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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

CHAPTER XIII

MENTIONING THE AMIR 'L-MU'MINEEN

ASKIYA 'L-HAJJ MUHAMMAD IBN ABU BAKR

The son of *Sonni* Ali, Abu Bakr Daa`u was given the authority in the town of Dangha after the death of Sonni Ali. At that time the auspicious and upstanding Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr at-Tuure' 's-Salenke¹ was among the prominent commanding officers of the military of Sonni Ali. When the news of the appointment of Abu Bakr Daa`u reached him, he concealed within himself the desire to secede from the jurisdiction of Abu Bakr Daa`u. He began to lay out the stratagems for that using all means necessary. When he had finished weaving the cord for these stratagems, he directed himself towards Abu Bakr Daa`u with the leading generals which were with him. He and his army invaded him in the above mentioned town in the year 898, the 2 *Jumaadi 'l-Ulaa*². He was able to defeat Abu Bakr Daa`u 's armies and caused him to turn away fleeing for his life until he reached a village called Ankughu near Gao. There he halted until his armies reassembled and they engaged him on Monday 14 *Junaadi 'l-Akhir*³. There then took place between them an intense war, a terrible engagement and a ghastly battle until both their armies were almost annihilated. Then Allah ta`ala gave His assistance to the auspicious and upstanding Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr. As a result *Sonni* Abu Bakr Daa`u fled to Ayan and remained there until he died.⁴ It was then that Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr took complete control of the government and was appointed *Amir 'l-Mu'mineen* and *Khalifat 'l-Muslimeen*.⁵

¹ The two surnames *at-Tuure'* and *as-Salenke'* indicates that part of his ancestry originally came from Futa Turo perhaps from the Fulani *Turudo* clan, while part came from the clan of the Soninke called Sylla.

² This encounter took place on 18 February 1493 C.E..

³ This took place on March 3, 1493 C.E..

⁴ This region is called Ayuru and lies to the extreme northeast some 700 kilometers from Gao.

⁵ The titles of *amir 'l-mu'mineen* (governor of the believers) and *khalifat 'l-muslimeen* (vicegerent of the Muslims) is a title which can only be held by a person who is a descendent of the Quraysh. It has been related by *Imam* al-Bukhari on the authority of Abdallah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said, "Allah's Apostle said, 'This matter (*khalifa*) will remain with the Quraysh even if only two of them still exist.' According to the chroniclers Askiya Muhammad's paternal Soninke` lineage was from the Ansaar going back to the Companion of Muhammad, Jabir ibn Abdallah. It is for this reason that Askiya Muhammad made the pilgrimage and was recommissioned in his post by the leaders of the Quraysh of Mecca. His lineage is as follows: Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn Ali ibn Abdallah ibn 'l-Hassan ibn Abd'r-Rahman ibn Idris ibn Ya`cub ibn Is'haq ibn Yusef ibn 'l-Hassan ibn Abd 'l-'Azeez ibn Sufyan ibn Saalih ibn Luway ibn Muhammad 'l-Yameni ibn Abu Bakr ibn Ali ibn Musa ibn Husayn ibn Ilyas ibn Abdallah ibn **Jaabir ibn Abdallah**.

When the news of the victory of Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr reached the daughters of Sonni Ali, they shouted, "*Askiyaa!*", which means in the language of Soninke, "No, not him!" When he heard this he ordered that he should only be surnamed that. Thus, he came to be called *Askiya* Muhammad. By means of him Allah ta`ala released the Muslims from their grief and torment and removed the affliction and misfortunes which had befallen them. He made strenuous effort in establishing the religion of *Islam* and improving the affairs of mankind. He used to keep company with the scholars, asking their legal advice concerning all the affairs which were required of him to discharge and resolve. He created differentiation among the people between those who were part of the military and the ordinary citizens. This was after the heretic *Sonni* Ali had made all the people participate in the military. He dispatched a messenger without delay to the *Khateeb* Umar ordering him to release al-Mukhtar ibn Muhammad Naddi from prison and have him brought in order to have him returned to his position. He was informed that he had died. It was said, however, that at that moment they hurried to kill him. *Askiya* Muhammad then dispatched a messenger to Walata for his older brother Umar. He came and he was restored in his rightful place as *Timbuktu-Koy*. In the last part of 899 A.H. *Askiya* Muhammad had the town of Zaagha seized by the hands of his brother *Kurmina-Fari* Umar Kumzaaghu and they fought *Bukar-Magha*.⁶

