the Sunnah, but Sunnis stress it, as well as consensus (*ijma*; the full name of Sunnis is *Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Ijma*, people of the Sunnah and consensus). (Sunni Islam- Oxford Islamic Studies Online)

Eastern Africa countries received their first Tablīghīs visits (Wario 2012: 97). According to Sikand (2002: 2), Faruqi (1992: 43), and Furnish (2010: 1), Tablīghī Jamā‘at was not restricted to South Asia. Rather it became a transnational movement and one of the largest global Islamic renewal movement with a presence in about 165 countries across all continents. Marloes Janson’s estimate comes close to this with Tablīghī Jamā‘at operations in 150 countries (Janson 2009: 140). It is worth noting here a significant concern raised by Janson: ‘Despite its worldwide influence on the lives of millions of Muslims, scholars paid almost no attention to its spreading in sub-Saharan (Janson 2006: 44).’

3. The Genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia: Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya (1936-2003), the National Leader (*amir*) for Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia

The Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement came to the Ethiopian soil in in the early/mid 1960s and was well received by the late Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya who was of Eritrean origin. He was a civil servant, a businessman, and was considered as one of the then leaders of Islam. He has always been remembered as the founding father for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at work in Ethiopia. The movement is growing from a few hundred to now some millions of participants throughout the country, though predominantly in the Gurāgē land and within the Gurāgē community elsewhere. Musa’s contribution towards the work of Tablīgh in Ethiopia was immense and has remained unforgettable by his closest friends as well as the Muslim communities at large. In this section of the chapter, we explore Musa’s life and ministry in connection with the development of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia.

3.1 Birth, Family, and Early Life of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya (1936-2003)

Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya was born in 1936. His father was Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya and his mother was Hajiya Fatuma Haji Ahmad Kikiya³³ from Turkish descendants Eritrean in Massawa, at a village called Hirgigo, North Red-Sea Region of Eritrea, 15 km from the port of Massawa (Abdalah A. pp 219-21). Since the 16th century to the mid 19th century, the Turks had a military base in the area (Reta 2014: 70). The Kikiyan family were one of the well-known traders of their time. I visited Hirgigo, Massawa, Eritrea, the birth place of Haji Musa as part of country visit, alike India, Bangladesh, and Kenya. The visit was in December 2018. In my visit, I checked some of the details with regard to Haji Musa. Musa went to a primary school in Asmara, Eritrea. He attended secondary school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The secondary school's older name was *Balabat Timirtbet* but it is currently known as Medhanialem Preparatory High School. Musa continued his studies at Addis Ababa University and graduated with a BA Degree in Business Administration. Following his graduation, Musa was appointed as an officer at the Ethiopian Civilisation Office where he worked from 1955-57 (Saleh Musa, Interview about Haji Musa life and mission, 2018).

Musa's family is known by the name Kikiyas. The Kikiya family are well known both in trade and in strengthening Islam in Asmara and Addis Ababa. Haji Saleh Kikiya and his brother, Haji Usman Kikiya, played a key role in the trade and economy of Ethiopia at the time of the Military Junta (Derge 1974-90). The Kikiya Company had significant contribution in introducing new commodities and accelerating trade in the capital, Addis Ababa, at a place known as *Marcato*, one of the largest open markets in Africa, and the central market place for the city of Addis Ababa. The Kikiyas are particularly known for having 400 stores built with stones at the central market place (*Marcato*). Kikiya is the family name which everybody within that family preferred to be addressed, which is not the usual practise with Ethiopian names. Kikiyans were strong Muslims as well as business people and their roots traced backed to the Turkish traders who came to Eritrea

³³ In the [majority of] Ethiopian culture marriage relationship between cousins is unacceptable, however, it is normal and cultural practise in Afar and Eritrea Islam. (Abdalah A. 2017: 220)

when the Turks controlled the Red Sea. By the 1850s they were well known traders in Eritrea for over 50 years. Upon the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the Kikiyans came to Ethiopia and made a significant contribution to Ethiopian trade and economy (Abdalah A. 2017: 220-23).

Haji Musa Kikiya had been involved in import-export trade for quite some time here in Addis Ababa. However, Musa was not only remembered as an importer and exporter, but also as a leader (*amir*) of and a founding father of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. He was particularly recognised as the one going out in the way of Allāh to do a call to Islam (*da‘wa ilalah kuhruj fi sabilillah*). The first *mashūra* (meeting) at the national level took place at Anwar Masjid in the mid-1960s. Haji Musa Kikiya was elected as a national *amir* (leader) for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in this first meeting to lead and organise the work of Tablīghī. (It is hard to trace the actual date for this specific event. However, the year and the venue were confirmed by my informants). Since its inception, the Grand Anwar Masjid has played a significant role in the history of Tablīghī Jamā‘at work and has continued to do so to this present day. The Grand Anwar Masjid was not only the place for the first *mashūra* (meeting) but also the first *Markaz* for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at work for a few years until it moved to Haji Zaynu Masjid in early 1970s. The Grand Anwar *Masjid* was a place for the beginning of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at work, and was also known for organising the women *da‘wa* (*masturat*) for longer periods of time which has continued to be effective to this date.

Hajis Musa, Zaynu, and Faraja were part of the first *da‘wa* as well as *mashūra* (consultation) at the Grand Anwar Masjid. In an interview with Haji Faraja, he mentioned that the first *Markaz* for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at work was the Grand Anwar Masjid, which is one of the three oldest mosques in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, at a place called *Marcato*, the city centre. As it is mentioned, the first headquarters (*markaz*) was at the Grand Anwar Masjid which is considered as one of the oldest Mosques in Addis Ababa. The first teaching and *mashūra* (meeting) also took place at the same Masjid, even though there were questions about the movement and serious

opposition from the then leadership for accommodating such a movement. The first *da'wa khurūj fi sabilillah* (to call and going out in the way of Allāh) took place in the 1960s to Abret by the late Haji Musa and continued to other parts of the country, particularly where the Gurāgē communities are active in religious duties and also a town called Debre-Birhan which is 125 km north of Addis Ababa where the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwahīdo Church very active and dominant.

It is believed that the majority of Ethiopian Muslims heard about the greatest contribution of Musa towards the work of *da'wa* and the development of Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia. Through the process and the spread of the Tablīgh work, Musa felt that he needed to invest more time in the cause of spreading and strengthening (*deen*) Islam. In his lifetime, Musa became extremely busy with the work of Tablīgh beginning in the 1960s. Musa considered himself and was considered by others, including the then Indian Missionaries, as a full-time worker and responsible for the Tablīghī Jamā'at work here in Ethiopia. He was married, with two wives, Fatuma Saleh Kikiya and Muluka Muḥammad Sharif. Musa had 8 children from his two wives, 3 boys and 5 girls (Abdalah A. 2017: 220).

In 1976, the period of Military Junta Regime (Derge 1974-1991) in Ethiopia, Haji Musa was arrested at Asandabo, a small town in the Jima area, due to his deep involvement in propagating Islam (*da'wa*) and in organising the work of Tablīgh in the Jima area. Musa was released after a few weeks of imprisonment. In 1994, with the then Ethiopian government, the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took Haji Musa to the Central Criminal Investigation Office, traditionally known as the Central (*maekelawi*) and interrogated by EPRDF high-level officials, who included Berket Simeon (then Minister of Information), Abay Teshaye (Minister of Federal Affairs), and Tefera Walwa (the then Mayor of Addis Ababa). These were the key decision makers in the Ethiopian government and politics. The authorities thought that the Tablīgh movement would make the younger generation too idealistic and became suspicious of a hidden agenda within the Tablīgh movement. They wanted to find out if their suspicion of the movement was founded on any connection with other violent group(s). Haji Musa then answered wisely, 'If

the youth were not involved in this type of religious renewal movement, that would be very difficult for the government to run the country peacefully as it is happened now' (Saleh Musa 2018: interview). Haji Musa argued regarding the benefit of having *da'wa*, and that unless the younger generation cultivated their life style in an ethical way according to the life transaction (*deen*) of Islam to be a good Muslim and take part in a religious tour it would prove a serious challenge to the government with such a low employment rate, and too many bad habits that were contrary to formal Islamic teaching, which might put the new government in danger. Musa was finally released home peacefully.

3.2 Haji Musa welcomed the Tablighī Jamā'at Movement

The exact date of when Haji Musa accepted the Tablighī Jamā'at movement and its teachings has not been determined. However, it is known that Haji Musa welcomed the teachings of Tablighī Jamā'at through a visit of Indian and Pakistani Mashaikhs in the mid-1960s. This date was indicated at a presentation at a quarterly meeting (*mashūra*) which took place in January 2015, by one of Musa's closest friends (Mohammed W., Field Notes: Quarterly Mashūra, 2015: 23). Østebø suggests the arrival of Tablighī Jamā'at movement in the early 1970s, and that it attracted the Gurāgē ethnic group, and was the largest Islamic movement in Ethiopia:

The latter [Tabligh] is probably the largest Islamic movement in Ethiopia, and seems to have arrived in Ethiopia in the early 1970s, by way of South African and Kenyan Tabligh missionaries, attracting followers among the Gurage community in Addis Ababa' (Jörg Haustein & Terje Østebø, 2011, p. 766).

Abdalah Abdulfatah (2017: 221) dated the arrival of Tablighī Jamā'at in the early 1960s. According to Abdulfatah, the Tabligh work started at Grand Anwar Masjid where Haji Musa was an active participant. Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris Zeleke³⁴, President of the Ethiopian

³⁴ Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris Zeleke assigned as President of Ethiopian Islamic Affairs General Council on 8 May 2019 and the outgoing President is Haji Muḥammad Amin Jamal. Mufti Umar also President of the Fatwa and Da'wa Council of Ethiopia. Mufti Umar was born in 1934 at Legambo Woreda South Wallo Zone in Amhara Region. Wallo considered as a place for high level of Islamic educational centre like Dana and many of the Ethiopian Muslim scholars have done their religious training in that part of the country. Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris is the most respected and loved by many Ethiopians including Christians. He is sort of fatherly and admired by his view of tolerance.

Islamic Affairs Supreme Council also suggests that the work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at began in the 1960s (Mufti Umar 2021 interview). According to Mufti Umar, the work started at Nur Masjid (Banin Safar Masjid) which is the second oldest *Masjid* in Addis Ababa, not at Anwar Masjid.

The Indian and Pakistani origin: South African and Kenyan Tablīgh Missionaries (*dais*) were visiting Grand Anwar Masjid and encouraged the then leaders and scholars (‘*ulama*’) to start the Tablīgh work here in Ethiopia as in India and Pakistan. Then the scholars at Grand Anwar Masjid agreed to start the work of Tablīgh and organised the first team (*jama’a*) in 1961 and Haji Musa Kikiya was elected as the first leader (*amir*) at the Anwar Masjid which served as the headquarters (*markaz*) of the then Tablīghī Jamā‘at. After a few years, Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina, one of the best friends of Haji Musa, took the initiative to move the headquarters (*markaz*) of Tablīghī Jamā‘at from Anwar Masjid³⁵ to Haji Zaynu Masjid where the current headquarters is and known by the name of Hābāša Markaz in the centre of Addis Ababa at a place called Quoas-Meda, Addis Ketema Sub-City (Sumaya 2012: 42).

Haji Musa was one of the educated persons of his time, so he didn’t take much time to analyse and respond to the call for participating in the work of the Tablīghī movement which was started in India and came to be introduced to the Ethiopian soil through the Indian Mashaikhs, mainly, Dr Mukhtar. According to Saleh Musa, Mukhtar visited Ethiopia in 2019 as his 15th trip.

3.3 Major Contributions of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya towards the Growth of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia

Haji Musa’s major contribution began right from the inception of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at work in the 1960’s. Haji Musa was elected as a national *amir* (leader) by the *Shūrā* (committee) through

³⁵ Anwar Masjid is one of the oldest mosques in Addis Ababa and built in 1938 and many of the leading Muslim scholars are part and parcel of this *Masjid*.

Mashūra by the help of the Indian Mashāikh in the 1960s. Haji Musa then took a pivotal position in the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. Not only was he leading the movement, Musa was also encouraging authors to write or translate books on the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement so that people could gain a deep and detailed understanding of some of the details with regard to the Tablīghī Jamā‘at. In order to fill the gap, Musa gave an order in 2002, towards the end of his life, for a translation work on a book which would explain the six points of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. Two Ustadhs (Ustadh Muḥammad Jamal and Ustadh Abubakar Abdala 2013: 4-7) received Musa’s order and did the translation work on ‘Al-Ḥadīth al-Muntakhb Volume-One (Ḥadīth 1-411). This book was written by Sheikh Muḥammad Yusuf Khandhalwi, son of Ilyas, and forwarded by Abu Hasan Ali Nadwi, the author of *Life and Mission of Maulana Mohammad Ilyas*. According to Musa’s order, this book was translated into Amharic, the working language of Ethiopia, and printed in June 2013. Because Musa was one of the well-educated of his time, he was eager to have more books read among the Tablīghīs.

Musa was also known to be doing *ziyara* (visit) as he did his first visit to Abret when he visited the Abret Sheikh Sayyid Budala.

3.4 The Visit of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya to Abret Sheikh, Sayyid Budala

The main purpose of Musa’s visit to Abret were twofold: firstly, Musa considered the Abret Sheikh, Sayyid Budala, as his own sheikh and secondly, it was to do a call (*da‘wa*) to that part of the country and to the people of Gurāgē who were known to be mixing Islam with indigenous traditions such as tomb visits.

Abret is situated in the heart land of Gurāgē Zone, Cheha Woreda, 17 km away from the town of Emdibir, which is the capital of Cheha Woreda. Abret³⁶ is an Islamic traditional religious

³⁶ Abret’s previous name was Abred. Abret is a well-known place for veneration of Mawlid. Abret is situated at the southwest of Addis Ababa 220 km far. People come from far and near, estimated about 100,000 every year to celebrate

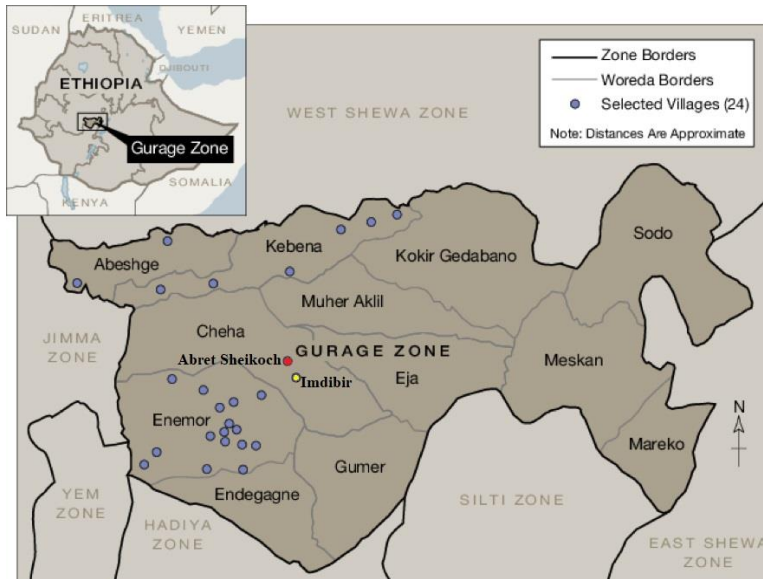
education centre established by Sayyid Bushra (Bau-Sani)³⁷, the first born of Sayyid Ibrahim who paved the road for Islam to the Gurāgē people by breaking the traditional line of leadership called honourable (*goŷtakuya*), and the ‘worship of god of lightning’ (*bože*). Sayid Bushra studied Sufi Islam-Qādiriyya-Order for 3 years under Sheikh Shahiibadin Ahmed at Dana, in the Northern part of Wallo, and came back to Abret, the Gurāgē land with the Qādirīyya *tariqa* and being *Khalifa* of the Qādirīyya *tariqa* (Taju K. 2021: 276). Sayid Bushra worked hard for the spread of Islam into the traditional cult of *bože* (god of lightning). He succeeded. The then leadership chain followed, entitled the ‘*goŷtakuya* (honourable)’ of 7 generations, until Sayid Ibrahim, the grandfather of Sayyid Budala, and father of Sayid Bushra broke the line by introducing Islam to the area but did not achieve a significant number of converts to Islam.

Abret Mawlid, in the month of Rajab, Islamic Calendar. It is one of the popular annual religious visits and highly encouraged by Muslims, mainly Sufis and Abret *murids*. Some say: ‘*abret yanaže teberashe*’ (who doesn’t visit Abret, who is the spoiled) is a common saying amongst the people of Gurāgē. There is a plan to build an Islamic Centre at Abret which is a similar form of Hadrās of Silsilatul Qādirīyya, ‘Sultan Bahu Centre’ at 44 4th Avenue, Mayfair, Johannesburg, South Africa (Muzwa 2014: 202).

Currently, Abret is administered by one of Sayyid Budala’s son and with cooperative of Muslim Leaders of the area (Kamal January 2019: 49).

³⁷ Sayid Bushra (Bau-Sani), once met with the Jima Aba-Jifar (the then King of Jima), and Aba-Jifar asked just a piece of advice from Sayid Bushra. Sayid Bushra answered, you are the King, how can you accept my advice to you? Aba-Jifar confirmed that he will. Then Sayid Bushra continued, I didn’t expect that you are in a position to accept my advice, firstly, don’t say I will take your cloth to Allāh. Aba-Jifar asked clarification for the analogy. Bushra said, don’t be proud, you feel that you are a king, pride is the cloth of Allāh. Secondly, don’t touch the wound of Allāh, the wound of Allāh is the poor. Sayid Bushra said, that’s all. Aba-Jifar received these advices wholeheartedly (Muzwa 2014: 168).

Figure I -Gurāgē Zone Map showing Abret Sheikoch with Woredas



Source: (researchgate.net/figure/ 2018).

People come to visit Abret Sheikoch from the villages and towns not only on the annual Mawlid celebration but at times whenever they can. People have a high regard for Abret, considering it as one of the holy places and a religious centre.

Abret Sheikoch is a small village/town without 24/7 electric power, but with a generator, an Islamic educational centre, a tomb of Sayid Ibrahim, and hundreds of *khalwas* (little tin-roofed huts) (Teshome Kamal January 2019: 44-50). It is a well-known place for the *Mawlid* Celebration (birthday of Prophet Muḥammad) in a traditional way with the gathering of tens of thousands of people. According to Mubarek Muzwa, the first *Mawlid* celebration was established by Sayid Bushra with the slaughtering of chickens during the month of Rajab (the Islamic Calendar). It is believed that the inception of the Prophet Muḥammad was in the month of Rajab and Sayid Bushra received the order of celebrating Mawlid from the well-known Sheikh of Wallo, Jamā Nigus (Muzwa 2014: 149). In the current celebration, people bring as gifts camels, oxen, sheep and goats to slaughter every year as part of the feast for the people who gather for the celebration, I (the researcher) am one of the eye-witnesses. The *Mawlid* celebration is facing serious criticism and is considered as a religious innovation (*bida*) by other Muslims, particularly the Wahhabi/Salafi, and becoming one of the reasons for having sharp

differences between the Tablīghī and the Wahhabi. This issue of Mawlid will be discussed in chapter four where I discuss the Gurāgē people.

After Sayid Bushra, his son, Sayid Budala, became the centre of power at Abret Sheikh, replacing his father as a community and religious leader of the Gurāgē people while in his teenage years. Sayid Budala, like his father, went to Dana, in the Northern part of Wallo, a well-known place for the Qādirīyya order and to study Islam. He received a high level of training during this time and also received the Qādirīyya order (*tariqa*) to be a *Khalifa* of the *tariqa*. Abret Sheikh, Sayid Budala³⁸, was born in 1915 in Eža (Eja) Woreda, in a village called Yasafa-Atat. Little is known about his death in approximately 1977. (He was taken from his home area, Abret, by the military *junta*, and no one knows about the whereabouts of Abret Sheikh Sayyid Budala/Aba Ramuz). Sayid Budala was a tribal and religious figure in the Gurāgē land. Despite his influence in religious matters, he also extended his involvement into politics. In the period of Emperor Häyilāsīlase, there was a meeting in Addis Ababa at Hager Fikir Theatre Hall, organised by Makonen Habtewold, then Minister of the Interior. The agenda was about Eritrea. Some were saying that we must use military force to convince Eritreans to submit to the Ethiopian government. After listening to talks and evaluating ideas which endorsed the war, Sayid Budala said: ‘Eritreans belongs to us, they did not come from nowhere. If one leg is wounded, no one says ‘Let me cut and throw it away. If we touch the wound now and then, it would be difficult to get rid of it, but if we treat it well, it will get better’ (Muzwa 2014: 101-2).

Sayid Budala is noted for his community involvement in regard to formulating rules and regulations pertinent to the Gurāgē people, including his significant role in offering judicial solutions to different problems of the Gurāgē community. He was involved in the traditional

³⁸ ‘Shehoch [Abret Sheikh, Sayid Budala] symbolizes in a spiritual and institutional form the unity of sabat bet [Gurage]. ... The rise of shehoch must be seen in retrospect with the spread of Islam in south west Ethiopian among the nation as a whole, (Shack 1966: 91-).

judiciary system of the Gurāgē people known by *Yajoka*³⁹. The judiciary system is comprised of representatives from the seven Gurāgē clans and all the rules and regulations take place at *Yajoka*.⁴⁰ During the Italian invasion, Budala also involved himself in, and led the Sharia court of the area, becoming the main judge (*qadi*) of the court. His contributions in dealing with the issues of the people in a traditional way of problem solving and arriving at agreed, wise decisions went beyond his Islamic religious allegiances and identity. He was also involved in the Christian communities of the Gurāgē area.

Sayid Budala's Sufi background was helpful not only in his life within the Qādirīyya order, but also in strengthening his alliance with Jima-Oromo through his marriage to the great-grandfather of Aba-Jifar as his second wife. This marriage relationship brought the Tijaniyya Order (*Tariqa*) to the Gurāgēs and was allowed by the Qādirīyya Tariqa (Muzwa 2014:139-45). For this research, I would concentrate on Sayid Budala's contact with Haji Musa to be considered as one of the historic events in Islam amongst the Gurāgē people. Both orders, Qādirīyya and Tijaniyya are known by celebrating *Mawlid* as one of the big religious events.

Haji Musa visited Abret Sheikoch⁴¹ in 1966 right after his reception of the Tablīghī Jamā'at teachings. When he was about a 3 hour walk from Abret, Abret Sheikh Sayid Budala,⁴² Haji

³⁹ The term *Yajoka* is believed to have been derived from the zegba (Podocarps) tree that serves as the venue of the assembly. The term expresses the special feature of the tree, whose branch (*yaj*, hand) is buried in the ground (*yoka*) only to sprout again (Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang, 2002: 21).

⁴⁰ Yä Säbat-Bét Gurage Qyiça (Yājoka law) was formulated by members of Säbat-Bét (literally Seven Houses) which includes Chaha (including Gummär), Ezha, Mihur (including Aklil), Geta, Ennemor (including Ennär), Maqorqor and Endagañ. These people usually send their representatives to Säbat-bet Gurage Shengo (council) called Yājoka. It is named after a specific locality in Chaha, i.e. Yājoka. It is derived from Guragigña term Äej Wäkkä which literally reflects an old tree in the locality where one part of its branch supported the stem. In doing so, all the rules and regulations are enacted at Yājoka square (Nimane 2013:92).

⁴¹ *Abret Sheikoch* is a well-known place for veneration of *Mawlid*. Abret is situated at the southwest of Addis Ababa 220 km far. People come from far and near, estimated over 100,000 every year to celebrate Abret *Mawlid*. It is one of the popular annual religious visits and highly encouraged by Muslims, mainly Sufis. 'abret yanaže teberashe' (who doesn't visit Abret, who is spoiled) is a common saying amongst the people of Gurāgē.

⁴² *Abret Sheikh*, Sayid Budala had other three names: 1) Aba Ramuz: 2) Bau Salis: to clarify that he was the 3rd Sheikh; 3) *Abretiye*: to make it very close to the people who love him.

Musa understood through his special gift of discernment that guests were on their way to see him, so he sent his people to welcome them (*amir* Abdulhadi: 2014). The purpose of Musa's trip to Abret were two-fold. Firstly, to pay his respect to the Abret Sheikh Sayid Budala and acknowledge him as his own Sheikh. Haji Musa always said, 'Each and every one of us need our own Sheikh'. According to Ali Hasan Khan, one of the scholars in Pakistan: 'Having our own sheikh is part of the Sufi teachings and practises, and considered as a relationship between *Sheikh and Murid* (Master and Disciple).' According to Ali Khan, this practise of Sufi, called '*Tawhid ul Matlab*', is an invention of another kind of *Tawhid* (the oneness of Allāh) (Khan A. H. 2010: 231). The disciple (*murid*) should have only one spiritual guide. This concept is further explained in a publication, 'Irshaadul-Mulook' (Eng. Translation, Saadiq Publications p. 27, story no.3 in Khan):

Tawheed al-Matlab is to have complete and a strong belief in one's Shaikh that as far as reaching the desired destination (matloob) is concerned, none can make me reach my goal apart from my own Shaikh, even though there may be other Shaikhs present in the world, who have qualities similar to my Shaikh. Therefore, Tawheed al-Matlab is a major pillar of Sulook (the way of the Sufis). The one who cannot acquire this (attachment to a single Shaikh) will always be distressed, even if he dies wandering in the forest. Allāh does not care for such a person at the least. To consider every Shaikh as the one, who can quench my thirst and help me reach my goal, is harmful to the Sulook. Just as there is one Haqq (truth) and one Kiblah, the spiritual guide should also be one (Khan A. H., 2010: 231).

Khan regarded such practise as an innovation (*bid'a*), thereby changing the original teaching of *Tawhid* (the oneness of Allāh). 'As they [Sufis] have no proof from the Qur'an and Ḥadīth to justify their *Tawhid ul Matlab*, they have to resort to a Satanic Qiyas (analogy) to justify following one *Shaykh* only.' Khan further commented in his book, on the 'blind obedience to the Shaykh' which is written in '*Irshaadul-Mulook*' under the chapter '*obedience to the Shaikh*', (Eng. Trans, Majlisul Ulama of South Africa): '*In short, it is not at all appropriate for mureeds to disobey the Shaikh's instruction*' (Khan 2010: 233).

Secondly, Musa took the trip as an opportunity to do a call on the Gurāgē Muslims, who were Muslims only in name and were deeply immersed in occult practises. In the conversation Musa had with the Abret Sheikh, Sayid Budala, Musa raised two questions to him: i) Why should the people not say the proper words in their prayers? ii) Why should the people put too much focus on you rather than Allāh? The Abret Sheikh Sayyid Budala answered Musa's question with another challenging question (a rhetoric question): 'How many of your children are following your footsteps?' (Interview Saleh Musa: 2018).

Abret Sheikh Sayyid Budala, visited Haji Musa's mother in Addis Ababa. This happened after Musa's return from Abret. The very reason for this visit was that Sayid Budala was convinced that Haji Musa had been influenced by his mother. Sayid Budala said, 'I have to visit your mother, and learn how she raised you; she must be special.' Sayid Budala came to Addis Ababa in 1967 and went to a place known as the *Mesalemia* Kolfe area where Haji Musa lived with his mother.

3.5 The Death of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya (d. 2003)

Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya died on 6 March 2003, at the age of 67, in the Dejazmach Balcha Hospital in Addis Ababa. When Musa was admitted to the hospital, he had high blood pressure and a stroke and so became paralysed. Musa stayed in the hospital under treatment for only 15 days (Interview Saleh Musa 2018). Musa's death created a huge gap in leadership. Since his death in 2003, the leadership remained in the hands of a few elected leaders. No one has replaced Musa as the National leader (*amir*) of Tablīgh for Ethiopia.

3.6 Has Anyone from Haji Musa's Family followed in his Footsteps?

This question had been asked by the Abret Sheikh Sayid Budala, when Haji Musa made his first visit, as a reply to Haji Musa's question to the Abret Sheikh Sayyid Budala. So far, only one of Musa's daughters, Zaynab Haji Musa Kikiya from Musa's family, has followed her father. She is mentioned as a strong and exemplary lady in following her father's footsteps in the biography

of Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina (Abdalah A., Yahaji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina Yahiwot Tarik 2017: 389). Otherwise, no one has been found to be as active as Haji Musa with the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement from Musa’s family, unlike Sheikh Ilyās Khandhalwi, the founding *amir* (leader) for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement of India, who after the death of Ilyās, his son Sheikh Muḥammad Khandhalwi succeeded his father and served for many years as a leader (an *amir*) for India as well as for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement centre, *almi-markaz* (world headquarters).

However, this did not materialise within the whole family of Musa Kikiya. Though all of them have remained Muslims, they have not been interested in committing themselves to the faith as their father did, except Zaynab. One of the reasons for this is that leaving their homes and traveling for days, weeks, and months could not be seen as a parental duty. My informant, Saleh Musa, would say: ‘How can someone survive without working and earning money for his family? This Indian model of *da‘wa* must be corrected,’ Saleh concluded (Interview Saleh 2019).

4. Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina (1923-2013), and the Hābāša Markaz

Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina was born in 1923 of the Mazaraze clan in a village called Mazaraze, Gadabano Woreda, Gurāgē Zone. Haji Zaynu studied Islamic education in a traditional way first from his mother, Ade-Nafisa for 6 years, and continued under well-known *sheikhs* in the Gurāgē-land, Addis Ababa, and Mecca. These include, Ya-Qatbare Sheikh at Qebena; Sheikhs Tenkush and Sayid at Gadabano, Ya-Karacha Sheikh at Sabat-Bet Gurāgē-Cheha, Sheikh Muḥammad Rafi in Addis Ababa, Sheikhs Humeyid and Abu-Salman Sheikh Nur-Muḥammad in Mecca, and from others who were ahead of him in the knowledge of Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, and general knowledge of Islam (Abdalah A. 2017: 196).

It would be very difficult to understand the establishment of the current Hābāša Markaz without considering Haji Zaynu’s involvement and contribution. Haji Zaynu had served as the Imam of Masjid Markaz/Abubakar Asidiq Masjid, which he himself founded in 1970 and served for over

40 years (1973-2013) until his death. Muslims in Addis Ababa called this mosque, Haji Zaynu Masjid, because of its history connected with the late Haji Zaynu (Abdalah A. 2010: 259; 2017: 346, 376; Sumaya 2012: pp. 42, 142). Some called this *Masjid* ‘Abubakar Asidiq’ because this was the name of the Mosque since its inception. Others call this Masjid as *Markaz* or *Markaz Masjid*, due to its connection with the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement that serves as the headquarters and main operational centre for Ethiopian Tablīghīs.

4.1 Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina in Relation to Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia

Haji Zaynu was the founding Imam of Abubakar Asidiq Masjid/ Haji Zaynu Masjid/ Markaz Masjid/, at the beginning of the 1970s. When Haji Zaynu tried to build a mosque at the current place of the Markaz, Zaynu faced serious opposition from Ras Masfin Selishi, who was one of the high-ranking officials and policy makers at the time of Emperor Häyiläsīlase. (Abdalah A. 2017: 105) Ras Masfin said, ‘This Gurāgē. Is he going to say Allāh-Akbar, next-door, and shout at me every morning? Doesn’t he know who I am, Ras Masfin? I am not going to allow him.’ Haji Zaynu kept quiet and left the matter in the hands of Allāh and said, ‘I am thinking to build the house of Allāh’. Despite Masfin’s warning, Zaynu built a mosque overnight in 1970. In the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, the military *junta* (*Derge*) took power from Häyiläsīlase and killed 60 high ranking officials, one of whom was Ras Masfin. Ras Masfin’s private house and his whole compound was confiscated by the new military government and was converted into a pharmacy for the distribution of medicine under the Ethiopian Ministry of Health. After a while, one of Haji Zaynu’s children was hired by the Ministry of Health and assigned to work in this same building. Then, Haji Zaynu commented: ‘Ras Masfin forbid me to build a *masjid* (mosque) next to his house but I built a mosque. And his house is taken by the new government. And in his house, my daughter is working and jumping in at liberty in the former living room of Ras Masfin. This is a judgment from Allāh’ (*amir* Abdulhadi, Interview 2014). This historical piece created an impression that Allāh’s judgment is always just and timely. Muslims in general, and Gurāgē Muslims in particular, were amazed by Allāh’s intervention.

Haji Zaynu's life and ministry is inseparable from the establishment of Tablīghī Jamā'at and its growth and development, as well as with the history of Hābāša Markaz in the spread of Islam in Addis Ababa and beyond. Haji Zaynu's contribution for *da'wa* in Ethiopia is characteristic of his personality. People who knew Haji Zaynu remember him as courageous, reliable, persuasive, personable, a change agent, born *dais* (missionary), very practical, and always looking for the positives in people, particularly to those who left their homes for *da'wa*. Zaynu could not stay idle. He was always on the move to present people with a strong and attractive message of Islam. With regard to *da'wa*, Haji Zaynu had a clear goal and was always ready to use every opportunity to proclaim *da'wa*, be it at a wedding feast, *ṣadaqa* (charitable giving), *Mawlid*, or other celebrations. When Zaynu met the *da'wa jamā'a*, at his *Masjid*, he was delighted, and expressed willingness to fully support the movement in every aspect of the work. Haji Zaynu gave full freedom for the *da'wa jamā'a* of Tablīghī Jamā'at movement to operate in the area. This was not the case when they were with Anwar *Masjid* in the early 1960s, at the first *Markaz* under Haji Musa's leadership. Haji Zaynu took the initiative to move the *Markaz* from Anwar to Abubakar Asidiq *Masjid*, where Zaynu was an Imam. He supported the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement wholeheartedly by providing rooms. There were rooms in the compound of the *Masjid* for *madrassa* (Islamic school) to be used as the coordination office for the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement. Zaynu's support towards Tablīghī Jamā'at movement until his death was unforgettable (Abdalah A. 2017: 288-294).

Haji Zaynu provided all the necessary support to, and freedom of operation for *Ya-da'wa Sāwočī'* (the people of *da'wa*) which is the work of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement. Zaynu's commitment was strong and solid. His support for the movement extended beyond *Markaz*. He even travelled to places where the *da'wa jamā'a* (team members of the Tablīghī work) were arrested because of the work of *da'wa*. Haji Zaynu would stand at government offices and police stations to defend those who were arrested declaring, 'These are my children. I will be the guarantor for them.' In most cases, they were released. In the 1970s, at the time of the communist military *junta*, it was

not easy to move around and carry out religious duties and responsibilities, but Haji Zaynu was always available to talk to the police officers, sometimes in person and other times over the telephone. This was a vital support for the work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement at large. Zaynu’s diplomatic skills proved very helpful in dealing with officials at all levels. On occasions he would express fury with regard to any infringement of religious rights on the part of the officials.

Zaynu was widely held in high respect. Whenever any *Masjid* leaders were hesitant to welcome the work of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement and the Tablīghīs claimed ‘We are children of Haji Zaynu or Haji Musa,’ the Masjid leaders would welcome them, and open their mosques to them in order to facilitate the work of the movement. Zaynu’s and Musa’s names became like a passport, allowing the *dais* (Tablīghī missionaries) to move easily from place to place. Haji Musa always gave credit to Haji Zaynu, by saying, ‘We are indebted to Zaynu’s support towards the work of Tablīgh in Ethiopia. With him, we managed to move around.’ Zaynu was an excellent communicator. He could communicate as easily with those who were educated as with those non-educated, with traders as with religious people, and indeed with anyone who cared to visit the *Markaz*. He was a known *alim* (scholar) so that the people who were involved in *da‘wa* got enough training. Zaynu was willing to teach and mentor novice Tablīghīs. Zaynu’s personal character was exemplary and this attracted many people to the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. He would, for example, be ready to prepare tea for the *da‘wa jamā‘a* (team members of the Tablīghī work). Following his footsteps, many would commit their time and life to this movement of faith renewal in Ethiopia (Abdalah A., Yahaji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina Yahiwot Tarik 2017: 192-3).

4.2 Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina and the Hābāša Markaz

In 2011, Haji Zaynu initiated the move to build a new five storey complex that contained a mosque and the *Markaz* (Headquarters). The foundations and basement of this building had been

completed by the time of Zaynu's death. All the activities of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement are carried out in both the old and the new buildings.

The first room, called *Istiqbal* (reception area), is situated in front of the new Masjid and serves as a reception area for guests to stay and to keep their belongings. The second room, the *Mashūra* (meeting) room, is situated in the new building. This is where all the discussions and decisions on all aspects of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement are held, including its missionary outreach throughout the country and beyond. And, of course, all the details of *Markaz* are also discussed and decided upon in this room. There is no decision without *Mashūra*, whether it is a big or little issue. That is the only way of making decisions in the world of Tablīgh. The third room is the Service Room for the *Mashūra Jamā'a*. It is situated in front of the *Mashūra* room. Tea, coffee and meals are served from here to the *Shūrā* (council) members, meaning those who are responsible for the work of Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia. The fourth room contains individual rooms for *Istinjā* (washing private parts). There are five standard washrooms for use for the council members, and these are situated next to the meeting and service rooms of the council. The fifth room is a room for having a nap (*qaylula*), and is situated next to the *Mashūra* room. It serves the monthly elected *amir* (leader), who spends his entire time working incredibly hard to accomplish his given responsibilities. The sixth room is called the Service Room. It is the dining area for the main *Jamā'a* and is situated in the new building on the ground floor. This room services any celebrational prayer and has its own washroom. It also serves as the area for the preparation for prayer, for having *wuḍū'*, (ceremonial washing). The seventh room is a kitchen, which is connected to the ground floor of the new building. It is clean, roomy and comfortable for cooking and storage of all the necessary materials and utensils. The *Markaz* is committed to the ongoing modernisation of the kitchen. The eighth room is a place for sleeping for the *Jamā'a*. It is situated at the second floor of the new building. It also serves as a place for prayer at times of celebrational prayers and has its own wash rooms for *wuḍū'*, (ceremonial washing). These are

the main parts of the new facilities which were launched in the lifetime of Haji Zaynu. Currently, the new building is nearing completion (Abdalah A. 2017: 336-39).

4.3 Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina and Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya in Relation to Tablighī Jamā‘at Movement and the Hābāša Markaz

Haji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina was the founding member and the first *Imām* (Muslim congregational leader) of the mosque where the Tablighī Jamā‘at *markaz* (headquarters) was located and from where all operations in the country was organised. It became known as Hābāša Markaz. Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya was the first, and so far, the only elected *amir* (leader) for the Tablighī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia. The relationship of these two notable Muslim leaders began in the 1960s, where they were part of Grand Anwar Masjid, one of the oldest *Masjids* (Mosques) in Addis Ababa. Haji Musa and Haji Zaynu played significant roles in the history of Tablighī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. Firstly, Haji Musa was willing to be the first *amir* for the Tablighī Jamā‘at movement while it was operating at Grand Anwar Masjid. Secondly, Musa’s willingness to move the Tablighī Jamā‘at work to Zaynu’s Masjid in its early years after a few years in the 1970s. Haji Zaynu moved the Markaz to his Masjid, Abubakar Asidiq Masjid, where he, Zaynu, was the founding *Imām*.

Musa and Zaynu were good friends for about 4 decades. They served and worked together since the inception of the Tablighī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia at Grand Anwar *masjid*. Musa was educated in the modern system, and graduated from Addis Ababa University. Zaynu was educated in the traditional teaching system. The difference in their educational systems didn’t hinder their relationship, nor their friendship as they sought to advance the work of *da‘wa* (a call to Islam) and the Tablighī Jamā‘at work for faith renewal. Their friendship continued through organising the Tablighī Jamā‘at work at Haji Zaynu Masjid where the *Markaz* (headquarters) for the Tablighī Jamā‘at movement was located, and the masjid itself took the name, *Markaz*. They served together for years with mutual love and

respect, providing ministry support to each other. Haji Zaynu, as the *imam* of his *masjid*, was striving to strengthen the *da'wa* effort in all possible ways, and Haji Musa served as the *amir* (leader) of Tablighī Jamā'at movement. Musa worked very closely with the *Da'wa Jama'a*. He was encouraging his *jama'a* to respect Haji Zaynu and not to undermine Zaynu's *imāship* (leadership) of the *masjid*. Sometimes, Haji Musa would say, 'Don't touch Zaynu because he always does *dhikr* (invocation of Allāh). His tongue is like a sickle, so he will cut you' (Abdalah A. 2017: 221). Musa would say this publicly, on occasions, to his *jama'a* members in order to facilitate the Tablighī Jamā'at movement effectively. Haji Zaynu was the main supporter of the movement (also known as Jamā'at al- Tabligh, or known by its local name, 'Ya-da'wa Säwoči' (the people of *da'wa*), not only by providing the necessary facility, but by always standing with Haji Musa Kikiya and the Tablighīs in all their endeavours.

5. Sheikh Engineer Alī Khadir: The Currently Assumed Leader (*amir*) and the Council (*Shūrā*)

Sheikh engineer Ali Khadir is one of the committed leaders and a member of the *shūrā* (council), one of the 22 people elected to offer leadership following the death of Haji Musa. Ali Khadir is a very charismatic speaker and known by his motivational speeches, delivered with a challenging mode of presentation. Sheikh Ali is also known by his *bayān* (elucidation) in his speech, supporting the Tablighī Jamā'at movement in Ethiopia. Though Ali Khadir has not been given the official responsibility to be the national *amir* (leader) for the Tabligh movement in Ethiopia, he is fully responsible for the new building project of Hābāša Markaz which is under construction in the same compound where they are now. Ali Khadir also is and has been responsible for many of the activities

related to the work of Tablīgh. He also was one of the organisers and played a significant role at the first Hābāša Ijtima⁴³ which took place in December 2019 in Butajira town.

Ali Khadir is actively participating from the *Markaz* and his own home and giving directions in all the operations of the Tablīghī movement even amidst Covid-19 challenges. People are visiting his home to receive proper advice and direction for what to do and how to do things, particularly at this Covid-19 Pandemic era. Ali Khadir is always available and happy to assist people and give guidance to their questions (Interview with Ayub 2020).

5.1 The *Shūrā* (council), the Leadership Role for the Hābāša Markaz, and the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia

After the death of Haji Musa, the role of leadership remains with the ahlal *Shūrā* (elected 22 people) as a committee or Council (*Shūrā*) (Abdalah A. 2017: 337). Everything is decided through *mashūra* (meeting). So far, they have continued this pattern, unlike in south Asian countries. The Tablīgh movement in Ethiopia is operating at Abubakar Asidiq Masjid within the rooms of the new buildings. In spite of their maturity they sometimes engage in furious arguments and debates amongst themselves. Due to their longing to be more spiritual, they become very critical of themselves. The movement encourages them to be self-critical. Dreams and opinions from the elderly, and sometimes from the middle-aged, are listened to carefully. This can be considered as a good strength in keeping the movement going in a right direction.

5.2 The Growth of Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement through the Leadership of Sheikh Engineer Ali Khadir

⁴³ Ijtima is an annual gathering which takes place where the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement is active with tens of thousands of adherents. For instance: Bangladesh, Biswa Ijtima at Tongi, Dhaka with a couple of million people gathered; Pakistan, Raiwind Ijtima at Lahore with hundreds of thousands people. Ethiopia, Butajira Hābāša Ijtima with one hundred thousand people. Traditionally, once Ijtima started, it will continue every year and become annual gathering at the same place and time.

Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya had predicted the potential in Sheikh Engineer Ali Khadir to be the future *amir* (leader) for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia. Musa said, ‘This man [Ali Khadir] will be a great man of *din* (faith)’ (Abdulhadi 2014 Interview). However, the leadership of the movement operates through the 22 elected *Shūrā* (council) members and turn by turn, each member of the council will have a chance to be an *amir* (leader), in a rotating style for every month. Ali Khadir, well-educated, committed for the Tablīghī Jamā‘at, works tirelessly day and night for the good of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. In one of my visits to the Hābāša Markaz, I found him at the main gate where he had taken position as a *hirāsa* (guard). This type of humility is a very common practise for the majority of Tablīgh adherents. As a professional engineer, Ali Khadir has been intimately involved in the entire on-going building process of the new 5 storey building in the Hābāša Markaz premises. His time, money, and his whole energy are being invested in this project.

At the first Hābāša Ijtima (annual gathering), which took place in 6-8 December 2019 at the centre for the Gurāgēs, Butajira-Ethiopia, Sheikh Engineer Ali Khadir’s contribution was immense. He was one of the leading organisers of this big and historic gathering for the first time in the Hābāša Land Ethiopia. He served as Master of Ceremonies (MC) of the Hābāša Ijtima and welcomed the participants who came from different parts of Ethiopia and abroad. The Hābāša Ijtima took place at the Butajira Stadium as a centre of the meeting, though there were more people outside the stadium than inside the stadium. The congregants at the first Hābāša Ijtima were estimated by the participants to be about half a million people. But, in my view, the participants were not more than 150 thousand.

The second and the third Hābāša *Ijtima* (annual gathering) was expected to be done in 2020 and 2021. But the gatherings cancelled according to COVID-19 protocols and state of emergency announced by the Ethiopian government which is welcomed by the Ethiopian Tablīghīs. The years, since February 2019, 2020 and 2021 have been very challenging years in many aspects

including COVID-19 Pandemic which demanded a critical responses from the government and religious leaders.

5.3. Tablīghī Jamā‘at Response to COVID-19

The year 2020 and 2021 remembered as very challenging years in the history of the world. One of the challenges was COVID-19 Pandemic which caused over a million death and shut down entire countries, social isolation, unprecedented travel restrictions which affected the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement directly. The Pandemic affected all religious gatherings in small and large scales, not only the Tablīghīs gathering. Wise responses were expected from country and religious leaders to observe medical advises accordingly. In such COVID-19 Pandemic context sharp contrast have been observed between the Indian and Ethiopian Tablīghīs. The Indian Tablīghīs have faced serious challenges from their own government unlike the Ethiopian Tablīghīs. Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement is all about gathering which could clearly affected due to the Pandemic. This is the main reason to write about COVID-19. Responses were different in the Indian context where the headquarters of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement is situated with Ethiopia.

The Tablīghī Jamā‘at Response to COVID-19 was different from place to place. The Tablīghīs gathering in New Delhi, India created a serious controversy in India which is known by ‘The Nizamudin-Controversy’. The Nizamudin Controversy began on 13 March 2019. The following summary helps us to understand what has happened and how the Nizamudin Controversy was handled.

13 March 2019: Ministry of Health circular says ‘Coronavirus NOT Health Emergency’.

13 March 2019: Jamaat (religious Congregation of around 4000 people) at Nizamudin Markaz (headquarters) starts.

15 March 2019: Jamaat at Nizamudin ends.

16 March 2019: Hindu Mahassabha⁴⁴ conducts GouMutra⁴⁵ party to cure Coronavirus.

16 March 2019: Delhi Govt Notification to close all religious institutions.

17 March 2019: 40000 visitors still at Tirupati.⁴⁶

18 March 2019: 40000 visitors still at Tirupati.

19 March 2019: Tirupati was closed, PM [Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi] announces Janta Curfew1⁴⁷ 22 March 2019.

22 March 2019: Janta Curfew2.⁴⁸

22 March 2019: 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm 100s of people gather in many mini celebratory rallies beating utensils and singing songs.

25 March 2019: India Lockdown announced.

25 March 2019: UP CM Yogi conducts Rom Lalla movement event.

30 March 2019: 6 people who've been to Tableeghi Jamaat [Tablīghī Jamā'at] congregation on 13-15 March die.

30 March 2019: Media overdrive to hide govt mistakes and start of propaganda to blame the Muslims. India Media, as expected, covering for the government incompetence and demonizing Muslims.

BBC News on 16 April 2020: India Coronavirus: Tablīghī Jamaat leader on manslaughter charge over COVID-19. The COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on the Indian TJs. As it's happened everywhere in the world, India is one of the countries hardest hit by the COVID-19

⁴⁴ The Hindu Mahasabha (officially Akhil Bhārat Hindū Mahāsabhā or All-India Grand-Assembly is a political party in India.

⁴⁵ GouMutra is cow urine. 'Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) parliamentarian Pragya Thakur has said that drinking cow urine can help prevent coronavirus disease (Covid-19), adding that her remark had "scientific backing' (Hindustan Times Correspondent 18 May 2021).

⁴⁶ Tirupati: Spiritual Capital of Andhra Pradesh.

⁴⁷ *Janta*-Curfew was an effort to combat corona virus spread, introduced by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, in the wake of the 2020 corona virus pandemic in India. Date March 22, 2020.

⁴⁸ Janta as a noun (in India) the general public: the people.

Janta is a political party in India founded in 1976 and came to power in 1977. [BJP: Bharatiya Janta Party]

Pandemic. In July 2020 the number of infected people approached a million and the death toll was over 20 thousand (University J. H., 2020). The actual figure could be more.

There are different views on the spread of the COVID-19 virus in India. One of the views is connected with the gathering of Tablīghī Jamaat leaders who came from different corners of the world for an assembly which took place 13-15 March 2020 at global *markaz*, Nizamudin, New Delhi. The number of attendees were 4,000 with attendees from 20 countries. Participants were mainly from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malaysia, with about 300 participants from outside India. The government of India accused the Tablīgh leaders for violating the government law/Article by going ahead with the meeting. From those who were in the Tablīgh meeting, a few people died and many tested positive for COVID-19.

Due to this incident, some people used this to express anti-Muslim sentiments. Some of the hashtags used by social media included: ‘*Corona-Jihad*’, ‘China the producers and Tablīghī Jamaat the spreaders’, and the ‘Tablīgh idiots (idiot Tablīghīs)’ were the main ones. CTV News on 31 March 2020: ‘The Tablīghī Jamaat gatherings viewed as one of ‘India’s Major virus hot spots’ after thousands flocked to an Islamic religious centre in Nizamuddin west neighbourhood. According to the report from inside and outside India with regard to countries of participants in the Nizamuddin meeting, those who are infected with COVID-19 have been in the March 2020 gathering at the global *markaz*, Nizamuddin, New Delhi.’

On the one hand, the Indian case is a bit different. On 12 March 2020 PM Narendra Modi said, ‘Corona is not a health emergency.’ However, he was very critical of the Tablīghīs. In the weeks of March 2020 other religious gatherings were taking place in Delhi, India. However, the government, as a Hindu sympathiser, didn’t say a word. But on the Tablīghīs, it was a nightmare. They stopped their meeting after the PM Modi announced the emergency and offered their building for a place to quarantine. When the lockdown (*ganta-curfew*) was declared, the participants of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at gathering couldn’t go anywhere in India or beyond. There were no flight nor buses.

That was the sad part of COVID-19 Pandemic in India regarding Tablighīs in general and Indian Tablighī in particular. The leader (*amir*) of one of the Tablighīs factions in India, Sheikh Saad, is accused with violating rules (currently he is in self-isolation, according his spokesman/lawyer). The responses to the government from other Muslims and Tablighīs, was ‘Fight corona not Muslims’. There are mistakes from both sides.

On the other hand, the case of COVID-19 and Tablighīs in Ethiopia is different from India. The government of Ethiopia took enough time with the religious leaders of the country through the Ethiopian Interreligious Council in general and with Muslims in particular. Due to such a wise process of decision making for the banning of all religious gatherings including gatherings at the Hābāša Markaz where the Tablighī Jamaat headquarters was operating, the result was encouraging, unlike India.

According to my informal conversations with my friend, Ayub and others, the Hābāša Markaz is in full agreement with a decision made by the Ethiopian Islamic Supreme Council (EISC), a *fatwa* declared by *Taqadami* (Grand) Mufti Haji Umar Idris, the newly elected President of the EISC on March 2020. Following the *fatwā*, the Tablighī Jamaat Markaz came up with a decision by which not more than 3 people would sit together or *khuruj* (going out) for the work of Tabligh.

From the Tablighīs viewpoint, they might have taken the COVID-19 case not seriously enough and spiritualized a bit, as we sometime observe in our country, Ethiopia. From the government side, they considered that the Tablighīs are mainly responsible for the spread of coronavirus in India as their gathering was labelled as a hotspot despite the fact that other religious gatherings were also taking place in India, unlike Ethiopia. So, it would be much better to focus on the fight of COVID-19 instead of Tablighīs.

Tablighīs, in Ethiopia, are willing to observe the COVID-19 protocols and guidelines from the Ethiopian Ministry of Health. The Tablighīs in Ethiopia are softer than Indians and easy

to work with or to convince with necessary rules from the Ethiopian government and Islamic Supreme Council. March-August 2020 Ethiopia had been under state of emergency and a partial lockdown. In July 2020 the number of infected people with COVID-19 was over 7,000 and the death toll was over 100 people which cannot compare with India.

6. Conclusion

The Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement is indeed transnational. It came to Ethiopia from a far distant country, India, in the continent of Asia. The genesis of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia is connected with the history of the South Asian Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement, particularly with India as the home of the movement. The arrival of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia was in 1960s through the South Asian origin, mainly through the Indian and Pakistani *Mashaikhs* who were South Asian origin (Mohammed 28 June-8 August 2014: 58). One of Haji Musa’s closest friends mentioned about the arrival of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia: ‘This work started 54 years ago’ (Mohammed 2015: 23). This traces the arrival of Tablīghī Jamā‘at to the 1960s. Østebø (2008) suggests the 1970s, which might indicate the organised work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement from the current *markaz* (headquarters). The South Asian origin of Tablīghīs has been involved in the early period of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement and their involvement continues to this date in Ethiopia. According to the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement leaders and adherents, the movement has been operating in Ethiopia for over 50 years, which is a significant period of time for such a movement. It continues growing and expanding all over the country where the ethnic Gurāgēs are actively involved.

Abret Sheikh and the Gurāgē community have played their role in the genesis and growth of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia and within the community. From the inception of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement, the significant contribution of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya is always remembered for his pioneer work in the history of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. Haji Zaynu’s contribution was also remarkable and well-remembered by Muslims in Ethiopia in general and by the Tablīghī adherents in particular.

The past two governments, 1960-1974 and 1974-1991 (the King and the military *junta* respectively), and the current government 1991-present, have posed both challenges and opportunities towards the development of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia. Because the governments have suspected the leaders and sometime arrested them, this could be viewed as challenges of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. By contrast, the willingness of the government officials to allow the work of Tablīgh can be considered as part of their opportunity. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement adaption with the local Sufi tradition helped its development greatly. This is particularly so with its Qādirīyya *tariqa* (order), a major influence amongst the Gurāgē ethnic group.

The main focus of this movement is to call and attract Muslims in general. However, the younger generation is highly attracted by the way of life and religious duties of the adherents of the movement. The role of the family in the lives of both Sheikh Ilyas and Haji Musa was immense, particularly their mothers’ devotion and contribution in the growth of these two Indian and Ethiopian leaders respectively. They have been well nurtured by their mothers.

The current political and religious climate of Ethiopia seems favourable for Muslims in general and Tablīghīs in particular. There is a reasonable freedom to practise faith and religious duties at large, including the organising of big gatherings. So, enjoying this favourable religious climate and expression of faith in any form, Tablīghīs planned to have the first National *Ijtima* (annual gathering) for the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. The *Ijtima* was planned for October 2019 at a town called Butajira, Gurāgē Zone, 130 km south of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia⁴⁹, and was actually held 6-8 December 2019. The first of its kind, it was an open field gathering and a milestone in the history of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia as the Bishwa *Ijtima* in Tongi-Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Raiwind *Ijtima*, Pakistan.

⁴⁹ Conversation with Ayub Hailu on 18 July 2019 about the future plan of Tablīghī Jamā‘at gathering in Ethiopia like *Ijtima* of other countries, Kenya, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and etc.

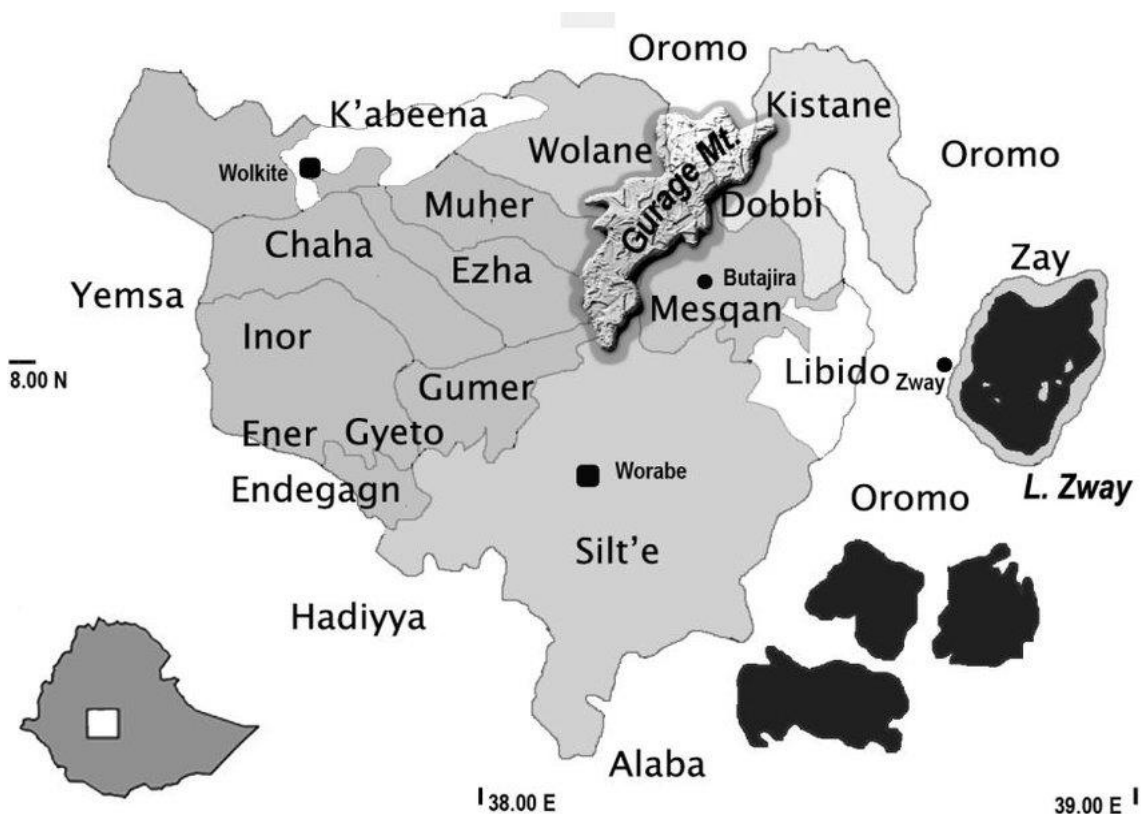
In Chapter three, the next chapter, I will explore the nature of the Gurāgē community, as a mobile community, traders, and key role players in the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement. Since the inception of the movement, how it helped through its mobility as a community of Islamic faith, in the life and growth of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at renewal and the revivalist movement within Sunnī Islam is spreading in Ethiopia through the genuine effort of the Gurāgē community with the help and participation of other communities too. However, the Gurāgē community involvement, if not ownership, is noticeable. In the 40 days *da ‘wa* tour in the areas visited, in towns and rural areas, the involvement of the Gurāgē community has been immense both in leadership and participating in all types and parts of Tablīghī activities. As it is observed in the *da ‘wa* tour, the Gurāgē Muslim community is involved in business and religious activities in general, and in the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in particular.

CHAPTER THREE: The Gurāgēs, Mobile Community: Traders and the Key Role Players of Tablīhī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia since the 1960s - From the Inception

1. Introduction:

The Gurāgē people⁵⁰ in Ethiopia are organised and structured at the Zonal level within the regional government. The Gurāgē Zone is situated in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPR) and is settled in the semi-mountains region in Southwest Ethiopia, about 150 miles southwest of Addis Ababa, the capital. Their homeland extends to the Awash River in the North, the Gibe River (one of the tributaries of Omo River) to the West, and Lake Ziway to the East. The Gurāgēs are now scattered throughout Ethiopia (Trimingham 1952: 185, Tereda 1991: 7).

Figure II - Map of Gurāgē and Silti Zones



Source: researchgate.net

⁵⁰ The Gurāgē ethnic and language groups include the Sebat bet- Gurāgē, Silti- Gurāgē, and Soddo- Gurāgē. (Abraham Hussien and Habtamu Wondimu, 1994: 58).

One hypothesis about the roots of the Gurāgē people is that it originated in the northern parts of the then Ethiopia, currently Eritrea. Linguistically, they relate to the Semitic Language Family. For this research the Gurāgē people will be regarded as an ethnic group. However, the language spoken in Northern Ethiopia and with the Gurāgē area is Semitic which could clearly indicate a connection with it but not a similarity.

Worku Nida connects the root of the Gurāgē people to a migration history. Nida suggests that the migration of the Gurāgē people connected to the Northern parts of Ethiopia [then Eritrea] which was led by Azmach Sibhat, of the then king's army, settled at the current North Gurāgē while a remnant army of Ahmad Gragn (the left handed) ⁵¹ remained in Walane. The Silti and Azarnat Barbare Gurāgēs came from Barbara and Harar, Eastern parts of Ethiopia. There are also people who reside in Lake Ziway who came from Southern parts of Arabia. (Nida 1991: 11-12) But Richard Pankhurst argues that the Gurāgēs came from Saudi Arabia, not from Eritrea, then the Axumite kingdom. According to Pankhurst, the migration from Arabia to Africa divided in to two groups. The first group went to the Northern part of Ethiopia and became the source of the Axumite Kingdom. The second group went to the Southern part of Ethiopia and settled at the place called Gurāgē and became the source of the current Gurāgē people group (Pankhurst, 1961: 58 footnote 147). However, both sides agreed that there is a people and language group called Gurāgē at the current geographical area where the Gurāgēs live.

The Gurāgē group represents the Sebat bet- Gurāgē, Silti- Gurāgē, and Soddo- Gurāgē. Though their language group is Semitic, each one of them have their own differences, dialects, and accents. Aleqa Taye and Seifu Dibabe suggest that the term 'Gurāgē' refers to the people who came from a place called '*Gurā*' in nearby Daqamahari in Eritrea, and 'gē' is an indicator of the name for the people group of that specific place (Dibabe 1974: 12, Aleqa 1966: 52-3). But, Trimmingham quoted the

⁵¹ Ahmad Girañi (the left handed) Ahmad bin Ibrahim al Qhadhi (1514-1551), in the 16th century, he was a Muslim leader who led Ethiopia from North to South (Kamal January 2019: 67).

Journals of Isenberg and Krapf (1843), saying: ‘The word *Gurā-gē* means ‘land of the left hand’ (Trimingham 1952: 185). Worku Nida confirmed Trimingham and suggests: ‘The term *gurā-gē* is traced from a name given to the Gurāgē area combining two Amharic words, *grā* (left) and *gē* (‘side’ or ‘land’)’ (Nida, Gurage ethno-historical Survey, 2005: 929-935).

One of my informants in Addis Ababa on the word *gurāgē* is Tenkir Teni,⁵² a male, 48, and his ethnic background is Chaha-Sebat-bet Gurāgē. Teni said: ‘In Chaha Gurāgē language, *gurā* means ‘left and *gē* indicates direction’. Teni further commented, ‘*gē*’ refers to a village, a settlement or an area in the Silti Gurāgē language.’ My second informant on the word *gurāgē* is Berhanu Areda,⁵³ a male, 33. His ethnic background is Goumar-Sebat-bet Gurāgē. He states that ‘In the Goumar Gurāgē language, *gurā* means ‘left and *gē* is the bottom of the land or lowland, and ‘*gurāgē*’ means the left lowland or the left bottomland’. He further commented, ‘The Gurāgēs settle mainly following the downstream part of the surrounding rivers and put their huts not far from their *ensat* plantation and cash crop production. That’s why they are called ‘the left lowlander’. My third informant on the word ‘*gurāgē*’ is Mekonen Areda,⁵⁴ a male, 54 and he is from Kistane (Soddo) Gurāgē. He suggests that according to the Kistane (Soddo)-Gurāgē language, *gurā* means ‘left and *gē* is house, so the word *gurāgē* means the left house.’ These explanations from my three informants on the word *gurā-gē* confirm the basic meaning mentioned by Trimingham and Nida which is connected to ‘left’ and ‘land’.

The Southern Nations Nationalities and People’s Regional State⁵⁵ (SNNPRS) consists of 15 zones including the Gurāgē zone as one of the regional zones. The Gurāgē Zone consists of 15 Weredas⁵⁶. The Silti people group were considered as part of the larger Gurāgē ethnic group. But, since early 2000s the Silti became a different Zone under the regional state of the Southern Nations Nationalities and People’s Region (SNNPR) due to a politically motivated agenda of the federal government.

⁵² Teni T. Interview on the word *gurāgē* 14 July 2020.

⁵³ Berhanu A. Interview on the word *gurāgē* 14 July 2020.

⁵⁴ Mekonen A. Interview on the word ‘*gurāgē*’ 14 July 2020).

⁵⁵ Regional State is the highest administrative level in the Ethiopian political administrative structures under the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia which consists 10 regional states and 2 city administrations.

⁵⁶ Wereda is the lowest administrative level in the Ethiopian administrative structures under zonal administration.

Generally, the Gurāgē ethnic group can be divided into three major areas in terms of religious affiliation. ‘The Silti are a Muslim people, and the Soddo Kistane have been followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox [Tāwahīdo] Christianity for centuries. The Sebat Bet [Gurāgē] used to follow an indigenous religion represented by ‘Waq’, and converted to Islam and Christianity during the 20th century’ (Nishi 2005: 159). So, religious affiliation could be considered as one of the reasons for the split so that there could be a more meaningful identity, as they prefer to be different from the remaining Gurāgēs. According to the Silte oral tradition, a religious leader called Hajj Aliye, who was born in Harar followed the expedition [Ahmad Gragn Expedition] until he was asked to settle in a place called Umnan [Gurāgē area]. He married local [Gurāgē] women, and his last son, called Gan-Silte, is believed to be the ancestor of the Silte’ (Nishi 2005: 160).

There was little incentive in those days for the Silte or the people of “Islam” to claim their own identity as something separate from the Gurage. Being traders who were deeply committed to the national economy of Ethiopia, they were recognized as the Gurage, and not as “Isaam”, a people who emerged from the 16th century military expedition that nearly ruined the Abyssinian Empire (NISHI, 2005: 163). The Siltes are successful traders and contributed significantly to Ethiopia’s economy and commercial activities. They are always remembered in the name of the wider circle of the Gurāgē ethnic group. ‘The split of the Gurage and the formation of the Silte Nationality do not simply mean to the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that the party has another minority group to deal with. While the identity of Gurage is one of the legacies of “past” Ethiopia, the Silte Nationality was born to join the “democratic forces” of the EPRDF’ (NISHI 2005: 165). However, to date, the Siltis consider themselves as part of the larger Gurāgē ethnic group. Others consider that to be so as well.

The Silti Zone consists of 8 Weredas, including Silti, Alichu, Lanfuro, Mirab Azarnat, Dalocha, Sankura, Misrak Azarnat, and Wulbareg. The majority of the Silti people are Muslims and they are very much involved in Sufi-Islamic practises. Particularly, the *Qādiriyya* order (*tariqa*) are involved in such Sufi-Islamic practises which include tomb worship and saint veneration in Muher, and Cheha.

(Trimingham 1952: 185). The Gurāgēs have different clans with linguistical differences. Linguistically, the Gurage are divided into three groups: the Northern Gurage (Aymellel or Sodo), Eastern Gurage (Silte, Wollene, Zeway, etc), and Western Gurage, mainly the Sebat-bet (seven houses), and Gogot (Meskan) (Nida 2000: 44). Also, there is the Sebat-bet Gurage, including the sebat-bet (seven-houses). These seven- member tribes are: Cheha-Gumer, Muher-Aklil, Maqoqor, Enor-Ener, Geto, and Endagagn (Worku 1990:3-8). For Getnet (1992:32). However, Meger, in lieu of Endegagn, constitutes a member to the Sebat-bet confederation. Shack, on the other hand, considered WoHene-Wiriro and Aklil, disregarding Maqorqor and Endegagn, as members i.e. confederation (1966:4).

2. Gurāgēs: The Rural People

Gurāgēs are mainly settled in rural Ethiopia. Tribal identity is part and parcel of the Gurāgē community, whether they are Muslims or Christians. The Gurāgēs are not only loyal to their bigger ethnic identity, they are also loyal to their tribal and smaller clan identity, to the extent that marriage within the same clan is prohibited (Abdalah 2017: 220). In regard to their food culture, Gurāgēs are known to be very meticulous about food preparation, particularly of raw meat and its preparation with various seasonings. It is said that ‘Wherever the Gurāgēs are, there is meat!’ Cheese, spinach, butter, home-made bread and cereals are always available and they are able to provide for themselves as well as guests.

The belief systems of the Gurāgēs are highly interwoven with indigenous traditions, including *Waq* (the sky god), *Boža* (god of lighting), and *demuwamit* (god of fertility). Such traditions take precedence over religious identity. Christianity and Islam have a long history in the rural Gurāgē land. These three categories of indigenous traditions are significantly rooted within the Gurāgē culture and belief systems regardless of their religious background. The distribution of the Gurāgē belief system displayed in a table by Spencer Trimingham, ‘Islam in Ethiopia’ under ‘Tribal Distribution of Islam’

a section on Gurāgē,⁵⁷ depicted the following picture which is more or less similar with the current realities. Though Islam and Christianity are spreading amongst the Gurāgē people, it is very difficult to totally avoid indigenous traditions and practises which have been there for years. Significant numbers of the Gurāgēs prefer more to preserve the older belief and practises. A majority of the Gurāgēs are involved in trade and commerce, so they are fearful of damaging their business by disregarding the past.

Table 1 - Trimingham’s religious Classification in the Gurāge Land

<i>District</i>	<i>Dominant religion</i>	<i>Other religions</i>
Chaha	Pagan	Muslims and some Christians
Guieto (Gieta)	Pagan	Christians
Gadeba	Christian	Pagans and some Muslims
Walanē	Muslim	1:3 Christian
Muher	Christian	Pagans, no Muslims
Akelil-Kebena	Muslim	Christians
Eja (Eža)	Pagan	Christians
Ennamor	Pagan	1:5 Muslims and some Christians
Gogot	Muslim	Some pagans
Siltē	Muslim	Some Christians
Goumar (Gwemaro)	Pagan	1:2 Muslim
Masqan (Urib)	Christian	Some Muslims and no pagans

Trimingham suggests that Islam has also been persistently infiltrated into the Gurāgē land through proximity to the Hadiya and through the influence of traders, for the whole of the commerce of the area is in the hands of Muslims, especially the Warjihē. The town of Siltē (pop. 2,500, in 1950s), in the 2020s it is estimated to be 100,000, which lies at the foot of mount Gurāgē, is the chief Muslim

⁵⁷ Trimingham 1952: 186-7, Azaïs and Chambard, *Cinq années de recherches archéologiques en Éthiopie* 1931, p.187.

centre. Many of the Gurāgē Muslims belong to Sunni Islam. Sufi, with an inclination to the Qādiriyya *ṭarīqa* (order). Currently a significant number of Gurāgēs are following the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement.

Trimingham also suggests that the Gurāgēs are not only agriculturalists but are also industrious workers and as well as being intelligent, who accommodated themselves in the capital, Addis Ababa, where the word Gurāgē had different connotations including ‘porter’. The Gurage Exhibition Committee prepared 30 and 45 page booklets, on Gurages and their Social life. Socially, the Gurages were not held in high esteem by the Amharas, as a former usage of the name Gurage might illustrate. Several years ago, anyone in Addis Ababa wishing to hire a porter, shouted, “Gurage! Gurage!,” since the porters were mostly Gurages. The Gurages felt offended at this, and protested to the government against such usage. As a result, the appellation “Gurage!” was forbidden, and instead the name “Kuli!” is now used for the porters (Trimingham 1952: 186-7; The Gurage Exhibition Committee n.d. 30 pp. and 45 pp.). Currently, the connotation to the word Gurāgē includes someone who works hard and is always looking to make a profit.

3. Gurāgēs: The Economic Migrant (*fanonätī* /*fano*)

Fanonätī is a common term used to point economic migration in the Gurāgē area. ‘The process of out-migration is described locally as *fanonätī*, while the out-migrants are referred to as *fano*’ (Nida 2000). The Gurāgēs are one of the most urban-oriented and urban dwelling people group in Ethiopia. Fanonätī refers to migration for economic reasons from the rural-Gurāgē land to Addis Ababa and other urban areas including Diredawa, Nazret, and Jima. Gurāgēs are always on the move. Migration from the rural to the urban is part and parcel of their lifestyle. Fanonätī and Fano, in the Amharic language, have a different meaning however, which carries a political connotation, mainly as a migrant, youth combatant. Currently, August 2021, war is going on in the northern parts of Ethiopia and those who joined the war, non-formal army youth groups from the Amhara Region, called themselves and are known by others with the term ‘Fano’. One of the Fanos from the war zone of the

Amhara Region, South Gondar Zone, Kimir-Dingay town at the Ethiopian Broad Cast (EBC) Ethiopian Television (ETV)-ETV-57 evening news referred to himself as a Fano and explained the term Fano as follows: ‘Fano means, at the time of peace, the one who works on his farm, and at the time of war, he becomes a soldier. I am Fano, did my farming and now I am ready to protect my country’⁵⁸. But, within the Gurāgē community and language the term Fano refers to an economic migrant and has nothing to do with war or a political agenda.

My informant, Tenkir Teni, 48, who is respected and educated in his area, who was born and raised in the Gurāgē zone in the 1970s commented on *Fanonäti* and *Fano*. Tenkir is very familiar with these two terms, *Fanonäti* and *Fano*, as well as the process of out-migration. He commented very comfortably on the positive side of *Fanonäti*, about economic migration. In Tenkir’s definition, *Fanonäti* is simply someone who left for urban areas to look for any type of business in order to support his families back home who stay in the rural area. Tenkir further explained ‘It is good to have one in the family who is *Fano* (economic migrant).’ Tenkir illustrates how a Fano would be the first choice in the process of marriage:

When the village elders went out to look for marriage partner to a young man and talk to the families of a girl, the family will ask question about the young man. Is he *chawach* (farmer), or *hibo* (divorcee), or *fano* (urbane)? The priority always given to the *fano* (urbane) (Tenkir Teni: Interview 20 April 2020).

One of the informants of Nida, Agaz Habte Mereche, 80, who is one of the Gurāgē area villagers and respected elders commented on the indispensable contribution of *Fanonäti* towards the support of rural communities with regard to the shortage of farmland and related reasons as this quote of Nida’s appears in ‘Urban Migration’:

Given that we are suffering from shortage of farmland, from loss of soil fertility of the small amount of land that we have, and high population density, our lives in the village would have been impossible had it

⁵⁸ Ethiopian Broad Cast (EBC) Sunday 22 August 2021 at 8pm ETV 57 Evening Official News at the Ethiopian National TV Broadcast.

not been for the *fanonäti* , and the support from our *fano* children. It is due to them that we (the rural villagers) opened our eyes and became civilized in terms of our dressing, education, health services, roads and everything. *Fanonäti* is part of our farm, field, our marriage, our wealth and resources such as cattle[,] land and asat' (Nida, *Fanonäti : Ethnohistorical Notes on the Gurage Urban Migration in Ethiopia.*, 2000: 64).

The reality of the scarcity of farmland and migration stories of the Gurägēs is highly significant. Beyond helping us understand the circumstances of migration, they also provide valuable insights on the larger contexts in which new Islamic renewal movement *da'wa*, (a call to Islam and spread of Islam) patterns evolved. Though the Gurägēs migrate mainly for economic reasons, and get immediately involved in small business activities (including shoe-shining, petty traders, retailers, and shopkeepers), they are not involved in social disturbances. While this is going on, the Gurägēs also commit themselves to fervently practising their religious duties, whether they are Muslims or Christians.

One of the World Bank staff, Tom Bundervoet, from his research, states that the Gurägēs are at the top in numbers for internal migration in Ethiopia. They migrate to Addis Ababa, Nazret, and to other urban areas to improve their economic situation (Bundervoet 2018). Tom Bundervoet's research findings show, in his study of qualitative and quantitative research on 'Internal Migration in Ethiopia': Migrants in Addis [Ababa] mainly hail from Gurage,' (Bundervoet 2018). The Gurägēs are well-known to migrate to other parts of Ethiopia, mainly for trade and economic reasons, and so have been considered as economic migrants since 1900.

Internal migration (*fanonäti*), is common amongst the Gurägē community. According to Worku Nida, since 1900 Gurägēs started migrating to the urban areas, particularly Addis Ababa. In 1910 the number of *fanos* (migrants) Gurägēs were 2000, constituting 3.1% of the total Addis Ababa population. In 1984 this increased to 255,000, or 18%, thus showing Gurägēs large scale migration to the capital, Addis Ababa (Nida 2000: 53). The current population projection statistics, in 2020, estimated the Gurägēs in Addis Ababa to be close to one million. This just happened through the last

110 years. In the 1950s there was no migrant (*fano*) Gurāgē who had a licensed residence and business of his own in Addis Ababa except one, Sheikh Yusuf, who owned his own house in Banin Sāfār, (very near to the city council) at the city centre (Nida 2000: 56). This contrasts significantly with the Gurāgēs who currently own houses, multiple businesses, commercial stores, and luxury vehicles. Gurāgēs are mainly migrating within Ethiopia⁵⁹ and at times, beyond. Some of the reasons for migration (*fanonāti*) are due to the scarcity of farm land, a lack of modern farming, extended family ties in urban and rural areas, and looking for a betterment of their lifestyle.

The Gurāgēs are one of the key people groups in the life and growth of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia. The Gurāgēs have played and continue to playing the key role in the rise and development of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia from its inception of 1960s. One of the main reasons for the Gurāgēs to hold this key role is due to their mobility and involvement in small and large scale trading activities in Addis Ababa, the Capital, Nazret, Diredawa, one of the city administrative regions, and throughout Ethiopia, mainly in urban areas and small towns.

4. Gurāgēs: The Urban Traders

The Gurāgēs’ involvement in trade and religious duties are highly intermingled, particularly at a place known by ‘*Marcato*’ as a central market place in Addis Ababa and the new centre for trade and commerce. The trade activities in *Marcato* opened their doors, and encouraged and facilitated the Gurāgēs involvement in various business activities. Wherever the Gurāgēs are, they start their business from being a small enterprise, including shoe shining, or known as ‘*suq-badarate*’, which literally means, ‘the kiosk is on my chest’, which then grows into shops and big stores situated strategically in the market places. This business ethos and strategy is the same that is employed in

⁵⁹ ‘The Gurāgē are considered to be a highly mobile and adoptive people’ (Nida 2000). As one of the early and famous sayings depicting the Gurāgēs as a mobile community: ‘there is no place where the Gurāgē and the Land-Rover cannot enter’.⁵⁹ In reality, this saying is proved by many Gurāgēs who travelled to Addis Ababa and other urban areas with significant number mainly Nazret (100 km East of Addis Ababa) where the Tablīghīs influence is vivid. In the town of Nazret, the attentiveness of the Gurāgēs observed at the time of the 40 days *da‘wa* trip which took place in 2014 by the researcher of this research’ (Mohammed W. H., Field Notes: 40 days’ *da‘wa* tour 2014).

their religious life and practise, by starting with a small *masjid* and little prayer houses which then grow massively within a few years.

The establishment of a central market place (*Marcato*) in the capital, Addis Ababa by the Italians who were the invaders/occupiers of Ethiopia (1936-41), contributed to the growth of business activities in Addis Ababa. As Haggai Erlich explains: ‘Before the appearance of the threat of Mussolini, [Emperor] Häyiläsīlase’s Christian empire still enjoyed growing confidence. Throughout 1930-5, Addis Ababa continued to expand, thriving on commerce led mostly by Muslims, who were hardly recognised as a community. Back in 1904, Emperor Menelik had promised the Ottomans he would build a mosque for the capital’s Muslims, but neither he nor Häyiläsīlase authorised the enterprise. However, Muslims were accepted, even encouraged, as traders.’ A trading firm was established by the Indian Muslim merchants who had been favoured since the days of Emperor Menelik. Also, the Addis Ababa community of Arab traders, mostly immigrants from Yemen and Aden, had a strong presence in the *mercato*, the capital’s huge market’ (Erlich 2015:25). As Erlich argues, the presence of expatriate traders was robust in the world of trade in Addis Ababa and beyond. At that time, the Gurāgēs were in their early stage of business involvement in the capital, Addis Ababa and beyond.

In the 1950s and 1960s the Gurāgēs operating a small business faced intense competition with expatriate traders. The then traders were mainly the Yemenite Arabs who monopolized major commercial activities and some of the small kiosks in Addis Ababa. The small kiosks owned by the Arabs were called ‘*ārab-bet*’, to indicate the shopkeepers (‘*ārab*’ refers the Arabs and ‘*bet*’ to the house). The government was in favour of the Yemenis, because they were strong financially and were taxpayers. In the Yemeni’s struggle to compete with the Gurāgē traders, they arranged for the arrest by the police of any Gurāgē found selling items around the Yemenite shops, and jailed for a two-week period. Upon release, they had to pay a fine. However, despite all the setbacks the *fano* [migrant] Gurāgēs thrived in expanding their businesses and finally replaced the Yemenite Arabs comfortably

in the commercial sector of Addis Ababa. This was not the reality until the 1950s (Nida 2000: 56). In the late 19th - early 20th centuries the Yemenis role were pivotal in the history of trade in Ethiopia until the Gurāgēs replaced them.

Bahru Zewde (Zewde B. 2001: 197) also commented how the expatriate domination of trade challenged by national traders (Gurāgēs) and the attraction of Mercato. ‘The expatriate domination of trade met a serious challenge from a class of national traders – a process partly facilitated by the Italian policy of destroying the expatriate mercantile class in favour of state monopoly of trade. The Mercato [Mercato] became the stronghold of these national traders, most notably the Gurage [Gurāgē] traders. Their displacement of the Yemenite Arabs, who had earlier dominated retail trade, remains a remarkable example of national enterprise.’

The Gurāgēs continued flourishing in their businesses and spreading Islam through their business and social contacts from where they were. The significance of trade in the rise and development of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is immense which creates a platform for Turkish-root-Eritrean origin Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya, the trader and the then leader of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, to connect with the traders, undoubtedly Gurāgēs. To be involved in trade is one of the common platforms for people to communicate and socialize with others, including discussing their religious journeys.

Since the 1950s, Haji Musa Kikiya was a well-known businessman with his families, the Kikiyans. The Kikiya Company built the first 400 stone buildings in the middle of the Mercato. The two brothers, Saleh Ahmad Kikiyan and Usman Ahmad Kikiyan, were the main builders. That plot of land, in the heart of Addis Ababa, was owned by the heirs of the late Fitawrari Habtegiorgis, Defence Minister. The Italians appropriated the land from the heirs of Habtegiorgis and handed it over to the Eritrean Kikiyans brothers so that they could build the modern central market according to the Italian’s plan (Zewde 2016: 216; Samu 2010: 55). That place was known as ‘the *Kikiyan Suq*’ (the

Kikiyan Store). Haji Musa and his family, the Kikiyans, were highly involved in trade, including import-export in this part of Addis Ababa where the Gurāgēs still were concentrated for their day-to-day business and religious life. When the Turks controlled the Red Sea, the Kikiyans came to Eritrea and established in Massawa at a place called Hirgigo, where Haji Musa was born⁶⁰ (Abdalah A., Yahaji Zaynu Sheikh Muqina Yahiwot Tarik 2017: 219-20; Samu, 2010: 55-7).

To provide valuable insights on the larger context in which new Islamic renewal movement, *da'wa* (a call to Islam and spread of Islam), similar patterns evolved. Though the Gurāgēs migrated, and continue to migrate mainly for economic reasons, they immediately become involved in little business activities, including shoe-shining, traders, retailers, and shopkeepers. While the Gurāgēs are doing these, they also commit themselves to practise their religious duties, whether they are Muslims or Christians.

5. Gurāgēs Religiosity - Faith that kept up to Death: Biography of My Grandfather Fujata Mukhtar Wabiso

My grandfather from my mother side was born in the Gurāgē land, in the Silti area which is not far from Butajira town where the First Hābāša Ijtima (6-8 December 2019) took place. My grandfather, Fujata Mukhtar Wabiso, was born in the Silte Zone, at a place called Titigora, 180 km from Addis Ababa, from a Muslim family. He was called by the name Fujata. When Fujata was ready for education there were no schools in the area, so he was forced to become involved in farming to help his family. Whilst Fujata was doing farming and helping his new family, he repeatedly heard from his friends about good job opportunities in Addis Ababa, the capital. Fujata decided to join his friends to migrate to Addis Ababa to look for jobs in order to change their lives.

⁶⁰ Hirgigo visited by the researcher as part of country visits for this research and Hirgigo confirmed that it was the birth-place of Haji Musa Kikiya (Mohammed W. H., Country Viist: Eritrea 2018).

By then, many young people who migrated to Addis Ababa from Silti were working at the Bis Company, owned by an Italian who was involved in coffee, and hide and skin export at a place known by *Bis-Bet* (the house of Bis). Fujata also joined the Bis Company, situated at the city centre near the City Council and not far from the market centre, *Marcato*. The unique name of that area is Italian-Safar. That was also the area where Fujata met his wife, our grandmother from our mother's side, Ejigayehu Wube, whose background was an Orthodox Christian from the Amhara Region, in a places called Shoa and Gojam. The community where they lived was an Orthodox Täwahïdo Christian dominated area. Having different religious convictions was a serious problem in that community, and it became difficult for them in their marriage relationship because the two of them were of different religious beliefs. Then Fujata decided to accept Orthodox Christianity so as not to lose his lovely wife, Ejigayehu, and went on to accept baptism in order to change his religion and received his new baptismal name, Gebremichael. This whole process took place at St George (*Giorgis*) Orthodox Täwahïdo Church, located at the hill, next to the City Council of Addis Ababa.

