

## COURSE GUIDE

### ISL 804 ISLAMIC STUDIES IN WEST AFRICA

**Course Team**            Abdul- Aziz Yusuf Taiwo (Course Developer/  
Writer) Unibadan  
Wahab Qahar Sarumi (Phd) (Course Editor) –  
NOUN  
Prof. A. F. Ahmed (Programme Leader) – NOUN



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

© 2021 by NOUN Press  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
University Village  
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone  
Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway  
Jabi, Abuja

Lagos Office  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island, Lagos

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)

URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

First Printed 2013

Revised and reprinted 2021

ISBN: 978-978-058-273-9

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Introduction.....	iv
What you will learn in the course.....	iv
course Aims.....	v
Course Objectives.....	v
Working through this Course .....	v
Course Materials.....	v
Study Units.....	vii
Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMAS).....	viii
Self-Assessment Exercises (SAES).....	ix
References and Further Reading.....	x
Assessment File.....	x
Course Overview and Presentation Schedule.....	x
Final Examination and Grading .....	xi
Course Marking Scheme .....	xi
How to get the most from this Course.....	xii
Tutors/Tutorials.....	xiii
Summary and conclusion.....	xiii

## INTRODUCTION

ISL804: Islamic Studies in West Africa is a Three-Credit Unit Course for the Master's Degree students programme. It gives student a deep insight into the Islamic Studies in West Africa and the scholars both of the old and the contemporary age in Islamic thought. In it, you will be able to study the following: spread of Islam to West Africa, contributions of itinerant preachers and scholars, the role of 'Uthman dan Fodio, Muhammad Amin El-Kānemi, al-Hājj 'Umar al-Fūti, Abdullah ibn Fūdī, al-Maghīlī and Adam Abdullah al-Ilūri. In addition to this, you will have an opportunity to know Islamic scholarship in West Africa under the colonial rule and after political independence.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THE COURSE

Islam is a religion that deals with both the ephemeral and eternal life of humankind as believed by its adherents. It is an embodiment of ways of individual/ personal life, community life, and the world at large. Islam started to spread from its origin down to every part of the world gradually and in different styles. Wherever it is intended to be established; it moves together with its way of thought; be it cultural, ethical, educational, legal, theological, philosophical, political, medical etc. Such was how it entered into *Bilād al- Sūdān* which is now known as Western Africa. Islam came into West Africa with its call in education, morality, politics, law, theology, philosophy merged together. The pioneer of this call introduced these gradually, beginning from introduction of Islamic faith/ belief down to Islamic rituals, such as *Ṣalat* and *Ṣawm* linked with education. Other aspects of life ensued thereafter.

This work is designed to address the composition of Islamic thought and to enlighten you on the contribution of different scholars in the struggle to establish Islam in all aspect of life within West African community. At the end of the course you will be able to discuss the efforts of indigenous West African scholars, in particular, and that of the foreign Muslim scholars, in general on West African soil to the growth of Islam in all its spheres in the land.

## COURSE AIMS

- i. To introduce you to the history of Islam and Islamic thought in West Africa.
- ii. To acquaint you with the efforts expended by West Africans to the growth and development of Islam & Islamic thought in West Africa.

- iii. To expose you to works of some itinerant scholars / preachers who came into West Africa.
- iv. To study some of the areas in which indigenous scholars contributed to Islamic thought in West African.
- v. To acquaint you with the effects of the rise and fall of power in West African countries on Islamic thought, most especially in the pre and post-colonial era.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Apart from the general aims of this course as specified above, each course unit has its own objectives with which the general aims will eventually be achieved. To get the best of this course you are advised to read through the objectives of each course unit before the beginning of the study session as well as in the course of study intermittently or regularly.

The general objectives stated below are expected from you to be achieved at the end of all the units of the course. Therefore, you should be able to do the following:

- i. Give an account of the beginning of Islam in Medieval Ghana, ancient Mali, and Nigeria.
- ii. Explain the factors that contributed to the growth and development of Islam in West Africa.
- iii. Describe at least five areas where Islam has contributed to general thought in West Africa.
- iv. Outline the distinguishing features of Islamic culture.
- v. Enumerate at least four indigenous Muslim scholars who have engraved their footprints in Islamic thought in West Africa.
- vi. Highlight, at least, three non- indigenous scholars' works in any of the Islamic field in West Africa.
- vii. Discuss the effects of Western colonialism on Islamic thought in West Africa.

## **WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE**

This course contains 14 units which are broken into three modules. Under each module there are numbers of units. You are to read these units and related materials given at the end of this guide, including others that you might lay your hand upon. You will benefit a lot in this course if proper attention is given to the exercises and assignments given at the end of each unit. Submission of each assignment is very important. Performance will be assessed through the exercises, assignments as well as the final examination.

## COURSE MATERIALS

In this course you will need the following materials:

- i. Course Guide
- ii. Study Unit
- iii. Textbooks
- iv. Assessment file
- v. Presentation schedule
- vi. Access to internet Resources

## STUDY UNITS

The course units are broken down as follows:

### **Module 1 Islam in West Africa**

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | The Emergence of Islam in West Africa.  |
| Unit 2 | Composition of Islamic Thought.   |
| Unit 3 | Emergence of Islam in Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai.                          |
| Unit 4 | Emergence of Islam in Nigeria.  |
| Unit 5 | Factors Contributing to The Growth of Islam and Islamic Thought in West Africa. |

### **Module 2 Selected West African Arabic/Islamic Scholars and Their Contributions to Islamic Studies in West Africa**

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Unit 1 | “Uthman Bn Muhammad Fudi and His Contribution to Islamic Thought in West Africa.               |
| Unit 2 | Muhammad Al-Amin Bn Muhammad Nimka Al-Kanemi’s Contribution to Islamic Thought In West Africa. |
| Unit 3 | Al-Hajj ‘Umar Al-Fūti and His Contribution To Islamic Thought In West Africa.                  |
| Unit 4 | Abdullah Bn Fudi and His Contribution to Islamic Thought In West Africa.                       |
| Unit 5 | Ibrahim Niass and His Contribution to Islamic Thought In West Africa.                          |
| Unit 6 | Adam Al-Iluriy and His Contribution To Islamic Thought In West Africa.                         |

### **Module 3 Contributions of Itinerant Preachers/ Scholars to Islamic Scholarship in West Africa Under The Colonial Rule and After Political Independence**

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Unit 1 | Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba And Their Contributions To Islamic Thought In West Africa. |
|--------|--|

- Unit 2 Islamic Scholarship in West Africa Under  
The Colonial Rule
- Unit 3 Islamic Scholarship in West Africa After  
Political Independence
- Unit 4 Revisions.