In the year 902 A.H. and Allah knows best, he traveled to the pilgrimage during the month of *Safar*.⁷ He made the pilgrimage to the sacred house of Allah ta`ala along with a large contingent from the notables of every tribe. Among them was the *waliy* of Allah ta`ala Muri Saalih Jawra, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him and benefit us by his *baraka* in the two worlds. He was Wangara by origin and his town was Tutaa-Allah located in the region of Tindirma. Allah caused the *Amir Askiya* Muhammad to behold some of his *baraka* while they were on their journey when a hot sandstorm blew against them; which occurred on the journey between Mecca and Cairo. The sandstorm caused all of the water supplies they had to dry up until they nearly perished from the heat and the thirst. Then the *Askiya* sent a messenger to Muri Saalih seeking for him to beseech Allah ta`ala to send water by the sanctity of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Muri Saalih rebuked the messenger harshly and said, "The sanctity of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is too great that it should be beseeched for worldly needs." He then made supplication to Allah ta`ala and He caused it to pour down with abundant rain at that very moment in accordance with their desire.

The military forces which accompanied the *Askiya* Muhammad were one-thousand and five-hundred men. Five-hundred of them were cavalry and one-thousand were foot soldiers. Among them was his son, *Askiya* Musa and the *Huku Kuray Kuray* Ali Fulan and others. As for the wealth, he brought with him three-hundred thousand *mithqaals* of gold which he seized from the *Khateeb* Umar from the personal wealth of *Sonni* Ali. As for the wealth which *Sonni* Ali kept in his palace, it was lost and nothing from it has ever been found. *Askiya* Muhammad made the pilgrimage and visitation of many of the righteous. Among his community there were many whom Allah had decreed would make the pilgrimage with him in the last part of that year.

The blessed *sayyid* Muri Saalih Jawra did his utmost in making supplication for the brother of the *Askiya*, Umar Kumzaaghu, whom the *Askiya* appointed in his

⁶ This coincided with the year 1494 C.E..

⁷ From October 21 until November 19, 1495 C.E..

place over the government. He did this to his utmost ability because he had great affection for him. The *shaykh* used to benefit him and show him the utmost level of honor. The *Amir* gave away as alms one-hundred thousand *mithqals* of gold while he was in the two Sacred Places. He also purchased a garden in the sublime city of Medina and made it a religious bequest for the people of west Africa (*Takruur*). This garden is well known there. He also spent an additional one-hundred thousand purchasing merchandise all that they needed with the same money. He met in that blessed land the Abassi Shareef and sought from him to appoint him as his *Khalifa* in the land of Songhay⁸. The *Shareef* was content with that and ordered him to relinquish his authority for three days and then come to him on the fourth day. The *Askiya* did this and he appointed him as his *khalifa* placing upon his head his own skull cap and turban. Thus the *Askiya* was appointed a legitimate *Khalifa* in Islam. He then met many of the scholars and the righteous of Egypt. Among them was al-Jalaal 's-Suyuti, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him, whom he questioned concerning certain things among his affairs. The *shaykh* gave him legal decisions concerning them. In addition he sought from the *shaykh* to make supplication for him. Thus, the *Askiya* was able to attain much *baraka* from them. He returned to his land after three years. He entered Gao in the month of *Dhu'l-Hijja* at the completion of the year.⁹ Allah ta`ala made his government prosper, assisted with tremendous assistance and opened for him clear openings. He governed from the lands of Kunta to the Atlantic Ocean and its dependencies in the west and from the lands of Binduku to Taghaza and its dependencies. The entire people of these regions were brought under obeisance by the sword and coercion as will be discussed when mention is given to his military expeditions. In short, Allah ta`ala fulfilled the aims of the *Askiya* in all he desired. In whatever fashion he desired to execute his rule in the lands of his authority, likewise Allah ta`ala allowed him to discharge it in all the regions his entire kingdom. Allah provided his kingdom with well being, expansion and extensive wealth. Glory be to He who singles out whomever He wills with whatever He wills. He is the Possessor tremendous bounty.