The narrator of this information, was my brother, Tamiru, who is the youngest in our family. He lived for many years with our grandfather. Tamiru had a chance to spend a few good years with our grandfather, Fujata Mukthar Wabiso (Gebremichael). To change his religion was not an easy decision for Fujata Mukthar, whose family background was Silte Muslims, who are proud of their Muslim descendants which could be traced to the Eastern part of Ethiopia, Harar, and sometimes to Saudi-Arabia. Fujata, (Gebremichael) with his new name, further enjoyed his marriage relationship with Ejigayehu and converted to Orthodox Christianity due to his love for his lovely wife. In their marriage life, they had their only daughter, Jamā'anesh, our mother. Because Jāmanāšī was the only child, that's why they named her Jamā'anesh, which the meaning 'you are many' and expresses best wishes to have many through her. Jamā'anesh's parents, Gebremichael and Ejigayehu, were eager to see many children and grandchildren from their only daughter. Of course, these good wishes of our grandparents was fulfilled by Jamā'anesh, our mother, by having 12 children, 7 of whom survived, and who now has 19 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

Religious faith. It's hard to understand and difficult to explain when thinking about our creator and His creation between two religions, Christianity and Islam in particular. Gebremichael Mukthar and Ejigayehu Wube led a reasonable life at the city centre of Addis Ababa. However, after a few years of marriage, our grandmother, Ejigayehu Wube, died and Gebremichael Mukthar was left in the hands of our Mother, Jamā'anesh. Jāmanäsi became the only caretaker for her father, Gebremichael, with the help of her children, including all 7 of us. Gebremichael lost his lovely wife and following that loss, he also lost his sight for the rest of his life due to cataracts, an eye disease that involved the clouding of the natural lens of the eye. Gebremichael refused to have surgery and decided to stay home for the rest of his life, which he did. The very reason to refuse the surgery was, 'So what? I lost my wife and I have no life!'

Life goes on. Gebremichael stayed in his little room, on his 90 cm bed, with most of his time spent on his bed, just sleeping. As a family we all took turns to help our grandfather, Gebremichael Mukthar, including laundry, cleaning his rooms, cutting his nails, bathing, feeding, and etc. On his bed he always sang a traditional Silti song in the Silti language called '*se-yababeo nagday lamalabwo*'. The song has a loaded meaning: 'to whom I refer the guest.' The guest is special from what we know traditionally. 'Who is well-prepared with enough fire-wood, painting his house, cleaning his village, and ready to purchase an ox to be slaughtered to welcome the special guest. Who is ready to observe the standard to celebrate the *Eid al-Adha-Arafa* celebration which is considered as a special guest?'. According to the Silti culture, there is a standard common way of treating religious festivals and celebrating, particularly *Eid al-Adha-Arafa* among the Silti community. The traditional song examines whether a proper preparation was done or not to welcome *Eid al-Adha-Arafa* which was considered as the special guest in Silti culture: 'to whom I can pass on so that the celebration will be done accordingly.'

In addition to this traditional song, Gebremichael Mukthar also was known to say 'Allāh' from his bed. Whenever Gebremichael heard a call for prayer from the near mosque, the Grand Anwar Masjid,

he joined the five-time prayer and said repeatedly only ‘Allāh’. This practise became part and parcel of his life until his death. Our mother, Jamā‘anesh, became uncomfortable hearing his traditional songs and observing the time of prayers and joining by simply saying, Allāh. So, Jāmanāšī decided to bring a priest from the nearby St George (*Giorgis*) Orthodox Tāwahido Church to have water sprinkled on her father, Gebremichael Mukthar. Rev Woldaragay was the one who came to our home and did the water sprinkling on our grandfather Gebremichael in order to relieve him from what Gebremichael has been saying and doing. Both practises, saying Allāh and water sprinkling continued for a while in our home. As a child, no one gave any serious attention. But this was a very serious issue between our mother and grandfather. Sometimes when the Rev Woldaragay arrived to sprinkle water, our grandfather Gebremichael covered his face to be protected from the water.

Thus, my grandfather, who lost his Islamic religious identity, his wife, his eyesight, and became bedridden, decided to return to his previous Islamic faith. Gebremichael Mukthar felt that he was not going to have his wife and eyesight back, but he started to return back to his previous Islamic identity and faith. That’s why he became very attentive to the five daily call of prayers from the Grand Anwar Mosque. He was also used beads to assist his prayers.

In the meantime, one of Gebremichael cousins, whose name was Chumato Nurtata, came from the birth place of Gebremichael Mukthar, in the Titigora-Silti area, to start helping his uncle. The main responsibilities of Chumato included helping his uncle to go to bathroom, laundering his bedding, preparing coffee, and talking to him in the Silti language in order to accompany him while he was lonely. Chumato was a Muslim and a very good man who could give more time to Gebremichael and comfort him day and night. One of the things that both Gebremichael and Chumato did was to have a special coffee ceremony on Tuesdays. They said, ‘Tuesday is set aside for Nurhusien.’ They also had names for the rest of the days: Monday, Wednesday-Jillane, Thursday-Khams, Friday-Jumu‘a, Saturday-Saydina Khadir, and so-on. Though they counted and set aside all the days of the week, their special coffee ceremony took place on Tuesdays as if they were remembering Sheikh Nurhusien. After a few years of enjoying Chumato’s help and friendship, Chumato left for his home area, Silti,

Titigora and re-established his life there. Gebremichael became lonely and helping him in his daily needs remained mainly the duty of our mother and her children.

Gebremichael Mukhtar continued using his prayer beads and practising his previous Islamic faith. In the meantime, one of his nearest friends, Dalgaba, continuously visited Gebremichael and encouraged him to return to the Islamic faith, which seemed successful at the end. From the story we heard and understand told by some of Gebremichael friends, he returned to Islam and confessed Islam by saying '*la 'ilāha 'illa-llāh Muḥammadun rasulu llāh*', which is the main article of faith to affirm accepting Islam. In 1985, Gebremichael Mukhtar Wabiso became seriously ill, and died in his late 90s. Then the issue came, where shall be Gebremichael's funeral take place? Should we take the body to St George (*Giorgis*) Orthodox Täwahido Church nearby where he was baptised to convert to Christianity (making him as Orthodox Christian) or to a Muslim Funeral as a Muslim because he returned to Islam. The debate between his relatives/friends and my mother, who is a very strong Orthodox Christian, and sort of an iron-lady in her personality. She was furious.

Finally, my mother won the debate and Gebremichael Mukhtar Wabiso, whose had a Silti and Muslim name, Fujata Mukhtar Wabiso, was buried at St George (*Giorgis*) Orthodox Church Täwahido Church where his wife also buried as a Christian though he returned to Islam and should have been buried at a Muslim cemetery as a Muslim. This piece of my family story depicts the nature of religiosity with in the Gurāgē community in general, and Silti Gurāgē Muslim community in particular. The Gurāgēs who are the key role players in the rise and development of Tablīghī Jamā'at, which is known by its spirituality, solidarity, and secretiveness, in their journey of faith. What a faith! To be kept up to death, even though he was denied it by his closest family whilst recognised by some of Fujata Mukhtar Wabiso's friends! Though he was denied, he remained faithful to his Islamic identity and faith. Gurāgēs' religiosity is strong and is demonstrated through a story like this.

6. Gurāgēs: The Religious Migrant (*musāfir*)

The meaning of *musāfir* is traveller, locally considered as a religious migrant. The Gurāgēs are known to migrate to the cities and urban areas, mainly Addis Ababa and other towns. Migration is encouraged in Islam because it gives more opportunities to spread Islam to the area where migrants are going to settle. In this case the Gurāgēs are always at the top of the numbers of those who migrate amongst Ethiopians. When the Gurāgē Muslims leave their home land they consider themselves as travellers of Allāh (*ya llāh musāfir*) and believe that Allāh will help them in all aspects of life. One of the Gurāgē religious migrants, Haji Zayno Sheikh Muqina, who is remembered as ‘the father of *da‘wa* and generation’, left his birthplace, the Wolane, Gurāgē area. His primary reason was to spread Islam as he was doing in his homeland. Zayno settled in Addis Ababa and ended up planting a masjid, which has now become the National Headquarters (*Häbäša Markaz*) for the Tablighī Jamā‘at movement in Ethiopia. Planting masjids in Addis Ababa and beyond for the Gurāgēs is a very common practise.

The Qatbare Sheikh Issa Hamza could be considered as one of the religious migrants of his days. Sheikh Issa is remembered for planting mosques in Addis Ababa, the capital and Dajan, Gojam, Amhara Region, known as one of strongholds for the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahido Church. Issa Hamza planted a mosque in Addis Ababa at Banin Safar, Nur Masjid in 1916 as the second *masjid* next to Haji Wale, planted by the Indian architect who came to build a palace and a church for Emperor Menelik in 1906. Currently there are about 300 mosques and prayer houses in Addis Ababa and the Gurāgēs have participated in the establishment of the majority of them, if not all. In most cases, they are front-liners.

The Gurāgēs established themselves by building mosques in Addis Ababa and surrounding areas from their humble beginnings. Haji Temam Saman could also be mentioned regarding having humble beginnings yet had great involvement in spreading Islam through helping in the building of mosques and madrasas (Islamic schools) in Addis Ababa. This has been a common practise amongst the

Gurāgē Muslims. In 2004, Haji Temam Saman, who lived in Addis Ababa at a place called Kara-Qore on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, played a significant role in the Rahma *masjid* building project. Temam's contribution includes commencing the purchase of land 2500 square meters, for the construction of the mosque, *madrassa* (Islamic school), and shops for income generating. Temam's extraordinary commitment was demonstrated through his kind generosity of paying ETB 460,000 (the equivalent of USD 50,000 then) from his own pocket. Haji Temam Saman is the chairman of the Rahma Masjid Committee. According to the masjid committee members explained by Abdulfatah Abdalah, 'So far over 100 young people have been trained and went out for *da'wa* (a call to Islam) and further religious training (Abdalah, *Yaddis Ababa Masjidoch Tarik Qutir 2* (The Story of Addis Ababa's Mosques No. 2 2010: 93-9).

7. Gurāgēs Involvement in the First Three Mosque Buildings in Addis Ababa

The first three Mosques in Addis Ababa historically connected in one way or another to the work of Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement. These three Masjids are, Haji Wale, Al-Nur, and Grand Anwar Masjids. These three mosques have been built with a direct and indirect contributions of the Gurāgē and Yemeni communities who resides in Addis Ababa and beyond. These three mosques have their own contributions towards the development of Tablīghī Jamā'at movement in Addis Ababa and beyond. Sheikh Isa Hamza (Qatbare Sheikh) who played a significant role with his Yemeni friends was the one who predicted the big gathering (*Ijtima*) will be happened in the Butajira town which is fulfilled in December 2019 gathering of Hābāša Ijtima (see *ibid.* p. 121). As it is discussed in (*ibid.* p. 82) the work of Tablīghī Jamā'at has started at Grand Anwar Mosque. So it is important to give enough attention to these three oldest mosques in Addis Ababa with regard to the Gurāgēs involvement as well the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement.

The first mosque of Addis Ababa was built in 1906, at Aware, near Emperor Menelik's Palace. It was founded by Haji Wale Muḥammad, an Indian Muslim architect, who came with his family from the

British colony of India and worked on the construction of Emperor Menelik II's Palace and Gibi-Gabriel Orthodox Täwahido Church for the Emperor, (Abdulwehab 2011: 312-13; Sumaya 2012: 21; Abdalah 2010: 259) Haji Wale was the one who built the first mosque in Addis Ababa on a piece of land given by Emperor Menelik. With the permission of Menelik, he also built a small shelter as a prayer house for himself and a few Muslims, including Gurāgēs, who lived in the area. The name of the mosque followed the founder, Haji Wale Muḥammad Masjid.

The second mosque, Al-Nur Masjid, was founded in 1916 by the Qatbare Sheikh, Issa Hamza⁶¹ (1875-1948) who migrated from the Gurāgē area to Addis Ababa, and by Yemeni Arab traders. The Yemeni Arabs and the Qatbare Sheikh, Issa Hamza were working hand-in-hand in the realisation of Al-Nur Mosque. Amira Kedir, who wrote her thesis on the Qatbaré Sheikh, states: 'Brilliantly realizing the absence of a reasonable mosque in the capital and the eventual consequence this would bring against the Muslim believers, the Qatbaré Sheikh [Issa Hamza] once created cordial relations with the Yemeni Arabs so as to gradually resolve the problem step by step. Accordingly, the Qatbaré Sheikh, after securing the *Jam'a* prayers in the residence of the Yemeni *Tujjars* [traders] further asked if they would extend their solid support for constructing a mosque. The Yemeni Arabs had assured him that there were no difficulties if the authorization of such construction and a sizable plot of land can be secured from the government side. The Qatbaré Sheikh did not waste his time.' (Amira Kedir 2014: 73-4)

Al-Nur Mosque, was established in 1916 during Empress Zäwditu's time at Banin-Säfar, Piassa, where the City Council is located, and very near to the municipality by the tactful effort of the well-

⁶¹ The Qatbare Sheikh, Issa Hamza (1875-1948), contributed a lot to the expansion of Islam in Ethiopia. A few of his contributions include: establishing Islamic centres and mosques in Qatbare-Islamic Centre, Nur Masjid-Addis Ababa [second oldest mosque in Addis Ababa], Masqan, Gururu, Dajan-Gojam, Amhara Region; judge for Shariah court at down-to-Awash and Gibe area Oromia and Southern Nations Nationalities People Regions; confronting King Häyiläsilase and his officials for Muslims right and to stop viewing Muslims as second citizen. Because of his contributions and relations with the then government officials, the Qatbare Sheikh considered as 'Political Sheikh' [*siyasa sheikh*]. Haji Zayno, who was the Imam of Abubakar Asidiq Masjid where the Tabliḡhī Jamā'at Markaz situated was a student of the Qatbare Sheikh. (Abdalah, Yahaji Zayno Shiekh Muqina *Yahiywot Tarik: Ya-Ethiopia Ya-Da'wa-na Yatiwliid Abat* (Biography of Haji Zayno Sheikh Muqina: Ethiopian Father of Da'wa and the Generation 2017: 65-8, Taju K. , 2021: 413-38).

known Sheikh-Qatbare, Issa Hamza. (Abdulwehab 2011: 312) The Qatbare Sheikh Issa Hamza had a good relationship with Fitawrari Habtegiorgis, Minister of Defence, and was one of the influential leaders within the Ethiopian administration. (Sumaya 2012: 50) Habtegiorgis was known for his policy of religious tolerance and justice. Bahru Zewde, in his recent book on Habtegiorgis's biography, quoted Bairu Tafla and states the following: '16 Orthodox believers left their beliefs and joined the protestant beliefs faced trial before the court. Many of the judges were expressing their statements in favour of cutting their hands and legs, or hanging, or beating them publicly. This was expressed in the presence of Lij Eyasu (the then prince of Ethiopia as successor of Emperor Menelik) and Habtegiorgis. But Habtegiorgis said the following and saved the 16 Protestants, 'There is no law which says, someone who chose a different religion must be punished physically' (Zewde 2016: 5).

Though Habtegiorgis prohibited the construction of the minaret that would be very visible and eye catching from every corner of the city, he was instrumental in the realisation of the Al-Nur Mosque (*Banin Safar Masjid*) building because of his relationship with the Qatbare Sheikh Issa Hamza. The Qatbare Sheikh Issa Hamza, had been one of the influential Sheikhs of his time with regard to the spreading of Islam and establishing Islamic centres in Addis Ababa, within and beyond the Gurāgē land (Taju K. 2021: 418-37).

In the 1930s, the great Al-Anwar Mosque was established as the third mosque in Addis Ababa by the help of the Italians, (Mussolini personally saw to its completion)⁶² in the Marcato area which was and still continues to be the centre of trade and commerce for the capital and the country. The Italians had been instrumental to subsidise its construction and were supportive to rebuild many Islamic institutions, is not only the great Al-Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa, but also hundreds of mosques throughout Ethiopia including Harar, Jimma-Mantina Italian Masjid, and other parts of the country at the time of Italian Occupation (1936-41). Erlich further commented on the Italians' support towards

⁶² See (Erlich 2007: 68) 'Hundreds of new mosques were built throughout the country, including the great Al-Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa (Mussolini personally saw to its completion).'

pilgrimage (*hajj*): ‘Hundreds of Muslims from all over the country were encouraged, and subsidized, by the Italians to perform this [*hajj*] ultimate religious obligation (Erich 2007: 68-9; Sumaya 2012: 50). Hussein Ahmed reinforced how the Italians supported Muslims as he states: ‘They [Italians] provided full freedom of religion for Muslims, stimulated Islamic education of Arabic in schools, built fifty new mosques, and supported Muslim leaders financially (Ahmed 1994: 776). This was the Italian way of buying favour from the Muslim community.’

Kemal Abdulwehab commented on the history of the establishment of the first three mosques in Addis Ababa. He suggests: ‘It is not accidental that the first three mosques in Addis Abäba were initiated by foreigners: Wale, an Indian, and Al-Nur, by Arabs (the role of Sheikh Qiṭbare [Qatbare] was undeniable and Al-Anwar by Italians.’ Birhanu Samu suggests that the great contribution of Saleh Ahmad Kikiyan (Haji Musa’s uncle), in the construction of the building of Al-Anwar Mosque with Italians is remembered (Samu 2010: 56; Abdulwehab 2011: 313). In the 1930s, the Gurāgē-Muslim community in Addis Ababa were very few in number and economically not capable to finance the construction projects like the Arabs or the Italian occupiers. The influence of Haji Wale, the Indian architect, who was responsible for the building of both the palace and the church was vital. The Arabs’ contribution towards trade and commerce in the capital, Addis Ababa, was irreplaceable. The Italians, as the occupier of Ethiopia, looked for supporters from any parts of the community, and this was also understandable. The Gurāgēs were also involved in whatever possible ways towards the development of the earliest three mosques in Addis Ababa.

Al-Anwar Great Masjid is the mosque where the first work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at started. In the process, the Gurāgēs active commitment to the work of Tablīghī Jamā‘at increased, as they became followers and supporters of the movement and major role players through their business and religious contacts. These contacts included the respected trader and founder of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya.

8. Gurāgēs and the Kikiyans influence in trade at Marcato, Addis Ababa

From 1940-1980, the Kikiyans had a prominent name and commercial history in the Marcato, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. For instance, they built what is estimated between 300 to 400 stone made shops in the middle of the Marcato, a market place. For this reason they were praised with rhymes as follows: ‘350 are the shops of the Kikiyans, drag yourself around Piassa (to see and enjoy them); 400 are the shops of the Kikiyans, drag yourself around Marcato (to see and enjoy them).’

Birhanu Samu, a journalist, is known in his writings on trade and commerce in Addis Ababa in general and Marcato in particular. Samu wrote a book on the history of trade and commerce and mentioned many people who were the champions in trade and commerce of the Marcato area including the Kikiyans and some of the Gurāgēs. Due to the relationship and connection of the late Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiyan, who was an *amir* of the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā‘at and part of the Kikiyan family, it would be much better to understand how trade and commerce developed through the Kikiyan family in the Marcato area. Birhanu Samu suggests that the Kikiyan family contribution was one of the significant influences among others in his book entitled *Ka-Intoto Hamus-Gabaya Iska Marcato*. 1879-2000⁶³

Intoto⁶⁴ was a centre for the capital, located on highland in Addis Ababa, and had a weekly market on Thursdays until the market moved to Marcato. Samu mentioned many Muslims, including Gurāgēs, who were prominent in the life of trade and commerce in Marcato, Addis Ababa. But, better to focus only on the family of the Kikiyans who came from Massawa-Asmara, Eritrea at the time of the Italian occupation.

⁶³ (‘From Intoto Thursday Market up to Marcato: 1887-2008’), written in Amharic which is the working language of Ethiopia. Since 1994, Amharic language considered as the Federal working language of Ethiopia, previously Amharic was the national language of Ethiopia.

⁶⁴ Intoto is situated at North-West of Addis Ababa, 3,000 m. above sea level. Intoto was a place for Emperor Menelik palace and served as the capital for Ethiopia. Currently, the new Intoto-Park built on the area preserving the old Emperor Menelik Palace and the church. Intoto-Park became one of the tourist attractions in Addis Ababa.

Saleh Kikiya enjoyed practising generosity acts. He established a school in Massawa, at his birth place, and opened a mill in order to cover the cost of the school. An eyewitness, Mr. Ahmad, says that Saleh Kikiyan sponsored the operation of building a rock fence all around Kidiste-Maryam Orthodox Täwahido Church in Asmara. His Muslim background did not hinder Saleh's desire to support the Orthodox Christian project. It is widely believed that his contribution to build Addis Ababa's great Anwar Mosque, in the 1930s, was very substantial. From the generous acts performed by Saleh, there is one that is particularly remarkable due to its size and exceptionality. This is when he covered one third of the total expense to build a school named after Häyiläsilase I (currently known as Kotebe Metropolitan University). To cover this expense, he decided to donate the full rent he redeemed from his 48 stone-built shops/stores located in Marcato. It is said that two thirds of the rest of the building expense was covered by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and the government of Netherlands. Some say that this generous act by a private donor was the first of its kind, which can be considered as foundational in Addis Ababa. Consequently, it paved the terrain for the proliferation of an aid organization like Häyiläsilase I Foundation for Humanitarian Organisation and others.

When the Italians were defeated in 1941, the older nephew of Kikiyan, Saleh, was imprisoned in Asmara by the English, who replaced the Italians. The reason he was imprisoned included the fact that he was so close to the Italian administration. His honour name, 'Commendatory', given to him by them, proved this assumption. When Emperor Häyiläsilase returned to Addis Ababa, he set him free, and the English men gave him the honour name '*Basha*'. Some say that Saleh sent older men to plead with the Emperor for his freedom while he was imprisoned in Asmara. That's why Häyiläsilase set him free. Others affirm that the Emperor was pleased by his works done in Marcato. Meanwhile, there are also people who say that he was freed because he submitted documents to the Emperor which showed that he paid compensation to the Italians and the previous owners who claimed the land where his shops were built.

By the time the Italians were defeated and freedom was re-established, the Kikiyan Company had an income of 50 thousand Mariatreza (the then currency for Ethiopia), only from the Marcato properties.

It is said that the money was counted and placed in big sacks. An accounting senior officer named Fitawrari Estifanos said that he was one of the live eyewitnesses that saw multiple times money being packed and loaded on a 'Trenta Quattro' truck to be transported in and out of the company to a special store.

This Kikiyan Company, which had a very big name for 40 years in Mercato, declined after the death of the 53-year-old Saleh Ahmad Kikiyan in 1958. In the consequent years it went from bad to worse. The younger Kikiyan brother, Usman Ahmad Kikiyan, died in 1979 and after that the heirs of the Kikiyan lost all their property including their house in the middle of Mercato (Mars Hotel) due to the Marxist Policy of the Military Junta (Derg). Saleh had five children and he was buried in his birthplace, Hirgigo, Massawa and Usman's father of ten children was buried in Kolfe Muslim Cemetery in Addis Ababa (Birhanu Samu '*Ka-Intoto Hamus- Gabaya Iska Mercato: 1879-2000*' ('From Intoto Thursday Market up to Mercato: (1887-2008) 2010: 54-7). The Kikiyans have been good friends and had great relationships with the Gurāgēs due to the Gurāgēs meaningful involvement in trade and commerce.

9. Gurāgēs' Work Ethics and Solidarity

The Gurāgēs' cultural habit of total commitment to hard work in business is also shown in their religious zeal to commit to spreading the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement. Strong saving and a hard working culture in business are part and parcel of the Gurāgēs identity demonstrated in their religious endeavours. Also, the Gurāgēs are by nature a peace loving and friendly people, therefore, makes them suitable for the Tablīghī movement. They are well known within their community for their ability to mediate peace within their own community, and beyond their community. They are good at promoting peace and bringing about reconciliation and conflict resolution. This quality is recognised by Ethiopians, and this is pointed out in the analysis of the interviews. It is arguably a proposition that wherever the Gurāgēs are, the environment would be a peaceful one.

Since 1900, repetitive occurrences of famine and drought have been in Ethiopia as a cycle, which puts the country at a step as one of the poorest countries in the world. This continuous cycle of

are a majority of Gurāgēs. The diligence of the Gurāgēs was also noted during the 40 days *da‘wa* tour which took place in 2014 by the researcher of this study (Mohammed 2014).

It is crucial to this study to begin the fact that all the informants, regardless about their judgment, know about the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement and referred to it by using different names including ‘the people of *da‘wa*, the people of *ziyara*, the people of *fi-sabililah* (interview 17) people who call back to the path of Allāh, (Interview 15), Allāh path followers (Interview 19), *fi sabililah jamā* people (interview 21), bida or innovation (interview 22), *da‘wa doers* (interview 20), like missionaries (interview 23), people of *ziyara* (interview 26), people of *jamā* (interview 26), and *din* teachers (interview 27). This fact leads us to believe that in a matter of approximately 60 years the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement become so influential and notorious that it’s almost impossible to find an Ethiopian Muslim who has never heard about it.

When we go deeper to analyse what the movement does, the informants think about the mission and objectives of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at people. We can identify the most common aspects (definition) which are honoured practise, humanitarian service, a peaceful movement (Interview 4), and the people of *da‘wa* have the objective to satisfy Allāh.

11. Gurāgēs: The Main Organisers and Participants for the First Hābāša Ijtima

The first Hābāša Ijtima took place on Friday-Sunday 6-8 December 2019 in Butajira town, Gurāgē Zone, South Nations Nationalities People Region (SNNPR), Ethiopia. Butajira is located 130 km to the Southwest of the capital, Addis Ababa. Butajira is a town situated at the heartland of the Gurāgē people and is the geographical centre for the Gurāgēs to travel from any part of the Gurāgē Zone. Butajira town is also the centre for the many congregants who came from different directions of Ethiopia to participate in the first historical gathering of the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement of Hābāša Ijtima.

65,000 people were registered participants for the Ijtima and the registration fee was ETB 350 (equivalent of \$10). The registration was done before the meeting in Addis Ababa. Those who paid the fee managed to get into the stadium where the actual events took place. However, the number of participants outside the stadium might be equal to or more as compared to people who were in the stadium. I was observing the event from outside the Butajira stadium and managed to hear the teachings and the reports of the Ijtima. Some people estimated the total number of participants to be about 200,000; but as for me, this is a bit over estimated. In my opinion the number of people for the Hābāša Ijtima at Butajira both inside and outside the stadium could be estimated at around 130,000.

During a conversation with Ayub at the Hābāša Ijtima (12 December 2019), who was in the stadium and part of the organising team, he told me that many people were invited from outside Ethiopia including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and many others. The expectation was from 180 countries, but it was very difficult to know how many countries were represented in the gathering. However, some of the participants who came from other parts of the world remained in Addis Ababa to do the 40 days *da'wa* based on their commitment. The everyday programme functioned similar to everywhere else that Ijtima takes place. *Subhi bayan* (morning teaching) was delivered every morning, which was followed by *ahwal* (reports) from different parts of the country. Teaching was also done in the afternoon from the visitors in Arabic and Urdu and it was interpreted in Amharic only. At the end of the meeting 240 people committed themselves to do *khuruj* (going out) to other countries travelling abroad for *da'wa* (Mohammed, The First Hābāša Ijtima-Butajira, Sound Recording 12 December 2019).

Why was Butajira town chosen for the first historic gathering of Tablīghī Jamā'at of 'Hābāša Ijtima'? Due to prophetic words from the early Muslim leaders. Qatbare Sheikh: Sheikh Issa Hamza said, 'Butajira town will host *alims* (Muslim scholars) and *Mashāikhs* from all over the world,' (according to one of the participants who was not willing to mention his name). Haji Musa Kikiya: Haji Musa said: 'Butajira town will host the first Hābāša Ijtima sometime in the future.' (Hailu A., 2019) It is a geographical centre for Muslims in Ethiopia and it is easy to travel there from where many Muslims

are concentrated. Butajira town is hugely surrounded by Muslim communities and people could come from the surrounding areas easily to Butajira to participate in such a historic gathering of the first ‘Hābāša Ijtima’. Butajira town is sort of a peaceful area and has a good reputation for the coexistence of different religions. In comparison with other towns in the Gurāgē Zone, Butajira town has some basic facilities and infrastructure compared to other towns within the Gurāgē Zone.

Congregants came from the following regions and towns: 1) Tigray Region: Mekele 2) Amhara Region: Debrebirhan, Gondar, Gojam, Wallo, Aliyuamba, Mahalamba, Gohastion, 3) Oromia Region: Sandafa, Shashamane, Jima, Holeta, Fiche, Ambo, Naqamte, Dembidolo, Adama (Nazret), Mojo, Nagale-Borana, Adaba, Dolo, 4) SNNPR⁶⁷ Region: Butajira, Wolkite, Walane, Dalocha, Belesa, Hosanna, Wolayta, Jinka, Tepi, Gechi, 5) Somali: Jigjiga, Qabridahar, 6) Afar: 7) Harari: Harar, Mirab-Hararge, Tora 8) Diredawa: 9) Addis Ababa (Mohammed W. , The First Hābāša Ijtima-Gathering: Field Notes (Butajira 6-8 December 2019). As per information at the reception tents, no representation was listed from the Gambela and Benishangul regions. The reception tents were outside the stadium where the actual events of the Hābāša Ijtima was taking place. It was next to the stadium fence under the temporary tent cover. I managed to be there and took a few pictures and notes from outside the stadium where the main events took place.

According to the representation of the areas, the leaders of the group were taking part to report, giving testimonies (*ahwals*) on how the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement is moving, and what had been done so far in their respective areas. A typical template of the report focused mainly on the number of people and groups who were participants. The time and actual events will be covered as listed below. This flow of lists more or less is similar at all levels of gatherings of Tablīghīs including their annual *Ijtima* (gathering). One can see that how the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement is serious in recording numbers in order to weigh the spread of the movement.

⁶⁷ (SNNPR) Southern Nations Nationalities and People Region.

A sample of a typical template: How long and how many people and groups are involved? In their presentation of their report at *Ijtima* this is the way how it flows:

- 4 months
- 40 days
- 1 year *Ulama*
- 4 month *Ulama*
- 40 days *Ulama*
- 40 days *masturat* (women *khuruj*/outing)
- 10 days *masturat*
- 3 days *masturat*
- Women ta'lim
- Number of *masjids* and *musalas*
- *Khamsa amal*
- 3 days *Jāma*
- observe for *tartib* (schedule)
- who commit for 2:30 hours every day *tafrig* (going around)
- *Tamirel masjid*
- Home based ta'lim
- *Sita Sifa* (Six Principles)
- Every year committed for 4 months
- who commit for 8 hours every day
- 4 months *Jāma*
- 40 days *Jāmma*
- *Masjids*, which can manage helping others to implement *Khuruj fi sabilillah* (to perform similar type of operation like the Hābāša Markaz)
- For *Merakiz* (India, Pakistan or Bangladesh)

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Name of the Group (*ḥalaqa*) _____ Date _____

A) General Report (*aḥwāl*)

		General	At Work						
			Past	Promised (<i>yatanayta</i>)	Current	Future			
A	Outing For 4 Months						E	Women 40 Days	
							F	Women 10 days	
B	Outing For 40 Days						G	Scheduled (<i>Tartib</i>)	40 Days
								Women	3 Days
C	No of Outing Scholars (<i>Ulamās</i>) For 1 year						H	No. of Places For Weekly Study (<i>Talim</i>)	
								I	No. of Heads of the House Hold
D	No of Outing Scholars (<i>Ulamās</i>) For 4 Months/40 Days						J	No. of Mosques and Prayer Places (<i>masjids and masalas</i>)	

B) Work Accomplished in 3 Months

Serial No.	List of Works	In the Past	Promised (<i>yatanayta</i>)	Current	For the Next 3 Month
	Mosques with 5 works				
	Mosques with limited works				

Teams (<i>jamā'a</i>) Outing for 3 days a Month in Average									
Committed For 2:30 hours Everyday									
Committed Up to 2:30 hours Everyday									
Mosques with volunteer to help (<i>Tamīr</i>)									
Everyday Study (<i>Talim</i>)	General	6 Sifa	General	6 Sifa	General	6 Sifa	General	6 Sifa	
Every Year For 4 Months									
Every Month For 10 Days									
Committed For 8 hours everyday									
Number of Teams (<i>jamā'a</i>) Outing For 4 Months	General	In the Country	General	In the Country	General	In the Country	General	In the Country	
Number of Teams (<i>jamā'a</i>) Outing For 40 Days	General	In the Country	General	In the Country	General	In the Country	General	In the Country	
Mosques which can work by	In the Country	Out of the Country	In the Country	Out of the Country	In the Country	Out of the Country	In the Country	Out of the Country	

themselves of Outing For 4 Months/40 Days	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.	4 Mo.	40 Da.
Number of Teams (<i>jamā'a</i>) Outing to other Countries																		
Teams (<i>jamā'a</i>) to Nizamudin- India (<i>Merakiz</i>)																		
For 40/10 Days Women Teams (<i>masturat</i> <i>jamā'a</i>)	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.	40 Da.	10 Da.
For 3 Days Women Teams (<i>masturat</i> <i>jamā'a</i>)																		
For 40 Days Women Teams (<i>masturat</i> <i>jamā'a</i>) to Other Countries																		
For Service (<i>Khidma</i>)																		
For 2 Months to Nizamudin- India For Service (<i>Khidma</i>)																		
No. Mosques Where Works Established																		

Countries We took Responsibility									
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The reporting (*ahwal*) sessions were structured and the contents mainly focused on the following main activities: How many team and team members, men and women (*jamā'a and jamā'at*) were involved on *khurūj* (outing)/ *da'wa* tour in terms of time frames, for 1 year, 4 months, 40 days, 10 days, and 3 days as well as the commitment to be involved for 2:30 hours every day in the work of Tablīgh. The report indicates the number of '*ulamā* (scholars) participating differently to encourage the scholars to be the main supporters of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement. Number of groups, (*ḥalaqa*), mosques (*masjids*) little prayer-houses (*murasalas*), will also mentioned as part of the report. Organising a circle of people within mosques or little prayer-houses is considered as one of the main tasks of the work of Tablīgh. The assigned countries for that particular town which is envisioned to be reached with the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement was mentioned in each report as part of their accomplished plan or as part of their future plan. The number of home-based (*ta'līm*) participants was also described in the reports. Participants of women's *da'wa, khurūj (masturat)* was taken into consideration in the report. In this regard, the growth of women's' involvement is a bit slow due to the cultural situation in Ethiopia. As one can see the sample reports presented by representatives from Addis Ababa and Wolayta depict a clearer picture of the growth of movement in the country, Ethiopia.

According to one *ahwal* (report), in Addis Ababa, the number of 40 days *khuruj* (outing) were 4,564, while 10 days *masturat jamaat* (women) were 48. The number of groups (*midibis/halakas*) were 40 while the number of mosques and prayer-houses (*masjids and murasalas*) were 2,095 and home cell-

groups (*ta'līms*) were 5,789. The number of teams (*jamās*) who went out for 4 months were 70, and for the Hābāša *markaz* (headquarters of Ethiopian Tablīgh) *khidma* (service) 10 teams (*jamās*). A trip to Nizamudin, New Delhi, India where the Global Headquarters of Tablīghī Jamā'at is, showed only 2 who committed for 2 months.

Another report (*ahwal*), in Wolayta, one of the 15 zones in the Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regional State (SNNPRS), which is stronghold for evangelical Christians, shows 10 teams (*jamās*) for the 40 days *khuruj* (outing), 40 days women (*masturat*) had 1, and 10 days women (*masturat*) had 10. The number of mosques and prayer-houses (*masjids* and *murasalas*) were 55, and the masjid cell-groups (*ta'līms*) had 5 teams (*jamās*). They assigned the Jinka area, which is one of the zonal towns in the southern part of Ethiopia and Tanzania outside Ethiopia, as a mission field for them.

The data tells us that the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement is growing geographically and in number of adherents who are committed for days and months to be involved in the actual work of the Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement in the capital, Addis Ababa as well as in the Wolayta area, which is known as one of the oldest centres for evangelical Christians in Ethiopia. Tablīghī Jamā'at is comfortably spreading and growing not only where Gurāgēs and Muslims are concentrated, but to other areas where their presence is not massive.

Nevertheless, many parts of Ethiopia were represented at the Hābāša Ijtima. Many of the participants were Gurāgēs who came from those parts of Ethiopia. In reality the Gurāgēs are the ones who are actively involved in the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement where they reside. On the one hand other people groups are involved in the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement with limited numbers, but the majority of the participants are Gurāgēs on the other. That is why the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement is associated with the Gurāgē ethnic group. Whether the second Hābāša Ijtima will be held or not, is not yet known. According to the tradition of Ijtima elsewhere, once it is started it will continue every year. Though the tradition of having annual Ijtima is a continuous practise, due to COVID-19 restrictions and protocols of Ethiopia, it did not happen in December 2020, 2021, and 2022.

12. Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that the rural Gurāgēs became the economic and religious migrants (*fano* and *musafir*), traders and urban dwellers, which significantly contributed and led them to be leaders and key role players of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement at all levels of the Tablīghī structure in Ethiopia, and in the rise and development of Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in the capital Addis Ababa and beyond. Their mobility did not hinder the Gurāgēs from flourishing both in trade and religious journeys. It helped them to connect with the well-known business people and pioneers and committed Muslims like the Kikiyan families, including Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiyan. The Gurāgēs’ religious growth was demonstrated by their involvement in the mosque building in Addis Ababa and by establishing and maintaining the work of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement in and out of Addis Ababa, particularly in the Oromia region where the 40 days *da‘wa* tour took place and where I did my participant observation as part of my research journey.

In organising and participating in the first Hābāša⁶⁸ Ijtima which took place at Butajira town, the Gurāgēs, particularly the Silte-Gurāgēs, were on the forefront and were very committed to it. They considered this as a fulfilment of the prophecy from the early fathers including Qatbare Sheikh Isa Hamza, and Haji Musa Kikiyan. Being migrant, successful traders, and peace-loving people made the Gurāgēs appropriate vectors for the spread of Tablīghī movement in Ethiopia. Their attitude and behaviour are easily adaptable to the teachings and practises of Tablīgh. Although many Gurāgēs are not in their homeland, their strong link with their homeland remains intact.

In Chapter four, the next chapter, we will explore the teachings, structure, and operational aspects of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in Ethiopia with its clear structural connection between the local, regional, and global levels of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movements.

⁶⁸ Hābāša is a term to refer to Ethiopians in the Islamic literatures. “Hābāša”, which means “people of mixed blood.” (Sudan Tribune, 18 February, by Magn Nyang 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR: Teaching, Structure, and Operation of Tablīghī

Jamā‘at in Ethiopia: Tablīghīs on the Move

1. Introduction

In this chapter, we explore the teachings, structure, and operation of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia which helps us to understand that Tablīghīs are on the move. The Tablīghīs teachings and lifestyle are more based on the six principles (*sifatu sita*) of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at and the teachings on the 20 etiquettes (*adabs*⁶⁹), which they claim developed from the Ḥadīth and lives of the companions (*hayatu saḥābas*). The Tablīghī should observe all the necessary rules and regulations of Islam.

It follows from the above that the operation of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, from its arrival on African soil, included Ethiopia as part of East Africa. It is also strongly linked to its South Asian origins, and the clear structural connection remains the same to date. The arrival of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia was in the early 1960⁷⁰. As one of my informants, Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris, President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council suggests about the beginning of Tablīghī Jamā‘at: ‘When Haji Muḥammad Sani Habib and I came from Dessie-Wallo to Addis Ababa in the early 1960s, that was the time the Indians came to Ethiopia with the Tablīgh teaching’ (Interview Mufti Umar 2021). Østebø suggests the 1970’s. This appears to be relative more to the history of the current *Markaz* (Headquarters) (Abdalah A. 2017: 290) It is worth noting that Ethiopia has

⁶⁹ (Mohammed W. H. 2014 p. 59) The 20 adabs have five major categories and each of them have four things: i) need to be maximized ii) minimized iii) not to be neglected iv) not to be interfered v) prohibited.

⁷⁰ (Mohammed W. H. 2015) 10-11 January, one of the speakers on the three-month *mashūra*, at the *Häbäša markaz*, was a close friend of the late Haji Musa Kikiya, who was the first to affiliate with TJ, has said: ‘this movement started before 54 years ago’, if that is the case, the arrival of TJ in Ethiopia is precisely in 1961.

strategic importance in the region because of its geographical position in East Africa in general and its historical contacts with Islam and Tablīghī Jamā‘at Movement in particular.

In the period from 28 June-8 August 2014, I had a chance to travel with the Tablīghī Jamā‘at people in Ethiopia in order to understand its teaching, structure, and operation. The travel was called the 40 days’ *da‘wa* tour or *khurūj fi sabilillah*, (call to Islam or going out in the way of Allāh), but it took 42 days, including a proper introduction and conclusion. I was given permission to join the *jamā‘a* (team), which was comprised of all Muslims who are committed to following the footsteps of the Prophet, and ready to bring Islamic renewal through the mission. The majority of the *jamā‘a* members were ethnic Gurāgēs, including the *amīr* (leader). Even though the travel took place in the land of the Oromos, many of the adherents in the area we visited were Gurāgēs and the leadership of the movement remains in the hands of the Gurāgēs at all levels. The main reason for this is that the early leaders of the movement were mainly Gurāgēs, with the first *amir*, Haji Musa, who was of Eritrean origin, excepted. However, because of Musa’s religious affiliation and involvement in trading, his contact with the Gurāgēs at a place called *Marcato* (market place) was great. This people group is well known in trade and scattered throughout Ethiopia. The Oromo affiliation with Salafi hindered the Tablīghī movement from flourishing like within the Gurāgēs. In my visit, 7 August 2016, to the global markaz of Tablīghī Jamā‘at⁷¹, at Nizamuddin, New Delhi, I met 3 Ethiopians who had been there for about four months, who were ethnic Gurāgēs.

⁷¹ (Mohammed W. , Field Notes: Centres Visit: Ethiopia, India and Bangladesh, 2016). This visit took place in August 2016. Mainly to visit centres and *markazes*. Islamic University with 6,000 students and 300 teachers at Dārul Uloom Deoband, India and global *markaz* Nizamudin New Delhi. And a centre with 2,000 students and 100 teachers, called Al Jamaah al Rahma niya al Arabiya Muḥammad-Pur Dhaka, Bangladesh and Kakrail, Dhaka the national *markaz* of Bangladesh.

On the 40 days *da'wa* tour in Ethiopia, I developed a good relationship among the Tablighīs. The 40 days were very helpful in my stay with them. I have repeatedly been asked by their leaders to accept Islam before joining this trip as well as after completing the trip, at the time of the concluding remark, *hidāya* (debriefing, and guidance). My response was and will continue to be, 'I am here to do my research, not to accept Islam. If I accept Islam, then, how can I be fair in my research journey?' My Tablighī friends promised to continue praying for me, so that I would accept Islam, and I, also, continue to pray to complete my research journey smoothly with the Ethiopian Tablighīs.

My role was that of a participant observer. When I tried to interview the Tablighīs, including their leaders at the national headquarters (*Hābāša Markaz*), their one response was, 'Come and see. We have nothing to tell you. It's all about practise and lifestyle. We are not interested in media and literature or any publicities.' Hence, my choice of this approach.⁷² Masud also commented on the need for participation in his preface to the volume which he edited, 'Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighī Jamā'at as transnational Islamic movement for faith renewal.'

The movement has no official writings and discourages interviews with the elders. Accounts written by the Tablighīs are often far from objective. This volume offers studies of the Jamā'at by scholars who have watched activities very closely for a considerable length of time, and most of them have personally participated in those activities. Masud (2000: Viii)

Wario, who did his thesis on the Borana of Northern Kenya, and other researchers as well, had a similar response from the Tablighīs. According to one of Wario's informants:

⁷² (Manson 2002: 85) suggests, the reasons to deploy participation observation is to understand the community and to acquire meaningful knowledge about it. Colorado State University (CSU) guide (1993-2013: 2) states, 'What is agreed upon is that qualitative observational research is a systematic inquiry into the nature or qualities of observable group behaviours to learn what it means to be a member of that group.'

