

**SETH OSMAN YAKUB**

*A Biography*

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This is a short biography and history of our grandfather. It is intended to provide our future generations a glimpse of their roots and provide information on our heritage and the difficulties, our ancestors faced so that we could appreciate the affluence and freedoms we enjoy today.

Most of the family history was captured by Shavar Osman over many years by consulting our Grandmother (Aysha Osman), our Uncles, and Aunts.

The Historical documents have been provided by Kaisra Osman. Some information included was from the book “ Seth Usman Yaqoob Meman aur Mushriqi Africa ke Mukhlis Ahmadi Ahbab ka Tazkrai “ written by Amina Osman.

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## Introduction

Our grandfather's name was Osman Yakub (referred to as Dadajan Osman in this biography) but well known to his peers as Seth Osman Yakub. Seth being a title bestowed on people who are revered and respected for their dignified social norms, values, and leadership persona. He belonged to a generational business family from India. His father's name was Yakub and had four brothers, Ayub, Ahamad, Khamissa and Omar and one sister named Mariam. He was married to Ayesha, who was also from India and together had eight children and 34 grandchildren. His "great" grandfather, Seth Dada Ismail Yakub, was a great family man and highly valued unity of the extended family structure, a trait that has fervently been carried forward through the generations. Hence, Dadajan Osman was close to his uncles, aunts, siblings, nephews and nieces and their families. Likewise, his children maintained and nurtured their relationships with their aunts, uncles, and cousins. *See Figure 1 & 2* depicting the family trees of both our "great great" grandfather, Seth Ismail Yakub and our grandfather Seth Osman Yakub.

Figure 1

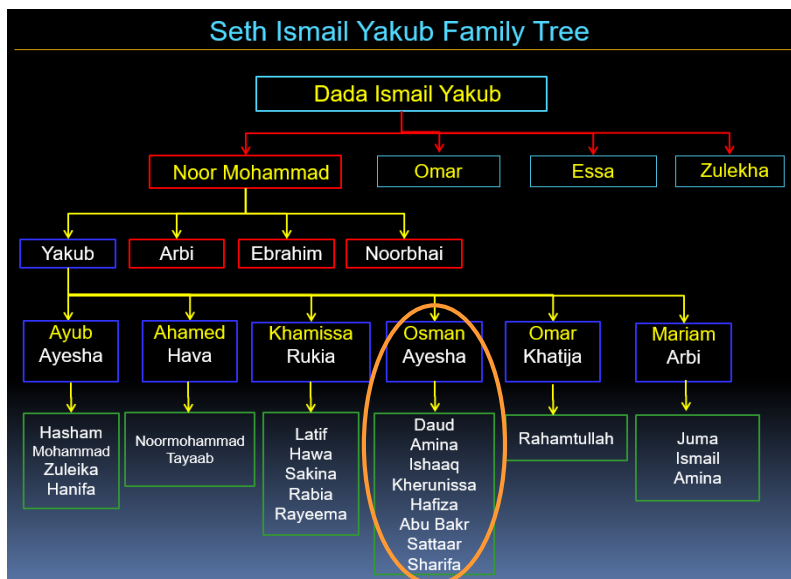
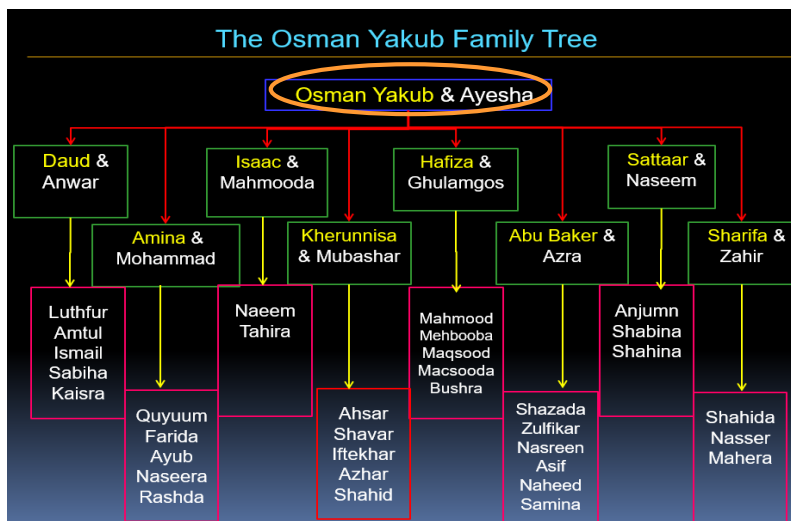


Figure 2



Dadajan Osman was born in 1890 in a small village called Daransville which is near Dwarka in India. Dwarka or Dwarika is an ancient city and a municipality of Devbhoomi Dwarka district in the state of Gujarat in northwestern India. It is located on the western shore of the Okhamandal Peninsula on the right bank of the Gomti River. It is one of the Chardhams, four sacred Hindu pilgrimage sites, and is one of the Sapta Puri, the seven most ancient religious cities in the country. Dwarka is often identified with the Dwarka Kingdom, the ancient kingdom of Krishna, and is believed to have been the first capital of Gujarat. Dadajan Osman's ancestors were of Turkish Origin from Asia Minor who, even after accepting Islam in 1422 AD, continued practicing some of the old Hindu traditions and customs such as praying on graves with the belief that the dead would fulfil their prayers and grant their wishes. However, Dadajan Osman did not agree with these practices and often questioned their validity. People were concerned about this attitude of his and would complain about his views to his father, Seth Yakub, known to us as Dada Yakub.