During the year 903 A.H. he made military expeditions against Na`sara, the ruler of Mossi. The blessed *sayyid* Muri Saalih Jawra accompanied him on this expedition and ordered him to make this military excursion into a legitimate *jihad* in the way of Allah. The *Askiya* obeyed him in that and the *sayyid* explained all of the legal judgments concerning *jihad*. The *Amir 'l-Mu'mineen Askiya 'l-Hajj Muhammad* sought from the above mentioned *sayyid* to act as a messenger between him and the ruler of Mossi. This he accepted and went until he reached his country. There he delivered the message of the *Askiya* for the ruler of Mossi to enter under the religion of Islam. The ruler said, "We must first consult our ancestors who are in the Hereafter. He then went with his advisors to the house of their idols. The *sayyid* also went with them in order to see how they would consult the dead. They did what they do from their customs of giving libation and suddenly there appeared a very old man. When they saw him they made prostration to him and informed him of the news. He then spoke to them in their native tongue. He said, "I will never accept that for you. Rather, you should fight him until your last man is annihilated or their last men are annihilated." Then Na`asara said to the blessed *sayyid*, "Return to him and say, 'There is nothing between us and you except war and fighting'." The *sayyid* Muri Saalih then

⁸ He was *Amir 'l-Mu'mineen* al-Mutawwakil 'Ala Allah Abu 'l-'Izza Abd 'l-Azeez ibn Yaqub ibn Muhammad ibn 'l-Mu`atadhab Billahi [1479 -1497 C.E.], the 14th Abbasid *Khalif* under Egyptian Mamluk control.

⁹ July 31, 1497 C.E..

said to the personage which appeared in the form of an old man after the people had gone away from the house, "I ask you by Allah the Tremendous, who are you really?!" He said, "I am Iblees. I am seducing them and leading them astray in order that they may die in a state of disbelief." The *sayyid* then returned to the *Amir Askiya* 'l-Hajj Muhammad and informed him of everything which had transpired and said to him, "Now fighting them is obligatory upon you." He thus made war against them, killing their men, destroying their lands and homes and seizing their wealth. Consequently everything which was seized, whether men or women became a source of *baraka* for him. In this region there was no *jihad* conducted in the way of Allah except this particular military expedition.

In this same year *Qadi* Habib died,¹⁰ may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him and the authority of the judiciary was given then to *Shaykh 'l-Islam* Abu 'l-Barakaat as judge of Timbuktu and all of its quarters.¹¹ One of the most authoritative sources from among my comrades once informed me that *Shaykh 'l-Muslimeen* the jurist Muhammad ibn Ahmad Baghyuyu 'l-Wangari, may Allah ta`ala preserve him told him:¹² "The jurist Abu Bakr ibn *Qadi* 'l-Hayy was the one who suggested to *Askiya 'l-Hajj* Muhammad that the jurist Mahmud be given the authority of the judiciary. He said to him, "Verily that young man is blessed and righteous. You should appoint him to the post." Here ends what *Shaykh 'l-Wangari* had to say.

At that time *Qadi* Mahmud's maternal uncle, the jurist al-Mukhtar 'n-Nahawi was absent; however when he returned from his absence, the jurist Abu Bakr deeply regretted having *Qadi* Mahmud appointed. The son of *Qadi* Mahmud said to him, "Why did you suggest my father for this post?! Did you not have a son who was deserving of the post of judge?! What did you not suggest him?!" Abu 'l-Barakaat's age at that time was thirty-five years. He remained in the post of judiciary for fifty-five years and he died at the age of ninety, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him. He secured during his tenure as judge the post of *Imam* of the **Sankore'** mosque/university. Then he surrendered the post of *Imam* during his final years and the post was appointed to his maternal nephew the **Imam And Agh Muhammad** ibn *al-Faqih* 'l-Mukhtar 'n-Nahawi.¹³ Thereafter, *Qadi* Mahmud never stood in front of

¹⁰ He was al-Qadi Habib ibn Muhammad 's-Saalih ibn Abd 'r-Rahman 't-Tamimi, [d. 1498 C.E.].