There is no one who can tell you chronologically the growth of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Kenya. In the movement, there is no documentation. *Wazee*, the elders discourage documentation. They do not approve of even things were doing here for studies/reference. They refuse. For example, the *sitta siffat*, one can write the whole principles that I have told you in a book form so that it can be read for future. The elders say no. Those are dead words. Once something has been written it becomes dead. That is what they say. It is said that the practises become less once it has been written and the efforts would be less. But if it remains oral and practical, you learn it through mobility and effort of *da‘wa*.⁷³ (Wario 2012:89)

Tablīghīs almost always try to avoid such a practise of documentation. When it comes to their internal documentation, they are careful and do their job properly. ‘If you want to understand what is going on in the world of Tablīghīs, just come, and join us and see,’ is the usual reply. Of course, it took me about nine months to get permission from and to build trust with the leaders at the national *markaz* (headquarters)⁷⁴ which is situated in the centre of Addis Ababa at a place called Quoas-Meda. I felt that unless I became involved in the 40 days of *da‘wa* tour and employed the participant observation, there was no way of doing ethnographic research on this particular group. While I was travelling with the *jamā‘a* (team), I took notes, paying close attention to what they do, how they do it and why they do it. With teaching in the mosques excepted, I also participated in several roles as one of the *jamā‘a* members. These roles included *ziyara* (visiting Muslim homes), *khidma* (purchasing food items and cooking), *hirāsa* (guarding), and taking part in *ta‘līm*, which is reading work from the English version of *faza‘il al amal* (the Tablīghī text). I also participated in translating it into Amharic, in addition to studying the Qur‘ān, the

⁷³ (Wario, ‘Networking the Nomads: A Study of Tablīghī Jamā‘at among the Borana of Northern Kenya’. PhD Thesis, 2012) As one of his informants explained the issue of discouraging any written form of material in relation with the TJ.

⁷⁴ National *markaz* of Ethiopian *Tablīghī Jama‘at*. Currently, called *Hābāša markaz*, the term, *Hābāša* represents Ethiopians, but, according to Islamic mapping of the world, the land of *Hābāša* includes, some parts of East, West and Central Africa.

ḥadīth and *hayātu saḥābas* (the story of the companions of Muḥammad) with the help of our *amīr* who is a very experienced Tablīghī.

Given our small budget, which came from the voluntary contributions by the *jamā'a* members themselves, the quality of the food was reasonable. A wasteful lifestyle was strictly prohibited. Whatever we prepared, food or beverages must be consumed. According to the etiquettes of eating (*adab al-ta'ām*), proper use of resources is highly encouraged and is believed to bring about blessings. At the end of every meal, eating the leftovers, from the dish as well as the mat, and licking our fingers were routinely practised. According to the *ḥadīth*, wasting food (*isrāf*) is considered unlawful.

For 40 days' *da'wa* trip ETB 1,500-2,000 (USD 75-100) is expected to be paid upfront. For 4 months, in the country minimum ETB, 5,000 (USD 250) and *da'wa* abroad ETB 10,000 (USD 500) must be in place as the first instalment, which is handled and administered in a proper manner and with clear accountability. At the end of the tours, the remaining balance would be equally divided amongst the team members by the *amīr*. The number of our team (*jamā'a*) members were 14, some of whom were returnees, whilst others first-timers projected a certain commitment to return, or even plan for *da'wa* to Nizamudin, India. Ayub, my friend, participated during July-August 2016. Ayub visited Nizamudin for 40 days and practised the global flavour and connection of the Tablīghī Jamā'at.

2. Tablīghīs Teaching in Ethiopia

The Tablīghī teachings in Ethiopia are based on the oral transmission, as it is believed this will strengthen the movement. The teaching emphasises the six points/principles (*siffatu sitta*) of the Tablīghī Jamā'at. However, little booklets in Amharic language are becoming available. Some of these booklets are: *Al-da'wah wa Tablīgh* by Ustaz Abubakar AbdAllāh: n.d., *Al Ḥadīth Al Munthab* by Ustaz Muḥammad Jamal and Ustaz

Abubakar AbdAllāh: 2012, ‘*ykhārijin sinq*’ by Abdulawal Bashir: 2016 and *Sidistu Bahriwoch: Sifatu Sita* by Ustaz Muḥammad Jamal Gonafir: 2017. When Tablīghīs teach and explain the six points, they stick with the most important points. However, its explanation will differ with each of the teachers. Though part of the concepts of the Orthodox Islam is included, the Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s missed some of the basics. From The Five Pillars of Islam, the teachings of *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), and *Zakat* (alms giving) are neglected. From the Six Articles of Faith, believing in the Books and Angels are not dealt with accordingly, which sometimes left the Tablīghīs vulnerable for critics who might state that they wish to replace the Six Articles with their six points.

2.1 The Tablīghīs Six Virtues/ Principles/ Points (*Sifatu Sita*)

According to the *Al-da‘wa wa Tablīgh*, Amharic booklets relative to the six principles are considered as the six marvellous virtues of the companions (*ṣaḥāba*) of Prophet Muḥammad and are listed as follows.

2.1.1 Kalīma Tayyiba/qal-tawhid

The first virtue focuses strongly on believing in the oneness of God (*qal-tawhid*). The implication of this belief is that there is no one except Allāh whom we subdue when we face and are passing through suffering, or whenever we are in need of His help. Our leader is Muḥammad, the messenger sent for the worlds, and no one could come after him. The purpose of this first virtue is to assist us to strongly believe that Allāh has the power and ability to help us without any help or causes from the creatures; and the creatures, unless Allāh helps and his will is included, having everything, will not help us to accomplish anything.

Allāh is omnipotent to satisfy hunger without food, satisfy thirst without water, grant healing without medicine, and provide fruit without a tree. Allāh can create a child without parents and care-taking, grow plants without rain, and burn a thing without a

fire. Allāh is able to fulfil our needs without having any causes. Through suffering, Allāh can make us honoured. Through honouring, He could make us fail. Allāh interchanges success in the face of chaos, chaos in the face of success, and peace in the middle of fear. Allāh can make a few people who are not armed fare well on the many who are well armed and equipped. All the ups and downs in our lives are in the Hands of Allāh. In times of honour or when fallen, health or sickness, profit or risk, calmness or fear, joy and sadness, peace or war, victory or loss, poverty or wealth, cheerfulness or grief, without seeking any help from anyone and without looking for any causes, Allāh can accomplish it all only by Himself. All creatures are in need of Allāh's help because of the way they are created and function. No one has ownership rights on any single point of elements on earth and in the heavens. Pertaining to life and death, resurrection after death is not in the hands of creatures. No one can defend and avoid any destruction to humans. If someone wanted to use all the tools including fire, sea, aeroplanes, ships, vehicles, factories, business centres, gold and silver, army weapons, they should have Allāh's will. According to Allāh's will, He will use it as He wishes. Once Allāh predestined a man for damage, poverty, sickness or sadness, no creature or cause could stop Allāh to implement what He planned on that man.

As part of the first virtue, ratifying Muḥammad as a messenger is absolutely vital. To reach to prosperity and success (*falāh* and *najāh*), one must strongly believe in the tradition/practise (*sunna*) of Prophet Muḥammad and follow his footsteps to make his sunna alive. Not observing the life-style of Prophet Muḥammad wholeheartedly will lead one to be unsuccessful, bankrupt, and experience destruction. If people lack material wealth but manage their lifestyle and day to day activities for 24 hours, modelling the Prophet Muḥammad, they are the owner of success. But, if people fail to manage their life according to the leading of Prophet Muḥammad, having material wealth can not bring victory and success. Help and support is from Allāh, as Allāh

told us, not like with those who have material power and strength as owners of modern equipment, but with those who are the owners of faith and fear of Allāh (*īmān* and *taqwā*). Allāh says: ‘Before you [Muḥammad], We sent messengers, each to their own people. They brought them clear proof and then We punished the evildoers. We make it Our duty to help the believers’ (Sura Al-Rum 47).

In the Qur’ān and Hadith several blessings are mentioned. A few are here: i) Zayd Ibn Arqam transmitted, and reported by Tobrani: ‘Who says, there is no deity except Allāh, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh (*la ‘ilāha ‘illa-llāh muḥammadun rasūlu llāh*). With perfect honesty and integrity one will enter paradise (*janna*).’ And the Prophet was asked, ‘What is the required perfect honesty and integrity?’ ‘Protect from pushing Allāh’s boundary,’ he answered. ii) transmitted by Abu Hurayira and reported by Tirmizi: ‘A slave could not say, *la ilāha ‘illa-llāh muḥammadun rasūlu llāh*, unless the doors of the heaven opened up to the Throne (*Arsh*). However, to own this grace, one must be protected from the greatest crimes.’ iii) Umar said, ‘I heard the following from the Messenger of Allāh: ‘I know a single word, ‘*la ‘ilāha ‘illa-llāh*’. Someone who said this word is not going to die in the hereafter.’ (reported by Hakim). iv) Some of the Benefits of saying Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh (*muḥammadun rasūlu llāh*), Allāh says: ‘Who is obedient to the Messenger, indeed he is obeying Allāh.’ ‘Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys God. If some pay no heed, We have not sent you to be their keeper’ (al-Nisa 80). The Messenger of Allāh has spoken the following, transmitted by Irbad Ibnu Sariyah: ‘Follow those genuine leaders who followed my example and footsteps and hold firmly their legacy’ (reported by Abu-Dawd and Tirmizi). v) as transmitted by Anas, said the Messenger: ‘Who love my footsteps loves me. He who loved me will enter paradise (*janna*)’ (Reported by Tirmizi). vi) as Abdalah Ibn Amir transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Someone among you whose emotion and need is not in line with the message I

brought, he is not believing.’ vii) as Abu Hurayira transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘When my people are spoiled, those who strongly hold my tradition (*sunna*) will be provided with 100 times equivalent of blessing (*minda/ajr*) with martyrs (*shahīds*).’ (reported by Bayhayaq). viii) Abu Sayd Al Khudry transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Who eats lawful (*ḥalāl*) food, practising my customary practise (*sunna*), people trust him that he is not an evil-doer, will enter paradise (*janna*).’ (reported by Tirmizi). ix) Bilal Ibn Al Haris transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘After my death someone who makes a single sunna alive, he will be rewarded as equal with those who have done like me, without losing any little part’ (reported by Tirmizi).

‘Oh respected readers, how can this unshakable faith (*yaqīn*) be immersed in our hearts? We must strive highly and say much of (*la ‘ilāha ‘illa-llāh*). Call people to have a similar unshakable faith. And we are expected to pray and ask Allāh to receive graciously this unshakable faith. If we manage to do this, the unshakable faith will be created in our hearts.’

This first virtue, Kalīma Tayyiba of Tablīghī Jamā‘at teaching, has lots of redundancy both in writings and speech. However, the main message is focused on the acceptance of Allāh and His Prophet Muḥammad as well as propagating this to others. The way of propagating is through touching base where people live in rural and urban areas. People are told to give more attention for the coming world instead of the world we live in.

2.1.2 Prayer (*ṣalāt*)

The second virtue of Tablīghīs teaching, as explained in the Tablighi booklet, demands patience and to perform the prayer in an organised way. Receiving the oneness of Allāh (*qal-tawhid / Kalīma*) is ratifying to be subjugated to Allāh. The second characteristic of companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*) was performing prayer

(*ṣalāt*) in an organised manner, with humble and fear (*khush'* and *khud'*) as well as demonstrating a practical interpretation of submitting to Allāh. The *ṣaḥāba* and us are prostrating. But, they prostrate in an organised and highly fearful way. Always they wait eagerly for *ṣalāt*. They were also confident that Allāh will fulfil any of their prayer requests. Our *ṣalāt* must be like the way of the Prophet Muḥammad and similar with his companions. Our faith on *ṣalāt* must become solid, observing *ṣalāt* accordingly with regard to time and the necessary etiquettes, and without missing one prostration in team gatherings and with a reverent spirit. We continue our effort through doing a call to Islam and outing in the way of Allāh (*da'wa* and *khurūj*).

The Messenger told us that *ṣalāt* has several benefits. A few are the following: i) Abu Hurayira transmitted: 'At the Last Day (*Yawm al-Qiyāma*) a man will be asked from his records, firstly, about *ṣalāt*. If his *ṣalāt* is found perfect, he is successful. If not perfect, he is lost, and covered with a shameful cover' (Reported by Tirmizi and Nasai). ii) Umar wrote a letter to his colleagues, 'From all what you do, *ṣalāt* has the greater consideration before me. He who did his prostration, *ṣalāt*, accurately has kept his faith well. He who lost his *ṣalāt*, not prostrated accurately, nothing hinders him to make mistakes in other commands of Allāh' (Malik wrote in his Kitab called *Muwatoe*). iii) Ibn Masued transmitted: 'I asked the Messenger of Allāh: 'Which one is greater from all good deeds? Performing *ṣalāt* on time', he answered. (reported by Bukhari and Muslim). iv) Abu Hurayira transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'The five times prayers (*ṣalāts*) and Friday to Friday (*jumu'a*) prayers could cancel crimes, so long as greater crimes didn't happen' (Reported by Muslim). v) Abu Hurayira said, 'I heard the Messenger of Allāh who spoke the following: 'Please tell me, one among you who have a river flow on his footsteps of his home and washed five times a day. Is there any dirt on his body?' They answered, 'Nothing dirt on him.' This is an example of the five times daily prayer (*ṣalāt*), because of this, Allāh will

clean the crimes’ (reported by Bukhari and Muslim). vi) Buraydah transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Tell to the people who are going to the mosque in the dark; ‘At the Last Day (*Yawm al-Qiyāma*) they will be the owner of Full-Light’ (reported by Abu Dawd and Tirmizi). vii) Ibn Masued spoken like this: ‘Someone who wanted to meet Allāh as a Muslim, let him perform the Five-Times prayer (*ṣalāts*) in gathering (*jamā‘a*) properly. Allāh showed the straight path to your Prophet. These Five Times Daily Prayers are included in this straight path. If you perform *ṣalāt* at your homes, you are doing just like with lawbreakers and neglecting the customary practise (*sunna*) of the Prophet. Neglecting the sunna is missing the straight path. An acceptable *ṣalāt* demands that one strive greater and put forth more effort. We need to develop performing the obligatory act of prayers (*farḍ ṣalāts*) in Friday gathering (*jumu‘a*). Making longer the piety (*qunoot*), immersed in the fear of Allāh, and perform *ṣalāt* with extra prayers (*nafla ṣalāt*), and bring any of our issues through *ṣalāt* to Allāh and ask Him in order to bring this wonderful virtue is what is expected from us. Until we develop solid faith (*yaqīn*) on our *ṣalāt* and until our *ṣalāt* can be used for any issues, we should continue our struggle. We will call people to *ṣalāt*; and ask Allāh so that He graciously provides us the perfect *ṣalāt*.

2.1.3 Knowledge and Remembrance (*‘Ilm and Dhikr*)

This is the third virtue of the Tablīghīs teaching in Ethiopia and also considered as the third characteristic of the companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*). Knowledge (*‘ilm*) is explained here in a way that enables us to lead our life according to *sharī‘a*. Also, the knowledge of *sharī‘a* helps us to understand the will of Allāh, and teaches us how to perform Allāh’s command, and tells us of the blessing through fulfilling this command in all matters of life. Each and every Muslim should know how to discern the will of Allāh in every issue and the method of the Prophet and how it was practised

(*sunna*). Each Muslim should also learn to differentiate truth from false and good from evil.

The following excerpts from the Tablighi booklet indicates the benefits of knowledge (*'ilm*): The Prophet told us several benefits of *'ilm*. A few are the following: i) Mawiyah transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Allāh will provide faith (*Dīn*) to whom He wants to have good things' (reported by Bukhari and Muslim). ii) Abu Hurairah transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Who begins a journey to find knowledge, Allāh makes it easy his journey of paradise' (reported by Muslim). iii) Ibn Abas transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'A scholar (*'ālim*) is a great challenge for Satan (*shayṭān*) more than one thousand worshipers and subdue to Allāh (*'ābids*)' (reported by Tirmizi). iv) Abu Umamh transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'A scholar (*'ālim*) who is greater than a worshiper of Allāh (*'ābid*), the point of greatness the scholar has is similar with what I have in terms of greatness with who is the least among you.' The Messenger also said: 'Allāh and Angels; the inhabitants of heavens and earth; an ant which live in the cliff and a fish in the sea, all wishes the mercy (*solwat*) of Allāh on the scholar (*'ālim*) who teaches good' (reported by Tirmizi). v) The Messenger of Allāh spoke this which I listened to it, as Abudardan transmitted: 'To whom who started searching for knowledge (*'ālim*) Allāh will make it his journey easier to paradise. Because the Angels become happy on the one who searches for knowledge, they will put down their wings. Creatures in heavens and earth, including serpents in the water will ask Allāh for mercy upon the knowledge seeker. A scholar (*'ālim*) is greater than a worshiper of Allāh (*'ābid*) in a way that the sun is greater than the moon. The scholars (*'ulamā'*) are inheritors of the prophets. Prophets did not leave money to be inherited, but knowledge. He who has knowledge holds fragrant' (reported by Abu Dawd).

‘Invite the scholars (*‘ulamā’*) and listen to their teachings. Always be where knowledge is available, call people so that they can search for knowledge, ask Allāh in order to receive important knowledge from Him. These are the few strategies of owning knowledge. Knowledge (*‘ilm*) is light. Remembering Allāh (*dhikr*) is the fortress in order to be protected from evil. For this reason, knowledge and the remembrance of Allāh (*‘ilm and dhikr*) should be integrated. The purpose of remembrance of Allāh (*dhikr*) through understanding the Sovereignty of Allāh, immersed by His Love and fear, cleaning the heart (*qalb*) from worldly (*dunyā*) dirt and rubbish, and be clean from the bad features of the crimes.’

Benefits of the remembrance of Allāh (*dhikr*): In the Hadith, it was told that *dhikr* has several benefits. A few of them are the following: i) Abu Dardah transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Shall I point you to a practise which could prevail greater blessing? the Prophet asked. And people said yes. Before Allāh the most loved practise which makes your status higher is not giving gold and silver; and not cutting the neck of the enemies in the middle of the war. But, it is remembrance of Allāh (*dhikr*)’, the Prophet answered (Reported by Ahmad and Tirmizi). Muaz added and transmitted the following: This is the last speech I heard before the farewell of the Messenger of Allāh: ‘I said to the Prophet, what is the most loved practise before Allāh?’ ‘Dying with the wet tongue by remembering Allāh.’ The Prophet answered’ (reported by Ibn Hibana and Bayihaqiy). Muaz Ibn Jobir also transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Son of man didn’t practise anything more than *dhikr* which can protect him from the torment of funeral’ (Reported by Ahmad). In order to be the one who remember Allāh (*dhākir*), using the following strategy is important to make remembrance of Allāh (*dhikr*) part of our life: everyday recite three types of Glorification of Allāh (*tasbīh*). i) repeatedly saying 100 times of ‘Glory and praise be to Allāh, there is no Allāh but Allāh, and Allāh is the greatest, and there is no power

except with Allāh.’ (*‘Subḥānallah walhamdu lillah wala’illah’illah- walhu akbar wala hwl walqwtā ilābillillah’*) ii) repeatedly saying 100 times of (*solwat*) on the prophet iii) repeatedly saying 100 times of asking Allāh for mercy, (*istighfār*) push and encourage people to do remembrance of Allāh (*dhikr*).

2.1.4 Honour for Muslims (*ikramel muslim*)

Honouring Muslims is the fourth virtue of the Tablīghīs teaching in Ethiopia. This is also the fourth characteristic of the companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*), according to the Tablīghīs booklet. The purpose of honouring Muslims is to create strong bonds of love between Muslims. We should never offend a Muslim with our hands or tongues. We should beautify our ethics, and give more attention to preserve the Muslims right/the truth (*al-ḥaqq*).

It is mentioned in the Hadith that honouring and appreciating Muslims has several benefits. A few statements from the Hadith are mentioned here: i) Abu Hurayira transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh spoke the following: ‘Someone who remove one of the believers (*mu’min*) burden, Allāh will remove one burden from him. Who help someone in trouble, then Allāh will cover or stops (*yikatiral*) his shames (*nawr*) here in the world and the hereafter (*dunyā* and *ākhirā*). Unless the slave stops helping his brother Allāh did not stop helping His slave’ (reported by Muslim). ii) Anas transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Someone among you, what he desire for him, should desire for his brother, if he doesn’t, he is not yet believe’ (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim). iii) Abu Musa transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘The believers are like strongly bonded building’ (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim). iv) Ibn Umar transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Who he dealt with his brother’s issue, Allāh will dealt with his issue’ (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim). What is expected from us, in order to gain all these benefits: respect the elderly, sympathetic

for the younger, appreciate our scholars, and always provide important advise to Muslims and to teach them.

2.1.5 Sincerity of Intention (*Ikhlas Niyya*)

Sincerity of intention is the fifth virtue of the Tablighi teaching in Ethiopia. This is also considered as the fifth characteristic of the companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*), according to the Tablighi booklet. The purpose of this characteristic is accomplishing our work in sincerity (*ikhlas*) and intention through accomplishing good deeds only for the sake of Allāh. Whatever we do, it must be clean from a worldly (*dunyā*) goal, with the disease of being showy and looking for publicity (*riyā*) in order to get acceptance from Allāh. This characteristic will help to accomplish these goals.

The importance of sincerity (*ikhlas*) is explained by several statements of the Qur’ān and of prophetic writings. A few are mentioned here: i) ‘Is it not Allāh that sincere devotion is due?’ (*Sūrah Al-Zumar* v. 3). ii) ‘Verily it is We Who have revealed the Book to thee in truth: so serve Allāh, offering Him sincere devotion’ (*Sūrah Al-Zumar* 2). iii) ‘And they have been commanded no more than this. To worship Allāh, offering Him sincere devotion. (*Al-Bayyinah* v. 5) The following Hadith also mentioned: iv) Umar transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘The work is evaluated by intention (*niyya*). Every person will find what he intended. If his refuge is to Allāh and the Messenger, his refuge is to Allāh and the Messenger. But his refuge is for worldly benefits or to marry a woman then his refuge is that he was taken to refuge’ (reported by Bukhari and Muslim). v) Abu Hurayira transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Allāh does not see your physical appearance or beauty, what He sees is your heart’ (reported by Muslim). vi) Sawban transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Those who accomplish their duties with sincerity and intention are lucky. They are light of the straight path. Because of them obstacles of the dark will be removed’ vii) Abu

Hurayira transmitted as he heard when the Messenger of Allāh spoken the following: ‘Allāh will put seven people under the shade where any other shade is available. When the right hand give alms if the left hand didn’t see, that person is one of them’ (reported by Bukhari and Muslim). In order to obtain sincerity (*ikhhlās*) and intention (*niyya*) as well as purity: to be equipped with wonderful sincere (*ikhhlās*) and through the cleanness of intentional (*niyya*) character and raise up to accomplish ethical practise. Then we should examine our hearts (*qalb*) to understand that for whom we are doing what we are doing. In order people have a corrected intention, we do a call to Islam (*da‘wa*). We do strive to all our action with sincerity (*ikhhlās*). In this way, the wonderful character of sincerity (*ikhhlās*) will come into ourselves.

2.1.6 Spare Time Going Out in the Way of Allāh (*khurūj fī-sabilillah*) to make alive and extend Islamic Faith (*Dīn al-Islām*)

The sixth virtue of the Tablīghīs teaching in Ethiopia is also considered as the sixth characteristic of the companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*). According to the Tablīghīs booklet of the Amharic language version, the purpose of a call to Islam and convey a message, and going-out (*da‘wa and Tablīgh and khurūj*) is to make alive the Islamic faith (*Dīn al-Islām*). Through this effort, Islam, which is the result of the Prophet’s effort, will become alive and Islam will be extended.

The benefits of *da‘wa and Tablīgh* is explained in the following Qur’ānic verses: i) ‘Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allāh, works righteousness, and says, ‘I am of those who bow in Islam’? (*Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* or v. 33) ii) ‘Say thou: ‘This is my way: I do invite unto Allāh-on evidence clear as the seeing with one’s eyes-I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allāh! And never will I join gods with Allāh!’ (*Sūrah Yūsuf* v. 108) iii) ‘O Prophet! Truly we have sent thee as a Witness, a Bearer

of glad tidings, and Warner-And as one who invites to Allāh's (Grace) by His leave, and as a Lamp spreading light' (*Al Aḥzab* vs. 45-46).

The following Hadiths explain the benefits of *da'wa and Tablīgh*: i) Abu Hurayira transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Someone who calls people to the straight path and followed him will secure similar blessings with those who followed him. This cannot minimize their blessings' (Reported by Muslim). ii) Sahil Ibn Saed transmitted the Messenger said to Ali: 'If Allāh led someone through you to the straight path, you will have a price more than the red camel' (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim). iii) Abu Masoud al-Ansoari transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Who he pointed to the good path will secure as equal with the follower of it' (Reported by Muslim). iv) Ibn Masoud transmitted, I heard the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Someone one among us who heard a word and transmitted the message as it is, let Allāh mark Him bright. The one who received the message could understand the message more than the hearer' (Reported by Tirmizi). v) Abdallah Ibn Amir ibn Al-As transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Whatever you heard from me, even a single word, convey to those who didn't hear...who he spoke false on me, let him prepare his sit in fire' (Reported by Bukhari). vi) Abu Dardae transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh was asked: 'What level of a person should reach to be considered as knowledgeable of legal issue (*faqīh*)? Amongst my people (*ummat*) who studied 40 Hadith regarding the Islamic faith (*Dīn al-Islām*), at the Last Day (*Yawm al-Qiyāma*) Allāh will rise him and make him scholar (*ālim*). I will be intercessor and witness (*shafā'a* and *shāhid*) for him' (Reported by Bayhaqiy).

How can the Tablīghīs in Ethiopia show they embrace these six virtues/principles/teachings/points? The following is what they think and say about themselves:

We should build our character on these six virtues of companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*) so that we can influence and immerse other people and equip ourselves with

ethics of good intention (*niyya*), until the word of Allāh becomes superior, preached to one end of the world to the other end, relentlessly implement *khurūj* and *da‘wa* (going-out and a call to Islam). We believe that is a significant way of embracing the virtues. A person who goes out with this perfect, genuine, and honest intention (*niyya*) for *khurūj* will receive several benefits and blessings.

The religious justification given for performance of the six virtues/principles (*sifatu sitta*) by Tablighis include the following interpretation of Hadiths mainly by the Tablighis themselves. Though the common understanding of these Hadiths could be seen within Islam, the way of performing them is different.

- Anas transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘A journey which takes place in the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*) is greater than any of the worldly and gifts within the world’ (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).
- Abu Hurayira transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘The dust in the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*) and the smoke of Hell (*Jahannam*) never meets on a person at the same time’ (Reported by Abu Dawd).
- In other documentation, it was mentioned: ‘Stand firmly for an hour in the way of Allāh is greater than standing at prayer time of the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*) with worship’ which provided with remuneration (*ajr*).
- Usman transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh said: ‘Standing as a guard for an hour at the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*) greater than staying at home for 1000 days’ (Reported by Tirmizi).
- Fudoalat Ibn Ubayid transmitted, the Messenger of Allāh spoken: ‘Anybody who died, his account for his work will be turned out, a person excepted, who stood as a guard at the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*)’ (Reported by Abu Dawd and Tirmizi).

The companions of the Prophet gave their whole lives to the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*). Their time, knowledge, energy, money, etc was sacrificed for this holy practise. They worked very hard to reach the human race through the faith of Allāh (*Din*). Based on this, scholars (*ulamās*), each and every Muslims, learn how to extend the faith of Allāh (*Din*) and wisdom of calling people to Allāh and make them obedient to the command of Allāh and the Messenger (*Rasul*). In their lifetime he should go out for 4 months, 40 days, once in a year to perform *khurūj* and *da'wa*. Every week one should perform going arounds (*jaulas*), one in his own vicinity and the other to the area different from his own vicinity. One should also perform two knowledge seeking programmes (*ta'līms*), one at home and the other at the mosque, and he should follow up on this every day. One should also think how to mobilise people who live in his own vicinity for *khurūj* and *da'wa* as well as thinking how to prepare global teams (*jamā'a*). This time of thinking should preferably be between the afternoon and evening prayer (between *'aṣr* and *'ishā'*).

In most cases, the Tablīghīs in Ethiopia teach and convey all these messages orally. However, sometimes they use their little booklet in order to follow the sequences. Though the Tablīghīs are saying that they are not interested in writings or documents, these teaching materials are translated and prepared and printed in the local languages, which justifies the thought that the Tablīghīs are becoming quite interested in writing materials rather than utilizing only oral traditions. Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris, who is the current President of Ethiopian Islamic Affairs General Council, is very much comfortable with the Tablīghīs movement and also commends their inclination to education. Mufti Umar is not critical of the Tablīghīs as he commends some of the activities taking place among the them.

2.2 The Six Points of Tablīghīs Teaching with Regard to the Orthodox Islam

The Tablīghī teachings consist of Six Points: 1) *khalimatu toyba* (sacred pledge of man with Allāh) 2) *ṣalāt* (prayer, five times a day) 3) *'ilm and dhikr* (knowledge and

remembrance) 4) *ikramel Muslim* (honour for a Muslim) 5) *ikhlās niya* (sincerity of intention) 6) *khuruj fi-sabilillah* (going out in the way of Allāh) which, in other literature is called, *tafrigh-i-waqt* (to spare time) which refers to the same activity of *da‘wa* and known by the Tablīghīs, *sifatu sita*. Not only by the Tablīghīs, but by the well-known Ethiopian Artist, Teddy Afro, *sifatu sita* is mentioned in connection with the ten commandments. In one of his songs, Teddy mentioned the *sifatu sita* with regard to a love relationship between a Muslim and a Christian. In the Ethiopian context, cross-religious marriage is not a surprise. It is well practised by many. The song states⁷⁵:

...*tāwado yālābāti isilamī kirīisitiyanu* Where Muslims and Christians are in affection
tāzānāgašī inūde itiyopiya Its’ Ethiopia, did you forget that,
anīčimī bayīmanotšī inemī bayīmanote You remain in your religion and I remain in mine too
mānorī inīčīlalānī ayīt ‘ābānīmī bete We can live together my house is not narrow.
kalīwāt ‘ahu kasīritu kāsifatu sita If I don’t violet the Ten commandments and sifatu sita
anīčini bāmāwidāde ayiqotumī geta!... The Lord would not be angry because I love you!...

(Afro, Shiemendafer Song 3rd track June 2005).

The overall teaching of the Orthodox Islam is summarized with the five pillars of Islam: *shahāda* (affirmation), *ṣalāt* (five times daily prayer), *sawm* (fast), *zakāt* (almsgiving), and the *hajj* (pilgrimage). As well, it can be summarized with the six beliefs of Islam: tawhid (the oneness of Allāh), Angels, Prophets, Books, the predestination of Allāh, and belief in the Last Days. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s 1st and 2nd points are similar with *tawhid*, *shahāda*, and *ṣalāt*. However, the other four points are not found in the teachings of the Orthodox Islam. The main points of Tablīghī Jamā‘at teachings are very clear, simple and have no contradiction with Orthodox Islam, even though they are considered as *bida*

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(innovation) by *Salafīs* (Nuru: 22 November 2015).⁷⁶ One of my informants from Salafi puts the whole Tablīghī Jamā‘at teachings and operations as heretical and regards the six points of Tablīghī Jamā‘at as a replacement of the five pillars of Islam.

2.3 Ta‘līm (study group) and Home-Based Ta‘līm (the Breath of the Movement)

Ta‘līm is a study group organised to seek knowledge with the aim of recognising the benefits of good ethics and recognising the harmfulness and distraction of the bad side. The purpose of *ta‘līm* is to prepare hearts to be touched by the speech of Allāh and Prophet Muḥammad and also to understand the full knowledge of Islamic faith (*Dīn*) in order to create a genuine feeling. The Tablīghīs sit in a small group and read from the Qur‘ān, *ḥadīth*, *faza‘il-E-A‘maal*, and *hayatu Saḥāba* (stories of the Companions of the Prophet) in order to learn from the life style of the early days of *Saḥāba* (Companions of Muḥammad). *Ta‘līm* could take place at a mosque or *markaz* (Tablīghī Jamā‘at centre/headquarters) as well as at homes of respective families.

According to the Tablīghīs booklet, translated, *Ta‘līm* has several benefits. i) one of the *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abdalah Ibnu Umar, a messenger of Allāh was passing through beside two groups of people. Then said: ‘Both groups are doing good things. However, one is better than the other. The first group was doing prayer (*dua*) and supplication to Allāh. If Allāh wants to give what they are asking for He can give or if Allāh is not willing He won’t give them. The other group is seeking the science of the application of the *Sharī‘a (fiqh)*, and other religious knowledge as well as transferring what they know to

⁷⁶ (Nuru U. , 2015). One of my informants from Salafi puts the entire TJ teachings and operation as heretic, even he said, ‘the TJs are Shayṭān, they are not Muslims.’

others. This group is better than the first. I was sent to as a teacher for humankind.’ After Prophet Muḥammad said this, he sat down with the teaching group.

ii) Umar Ibnu Abas transmitted the following Ḥadīth: ‘At the right side of Allāh, both hands are right hands. There are people with Him who are not Angels. Their faces are very shiny. Prophets and martyrs are appreciating the status and the nearness of these people with Allāh, I heard when the Prophet said. ‘Oh the messenger of Allāh, who are these people? asked the Prophet. ‘These people are members of different race and clan. They are coming together to remember Allāh. As someone who eat dates by choosing the good ones, these people also select and receive the good ones from the speeches which they heard,’ answered the Prophet.

iii) Umar said this: ‘There are three things in this world which we cannot live without: fasting in the day that the heat of the Sun is very strong, bowing down prayerfully to Allāh, and sitting at the place of *Ta’līm* (where studying and knowledge sharing in groups is taking place). Such powerful sayings are the motivations and driving forces for the Tablighis to justify and legitimise their practises in a way that imitates the life-style of the early days of Muslim Leaders.

Ta’līm has three goals in the life of *dā’īs* (Tablīghīs/ the one who does *da’wa*): i) to improve the ways of reading the Qur’ān in a manner of correct accent (*tajwidal Qur’ān*), Prophet Muḥammad said ‘Someone who read the Qur’ān according to the correct accent, is good and he will be with Angels who are obedient to Allāh’ (Bukhari and Muslim). ii) to develop practising good deeds through the reading of virtue of good deeds (*Faza’il-E-A’maal*) from the book written by Maulana Muḥammad Zakariyya, one of the Indian frontline Tablīgh leaders. Virtues must be listened always, if a *dā’ī* stops listening to virtues of good deeds (*faza’il-E-A’maal*) he might die. iii) to remember to the story of

Sahābas in light of the six principles in a way helpful to those who actively participate in the work of Tablīgh (dā'īs).

The primary purpose of having *ta'līm* is to gain knowledge: learning the *adabs* (etiquettes), reading from *hayatu Sahāba* (stories of the Companions of the Prophet), *faza'il –E- Amaal* and the *ḥadīth* are the main parts of *ta'līm* and teaching sessions. The above-mentioned talks and teaching materials are recited, chanted and discussed in many of study group (*ta'līm*) sessions. Islamic knowledge in general, *Tablīghī* six points in particular are encouraged to be discussed in the study groups Bashir (2016:28). quotes one of the companions of Muḥammad (*ṣahāba*), Abdullah ibn Masud, about seeking knowledge: 'When you grasp knowledge make sure that goal (*maqṣid*) should be a call from partnering Allāh to absolute certainty (*shirk* to *yaqin*); from pride to humility; from pretentious to integrity and faithfulness; from greedy of this world to yearning for the next world (*Ākhira*); and instead of sitting in the mosque (*masjid*) move around to call others to the faith of Islam (*Dīn*).' The basic teachings also can be memorized easily and are not difficult to explain to the novice *Tablīghīs*. While I was in the *da'wa* tour, there was a session for *ta'alim* (study group) taking place every morning between 10:00 am- 12:30 pm, which begins with reciting the *siffatu sitta* from memory.

The necessity of *ta'līm* in Islam in general and in the *Tablīghī* world in particular arises from the *ḥadīth*, where seeking knowledge is highly encouraged and considered as walking in the light. In one of the *Sahih* (reliable) Ḥadīth, Malik narrates:

Yahya related to me from Malik that he heard that Luqman al-Hakim made his will and counselled his son, saying, "My son! Sit with the learned men and keep close to them. Allāh gives life to the hearts with the light of wisdom as Allāh gives life to the dead earth with the abundant rain of the sky." (Knowledge Malik:: Book 59: Ḥadīth 59.1.1)

According to the Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s explanation of *ta‘līm*, where *ta‘līm* is taking place, there will be blessing (*barakah*) and light (*nūr*). Abdulhadi, our *amir*, in the 40 days *da‘wa* tour, explained the need for *ta‘līm* by quoting from the early days of Islam and connecting to the present days. ‘In the early days of Islam, Umar, who once tried to kill Muḥammad accepted Islam because of home based *ta‘līm*. The *masjid* of the Prophet was under the palm tree.’ Behind legitimization of various *Tablīghī* practises there is a creative appropriation and reinterpretation of events and rituals of early Islam from the conversion of Umar through *ta‘līm* to give rationale for going around and going out (*jaula* and *khurūj*). There is a saying amongst the Tablīghīs in Ethiopia, in relation with knowledge (*‘līm*): ‘From thousands of discernment (*karāmā*) integrity (*istiqāma*) is much better.’ Doing home based *ta‘līm* is always encouraged for the wives and children by presenting gifts (*ikrām*). *Ta‘līm* is a place for acquiring wisdom (*hikma*) which is compared to like a drop of water which leaks little by little. One of the etiquettes of *ta‘līm* is splitting men and women into different rooms or using the curtain as a divider and to never stop *ta‘līm* under any circumstances. Though the Ethiopian culture is highly male dominant, the gender hierarchy in the Tablīghī world is considerate to facilitate rooms for all family members. The Tablīghī system of sharing knowledge does not neglect any of the family members in order to bring the targeted religiosity and fulfilling the call of the Tablīghī movement to ‘Be Muslims’.

The etiquette of gathering for knowledge (*adab ḥalaqat ta‘līm*): This gathering has open and hidden etiquettes (*adabs*). Open etiquettes include ritual washing with water to be pure for the prayer (*wuḍū’*), use of perfume as ointment, a form of sitting (*tashūd*), not in a relaxing way of sitting, facing the person who is teaching and leading the session, and avoiding a sitting style which could invite sleeping. One should listen carefully, and don’t ask questions in the middle of the teaching session. Hidden etiquettes include a strong sense of believing that sitting for knowledge in gathering (*ḥalaqat ta‘līm*) is one of the

ways which provides success and joy (*falāḥ* and *najāḥ*) in this world and the hereafter (*dunyā* and *Ākhira*). Other tenets of these meeting are: Seeking the will and love of Allāh, dreaming of the greatness and sovereignty of Allāh, deciding all advises taken here to be put into practise, and teaching people to bring about transformation. Here, one can seek a cleaning of the heart (*qalb*) from thinking about this world. One can follow up all messages transmitted, hearing with full care and thoughtfulness. ‘Though we have been hearing for 100 times of what we are hearing now, better to listen considerately.’ At times of listening to good news one should be joyful. At times of listening to sad news, reflect sorrowfully. Whenever the name of Prophet Muḥammad is mentioned, reply by saying, ‘Peace be upon him.’ (*sallā’ llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) as sign of blessing (*salwat*).

As to the one who holds the book to read to the group, the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, it is expected to read repeatedly twice. Let the reader read the given commentaries (*sharḥs*). He should avoid adding his own opinions and emotions. Whenever the reader mentions the name of Allāh, let him say ‘Great is his Majesty (*jalla jalāluhu*) and His sovereignty reigns.’ When the reader mentions the name of the companions of Prophet Muḥammad (*Sahābas*), don’t forget saying ‘May Allāh be pleased with him (*radiya’ llahu ‘anhu*)⁷⁷.’ One must remember members of post *sahābas* generations (*Tābi’un/tābi’uoch*), religious leaders, great people, and scholars (*‘ālims*) and remember to not say, ‘May Allāh have mercy upon him.’

(*yraḥimahu’ llāh*). When the reader mentioned these words of mercy, he needs to motivate his listeners and following up with their emotion should be his main duty. This

⁷⁷ *radiya’ llahu ‘anhu* (may Allāh pleased with him) for male companions of the Prophet; *radiya’ llahu ‘anhā* (may Allāh pleased with her) for female and *radiya’ llahu ‘anhum* (may Allāh pleased with them) for plural use of mentioning the Prophet’s Companions. (Bewley 1998: 30).

gathering (*halaqa*) is a place where important counsel is spoken, not a place for debates on issues of the science of the application of the Sharī'a (*fiqh*).

2.4 The 20 Etiquettes (*adabs*) of Tablīghīs: the Key Practical Manual of Tablīghī Jamā'at's Movement in Ethiopia (the do's and don'ts)

The Tablīghīs have detailed rules and regulations for their practical operation of its mission. This full description is summarised and presented with an oral presentation called the 20 *adabs* (the 20 etiquettes) which are also divided into five main categories. Of course, the overall nature of these etiquettes is in line with the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad as mentioned in the Qur'ān 33:21 and 68:4 (Haleem, 2005).⁷⁸ The main five divisions of the *adabs* (etiquettes) include: i) things to be maximised, ii) things to be minimised, iii) things not to be neglected, iv) things not to be interfered and v) things not permitted (Mohammed W. H., Field Notes: 40 days' *da'wa* tour, 2014, p. 59).

- i) Things to be maximised:
 - *da'wa* (a call to Islam) must be maximised. Bashir further describes (Bashir, 2016: 84-91) that the work of *da'wa* is good and no one can reach it like we cannot reach the goodness of Allāh. Bashir explained the need for doing *da'wa* in a group and individually. Ethiopian Muslims in general and Tablīghīs in particular have high regard for participating in *da'wa*. With regard for the Tablīghīs, they do it as part and parcel of their life. They are very much committed and plan to do it every day, every week, every month and every year for days, weeks

⁷⁸ The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God and the Last Day and remember Him often. (Qur'ān 33:21) and (68:4) truly you have a strong character.

and months in and outside of Ethiopia. They also ready and happy to pay all the necessary costs including financial, time, and family responsibilities. My friend, Ayub, left for the 40 days *da'wa* tour when his wife Ikram was expectant and gave birth in his absence (Interview Ayub and Ikram 2018). As for me, this is amazing and confusing. What a commitment and a neglect! How can someone have missed when he was needed most?

- *ta'lim* must be maximised at all places including mosques and homes, in groups, and an individual basis. Though the Tablighīs are not high-level scholars, seeking knowledge is crucial and vital to the day to-day life and encouraged to maximize their effort in order to practise the necessary virtues of Tablighīs.
- *dhikr* (remembrance) through reciting of the names of Allāh must be always maximised. The Tablighīs are always practising to remember Allāh by reciting His name, striving to be far from the worldly and nearer to the hereafter, which make sense. However, sometimes they are busy with other things and trying to remember through reciting Allāh's names. It's a bit of a mystery how the Tablighīs manage such practises.
- *khidma* (serving others), including families, must be maximised anytime and anywhere. Serving others includes team members at *fi sabilillah* (in the way of Allāh), the leader (*amir*), and all Muslims who are in need of *khidma*. This practise needs to be encouraged and maximized as much as possible in a country like Ethiopia. As a country with lots of social, economic, and political problems which

left many people displaced, serving others (*khidma*) is very important.