### **TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMAs)**

Every unit in this course has an assignment that must be marked by the tutor. Assessment will be based on four of them while the best three performances will be used for 30% grading. The marked obtained in the best three will count together with the final mark obtained at the end of the course in computing the overall grading/result.

It is very important that you submit each of your assignment to the tutor latest on the deadline date. Further information on assignment will be found in the assignment file itself.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES (SAEs)**

The self-test questions on the section you have covered assist in evaluating your progress and maximum understanding of the course. This exercise together with the tutor marked assignment (TMAs) helps in achieving the aims of each unit in particular, and objectives of the course in general.

### **REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

Each unit contains a list of references and other resources. Text materials which are provided by the NOUN are very essential in this whilst. There are also some materials written on this course which you can lay your hand on in addition with internet resources. All these materials are meant to deepen your knowledge of the course. Don't just be contented with a single material. This is because you may not be able to find title of each unit in just an ordinary single material. Below is a list of most of the books suggested as references.

- Hunwick, J.O. (1964). 'The Influence of Arabic in West Africa'.

*Transactions of the History Society of Ghana*, vol. ii, Legon, Ghana.

- Hunwick, J.O, (2006). *West Africa, Islam, and the Arab World*. Princeton. Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Hunwick, J.O. (1995). *Arabic Literature of Africa*, Vol.II. The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa, Leiden. The Netherlands E.J. Brill.

- Hunwick, J. O. (1992). *An Introduction to the Tijani Path in Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara*.
- Akintola, I. *Shari'ah in Nigeria: An eschatological desideratum*.
- Trimingham, J.S. (1970). *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London. Oxford University Press.
- Robinson, D. (1985). *The Holy War of Umar Tal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nehemia Levtzion & Randall L. Pouwels (Eds). (2000). *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens OH: Ohio University Press.
- Wise, C. (2001). *The Desert Shore: Literatures of the Sahel*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner.
- Fafunwa, A. B. & Aisiku, J. U. *Education in Africa. A comparative Survey*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Wise, C. (1999). *Yambo Ouologuem: Postcolonial Writer, Islamic Militant*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner.
- Basil Davidson. (1908). *Old Africa Rediscovered*. London: Gollancz.
- Doi, A. I. (1984). *Islam in Nigeria*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corp.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1991). *History of education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1992). *Education in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future*. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publisher Ltd.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1974). *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Clarke P.B (1982): *West Africa and Islam*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.
- Paden J.N (1973). *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Davidson, B. (1995). *Africa in History*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Oloruntimehin, B.O. (1972). *The Segu Tukulor Empire*. Humanities Press, New York.
- Abdurrahman M. & Peter Canham (1978). *The Ink of the Scholar: The Islamic Tradition of Education in Nigeria*. Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Ltd.
- Maigari, M. T (1979). *Al-Shaykh Ibrahim Niass al- Singhali: Hayatuhu wa ara'uhu wa ta 'limuhu*,. Beirut: Dar-al-'Arabiyyah.
- Malise Ruthven (1997). *Islam: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Al –Ilori, A.A (1987). *Nasim as-Saba fi Akhbar al-Islam wal 'Ulama' fi bilad Yoruba*. Cairo: Maktab al-Adab.
- Al –Ilori, A.A (1971). *Al Islam fi Naijiriya wa ash- Shaykh 'Uthman bun Fudi al-Fulaati*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed..)



- Quadri Y.A. (1981). *The Tijaniyyah in Nigeria: A case Study*, An unpublished Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Tijani D.A.A. (1991). *Sufism in the Arabic Poems of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass Al-kawlakhi*. An unpublished Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Ahmed, A. F. (1980). *Arabic Sufi Poetry of Northern Nigeria*. A dissertation in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan.
- "Arabic materials for Ghanaian history", *Research Review* [Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana], ii/1(1966). 83.
- Balogun, S. U (1986). *Shaykh "Uthman Fodio and His Influence in Ghana: Through Precepts and Practices*. A paper presented at the International Seminar on the role of the Sokoto Caliphate. 1804- 1903.
- Fadl K. D. (1985): *Amir al- Mu'minin Muhammad Bello: A Historiographer*. A paper presented in an academic conference organized on exhibition of part of intellectual products of Amir al- Mu'minin Muhammad Bello at Islamic Studies Centre, University of Sokoto.
- Balogun S.U (1998) Islamisation of knowledge in Nigeria: The Role of the Sokoto Dynasty" *Hamdard Islamicus* Vol. xx1 Oct. – Dec. 1998, NO. 4.
- Uchendu, E. (2010). Evidence for Islam in Southeast Nigeria. *The Social Science Journal*, 47, pp.172-188.
- Uchendu, E. (2010). Being Igbo and Muslim: The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria and Conversions to Islam, 1930s to recent times. *The Journal of African History*, 51:63:87.
- Ahmad Rufai S. (2012). A foreign faith in a Christian domain: The historical development of Islam among the Igbos of Southeastern Nigeria, *Journal Hadhari*, 4 (2) (2012) 137 – 154.
- Internet Resources. Such as: <http://www.tijani.org/al-hajj-umar-al-futi-tal.>, retrieved, Sept, 14, 2012. and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Hadj\\_Umar\\_Tall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Hadj_Umar_Tall), retrieved, Sept, 14, 2012.