¹¹ He was *al-Qadi* Abu'l-Barakaat **Mahmud ibn Umar** ibn Muhammad Aqit ibn Umar ibn Ali ibn Yahya 's-Sanhaji 't-Timbukti. He was born in the year 868 A.H. (1463 C.E.) He was youngest of the famous sons of *Shaykh* Umar ibn Muhammad Aqit. He was the chief judge of Tinbuktu, the praiseworthy, the splendid, the foremost scholar, the most righteous, the professor, the jurist and *Imam* of *Takruur*. He was appointed over the judiciary in the year 904 A.H. (1498 C.E) during which he examined all affairs in detail and was strict in carrying out his judgments. He specified and strove for the truth and pointed out falsehood and caused it to wither. As a result of this, his justice became well known to the point where he had no equal in his time. He performed the pilgrimage to Mecca in the year 915 A.H. (1510 C.E) where he met some of the masters of erudition. Among them were: Ibrahim ibn Muhammad 'l-Muqaddasi, a Shafi` scholar and *Imam* of the central mosque of Manjuk; the two disciples of *Shaykh 'l-Islam* and *Imam* Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hajr, [909-974 A.H./1504-1567 C.E.] - *Shaykh Shaykh 'l-Islam* Zakariya ibn Muhammad ibn Zakariya, [823-926 A.H./ 1420-1520 C.E.] and; the two al-Laqaanis: Shams 'd-Deen 'l-Laqaani [935 A.H./1528 C.E.] and Naasir 'd-Deen Muhammad ibn Hassan 'l-Laqaani, [873- 958 A.H./ 1466-1551 C.E.] and others who became acquainted with his piety and uprightness. He returned to his country and persisted in benefiting and executing the truth. He taught for some fifty years until he died in the year 955 A.H., on Friday night the 16 of *Ramadhan* (October 19, 1548). He attained the highest degree of eminence and the people extolled him until his reknown spread and reached a degree which no other had attained.

¹² He was Muhammad Baghyuyu ibn Mahmud ibn Abu Bakar al-Wangari at-Timbukti [1524 C.E.-July, 1593 C.E.]. For a thorough look at this renown scholar's biography see Chapter 10.

¹³ He was **Abu Abdallah And Agh Muhammad** the son of the jurist of al-Mukhtar 'n-Nahawi ibn And-Agh Muhammad. He was appointed the *imam* and dean of the university/mosque of **Sankore'** by

the people to lead the prayer except when the *waliy* of Allah ta`ala Sidi Abu'l-Qaasim 't-Tuwaati died, over whom he prayed. And except when Fayaad 'l-Ghadaamasi died, over whom he prayed also. May Allah ta`ala be merciful to him.

Then the *Amir* dismounted at a place called Touya on his return from the military expedition against Na`asara during the month of *Ramadhan*. In the year 905 A.H. he went to Tindirma and seized the *Baaghin Faari* Uthman and had Danba Dunbi the Fulani killed. In the year 906 A.H. he made a military expedition against Air and had Tildha removed from power. In the year 907 A.H. he dispatched his brother Umar Kamzaagh to the land of Zulna in order to engage Qama Fati Qalli the chief general of the ruler of Mali, who had been appointed over that land. However, the general prevented him from taking the land and he was unable to attain anything from this expedition. This news was forwarded to the *Amir Askiya* who then went and encamped in Tinfirna which was near Zulna in the direction of the east. It was there that his son, Uthman was born who was nicknamed Tinfarna after his place of birth. The *Amir* then came himself with his armies and killed Qama Fati Qalli, conquered his armies and leveled his authority there in that country. The authority of the ruler of Mali was removed and his family there, were made captives. It was from this captivity that Maryum Daabu, the mother of his son, Isma`il, came. He remained in that country until he rectified the land and established a system there which was different from the first. He then returned to his own country. As for the people of Jenne', they voluntarily entered under the authority and jurisdiction of the *Amir*.

He did not execute any military expeditions during the years 908, 909 and 910 A.H.. However, in the first part of 911 A.H. he sent a military expedition against Birku which was also called Birbu. It was during this campaign that his female captive, Zaarikun Banke' attracted his attention and later gave birth to his son *Askiya* Musa. In this particular military expedition so many of the notables of Abeeru Banda and their *jinn* lost their lives in the battle between them and the disbelievers, that the *Amir's* brother, Umar Kumzaaghu began to weep. He said to the *Amir*, "You have brought the people of Songhay to ruin." He responded, "On the contrary, I have caused Songhay to prosper. These people here that you see will make life for us who remain of the Songhay good. They were with us in this war and we would not have been able to do what we did by ourselves. For this reason they came with us to this place here in order to meet their death. Their presence here reinvigorated us when we saw how they failed to flee from death." It was then that the grief and sorrow which his brother, Umar, felt was removed.