The Tablighīs practise is well-known by being self-contained.

ii) Things not to be interfered with:

- When the Tablighīs are on *khurūj* (going out) talking or interfering in the issue of politics is strictly forbidden. However, one cannot be free from politics. In one way or another one finds himself or herself thinking, reflecting, and discussing politics. Not to talk political issues by itself could be considered as a political choice. In a country like Ethiopia where Muslim-Christian relations have passed through lots of ups and downs, how can a Tablighī-Muslim stop not to talk or to involve in politics. Of course, significant involvement or participation as Tablighīs could be controlled and realistic. But, individually, it is hard to stop it.
- No interference in the issue of *khilafas* (disputes) on Islāmic jurisprudence. Don't condemn others and don't be critical with your Muslim friends who have a different understanding of the Ḥadīths. This, no interference in the issues of Islamic doctrines, make sense. Tablighīs lack enough knowledge in the Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic theology.
- No interference in any issues of the mosques, no interference in *masjids haq* (belongings for mosques). This is useful for developing interpersonal skills for the Tablighīs. Without having enough knowledge and understanding of issues in specific mosques, trying to interfere might damage the work of Tablighīs.

- No interferences of the weaknesses of any particular area and arguments.

iii) Things not to be neglected:

- Obeying the leader (*amīr*) must not be ignored. The role of the *amir* is very important at all times. Though discussion and consultation is encouraged amongst the Tablighīs through having a daily meeting (*mashūra*), the final say remains with the leader (*amīr*). This pattern is similar with the early days of companions of the Prophet Muḥammad. So, sometimes the *amīr* might decide a serious decision, but it must be implemented by the team members.
- Respect and give priority for the *jamā'a* (team) purpose as well as preserving the personal *tartib* (schedule) at all times cannot be neglected. Private *ibāda* (worship) also must not be overlooked in any situations. The top priority must be given to the cause of the team without sacrificing personal commitments. This practise creates tension between the two. Sometimes individual worship practise might need more time and energy than the team. However, in any circumstances one cannot neglect prioritising the purpose of the *jamā'a* (team).
- Respect the masjid disciplines, because the *jamā'a* (team) is sitting, eating and sleeping in the masjid. Tablighīs are travellers, so the mosques are the only available accommodations and shelters while the *jamā'a* (team) are on the field. Neglecting such discipline might lead to destroy the whole purpose of the *da'wa* tour. I don't think that there is any other option without observing all the necessities in order to stay in that specific mosque and accomplishing the work of Tabligh harmoniously.

- *sabr* (patience) must not be ignored in any circumstances. Tablighīs are more patient compared with other Muslims. Tablighīs patience is demonstrated through all challenges at their respective *da'wa* tours. Tablighīs are not only good speakers, they are also good listeners with good manners, which reveals their patience. Their patience is proven by walking long distances on foot and sharing little meals while they travel for spreading the work of Tablighī Jamā'at.

iv) Things not permitted.

- *isrāf* (profusion), in any of its kind, is not allowed. Extending this practise to the community at large will be helpful in order to utilise resources wisely and economically. As one of the poor countries in the world, experiencing civil war among brothers has been a great hindrance to the use of the limited resources of the country. Ethiopians must learn a lot from this Tablighīs religious practise which needs to be considered as one of significant contributions towards the economic development of Ethiopia within the community and at the family level.
- *ishrāf* (covet) is not permitted. A Tablighī should not covet anything which is not part of his belongings. Coveting is sort of an inner motive which cannot be seen by other people. However, one who is really committed to the work of Tablighī Jamā'at Movement should discipline his inner motives to accomplish the requirements, including avoiding covetousness.
- Taking your brother belongings, without permission is not allowed. This discipline could be seen in light of 'Respect to Muslims' which is one of the Tablighīs virtues/principles. Taking any belongings without the knowledge or permission of the owner might lead to unnecessary

conflicts or could simply break the heart of the owner of that belonging, as the Tablighīs explained in their explanation of the do's and don'ts.

- Filthy and worldly talk are not allowed. At all times all the talks must be centred around or point to the hereafter instead of worldly issues. When *da'wa* tour takes place for days, weeks, or months each day is scheduled to implement religious duties accordingly. In this manner, one could say that, there is not enough time for having a filthy or worldly talk. However, there are limited spare time which can be abused by having such unhelpful talks. But, how can someone protect himself/herself from all sorts of worldly talk? When it comes to actual implementation, it's a bit difficult. But, the Tablighīs are trying to observe this while they are at *da'wa* tour.

v) Things to be minimized:

- too much food, eating more than we need, must be minimised. This is a healthy practise for people in any circumstances, including someone who is travelling for the religious cause.
- too much sleeping must be minimised. A balanced life style is important not only for the Tablighīs who are very committed to fulfil what they planned, but for the rest of us. Naturally, our body demands about 8 hours of sleep and the remaining for work and relaxation, though relaxation is considered as worldly by the Tablighīs.
- Without having a good reason, going out and coming into the mosques must be minimised. Purposeful movement where *da'wa* tour is taking place is essential. When the Tablighīs are staying together at the mosque or going out for their task, all the team members must stay

together unless the leader (*amīr*) of the *jamā'a* (team) allows any movements outside the mosque. If the move is without having a specific purpose, like walking around, that's strictly forbidden. However, walking around to perform some sort of reflection and manifestation of the Divine (*fikr*) with regard to that specific area, that's is part of the work of Tablīghīs which needs to be maximized.

- Gossiping and worldly engagement must be minimised. In the world of Tablīghīs, instead of gossiping, talking frankly between brothers (*aḥbab*) is absolutely vital and it helps to strengthen fellowship and unity amongst the *jamā'a* (team) members. Worldly engagement is a broad term. However, anything which diverts from the main purpose of the Tablīghīs work is considered a worldly engagement.

2.5 Ya-Ubayy Firewoch ya-Qur'ān Hifz Maekel (Fruit of 'Ubayy Qur'ān Memorisation Centre)

In Addis Ababa, at a place known by CMC⁷⁹, one of the fastest and well developed part of Addis Ababa, there is an Islamic Training Centre called *ya-'Ubayy Firewoch ya-Qur'ān Hifz Maekel* (Fruit of 'Ubayy Qur'ān Memorisation Centre), named after 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b, known as the master of the reciters in the early days of Islam. This centre was established in 2004 (after a year of Haji Musa's death) within CMC *Masjid* premises. It is a boarding school only for male students and the enrolment of the students in 2016 was 180 and the number of teachers was 8, including a Pakistani teacher. The admission criteria includes gender (male), grade 10 completed (which is considered as high school completed in the Ethiopian schooling system), and 18 years

⁷⁹ CMC is an area name for a specific place in the eastern part of Addis Ababa where the Tablīghīs training centre situated.

and above. The regular programme has an advanced diploma programme which takes 5 years with a 1 year field practicum. To earn the title of ‘Maulana’, the student should complete a 10-year programme with a 1 year field practicum. Courses offered under the 5 year curriculum include: *Belaga* (Arabic Poetry), *Adabu* (Arabic Literature), *Nahul*, *Wadi* (Grammar), *Serf*, *Haytu Sahaba*, Ḥadīth Bukhari and Muslim, *Tajwid/Tazari*, Poetry *Kitāb*, *Tawhid*, *‘Ta’līm wa Talum* (Teachers *Adab* Discipline), *Tafsir-Qur’ān*), *Fiqh*, *Umda*, *Safina*, *Abishuja*, *Minhas* (Path).

This centre has 5 branches in Addis Ababa in different parts of the city. The centre runs a 2 month rainy season (July-August) programme and admits teenage students. The cost is \$175 per student. Every year the centre promotes the rainy season programme targeting children ages 8-15 with a clear purpose of making the children to be *ḥāfīzal* Qur’ān. In my visit to the centre, in 2016, I even saw a 6 year old student. In the 2016 rainy season programme there were 200 teenage students. The graduating students from the regular class are teachers for the teenage students during the rainy season. From the name of the centre, we can learn that the main purpose of this centre seems to help Muslims in their recitation of the Qur’ān. However, the centre has a wider purpose in helping the Tablīghī Jamā’at’s movement by sending its students to *da’wa* tours as part of its field practicum programme and a requirement for graduation. The classroom instructions with the field practicum will take about five years to accomplish the whole training. A student who wants to continue for another additional five years can graduate with the title ‘Maulana’, which is a common practise and title in the Indian and Bangladeshi Tablīghī Jamā’at movements with the Hanafi orientation of South Asian. ‘Maulana’ as an Islamic religious title is not yet common in Ethiopia. The curriculum of this centre has similarities with centres in India, Deoband Dārul Uloom and Bangladesh, Dhaka, Al Jamaah al Rahmaniya al Arabiya. Similarities of admission and graduation standards are also observed.

In Asela, during my 40 days *da'wa* tour, I met a student who was studying at the *ya-Ubayy Firewoch ya-Qur'an Hifz Maekel*. Both with my informal conversation with Muḥammad Asela and during my recent visit of the centre, I found out that the centre has a proper curriculum with a 5 year programme. Tablīghī leaders are encouraged to join the centre with a clear connection to the field. I was told that five different branches in Addis Ababa are doing similar pieces of training.

3. Tablīghīs Operation in Ethiopia

Tablīghīs operation in Ethiopia has similarities with other countries like India and elsewhere. However, those similarities did not hinder Ethiopia to develop its own way of doing things. In the following section the leadership and structure, as well as the council (*mashūra*) as the heart and mind of the Tablīghīs Movement will be discussed.

3.1 Leadership and Structure of Tablīghīs in Ethiopia

Tablīghīs leadership in Ethiopia has been operated under the leadership of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya, the first national leader (*amīr*) for Ethiopia. He held this position until his death in 2002. After Haji Musa died, 'the leadership was organised in a more collective manner, with a committee exerting the overall responsibility' (Østebø 2008: 424). This practise of decision making is called *mashūra* (council), which I consider to be the heart of the movement.

The purpose of having a *mashūra* (Council) is to spread the Islamic faith and attributes (*din* and *siffat*) individually, at the family level, locally, nationally, and globally. This includes preparing the children to be knowledgeable in memorizing the Qur'an (*ḥāfīzal Qur'an*), making the younger generation to be a person who is able to perform a call to Islam (*dais*), making women to be helpers of the Islamic faith (*Dīn*), and requiring properly veiled women (*mutahajibat*), and the elderly as the one who does

remembrance now and then (*zakir*) (Mohammed W. H., Field Notes: 40 days' *da'wa* tour, 2014, p. 59).

3.2 Council (*Mashūra*): the Heart of the Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement

Council (*mashūra*) serves as the heart of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement. In my observation, it is the heart and the heartbeat of the movement. Every operational issue is decided in the council at all levels. In council (*mashūra*), the main agenda is how to promote Faith (*Dīn*) of Islam through the diligent activities of *da'wa* tour and to work hard in the lives of those who are involved in *da'wa* and amongst the *umat* (Islamic community). 'When we sit in *mashūra*, we will find the love of the people (*umat*)' (Mohammed W. H., Field Notes: 40 days' *da'wa* tour, 2014, p. 32). 'My people (*umat*), is the people of worship and call (*umat* of *ibāda* and *da'wa*)', said the Prophet. Based on this, the call to Islam and worshiping Allāh must be advanced as much as possible. Throughout the whole discussion, each and every one of the participants looks to the map of the world which is fixed on the wall of where the *markaz* and *mashūra* (headquarters and council) takes place. That helps everyone to think of the whole world. This can tell us how the Tablīghī movement is deep rooted at the local level with a clear vision for the global expansion of Tablīghī movement. One can imagine the courage and depth of Tablīghīs religiosity and faith envisioning the whole world. The Tablīghī have a very interesting saying with regard to a meeting (*mashūra*): 'There is no meeting before a meeting and there is no meeting after a meeting.' (No *mashūra* before *mashūra* and no *mashūra* after *mashūra*.) Meeting before a meeting is a revolt, and a meeting after meeting is gossip. So, Tablīghīs value meetings. This could be true at the *da'wa* tour, but very difficult to justify in the day-to-day life of Tablīghīs.

Council (*mashūra*) needs to have a leader (*amir*) who is responsible to lead the meeting. The leader elaborates the purpose of the *mashūra* and invites each and every one of the participants to ask questions or make comments. When the leader presents his idea, it should not be as a final decision. It must be open for discussion. He is also expected to say, ‘This is my idea. It’s not final.’ If the team agrees, then it could be ratified. However, at the end of the discussion, the leader’s decision will be final. If someone from the team member asks to contribute an idea, he can forward his idea without using any strategy or push-in order to influence his ideas. If the idea is not accepted by the team, he should not be upset about it. Even if he was not asked to contribute an idea, he should not be upset. If the team leader (*amir*) ratifies his or someone’s idea, the team members should accept the decision graciously and wish Allāh would make all the best out of it. If the team wants to dismiss the *mashūra*, this must be done in agreement. This will help to avoid unnecessary criticism among themselves and also to protect the team leader as well as members from a heart breaking experience.

Council (*mashūra*) at all levels, is the central and highest body of the movement. Without *mashūra* nothing happens in the world of *Tablīghīs*. It has its leader, namely the *amīr*. In my 40 days *da‘wa* tour, our *amīr* told us, ‘Two or three of you are on a journey, better to have an *amīr*. If not, *Shayṭān* will be your *amīr*’, the Prophet said. So, having an *amīr* who can lead the *mashūra* is the central part of the *Tablīghī Jamā’at*, and can be seen as the head of the *Tablīghī Jamā’at* movement. The purpose of *mashūra* is to discuss strategies of how Islam can be spread in the whole world in general and in this village or town in particular. Preparing and encouraging people for *khuruj fi sabilillah* (going out in the way of Allāh) and how people adopt this life style of the Prophet into their life’s goal is important. The day-to-day activities, including assigning of responsibilities for cooking, what to eat,

going out in sub-teams, and any other duties are planned and implemented through *mashūra*. *Mashūra* keeps the hearts and minds of the team members' in line with the main purpose. It helps to preserve the amir and members from *Shayṭān*, as well as thinking, meditating, and coming up with excellent ideas. At the end, the decision will be considered as a group with no room for one criticising the other.

Having said that, it is worth noting regarding the etiquettes of council (*mashūra*). In my experience, getting permission for my 40 days of *da'wa* tour with the *Tablīghīs*, took me 9 months, when the responses was, 'We will have *mashūra* and will let you know our decision.' In the *Tablīghī Jamā'* at world, everything is decided through *mashūra*. The role of the *mashūra* is to have the final say, almost in all matters and at all levels. *Mashūra* has its *adab* (etiquettes), and it operates accordingly. The rules and regulations of the *mashūra* must be observed in all structures, at the grassroots including family, throughout *maqāmi* (site), *masjid* (mosque), *midībī* (group) and *Hābāša markaz* (Ethiopian national Markaz). Some of the etiquettes are: 1) Opposing others' idea is not permitted in *mashūra*, which could break the heart (*qalb*) of your brother. 2) Supporting others' idea is also prohibited, because this could make your brother puffed up. 3) When someone presents his idea, he should say; 'If this is the will of Allāh.' 4) One should respect and accept the leader (*amīr*) and the decision whole-heartedly that has been made through *mashūra*. The significances of *mashūra* include, unified spirit and thoughtful ideas amongst the team members⁸⁰. It is also worth noting the similarities with the decision making of early days of Islam. Participation and transparency is encouraged, even though, the final say/decision (*fāiṣala*) remains with the leader (*amīr*).

⁸⁰ (Abdalah M. S.-B.) see pp. 63-64.

3.3 Operation of Tablighī Jamā'at in Ethiopia

According to the operational side in Addis Ababa and the surrounding areas, the Tablighīs are coming from different mosques based on its grouping. An interested applicant for the 4 months or 40 days *da'wa khuruj fi sabilillah* should go to national markaz. The *markaz* accepts the names and the people through the office called *istiqbal* (reception). Any operation in the Tablighī Jamā'at movement begins not only from each mosque, but from home based *ta'līm* with *Tablighī* individuals, and families. The *istiqbal* office at the *markaz* does the registration using registration forms (see Appendix II), which they use for reporting throughout the Tablighī Jamā'at structure, including the global *markaz* in Nizamudin, New Delhi, India. On 10-11 January 2015, during my participant observation of the Tablighī Jamā'at's quarterly meeting for Addis Ababa and the surrounding areas, at the *Häbäša markaz* (Ethiopian National HQ), one of the main leaders of the Ethiopian Tablighī Jamā'at, Sheikh Engineer Ali Khadir emphasised the importance of the forms, because they are sent to *mashūra* of *merakiz*⁸¹ Nizamudin, New Delhi, so it should be filled out correctly. The correct filling of the form will help to determine the actual number of people participating in 40 days, 4 months, or 1 year *da'wa* tours and the places where the *jamā'at* will accomplish the work. This clearly demonstrates the advancement of the work in Ethiopia and beyond and gives insight for future planning and strategizing.

The work of the national *markaz* are organising the *da'wa* trip of 4 months and 40 days in helping the interested Muslims go out for *khuruj* (going out). The implementation of this by local mosques is now encouraged. Due to the workload of the national *markaz*, it is inevitable that it would expand to other mosques commonly called as *masjids*. There are a few mosques which have started work similar to what

⁸¹ The term *merakiz* used for the global *markaz* at Nizamudin India and include Pakistan and Bangladesh *khuruj*.

the national *markaz* is responsible. The work initiated by a few mosques do not include trips for outside the country, which remains the responsibility of the national *markaz*, because it demands serious correspondences.

3.4 Structure of Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia and beyond

Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia, as a movement, is highly organised and well structured. Even though the leaders of Tablīghī Jamā'at say, 'We are not interested in structure and organization', the primary source data taken from 40 days *da'wa* tour through participant observation proved that Tablīghīs are organised and structured in a way to implement their missionary activities in Ethiopia and beyond. The secondary source from elsewhere in the world, Kyrgyz-Central Asia, reinforces that the Tablīghīs are reasonably organised. Aksana and Emil (2012) have argued and quoted Reetz 2008, on their writings about the 'Structure, Travel, and Culture of Kyrgyz Tablighi Jama'at.' They state: 'The tablighi [Tablīghīs] claim that there is no special organization and administration involved. However, a closer look at their functioning reveals that this is far from true. Their international administrations have become very strong and robust' (Reetz, 2008) (Aksana Ismailbekova and Emil Nasritdinov 2012: 183).

The global, regional, national and local structures are clear to understand and trace what is happening in the whole movement of Tablīghī Jamā'at both the global and local level. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have a special place in the understanding of Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā'at. Ethiopian *Tablīghīs*, when they commit themselves to go out of the country to one of these three countries, of course, always for a minimum of 4 months, say 'I am ready for *merakiz*'. For instance, the annual gatherings in Tongi, Bangladesh, are 30 kilometres north of Dhaka and Raiwind, Pakistan lies 40 kilometres from Lahore and are next to the Hajj of Mecca in the number of attendees.

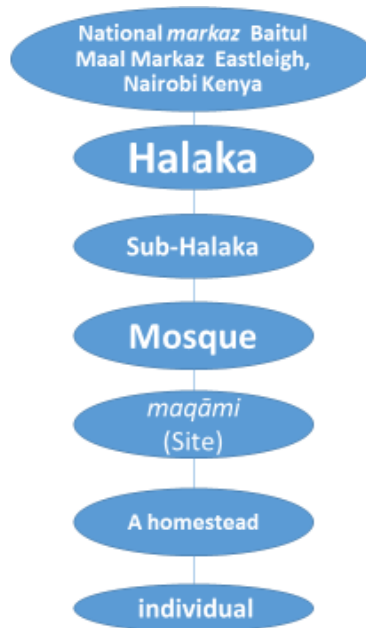
Figure IV - Simplified Global Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure

Global TJ Structure: simplified



Figure V - Kenya Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure

Kenya TJ Structure: Adopted from (Wario 2012)



Wario (2012: 118-119)

Figure VI - Simplified Ethiopia Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure

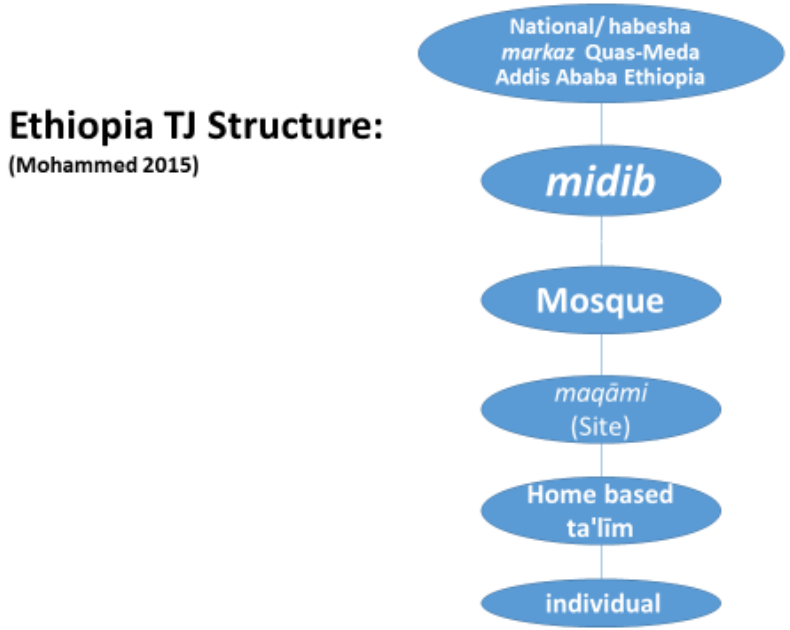
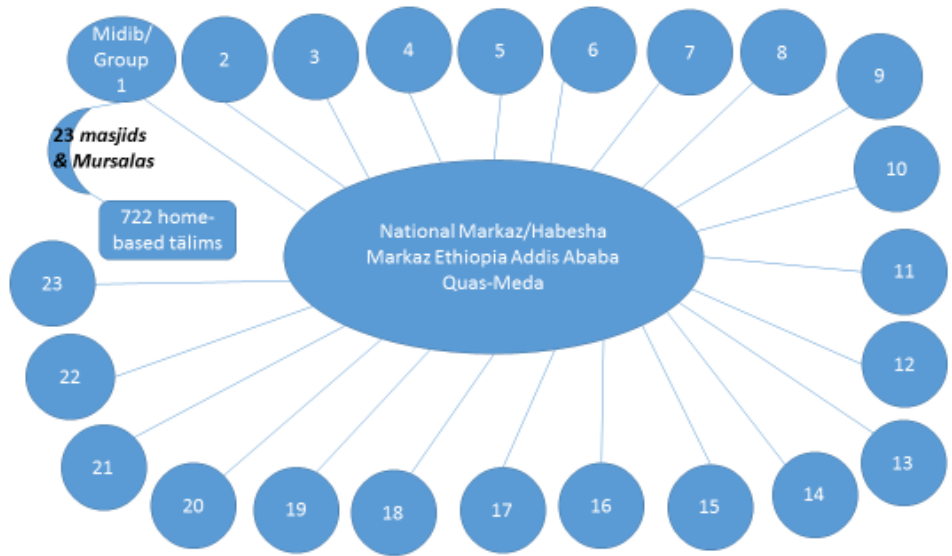


Figure IVII - Addis Ababa Tablīghī Jamā‘at Structure

Ethiopian TJ Structure: National Markaz with Midib (Group) of 23 Addis Ababa and surrounding: with over 500 masjids and mursalas and over 13,000 home based tālims



The Tablīghī structures at all levels are loose in nature, with a strong grassroots foundation. Tablīghīs are working under these loose structures voluntarily, with no paid staff and there is no limit of time to stay with the movement. It is the bottom level which is going to the next upper level to receive instructions and directions. Structurally, the approach is more bottom-up, not top-down. At all levels, the main

reporting issues are how many people are motivated and have participated in the work of the movement and for how long they committed themselves and the localities as well as the countries where the movement is taking place.

Whenever the lower level needs guidance and instruction, the upper level is ready to support as it is needed. The global level is always interested to hear the testimonies (*ahwal*), straight from each of the countries. The above four figures, global, regional, country, and Addis Ababa level structures depict Tablīghī Jamā'at's transnational connection with the clear working lines for reporting systems and keeping track of meetings and gatherings on a weekly, quarterly and annual basis. This helps the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement to remain connected to its historical roots. Moosa suggests:

There is a remarkable global uniformity in the format of Tablīghī *modus operandi*. Functions are divided into national, regional, and local levels. In every locality and region one mosque is identified as the headquarters (*markaz*) of the Tablīghī activity. On weekends, from Friday evening until Sunday localities send groups of men to the regional headquarters, from where they are redeployed to spend time in targeted areas. (Masud 2000: 213)

According to the Kenyan Tablīghī Jamā'at structure (see *ibid* Figure III. p. 214), Wario (2012:118-119) puts that Kenyan Tablīghī Jamā'at structure has 7 layers, including the individual, National *markaz*, *halaqa* (in Urdu, a larger territorial division of Tablīghī Jamā'at), Sub-*halaqa*, mosque, *maqāmi* (site), a homestead, and *Tablīghī* individuals. The *Tablīghī* individual is always the key for the movement. Comparing the Kenyan structure with the Ethiopian, some layers are not seen in the Ethiopian structure (see *ibid* figure IV. p 214). Because the Ethiopian *markaz* has not developed like the Kenyan, it has six layers, ie national, group, mosque, *maqāmi*, home-based *ta'alim* and the *Tablīghī* individual. When the need arises, the layers might grow. However, when it comes to a clear command

structure, loose connections are observed, and they are free to adopt contextual approaches.

Each group (*midibī*) has a different number of mosques, (see *ibid* Figure V. p 215) in Addis Ababa, and home-based *ta 'alim*, with over 500 *masjids* and *musalas* (Mosques and prayer rooms) and over 13,000 home-based *ta 'līm*.⁸² Eventually the number of mosques and prayer rooms, and home based *ta 'alim* will grow significantly. The Amharic term *midibī*, which stands for group, was mainly used, but in the past couple of years, the Tablīghīs prefer to use the Urdu term *halaqa* which indicates the continuing strong connectivity with its South Asian root.

4. Conclusion

As the head of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement, the role of the *mashūra* is invaluable for the Tablīghīs in Ethiopia, and as such, it is instrumental for smooth operation and accountability at all levels. The Ethiopian *mashūra* mirrors the global *mashūra* in Nizamudin, India as the integral part and epicentre of the movement. Nothing happens without the knowledge of the council (*mashūra*). However, the heart of the movement is *ta 'līm* which has different teachings to help the movement move forward. Given the oral culture of the region, oral transmission of the teaching-learning process has been very active and influential.

When ethnographic research took place, close attention was given to all activities including teachings, leadership structure and style, operation, and reporting systems. Though the Tablīghīs are saying that they are not interested in structure and organisation, it is clear that Tablīghī Jamā'at are well organised and structured at all levels. Through such a massive missionary movement, Tablīghīs in Ethiopia seem well established with a potential to reach millions of Ethiopians with its movement.

⁸² (Mohammed W. H.) 2015 Field Notes.

There is also a training centre in Addis Ababa at a place called CMC, where the key Tablīghīs have their trainings for about 5 years. The name of the centre is ‘ya-Ubayy *Firewoch ya-Qur’ān hifz maekel*’, named after ‘Ubayy who was considered as an expert on the Qur’ānic text and the best reciter of the Qur’ān in the early days of Islam (Gilchrist, 1989).⁸³ From my recent trip in August 2016, I observed how India and Bangladesh, have close curriculum correlations with the centres in Dārul Uloom Deoband, India and Al Jamaah al Rahmaniya al Arabiya Dhaka, Bangladesh. A one year Field practicum is crucial in all the three centres. This practise could lead us to think Tablīghī Jamā’at’s connection with formal training and education can be a real help in the teaching of propagating the simple call, ‘*Oh Muslims! Become Muslims* – sums up the aims of the movement.’ Though the limitation of this research is clear, the influence of Dārul Uloom Deoband and the ‘ya-Ubayy *Firewoch ya-Qur’ān Hifz maekel*’ cannot be denied in the life of the current Tablīghīs and the founder Sheikh Ilyas. One of my informants, 32, Yasin Negash, lecturer at Jimma University in Jimma mentioned that his brother-in-law recently graduated after 7 years of study from ya-Ubayy *Firewoch ya-Qur’ān Hifz maekel* (Negash, Interview 25 July 2019 Jimma:).

In my very recent interview (Mufti Umar 2021) with the current President of Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris, he commented on the Islamic knowledge of the Tablīghīs, stating. ‘These days the Tablīghīs are becoming more and more involved in education. In Addis Ababa only, they have 60 Islamic schools (*madrasas*). They are also studying Qur’ān and have a few scholars among them. These days, we don’t criticise them regarding lack of religious training.’ Mufti Umar further

⁸³ (Gilchrist, 1989) In consequence he [‘Ubayy] became known as *Sayyidul-Qurra* - "the Master of the Readers". Umar himself, the second Caliph of Islam, confirmed that he was, in fact, the best of all the Muslims in the recitation of the Qur’ān (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 6, p.489) pp 62-63.

commented positively on the practise of Tablīghī Jamā'at, that the movement is known by the work of visitation, helping one another, and call to Islam (*ziyara* and *da'wa*). In the coming chapter, I explain further in depth the visitation part of the Tablīghī Jamā'at as the feet and basis of the movement and vital part of the Tablīghīs practises.

CHAPTER FIVE: Ethnography of Tablīghīs Mobility ‘The People of Visitation and Call to Islam (*yazyara-na yada'wa säwočī*)’: the Basis of the Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement

1. Introduction

This chapter explains the importance of visitation and *da'wa* tour as the basis of Tablīghīs movement considering that going out in the way of Allāh (*khurūj*) for days, weeks, and months is one of the central areas of importance of the movement to be known as ‘the people of *da'wa*’ with in the community wherever they move around. If someone who wants to address this group of travellers would say ‘the people of *da'wa*’. As the name refers, Tablīghīs in Ethiopia are ready and organised to move around starting from their vicinity to far areas and sometime across borders. This chapter focuses on how the 40 days *da'wa*’ tour is prepared and implemented accordingly through the supervision of the main *Markaz*. The Ethiopian main *Markaz*, called Hābäša *Markaz*, is situated at the city centre of Addis Ababa at a place called Quoas-Meda, near the central Bus Station. Pre- and post- field guidance (*hidāya*) will be discussed as an introduction and conclusion of the 40 days *da'wa*’ tour.

Visitation and call to Islam are the vibrant part of the Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement. Wherever the movement is done, these practises are implemented according to the Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement guidelines. To observe these practises I have done participant observation very closely with the team (*jamā'a*). While the team was going around to visit Muslim homes for the purpose of visitation and call to Islam and walking to the Mosque, a lady came out from her home and referred to the team (*jamā'a*) as ‘*ziyarawoch*’ by saying, ‘These are the people of visitation (*yazyara säwočī*)’. Another lady also referred to the team as ‘the people of call to Islam’ (*yada'wa säwočī*). That is

the main reason to name this chapter: ‘The People of visitation and call to Islam (*yazyarana yada'wa säwoči*)’.

2. The 40 Days Da'wa Tour and Quarterly Meeting/Council (*mashūra*):

2.1 Introducing Myself as a Researcher to the Tablīghī Leaders

My first visit to Hābāša Markaz was on 24 September 2013. I went to Markaz just to introduce myself as a student, a novice researcher, interested in the history of Tablīghī Jamā'at. I also introduced myself as an Arabic language student at Awaliyā College. I met Sheikh Ahmad and who led me to Sheikh Nuredin who is responsible for the masjid. He welcomed me with a warm spirit. His bearing was beautiful, with his impressive dress, including his cape. First, he invited me to sit in the compound outside of his office. Then he changed his mind and took me straight to his office. Sheikh Nuredin asked me about my purpose of this visit, which I explained myself as a researcher of Tablīghī Jamaat in Ethiopia and Arabic language student at Awaliyā College. I asked him what they were doing now, to which he replied that on Tuesday there is a weekly meeting and there is a teaching session that is going on as well as encouraging the people in their work of propagating Islam. He also mentioned that they have a good relationship with Indians as an international connection. He stated that Ethiopians are participating in annual meetings which are organized at the regional level like Africans, Asians and so on... In their teachings they encourage Muslims to be part of the movement. They have different class sessions for women and children. According to Sheikh Nuredin's explanation, Muslims are encouraged to share mainly their life testimony, particularly, their three days *da'wa* tour. During this tour the main focus is sharing simple teachings of Tablīghīs, the six principles. He states: *Khalima Toyba, salat, 'ilm and Dhikr, ikramel Muslim, ikhlās niyya and khuruj fi sabilillah*. Sheikh Nuredin also invited me to participate in and observe one of their three day

trips, to which I agreed to take part in the near future. He mentioned repeatedly how the Tablighīs are simple and clear in their teachings. Among their members, there are university professors, a high-ranking government consultant, medical doctors, and university students. Sheikh Nuredin explained about their status in politics, which I did not ask for. Due to the current tension in our country between Islam and the government, the level of suspicion was high. So, Nuredin said, sometimes the government sends security personnel to investigate what we are doing in our meetings. The government concluded that our movement is a peaceful one. We then exchanged our contact mobile numbers so that we could meet some other time in the near future. Sheikh Nuredin concluded our discussion by mentioning that they are not interested in any of the publications or media. They want to stay humble, hidden, and with a low profile. However, they wish to see a renewed generation of Muslims as well as the expansion of Islam. At the end, Nuredin asked about my religious affiliation. In the beginning, he assumed that I was a Muslim, and then I told him that I am not. However, I explained to him about my family background and especially that my father was a Muslim. Immediately Sheikh Nuredin said, 'We will do *dua'a* (prayer) for you to return to your father's religion.' Nuredin asked another sheikh who sits next to him to make *dua'a* for me, and we then ended our discussion.

14 December 2013 I had an appointment with my friend, Ayub, to attend a meeting at the *Mashūra* at *Häbäša Markaz*, at the Ethiopian Tablighī Jamaat headquarters. Prior to going to the meeting, I had to ask Sheikh Nuredin's permission to make a telephone call to his mobile number. He answered my call, and told me that on that day they had a serious meeting so that I could not join them. I insisted a bit, based on our previous conversation, that I was interested to see their meeting. I also mentioned I was invited by my friend, Ayub, (Ayub is my good friend who is studying Arabic language with me and one of the promising young Tablighī practitioners and leaders).

Then, Sheikh Nuredin replied, ‘Worku, you know that we make decisions for everything in *mashūra* (in-consultation).’ I said, ‘Yes I know, I have read about the decision-making process of Tablīghīs, which is almost always in *mashūra*.’ Then Sheikh Nuredin promised that he would call me back after their meeting. After 15 minutes, he called me back on my mobile number, and told me that, joining such a meeting is not permitted for non-Muslims. I was disappointed and depressed, because I thought that our previous discussion was positive. But now it turned out to be something different. I told Sheikh Nuredin that, my purpose of coming there is to do my research. I am a researcher and have to be there to see and observe how Tablīghīs function in their meetings, which gives me insight and be fair in my understanding of Tablīghīs, which protect me from any of the biases.

The 16 December 2013 I met Ayub at the Awaliyā Arabic Language School, (Awaliyā College). He asked me why I did not appear at the *Markaz* over the weekend. I told him the conversation I had with Sheikh Nuredin. Ayub replied that he could not see a convincing reason for the decision they made. We took some time together and he helped me get an idea of the meeting. He summarized the meeting and some of the major action steps that Ethiopia is assigned to reach 15 countries in Africa, including the Eastern part of Africa. Ayub also mentioned, some already went to Rwanda and Uganda. He is also preparing himself to do *khuruj fi-sabilillah* (going out in the way of Allāh) outside Ethiopia. Finally, he promised me to bring his notes from the meeting so that I could use it for my research purposes (which he did). Ayub is a very helpful friend in my research journey, including introducing me to the Tablīghī leaders and always with me to do his best in this long journey of research. Ayub is a graduate of Addis Ababa University with the BA in theatrical arts and currently working as a journalist and senior editor at one of the weekly newspapers published by the Addis Ababa City Administration Office called Addis Lisan.

Ayub and I reached in agreement that being a non-Muslim should not be seen as an obstacle. A researcher could come from any religious background or affiliation and should not be expected to have a similar religious affiliation with a group that a researcher is researching. If this were made a pre-requisite, then the tendency to be biased would happen, which could jeopardize the research process. Ayub further commented, it would be good for Ethiopian Tablighīs to be researched by a non-Muslim in order to get the proper understanding of what is going on in the world of Tablighī Jamaat in Ethiopia, including the positive ethical impact which the Tablighī movement brought in amongst the younger generation.

2.2 Permission Granted From the Tablighī Leaders to join the 40 days *Da'wa* tour *jamā'a* (team)

On 31 May 2014 Ayub and I met for our Arabic Language class. We again raised the issue of visiting Hābāša *Markaz* at their council (*mashūra*). In December, at the quarterly *mashūra* (council) I had been denied access to their meetings on the basis of being non-Muslim. I had argued with Sheikh Nuredin that being a non-Muslim should not be seen as a problem and that continuing to be a non-Muslim would give me a clearer view as an outsider.

The 31st of May 2014 was a special day for my research journey because my request was accepted and permission was granted to join the 40 days *da'wa* tour and the quarterly *Mashūra* by the leaders at the Hābāša *Markaz*. On Saturday, 31st May, Ayub and I met at *Markaz* at 8:30 am, outside the compound. Ayub told me that I should come back at 12:00 noon when they would have a break. In the discussion about granting permission, the issue of being a non-Muslim was raised again. Ayub was doing *dua'a* (prayer) for me very quietly, (he told me afterwards), so that I

could get permission to sit with them and talk about my research. At 12:00 noon I came back to Hābāša *Markaz*, met with Ayub, and sat down on the mat with Sheikh Nuredin and others. Ayub started the conversation. It took him some time to convince them, but finally I was granted permission to enter and sit with the leaders in the room. I was also told that I could join the 40 days *da'wa* tour. The room where we sat down could accommodate about 75 people for prayer. While I was there, they did *Zuhr salat* (noon prayer). We sat in a small group with Sheikh Nuredin, Ayub, myself, and three others. I was given a chance to introduce myself, explain my research, and the purpose of my visit to Hābāša *Markaz*. I told them about my family background. My father was half Yemeni and half Ethiopian and was a Muslim but converted to Orthodox Christianity after marrying my mother. Many of my relatives from my father's side are still in Yemen, Sanaa and Teez, and are still Muslims. I also told them about my Master's degree research which was on 'folk Islam in Wallo', and my visit to places like *Gatā*⁸⁴ in the Kemblocha area in the North-Central part of Ethiopia of South Wallo. In my visit at *Gatā*, I had a chance to visit the current Sheikh, Hajji Muhiddin Adam. Then Sheikh Nuredin who was sitting in the middle, said that he knew the Sheikh at *Gatā*.

After introducing my background and MTh research, I continued explaining about my current research interest on Tablīghī Jamā'at. I gave some explanation how the Tablīghī movement started in India in the 1920s, and how it is spreading throughout the world, (over 165 countries) with an estimate of 100 million members/followers. Then I gave a brief explanation on how Tablīgh came to Ethiopia by mentioning the late Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya who

⁸⁴ *Gatā* is a tomb/shrine in Wallo, visited by folk Muslims every year at the celebration of *Mawlid* (birthday of the Prophet). (Mohammed, 2008: 38).

welcomed the teachings of Tablīghī Jamā'at and took it to Abret Sheikoch for the first time in the 1960s. I also mentioned regarding what I had read about the Indian Tablīgh movement, written by Yoginder Sikand, Australia, by Jan Ali, Southeast Asia by Farish Noor and Kenya, by Halkano Wario. However, nothing had been done in Ethiopia by Ethiopians. I stated the following: "My plea to you is, are we excepting someone from outside our country to come in and write our history of Tablīghī Jamā'at?" At this point, I tried to even challenge them. I explained my purpose was not to publicize my findings on a book, magazine or newspaper. I also mentioned that I was aware that the Tablīghīs are not interested in publicity. This is research which will be documented carefully and reserved only for academic purposes, which might take about 8 years or so. I told them that the impact of Tablīghīs teaching and life style on the moral and ethical life of the youth is immense. But, nothing is written or known, from an outsider's perspective. They all were listening carefully to the points I was trying to make. I also made myself clear that I did not have any hidden agenda nor interest except doing my research. Finally, they invited me to have bottled water and snacks with them as an indication of a real welcome. Whilst we are having water, biscuits and candy, they encouraged me to be relaxed and feel at home (we were sitting on the mat which is sometimes not easy for me). Sheikh Nuredin, who was sitting in the middle, gave me his notebook and asked me to write my name and contact address, which I did exactly as was asked

While we were sitting there, the teaching session started, with the focus of the teaching being on the need of doing more travel. The speaker was encouraging the congregants to do more travel in order to bring renewal of Islam. I sensed from the speech that the speaker was well versed in the history of Tablīgh. The speaker was quoting the founder of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement, Sheikh Mawlana

Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi, and how the movement was started and spread in Bangladesh. The speaker also stressed how vanity is this world, (*dunia*), and that we should work for the hereafter, (*akhira*). At the end of the teaching session, I was invited to have lunch with them. They brought food (it seemed more Yemeni style, *al-mandi*), rice, fish, chicken, chapatti, etc. We all shared from the same plate, as we do culturally, and enjoyed the meal. While we were having lunch, Sheikh Nuredin, the elderly, was distributing meat by making little pieces for each one of us and we were following his hand touching the meat. My friend, Ayub, asked their permission to take me with him on the 40 days *da'wa* tour (going out in the way of Allāh) *khuruj fi-sabilillah* which would be starting at the end of June in the beginning of Ramadan. The leaders blessed the idea and agreed to Ayub's proposal by wishing me all the best, including my conversion to Islam through the process, which they promised to do *dua'a* for me. Ayub also mentioned that he did not know the exact place where the 40 days *da'wa* tour would take place. He also told me to prepare cash, which was ETB 1,500. (an equivalent to \$75, then) for the trip to contribute towards our meals, transportation, and any necessary expenses towards the 40 days *da'wa* tour. Now I was happy and ready for the 40 days *da'wa* tour, which would be the major part of my participant observation of my research methodology. That is why I named this day as a special day in my research journey.

2.3 Composition of the Team Members (*jamā'a*)

To accomplish the 40 days *da'wa* tour, organising the team members (*jamā'a*) is crucial. The *jamā'a* was composed of 14 members who came mainly from Addis Ababa and the rest were from the Nazret, and Chenchu Mosques. From Addis Ababa: 3 were from Adare Mosque including our *amir*, 2 from Grand Anwar

Mosque, and the rest were 1 each from Fatah Aba Bora, Imran, Ayub, Chenchab-
Bilal, Nazret-Imran, Ahmed Dalati, and Rahma Mosques respectively. Each one of
them were active in the Tablīgh works around their areas. Age-wise, the majority
were young and in their teens. 5 members were 16-19 years of age, 3 early 20s, 1
(our *amir*) late 20s, 1 early 30s, and the remaining 2, including myself, were early
50s. Based on this data, one can imagine that the Tablīghī movement is indeed a
movement of the youth. Only 3 out of 14 were married but the rest were singles,
and 2 had plans to marry soon. Mapping their educational background of the
jamā'a members will help to view how the Tablīghī movement is gaining ground
with the younger generation in the urban set-up: 2 illiterate, 2 8th grade, 2 college
graduates, 7 high schoolers, and 1 second-year college students. The educational
background verifies that there was a serious gap in terms of their understanding of
the teachings and practises of Tablīgh movement. However, this is a religious
exercise which demands huge humbleness in order to walk together and accomplish
such a huge task for a long period of over 40 days. Registration of the participants
team members (*jamā'a*) was needed, so the registration form below was the form
for registration.