**ASSESSMENT FILE**

In the assessment file you will find details of the works you must submit to your tutor for marking. The assessment will be based on both the tutor marked assignment and the written examination. Your final marks will be the summation of the marks obtained from both of them. The tutor marked assignment counts for 30% of your total score. Therefore, your TMA(s) must be submitted in line with the stipulated deadline.

**COURSE OVERVIEW AND PRESENTATION SCHEDULE**

Unit	Title	Week	
<b>MODULE 1</b>	<b>ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA</b>		
Unit 1	The emergence of Islam and the spread of Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 1	
Unit 2	Composition of Islamic thought	Week 2	
Unit 3	Unit 3: Emergence of Islam in ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai	Week 3	Assignment 1
Unit 4	Emergence of Islam in Nigeria.	Week 4	
Unit 5	Factors contributing to the growth of Islam and Islamic thought in West Africa and Scholars: Past and Present	Week 5	Assignment 2
<b>MODULE II</b>			
<b>MODULE II</b>	<b>SELECTED WEST AFRICAN ARABIC/ISLAMIC SCHOLARS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISLAMIC STUDIES IN WEST AFRICA.</b>		
Unit 1	‘Uthman bin Muhammad Fudi and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 6	Assignment 3
Unit 2	Muhammad al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka al-Kanemi’s contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 7	
Unit 3	Al-hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 8	Assignment 4

Unit 4	Abdullah bin Fudi and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 9	
Unit 5	Ibrahim Niass and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 10	
Unit 6	Adam Al-Iluriy and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 11	

MODULE III	CONTRIBUTIONS OF ITINERANT PREACHERS AND SCHOLARS & ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP IN WEST AFRICA UNDER THE COLONIAL RULE AND AFTER POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE.		
Unit 1	Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba and their contributions to Islamic thought in West Africa.	Week 12	
Unit 2	Islamic Scholarship in West Africa under the Colonial Rule.	Week 13	
Unit 3	Islamic Scholarship in West Africa after Political Independence.	Week 14	
Unit 4	Revision.	Week 15	Assignment 15

### **FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING**

At the end of the course, you will sit a final examination which will last for three hours. This examination constitutes 70% of the total course grade. All aspects of the course will be examined. Revision of all the units of the course as well as different types of assignments you have passed through will be an added advantage for you in getting good marks at the end of the examination.

### **COURSE MARKING SCHEME**

The table below shows the breakdown of the course assessment marks.

Assignment (The Best Three out of the Four Marked)	30%
Final Examination	70%

Total	100%
-------	------

## **HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE**

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecture. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through especially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study units tell you where to read, and which are text materials or set books. You are provided with exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course. This will usually be either from your set books or from a Reading section .The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor. Remember that tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly, it is your first assignment.
2. Organise a Study Schedule. Design a 'Course Overview' to guide you through the Course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignment relate to the units. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.
3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful to it. The major reason why students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please, let your tutor know before it is too late to help.
4. Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
5. Assemble the study materials. You will need your set books and the unit you are studying at any point in time. As you work through the unit,you will know what sources to consult for further information.

6. Keep in touch with your centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.
7. Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before due dates), keeping mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignment carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than due date.
8. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.
9. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your stuffy so that you keep yourself on schedule.
10. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor- marked assignment form and also the written comments on the ordinary assignments.
11. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objective (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in the Course Guide).

## **TUTORS AND TUTORIALS**

Your tutor is like a guide to you. Kindly utilize his guidance judiciously. The tutor is there for you to mark your assignment, assess your performance and comment on your assignment. Make sure have the name, phone number and address of your tutor at hand for easy contact. Likewise, your tutorials are very important, don't skip any of them. The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you. The advantage you will achieve when you are discussing your difficulties with your fellow students as well as with your tutor can never be over-emphasized. To have maximum benefit from course tutorials try as much as possible to outline question from the unit you have difficulties with before coming to the tutorial. Don't ever hesitate to raise these questions while you are amidst your colleagues and your tutor.

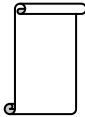
## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In a nutshell, ISL804: Islamic Studies in West Africa gives you an insight into the works of West African scholars in Islamic thought.

You are also given opportunity to know about the spread of Islam in West Africa, the role of ‘Uthman dan Fodio, Muhammad Amin El-Kānemi, al-Hājj ‘Umar al-Fūti, Abdullah ibn Fūdī and his niece, Ibrahim Niass, and Adam Abdullah al-Ilūri as well as contributions of itinerant preachers and scholars, such as; Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba. In addition to this, you will have an advantage to know Islamic scholarship in West Africa under the colonial rule and after political independence.

All features of this course guide have been designed to facilitate your learning in order that you would be able to achieve the aims and objectives of the course. You are sincerely advised to maximise the use of the course guide in order to achieve maximum results in your study.

Wishing you successful study ahead



**MAIN  
COURSE**

<b>CONTENTS</b>		<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Module 1</b>	<b>Islam In West Africa.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Unit 1	The Emergence of Islam in West Africa.....	1
Unit 2	Composition of Islamic thought.....	7
Unit 3	Emergence of Islam in Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai.....	11
Unit 4	Emergence of Islam in Nigeria.....	19
Unit 5	Factors Contributing to The Growth of Islam and Islamic thought in West Africa.....	27
<b>Module 2</b>	<b>Selected West African Arabic/Islamic Scholars and their contributions to islamic Studies in west Africa.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Unit 1	“Uthman bn Muhammad Fudi and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.....	32
Unit 2	Muhammad al-Amin bn Muhammad Nimka al-Kanemi’s contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.....	36
Unit 3	Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.....	40
Unit 4	Abdullah bn Fudi and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.....	44
Unit 5	Ibrahim Niass and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.....	49
Unit 6	Adam Al-Iluriy and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.....	52
<b>Module 3</b>	<b>Contributions of Itinerant Preachers/ Scholars to Islamic Scholarship in West Africa Under the Colonial Rule and After Political Independence.....</b>	<b>71</b>
Unit 1	Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba and their Contributions to Islamic thought in West Africa.....	71
Unit 2	Islamic Scholarship in West Africa under the Colonial Rule.....	80

Unit 3	Islamic Scholarship in West Africa after Political Independence	85
Unit 4	Revisions.....	91



**MODULE 1 ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA**

Unit 1	The Emergence of Islam in West Africa.
Unit 2	Composition of Islamic Thought.
Unit 3	Emergence of Islam in Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai
Unit 4	Emergence of Islam in Nigeria.
Unit 5	Factors Contributing to The Growth of Islam and Islamic Thought in West Africa.