Figure 3

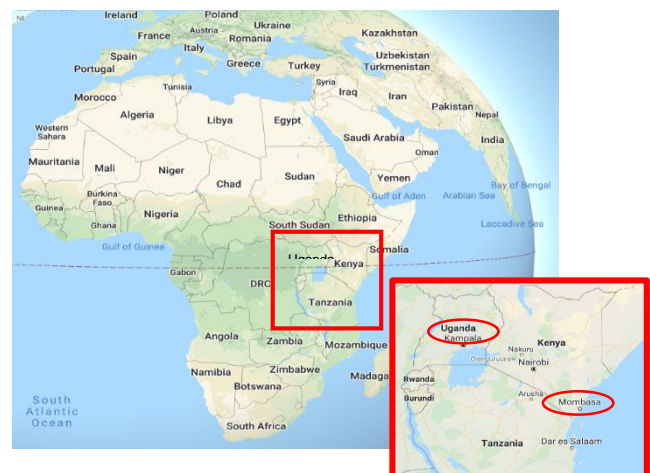


During this time Hindu, Christian and Muslim Scholars frequently held religious debates around the country and since Dadajan Osman lacked conviction in the practices of his people and a keen interest in discovering the truth would often attend the debates. The more debates he attended, the more questions he raised. Perplexed with this, his father decided it was best to send him away for a while to clear his mind and at least slow the rate of questioning and avoid any future defiance to their beliefs and customs.

## Emigration to Africa

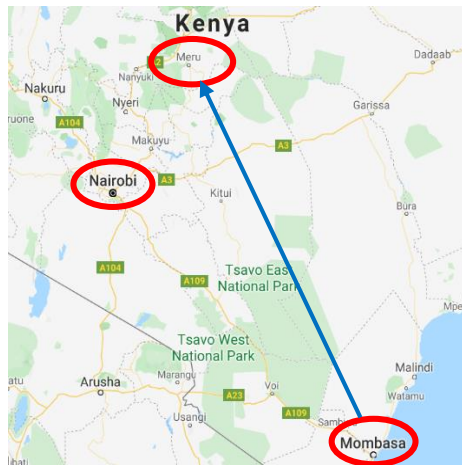
In the early 1900's, Dada Yakub's eldest son Ayub Yakub (Taya Ayub), elder brother to Dada Osman, had migrated to Uganda in East Africa at the invitation of the Sultan of Zanzibar and opened up a business in Masindi Port. In 1905 Taya Ayub returned to India to visit his family and discussed the vast business opportunities available in Uganda and his need for additional help. Dada Yakub saw this as a perfect opportunity to send Dada Osman with him and hence began Dada Osman's journey to Africa and his future home. When they arrived in Mombasa, a port town in Kenya on the coast of the Indian Ocean, they applied for a visa for Dadajan Osman to enter Uganda, a neighboring country to Kenya. However, the Ugandan Government refused to issue a visa on the grounds that at the age of 15, he was a minor and would have to wait until he was 16 to enter Uganda. In addition, an outbreak of Typhoid and Malaria in Uganda was not a safe environment for a young child to travel to.

Figure 4



Dada Ayub had no choice but to leave Dadajan Osman in Mombasa with a friend by the name of Pir Sahib, who had a guest house and a shop in Mombasa, until he was old enough to get a visa and gain admittance into Uganda. Besides running the guest house, Pir Sahib also practiced holistic medicine and agreed to hire Dadajan Osman to help with packaging and selling the medicines. Dadajan Osman, being soon discovered that Pir Sahib was deceiving people with pouches of sugar instead of medicine. When he confronted Pir Sahib and argued that it was wrong to deceive people, he found himself with two options – either to keep quiet and bid his time until he would leave for Uganda or leave his job and look elsewhere for employment. Being a man of conscious, ethics and high moral values, he could not continue to work there and decided to look for other employment opportunities.

Figure 5



As providence would have it, a trader and patron to the guesthouse named Mahomed Moti heard the conversation and was impressed with Dadajan Osman's honesty and integrity and offered him employment. He took him to Meru, a small town approximately 654 km (406 miles) from Mombasa to work at his store.

While Mahomed Moti was impressed with Dadajan Osman's work, his son was not happy with his father's decision to hire a worker. After two years of arguments with his son, Moti decided to find Dadajan Osman alternate employment with a friend called Mohamed Hasham, who owned two general merchandise stores in Meru and was finding it difficult to manage them by himself. He welcomed the opportunity to hire Dadajan Osman to manage one of his stores.

Mahomed Moti &amp; Sons



He was incredibly happy with Dadajan Osman hard work and trusted him fully to manage his store. However, in 1909, Mohamed Hasham became extremely sick and was unable to continue working. He finally decided to sell his stores and return to India to be with his family. He offered Dadajan Osman the opportunity to purchase one of the stores. Knowing how honest and hardworking Dadajan Osman was, he offered to sell him the store on credit with monthly payments on the condition that payment was made in full within one year. Coming from a business-oriented family and

<sup>15</sup> **Osman Yakub**, for example, claims to "have been trading at Meru since 1909 (nearly 40 years after),... dealing in country produce and general merchandise - mostly for the requirement of Africans. The first time, Mr. E. B. Horne, the then Commissioner, established a Boma at Meru, I went there and started my shop..." Osman Yakub writing to the D.C., regarding allocation of a business plot, 9th march, 1949, DC/MRU/2/9/2. Some of the other Asian traders were Mohammed Moti, Habib Ahmed, Jamal brothers, Rahmtula Ahmed, Gani Kassam, Ibrahim Ahmed, Arbi Hasham, Omar Ismaili, Ayub Yakub, Ali Mohammed Tayab, Adam Noor Mohammed, Ahmed