It during this period that the jurist Muhammad ibn *Qadi* Abu'l-Barakaat Mahmud was born, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to them. The *Amir* did not make any military expedition during the year 912 A.H.. In the year 913 A.H. he made a military expedition to Kilanbut the capitol of the Malian kingdom. In the year 915 the *Shaykh 'l-Islam Qadi* Mahmud ibn Umar made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He appointed in his place as *imam* of the **Sankore'** mosque/university, his maternal uncle, the jurist al-Mukhtar 'n-Nahawi and in his place as judge *Qadi* Abd'r-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr with the order of the *Amir Askiya 'l-Hajj* Muhammad. He then returned from the

the *Shaykh 'l-Islam* Abu 'l-Barakat, the jurist *Qadi* Abu'l-Barakaat Mahmud ibn Umar Aqit when he became very advanced in years, who resigned the post over to Abu Abdallah in the year 1540 C.E. He was a pious scholar, modest, humble and firm with Allah. He was renown for his knowledge of the Arabic language. He was a praise singer of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace¹³. He was extremely coherent in the *as-Shifa Bi Ta`reef Huquuq 'l-Mustafa* of al-Qadi Abu 'l-Fadl `Iyad ibn Musa ibn `Iyad 'l-Yahsubi. [d. 544 A.H.], may Allah be merciful to him, giving a detailed commentary upon it every *Ramadhan* in the mosque of **Sankore'**. May Allah be merciful to him.

pilgrimage in the year 916 A.H. on 20 of *Sha`ban*. When he reached the city of Gao, the *Amir* who was in Kabara a well known port town, heard of his arrival. He then boarded a ship heading in the direction of Gao in order to meet *Qadi* Mahmud. He met him there after which Abu'l-Barakaat continued on to Timbuktu. He then entered his home safely and with well-being. Many people of Timbuktu thought that he had surrendered the position of *imam* of the **Sankore'** mosque/university to his above mentioned maternal uncle. However, during the *dhuhr* prayer of the day in which he returned, he came to the mosque and led the people in the prayer. As for the *Qadi* Abd'r-Rahman, he remained in the position of judge and the jurist Mahmud said nothing to him about this for about twenty years. Then *Shaykh* Ahmad Biyukune' informed *Askiya 'l-Hajj* Muhammad of that. He then sent a messenger to Timbuktu and ordered that *Qadi* Abd'r-Rahman be removed from the position and it be given over to the jurist *Qadi* Mahmud. Thus, he was removed and the position of the judiciary was given over to the *Qadi* Mahmud. Some words and contention emerged between the *Qadi* Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn *Qadi* Abd'r-Rahman and Nafa`, the son of the Timbuktu-Koy al-Mustafa Kara the grandson of *Shaykh* Ahmad Biyukune'. The *Qadi* Muhammad was very vehement in his enmity. Nafa` said, "This enmity of yours is because of the delegation of our grandfather, when my grandfather *Shaykh* Ahmad encouraged the *Amir* *Askiya 'l-Hajj* Muhammad to do what he did with your grandfather, *Qadi* Abd'r-Rahman. He had him removed and this is what you have against us."

In the year 917 A.H. the *Amir* despatched the *Haku Koray-Koy*, Ali Fulan and the *Balam`a*, Muhammad Kara to Baaghina Faran along with the *Qutu-Keita*. In the year 918 A.H. *Askiya* Muhammad made a military expedition against the accursed false prophet Tayinde', whom he killed in a place called Zaru. Intelligence showed that Kulle' the eldest son of Tayinde' was absent from the military expedition. When the news of what had happened to his father reached him, he along with some of the military forces fled to the land of Futa, which is the name of the country which is near the Atlantic Ocean. He took refuge with the ruler of Jolof and remained there attempting his treachery against that ruler until he became firmly established enough to fight against him. As a result the region of Jolof became divided into two parts. One part was controlled by Kulle', the sons of Silta-Tayinde'. The other part was controlled by the *Damel*, who was the most prominent military leader of the ruler of Jolof. Thus, in that region there emerged two mighty kingdoms which possessed profound strength. Each of these governments remained this way until the present. They are all among the Blacks. When Kulle' died, his son, Yeruyime', was appointed in his place; and when he in turn died his brother Kalaye' Tabara was appointed in his place. He was liberal, good and just. His government reached the highest level of justice until there was none who equaled him in the regions of the west except the ruler of Mali, *Kankan* Musa, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to them. When Kalaye' died his nephew, Kute', the son of Yeruyime' was appointed in his place. When he in turn died his brother Sanbu Laam was appointed in his place. He also achieved an amount of justice during his rule. He prevented injustice in his lands and accepted it from no one. He remained in authority for thirty-seven years. When he died his son Abu Bakr was appointed in his place and he is the one who rules those lands presently.