**UNIT 1 THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA****CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
	3.1 Africa and Islam
	3.2 West African Nations and Islam
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

It is not a new knowledge to you that Arabia was the cradle of Islam. It started to spread thereafter throughout the Arabia peninsula and across its boundary and beyond. Africa's soil (present Ethiopia, to be precise) was the first place to shelter the first Muslim emigrants when they were persecuted by the infidels of Makkah. From about 1000 to 1600, four of the Sahelian empires of the Western and Central Sudan developed into relatively long-lived empires: Ghana, Mali, and Songhai in the western Sudan, and Kanem-Bornu in the central Sudan. In this unit, you will learn how Islam got into Africa in brief and West Africa together with its culture, civilization and the spread of its thought.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the initial spread of Islam to Africa
- describe the initial spread of Islam to West Africa
- mention four ancient West African countries where Islam had been firmly established before their downfall
- discuss the vessel through which Islam got into West Africa.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Africa and Islam

There is no way one will wish to talk about Islam in West Africa without mentioning its passing through other African countries/ nations down to West African land. Africa is one of the five continents of the world, others are: Europe, America, Asia and Australia. The word “*Ifriqiya*” has featured prominently in some Muslim history books when those writers were trying to interpret its meaning to the world. Writers like Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Dinar, Al-Bakri, and Al-Masudi, brought divergent interpretations of *ifriqiya*. They also differed in the description of the boundaries of Africa. It was interpreted at times, as the “Queen of Heaven” or that it was named after “Ifriqos bin Qais bin Saifi, the king of Yemen. However, the entire continent of Africa in the present time refers to the Arabic speaking people of the North Africa and the Tuareg. These people can be found in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, etc. Africa also comprises of the black people of the East Africa and the West Africa, the Central Africa including all the inhabitant of South Africa. Everyone of this group of nations is referred to as an African. Every African tribe had its own way in faith and religion before Islam. The people of the book, most importantly, the Jews and the Christians could then be found in Egypt and Abbysinia as well as the idol worshippers before Islam. Most of the practices and ideologies found on African land were not different to that of the Arabia before Islam. And thus, labeled by Islam as *Jahiliyyah*.

For the first time, Islam was brought to Africa by the early Muslims who migrated from Makkah to Abyssinia. This occurred at the beginning of the month of Rajab in the fifth year (615 AD) of the Prophet’s mission. The migration was as a result of persecution faced by the new believers in the mission of Prophet Muhammad (S. A. W). The Prophet was preaching then maintaining oneness of Allah in His worship, Lordship as well as in His names and attributes. This was tantamount to the abolition of polytheism in this regard and annihilation of all vices perpetrated by the then Arab of *Quraysh* in particular and the whole Arabia in general. It is natural that this type of mission would attract serious opposition and both covert and overt enmity from the generality of mankind who have been dwelling in such dastardly acts. Thus, the priestly class of the *Quraysh* began to persecute the Prophet and his early followers. The Prophet, however, advised those early Muslims to migrate to Habashah as a result of the unending persecution they were facing from the hand of the noble class among pagan Makkans. It was on the African soil the first Arab Muslims’ refugees took shelter for security of their life and their new faith. They took to the advice of the Prophet who said: “It would have been better if you were to go to the

land of Habasha (Abyssinia or Ethiopia) where there is a just king, where no person is undone at his place, and it is a land of truth. You would be (staying) there until that time when Allah would help you to get out of what you are now experiences". The first set of Muslim immigrants to Abyssinia in the year 61 A D consisted of 12(twelve) men and 4 (four) women, under the leadership of 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān with his wife Ruqayyah, the daughter of the Prophet. Another set of immigrants consisting eighty-three men and eleven women entered into Africa on the same soil (Habashah). This batch stayed for a long time therein. Their stay for a long period was due to, among others, the justice, honesty, and hospitality found with Negus, the Christian king, regardless of the oppression and brutal demand from the *Quraysh* delegate despatched to him. The historical and legal significance of these two *Hijra* was that the Prophet legalized or permitted the oppressed Muslims to seek refuge with Negus, a Christian King, and described his domain as the land of truth; making it precedence for Muslims should such situation arise.

The discourse between the first batch of Muslim immigrants who tabled their course, mission and call before King Negus when the *Quraysh* delegation appealed to the King that those immigrants should be sent back to Makkah could be seen as the first *da'wah* call on African soil.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Briefly discuss the origin of Islam and its emergence on African soil.

### **3.2 West African Nations and Islam**

West Africa is the area south of the Sahara between the Atlantic coast in the West and Lake Chad with the highlands to the South of it in the present-day Republic of Cameroon. This unit focuses its study on countries in the Sahelian Empires of the Western and Central Sudan like Nigeria, Ghana, Songhai and Mali. The ruling elites of these states converted to or were heavily influenced by Islam, although most of their populations practiced local religions or engaged in syncretism.