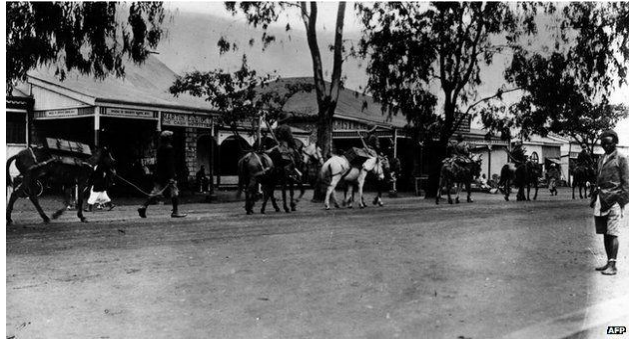
Source: [The Muslim Presence and Representations of Islam Among the Meru of Kenya](#), Anne Nkirote Kubai

## Business Endeavors

Dadajan Osman's business savvy, honesty and humbleness opened many opportunities and brought success in all his business endeavors. A glimpse of his historically recorded business licenses over time are listed in [Figure 6](#).

When the First World War broke out and the demand for supplies peaked, Osman Yakub & Co. spread all over the country to acquire supplies needed for the war. In addition, the company won the tender to supply army equipment to the British army. This tender proved to be very profitable for Dadajan Osman allowing him the opportunity to expand his business and open several more stores in various surrounding towns.

Meru



A Meru Marketplace



Among other products, the demand for flour increased during the war and to meet the demand, Dadajan Osman set up a flour mill on the Meru River supplying flour directly to the army depot. He purchased wheat and corn from the local farmers, processed it into flour and shipped to the army depots across the country. Other traders would bring their grains to mill and while waiting for it outside, they would bring other crops to sell. The area outside the mill soon turned into a small marketplace. Eventually, more traders came to sell their goods and began building stores expanding the small market into a large trading center for the

region and transitioning Meru from a small village to a thriving town. It was no accident that Meru became known as Dada Osman's town since he was instrumental in its affluence and economic development.

The expanded business gave rise to the need to transport goods on time and more economically and efficiently. Dada Osman started a transportation arm of his business and while it was intended for his own goods, others began contracting with him to transport their goods and this business also began to grow exponentially. This venture proved to be extremely profitable especially because the primary means of transportation at that time was horse carriages, donkeys and camels and the trucks provided the business community with a more efficient and effective means for transporting their goods. [Figure 7](#) provides verification of his transport licenses.

Kenya Roads in early 1900s



With the fast-expanding business, Dada Osman brought his siblings and cousins from India to Africa to help them build a better future for themselves and their families with opportunities to work or own parts of his business dynasty. He assisted them financially to bring their families over and settled them comfortably in their new homes. He gave them employment and stores to manage and continued to support them throughout his life.

Figure 6

46 THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE. January 13, 1926.

RETURN OF LICENCES ISSUED AT NAIROBI—(Contd.)

LICENSEE.	Nature of Licence.	Licence Fee Shillings	Date of issue	Date of Notice of Transfer or Cancellation (if any)
Osman Yakub & Co. ★	...	150	1-8-25	---

RETURN OF LICENCES ISSUED AT MERU UNDER THE TRADERS LICENSING ORDINANCE (No. 25 OF 1919).

For the Quarter ended 31st March, 1927.

LICENSEE.	Nature of Licence.	Licence Fee. Shillings	Date of Issue.
Chuni Ram	Trading	30	12-1-27
Mohamed Moti	...	300	13-1-27
Ganee Ismail	...	30	13-1-27
Mohamed Moti	...	30	14-1-27
Ayub Yakub	...	300	17-1-27
Popatlal Manekchand	...	30	17-1-27
Osman Yakub & Co. ★	...	150	18-1-27
Ali Mohamed Tayib	...	15	18-1-27
Abdul Karim Ismail	...	15	19-1-27
Suleman Ahmed	...	15	19-1-27
Ahmed Yakub	...	15	19-1-27
Osman Yakub & Co. ★	...	15	19-1-27
Arbi Hassan	...	30	19-1-27
Bechar Dhanji	...	150	20-1-27
Ganee Ismail	...	30	21-1-27
Haji Arbi	...	300	21-1-27
Haji Arbi	...	30	21-1-27
Haji Arbi	...	30	21-1-27
Purshotam Hira	...	30	24-1-27
Bechar Dhanji	...	150	24-1-27
Adam Nurmohamed	...	300	21-1-27
Osman Yakub & Co. ★	...	150	24-1-27
Ahmed Yakub	...	15	24-1-27
Osman Yakub & Co. ★	...	15	24-1-27

Source: [Official Gazette of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya-Nairobi June 1, 1927](#)

RETURN OF LICENCES ISSUED AT EMBU UNDER THE TRADERS LICENSING ORDINANCE (No. 25 OF 1919).

For the Quarter ended 31st March, 1928.

LICENSEE.	Nature of Licence.	Licence Fee. Shillings	Date of Issue.
Messrs. Osman Yakub & Co. ★	Trading	300	4-1-28

LAND GRANTS—(Contd.)