NOTE: Tayinde' Silta Yaalube', Neema Silta Warurbe', Duku Silta Firuhe' and Kara Silta Walrube' all originated from among the tribes of Jolof in the lands of Mali. They settled in the land of Qayake'. When the *Amir* *Askiya 'l-Hajj* Muhammad killed the accursed Silta-Tayinde', they all fled into the lands of Futa and resided there. They have resided in that region until the present. As for the people of Jolof, they are

the best of the people in good deeds and natural disposition. Their nature is far superior to the remainder of the Fulani in every respect. Allah ta`ala singled them out with the traits of excellent character, noble deeds and praiseworthy behavior. In this respect they presently have attained great strength and momentous integrity. However in the realm of courage and bravery they have no portion in these. But in the realms of fulfilling oaths and promises, these qualities both begin and end with them based upon what we have heard.

In the last part of the year 919 A.H. *Amir 'l-Mu'mineen Askiya 'l-Hajj Muhammad* made a military expedition against Katsina and returned during the month of *Rabi`a 'l-Awwal* of the year 920 A.H.. In the last part of the year 921 A.H. He made a military expedition against al-`Aadila the ruler of Agadez. He returned from that expedition in the year 922 A.H.. During his return the governor of Lika, Kuta who was nicknamed Kanta rebelled against him. The reason for this rebellion was when he reached his land on returning with the *Amir* from that military expedition, he awaited his share of the booty. When his hopes of obtaining the booty were dashed, he questioned the *Dandi Fari* about his share. He said to him, "If you ask me for it then I will be angry with you." Kanta became quiet at his response. Then his companions came to him and asked, "Where is our share from this booty? We haven't seen anything from it until now! That is why we have come to ask about it!" He said, "I asked about it and the *Dandi Fari* said, 'If you ask me for it then I will be angry with you.' I will not become angry by myself. However, if you all show your anger along with me, then I will go and demand it." They said, "We all will demonstrate our anger and discontentment!" He then said, "May Allah bless you. This is what I wanted from you!" He then returned to the *Dandi Fari* and demanded his share of the booty and was refused. He then opposed the *Dandi Fari* and there emerged between them enmity until a formidable war took place between them. Kanta staved off the armies of *Dandi Fari* and withdrew from under the jurisdiction of the *Amir Askiya 'l-Hajj Muhammad* until the time when the Songhay government deteriorated. Thus, Kanta achieved autonomy. In the year 923 A.H. the *Amir* made a military expedition against him but did not achieve his desire in that.

In the year 924 A.H. the *Amir* dispatched his brother, the *Kurmina-Fari Umar* against Qama Qata to fight him. In the year 925 A.H. the *Amir* dismounted with his armies in the port town of Kabara on the 15 of *Ramadhan*. In the year 926 A.H. the brother of the *Amir*, Umar Kamdiaghu died on 3 of *Rabi`a 'l-Awwal*. Then the *waliy* of Allah, Muri Saalih concealed himself from the people for three days. He then came out and when he sat down in his lecture he said to his students, "On this day has my Lord forgiven Umar." This he did because of the great love, respect and honor which Umar showed to him. At this time the *Amir* was in the town of Sankara which lay beyond Kukiya in the direction of Dendi. He then appointed his brother Yahya as the *Kurmina-Fari*. He remained in that post for nine years and died during the revolt of the *Fari-Mundhu Musa* when he withdrew himself from under the control of his father, the *Amir Askiya 'l-Hajj Muhammad*. In the year 928 A.H. the governor of Timbuktu, Umar ibn Abu Bakr died. In the year 931 A.H. the *Amir* sent his brother, the *Faran Yahya*, to Kadara on a campaign in which the *Binka-Farma*, Ali Yarma died. When he returned the *Amir* dispatched Ali Fulan to Binka to oversee the succession of the position of *Binka-Farma* after the death of Ali Yarma. *Faran Yahya* requested from the *Amir* that his son, Bella, be appointed to the post of *Binka-Farma*. When the *Amir* gave permission for him to be appointed he was holding the position of *Adiki-Farma*. Bella was known amongst his brothers for his bravery and courage. He was the youngest of the sons of *Faran Yahya*. When the elder brothers