Islam spread to Africa from its place of birth which was Saudi Arabia. This spread began during the regime of the second Caliph, 'Umar b. al-Khattāb. Then, it got to North Africa and from North Africa it spread *to Bilad al-Sudan* (meaning country of the blacks which we now call Western Africa). Islam penetrated West Africa ( the Savannah region) around 8<sup>th</sup> (eight) Century C.E. not in the manner it entered into the North Africa. This was the time the writing of West Africa's history began. Historians agreed that Islam spread in West Africa principally through commercial activities, and since the maxim in Islam is the

Prophetic tradition that says: “Preach even if it is one verse” or “Quote on my behalf even if it is one sentence”, the Muslims went out like educationists to preach the words of Islam. Literacy was gradually introduced to the part of the Sudan or the "*Bilad-al-Takrur*" as this part of Africa was called or, the Land of the Black Muslims.

During that period, there were six main trade routes linking North Africa with the ancient Western Sudan. The first trade route started from Morocco running through Mauritania stopping at Senegal. The second one began from Taghaza coming down to Taodeni to the Niger bend. The third trade route started from Tunis linking Tripoli running down to Ghadames and Air, and from there to Katsina and Kano. The fourth trade route started from Fezzan in the North with Chad in the Old Western Sudan. The fifth one began from Egypt to Cyrenaica down to Kanem and Chad-Bornu area. The sixth route began also from Egypt through Darfu to Waday and stopping at Kanem Bornu.

There were other subordinate routes even though they were not as important as those mentioned. From time to time, people from West Africa would travel on foot or on animals like camels, bullock and asses, carrying goods from West Africa to people in North Africa. Among the goods they often brought from West Africa to North Africa were: ivory, gold and unfortunately slaves and gun. The products from North Africa with which the exchange included: guns, matchets and clothing materials. There were settlements where commercial people used to stay conveniently along the trade routes for a while exchanging goods and services and also sharing their socio- religious feelings with one another.

Bit by bit, popular places of rest developed into centres where people from various parts of West Africa mixed with their counterparts from North Africa. An important result was that such centres gradually developed into commercial towns. Besides that, wherever the travelers had a reason(s) to stay many nights, they continued mixing with their counterparts and informally shared religious cultures and traditions. This explains why many non-Muslims from West Africa gradually embraced Islam which they eventually brought back to their people at home, that is, those who were not travellers. It is observed that by travelling from place to place people-imbibed fresh ideas which they also sold to others. Commerce also helped Islam to spread North Africa to the coastal towns of West Africa. That was why ancient empires like Ghana, Mali and Songhai had Muslims in them. It was the travellers who brought Islam that made efforts to convert some traditional religionists in West Africa. It was not only common people who embraced Islam; big men and women also embraced the religion. To one surprise, rulers of empires or heads of families who were initially idol worshippers embraced Islam.

Among early West Africans to adopt Islam were the Dyula, that is, the Wangara, a clan of the Mande ethnic group. The Dyula were well-known for commercial activities. With their trade activities they influenced other people to adopt Islam. Another important ethnic group that accepted Islam thereafter was the Fulani. This is an ethnic group that moved from the edge of the Southern Sahara down into the Inland Delta of the Nile River, and then elements of them moved to other areas, such as Futa Toro and Futa Jallon, and eventually moved eastwards, into northern Nigeria, and into Chad and Dar-Fur. By the ninth century, North African Muslims (Arab/ Berber) began to cross the Sahara for trade and for obtaining slaves; and no doubt they had influence of conversion on the rulers they contacted.

A good example among these rulers was the King of Takrur (in the Senegal River area) known as War Jibin son of Rabis. He was the very first ruler in the Western Sudan to become a Muslim. War Jibin son of Rabis, was the first ruler of Takrur, and *Shari'ah* system was enforced during his period. This gave a uniform Muslim Law to the people of that region. From then onward, the entire West Africa Region was known to the Muslim historians as the "*Bilad al-Sudan*" that is, the land of the Blacks. Another heads of state who embraced Islam was the ruler of Zuwa dynasty in Gao, the ruler of Kanem as well as the ruler of Kawkaw. All of these conversions were in the eleventh century. Each ruler had a number of his subjects who accepted Islam along with him. After accepting Islam, royal mosques were built where congregational prayers were said. During the early days of Islam in West Africa whenever a ruler embraced Islam, a large number of his subjects would also embrace Islam not because they were convinced that Islam was good but because their ruler had embraced it. Living an Islamic guided live became the thought of those ages. Though, the downfall of those empires later came to past; the Islamic culture still lives till today either in one way or the other.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Describe how Islam entered into Western Africa region and outline the six major routes through which the North Africa and the West Africa trade links were facilitated.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Islam came into West Africa initially through the North African traders. With their activities, Islam, from its cradle, continued to spread in West Africa's nations. the early presence of Islam in West Africa was linked to trade and commerce with North Africa While the presence of Islam in West Africa dates back to eighth century, the spread of the faith in

regions that are now the modern states of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Nigeria, was in actuality, a gradual and complex process. Several major trade routes connected Africa below the Sahara with the Mediterranean Middle East, such as Sijilmasa to Awdaghust and Ghadames to Gao. The three great medieval empires of Ghana, Mali, and the Songhai developed as products of the link between the Northern and Western African traders.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed in brief the composition of African continent, how Islam came into Africa. We have also discussed the West Africa sub- region together with the emergence of Islam therein. The main routes through which the Northern African Muslim traders and the Western African people contacted each other is also analysed in this unit. Finally, the constituents of Islamic thought and its emergence in West Africa were duly analysed.