Figure IX: Registration Form for the 40 days *da 'wa* tour (English Translation with the Amharic Transliteration)

This form taken on 28 June 2014 from a form at Markaz (Habesha Markaz), originally in Amharic while I was registered and ready for 40 days *da wa* khuruj *fi-sabilillah* trip. (I just translated from Amharic to English)

Ya.....*qan yakharijin jamd'a makawegna form*

Date..... form of accomplishment of Jemna for khuruj

Ser. No. Tera- <i>Qutir</i>	List of team members <i>yakharijin sim-zizite</i>	Town came from <i>yemebbat ketema</i>	Name of the Mosque <i>yamosjidu sim</i>	Group <i>midib</i>	Age <i>idime</i>	Language <i>quwtaquua</i>			ID <i>metawqiyd</i>	Days <i>qanoch</i>			Five main works <i>Khimsa-omal</i>	Inform to the area <i>iamqami</i>	For how long he is going out <i>lesint gize naw ydmiv-daw</i>	Did you take guidance <i>hidoyat</i>	Money contribution <i>asbib</i>		
						Arabic <i>arabignd</i>	Amharic <i>amorignd</i>	English <i>ingilizignd</i>		3 day <i>qan</i>	40 day <i>qan</i>	4 month <i>wgr</i>							

Code of the team (*yajamd'a kod*)

Leader (*masul*)

Date of going-out (*yawatubet qan*)

Place, where the trip will be (*yatashkil bota*)

Date of return (*yamimeslabat qan*)

Even though the majority members, 11 of them, were from the Gurāgē ethnic group, their command of both the Amharic and Gurāgē languages were satisfactory. Other ethnic and language backgrounds who were also part of the *jamā'a*, - 1 Afar, and 2 Amharas with no language difficulties. The medium of communication and instruction was Amharic, which is the main language and is considered as a working language for Ethiopians, and Arabic, for the teaching and religious duties as needed. The language and ethnic composition of the Jamā'a depicted that the role of the Gurāgē ethnic is key in the 40 days *da'wa* tour in general and in the life of the Tablīghī movement in particular. Occupational data of the *jamā'a* members indicates that there were 6 students, 4 business people, 1 journalist, 1 daily labourer, and 1 researcher. This classification points out the focus of the Tablīghī Jamā'a movement is on youth and business people, which is similar to other places Tablīghī Jamā'a actively operated.

Beyond our different age, educational, professional, ethnic and language backgrounds, the fellowship and sense of family among the *jamā'a* members were great. Wonderful team! When we completed the 40 days *da'wa* tour, it was difficult to depart, and each of them was weeping. I cannot forget that experience. They were an amazing community, loving and caring to one another. The simple lifestyle, sleeping with simple mats and sleeping bags, eating simple food like soup, rice injera, and pasta just to survive was an interesting experience. (After I completed the 40 days *da'wa* tour and got home, I had lost 6 kg of my weight, which was not edifying in this culture.) Everybody took part in cooking for the whole group. Everybody was humble to help each other, particularly to the elderly. Sometimes they were even trying to wash my clothes. The practical impact, both psychological and emotional, as well as the religious influence of this movement was, therefore, immense. Almost every day new *jamā'a* (team) went out to different parts of the country, particularly in the month

of Ramadan, from the Hābāša *Markaz*, which mainly organises the long-term *da'wa* tour. Of course, recently, other Mosques started to manage organising the 40 days *da'wa* tour to assist the Hābāša *Markaz*.

2.4 Pre-Da'wa Tour Guidance (*hidāya*) and Teachings for 40 days *Da'wa* Tour

Pre-*da'wa*-tour preparation is required for joining the 40 days *da'wa* tour and was clearly explained and communicated to each one of us while we were at the Hābāša *Markaz*. Registration and payment must be done up front at the reception (*istiqbāl*) office and things were handled well by the experienced people by doing such details. The registration form which is attached as an appendix with this thesis made things more organised and clearer to both the *jamā'a* members and the Hābāša *Markaz*. Items which needed to be taken to the field and not to be taken were clearly communicated. A sleeping bag, towel, perfume, wooden tooth brush, handkerchief, comb, little glass, Arabic or Amharic books related to the Tablīghī works, notebooks, pen, hand watch, *Musbaha* (beads for prayer), and medicines (if there was a prescription from medical professionals). Having mobile phones for the *jamā'a* members of the *da'wa* tour is strictly forbidden. As Abdul Awal Bashir mentioned in his little Amharic booklet (Bashir, 2016:69). 'Sheikh Muḥammad Yusuf said: 'Someone who took his mobile phone with him when he goes out for *da'wa*, he is like a man who took his family and all of his belongings with him'. For the team leaders (*amirs'*) when they are on the *da'wa* tour, may take mobile phones with them as that can help them to communicate with the headquarters (Hābāša *Markaz*) for any emergencies and necessary plan changes, as well as to receive guidance.

The list of names were read by one of the leaders according to our assigned groups. We were told to stay where we were and waited for *hidāya* (teachings and guidance)

from the leaders on different topics and issues related to the 40 days *da'wa* tour, which continued for two days. We had three speakers. Their speech focused on discipline, like abstaining from politics, and religious arguments. It also focused on *salat* (prayer), reading the *faza'il-e-al amal*, Qur'ān, reading *al-fatiha*, *Khalima Toyba la-ilaha ilelahu Muhammad rasul-ilah*, as these are greater things than anything, especially if we say it whole heartedly, and this is foundational. Special focus for the study session in group (*Ta'alim*) were in three parts: *Faza'il-e- al amal*, Qur'ān, *Hayātu saḥābas* (life of the companions of the prophet), *sifatu sitta* (the six principles of *Tablīghī*). We were told to be courageous in our personal, individual activities including: doing remembrance (*dhikr*) 600 times per day, morning 300 and evening 300 times, and asking the forgiveness of Allāh (*Istighfār*) 200 times per day, morning 100 and evening 100 times. *Allāh-Musole Allāh-Muḥammade*, 200 times, morning 100 and evening 100 times. Also, *Subhan-Allāh wala Hamdililah, walahu akbar la hawla wala qureta ila bila hi aliyu lazim*, 200 times per day, morning 100 and evening 100 times. The Five times prayer, reading the Qur'ān, remembrance, and casual prayer (*salat, qiryat, dhikr, and dua'a*) must be taken seriously as part of our personal devotion.

We heard testimonies (*ahwal*) from those who had returned from their *da'wa* tour presented by their respective amirs as part of the guidance (*ḥidāya*) and as an encouragement for the novice *Tablīghīs* who were ready (*mustaid*) for the 40 days *da'wa* tour. The testimonies included which area was covered, what has been done and what should be done in the future. This will be very helpful for those who are joining the field to learn how to report their testimonies (*ahwals*) in their return from *da'wa* tour. After the testimonies (*ahwal*), guidance (*ḥidāya*) took place and continued for hours.

Tāqarābu, the Arabic term with the Amharic accent, has also an Arabic tone, which means come near/get nearer. We repeatedly heard this term while we were in the Hābāša *Markaz* now and then, so that we, the congregants, could listen to the guidance (*ḥidāya*), and the teachings. *Ta'alim*, *Bayan*, *Hayātu Saḥāba*, and so on and so forth were presented one after the other. The attendance of the congregants at *Hābāša Markaz* (main *Markaz* of the Ethiopian Tablīghī) was estimated to be about 750 who sleep, eat, and sit together. It was an amazing community.

Ḥidāya presented a combination of guidance and teachings by one of the leaders from the Hābāša *Markaz*, an outstanding speaker and charismatic leader as well. The remaining portion of this section is relating the items discussed.

The speaker stressed the greatness of grace (*nii'ma*) in Islam which Allāh gave us. Allāh sent 124,000 prophets (*anbiyas*), and all of the *anbiyas* brought a message which says: *la ilaha ilelahu*. All of them addressed that there will be an awakening from death. The purpose of the coming of the Prophet Muḥammad was to divide human beings into two: people for heaven (*Janet*) and people for hell (*Jahannam*). While you are on the going out (*khuruḥ*), don't touch any alcoholic drink, *khat* (a stimulant plant), and belongings which are not yours. If you chew *khat* and get excited you will lose control of your mind, which leads you to be disobedient to your leader (*amir*) and start doing *dhikr* (remembrance). Please don't touch *khat* at-least for 40 days. This part of the instruction implied that *khat* is not strictly forbidden in the world of Tablīghī in Ethiopia.

The teaching continued, relating that at Arafā, in Mecca, there could be over 5 million people gathered every year. From Ethiopia only, about 30 language groups were represented. Mussa conversed 153,000 words with Allāh, and the lifetime of Mussa was 1,500 years. Please don't fall asleep while you are listening. We were told that sleeping is like contaminated diseases. When Allāh revealed himself, the mountain

melted like a butter before Him. Those who obeyed Allāh will return to heaven (*Jennet*).

The Human being is created out of the fruit which comes from the chest of a woman and sperm which comes out from the waist and backbone of a man, then liquid, and then that creates blood. In the first 40 days of the inception period, the blood will be clotted, the second 40 days, will be flesh, and the third 40 days will be formed and identified as male or female. The speaker used this analogy to explain the necessity and the importance of the 40 days and 4 months *da'wa* tour in the lives of Muslims. After birth the baby will get milk from his/her mum's chest. Our provision (*rizq*) is with Allāh.

Human beings eat food to satisfy their hunger. In the early days, human beings were very strong and their power could be compared with the tractors of today. But human beings are weak today. Suleiman married 100 women, but never got a child. He was thinking to prepare a child who could perform in the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*), but he could not. Who changes the egg to different colours of chicken? That is Allāh. Allāh is the one who made poor or wealthy. The making of the truth (*haqiqah*) is Allāh. The very purpose of going out in the way of Allāh (*khuruj fi-sabilillah*) is to flee to Allāh.

At the time of the prophet there was only one *da'wa* which was *la ilaha illelahu*. The second *da'wa* is labouring on people who believe, the struggle/effort (*jihad*) is on believers. While we are on *khuruj*, we need to accomplish the job we are given. So long as we followed instructions on the dos and the don'ts, Allāh will create faith (*iman*) in us. The angels (*malā'ika'*) will depart from us only for two reasons: when we become mad and die. While we are alive, Angels are at work.

Those who are on our right side will write the good things and on the left the bad things. Those who do not listen to guidance (*hidāya*) properly, will return home before they finish their full days of their trip. They could return back home within 10, 20 days or two months. Those who are talking more about worldly matters (*dunia*) than the hereafter (*akhira*), will be in trouble. For the issue of *dunia*, there is no need of any speech of initiation (*targib*), but for *akhira*, there is and one will say, ‘Please do prayer (*dua* ‘a) for me.’ Most of us are deprived of faith (*gaflah* of *iman*), so we need commitment (*niya*) which comes out from the bottom of our hearts. Someone who died in the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*), will buy heaven (*Jennet*). The main purpose of going out for *fi-sabilillah* is to fulfil our own schedule/programme (*tartib*), practising this will to motivate our faith (*iman*), and we should continue doing so until the end of our lives. If you see a person who is going to a mosque repeatedly, then you can say this person has *iman*. We are going out to adjust and correct our faith and sincere commitment (*iman* and *niya*). *Iman* could be spoiled and become weak. When you observe this weakness in your life then you can consider this as an indicator and will show you that it is weak for the last day (*akhira*). *Da’wa* (a call to Islam), *Ta’alim*, (study group/seeking knowledge), *Ibāda* (worship), and *Khidma* (treating others/cooking and the like), and *Mashūra* (council) will prepare a person to be good and upright.

There were about eight jobs for everyday activities, and we were to be sure to implement all of them: execute council (*Mashūra*) according to etiquettes of council (*adab-mashūra*), listen to testimonies (*aḥwāl*), initiation for how we go forward, vision and planning (*fikr*), decisions (*fāiṣala*) which will be made by the *Amir*, 24 hours programme (*tartib*), and study group (*jamā’a ta’alim*). The study group (*ta’alim*) has its own purpose, benefits and etiquettes. The purpose of *ta’alim* is to find light (*nūr*) and interest on heaven (*yaqīn*). The morning teaching (*subhi bayan*),

the late afternoon teaching (*asar bayan*), etiquettes of sleeping (*adab-nawm*), etiquettes of eating (*adab-taam*), reading from the story of the companions of the prophet (*hayātu saḥābas*), treating others (*khidma*), were a part of the list of duties that went on and on. On the one hand it seemed like military discipline in which everything must be done in accordance to the guidelines given by the hierarchy. However, it is still religious practise and customs on the other hand. Indeed, it demands an iron discipline to implement all the necessary expectations accordingly.

The quality of a good team leader (*amir*) is the one who would make his (*jamā'a*) team members busy with different activities and involve them with necessary responsibilities. The very reason that we are going out in the way of Allāh (*khuruj fi-sabilillah*) is to correct our bad characters and to embrace the good ones. For people for whom this is their first time to participate in such trips, it is better to teach them the six principles (*sita sifa*): Article of faith (*khalimatu-toyba*), the five times Prayer (*salat*), Knowledge and Remembrance (*ilm* and *dhikr*), Sincerity (*Ikhlas*), and Respect to all Muslims (*Ikramel-Muslim*). Each principle (*sifa*) has three points as a whole; there are eighteen points in total. 1/3 of the Qur'ān is *Tawhid* (the oneness of Allāh). To avoid spoiled faith, saying *la ilaha illelahu* is absolutely essential. Going out in the way of Allāh (*fi-sabilillah*) in the month of Ramadan will bring light upon light (*nūr up-on nūr*). *Salat* needs to be in team (*jam'a*). All our spare time needs to be spent at mosques. When we go out of the mosques, the main reason must be going around (*jaula*), and visiting people (*ziyara*) and the like. We need to multiply the *Sunnah Salat* as much as we can. Allāh is the one who gives success (*tawfiq*). Please complete your *khuruj* with love (*muhaba*). Be diligent. If we sleep between 6-8 hours on *khuruj*, that is enough. If we face any problems on *khuruj*, the place to call is here at Hābāša *Markaz*, where the headquarter is, not any other place. Those who are ill and taking medicine should not go far. Work under the group (*mīdībī*) you are in at your

site/locality (*maqāmi*). Work also teaching at the main gate of the mosques (*tamirel-masjid*). Go out for visitation (*ziyara*) and do home to home visits. Divide and organize the area where you work. Work hard for 40 days and win your soul (*nafsiya*).

It is forbidden to a person on *fi-sabilillah* to take a shower in the river, as being naked is totally unacceptable. If you want to have a shower, ask for water with a container and do it at somewhere in the masjid area which is protected. Our schedule (*tartib*) needs to be reconciled with the situation of that area. Every day we will do treating others well (*khidma*). The main thing is not to offend your brother with your words. The preparation of the food is based on the contribution you made, for 40 days, it could be ETB 1,500. or 2,000. Ethiopian Birr (which is about \$75. or 100. USD). When you keep the money of the *jamā'a*, do not put it only with one person. It is not fair to keep the money of the *jamā'a* with one person. It is better distribute it between three people. Keep it carefully and safely, and do not assign this responsibility to novice Tablīghīs.

After their return from the 40 days trip, encourage them to have a three days trip in their respective areas. When we divide our area, a question to be asked is, 'How many Muslim homes are around this mosque?' Then we can divide it into four major areas like, North, East, South and West. It is better to assign the new and old *dais* (who does *da'wa*) or Tablīghīs. Each person needs to do morning teaching (*fajr bayan*) at least for 30 minutes, and the *Amir* should be the first to do it. Let *Mashūra* be only for 20 minutes, and all need to participate. Each one of you should talk of the greatness of Allāh and the necessity of the faith (*din*) very briefly as well as etiquettes of council/meeting (*adab-mashūra*). This responsibility is not only for the *Amir*, but for all of you. Organize the five works (*Khamsa-amal*) in every mosque where you reach or visit. After you have done your *Mashūra*, you need to go home-to-home to do

ziyara. Tell the people that they need to go out for 4 months and 40 days. The dates of our stay in each mosque will be decided on the work load of that specific Mosque. There is a big mountain before us, and there is a big task which we need to accomplish. Lack of faith (*iman*) makes us forgetful about the end times (*akhira*) and we are now out of drops of our weep and started bleeding instead. This world (*dunia*) is a place of preparation for the end (*akhira*).

All the speakers were doing their teachings and speeches without using any of the notebooks. They just talked from their hearts and minds. It is all an oral tradition. After the teachings and the speeches, Sheikh Mukhtar, one of the organizers did the forming of groups (*takwīn*) of team members (*jamā'a*) who came from Mekele, Sawla, Wolkite and Nazret. Our team (*jamā'a*) was mainly from Addis Ababa, except one who came from Chench, and one from Nazret which are South and East in Ethiopia.

We are told that we are going to stay for a day in a nearby mosque, Umar Masjid, Mercato area at a place called Abnet to organise the remaining items like cooking utensils and necessary materials as well as practising going around (*jaula*) in Addis Ababa before we depart to the far-reaching areas. They also told us that we will go on the next day to our assigned area. While we were traveling to the Umar Mosque, we were walking two by two and very quietly. Little kids playing on the road said, 'These are the people of *Da'wa*.' I think she identified us by way of our walking, carrying of our staffs on our backs and mannerism.

We arrived around 4:00 pm at Umar Masjid. We had our late afternoon teaching (*asar bayan*) and after that our leader (*amir*) assigned us to the surrounding areas to practise home-to-home visitation (*ziyara*), encouraging Muslims to come to the

mosque and join the teaching there, and to participate in the afternoon prayer (*asar salat*). Before we departed for Ziyara, our *amir* told one of our members to pray and put a drop of perfume on our hands. The *amir* assigned us to do visiting Muslims home-to-home (*umumi ziyara*), and we went out in four groups with three people in a group. One was assigned as a leader of the small group and considered as the head of the group (*amir*), one assigned as a spokesman and considered as the tongue (*mutakalim*), and one assigned to show where the homes of Muslims were in that area and considered as an eye (*dalil*). In this way we visited 9 homes, in which we found men in some and women in the others, (which we did not talk to according to the etiquettes of going around (*adab-jaula*) that we had learnt.) The *amir* is the one who knocked on the gates and asked permission of the men if they were ready to hear our brief talk. If they were willing, he invited the spokesperson (*Mutakalim*) to talk on the purpose of our visit. The *Mutakalim* will say, ‘You know that faith (*din*) is the main thing for our life, here on earth and the hereafter. Everything will pass except our *din*. Will you be willing to join us now to go to the mosque? There are others who will tell you more than I do.’ At the end of visitation one of the *amirs* from the small groups said we need to enter with asking forgiveness (*istighfar*). This is always the tradition after going around (*jaula*), which can keep them humble for all that they have done. After arriving back at the mosque, we took time for prayer and teachings. On the next day we collected the necessary cooking utensils and materials and left for the far areas where we were assigned.

2.5 Geographical Area Covered on the 40 Days *Da‘wa* Tour and the Ethnic

Gurāgēs Influence in the Areas

The *da‘wa* tour covered Addis Ababa as an initial point of departure and a place of preparation both from Hābāša *Markaz* and Umar *Masjid* by spending 2 days and 1

day at each masjids respectively. This 40 days *da'wa* tour took place mainly in the Oromia region, Arsi Zone, which is considered a stronghold of Salafis. However, the Sufi form of Islam, particularly the Qādirīyya order, also has a huge influence on the vast majority of the Arsi people. Arsi is one of the Oromia regional zones situated to the southeast of Addis Ababa. The team travelled to Meki town, which is 135 km from Addis Ababa. After spending only a day at Bilal Masjid in Meki town, the team moved to a small town called Abura, which is 20 km from Meki. The team (*Jamā'a*) settled in to Iman Masjid in Abura and worked hard for 10 days, Then the decision was made by the *mashūra* (council) of the *jamā'a* to move to the next small town which is 18 km from Abura and we moved to Areta-Chufa. The team accomplished 7 days of work in Areta Chufa and moved to Asela, a bigger and zonal town for the Arsi Zone. Asela is 24 km from Areta Chufa. The *jamā'a* made the decision, in *mashūra*, to cross over the Burkitu Mountain on foot instead of using a bus or any other means of transportation. This illustrates the following of the example of the early days of *ṣaḥāba* (Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad). The trip took 3 and half hours to get into Asela town, and we settled in to Al-Nur Masjid, which is the biggest and the oldest mosque in Asela. We spent 13 days working hard according to the guidance taken from the Hābāša *Markaz*. In Asela, the work was done mainly from Al-Nur Masjid and for 3 days from Asela-Bilal Masjid. Asela Bilal Masjid is only 2 km from al-Nur Masjid. Asela Bilal Masjid was a new building with wet cement plastered walls. It was very cold, which we didn't tolerate well, and it was rainy season as well. We returned to Asela al-Nur Masjid and spent 2 more days taking part in the celebration of Id al-Fatir. The last town we visited was Nazret which is 75 km from Asela. We settled in Nazret al-Anṣoāri Masjid where we stayed for 5 days. We also visited Hamza Masjid, 4 km from Anṣoāri, where we did *intiqali* (organize the *Khamsa amal*). In our 40 days *da'wa* tour, I realised that in most areas we visited, the

leadership of the movement at different capacities was handled well by the Gurāgē ethnic people. Some of the Gurāgēs have small kiosks and some have big stores in small and bigger towns including Abura, Asela, and Nazret. The financial implications from the Gurāgē traders towards the Tablīghī movement was visible. This is observed through the use of very nice concrete blocks to construct a *markaz* in the premise of Nazret al-Anṣoāri Masjid.

In the whole tour, we visited 14 mosques and Tablīgh offices (*masjids* and *markazes*) where the Tablīghī movements organised in the respective areas. In some *masjids* we spent days and in some we stayed for only a very brief time. While we were in the mosques, we were doing more praying and reading for ourselves which is expected to bring renewal for each of the *jamā'a* members. When we went out of the *masjids*, our focus had been on other people, calling them to the *masjids* so that they could be with us and practise what we were doing there. We used mainly public transportation for our journeys, with the exception of Areta-Chufa to Asela, which is 24 km.

On the 37th day, based on the request of permission made by my friend, Ayub and I left for Addis Ababa. Our amir brought the case for *mashūra* and the decision was made that the whole *jamā'a* should leave together and finish the remaining 5 days in Addis Ababa. Also, he mentioned that it is not normal or tradition to split the *jamā'a* in their return from *da'wa* tour. Then on 3 August 2014 we left for Addis Ababa and arrived at Hābāša *Markaz* in the late afternoon at the place where we began the 40 days *da'wa* tour. On the way back to Addis Ababa, we briefly visited Umar Masjid in Aqaqi town, at the edge of Addis Ababa, to have afternoon prayer (*asar salat*). The organisers at the Hābāša *Markaz* suggested that we needed to finish the full 40 days, so to do that they recommended that we go to Umar Masjid where we collected our cooking utensils and necessary materials, which we did in order to fulfil the 40 days.

2.6 Post-*Da'wa* Tour Guidance (*hidāya*), Teachings and Concluding Remarks at the End of the 40 days *Da'wa* Tour

The post- *da'wa* tour guidance (*hidāya*) started in Nazret when we were preparing for a return to Addis Ababa, with concluding remarks by our *amir*, Abdulhadi. Before we left for Addis Ababa, our *amir* took just over two hours to give us concluding remarks, particularly on things which we needed to know as the basics. Below are the highlights of his remarks.

He started by explaining about issues in *Mashūra* and mentioned about the need to think about the Muslim community. The Prophet Muḥammad said, 'Who doesn't think about my *umat* that is not for me'. No one is scarring (*yetandeb*) in having *mashūra*. One of the *ṣaḥāba* said, 'If your leaders are fair ('*adl*) and wealthy people are gracious enough to share what they have and if you solve your problems in *Mashūra*, I want to be above the ground. If not I want to be under the ground.' It is always better to do a one minute introduction before starting the *Mashūra* about the faith of Islam (*dīn-al-Islam*) and how we bring in the hereafter (*akhira*)-oriented thinking and how to avoid a worldly (*dunyā*) focused life style. *Mashūra* will protect us from disorder (*balā*) and bring mercy (*raḥmat*). When we sit in *mashūra* (meeting), we will find the love of the Muslim community (*umat*). We must give more time in our respective areas as much as we can, including *mashūra* and other duties. When we commit our spare time, that shouldn't be a cause of conflict with our family. Soul (*Rūh*) is alive in the order of Allāh, though it needs light, illumination (*nūr*). Wherever seeking knowledge (*ta'alim*) is, there will be blessing (*barakah*) and illumination (*nūr*). In the early days of Islam, Umar, one of the 4 Caliphs who once tried to kill Muḥammad

finally accepted Islam because of home-based *ta'alim*. The *masjid* of the Prophet was under the palm tree. There is a saying, 'One *istiqa'ma* is better than a thousand *karāma*' (one integrity is much better than a thousand dignity). Doing home *ta'alim* with sitting similar sits and encouraging the wives and children by providing gifts (*ikram*) will strengthen the effort. Wisdom (*hikma*) is like a drop of water which leaks little by little. Better to split men and women in different rooms or use the curtain as a splitter. Don't stop *ta'alim* at any circumstance. Organising site (*maqāmi*) must be a day-to-day activity in our respective areas. It is better to set aside Sunday for the day of *maqāmi* as many people would be around their homes on Sundays. Those who diligently do *maqāmi* with integrity (*istiqa'ma*), Allāh will take him to the other parts of the world and will change his unshakable certainty (*yaqīn*). We must correct and organise our works. We need to be careful about not spreading corruption (*fāsīd*). We are expected to work for 3 days a month to fulfil the monthly schedule (*tartib*) according to our programme.

He, then, reiterated The Five Major Works (*Khamsa amal*), which are: 1) consultation (*mashūra*), 2) seeking knowledge/study group (*ta'alim*), 3) spare time (*tafrig*), 4) visiting the areas and organizing carefully the full set of the work (*maqāmi and intiqali*), 5). monthly schedule/programme (*tartib*). 3 days *tartib*, for students are not permitted, but they can join the 40 days *da'wa* once in a year. For each of the months it is better to have 3 days *tartib* and once in lifetime, it would be wonderful to have the 4 months *da'wa* tour. When I listened to this, I said to myself, this is very similar with the concept of doing *Hajj* (Pilgrimage) once in a life time (*Hajj* is one of the five pillars of the Orthodox Islam). This process will help to keep us on track and not cooling our faith (*iman*).

Abdulahadi, our *amir* continued his long speech without using any notes. He was just talking from his heart and mind. Because we completed our 40 days *da'wa*, we do not need to be happy. The *ṣaḥāba* suggests that, if a person is happy at the end of his *fi-sabilillah*, he will not benefit from that. He needs to return with tears, not with joy. When we are out of this work, we will be like a fish which is out of water. This work has its own glory, and people respect us because of Allāh. Repentance (*Tawubat*) will be justified when we become the opener of good (*khayr*) and the closure of evil (*shar*) doors. *Dai* (a person on *da'wa*) is to be seen as white cloth, in return of *fi-sabilillah* and committing any wrong doings will be seen as a big problem on him. A high level of ethical life is expected from each one of us. We need to use our time properly, schedule what we should do, and plan systematically for our own work at mosques and homes. Washing private parts (*istinjā*) is considered as someone who has a sword. Those who move with ceremonial washing (*wudu*) is like a person who is moving around with his sword at hand. Doing additional Islamic religious tradition (*Sunnah*) every day, about 12 with a unit of prayer (*rak'a*), change (*badliya*) and capability (*qābliya*) would be very good. Allāh is clean from everything. He is greater than anything. He is also the creator (*haliq*). We are His creature (*mehluq*). The Qur'an is the light (*nūr*) so that we need to recite it every day. It's just like a catalogue which can be used as guidance. The Qur'an will clean the heart (*qalb*) of the man from rustiness. In the rest of our lives, it would be excellent to remember death, recite Qur'an, and do *dhikr* (remembrance). We need to say to Allāh 'Forgive me my crime and have your mercy (*rahmat*) upon me'. Those who wake up early and do prayer (*dua'a*), who feed others, those who do much greetings of others, and continue relationships will have a special house in paradise (*janna*). Giving 40 minutes daily to the mosques is a good way of life. Memorizing one ḥadīth in a day means

memorizing 365 Ḥadīths in a year. Ethics (*akhlāq*) is expected to be proper, and should be done through repentance (*istighfār*).

With our *amir* Abdulhadi's concluding remarks, the *da'wa* tour out of Addis Ababa concluded at the end of the 37th day on 3 August 2014. Then our leader (*amir*) told us we should fulfil the remaining 5 days in one of the mosques in Addis Ababa. At the end of his speech, everybody started weeping. No one controlled his emotions. We had started this trip with cheers but we ended up in tears. What an affectionate experience! One thing I realised, without analysing the whole process, is that we became like one family.

When we arrived at the Hābāša *Markaz*, Ismael, who was responsible for the reception (*istiqbal*) office, welcomed us and asked me how my trip was. 'How did you find the trip?' (Because he remembered my story before I left for this *da'wa* tour). Ismael continued his question: 'Are you ready to accept Islam?' Then, I told him that I had a wonderful experience with the team (*jamā'a*), and I am impressed by what I have seen so far, and it's also an amazing family spirit which I observed. About accepting Islam, I said that 'I am here to do my research, and while I am on this research journey, thinking this type of thing will jeopardise the research process, I think, doing my research as an outsider would give me a better position as a researcher. So, let me focus on the research in order to come up with a fair and reasonable assessment and out come from the research.' Ismael said, 'Fine, you are free to come any time and see whatever you want to see.' Then I asked Ismael for permission to go home. I asked him because upon entering the Hābāša *Markaz*, the responsibility would be theirs, not on our leader (*amir*). He gave me permission. After 37 days of having been away from my home, I came back home and joined my family. I started working with lots of issues related to my younger son who was ready for a trip to Italy for his college studies. I had many

unforgettable experiences, including not having a regular shower for over a month, using pit latrines in most cases, which was unclean and uncomfortable, and all sorts of inconveniences.

The next day, again, I joined the team (*jamā'a*) at the Hābāša *Markaz*. We then moved to Umar Masjid to fulfil the remaining 5 days as agreed upon. On the day we moved to Umar Masjid, for the whole day, I was sick with diarrhoea due to the water I had in the Umar *masjid* compound. Two others were also infected. Water in Addis Ababa sometimes is not safe to drink straight from the taps. Water in rural areas sometimes is much better than in Addis Ababa. On this day, I was visiting the toilet now and then. On the wall of the toilet, I read three statements written in Amharic related with politics: 1) Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) itself killed and itself mourn; 2) Let our committee members who are in prison be released 3) The struggle will be continued. This made me think to connect these statements with what is going on in the current Ethiopian political climate, particularly the tension between the government and the Muslim community. This tradition of writing political opinions and slogans on the walls of the public toilets, including school toilets and other public areas, are common in our country. That could be the case for this reflection of people's emotions and opinions. These writings might not represent either the Umar masjid or the Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement. But one can see how individuals in Tablīghīs stronghold community think and reflect their feelings in the area of politics. Umar masjid is considered as one of the Tablīghīs-controlled masjids in Addis Ababa and is highly dominated by the Gurāgē ethnic community, including the attendees and the leadership. Because of my illness, I got permission to stay with my family in the evenings and came back to Umar masjid the next day to join the team (*jamā'a*).

Anwar, one of the experienced Tablighīs at Umar masjid and a leader for group 1 (*mīdībī-1*), was invited by our *amir* to do a motivational speech (*targīb*). Our *amir* was also very sick, but decided to stay with us until the end of the required time, which is a full 40 days. Anwar’s speech focused was on creating an observing schedule/programme (*tartīb*), and how we can organize ourselves after completing the 40 days *da‘wa tour*. Personal discipline is very important to keep your schedule accordingly. Anwar mentioned his experiences in India. He participated in *khuruj fī-sabilillah* in India 7 years ago, and he remembered things in relation to personal scheduling (*tartīb*). He also explained about how to use money, and he put four priorities with regard to the use of our finances. Our first priority is that money should be invested in our families. Investing in our families is considered as charitable giving in the cause of Allāh (*ṣadaqa*). The second priority is that money should be spent on the way of Allāh (*khuruj fī-sabilillah*) for ourselves. The third investment must be helping others who strive on the way of Allāh (*khuruj fī-sabilillah*). The fourth investment needs to be helping very poor (*miskīn*) people.

Another issue mentioned in Anwar’s speech, was concentrating on weekly and monthly *mashūra*. Because he is the leader for group 1 (*mīdībī 1*), he knows the details, so he told us the dates of *mashūra*. Tuesday, at Hābāša Markaz after the afternoon prayer (*asar salat*), people come from all masjids in Addis Ababa on a weekly basis. On Wednesdays, *mashūra* will take place in the morning at 7:00-8:00 am at Grand Anwar masjid (the third oldest masjid in Addis Ababa). This *mashūra* is for *mīdībī 1* (group 1). On Sundays, monthly *mashūra* will take place at 7:00-12:00 pm at Hābāša Markaz. Many people come for this meeting, so Anwar encouraged us to participate in all these *mashūra*, including weekly, monthly and even the quarterly *mashūra* as well.

After the motivational speech (*targib*) by Anwar, and 4 days of staying at Umar Masjid, on 7 August 2014 we prepared coffee, milk and cake as a conclusion of our 40 days *da'wa* tour *khuruj fi-sabilillah*. We were told, that on 8 August 2014, we would move to the Hābāša Markaz to present our testimony (*ahwal*) and receive the final guidance (*hidāya*) before we departed to our homes. We exchanged our contact addresses including cell phone numbers and emails.

The next day, the 42nd of the total *da'wa* tour, we moved to *Hābāša Markaz*, and presented our testimony (*ahwal*) through our leader and received the necessary guidance (*hidāya*). Of course, many of the presentations in the *hidāya* were similar with the previous ones. One new thing mentioned by one of the presenters of *hidāya* was, 'We are not interested in politics. Our politics is with Shetan.' This was an interesting explanation. The final remark presented by Sheikh Engineer Ali Khadir, said, 'We have to visit each Muslim home. Our foot can get anywhere, but other means of transport cannot. So as much as we can, it is better to walk around instead of looking for vehicles,' he concluded. Finally, I met with Sheikh Engineer Ali, who is seen as the current leader (*amir*). We talked a little bit, and he said, 'In this work, too much talk is not benefitting, but it would be good for someone to come in and see what is going on'.

In the middle of my writing, I just want to express my deep gratitude to both of my supervisors, John and Halkano for giving me valuable advice and wise council before and after the 40 days of *da'wa* tour. I also thank the leaders in the Hābāša Markaz/Addis Ababa main *Markaz* for allowing me as a non-Muslim to take part in this 40 days *da'wa* tour and their trust of me, even though getting permission took me about 9 months. In the beginning of my 40 days *da'wa* tour, I was asked to accept Islam in a very polite way, which I replied in the same way. After I had done the 40 days *da'wa* tour, again the leaders at the *Markaz* asked me a similar

question, to which I also answered in the same way, saying that my purpose of coming here is to do my research. Interestingly, they are willing to accept me whenever I get time to visit the *Markaz*.

In my 40 days' *da'wa* tour, the routines were: 5:00-5:40 am devotion and prayer, both personal and congregational; 5:40-6:00 am morning motivational talk (*fajr bayān*) in the mosque, 6:00-6:15 am discussions on the greatness of Allāh in pairs (*infirād*); 6:15-6:30 am council (*mashūra*); 6:30-7:00 am a discussion on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) not in depth, but mainly on practical matters like ceremonial washing; 7:00-9:30 am sleeping time and preparation for the longer session to come. The afternoon were always for going around for *da'wa*, called (*jaula*). Because it was the month of Ramadhan, we ate in the evenings and early in the mornings.

As one of the learning opportunities, at everyday council (*mashūra*), the team (*jamā'a*) puts the world map in its midst. In some of the markazes they just put the map on the wall. Fixing our eyes on the world map or putting in the midst of the *jamā'a* seems to be a tradition for the Tablīghīs in Ethiopia. In the 14 *masjids* visited⁸⁵ in the 40 days *da'wa* tour, in all cases the world map was observed on the wall or in our midst. Neither the National markaz distributed nor the Tablīghī team member provided the copies of the world map. It was just there in each different *markazes*. The *jamā'a* members, looking to the world map, taking in turn sometimes say, 'I want to see the supremacy of Islam in my life, in my family, in my mosque, in my country and all over the world.' As a standard position of *Tablīghīs*, of not interested in politics, Metcalf (2002: 8) suggests, that 'Tablīghī

⁸⁵ (Mohammed W. H. 2014): Field Notes p.5.

Jamā'at represents an intensification of the original Deobandi commitment to individual regeneration apart from any explicit political program'. The Tablighī Jamā'at leaders once affirmed this position by saying, in one of their quarterly meetings, 'We are not interested in politics. Our politics is with *Shayṭān*'. But, I argue that the above statement, longing for 'the supremacy', indicates the political interest of the Tablighīs, at least internally. Without political involvement, reaching to the supremacy of Islam world-wide is unthinkable.

The motto of the Tablighī Jamaat movement is simple: 'Oh Muslims! Become Muslims'. By being a true Muslim one can think of changing his/her own life and could influence the world, which might lead to the supremacy of Islam, according to the Tablighīs thinking. On the one hand this could be related and pointing to all daily mundane and religious practises within the Tablighī worldview. For Tablighī, this world is full of *fāsid* (corruptions/irregularities) which need to be addressed through the teachings and principles of Tabligh. In the Tabligh practise, more focus is always given on self-pietism, which possibly leads to collective pietism. To become a good Muslim and fulfil the motto of the Tablighī movement, practising Islam in the form of Tabligh is vital. These practises might demand the rule of Islamic law as in the early days of Islam, which possibly requires political impact as opposed with the Tablighīs standard on the other. The issue of supremacy will not be realised without a direct or at least indirect political involvement. However, individual involvement and participation into politics is not prohibited. While Islam, as a religion, is interwoven with politics, as a group by itself could be seen as one of the political choices or another way of expressing a political opinion. Jeffrey Haynes suggests: Al-Mawdudi (1903-1979) was an influential Islamic thinker and the founder of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Islamic political movement, thought:

Islam was *inseparably* faith and state (*din wa-dawla*), arguing sovereignty cannot rest with the people but only with God, and that a religious state cannot simply be Muslim-majority, it must be governed not only according to his vision of ‘true Islam’ but also only by ‘true Muslims. (Haynes 2009: 99)

The source of teachings of the *Tablīghī Jamā’at* is mainly oral transmission as it is believed this will strengthen the movement. However, in my 40 days *da’wa* trip, (28 July 2014), I met with Muḥammad at Asela, (Muḥammad 28 July 2014), who is a student of *ya ‘Ubayy firewoch ya-hifiz maekel* (Fruit of ‘Ubayy Qur’ān Memorisation Centre). This training centre is situated in Addis Ababa, the capital. Muḥammad told me that the centre is highly connected with the work of *Tablīghī Jamā’at* in Ethiopia. One of the requirements for graduation is that you must go out for *da’wa*. The idea of having a training centre could be seen as part of the recent development with what Østebø suggests: ‘In Ethiopia the movement is not represented by any ulama or school. It doesn’t provide religious training on a higher level and it generally avoids debates on theology’ Østebø (2008:420). In my research journey I have found that *Tablīghīs* in Ethiopia have a place to have training, including classroom instruction with a field practicum. Explaining the six principles of *Tablīghīs* (*siffatu sitta*), which is part of their formal and informal trainings, will be demonstrated at every opportunity.

When study group (*ta’līm*) takes place, each one is expected to recite the *siffatu sitta*. Everybody has his way of reciting it. Whereas the main points are similar, the way of explanation and using illustrations were different. For example, as spoken by Seid Siraj (one of the experienced *Tablīghī* in our team): *Bismillah, al-hamdililah aselewatu selam Allāh Rasul-ilah* (always the introduction to the six principles). For human beings, to come before Allāh, the only way is based on his faith (*iman*) and character which demonstrates his lifestyle. The first principle

(*sifa*) is *La ilaha ilelahu Muḥammadun Rasul lilah*. What we need from this is changing certainty (*yaqin*) and to put our trust on Allāh (*tawakaltu*). The benefit of saying this creed is paradise (*Jannah*). ‘If a person’s last words are *la ilaha ilelahu*, the person will enter Paradise,’ said the Prophet Muḥammad. The reason for saying *Muḥammadun Rasul-ilah* is to change our ways and imitate the example of the Prophet. When the time ends, my tradition (*sunnah*) will be lost. ‘Who accomplishes a *Sunnah* of mine, will be rewarded with the reward (*ajr*)’ of 100 Martyrs, (*Shahīds*),’ said the Prophet. The name of the first Tablīghī Jamā’at principle among the Ethiopian Tablīghīs is, *la ilaha ilelahu Muḥammadun Rasul lilah*. But in the other literature and in practise elsewhere, it is known by the term ‘*khalimatu toyba*’.

Prayer (*Ṣalāt*) is the second, from which we take benefit from the safe box of Allāh (*khāzin*). ‘If you have a river which flows before your gate and wash five times a day, would you have any dirt on you?’ the Prophet asked his companions. Five times daily prayer (*ṣalāt*) will gain pardon for the small sins. *Ṣalāt* is the key for Paradise (*Jannah*), and the key for *ṣalāt* is purification/ceremonial washing (*wudu*).

The third is knowledge and remembrance (*‘ilm* and *dhikr*). The purpose of knowledge (*‘ilm*) is to submit to Allāh in a knowledgeable way and to identify the permitted and prohibited (*halal* and *haram*). The benefits of the former is walking in the light rather than the darkness. The purpose of the latter is to discard anything we depend on and to invite the greatness of Allāh within us. Our heart could easily be rusted, so the rust needs to be cleaned through remembrance (*dhikr*). The one who performs *dhikr* is alive (*hay*) and the one who does not is dead (*mayyit*). Knowledge is encouraged, and the general view of knowledge is that the one who has it is considered to be someone who walks in the light.

The fourth is respect to all Muslims (*Ikramel Muslim*)⁸⁶ and observing the justice or truth (*haq*) of the creatures, which includes loving our brothers because of Allāh. The purpose is to preserve our *haq* before Allāh Glorified He is exalted (*Subhanahu wa-ta'ala*). There are two infamous incidents of two women from the Ḥadīth (Malfoozaat Maulana Ilyas 2013: 18) which were repeatedly mentioned throughout the 40 days *da'wa* tour. There was a lady who was practising adultery (*zina*) for 40 years. But once, when she was thirsty, she went to a spring to drink water. There she saw a dog who was thirsty and was trying to satisfy himself by licking the soft wet dirt. She brought water using her shoes and gave it to the dog. Because of this act, Allāh permitted her to enter paradise (*Jannah*). Another lady who had been obeying Allāh for 40 years tied up her cat at home, left for shopping, and forgot her cat. She did not provide food or untie her cat so that the cat could find its provision (*rizq*) and in the process the cat died. Allāh condemned that lady to hell (*jahannam*). These didactic stories tell us the earnest longing of Ethiopian Tablīghīs, which is for higher moral values here on earth and the not yet. However, none is referred to by the source. In Tablīghī Jamā'at pieces of literature, *ikramel* applies only to Muslims. But the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā'at includes all creatures, which informs us of the contextual understanding of the locals.