Name	L R or Plot No	Locality	Area (Approx)	Stand Premium	Annual Rent	Term from	Remarks
			Acres	Sh	Sh	Years	
<b>V TOWNS PLOTS GRANTS—(Contd)</b>							
Joseph K Nuthu	6585/238	Thomson's Falls	50 by 50 ft	500	100	40 5-7-56	For business and residential
Mohamali Kalyanoo & Himatram R Bhatt	209/667	Nairobi	0 0877	—	96	45 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R No
Bhogalal Rambhar Patel	57/XXII	Nyeri	0 3332	720	144	99 1-5-56	For private residential purposes
The Modern Plumbing Services	18/XXI	Naitaku	0 1722	3,000	600	99 1-7-56	For the purpose of workshop only
Kenya Farmers' Association (Co op) Ltd	3/XXV	Naivasha	2 57	1,280	256	99 1-6-56	For private residential purposes only
Kinyu Bhawan Kanpara	7288/24	Sotik	0 1148	1,000	200	99 1-7-56	For business-cum-residential
L M Kanji	63/IX	Thika	0 505	4,000	800	99 1-7-56	For residential flats
S I Patel	142/VI	Kisumu	0 3013	1,440	288	99 1-5-56	For private residential purposes
C P T Aston and E V Ziviani	209/5012-5014	Nairobi	0 750, 1 110 and 1 510	—	—	—	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/359 8, 1732 and 1733
East African Rajput League	51/III	Nakuru	0 1148	1,400	280	99 1-9-56	For residential purposes
M/S Osman Yakub & Company ★	209/4592	Nairobi-Newark Road	0 1240	12,423/31	2,484/66	99 1-4-56	For the purpose of workshop only
O Walsh	451/633	Nakuru	1 062	1,820	364	99 1-9-56	For private residential purposes
Abdullah Rahmatullah	209/4911	Nairobi	4 98	—	180	47 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/221
B P (East Africa) Ltd	209/5025	Nairobi	0 1791	40,500	10,092	99 1-8-55	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/2203 and C L
H Schofield	1108/15I	Nyeri	0 346	—	144	55 9/12	In exchange for surrender of L R Nos 1108/2 and 4/1
F M Bhawoo—deceased	209/1967	Nairobi	0 2759	—	576	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/1654/1
City Properties Ltd	209/4994	Nairobi	0 0459	—	491/33	99 23-12-54	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/4991/3
City Properties Ltd	209/4999	Nairobi	0 0459	—	491/33	99 31-12-54	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/4991/8
City Properties Ltd	209/5002	Nairobi	0 2063	—	2,208/52	99 16-12-55	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
City Properties Ltd	209/5003	Nairobi	0 2204	—	2,359/25	99 16-11-55	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/4991/12
City Properties Ltd	209/5019 and 5020	Nairobi	0 2482	—	5,313/66	99 2-1-56	In exchange for surrender of L R 209/4991/14 and 15
J P Lobo	778/136	Eldoret	1 174	2,240	448	99 1-9-56	For private residential purposes
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/147	Nairobi	0 1501	—	540/36	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/148	Nairobi	0 1501	—	540/36	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/140	Nairobi	0 3788	—	1,363/68	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/167	Nairobi	0 1500	—	540	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/168	Nairobi	0 1635	—	588/60	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/170	Nairobi	0 1436	—	516/96	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/171	Nairobi	0 1125	—	405	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/172	Nairobi	0 1125	—	405	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R
L Makang N J Dave and B T Raval	37/173	Nairobi	0 1125	—	405	99 1-7-56	In exchange for surrender of the same L R

Source: [Official Gazette of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya-Nairobi November 6, 1956](#)

6th November, 1956

OFFICIAL GAZETTE

## COLONY AND PROTECTORATE OF KENYA.

GENERAL NOTICE No. 515.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ORDINANCE, 1919,

AND

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 1924.

NOTICE.

THE Registers of Voters for the Indian and Arab Electoral Areas are hereby published pursuant to the provisions of Rule 8 of the Legislative Council (Amendment) Rules, 1924.

### INDIAN ELECTORAL AREA.

Nairobi District.

Name.	Address.
M. H. Butt	Nairobi.
A. H. Malik	Nairobi.
Din Mahomed	Nairobi.
H. M. Waljee	Nairobi.
Osman Yakub	Nairobi.

Meru District.

Name.	Occupation and Address.
Abdalla Haji	Shopkeeper, Meru.
Alayar Mangakhan	Shopkeeper, Mikinduri.
Arbi Hassan	Shopkeeper, Muthara.
Ayub Yakub	Shopkeeper, Meru.
Dechar Dhanp	Shopkeeper, Meru.
Desai R. M.	Sub-Postmaster, Meru.
Gulam Mohamed	Carpenter, Meru.
Haji Arbi	Shopkeeper, Meru.
Habib Ahmed	Shopkeeper, Meru.
Jethabhai M. Patel	Clerk, 5th K.A.R., Meru.
Khamissa Yakub	Shopkeeper, Meru.

Source: [Official Gazette of the COLONY and PROTECTORATE of KENYA-Nairobi June 24, 1925](#)

Figure 7

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THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

January 20, 1948

GENERAL NOTICE No. 104

THE TRANSPORT LICENSING ORDINANCE, 1937

AND

THE VEHICLES LICENSING REGULATIONS, 1938

APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS

Any authority or individual wishing to make recommendations or objections in respect of the under-mentioned should, with due regard to the provisions of the Transport Licensing Ordinance, 1937, notify the Transport Licensing Board on publication of this list.