## 6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give an account of the composition of Africa continent and how Islam got into Africa.
2. Discuss the boundary of West Africa and how Islam got into West Africa.
3. Explain the components of Islamic thought.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Hunwick, J.O. (2006). *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Trimingham, J.S. (1970). *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Doi. I. A. (1984). *Islam in Nigeria*,. Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Limited.
- Mallam Muhammed Belly (1982). *The African Landmarks Islam*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- Muhammad Rida (1975). *Muhammadu Rasulu Llahi*, Beirut: Dar al-maktabah al- ‘Ilmiyyah.
- Doi. I. A. (1979). *Islam in West Africa*  
<http://spice.stanford.edu>

## **UNIT 2      COMPOSITION OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Looking at the phrase “Islamic thought” with a critical lense, one would see that it is an ideology clamoring for the way deep thinking should be done towards Islamisation of the whole ways of life. That is, thinking Islamic, rejuvenating the spirit of Islam in all what human beings do. In this unit, we shall look into what Islamic thought really encompasses.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss why thinking should be fashioned in line with Islamic guide
- give an account of the components of Islamic thought
- explain the beginning of and the reason for Islamic thought in West Africa.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Islamic thought encompasses the philosophies and doctrines of Islam as well as the development and transmission of religious knowledge and the trends it follows. It also covers the efforts of schools and movements that have contributed to the production of this knowledge. Discussion on Islamic thought comprises argument on Islamic culture, development of the Islamic intellectual tradition using the two foundation texts, the Qur’an and Hadith. This also includes legal thought, theological thought, mystical thought, Islamic Art, Islamic civilization, philosophical thought, political thought, economical thought, among other aspects of life. The Islamic ideology on life after death is not an exemption in this regard. Muslim thought of different ages with regard to every aspect of life is also discussed under this heading.

In other words, all what is produced by Muslims thought since the mission of the Messenger of Allah, (peace be upon him), till today,

started in the general cosmic knowledge related to the Almighty God, the world and humankind. It is also the product of Muslims' discretionary ideas under Islamic guidance in Philosophy, Islamic Mysticism, Theology, Jurisprudence and its principles, and other humanities studies. In this regard, every human thought as a product of independent thinking, which does not stem from the established unequivocal Islamic concepts derived from both the Quran and the Sunnah cannot be described as Islamic thought. We can also say that Islamic thought is one of the modern concepts that are commonly used in the contemporary Arabic and Islamic literature. It is the group of subjects that address the human mind and intellect, which propel him to use meditation, consideration, thinking, reasoning and research, as tools in unraveling issues in the sciences of the *Shari'ah*, matters of faith, values, social/cultural trends, experimental scientific issues, among others. All of these done based on Islamic point of view as established in the Quran and the Sunnah. Islamic thought includes everything produced by the Islamic mind in all fields and on all problems and issues associated with existence and nature, relationships and life but from the Islamic point of view or subject to the Islamic guides laid down by the *Shari'ah*.

The emergence of Islamic thought in West Africa is as old as the emergence of Islam in West Africa while the spread of Islamic thought in West Africa is as old as the spread of Islam in West Africa. This is based on the fact that Islam goes side by side with all what it brings; knowledge, ideology, pedagogy, law, civilization etc. The history of Islam in West Africa can be explained in three stages, containment, mixing, and reform. In the first stage, African kings contained Muslims segregated from Muslim communities. In the second stage, African rulers blended Islam with local traditions as the population selectively appropriated Islamic practices, and finally in the third stage, African Muslims pressed for reforms in an effort to rid their societies of mixed practices and implement *Shari'ah*. This three-phase framework helps shed light on the historical development of the medieval empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai and the 19th century Jihads that led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in Hausaland and the Umarian state in Senegambia.

The entire West Africa region, known to the Muslim historians as the "*Bilad alSudan*" (land of the blacks), had traces of *Shari'ah* Law in the records or documents of the old empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Kanem Bornu. To the indigenous Muslims, *Shari'ah* is a fundamental law, but from the point of view of the British administrators and lawyers, *Shari'ah* is regarded as a native law and custom. This can be supported with the submission given by J.N.D. Anderson when he openly admitted in the colonial research publications No. 16, that: "...



that attitude of indigenous Muslims to the basis on which Islamic Law is applied differ considerably from that of British lawyers ... Where the later enforce it, or permit its enforcement, merely as native law and custom, the former will regard it as binding on their conscience by divine command.”

Findings of his survey of the application of Islamic Law in Africa reveals that Islamic law is more extensively followed and enforced in northern Nigeria than anywhere else in the world outside Arabia. This is one of the areas where West African scholars contributed immensely to Islamic thought in the sub-region.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Briefly discuss the constituents of Islamic thought West Africa.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Muslim thinkers always tailor their course of day- to- day activities to fit Islamic guide in the human society where ungodly behavior, ideology and thinking manifest in all aspects of life. This is based on the fact that Islam is believed to have come, as the last monotheistic faith to annihilate any ungodly act, ideas, behaviour and thinking.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit we have looked into the components of Islamic thought both in the ancient time and at this present time. We have also looked at the reasons for Islamic thought, its emergence and spread in West Africa.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss the reason why thinking should be fashioned in line with Islamic guides.
2. Explain the beginning of and the grounds for Islamic thought in West Africa
3. Give an account of the components of Islamic thought.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Arkoun, Muhammad (2005). *Ayna Huwa al-Fikr al-Islami al- Mu'asir*. Beirut: Saqi Books.

Internet resources, retrieved on Sept, 20, 2012, from <http://ennmirate.arabblogs.com/maqalats/archive/2006/2/19701.html>.

Internet resources, retrieved on Sept, 20, 2012, from <http://www.al-islam.com>.