heard about that they became angry and swore that when he arrived in Gao, they would break his drum. This position of leadership was normally reserved for the eldest of those who possessed the authority. The one who held the position was also among those who possessed drums.

His brothers continued to speak enviously and jealously about his affair. All except the *Fara-Mundhu* Musa himself who was the oldest of all of them. Bella heard what they had been saying and he swore in turn that whoever desired to break his drum he would himself break the back of his mother. He arrived in Gao carrying his drum in hand and beating it until he reached a place near the city which was known as the place where all drums were to cease being beat with the exception of the drums of the *Askiya* himself. He ordered that his drummers continue their drumming until they reach the door of the palace of the *Amir*. Then the notables of the military mounted their horses which was the custom among them when meeting someone of his status. Among these horsemen were his brothers who had promised to break his drum. When he reached them, they all dismounted from their horses to give him the greetings of peace, as is the custom when someone of his stature arrives. All except the *Fara-Mundhu* Musa. Bella gave them the greetings while remaining on his horse and by simply nodding his head. He said, "I am not going to say anything about this conspiracy of yours. You know if I say anything about it I will have to keep my word." None of the brothers were able to raise any damaging objections to him. However, they made the conviction of manifesting their hostility towards Bella. This enmity was a result of the authority accorded him and due to the superiority he had over them because of the many military engagements and combatants he had killed.

The situation caused Musa to take steps to deviate from the path of his father, the *Amir*. He showed his wrath towards his father and his attendant and advisor Ali Fulan, due to the assistance and rapport which was between them. Musa claimed that the *Amir* never did anything without Ali Fulan's decision due to the fact that *Amir* had become blind in the latter years of his rule. However, no one realized this due to the closeness of Ali Fulan to him and his devoted attendance to the him. As a result Musa was determined to bring him down and threatened to kill him. This caused Ali Fulan to fear him and he thus fled to Tindirma under the protection of the *Karminu Faari* Yahya in the year 934 A.H..

In the year 935 the *Fara-Mundhu* Musa revolted from his authority and went to Kukiya with some of his half-brothers. Then the *Amir* dispatched a letter to his brother the *Faran* Yahya in Tindirma telling him, "to go and straighten out the crookedness of those young boys". He then came and was commanded to go to them in Kukiya and assure him that he would to his utmost to suppress this revolt. When he reached them in Kukiya, he immediately met them with intense fighting until he was wounded. He fell from his horse to the earth prostrate upon his face naked. He then began to speak about what would occur to them in the future. At that time Dawuud ibn *al-Amir Askiya* Muhammad stood by his head, along with his brother Isma'il and Muhammad Bankanu Koray ibn Umar Kumzaaghu. Yahya indicated that one of them would be a false-accuser and a liar. He said, "You, Bankanu Koray will be the one associated with lying. O breaker of the ties of kinship!" Isma'il then reprimanded him to make repentance. Then Yahya said, "O Isma'il you know that he will never be able to do that. However, you will because you keep the ties of kinship." He then died and the *Amir* appointed his son, Uthman Yawbaanu as the *Karminu Faari* and sent him back to Tindirma.

Then Musa and his brothers returned to Gao and in the last part of that year he deposed his father, the *Amir* on Sunday, the day of the *Eid 'l-Adhaa* before the prayer.

At the time the *Amir* was at the place of the prayer and Musa swore that no one would pray until he appointed him to the seat of authority. The *Amir* then surrendered the authority over to him. Since he was then the *Amir* the people prayed the *Eid 'l-Adhaa* prayer behind him. Musa remained in his own palace and allowed his father, the *Askiya*, to stay in the government palace. He did not remove him from the palace throughout the remainder of his life. *Amir Askiya al-Hajj* Muhammad remained in authority for thirty-six years and six months.



The famous pyramid tomb of *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* Askiyya Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr at-Ture` in Gao