ROAD SERVICE LICENCES

TLB. 778—Osman Yakub & Co., Box 798, Nairobi. Route: Nairobi-Isiolo-Meru-Nanyuki. Vehicle H 1861, at present licensed as a "B". Hold a "B" Licence in respect of one vehicle.

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THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE

8th September, 1953

GENERAL NOTICE No. 1902

THE TRANSPORT LICENSING ORDINANCE

(Cap. 237)

The undermentioned applications will be considered by the Transport Licensing Board meeting at the Desai Memorial Hall, Victoria Street, Nairobi, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 24th September, 1953. Any person who objects to any application must lodge a copy of his objection on the prescribed form with the applicant and Board not later than midday, Thursday, 17th September, 1953.

Nairobi,  
1st September, 1953.

A. H. EDWARDS,  
Transport Licensing Board,  
P.O. Box 820, Nairobi.

ROAD SERVICE LICENCES

778—Osman Yakub & Co., Box 5688, Nairobi. Conversion of "C" licence for KBL 228. Route: Nairobi City.

At the end of the First World War, the British Army offered a tender to dispose-off Army surplus supplies and equipment through public auctions and tendering. Dada Osman won the bid and he became the 10<sup>th</sup> richest man in East Africa. However, managing army contracts and the disposal of the military surplus from Meru became a logistics problem. Transportation between Nairobi and Meru was inconvenient to say the least. Transportation by trucks was difficult since the roads were not suitable to carry large loads. Wildlife and robberies were dangerous and sometimes it could take days or weeks to travel between Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, and Meru.

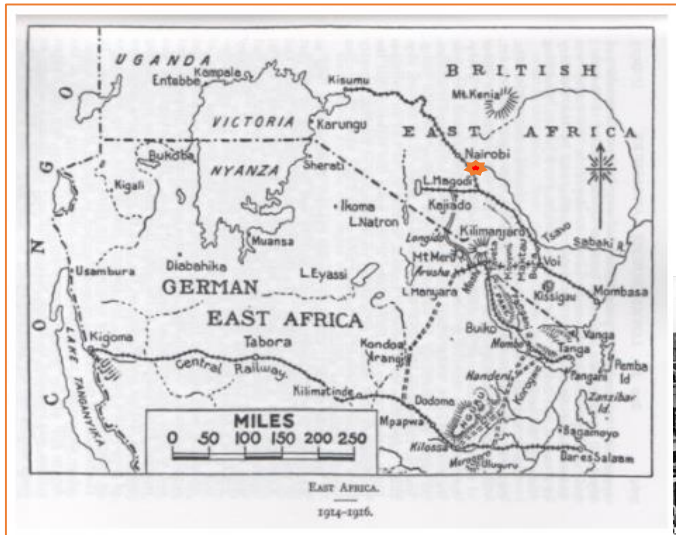
Dada Osman finally decided to move his business operations to Nairobi which was the capital and center of trading in East Africa. He gave up all his business interests in Meru and surrounding areas to family members and continued his business journey in Nairobi. It is notable to mention, that Dada Osman gave his business interest in Meru to his family at no cost to them.

Nairobi, 1920's

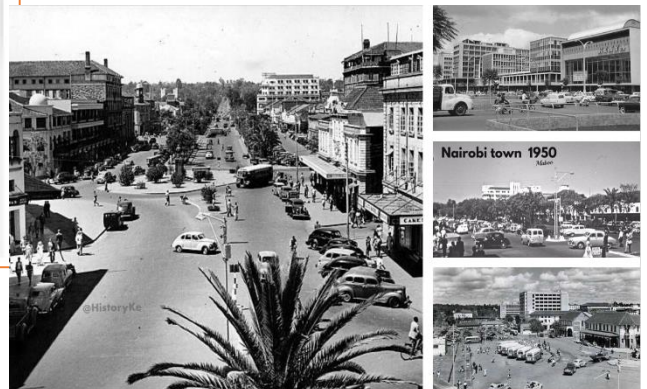


As Osman Yakub & Company continued to expand and prosper, the need for more facilities and warehouses emerged. Unfortunately, there was not enough warehouse space available and limited resources to contract for building new facilities. The entrepreneur in Dada Osman did not desist. He brought construction workers from India to build 10 large warehouses and after their completion found himself in yet another prospering construction business. In addition, he purchased and rented several buildings. He owned a tire factory and transport trucks for delivering goods to Mombasa, Sudan, and Uganda. He established the Sunrise Juice Company making fresh juice which became exceedingly popular. They also made Ketchup, noodles, hair oil and other products for wholesale and retail distribution.

East Africa 1914-1916



Nairobi, 1950's



Soon, Dada Osman diversified into new ventures mostly under military contracts. Some of which included:

- **Travel Agency:** Under the name of World Ways Travel
- **Automotive Parts:** Sale of second-hand parts and manufacture of small new parts

- **Safari Equipment:** Manufacturing camping equipment
- **Military Equipment:** Manufacturing of non-ammunition equipment

Allah blessed him with so much that by 1948 he became a millionaire and people endowed upon him the title of "Seth" (*pronounced sayth*) and began to refer to him as Seth Osman Yakub bestowing on him reverence and respect.