## **UNIT 3 THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAM IN ANCIENT GHANA, MALI AND SONGHAI**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Islam in Ghana
  - 3.2 Islam in Mali
  - 3.3 Islam in Songhai
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Tracing the history of Islam in Western Sudan, one will not but have recourse to places where Empires had reigned and perished in the region. Activities of those that brought the religion into the land and that of those that embraced it should also be looked into. In this unit, you will be acquainted with the origin of Islam in Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Activities of those that brought Islam into the land and the contributions of their rulers will also be examined.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the emergence of Islam in Medieval Ghana and Mali
- discuss the impact of Islamic thought in Ghana and in Mali
- mention some Malian rulers that had contributed to the growth of Islam and its thought in Ghana and in Mali
- mention at least three places where the impact of Islam is being felt in Mali till today
- talk on Songhai Empire, contribution of its rulers to Islam and its impact on Islamic thought in West Africa.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Islam in Ghana**

The earliest of West African empires was the Ghana Empire, which was dominated by the Soninke, a Mande-speaking people. In other words, it was the oldest West African kingdom. Ancient Ghana was located

within the present-day borders of Mauritania, Mali, and Senegal. Medieval Ghana literally sat on a gold mine. The land's abundant resources allowed Ghana's rulers to engage in years of prosperous trading. Strategic governing coupled with great location led to the rapid emergence of a very wealthy empire. Islam initially got to Ghana through the activities of traders and 'Ulama'. The 'Ulama' acted as preachers and mendicants. They also acted as *alfas* (Islamic cleric). Islam continued to spread by peaceful means with the support and patronage of the Soninke people. The people who came there to settle very early were probably Berbers from North Africa. When they got to ancient Ghana they intermarried with the indigenes of the area. Gradually they were able to dominate the people and govern them.

After some time another group of people migrated to the area and this people were called the Soninke. Al- Bakri, the Muslim geographer, gives us an early account of the ancient Soninke Empire of Ghana. *His Kitab fi Masalik wa al-Mamalik* (The Book of Roads and Kingdoms) describes Ghana of 1068 as highly advanced. They struggled hard to appoint one of them as the ruler of the area and the person appointed was called Ghana. Under their King called Ghana, the Soninke expanded their boundary as far as River Niger on the East, the Atlantic Ocean on the West and the Sahara on the North. The name Ghana came to be used for the empire ruled by

Soninke, its capital which was a flourishing centre for trade was called Awkar. Economically, Ghana was a prosperous country. Among the articles, which Ghana imported to their country were salt, copper, dried fruits like dates and clothing materials. Her principal exports were gold and slaves. The capital of Ghana - Awkar was divided into two: there was the pagan section and there was the Muslim section. The pagan section was also called the royal section or *al-Ghabah*. *Al-Ghābah* is an Arabic word meaning "forest". The pagan section was called *al-Ghabah* probably because of its sacred groves. In the Muslim section, there were twelve mosques including the *Jum'ah* mosque and several Islamic scholars. Each mosque had an *Imam*, a *Mu'adhdhin* and professional Qur'anic reciters. Arabic which was widely spoken was the vehicle for literacy works. At about the same time (1040 AD) Ghana had a large Muslim community exerting extensive influence. This can be testified to in the words of al-Bakri:

The City of Ghana consists of two towns situated on a plain. One of these towns is inhabited by Muslims. It is large and possesses a dozen mosques, one being for the Friday Prayer and each having Imams, Muezzins and salaried reciters of the Koran. There are juriconsults and scholars.... The king has a palace with conical huts (around), surrounded by a fence like a wall. In the king's town, not far from the royal court is

a mosque for the use of Muslims who visit the king on mission... The interpreters of the king are Muslims, as are his treasurers and the majority of his ministers.

When greeting the King, the pagans often prostrated full length on the floor and put dust on their heads, Muslims showed their own respect to the King by clapping their hands and not by prostrating because prostration in Islam is meant for Allah alone. Muslims enjoyed another advantage: they shared with the King the exclusive right to put on tailored clothes. Due to the effort of Soninke people, the coastal people and the people of Macina embraced Islam. Soninke people did more: they mixed freely with the industrious peoples of Mande and Dyula who after becoming Muslims carried the religion to the edge of equatorial forest. As a result of the commercial cum religious activities, the King of Jenne and all his households accepted Islam towards the end of 12th century. As soon as Islam got to Jenne, Jenne rapidly became the greatest Muslim metropolis in the Western Sudan. The King employed Muslim interpreters and most of his ministers and treasurers were also Muslims.

Muslim merchant-scholars played important roles in non-Muslim kingdoms as advisors and scribes in Ghana. They had the crucial skill of writing script, which helped in the administration of kingdoms. Many Muslim were also religious specialists whose amulets were prized by non-Muslims. The Muslim ministers were learned enough to record events in Arabic and correspondence, on behalf of the king, with other rulers. Also, as Muslims, they belonged to the larger body polity of the Islamic world and this would make it possible to establish international relations. With all these, Islamic thought in most of its spheres prospered in ancient Ghana. The Empire expanded throughout West Africa from the 8th century until 1076, when it was conquered by the Almoravids.

The end of Ghana Empire came at the hands of *Al- Murabitun* (called Almoravids by the European authors) in the year 1076 CE as earlier mentioned. The *Murabitun* movement had begun among the militant Muslim tribes of the Berbers of the Sinhaja.

*Al-Murabitun* is an Arabic word taken from *ribat* which means a Sufi monastery. Thus *Al- Murabitun* means the the *ribat* dwellers.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

What are the impacts of Islam on ancient Ghana Empire?

### 3.2 Islam in Mali

Some historians assert that the core of Mali Empire was Mande state of Kangaba. Kangaba was near modern Bamako on the upper Niger. Their King was Sunyata-Marijata. He conquered Ghana before moving the capital to the new city of Niamey. It was during his time Mali Empire extended to Kastina and Zaria in the Northern Nigeria and down to the Atlantic Coast. The empire developed out of the unification of several Mande communities. The first of Mali Kings to embrace Islam was Barmandana. He was converted to Islam after a Muslim Islamic scholar had performed what was to be a wonderful feat. Before the Islamic scholar came, Mali had suffered a prolonged drought. When the Islamic scholar came round and saw the plight of the people of Mali; he agreed to pray for the rain to fall. Surprisingly though, the man prayed and rain fell. So Barmandana was convinced that he should embrace the religion of the Alfa. So he became a Muslim and very many other people in his empire became Muslims.