The fifth is loyalty and intention (*Ikhlas Niya*), whereby our work needs to be acceptable to Allāh. In order to do that, whatever we do should be done in a qualified way. 'Even if your job is little, ya Mua'az, you have to do your work in excellence,' said the Prophet. This part of the six principles (*siffatu sitta*) is always brief.

⁸⁶ *Ikramel Muslim* helped the *Tablīghīs* to live smoothly with other Muslims who have different views of *da'wa*, like the *Salaḥī* or *Wahhabi*.

The sixth and last principle, a call to Islam in the way of Allāh (*da'wa ilalah khuruj fi-sabililah*), is to recognise that we are a community (*umat*) of calling to Islam and are a worshipping community (*da'wa* and *ibāda*) for Allāh. 'Ya Ali, if you are given the red camels, it is better to be a cause for guidance (*hidāyat*) to one of your brothers,' said the Prophet. The main purpose for going out in the way of Allāh (*khuruj fi sabililah*) is to correct ourselves, not others. The benefits are: If I go out before noon or afternoon that would be much better than the worldly (*dunia*) holds. There is no way to compare the dust you face in *fi sabililah* with the smoke of *Jahannam*. In conclusion, a person on *khuruj* (*kharijun*) will say, 'In the rest of my life I am prepared (*mustaid*) to accomplish this. I am prepared (*mustaid*). What about you?' The team members (*jamā'a*) responded by saying, 'We, too, are prepared (*mustaid*).' When Abdurrahman, one of the *Jamā'a* members and active *Tablīghī*, concludes his recitation of *siffatu Sitta*, he always says, 'In the rest of my life, until my death (*'bāqarāw hayate, skä lätä mote*) I will continue this *Tablīghī* mission.' (The mixed use of Amharic and Arabic, two Semitic languages, is a normal practise of Muslims in Ethiopia in general, and in the *Tablīghī* world in particular).

Whenever my turn arrived as part of the team or I got a chance to speak on the six principles (*siffatu sitta*), I repeatedly said, 'I am here to study the history of *Tablīghī Jamā'at* in Ethiopia so in the rest of my life I am prepared (*mustaid*) to accomplish this.' I merely mentioned the six principles as they are referred to in the *Tablīghī* text 1-6 in the Amharic, without going into any detailed explanation: *khalimatu toyba, ṣalāt, 'ilm and dhikr, ikramel muslim, ikhlās niya and khuruj fi-sabililah*.

There is a great sense of imitation of the early days of Islam, like trying to follow the example of the Prophet Muḥammad and the *ṣaḥāba*. When we travel, walking

on foot is preferable, sometimes over 20 kilometres! The promotion of ignoring this world by leading a simple lifestyle. Even sometimes, in normal conversation, it is encouraged to remain poor.

3. *Nusra Jamā'a* (Team Helper)

Nusra Jamā'a is a team of helpers who are ready to give support and encouragement to the formal *Jamā'a* (a team) who already left for a different area of the country for the Tablighī Jamā'at work. Muḥammad Jamal, who is one of the well experienced Tablighīs, is part of the leadership and sometimes called with the title Maulana, is known by doing *Nusra Jamā'a* (helping teams). Muḥammad was happy to be interviewed regarding this. However, he could not make it due to his busy schedule. In August 2021 Muḥammad Jamal had been in Asosa, which is in the Western part of Ethiopia, bordering Sudan. In the first week of February 2022 Muḥammad had been in the Dilla area, which is located in the Southern part of Ethiopia, bordering Kenya, to give support and encouragement as *Nusra Jamā'a*. Muḥammad went to these areas to give support to the *da'wa jamā'a* who had been in Asosa and Dilla respectively for 4 months. The purpose of organising and sending *Nusra Jamā'a* is to help the team who are in the field for so long and are tired with doing things, and are sometime facing financial constraints.

4. *Masturat* (Women's Da'wa)

Masturat is the women's involvement in the work of Tablighī Jamā'at. Tablighīs in Ethiopia, unlike elsewhere, are not doing well in *masturat* (participating women in *da'wa*). According to Eva Amrullah's explanation on 'Women in Contemporary Tablighī Jamā'at' (Amrullah, 2011, p. 150) Tablighī Jamā'at's goal is to produce women with six ideal characteristics: i) to *dā'iya* (proselytiser) ii) *'ābida* (pious believer) iii) *muta'allima* (teacher) iv) *murabbiya* (educator) v) *khādima* (server) vi) *zāhida* (manage simple life). In the case of Tablighīs in Ethiopia, it does not go as well as the Indonesian *masturat*.

According to my participant observation at the quarterly *mashūra*, (Mohammed W., Field Notes: Quarterly Mashūra, 2015) women in Ethiopia are involved in only 3 or 10 days *da'wa*. The Indian *mashaeqh* (greybeard) elderly teachers, when they were addressing the quarterly *mashūra*, they emphasise the need for *masturat* as a vital part of the work of Tablighī. Due to social circumstances and cultural issues, women's involvement in the work of the Tablighī movement seems slow. However, progress has been made over the years.

One of my informants, Ayub's wife, Ikram, mentioned the following details about *masturat* and her experience. She related that 'In these days there is improvement with regard to *masturat*. Even if they are few, there are women working like men. There are times where I really need my husband, Ayub. For instance, like the time when I gave birth, Ayub left me and went to his *da'wa* tour. But Allāh took care of me. So, when Ayub leaves me for the purpose of *da'wa* I am even happier. As I see it, the priority goes first to the *iman* (faith), including *da'wa*, and then to the family. *Da'wa* is essential for the life we are living.'

Ikram said, 'I went for a 3-day *masturat* twice with my husband, Ayub, at the Abudardan Masjid in the Quoas-Meda area, Addis Ababa. We do not go to every house as the men do. We choose a house near the operation spot and we remain there for 3 days, preparing. The chosen one from the men teaches. The one who teaches stays in the same house as we are, but in a different room and teaches us using a microphone. This is our way of communication. We do *mura'qaba* (monitoring/seeing each other) once a day, a mother with her child, husband and wife. (It is forbidden to go out with siblings). A mother, a boy, a girl, can go out together. They can meet for 3-5 minutes to discuss the situation. For a 3-day *masturat*, one raises ETB 300 (\$10, then). Sometimes the expenses could be covered by the host family, who is the owner of the house where we stay for 3 days. He slaughters sheep, and the Muslim people of the area around cooperate. There is no female

leader (*amir*) of the team. It is assigned from the men. During the Abudardan Masjid *masturat*, my husband, Ayub, was our *amir*. There were 4 couples, 8 people all together. During *masturat*, we should take books, including *Hayātu Saḥāba*. We do all the things that men do, like reading the Qur’ān, *Salat*, *Ta’līm*, and teaching each other at 10 am and 4 pm. There are also other women who attended our programme of *Ta’līm*. Many women came, sometimes they were even 50 of them gathering with us. The people who do not have to come to the *masturat* are pregnant women, (above seven months), and puerperal mothers (until two years after the birth). In my case, I participated before I gave birth in 2017. In our area, there are 10 women that participated in *masturat*. There is one women, who with her husband, participated in a 40 days *da’wa* tour.’

She continued, ‘*Masturat* changes the life of people. Women have to do it for 10 days every year, respecting the schedule (*tartib*). Men should do the same, but for 40 days. Observing the schedule (*tartib*) is a must. This practise, *masturat*, must be done through consultation (*mashūra*) with the family and concerned people. It should be taken as a life principle and encouraged to be implemented in any circumstances. It is not advised to stop doing so, but most people start it and then interrupt. It is dangerous to miss such practise.’

Ikram further suggested that she is observing her schedule (*tartib*) of 3 days every 3 months. She also decided to commit for 10 days every year. Ikram added, ‘Since I am done with reading the Qur’ān, I am now starting reading *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), and if Allāh is willing I will study Arabic as well as reading more books. My next plan is to participate in the *masturat*, to go to India for 40 days, together with my husband Ayub’ (Ikram Jamal 2019 Interview).

5. Visitation and Going Around (*ziyara* and *jaula*)

According to the founder of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement, Maulana Ilyas, the movement should be started from the nearby areas and then and go to the far areas. In one of Mawlana Ilyas sayings, he suggests: (Numani 2013: 77)

137[:] The correct procedure of this work is that we should begin by going nearby and starting from one's own environment and then proceed further. For example jamaats from here should initially go to Kernal, Panipat etc. and then from there to Punjab, Riyasat and after working in Bahawalpur, go to Sind. Sometimes in the beginning, to build up courage and determination in the workers, they should also be sent far and wide. Presently, the sending of jamaats to Sind, Bombay etc. is with this object in mind. Through these long journeys, courage and intense love for the work will be created.

In the same way, Hajji Musa started the movement from the nearby and went to a far place where the Gurāgē Muslim community were concentrated. Haji Musa was a well-educated Ethiopian, of Eritrean origin, who was venerated as the first affiliate with Tablīghī Jamā'at in Ethiopia. He started his far visit from *Abret Sheikoch*,⁸⁷ one of the first areas to welcome *Tablīghīs*. The late Haji Musa, the first *amīr* of Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā'at, was well-known for practising *ziyara* in his life and ministry of Tablīghī Jamā'at. This was mentioned at the quarterly meeting of the Addis Ababa and surrounding area by one of Haji Musa's close friends. That legacy seems continued through the emerging leaders, like Sheikh Engineer Ali Khadir, who is seen as the current *amīr* for the national *Hābāša markaz*. In one of his concluding remarks, Sheikh Ali mentioned that 'We should go on foot, for there are places which we cannot reach by aeroplanes, vehicles, ships or horses. Only the feet can get us anywhere.' That's why the home visitation is employed to fulfil] the *da'wa* mission.

⁸⁷ Abret Sheikoch is a heartland of the Gurāgēs and a place where Haji Musa Kikiya first went to introduce the Tablīghī teachings to the well-known Abret Sheikh, Sayid Budalah, who was serving at a place called Abret. Haji Musa considered this Sheikh as his own Sheikh, that's why he went to visit him as Haji Musa was well-known in *ziyara* (visitation).

5.1 Types of Visitation (*ziyara*)

Ziyara is more focused on the areas where the Tablīghī Jamā'at activists live. The founder of the Tablīghī Jamā'at movement, Maulana Ilyas, himself, states, 'The correct procedure of this work is that we should begin by going nearby and starting from one's own environment' (Maulana Ilyas, 2013, p. 77). In my 40 days *da'wa* trip, as it was written in my field notes, our *amīr* mentioned the same statement as Maulana Ilyas, saying: 'We have to give more time in our respective areas as much as we can' (Mohammed W., Filed Notes: Quarterly Mashwara, 2015, p. 32). The visitation takes place on a regular base with classifications of *umumi* (public) and *ususi* (established) *ziyara*.

- *umumi ziyara* (public visit)

This type of *ziyara* is done in the public as a whole, of course, with more focus on Muslim homes. Whether they know about this visit or not, it is a call to invite Muslims to a mosque. Sometimes, it could include people from other faiths.

- *ususi ziyara* (set up visit)

This type of *ziyara* is in a more organised way, sometimes with an appointment with a particular individual or family.

- *ziyara* in normal circumstances

The term *ziyara* regards visiting people who are in any circumstances. Visiting each other as a believing community is highly encouraged in general, and amongst the Tablīghīs in particular.

5.2 Going Around (*Jaula*)

Jaula is going around to call upon the local Muslims and beyond to attend the teachings at the nearby mosque. This takes place mostly in the mid-afternoon. *Jaula*

is explained very briefly in the *Tablīghīs* booklet which was translated from Maulana Sayid Ubaydaloah's, book on 'Da'wa wa Tablīgh' to the Amharic language and printed in Addis Ababa at Merwa Sofwa Printers, which is known by producing Islamic publications in order to assist the *Tablīghīs* in Ethiopia. Someone who teaches and motivates people on how to accomplish *jaula* should explain the following four points in the right manner: i) The necessity of faith (*Dīn*) and the great value before Allāh. ii) The need and the purpose of *da'wa* must be explained. iii) The benefits of making the Islamic faith (*Dīn*) alive, as this general *jaula* is part of the strive of the Islamic faith. iv) The disciplines of open and hidden *jaula*.

The publication regarding *Jaula* strategies explains how to relate the necessity of the Islamic faith:

i) Anybody who holds the Islamic faith will only be successful here on earth and the hereafter. A person whose life is in line with Allāh's command and the sunna of the Prophet and develops his life through the Islamic faith will be successful here in this world and the hereafter. A person who does not have faith, or is half-heartedly faithful, faces a great loss in this world and the hereafter and finds himself in incomparable disaster.

ii.) Before Allāh, the best thing is faith. The very reason that Allāh created the heaven and the earth is Islamic faith. So long as Islamic faith is alive the existence of the heaven and the earth will be preserved. Lacking the Islamic faith will put the existence of the world in danger. Truly, the Islamic faith is the soul for our physical body. If there is a soul in our physical being all parts of the body will function properly. If there is no soul in the physical body, the body will become a dead body. Parts of the body stop their functions, legs will not be able to walk, hands will not be able to greet, eyes will not be able to see, ears will not be able to hear, and the

tongue stops talking. So long as Islamic faith is alive on earth, even partly, the earth continues its duties to benefit mankind. Rain continues raining, rivers continue flowing, plants continue growing and bear-fruit, the sun and the moon shine down properly. If there is no Islamic faith in the lives of people the worlds do not have existence. According to what was told through the *ḥadīth*, ‘Allāh will hold the Last Day (*Qiyāma*) at this season.’ Until there is no one who says there is no God but God (*la ilaha illallahu*), the Last Day (*Qiyāma*) will not appear.

iii) Someone who gives greater attention to the Islamic faith (*Dīn*) and who turns his whole life to the direction of the *Dīn* and holds the *Dīn* very strictly will earn success here on earth and the hereafter. Whoever works for the *Dīn*, donates for the *Dīn*, strives for the *Dīn*, puts the *Dīn* over the worldly (*dunyā*), generally who submits the totality of his life, including his time, knowledge, energy, then it is ratified that success is for him here on earth and the hereafter. A person who is poor or wealthy, woman or man, white or black, slave or lord, if he says the Islamic faith is false and is out of the faith of Allāh and driven by his emotion and has chosen the life of this physical world will be a loser in both worlds. Allāh teaches the continuity this rule in the Qur’ān until the Last Day 123. Then We revealed to you [Muḥammad], ‘Follow the creed of Abraham, a man of pure faith who was not an idolater’ 124. The Sabbath was made obligatory only for those who differed about it. On the Day of Resurrection your Lord will judge between them as to their difference (Surah Ta Ha 123-124). Teachings in the Ethiopian Tablīghīs are more focused on the life after this world. It’s so twined and reflects the eschatological view of Islam in general and Tablīgh in particular. Though they wish success here on earth, more focus is given to the hereafter.

iv) The greater before Allāh are Allāh's slaves. Allāh ordered the prophets to perform a higher struggle for the Islamic faith (*Dīn*). The best thing to perform before Allāh is to work hard for the *Dīn*. This is not difficult to understand. If there is any other thing which is the most loved before Allāh, prophets could have been ordered to do so.

v) This Muslim community (*Umma*) of faith has been working hard to spread the Islamic faith (*Dīn*) through organising teams (*jamā'a*) and assigning armies of faith. Due to these reasons it has never been deprived of open and hidden help and blessings as well as mercy and support from Allāh. People are flooding to the faith of Allāh. When this Muslim Community (*Umma*) started neglecting and stopping this holy purpose of practising of spreading the *Dīn*, and also became aloof in sending teams (*jamā'as*) to the rest of the world, they were then deprived of help and support from Allāh. The Muslim community faced failure and dishonour, and bowed down with disgrace before its enemies as a result of Muslims who left their faith.

The publication also cites the following: 'In order to bring the *Dīn* in the lives of people and change their lives is only through the movement like *Tablīghīs* (*da'wa* movement). It is known that this world is only for a cause (*sabab*) to the *Dīn*. Allāh created *sabab* for everything. Movements done by the prophets have been the main cause for spreading the presence of *Dīn*. Whenever Allāh wanted to 'alive' Islamic faith, He will send the prophets. Whenever a prophet starts the *da'wa* movement, 'false' and its followers will disappear. Allāh sent the prophets at times of corruption and adultery (*fāsīd* and *zina*) increased; people's faith (*'aqīda*) and the ethics spoiled. The Prophet was sent when the people of Makka were immersed in the great sea of immorality. They were worshiping idols, having alcoholic drinks,

and were visiting the Ka‘ba while they were naked. They also practised infanticide of baby girls and buried them while they were alive, ate dead animals, used interest (*ribā*) in their business and trading, and killed each other. Because they had been immersed within a great immorality, the rulers at that time were not willing to rule them. The rulers dishonoured and despised the people. Allāh planned to deliver the people from this failure, so He sent the Prophet Muḥammad as the Messenger. The Prophet started the *da‘wa* movement with great energy and tirelessly did *jaula* day and night. The Prophet explained the greatness and sovereignty of Allāh, putting forth this message with great strength and authority. The lives of the Arabs changed and they grasped strong faith. They believed in the greatness and sovereignty of Allāh and were freed from evil practises.

Through the effort and energy (*jihud*) of the Prophet, Allāh granted an Islamic faith to Abubakar, Usman, and Ali and they donated 313 heroes of Islam to the Prophet for the battle of Badr.⁸⁸ Rulers of the Romans and Fars started trembling. People welcomed Islam in a very massive way and Islam reached the whole world. Allāh made the Prophet, the last Prophet. Until the end of the Last Day, no prophet will be sent. So, any spoiled faith and unethical and immoral practises could be avoided only through performing *da‘wa* movement following the strategy (*tartīb*) of the Prophet. Who is going to perform this holy act until the Last Day? Yes, performing this responsibility of honourable act is given to Muslims. Everybody who says, there is no deity except Allāh, and Muḥammad is the Messenger (*la ‘ilāha ‘illa-llāh Muḥammadun rasulu llāh*), brings a serious responsibility upon him.’

⁸⁸ Badr: a place near the coast, about 95 miles to the south of Madina where, in 2 AH in the first battle fought by the newly established Muslim community, the 313 outnumbered Muslims led by the Messenger of Allāh overwhelmingly defeated 1000 Makkan idolaters. Someone who took part in the battle of Badr is called *Badrī* (Bewley 1998: 36).

The greatness of Allāh should be explained almost always as an introduction to Muslims when *jaula* takes place. The need for *da'wa* and the purpose of *jaula* must be clarified. The significance of *jaula* is briefly explained as part of the struggle (*jihad*) in the process of spreading the Islamic faith in order to keep the Islamic faith alive, the (*Dīn al Islam*). Success here on earth and the hereafter is only through *Dīn al Islam*, so each one of us are expected to build our life in the line of *sunnah* (tradition of the Prophet) and the ordinance of Allāh. *Dīn* is considered as spirit for our body which can affect our body positively so that all parts of the body can work properly. So long as *Dīn al Islam* moderately exists, the universe will continue moving with its normal occurrences including rainfall, sunshine, plants, and the movements of the stars. Muslims are called to invest their time and energy wholeheartedly towards their *Dīn* like the early days of *ṣaḥāba* (companions of Muḥammad), so this can be demonstrated through the effort of *da'wa*. We all are members of the community of *Dīn* (faith). We are supposed to pray to Allāh to make *Dīn al Islam* great and supreme.

The Tablīghīs are very much concerned for themselves through the work of Tablīgh by encouraging and reminding other Muslims about their spiritual lives. In so doing, they believe that they would find more spiritual benefits for themselves. That is why Tablīghīs are actively visiting Muslims' homes where the *da'wa* takes place. There is a strong sense of belief that visitation will bring about a spiritual awakening. The *jamā'a* (team) is divided into four groups which consists of at least three members *amīr*, *mutakalim* and *dalīl* (leader, spokesman and guide) who visit any Muslim family homes, irrespective of personal acquaintances, to invite them to come to the mosque to listen to Tablīghī Jamā'at teaching. With the consent of the families visited they begin by the *targīb* (motivational speech). *Ziyara* and *jaula* have got their own etiquettes (*adab*) and observing the etiquettes is absolutely vital.

5.3 Etiquettes of Visitation and Going Around (*adabs of ziyara and jaula*)

There are two main parts of etiquettes for the execution of *jaula*. i) External: be in the spirit of prayer all the time, respect all the necessary traditions, control our eyes from what we see, be obedient to the *amir*, whenever we walk for *jaula*, walk on the right side of the road, move in *dhikr* (remembrance), *shukr* (thanksgiving), and *ṣabr* (patience), and keep quiet and do not make any talk or speech except the *mutakalim* (spokesman of the team). ii) Internal: strongly believe and trust Allāh that this *jaula* will play a greater role in influencing people and bring a life change to those who listen to it. Accomplish this *jaula* with a sincere and faithful manner, focusing on Allāh, and move around with the clean intention of rectifying ourselves. One must put on humility and a merciful character towards the *Ummat* (Muslim community), as well as maintain a constructive view: repent, feel sad, and ask forgiveness from Allāh for anything neglected when we are doing *jaula*.

Some of the etiquettes (*adab*) include having strong convictions that the work of *da'wa* could influence other people in the days ahead. One must do the job with sincere integrity, a humble spirit, and endurance, and with a focus only on Allāh. One should never talk to mentally ill people, those who are in a hurry, or women. The daily guide directs the team (*jamā'a*) members to Muslim homes and the *amīr* (leader) is always the first to speak to the families and give a very brief introduction before inviting the spokesman (*mutakalim*) to speak. In most cases, the responses from the people are positive, and at times rapid, as the people voluntarily go to the mosques straight away to listen to the Tablīghī Jamā'at teachings. In mapping the area, it is also vital to assign different teams at least to four directions, North, East, South, and West. Because there were 14 in our group, it was a good fit with three for each of the teams and the remaining two concentrated on cooking and guarding

(*khidma* and *ḥirāsa*). In each of the teams, we added one from the area we were visiting, particularly the *dalīl* (guide).

Going around (*Jaula*) is considered the best practise of the prophets. The prophets have done this practise efficiently through observing mercy honesty, humbleness, and good behaviours. We might not fulfil the practise in a similar way as the prophets. However, as much as we can, we must strive to do it by observing all the necessary etiquettes (*adab*) of *Jaula*. In order to accomplish this correctly, the following etiquettes should be taken in to consideration. i) the primary reason of going around with a clean intention (*niyya*) must be to correct ourselves. ii) humbleness and showing mercy to people must be demonstrated. iii) patience and endurance are vital. iv) have an affirmative view for Muslims. v) be regretful and sad for neglecting this work, and for the damage which the work is facing. These are connected internal etiquettes with the heart (*qalb*) of *Jaula*. The external etiquettes of *Jaula* which are not connected with the heart include, prayer (*du‘ā*); I really do not understand how prayer could be an external etiquette, but this is the way how the Tablīghīs see it. One must observe the traditions of the Prophet (*sunna*), control what you see, begin on the right side when making any movements to go around, be obedient to the leader of the team (*amir* of the *jamā‘a*), do not be forgetful to remember and mention Allāh’s name, and do not speak to anyone except the assigned spokesman (*mutakallim*) at the time of *Jaula*.

The spokesman (*mutakallim*) is expected to speak in Arabic according to the way of explanation of *Jaula* as an introduction to the work. The speaker should speak gently, and make it attractive as much as he can. First, he offers greetings to the

person who is going to be called. Then he speaks the following in Arabic:⁸⁹ ‘My brother, these are your brothers who came to visit you. We all are brothers. We ratified that Allāh is God. We received the Prophet Muḥammad as the Messenger. If we want to be successful in this world and the hereafter, we must achieve the commands of Allāh only according to a way that the Prophet educated us. Generally, how can this good principle be reflected on us and all Muslims? To achieve this, striving and struggle are necessary. For this purpose there will be a talk on Islamic religion and faith (*Din* and *Iman*) at the Mosque. We wish that you join us as we go to the mosque and listen to the talk. Allāh will provide you the greatest provision.’

Upon return from *Jaula*, we can’t forget to ask Allāh for mercy. The reason is, the work of *Jaula* is for the prophets. Because we are weak, we didn’t accomplish this holy work of *Jaula* properly. So, asking forgiveness (*istighfār*) is required. Due to being unable to perform the work accordingly, we must be regretful. Both during *Jaula* and remaining at the Mosque will provide grace equally.

When introducing the work of *Tablīghī* when *Jaula* is taking place, using the Arabic language is highly encouraged. Then translating the whole speech in Amharic is also needed. Most Muslims in Ethiopia do not understand Arabic. So, the Arabic version of the introduction must be interpreted into the Amharic language which several people can easily understand. The introduction part consists of greetings,

⁸⁹ يا اخي هؤلاء الإخوة جاءوا لزيارتك في الله، نحن و انتم كلنا إخوة في الله، و اعترفنا بلالة إلا الله علي محمدون رسول الله، إن فلاحنا و نجاحنا في الدنيا والآخرة في امتثال أوامر الله علي طريقة رسول الله كيف يأتي ذلك في حياتنا وفي حياة المسلمين اجمعين؟ لا بد لذلك من الجهد والسعي. ففي هذا المقصد في المسجد كلام الدين و الإمعان فنرجو امنكم انتفضوا معنا إلي المسجد يؤتكم الله اجرا عظيما.

Yā akhī hwla’ alikhwt jā’wa llyartk fy Allāh, nḥnw antm klna ikhwt fy Allāh, wa ‘trfna blalt ila Allāh ‘ly mḥmdwn rswl Allāh in flahna w njahna fy aldnaya w alakhrt fy amtthal awaml Allāh ‘ly tryqt rswl Allāh kyf yaty zlk fy hyatna w fy hyat almslmyn? Labd lzlk mn aljhd w als’y. fyy hza almqsḍ fy almsjd klam aldyn w ailm’an fnrjw amnkm antfḍwa m’na ily almsjd ywtkm Allāh ajra ‘ẓỵma.

thanksgiving to Allāh, how one becomes successful through obedience to Allāh, and also how to demonstrate that lifestyle, and the need to take part in the work of Tablīghī. At the end of the introduction, people are invited to the nearby mosque for further explanation (*bayān*) of where *Jaula* is taking place. This way of introduction in a speech among the Tablīghīs is so common, they know it from memory and speak it automatically. It seems in- built.

There is a special way of explanation of the work of Tablīghī to attract those who listen to it in Arabic and Amharic: ‘Peace be upon you. The reason we came to visit (*lamazayr*) you is for the sake of Allāh. You are our brother through Allāh. All of us are the members of Islamic faith (*Dīn al Islām*). No prophet will be sent after the Prophet. All of us have a strong responsibility to make it live, protect, and propagate Islām (*Dīn*). We need to talk on this issue and how to make Islam alive all over the world, reflect (*fikr*), and have council in order to design the strategy.’

When entering to an area to perform *Jaula* the following etiquettes should be in place. We must remember that we all arrived at this particular town by the will and help of Allāh to make alive the effort (*jihūd*) of the Prophet Muḥammad. Any thought that we reflect (*fikrā*) in our mind will be reflected on the area where we work. For this reason we must sharpen our intention (*niya*) and reflection (*fikrā*). The main task before us, upon which we think and reflect, must be on the people of this area, how they can make alive the effort (*jihūd*) of the Prophet, and prepare them for the work of *da‘wa* (a call to Islam) to go out (*khurūj*) for 3, 10 and 40 days, 4 months, and sometime for the a year.

We should relate to them the following etiquettes: One should perform a call to Islam, prayer, remembrance, worship, and we should involve ourselves by serving

others (*da'wa* and *du'ā*, *dhikr* and *'ibāda, khidma*) and do good things. When we enter the mosque, step first with our right foot and say this: 'In the name of Allāh let peace be upon the Prophet. Oh, Allāh open the door of your mercy.' Someone who has done ritual washing for prayer (*wuḍū'*), let him do two cycles (*rak'at*) of prostration (*sujūd*) at the mosque. After that we sit for a consultative meeting (*mashūra*). Speaking loudly and interfering with issues in the mosque is strictly forbidden.

6. Conclusion

Da'wa, Jaula, and Ziyara, are all interconnected and demonstrated through going around where the Tablīghī Jamā'at work is taking place to meet with people wherever they are. This piece of the movement could be considered as the feet of the movement. The main purpose of this movement is to call Muslims to be Muslims. This whole movement is spreading in Ethiopia due to the rigorous effort of the Tablīghīs, with the movement expanding since the 1960s. Without these efforts, it would be very difficult to spread the main concept and idea of the work of Tablīghī Jamā'at. As has here been explained in depth the main actors of the movement are those who left their homes willingly to join this movement aimed at bringing an Islamic renewal amongst Muslims in localities where they are and areas where they have envisioned, in most cases cross- culturally within Ethiopia and cross borders.

In the Tablīghī movement each and every tasks has its own *adabs* (etiquettes). Highly legalistic, not only religious duties, every action must be done accordingly. The role of the lengthy pre-and post-*da'wa* tour *hidāya* (guidance) is crucial and implemented rigorously by the leaders in their respective areas.

In the following chapter, locating the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā'at will be discussed in the current debate on faith and politics. This include the Tablīghīs spirituality, solidarity, and secretiveness with regard to Wahhabis/ Salafis, and Sufis.

CHAPTER SIX: Locating the Ethiopian Tablighī Jamā‘at in the Current Debate on Faith and Politics, Spirituality, Solidarity, and Secretiveness of the Ethiopian Tablighīs

1. Introduction

This chapter explains how to locate the Ethiopian Tablighī Jamā‘at into the current debate on faith and politics. The debate between Tablighīs and Wahhabis⁹⁰/Salafis⁹¹, tolerance between Tablighīs and Sufis, and the Tablighīs’ identity and position regarding political involvement will be addressed. This will help us to locate the Tablighī Jamā‘at. To accomplish this aim I explain intrareligious debates, conflict, and tolerance among Sunni Islam: (i) debates between Tablighīs and Wahhabis/Salafis; (ii) conflict between Tablighīs and Wahhabis/Salafis; (iii) tolerance between Tablighīs and Sufis. (iv) finally, we assess Tablighīs and politics in Ethiopia. At the end I reflect on Spirituality, Solidarity, and Secretiveness of the Ethiopian Tablighīs like and unlike other Tablighīs elsewhere in the world. Though it is shaded with secretiveness, being apolitical is common amongst the Ethiopian Tablighīs as in most parts elsewhere. The Tablighīs participate in many social activities including studying secular learning for males and females, some of them are involved in graduate studies, political involvement individually, but as it is excepted as a group.

⁹⁰ ‘Wahhabi is a label given to those who follow the teachings of Muḥammad Abd al-Wahhab. The Wahhabis are always referred to as Salafis, and in fact they prefer to be called as such. As a rule, all Wahhabis are Salafis but not all Salafis are Wahhabis. The term Salafism did not become associated with the Wahhabi creed until the 1970s. It was in the early 20th century that Wahhabis referred to themselves as Salafis.’ (Mohamed Bin Ali, Muḥammad Safiul Alam Shah Bin Sudiman, 11 October 2016)

⁹¹ ‘The modernist Salafis sought general principles in authoritative texts that permit flexible adaptation to novel forms of governance, law, and education.... Modernist Salafis outside Saudi Arabia defended Wahhabis against their critics by referring to them as Sunni adherents of the Hanbali law school. Then, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Wahhabism’s defenders began to call it Salafi. Finally, in the 1970s, Saudi religious scholars adopted the Salafi mantle’ (Commins, 2015).

With regard to educating women, the Ethiopian Tablighīs are willing to send their girls to modern schools to have a secular education and encourage other Muslims to do so, unlike the Pakistani Tablighīs. Malala story from Pakistan contrasts sharply with gender relations and approach to access in Ethiopia which owe to the particular ethnic of the Gurāgē background which is probably more egalitarian than the cultural context of Tablighī Jamā‘at in South Asia.

Malala Yousafzi, a Pashtun⁹², was born in Khushal Street, Swat Valley, North-West Frontier Province, Pakistan. Malala is known as an educational campaigner. The Mufti on Khushal Street, Mullah Ghulamullah was a member of Tablighī Jamā‘at, a Deobandi group that holds a huge rally every year at its headquarters in Raiwind⁹³, near Lahore, attended by millions of people. The Mufti turned up at Malala’s door with seven people, some other senior Tablighīs, a mosque keeper, a former jihadi and a shopkeeper, and they filled the small house. ‘As a leader of the team, I am representing the Ulema and Tablighīan and Taliban,’ Mullah Ghulamullah said, referring to not just one but two organisations of Muslim scholars to give himself gravitas. ‘I am representing good Muslims and we all think your girls’ school is *haram* [unlawful in the *Sharī‘a*] and blasphemy. You should close it. Girls should not be going to school’, he continued. ‘A girl is so sacred she should be in purdah, and so private’ (Malala Yousafzi with Christina Lamb 2013: 74-83). So far, sending girls to the schools is not an issue for the Ethiopian Muslims in general and Tablighīs in particular.

Mareike Winkelmann comments on the Indian Tablighīs regarding women’s education. She writes: ‘Characteristic of the tablighi views regarding women’s education is the idealization of past role models combined with anxieties regarding new methods of

⁹² Pashtun is one of the people group in Pakistan. For most Pashtuns it is a gloomy day when a daughter is born (Malala Yousafzi with Christina Lamb 2013: 9).

⁹³ Raiwind is a town which now promoted to Tehsil Head-Quarter located within union council 149 (Dholanwal) in Allama Iqbal Town of Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Raiwind serves as the head-quarters of Tablighī Jamā‘at and hosts the annual Raiwind Ijtima estimated over 2 million congregants. Raiwind is also home to Pakistan Railways Junction and Track Workshop and serves as the political base for former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

teaching and new areas of studies. Because women are seen as equal to man with regard to acquiring the rewards of matters pertaining to faith, if a woman ‘wishes’ to acquire knowledge, purdah should not be a hindrance.’ (Winkelmann, 2005: 55). The Indian Tablighīs might be similar with the Ethiopian Tablighīs because the Gurāgē ethnic people are more moderates, have strong work ethics⁹⁴, secular education, and also strive for modern life. However, the *Wahhabi-takfirī* are an exception, as they prefer to send their children to madrasa instead of modern primary schools. (ibid p. 44)

The debate and conflict between the Tablighīs and Wahhabis/Salafis can be summarised in three main categories. One, celebrating *mawlid*, the birth of Prophet Muḥammad. Two, interpretation of religious teaching and practises including the six virtues/principles (*sifatu sita*) of Tablighīs, as well as going far to accomplish religious duties for days, weeks, and months without having an appropriate knowledge of Islam and neglecting their own families. Three, political involvement (less interest from the Tablighīs, if not the hate of politics. but, more of an appetite from the Wahhabis).

As a researcher who has been studying the Tablighīs in Ethiopia since 2013, I have a chance to understand more of their character in i) spirituality, which demonstrates Tablighīs religiosity; ii) solidarity, which reflects their social involvement and togetherness; and iii) secretiveness, which indicates their interest towards politics. These three characteristics are common amongst the Ethiopian Tablighīs.

i) Spirituality: In this chapter I explain why the Tablighīs chose to be more spiritual than other Muslims. After all, one’s religious journey must be demonstrated through spiritual practise, which can be showed through observing Islamic virtues, particularly according to the six virtues/ principles (*sifatu sitta*) of Tablighī Jamaat and the *Tablighī Nisab* which

⁹⁴ See Ibid pp. 118-9

was developed by Sheikh Zakaria, an Indian Tablīghī leader. The Tablīgh Nisab is considered as one of the textbooks to be read repeatedly at the time of *da'wa* trips including 3, 10, 40 days and 4 months. All the efforts during the time of a religious journey must lead towards spirituality which can be demonstrated in the field (while they do the actual *da'wa* tour) and in the day-to-day life wherever they are. What makes someone spiritual is debatable, even among the wider Islamic circle, so it remains open for questions. However, in the Tablīghīs world, effort and struggle within self, and by doing travel in their own vicinities and beyond is highly recommended to bring vivid spirituality. Haji Zayno Sheikh Muqina⁹⁵ is remembered in his travel for religious cause. In so doing, the Tablīghīs are seeking and working hard to be considered a spiritual person by their peers as well as by leadership at different levels. These include *midibīs (halaqas)*, and main *markaz* (headquarters).

ii) Solidarity with fellow Tablīghīs: This is one of the characteristics one can easily identify the Tablīghīs from other Muslims. Of course, generally Muslims demonstrate solidarity very easily. However, solidarity for the Tablīghīs is just part and parcel of their life which can be easily reflected through their religious and social involvement. One of my informants, Abdulhadi Ahmad states: ‘...I love and appreciate their fellowship and solidarity. They did lots of good things on my wedding day.’ (Ahmad, 2019) Solidarity is demonstrated at all times of the activities of Tablīghīs. Solidarity begins by making financial contributions towards their *da'wa* tours, helping others who cannot afford the contribution for *da'wa* tours, as well as for any other meetings. These demonstrate strong ownership of what they do and why they do.

⁹⁵ Religious Migration is one of the expressions of spirituality. ‘Haji Zayno Sheikh Muqina, who is remembered as ‘the father of *da'wa* and generation’, left his birth place, the Wolane, Gurāgē area. His primary reason was to spread Islam as he was doing in his homeland.’ (Ibid p. 111).

iii) Secretiveness: The reason for the Tablīghīs to be secretive might be the fact that they don't want to take serious responsibilities. For instance, they are secretive regarding their family responsibilities and being apolitical. This characteristic is one of the common characteristics of the Tablīghīs worldwide. The way Muslims do remembrance of Allāh (*dhikr*) generally in secret, and particularly the Tablīghīs perform in the most secretive way when doing the remembrance of the names of Allāh. The Tablīghīs want to make everything secret. Unless the researcher tries to see it through participant observation and deploying social research tools, it would be difficult to understand it. They always prefer, if not enjoy, hiding things or to not tell everything what they know, and what they are doing, and why they are doing it. Due to this particular characteristic it was not easy to understand how the Tablīghī Jamā'at Movement is evolving in Ethiopia. That's why participating in their religious journeys as a participant observer and traveling very closely with them became absolutely vital, as it is recommended by the researcher of this field of studies. As a researcher, to accomplish my task as a participant observer, I travelled with them and experienced life in order to understand the characteristics of Tablīghīs, in which of course, secretiveness was vivid. Whenever a political talk started, the Tablīghīs wanted to remain silent and said that is strictly forbidden. The Tablīghīs feel that explaining everything will spoil the work of Tablīghīs and spiritual things will be changed to be secular and put the Tablīghīs efforts in danger. This similar notion is expressed by one of the interviewees of Halkano Abdi Wario, in his thesis, 'Networking the nomads' (Wario 2012: 89).

The Ethiopian Tablīghīs are more inclined to the Sufi order (*Qādirīyya tariqa*). As Gurāgēs are more comfortable with the Qādirīyya Sufi order and respecting and practising of tomb visit of their sheikhs, they adopted the Tablīghī Jamaat movement practises for faith renewal without sacrificing their strong roots/traditions with the Qādirīyya

order/*tariqa*). The local indigenous tradition had its roots in the current development of Islam in general, and in Tablīghī Jamaat in particular.

2. The Debate Between Tablīghīs and Wahhabis/Salafis

One of the issues for having arguments between the Tablīghīs and Wahhabis/ Salafis is the issue of celebrating *Mawlid*. ‘This ritual [mawlid] celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad and his holy deeds is performed by the recitation of spiritual poems. It is a popular practise in Sufi Islam, but is firmly rejected by Salafis’ (Gerard Pruner and Eloi Ficquet 2015: 116). Not only is it practised by the Sufis, it’s also supported and promoted by the Tablīghīs. Because the Tablīghīs are not against Sufi practises, which one of them is celebrating *Mawlid*, they always celebrate Mawlid commemorations. In our conversation with my friend, Ayub, and other Tablīghīs, what they are saying is, ‘We celebrate birthdays for any ordinary people. If we celebrate the Prophet’s birthday, what’s wrong with that?’

Hassen Taju, in his book entitled *atchaqachaqu* (do not argue): *Mawlid Memorial* for the Great Prophet (Taju H. 2016), mentioned causes for arguments and conflicts between Sufis and Wahhabis/Salafis Muslims. The debates are based on the traditions, Ḥadīth, and the Qur’ān. Though Taju’s focus was on the Sufis, it is clear that includes the Tablīghīs due to their strong connection with Sufis. The majority of Tablīghīs practise the Tablīghī Movement without sacrificing their traditional Sufi practises.

2.1 Debate on Mawlid Celebration

The debate on the birthday of Prophet Muḥammad (Mawlid) has been going on for quite some time in Ethiopia. Currently, such debate and arguments are becoming serious and furious. Since 1806, Muslims in Ethiopia practised the Mawlid

Celebration in an organised way. The contribution of Ethiopian Sufi Mashāikh were immense and continue to be vital (Taju H. 2016: 41). According to Taju, Ethiopian Sufis has a special connection with the Prophet Muḥammad and his birthday. Particularly, the great alim-Sheikh Muḥammad al-Shafi, who is known by the name ‘Jama-Nigus’, was the first to introduce the Mawlid Celebration in the northern part of Ethiopia, Wallo. Following Jama-Nigus’ footsteps, Jamal-Din al-Ani and alims of Dana continued celebrating Mawlid in a more organised way.

The late Haji Muḥammad Sani Habib (1914-1989), who was the first President for The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council and one of the prominent Muslim leaders in Ethiopia, with his colleagues, struggled to have Mawlid be considered as one of Ethiopian National Holidays. Sani Habib’s contribution is remembered as one of his significant contributions in the growth and development of Islam in Ethiopia. He achieved the struggle of making Mawlid as one the Ethiopian National Holidays, which was accomplished at the time of Military Junta (*Darg*) in 1985. The Transitional Military Government of Ethiopia ratified the Mawlid celebration as one of the Ethiopian National Holidays under the Proclamation No. 16/1967. Since then, Mawlid became the day of rest. Hussein Ahmad commented that this proclamation was ‘the most important gain for Islam after the revolution.’ (Taju H. 2016: 42)

Taju further commented and resonates that Muḥammad did not order that his birthday should be celebrated due to the following reasons: i) because that does not need a special order to do so. ii) because it is possible to leave something which is not categorised either permitted nor unpermitted. iii) because Muḥammad might be worried to put sort of a ‘must’ order on his people to celebrate his own birthday as one of good practises. iv) because Muḥammad understood the realities of his people. v) because the Prophet Muḥammad was an example of humbleness and

modest and he, therefore, could not say to celebrate my birthday. vi) because Muḥammad did not think seriously about celebrating his birthday. vii) because Muḥammad forgot considering this issue as one of the main things. So due to these reasons, celebrating Muḥammad's birthday was not practised in his time.

2.2 Debate on Islamic knowledge

The Wahhabis/Salafis have a good grasp of knowledge regarding the Orthodox Islamic doctrines. The Tablīghī Jamā'at movement, despite its growth in Addis Ababa and beyond, experiences internal clashes and conflicts in the *masjids* (mosques). Only recently there was a conflict between the young people of the Tablīghīs and the Wahhabis in the *masjid* at a place called Lomi-Meda. The issue of Islamic knowledge and doctrine could be a point of debate and conflicts amongst the Tablīghīs and Wahhabis. The way both groups have knowledge regarding the traditional *Mawlid* celebrations is often a source of conflict due to lack of Islamic knowledge. The practise of mawlid celebration, of course is highly interwoven within the Sufi order, which the Wahhabis are against it in any form, and the Tablīghīs are tolerant.