## Religions Affiliation

One Friday Dada Osman met a shopkeeper in Nairobi who told him about a Muslim group that offers congregational salat in an open field. Dadajan Osman's curiosity was peaked, and he went to the field where he met Dr. Mohamed Ali, an Ahmadi Muslim. They developed a friendship and upon hearing that Dadajan Osman had been following the Ahmadi debates and was aware of and interested in their teachings, Dr. Mohamed Ali gave him some literature to read. Attending the debates, meeting other Ahmadis, and reading the literature convinced Dadajan Osman of the true and logical Islamic teachings of Ahmadiyyat. He soon converted and became an active member of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat making time commitments and significant financial contributions especially towards building mosques.

Early members of the Ahmadiyya jamaat met with a lot of opposition and hardships when they offered prayers in the mosques of mainstream Sunni Muslims. This forced them to offer Jummah prayers in an open ground on Fridays until they were finally able to build a mosque of their own. Dadajan Osman's charitable personality was well known among the community. He contributed large amounts towards building the mosque in Nairobi and its continued maintenance. His generosity extended to building mosques in Mombasa, Jinja and Kisumu. In fact, the mosque in Mombasa was built almost entirely through his donations. It is also noted that he provided a car to any murabbi that was stationed in Nairobi and paid towards its expenses.

## Majlis Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya Kenya (1951)



## Ahmadiyya Mosque in Nairobi



## Ahmadiyya Mosque in Mombasa



## Ahmadiyya Mosque in Kisumu



The family's contributions to the Ahmadiyya Community have continued over the years. Dadajan Osman, Dadi Maa Ayesha, and their eldest son Daud and daughter-in-law Anwar are recorded in the historic *Panch- hazar-mujahedeen-daftar-awal* which is a list of the original members of the Ahmadiyya jamaat that contributed to the Tehrike Jadid scheme. Hazrat Musleh Maud, Khalifatul Masih II introduced the scheme calling it "Tehrik-i-Jadid" (New Scheme) in 1934. The primary purpose of this scheme was and still is to open new missions and construct mosques around the world.

#### Image from Panch- hazar-mujahedeen-daftar-awal

05284	USMAN YAQOOB SATH	KENYA	KENYA
05285	AISHA BEGUM W/O USMAN YAQOOB	KENYA	KENYA
05286	DAUD USMAN S/O USMAN YAQOOB	KENYA	KENYA
05287	W/O DAUD USMAN	KENYA	KENYA

In 1948, by the grace of Allah, Dadajan Osman and Dadima Ayesha performed Hajj in Mecca. They travelled by road and it took them weeks to reach Mecca. After hajj, they were fortunate to visit Qadian before their return home.

### Family Alienation

Taya Ayub (L), Dadajan Osman (R)



When Dada Yakub, still in India, heard that his son, Dada Osman had joined the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, he was very disturbed and upset. He contacted Taya Ayub in Uganda and asked him to go to Nairobi and convince Dadajan Osman to change his mind and leave Ahmadiyyat. However, after much debate and discussions. The opposite happened. Dadajan Osman convinced his brother about the truth of Ahmadiyyat and he too joined the Ahmadiyya community. Upon hearing this, Dada Yakub, even more disturbed, sent his second son Ahamad to meet his brothers and try to convince them to withdraw from the Ahmadiyya Community. But he too was not successful and although he did not convert, he remained in Nairobi to work with Dadajan Osman.

In 1919, Dadajan Osman returned to India to get married. Unfortunately, as an Ahmadi, he met with a lot of opposition and criticism and no one was willing to get their daughter married to him. However, the Marakatia family, impressed with Dada Osman's personality was willing to overlook his religious affiliations and gave him their daughter Ayesha Hassan Marakatia in marriage. They both returned to Nairobi but Dadima Ayesha (known to all as Maa) did not wish to become an Ahmadi at that time and Dadajan Osman did not force her. She wanted to study Ahmadiyyat for herself and if convinced would accept it. After three years of studying Ahmadiyyat and meeting with Ahmadi Muslims, she accepted Ahmadiyyat wholeheartedly focusing on the logical and pure teachings of the faith that took Muslims back to the original teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Ayesha Hassan Marakatia



During this time, the global Spanish Flu plagued Kenya as well. Mombasa being the port city demobilized Kenyans who had served as Carrier Corps. They got infected and as they made their way

Morbidity and mortality burden associated with 1918 influenza pandemic in Coastal Kenya Region, September 1918–March 1919.

District Name	Population Estimates	Reported Influenza Cases		Reported Influenza Mortality		Influenza Case Fatality Proportion (%)
		Number	Rate (per 1000)	Number	Rate (per 1000)	
1. Mombasa Island	36,884	1217	33.0	628	17.0	51.6
2. Vanga	19,761	-	-	400	20.2	-
3. Taita Taveta	30,545	10,691	350.0	1065	34.9	9.9
4. Nyika	71,137	20,000	281.1	1700	23.9	8.5
5. Malindi	22,872	-	-	800	35.0	-
Total	181,199	31,908	176.1 *	4593	25.3	10.6 *

\* based on data from Nyika, Taita Taveta and Mombasa districts.

Source: [NCBI - Spanish Flu Pandemic in Coastal Kenya Region](#)

home, particularly along the railway line the disease spread rapidly. In addition, a famine forced people from their homes in search of food and the rural areas became graveyards as an estimated 155, 000, died within six months. By the third wave of the pandemic, in 1919, more than 5.5 percent of the Kenyan population had been wiped out. Maa also fell sick at that time and it took months of treatment for her to heal and return to health.

Meanwhile, Dada and Dadi Yakub were disheartened by their two sons continued affiliation with Ahmadiyyat and decided to go to Nairobi themselves and convince them to reject Ahmadiyyat. Dadajan Osman was extremely happy to see his parents and brought them home with the intention to have them live with him forever. However, Dada Yakub refused to even drink a drop water at his son's house until he rejected Ahmadiyyat and went to the extent of threatening a hunger strike. But Dadajan Osman could not give up his faith and turn away from what he thought was the true Islam and a message from Allah. Unfortunately, Dada Yakub was also adamant and refused to live with him and wanted to live with his youngest son in Meru.

Travelling in those days was a challenge due to muddy and unsafe dirt roads. Some parts of the roads were closed because of heavy rains. Cars would have to wait on the side for hours at a time until it was safe to drive. Dada Yakub was not willing to wait until the rains subsided. Luckily Dadajaan Osman's truck driver was on his way to Meru the following day so he sent his parents with him. Unfortunately, when they reached Meru, Dada Yakub fell ill with pneumonia and died shortly thereafter. May Allah Bless his soul and bestow his place in Paradise, Ameen ).

By 1950 all his children were settled in their own houses. He had a piece of land in Mombasa too. He decided to build a house by the beach and a warehouse and a large building with shops and flats to rent. Both grandparents went to Mombasa and it took them about two years to complete the work. They returned to Nairobi for a week and Dadajaan left to go back to Mombasa to overlook some work and promised to return to celebrate Eid with his children.

However, Dadajan Osman's continued business and family successes became a subject of jealousy and envy for many people and his conversion to Ahmadiyyat a source of resentment. As a result, he was poisoned with herbal poison which was mixed in his food one night. As a result, he became terribly ill and disorientated and the poison affected his memory and mental state. The doctors tried to treat him, but nothing helped. He remained sick for almost one year and died in 1954. Innanlillaherajeon. May Allah bless his soul and bestow upon him a place in heaven. Ameen. He was buried in the Nairobi Cemetery. His death was a great loss to the family and community. The entire city of Nairobi was in shock and at a stand-still. His loss was felt by many and mourned for months. He is still remembered very fondly by everyone that knew him.

As noted earlier, Dadajan Osman was well known for his charitable and generous personality. Despite his wealth, he held a humble disposition, always ready to help anyone who needed a job, financial assistance, accommodation or just groceries. His home was always open to anyone who needed a place to stay or was hungry for a meal. He supported orphanages, schools, and hospitals for the needy. So even though his family had disinherited him due to Ahmadiyyat, he continued to help them when they were in need. This legacy of Dada Osman had embedded in the family and continued through the next generation carefully nurtured by Dadima Ayesha (Maa).

## The New Era

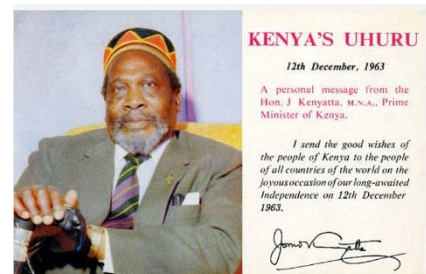
The new era after Dadajan Osman's demise brought many trials and tribulations to the family. However, central and to the core of family unity laid the strong grip of Maa. Her immense love, dedication and resolve to keep the family together and prosperous became the foundation for the future of her eight children, their spouses, and the grandchildren. Unique to this family unity was that her daughter in-laws and son in-laws and their families became a strong and integral part of the extended family as well. The bond of the family became the talk of the town. Some discussed it with respect and inspiration, others with envy and jealousy. See [Figure 2](#) for the family tree.

Maa had always been a strong backbone behind Dadajan Osman's successes and business endeavors. She was a powerful woman with an unprecedented business sense unlike any woman of that time. She worked side by side with Dadajan Osman during his life and did the same after his demise. With her business intelligence, she was able to continue working with her eldest son Daud to keep the businesses flourishing.

Daud, a staunch businessman and well liked in the community was also a defender of freedom. He had a close relationship with Jomo Kenyatta, who was a freedom fighter and elected as the President of Kenya in 1964 and Tom Mboya who was a founder-member of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and an active participant in the constitutional talks that led to Kenya's independence in 1963.

However, after Kenya's independence in 1964, African political and economic policies placed a great deal of pressure on big businesses. The downfall that began with the emergence of the Mau freedom fighting movement around 1955 culminated after Kenya's independence. The movement sent a message to Colonial masters that their days of prosperity and operations were numbered shattering the confidence in the business world. Financial and banking institutions, concerned about recovering debt, began calling in their loans and notes, reducing overdraft limits and stopping further lending. This put pressure on businesses to reduce production, increasing unemployment and decreasing consumption and ultimately slowing down the overall economy.

Daud Osman



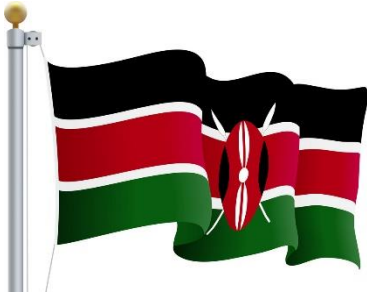
### KENYA'S UHURU

12th December, 1963

A personal message from the Hon. J. Kenyatta, M.S.A., Prime Minister of Kenya.

I send the good wishes of the people of Kenya to the people of all countries of the world on the joyous occasion of our long-awaited Independence on 12th December 1963.