Ayub, one of the experienced Tablīghīs commented: 'We are celebrating birthdays for any ordinary people, what's wrong in doing so for our Prophet, Muḥammad?' Mawlid celebration with tomb visits is common within the Gurāgē Muslims' culture and belief and practises. For example: the Abret, Qatbare, and others are the few to be mentioned which the Tablīghīs are not critical on the traditional practises of the tomb visits in combination with Mawlid celebration unlike the Wahhabis.

2.3 Debate on Leadership and Ownership

The Tablīghīs feel a sense of leadership and ownership in the Tablīghī Jama‘at Movement in general and on the mosques where the movement has a stronghold. Sometimes that creates tensions between the Tablīghīs and Wahhabis. This issue of leadership and ownership is demonstrated in the masjid premises regarding the use of property, and who determines the leadership and organisation of the Tablīghī Jama‘at. Sometimes both groups are in the same masjid.

3. Tolerance between Tablīghīs and Sufis

Tablīghīs are always tolerant with the practise of Sufis and Sufis are also tolerant with the Tablīghīs practises.

3.1 *Khat* Chewing Tradition

The Sufis in Ethiopia are known by chewing *khat* now and then. They prefer to have the *khat* chewing ritual on Wednesdays. The main reason for this is that Wednesday is set aside for Abdulqadir Jilane, who is the founder of the Qādriyya order (*tariqa*). The Sufis extend this *khat* chewing ritual at the celebration of *Mawlid* which is tolerable by the Tablīghīs, if not allowable. The Tablīghīs do not forbid *khat* chewing as the Wahhabi/Salafi do. The main reason for this is the Tablīghīs think that everything should be done little-by-little (*bitdaruj*). It should not be drastically overdone. Of course, at the time of *da‘wa* tour, it is strictly forbidden. But someone with the habit of *khat* chewing could join the *da‘wa* team and try to say that he can be free to have this bad habit.

3.2 Tomb Visit

The Sufis practise tomb visits wherever the tombs for well-known *Sheikhs* are buried. The Wahhabis/Salafis are very much against this practise unlike the Tablīghīs.

Though the Tablīghīs visit the tombs, they tolerate those who practise tomb visiting, including the Sufis.

3.3 Saint Veneration

Veneration of saints could also be seen as a point of tolerance between the Tablīghīs and Sufis. In Ethiopian Islam, saint veneration is highly practised by the Sufis. But the Tablīghīs give more room to Prophet Muḥammad. However, the Tablīghīs do not oppose any of the practise of saint veneration, unlike the Wahhabis/Salafis. One of the point of departure between the Tablīghīs and Wahhabis/Salafis as they have zero tolerance in this regard.

4. Spirituality, Solidarity, and Secretiveness of the Ethiopian Tablīghīs

4.1 Tablīghīs Spirituality: Commitment and Missional Identity

Spirituality: demonstrated through traveling for faith renewal in the country and beyond for days, weeks, and months in the way of Allāh as (*yAllāh musafir*) travellers of Allāh. Everything is spiritual for the Tablīghīs, including eating, sleeping, speaking, and participating in a meeting/gathering. Everything has its own etiquettes and must be done accordingly.

4.2 Tablīghīs Solidarity: Social Involvement

Solidarity: doing religious duties and responsibilities in the spirit of togetherness by organising all the necessary resources, mainly from the participants themselves and of course with other committed people to the movement. Those who cannot perform the long-days trip are encouraged to support others financially. According to one of the amirs at Anwar Masjid who was in Mekele and consulted with us at our 40 days *da'wa* tour: He suggests that our 'first responsibility is for ourselves,

second for our family, and third for those who are ready to perform *da'wa* and some other religious duties.' That is the way the financial administration works in the world of Tablighīs.

4.3 Tablighīs Secretiveness: Mystical identity

Secretiveness: in the Tablighīs world everything is secret and sacred. Documentation and the recording of the events is hardly done. Particularly for a researcher like me is very difficult to understand what is going on in their world. That is why participant observation is needed to accomplish this research. Indeed, participant observation is absolutely vital to understanding Tablighīs and their religious renewal movement. As others say elsewhere, 'Writings and recordings are worldly which could damage the movement down the road' Wario's interview (2012: 89).

5 Tablighīs and Politics in Ethiopia

5.1 Apolitical Choice of Tablighīs as a Political Choice

One cannot be free from politics. It depends to what extent one is involved in politics. As a matter of fact, in a country like Ethiopia where the politics are highly interwoven with religious and ethnic identity, how can someone be free from any form of political involvement? Not to be involved, by itself, is a political choice and detaching Islam from politics is not encouraged by other Muslims, mainly the Wahhabis/Salafis. Supporting prayers or negating the political leaders through prayers could be seen as taking a political stand.

5.2 Individual Tablighīs Involvement in Politics

Individually, Tablighīs are allowed to choose whatever they want. However, they cannot impose what they think and believe on the other Tablighīs using any means of the Tablighī Jamā'at movement as a tool to disseminate their ideas. My friend,

Ayub, is a journalist. He is greatly interested in politics. Whenever we meet, his first question is, ‘How do you see the Ethiopian politics? What is new in the past week? How do you evaluate the government actions regarding war which had been going on over a year, since November 2021?’ Ayub also articulates well and in a good manner. When he reflects on issues, I sense wisdom in his analysis. However, when Ayub does his Tablīghī work, he never mentions political issues. Amongst the Ethiopian Tablīghīs, there are well educated people and professionals, and some are involved in politics individually.

5.3 Tablīghīs Involvement in Politics as a Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement

This area is clearly set from the historic start of the Tablīghī Jamā’at movement. As a group, Tablīghīs leave all the issues to Allāh instead of confronting the government or political leaders. The Ethiopian Tablīghīs follow this pattern of distancing themselves from politics. This pattern, utilized by Tablīghīs, is criticised by Wahhabis/Salafis. But the Tablīghīs are still firm with their apolitical stand. In the future, they might rethink and change their minds as the Ethiopian politics continues to be dominated by ethnic and religious identity as it was historically.

However, it is worth noting to pay attention to Pakistani experts’ critical comments from South Asia, on Pakistan where Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement has strong presence through its Head-Quarters, Raiwind. Shamil Shams writes in his article on dw.com Pakistani’s Raiwind gathering fuels extremism (Shams, 2012). Three experts presented their views and critical comments on Tablīghī Jamā’at. Firstly, Yousuf Usmani, a Tablīghī activist [adherent] in the Southern Pakistani city Karachi, told DW. ‘There was a time when Muslims ruled the whole world but now they are being dominated by others. How did that happen? It happened

because Muslims are no more the real Muslims.’ This is exactly what has been a slogan for the Ethiopian Tablīghīs while they do their schedule *da‘wa* tour. Desiring to rule the whole world by being an apolitical is something questionable. Secondly, Dr Muḥammad Ali Siddiqui an educationist and literary critic in Karachi, told to DW that the Tablighi Jamaat [Tablīghī Jamā’at] did not take on apolitical role until Pakistan became a separate state in 1947. Ali Siddiqui further commented: ‘It claim whatever it likes, but Tablighi Jamaat is a political organization in my opinion,’ Siddiqui suggested: ‘it is not a spiritual movement [the Tablīghī Jamā’at Movement] or the one which only interprets the matters of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). It has a well-defined political agenda which provides ideological and cultural fodder to many hardlines religious groups.’

Thirdly, critical comment from Farooq Sulehria, journalist and scholar at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, told to DW that there would have been no Taliban without the organizations like the Tablighi Jamaat. ‘Organizations like Tablighi Jamaat create a cultural environment which nurtures and fosters militant Islamists like the Taliban,’ Sulehria said. He further commented: ‘Since the 1980s the Pakistani state has been investing in creating a jihadist infrastructure. It is not only backing armed groups like Lashakar-e-Taiba but also their ideological patrons like the Tablighi Jamaat.’

Usmani active Tablīghī adherent is commenting on the religious and spiritual direction of the Tablīghī Jamā’at which could lead to the supremacy of Islam like the old days. But Siddiqui and Sulehria critically commented and put the Tablīghī Jamā’at as a political organization which is contrary to its standard position. So, these critical comments from the natives will help us to observe the Tablīghī Jamā’at movement could gradually be changed to involve into politics through its

robust religious move and developing political agenda. The Ethiopian Tablīghīs could not be free from such evolution.

6. Conclusion

The Tablīghī Jamā‘at is a Sunni revivalist Islamic reform movement for faith renewal, which was started in India in the 1920s by Mawlana Muḥammad Ilyas Khandhalwi (1885-1944), (Masud 2000: 6; Nadwi 2012: 7, 122). The Tablīghī Jamā‘at is known by accommodating itself within the Sunni Islam, free from debates as one of its principles and reminds its adherents for their consideration, which says: avoid religious and doctrinal arguments. In the Ethiopian case, it is not possible to be free from arguments on Islāmic knowledge and doctrine; and, of course, from the issue of leadership and ownership as well. On the one hand, Tablīghīs are facing serious opposition from the Wahhabis due to indigenous traditions including chewing *khat*, visiting tombs, and saint veneration, yet support and commendation from the Sufis on the other.

As a transnational lay Islamic missionary movement, operating with a low profile, the Tablīghīs cannot avoid criticism from their Sunni-Wahhabi brothers. This is due not only because of their soft position on Mawlid celebration but also on politics and neglecting their families due to *da‘wa* tours for many days. The motto of the movement is simple and clear, as Sheikh Ilyas, the founder of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement coined it. ‘*aye Musalmano! Muslaman bano*’ (Hindi/Urdu) ‘–*Oh Muslims! Become Muslims*⁹⁶ – sums up the aims of the movement’ (Noor 2012:28). Because of its simple explanation, the Tablīghīs understand easily and respond accordingly. Critical comments nevertheless have been made about Tablīghī Jamā‘at and its activities by the followers of, and ‘schools of thought’, inspired by Wahhabiyya,⁹⁷ such as the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth of the Indian

⁹⁶ ‘*ayuha Mmuslimun! kunMuslimun*, the Arabic equivalent for ‘Oh Muslims become Muslims.’

⁹⁷ (Voll J. O., 1987). ‘An Islamic renewal group established by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. AH 1206/1792 CE), the Wahhābiyah continues to the present in the Arabian Peninsula. The term *Wahhābī* was originally used by opponents of the movement, who charged that it was a new form of Islam, but the name eventually gained wide acceptance. According to the teachings of Ibn ‘Abd al- Wahhāb, however, the movement is not a new Islamic school but, rather, a call or mission (*da‘wah*) for the correct implementation

subcontinent (Singh 2012: 30-34). Though the objective of the movement is clear and straightforward, it is facing serious challenges from other Sunni movements, particularly the *Salafis* and *Wahhabis*. Some of the warnings are expressed as follows:

Perhaps, someone exaggerated the status of a group's activities; calling it the work of the Sahabah and it may not be so. Perhaps, someone exaggerated the reward of doing certain actions-and they may not have any proofs for their claim. Perhaps, you are unaware of the gross mistakes in the teachings of a group-and you unknowingly participate in it. Perhaps, you hope that the activities of a group can bring religious Islaah (reformation) in the lives of the Muslims-and you have been deceived into believing this. Kayum (2001: 6).

We declare that the Tableeghi Jamaat is, by its own admission, a deviant sect of Islam and that it is being used by the enemies of Islam to help them in their continuing battle to prevent governance by the laws of Allāh from being re-established in the world (Islam Academy: Tableeghi Jamaat Exposed 2013).

One of my informants from the Salafī, Uztaz Nuru, argues that the ‘Tablīghīs are like *Shayṭān* (Satan) and they are not Muslims’ (Nuru U., 2015). So, the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement has been considered by Wahhabis/Salafis as a cult due to the 6 virtues/principles of Tablīghī Jamā‘at and some other guidelines and practises which are not welcomed by those who have the inclination of Wahhabism/Salafism.

However, the Tablīghīs are known for avoiding arguments⁹⁸ (Bukhari :: Muslim :: Malik :: Dawud ::) on any *khilafas* (arguments about Islamic jurisprudence) or *mazhabs* (schools of thought). While I was having my 40 days *da‘wa* tour, a discussion point was raised about the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Abdulhadi, our *amir* said: ‘These schools

of Islam. The Wahhābīyah often refer to "the mission of the oneness of God" (*da‘wat al-tawhīd*) and call themselves "those who affirm the Oneness of God," or *muwahhidūn*.

⁹⁸ Bukhari :: Book 9 :: Volume 92 :: Ḥadīth 395 ‘Prophet used to forbid... Asking too many questions (in disputed religious matters).’

of thought should be seen as the four breasts of a cow. All give milk, not any other thing' (Mohammed W. H., Field Notes: 40 days' da'wa tour, 2014, p. 59).

Tensions also grew around the Tabligh Movement, which came to Kenya from Pakistan 1990 and established branches in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Malindi. This puritanical movement only numbered 20 to 30 members, but quite visible due to their physical appearance, with men wearing long beards and long gowns while always carrying prayer beads and the women in full robes and veils. Some young men to study the Koran full-time. Some Tabligh members were arrested in 1994 after setting fire to some tourist bars, but since then, Tabligh members avoid confrontation with authorities (Jodi Vittori, Kristin Bremer & Pasquale Vittori , 2009, p. 1088).

However, the Ethiopian case is unlike the Kenyan. So far there has not been a single case with regard to violence related with Tablighī Jamā'at movement at large or on the individual level which has been accused with any sort of violence. However, debates and sometimes serious conflicts are going on amongst Sunni Islam brothers.

The tolerance level Tablighīs have with the Sufis encourage them to expand their movement. Considering all these details will help us locate the Ethiopian Tablighīs into the current debate on faith and politics. As part of the faith renewal movements within Islam they can be located as reformers who work hard to bring faith renewal through humble and low profile approaches. They maintain their spirituality by going far from their own vicinities and practising all sorts of Islamic religious duties, helping them to be more spiritual.

The Ethiopian Tablighīs solidarity and spirituality is affirmed by many Muslims. They are also known to shun from politics like elsewhere in the world. So, they can be characterized as an apolitical movement, though such a position is open for debate from Muslims and non-Muslims. The Tablighīs missional commitment of identity, working hard to accomplish what their movement leaders have told them, is amazing. However,

they are also known by their secretive identity, which is sometimes hard to understand and difficult to explain. So far, one thing I do not understand, whilst the Tablīghīs are calling for faith renewal and yet are not critical for issues which can hinder the process like chewing *khat*, visiting tombs, and saint veneration. In the following chapter, as a concluding remark, I will explain more in this particular issue as well as how the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement evolved in Ethiopia through the Gurāgē ethnic group by the leadership of the late Haji Musa Kikiya.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusion

Ethiopia is a house for both Islam and Christianity which has accommodated different religious expressions and movements from both religions for decades and centuries. Tablīghī Jama‘at movement is one of them, which is currently expanding in Ethiopia as one of a New Religious Movements (NRM) within Sunni Islam, though sometimes seen as a sect by the Wahhabis/Salafis and at times as an extension of Sufi practises as the Sufis are comfortable and not against with the Tablīghīs. The research findings determine that the Tablīghīs consider themselves as part of Sunni Islam, and have never been thought of as a sect or a new religious movement. However, the way the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement operates has exhibited that they should be considered as a new religious movement within the broader spectrum of Sunni Islam. The Tablīghī Jama‘at movement organises meetings, tours for days, weeks, and months, which have always faced strong criticism from other Sunni Muslims, particularly Salafis/Wahhabis.

The main research question of this dissertation, ‘How is Tablīghī Jama‘at in Ethiopia evolving?’ is adequately addressed in chapters Four and Five. As one of the objectives of this research (see *ibid* p. 20) promised to discover the motivation, methods, and operative machinery of the Tablīghī Jama‘at Movement in Ethiopia. In so doing, the motivation for the Tablīghīs is to strengthen and preserve their Islamic faith and spirituality by going out from their own vicinity to near and far distances to do a call, ‘O Muslims Become Muslims!’ which is the motto of the Movement. We understand from the leadership structure that the Ethiopian Tablīghīs have strong operative machinery which include council (*mashūra*) at all levels with clear and loose structural connectivity Family-local-Global (see *ibid* pp. 164-1720).

Examining the Tablīghī Jama‘at Movement has been done to see if there is any divergence from its normative image of faith renewal and a call to Islam (*da‘wa*) of the ‘Travellers in Faith’. However, so far no indication observed any divergence which could hint ‘Stealthy Legion’ within the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement. No violence or political involvement also observed as a group. Except the deep longing of the movement seeking the supremacy of Islam throughout the world by fixing their eyes on the world-map fixed on the wall where the Tablīghī Head-quarters (*markazes*) are operating. This is a pattern or tradition of the Tablīghīs expressing their desire by prayer, consultation and mission. So, the Tablīghīs will continuing to be nuance and secretive is not a surprise as it is observed elsewhere.

The Gurāgē interactions with Oromo displayed through mobilising *da‘wa* tour to the Oromo land to expand the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement in the region. This is observed while I was doing my 40 days *da‘wa* tour to accomplish my ethnographic research as well as visiting the Hābāša Markaz, listening to their reports (*ahwal*).

In this research, Islam and the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement were explored, assessed, and examined in connection with the Gurāgē ethnic group. The significant role of the Gurāgēs in the rise and the development of the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement had been immense. This was demonstrated through their activities in leadership from the local to the national level.

In the prior chapters of this thesis, the preparation of the research has its preliminary accomplishments in momentarily explaining the background of the research areas, geographical locations, and how the religion of Islam and Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement for faith renewal has been spread there by maintaining special characteristics among the Gurāgē Muslims, particularly in the case of Tablīghī Jamā‘at adherents. Objectives were

designed carefully with regard to intra-faith relations based on reliable primary and secondary sources. These have been accessed through *da'wa* tour participant observation, participating at quarterly *mashūra*, interviews, organised field work and field notes, as well as library activities to consult scholars and leading experts in the field of studies including Barbra Metcalf, Yoginder Sikand, and Khalid Masud. The theoretical and methodological frameworks employed to undertake both the data collection and analysis accordingly have brought the completion of this research. The data which are carefully analysed and synthesised have clearly established how Tablīghī Jamā'at has reached the study area, and how the Hābāša Markaz being founded and developed by Haji Zayno Sheikh Muqina and Haji Musa Kikiya (b.1924-d.2013 and b.1936-.2003) at Quoas-Meda, Addis Ketema Kifle Ketema, Addis Ababa.

In so doing, the main research question of this research, 'How Tablīghī Jama'at Movement in Ethiopia is Evolving' had been addressed adequately through appropriate research tools and methodologies. In the process I found ethnographic research and participant observation were vital to examine a movement like Tablīghī Jama'at. I also found myself as an improviser regarding participant observation in a country like Ethiopia. As a non-Muslim, travelling with a Tablīghī Jama'at team for 40 days gave me a clearer understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing it. In the world of Tablīghī Jama'at, everything has its own reason. An interested researcher in this field of studies must think to employ participant observation as part of his or her research tools and methodologies. It would be hard to understand and difficult to explain the Tablīghī Jama'at adherents without participant observation.

What I discovered from this long research journey, Tablīghī Jama'at in Ethiopia has been operating since the 1960s and had been instrumental in impacting the ethical life of the

youth, marriage relationships, and bringing spiritual renewal as the main purpose of the movement. As its founder, Maulana Ilyas, the first leader (*amir*) of the Indian Tablighī Jama‘at movement, coined it: ‘Oh Muslims, Become Muslims!’ had been fruitful in India. The similar fruit observed here in Ethiopia through the pioneering work of Haji Musa Kikiya who left his comfortable business and joined this Tablighī Jama‘at movement. Musa became the first National leader (*amir*) of the Ethiopian Tablighī Jama‘at Movement and managed to bring significant growth. In the past 4 decades of his time. Musa’s contribution with Haji Zaynu has been enormous amongst the Muslims who are involved in Tablighī Jama‘at Movement. Musa’s relationship with Haji Zaynu had been exemplary and decisive as well as very helpful for the Tablighī Jama‘at movement. The leadership and contribution of Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya as the Ethiopian leader of Tablighī Jama‘at movement had been huge. As a graduate from Addis Ababa University and a businessman with the well-known Kikiyan family, it did not hinder him to take the leadership position of this new Islamic renewal movement. As a pioneer, Haji Musa brought a significant contribution to the growth and expansion of the Tablighī Jama‘at movement in Addis Ababa and beyond.

Haji Musa’s ethnic background, being of Eritrean origin, did not hinder him to advance his contact with the Gurāgēs, who are good in business and religious duties. So, due to Musa’s good contact with the Gurāgēs helped the Tablighī Jama‘at movement to grow wherever the Gurāgēs live and move. The research depicted that the strength of the Gurāgē ethnic people both in business and religious duties was significant. This was confirmed by their practical involvement of helping in to spread Islam and the Tablighī Jama‘at movement. These efforts had been realised by supporting in the construction of mosques and markazes in different parts of the country, and with continued involvement of organising *da‘wa* tour in and outside Ethiopia. The Gurāgēs financial commitment

towards the Tablīghī Jama‘at Movement for themselves and others is always there. Their involvement in leadership and organising meetings (*mashūra*) at all levels, including the first Hābāša Ijtima (annual gathering), was huge.

The role of the Gurāgē ethnic people was clearly demonstrated in the growth and expansion of the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement in Ethiopia. So, it would be difficult to think about the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement in Ethiopia without the Gurāgē ethnic group. This includes the Säbat-Bét and Silti Gurāgēs. In the early days, both were considered as one ethnic Gurāgē group, but recently the Siliti’s preferred to be addressed by themselves as Silti. The Gurāgēs are moving extensively to spread the Tablīghī Jama‘at movement in the Oromo land who are more of the Wahhabi/Salafi orientation. Much effort had been done, though the response from the Oromo Wahhabi/Salafi is not as anticipated. Sometimes sharp differences are observed between the Tablīghīs and Wahhabis/Salafis due to religious matters. The Tablīghīs always try to avoid confrontation, but the Wahhabis/Salafis always want to confront.

One of the main issues for conflict is *Mawlid* celebration which is part of the national holidays of Ethiopia. The Wahhabis are against celebrating it as one of the national holidays as well as a religious festival. But the Tablīghīs are very much comfortable in celebrating *Mawlid* like the Sufis. In this regard, Tablīghī Jama‘at movement in Ethiopia is growing without sacrificing indigenous traditions like *Mawlid* celebration and other issues. It might be considered that Tablīghī Jama‘at movement is not as strict and conservative as it should be.

Tablīghī spirituality, solidarity, and secretiveness is expressed in their life and mission. In the world of Tablīghī Jama‘at, spiritualising things and to be seen more spiritual is a

common practise. On the one hand, the Tablīghīs spirituality and commitment is praised. However, neglecting family responsibilities has been criticised by non-Tablīghīs and non-Muslims. The Tablīghīs solidarity and commitment to it is an amazing experience. This is demonstrated in social affairs, spiritual duties, like weeding and at funerals, as well as participating in *da'wa* tours by helping others financially. Culturally, the Gurāgēs are known for solidarity which helps the Tablīghīs to extend such practise as part of the Tablīghī Jama'at movement identity. The missional aspect of the Tablīghī Jama'at movement would be a lesson for anyone who wants to accomplish a task within a community where he or she resides. Tablīghīs humble beginnings helped a lot for the movement to grow as the Gurāgēs are a good example in this regard. One can learn how to accomplish missional movement in a particular community from their example.

One of my findings affirmed the secretiveness of the Ethiopian Tablīghī Jama'at movement which is not a surprise as it is common elsewhere in the world. They want to hide everything and prefer to remain with a low profile. They did not promote or publicise the 'First Hābāša Ijtima' which was held in December 2019 at Butajira. It was a big and historic event, if not a milestone in their history in this land. Gathering over 100 thousand people in a small town! What an opportunity for the promotion of the movement itself! However, it was strictly forbidden for the use of any media platforms including social media. Sometimes they try to hide things which are already known, like the Hābāša Ijtima. Though Tablīghī Jama'at is viewed as 'Travellers in Faith' by the majority of scholars on the field, its secretiveness creates reasonable concerns by a minority of the scholars which could be continued for some time in the future. The Ethiopian Tablīghī Jama'at movement is far from a political involvement, nor to be suspected in violence. Politically oriented talk is strictly forbidden, which I saw in my participant observation. Violence and conflicts between Christians and Muslims have been in Ethiopia, but the Tablīghīs prefer

to pray and not to blame anyone, either positively or negatively. In 2010 there was violence in Jima, which left over 60 churches burnt to the ground and 5 thousand displaced.

However, Tablīghī Jama‘at movement is viewed as ‘Stealthy Legions’ by the minority, of which is not a case in Ethiopia. As we have seen from our secondary sources, scholars who locate and suggest that there is a different face of Tablīghīs which may appear down the road should not be overlooked. Because, detaching Islam from politics is not a normal practise of Islamic teaching. Islam is interwoven with religious and political thoughts which some of the Wahhabis/Salafis are raising the issue from the Ethiopian context as currently the political turmoil is high. On the one hand it has ethnic expression and religion on the other. This minority view includes Alex Alexiev (2005) who named TJ ‘Stealthy Legions’. Shireen Burki (2013) suggests that there is a growing linkage between exposed terrorists and the TJ. Burki also consider the TJ as a ‘Trojan Horse’. Ziauddin Sadaq (2006) suggests that there is a potential possibility of change in the life of an organisation like Tablīghīs, if not drastically. For the majority of viewers, like Masud (2000) TJ [Tablīghī Jama‘at] is being considered as a potential trait to the nation-state politics. Metcalf (2009) comments on some observers assumption that participation in the peaceful *jihad* of Tablīghī Jama‘at is a first stage toward militant jihad, or at least toward more active political forms of organisation. That assumption, like the more extreme position that Tablīghī Jama‘at serves as a cover for terrorists, remains to be demonstrated, if any.

The Ethiopian Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s connectivity with regional and global levels has been displayed in participating in the annual gatherings and visiting the global *markazes*. The Tablīghīs always say that they are not interested in structure, organisation, and

documentation which is far from the truth as it is depicted from the research findings. It is structurally clear, both bottom-up and top-down, and organisationally strong, and will remain intact as they build more facilities in their premises. Although it is a lay movement, they encourage formal and informal trainings here in Addis Ababa and beyond.

The Ethiopian Tablighī Jama‘at has been praised as peaceful by the past two governments of Ethiopia, the military *Junta (Darg)* and Ethiopian People Democratic Front (EPRDF). They are more on the side of Travellers in faith and far from being stealthy legion or trojan horse like elsewhere. However, that does not give a guarantee that the Tablighī Jama‘at movement will remain static on their traditional position of being apolitical or supporting some sort of violence elsewhere in the world. In this regard, due to the Gurāgēs massive involvement in the Tablighī Jama‘at, things might continue in the same trajectory for some time, as Gurāgēs are always more interested in their business and religious duties. The research findings show the Tablighī Jama‘at movement in Ethiopia is a peaceful movement for faith renewal, apart with political involvement as an organisation of the Tablighī Jama‘at movement. However, individual political involvement is not prohibited.

This thesis is a timely contribution in East Africa towards the growing literature relative to Islam in general and Tablighī Jamā‘at in particular. The main outcome of this thesis is depicting the Tablighī Jamā‘at as Travellers in Faith with a modest conclusion as far as the research findings are concerned. Essential components of which this thesis comprise are, ‘How the Tablighī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia is evolving within the Gurāgē ethnic group and larger circle of the Islamic community and the intra-faith debate around the six-principles/virtues of Tablighī Jamā‘at.’ Haji Musa Mahmood Ahmad Kikiya’s

contribution was immense as the first *amir* (leader) of Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Ethiopia was also explained. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at operation in Ethiopia and beyond from which the conclusion will be developed and serves as solid annotations of this research. The Ethiopian Tablīghīs in general and the ethnic Gurāgēs in particular are happy to send their girls to school unlike the Pakistani. The Gurāgēs are egalitarian community with strong work ethics, solidarity, spirituality and this demonstrated by sending their girls to school and participate fairly business and religious duties.

In the Ethiopian context Tablīghīs are more engaged on the daily ritual and devotion with regard the 20 *adabs* (etiquettes). The Tablīghīs in Ethiopia have proven themselves to be Travellers in Faith not Stealthy Legions as Alex Alexiev and Nazir Ali had argued mainly based on the case of Pakistani Tablīghīs. Tablīghī Jamā‘at as a movement focuses on the faith renewal to create pious Muslim individuals. However, the possibility is not closed for deviation by members like in Pakistan. So, it is fair enough to locate the Ethiopian Tablīghīs as Travellers in Faith rather than as Stealthy Legions. So far no indication is found from both primary and secondary sources. My final remark, being apolitical by itself is a political choice which indicates that one cannot be free from politics.

Factions observed in Britain Tablīghīs where South Asian Muslim communities are practising the Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement which led them to splits. Wadood Mushtaq and Murtaza Ali Shah write: (2018) ‘The Islamic missionary and reformist movement called Tablighi Jamaat has split into two groups in Britain with one faction following Raiwind Markaz [Pakistan] the other is following Moulana Saad of Nizam-ud-Din in India.’ The Pakistani and Indian *Markazes* are considered as the leading head-quarters in the world of Tablīghīs. Mushtaq and Shah further suggested on the cause of the difference: ‘These differences started in 2015 when the advisory committee-or shoora [*shūrā*] was formed to deal with all important matters including international congregations (also known as *aalmi Ijtama*). The followers of Nizam Ud Din in India refused to accept the decisions of

shoora [*shūrā*] and decided to obey only the decision of Moulana Saad of Nizam ud Din' (Wadood Mushtaq and Murtaza Ali Shah, 2018). As factions happen elsewhere, recently, the Ethiopian Tablighīs facing factions among themselves which might be connected with the Indian Tablighīs where the global-head-quarters (*markaz*) at. The faction takes a similar case amongst the Ethiopian Tablighīs. One faction support Moulana Saad of Nizamudin India and others not supporting Moulana Saad. Support and connection of the other faction needs closer attention and a for call further research.

Or the faction might be connected with the Intellectualist movement which is currently active in Ethiopia. However, 'the Intellectualist movement, with all its internal diversity, remains an important voice in the ongoing formation of the country's [Ethiopia] future', say Østebø and Shemsedin (2015). Due to the issue of moderation and other important issues Østebø and Shemsedin argued in their writings and further mentioned that there is conflict and faction within the Intellectualist movement⁹⁹. They write: 'This conflict caused factions. One faction favoured modelling the intellectualist movement on the Brotherhood, while the opposing faction emphasised the uniqueness of Ethiopia in terms of the country's particular form of religious pluralism, and argued that copying any outside movement would be detrimental to the local context' (Terje Ostebo and Walleign Shemsedin, May 2015). This argument of preserving the Ethiopian uniqueness and imitating or not imitating outside practise is also a case within the Tablighī Jamā'at movement. Creating contextual, unique, and indigenous model is not a surprise amongst the Tablighīs in Ethiopia which expressed by accommodating the Sufis comfortably. Such internal tensions might lead to faction. As part of continuity and change in the life of the Tablighī Jamā'at movement in Ethiopia, the faction piece needs further studies and

⁹⁹ 'Although drawing inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood, the intellectualists have never formed a local Brotherhood chapter in Ethiopia, nor established any formal links with the Brotherhood abroad' (Terje Østebø and Walleign Shemsedin, May 2015). If this will be a case in the near future, time and research will tell.

investigation which I did not deal with this dissertation. Due to the current tension and disagreement within the Ethiopian Tablīghīs, one group meets on Mondays and the other group on Tuesdays and using the same Hābāša Markaz. As one of the aims of any research, pointing potential areas for further investigation is vital, so hoping to see someone or myself in the near future that Tablīghī Jamā‘at may follow a different trajectory as it was in the beginning and elsewhere.

As one of the largest missionary movements in the world, any missionary movement could learn from the movement like Tablīghī Jamā‘at which is approaching to hit 100 years globally and over 60 years in Ethiopia. To learn from the Tablīghīs, it demands humility. To accomplish any missional purpose through high level of commitment demonstrated by tangible spirituality and solidarity like the Tablīghīs is essential. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at movement is known by self-inspired, self-supported, and self-organised or governed. Learning from this model will help a lot to its longevity of a missional move in broad terms whether religious or non-religious.

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2. Country visits

CV1-BA	Country Visit 1- Bangladesh
CV2-KE	Country Visit 2- Kenya
CV3-ET	Country Visit 3- Ethiopia
CV4-ER	Country Visit 4- Eritrea
CV5-IN	Country Visit 5- India

3. Archives

Al-da‘wah wa-Tablīgh (Amharic book).

Registration form for the Tablīghīs who are ready for 3, 40 days and 4 months

Reporting Form for 3 Months Council (Quarterly *Shūra*)

Reporting form at the First Hābāša Ijtima

4. Forty days Da‘wa tour

Quarterly *mashwara*

5. Oral Sources

Contributors

OH1-AT	Oral History 1- Abdulhadi Temam
OH2-IM	Oral History 2- Ikrām Musa
OH3-AH	Oral History 3- Ayub Hailu
OH4-SM	Oral History 4- Saleh Musa
OH5-HF	Oral History 5- Haji Faraja
OH-6 UAA	Oral History 6- Ustadh Abubakar Ahmad
OH7-MUI	Oral History 7- Grand Mufti Haji Umar Idris Zeleke

6. Focus Groups

The jamā'a (team) consists of 14 people whom I stayed with for over 40 days in my *da'wa* tour. We had sharing time of prayer, knowledge, meal and travel every day.

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Figure VI: Tablīghīs on the Move: Kakrail-Dhaka, Bangladesh

(Secured picture taken in August 2016: by Worku Mohammed)



APPENDICES

Appendix I: Addis Ababa and Surroundings Tablighīs Operational Reports

Extracted from the *Field Notes, Participant Observation: 10-11 January 2015 Three Month mashūra at Hābāša Markaz*. Addis Ababa: (Worku Mohammed 2015: pp. 3-23), as it was presented by the leaders of 23 groups. *Midibī* 1 (Group 1) and *midibī* 23 (Group 23) are presented here as a sample of reporting.

***Midibī* 1 (Group 1) Chew-Berenda, Abnet, Autobus-Tera and Addis-Ketema**

- 4 months: 248, functioning 154
- 40 days: 515, functioning 215
- 1 year *Ulama*: no
- 4 month *Ulama*: no
- 40 days *Ulama*: 2, functioning 2
- 40 days *masturat* (women *khuruḥ*): no
- 10 days *masturat*: 20, functioning 20
- 3 days *masturat*: 7
- Women *ta'lim*: 4
- Number of *masjids* and *musalas*: 23
- *Khamsa amal*: 8
- 3 days *Jamma*: 28
- observe for *tartib*: 22 families
- who commit for 2:30 hours every day *tafrig* (going around): 324
- *Tamirel masjid*: 13 mosques
- Home based *ta'lim*: 722
- *Sita Sifa*: 167
- Every year committed for 4 months: 20
- who commit for 8 hours every day: no
- 4 months *Jamma*: 1

- 40 days *Jämma*: 3
- Masjids, which can manage helping others to implement Khuruj fi sabilillah (to perform similar type of operation like the Häbäša Markaz): no
- For *Merakiz* (India, Pakistan or Bangladesh): 2 persons are prepared
- *Masturat* 40 days: no
- *Masturat* 10 days: 1 *Jämma*
- *Masturat* 3 days: 9 *Jämma*
- *Khidma* (cooking and helping to facilitate the meetings) for Addis Ababa, Häbäša Markaz: 125 people already-in
- Nizamudin *Khidma*: there is one man, but not yet left.

***Midibi* 23 (Group 23) Tulu-Bolo**

- 4 months 12 functioning 11
- 40 days 67 functioning 37
- 1 year Ulama: no
- 4 months and 40 days Ulama: 5 functioning 5
- 40 days women: no
- 10 days women: no
- 3 days woman: no
- Observe *tartib*: no
- *Masjids* and *Musalas*: 103
- *Khamsa amal*: 11
- Limited (few) works 7
- 3 days every month 5 *Jämma*
- Who commit for 2:30 hours every day
- Who commit for 2:30 hours every day tafrig (going around) 41

- *Tamirel masjid*: no mosques
- Home based *ta'lim*: 37
- *Sita Sifa*: no
- 4 months every year: no
- 10 days Monthly: no
- 8 hours every day: no
- 4 months: 4 persons
- 40 days: 1
- *Masjids*, which can manage helping others to implement Khuruj fi sabilillah (to perform similar type of operation like the Hábäša Markaz): no
- To other country: no
- *Merakiz*: no
- 40 days *Masturat*: no
- 10 days *Masturat*: no
- 3 days *Masturat*: no
- 40 days *Masturat* to other country: no
- *Khidma* (cooking and helping to facilitate the meetings) for Addis Ababa, Hábäša Markaz: no
- Nizamudin *Khidma*: no
- New work started: 2 mosques
- Country of responsibility: no

Appendix II.. Summary of Informants Data from the 28 interviewees

Gender:

Male=19

Female=9

Marital Status:

Married=21

Single=7

Ethnicity Background:

Gurage=17

Oromo=4

Amhara=4

Afar=1

Harari=1

Ethiopian=1

Age: 20-63=

15-20=2

21-30=8

31-40=12

41-50=3

51-60=2

61-70=1

Educational Background:

Primary (Grade 1-6)=2

Junior Secondary (Grade 7-8)=0

Secondary (Grade 9-12)=9

Diploma= 9

Bachelor's Degree=6

Master's Degree=1

Doctorate=1

Profession:

Traders=11

Teachers=5

Students=5

House wives=2

No Job=2

Journalist=1

Judge and *Imam*=1

Builder=1

Religious Affiliation:

Muslim-Sunni- Tablīgh=12

Muslim-Sunni-Sufi=9

Muslim-Sunni-Wahhabi/Salafi=7

Geographical Area of the Informants, where they come from:

Addis Ababa=23

Jimma=2

Asandabo=1

Emdibir=1

Alem-Gena=1

Appendix. III Summary of the 40 days *da'wa* trip participants: some of the details of the *Jāma* members as the focus group, 14 men.

Ethnic background:

Gurāgē=11

Amhara=2

Afar=1

Age: 15-60

15-20=5

21-30=5

31-40=2

41-50=0

51-60=2

Religious Affiliation:

Muslim-Sunni-Tablīgh

Geographical location:

Addis Ababa=12

Nazret=1

Chencha=1

Educational Background:

Primary (Grade 1-6)=2

Junior Secondary (Grade 7-8)=2

Secondary (Grade 9-12)=7

Diploma=1

Bachelor's Degree=1

Master's Degree=1

Doctorate=0

***Masjids'* of *Jāma* members: where they come from**

Addis Ababa-(Marcato) Adere masjid=3

Addis Ababa-(Marcato) Anwar masjid=2

Addis Ababa-(Marcato-Autobustera) Feth-Ababora masjid=1

Addis Ababa-(CMC) Imran masjid=1

Addis Ababa-(Marcato-Chidtera) Ayub masjid=1

Addis Ababa-(Marcato) Silte masjid=1

Addis Ababa-(Teklehaymanot-near to Marcato) Sheikh Ahmad Dalati masjid=1

Addis Ababa-(Marcato) Rahma masjid=1

Chencha- Bilal masjid=1

Nazret-Imran masjid=1

Addis Ababa (Asko) non-Muslim=1

Appendix. IV: Curriculum Correlation between 3 Islamic Schools, India, Bangladesh and Ethiopia which are connected with the Tablighi Jama'at Islamic Renewal Movements

Darul Uloom Deoband India	Al jamaah al rahmaniya al Arabiya Muhammad- Pur Dhaka, Bangladesh	Yaubay Firewoch Ya- Qur'ān Hifz Maekel (CMS Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
Established in 1866	Established in 1986	Established in 2003
6,000 students and 300 teachers	2,000 students and 70 teachers	180 students 10 teachers
Many unofficial branches of madrasas and Islamic institutions across the globe, South Asia, Southern Africa, UK, Australia, US, and Canada.	Many branches of <i>madrasas</i>	5 branches in Addis Ababa and with a rainy season 2- month programme in July and August for the children to make them <i>ḥāfīzal</i> Qur'ān. In last July and August, there were 200 students at the school and the graduating class students were the teachers. (for 2 months ETB 3,500 which is an equivalent of USD 175 must be paid)

10 years programme and additional 1-year field work	8-10 years programme and additional 1-year field work	5 years programme to be awarded advanced diploma and 10 years to earn a title Maulana, and an additional 1 year for field work
12-15 years of age is the main admission standard	12-15 years of is the main admission standard	8-15 years of age, particularly the rainy season programme and the other one is mainly students who are in their 20s
<p>Courses offered: Current Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Faza'il</i> Course (<i>Alim</i>) 8 Years • <i>Takmil Tafseer</i> (Special Course in Qur'ānic Exegesis) 1 Year • <i>Takhassus fil Hadith</i> (Specialization in Hadith) 2 Years • <i>Takmil Ifta</i> (Special Course in Islamic 	<p>Courses offered: Current Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Marha al takmil</i> (16 courses) • <i>Alsaf al tani manal fadyat</i> (11 courses) • <i>Alsaf al walman alfdyat</i> (10 courses) • <i>Alsaf al tani al tanwi</i> (9 courses) 	<p>Courses offered: Current Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Belaga/Arabic Poetry</i> • <i>Adabul/Arabic Literature Nahul</i> • <i>Wadi/Grammar</i> • <i>Serf</i> • <i>Hayatu Sahaba</i> • <i>Hadith Bukhari and Muslim</i>

<p>Jurisprudence-<i>Fiqh</i>) 1 Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tadreeb fill Ifta</i> (Specialization in <i>Fiqh</i>) 2 Years • <i>Takmil Uloom</i> (Special Course in Islamic Sciences) 1 Year • <i>Takmil Adab</i> (Special Course in Arabic Literature) 1 Year • <i>Takhassus fil Adab</i> (Specialization in Arabic Literature) 2 Years • <i>Tadreeb al- Mu'allimin</i> (Teachers' Training Course) 2 Years • Advanced Diploma in English (Language & Literature) 2 Years • Diploma in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alsaf alawal altani</i> (12 courses) • <i>Alsaf</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tajwid/Jazari Poetry Kitab</i> • <i>Tawhid</i> • <i>'Talim wa Talum/Teachers adab discipline</i> • <i>Tafsir-Qur'an</i> • <i>Fiqh</i> • <i>Umda</i> • <i>Safina</i> • <i>Abishuja</i> • <i>Minhaj /path</i> <p>The admission criteria include gender, grade 10 complete (which is considered as high school complete), 18 years and above.</p>
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<p>Journalism 1 Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in Computer Application 1 Year • <i>Tahaffuz-e-Khatm-e Nabuwwat</i> Course (Study of <i>Qadiyanism</i>) 1 Year • <i>Tahaffuz-e-Sunnat</i> Course (Study of <i>Ghair Muqallidity</i>) 1 Year • <i>Radd-e-Isaiyat</i> Course (Study of Christianity) 1 Year • <i>Muhadhraat</i> (Lectures on comparative study of sects & religions) • <i>Khushkhati</i> Course (calligraphy) 1 year • <i>Darus Sana'ie</i> Course (Handicraft) 1 year • <i>Hifz</i> (memorization of the Qur'ān) & Nazirah 		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hafs (Tajweed)</i> Course Urdu 2 years • <i>Hafs (Tajweed)</i> Course Arabic 2 years • <i>Qirat Sab'a</i> Course 1 year • <i>Qirat 'Ashra</i> Course 1 year • <i>Deeniyat (Primary)</i> Course 5 Years 		
Boarding School	Boarding School	Boarding School
Medium of Instruction- Arabic	Medium of Instruction- Arabic	Medium of Instruction- Arabic
The school owned the building	The school owned the building	The school owned the building