*Jomo Kenyatta*



Meanwhile, other African countries were also engaged in revolutions for freedom and as each country gained independence, a mass exodus of Europeans and Asians further accelerated the economic downfall and collapse of big businesses. Those who had no place to go, became victims of discriminatory policies as the “Africanization” of African countries made it difficult for non-Africans (Blacks) to do business or seek employment in the country.

As the economy of the country worsened, sales and revenues of Osman Yakub & Co. declined forcing the disbursements of businesses and assets at below market value and significantly reducing the size of the company. However, Daud Osman had political and financial connections that trusted him and were willing to extend him credit to rebuild the company, but the political environment and events in neighboring Uganda eliminated these options as well. Idi Amin, President of Uganda, decreed that all Asians from Uganda must leave the country empty handed. Financial Institutions in Kenya feared that similar events may occur in Kenya and as a result, recalled all loans and securities held by businesses including that of Osman Yakub & Co. This forced the company to surrender all assets and residences except for the Tire Rethreading Factory.

Unfortunately, the Tire Rethreading Factory burned down shortly after the insurance had lapsed. With no funds to fight the claim, Osman Yakub & Co. was forced to shut down operations. In October 1966, Daud Osman passed away at the age of 46 with a massive heart attack, bringing the end to an era that people even today speak of with great admiration. His death, just like his father’s shocked the community. Young and old, rich, and poor, black, and white, all attended his funeral. Another shocked followed when his wife Anwar Osman could not accept his death and died six months later in April of 1967. *Innanillaherajeon*. May Allah open the gates of heaven for them. Ameen.

The death of her young son and daughter-in-law was hard for Maa to bear. But she persevered. Knowing that nickel does not melt in a fire, took some family servants to the burnt down factory location and had them hand pick all items made of nickel. She had these sold at an auction and started a store selling camping equipment which became the source of income for the family. Maa was also a truly kind and loving woman. Her treatment of employees and hospitable nature was well known by everyone. Her doors continued to remain open for all family and friends. She also helped the underprivileged and the needy and her kitchen remained open for anyone that needed a meal no matter the time of day or night. She died in 1992 at the age of 91. *Innanillaherajeon*. May Allah open the gates of heaven for her. Ameen. She is sorely missed by her children who survived her, her grandchildren, and her great grandchildren.

Ayesha Yakub (Maa)



## The Next Generation

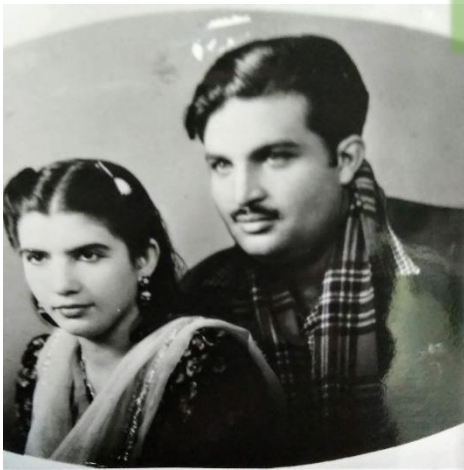
The aftermath of independence led to tremendous changes and hardships for the people of Kenya and especially those of British nationality. With the tremendous business losses and bleak future in Kenya, members of the Dadajan Osman’s family reluctantly and with a heavy heart decided to move to London, England, the United States or Canada in the hope of a better future for their children.

By 1968 most of the family had migrated and by 1971, no one remained in Africa. The Osman family struggled in the new country, a new environment, a new culture, and a new lifestyle. They suffered

through racism and prejudices on the streets, in the workplace, and in schools. They worked long hours, in any job they could find for lower wages and inequitable treatment. But they never let pride, arrogance or insult deter them. The humility, honesty, and impeccable ethics of Dadajan Osman was embedded in the family and carefully nurtured by Maa. They remained committed to providing for their families with an honest living, dedicated to the Ahmadiyya Community making great sacrifices, financial and otherwise and true to retaining their culture and language.

While the family has lost many members of the first generation leaving a great void in their lives, they continue to move forward and by the grace of Allah are blessed with material, spiritual and religious blessings.

Daud & Anwar Osman



Osman & Ayesha Yakub's Progeny

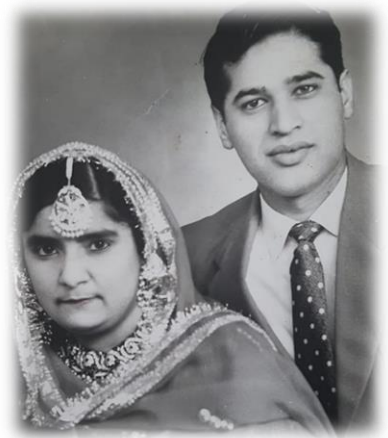
Abubakr & Azra Osman



Ishaq & Mehmooda Osman



Sataar & Naseem Osman



Mohammad & Amina Yakub



Mubasshar & Khairunnisa Butt



Zahir & Sharifa Khan



Ghulamghaus & Hafiza Bhatti



## Conclusion

The authors recognize that this biography barely touches upon the life of Dadajan Osman. We have endeavored to capture the essence of his life and record known events so that our future generations do not have to wonder where their roots are embedded. We pray that our future generations will continue to follow in his footsteps in their lives. Ameen

We hope this will provide pleasure to all who read it and will be the source of love and pride in Dadajan Osman and his sacrifices so that we can enjoy the lifestyles we have today.