Jenne was a town in Mali that flourished not only as a commercial town but also as a citadel of Islamic education. One notable example was the Great Mosque of Jenne, which was built in the 12th or 13th century. The Great Mosque of Jenne remains the largest earthen building in the world. Malian did not leave their traditional religious practices entirely when they entered into Islam. Muslims of Mali used to prostrate themselves on the floor and put dust on their heads when greeting their rulers; though this goes against the Islamic culture. They also had the privilege of putting on tailored dresses. They were also allowed to make special eating arrangements. They also forwent intoxicating liquor, eating out of the animal slaughtered for idols and they were allowed to marry according to Islamic rites. Likewise, they were also given the privilege to collect and distribute *Zakat* during the month of Ramadan.

Mali was one of the three popular West African empires which controlled trans-Saharan trades, elements of which were gold, salt, slaves, and other precious commodities in the past ages. It had neither rigid geopolitical boundaries nor rigid ethnic identities. The Mali Empire was later formed on the upper Niger River, and reached the height of power in the 14th century. Under the Mali Empire, the ancient cities of Djenné and Timbuktu were centers of both trade and Islamic learning. By the 16th century there were several centers of trade and Islamic learning in the Niger

Bend region, most notably the popular Timbuktu. The city's multicultural population, regional trade, and Islamic scholarship fostered a cosmopolitan environment. In 1325, the city's population was around 10,000. At its apex, in the 16th century, the population is estimated to

have been between 30,000 and 50,000. Timbuktu attracted scholars from the Muslim world. It established itself as a centre of commercial interchange between tropical Africa and Saharan and Mediterranean Africa during the fourteenth century thereby attracting men of religion as well as business men. The city was early settled by members of the Masüfa tribe of the Sanhaja confederation after the dissolution of the Almoravid movement in sub-Saharan Africa. They brought with them the Maliki juristic tradition. When Ibn Battuta visited Timbuktu in 1352 he noted the predominance of the Masüfa, but had nothing to say about Islamic learning there. In a later period, a Masüfa clan - the Aqit-migrated to Timbuktu from Masina, and they brought with them a deep tradition of learning, especially in the field of *fiqh*. Muhammad Aqit's descendants intermarried with another Berber, possibly Sanhaja family, and thus, provided the *qadis* of Timbuktu over the next century and a half; though, Saharan peoples were not the sole source of Islamic knowledge in Timbuktu at that period. The most celebrated member of the Aqit clan, Ahmad Baba (1556-1627) had as his principal *shaykh* a Juula scholar from Jenne, Muhammad Baghayogho. All these intellectual and political activities are the influence of Islamic thought brought into the land by those Muslim scholars.

The Mali Empire (1215-1450) rose out of the region's feuding kingdoms. At its height, the empire of Mali composed most of modern Mali, Senegal, parts of Mauritania and Guinea. It was a multi-ethnic state with various religious and cultural groups. Muslims played a prominent role in the court as counselors and advisors.

While the empire's founder, Sunyata-Marijata, was not himself a Muslim, about 1300 Mali kings became Muslim. The most famous of them was Mansa Musa (1307-32).

He made Islam the state religion and in 1324 went on pilgrimage from Mali to Mecca.

Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca showed up in European records because of his display of wealth and lavish spending. Apparently, his spending devalued the price of gold in Egypt for several years. During the 13th century, Mansa Musa conquered the Kingdom of Gao. The popular 14th century traveller, Ibn Battuta, visited Mali shortly after Mansa Musa's death. Two centuries later, the kingdom of Gao rose again as the Songhai Empire. Sonni Ali captured much of the Empire of Mali. The empire later declined as a result of internal intrigue, ultimately supplanted by the Songhai Empire.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the emergence of Islam and its impact in Mali Empire.

### 3.3 ISLAM IN SONGHAI

The discussion on Ghana/ Mali Empires will not be complete without mention of the Songhai Empire. The Songhai Empire was the largest and last of the three major pre-colonial empires to emerge in West Africa. Gao, which was founded around 800 A.D was made its capital in the 11<sup>th</sup> (eleventh) century. Gao was a small Niger River trading center. It was also home to the famous Goa Mosque and the place where Askiya Muhammad was buried. As the city and region grew in importance, the Malian Empire incorporated both as it expanded across the West African savanna.

Islam began to spread in Songhai some time in the 11th century when the ruling Za or Dia dynasty first accepted it. It was a prosperous region because of its booming trade with Gao, its capital. The Songhai had long been a major power in West Africa subject to the Mali Empire's rule by the 13th century and later freed itself by the end of the 14th century when the dynasty was renamed Sunni. The frontier of Songhai now expanded and in the 15th century, under the leadership of Sunni 'Ali, who ruled between 1464 and 1492, the most important towns of the Western Sudan, came under the Songhay Empire. It was however, when Mali's power began to deteriorate in its central part that Songhai began to use that opportunity, during the reign of Sunni Ali (d. 1492), to expand its territory thereby conquering Mena in 1465 and later captured Timbuktu. Songhai expanded, from Gao on the Niger River, in all directions until it stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to what is now Northwest Nigeria and western Niger. The cities of Timbuktu and Djenne were the other major cultural and commercial centers of the Empire. The Songhai's major trading partners were the Merenid dynasty in the Maghrib (north-west Africa) and the Mamluks in Egypt.

Sunni 'Ali was known for syncretism on which Muslim elites and scholars in Timbuktu challenged him. The famous family of Agit, of the Berber scholars, held the post of the Chief Justice. They were known for their fearless opposition to the rulers and they also challenged him. In his lifetime, based on this, he took scholars of Timbuktu as his enemies. It was after his demise that Islamic activities and respect for scholars were accorded great honour. His successor, Sunni Bar, was asked by Muhammad Ture, a military commander, to come and make an open confession of his faith in Islam. His reluctance to make the public confession made him to be ousted by the military commander who in turn established a new dynasty in his own name, called the Askiya



dynasty. Sunni 'Ali may be compared with Sundiata of Mali, and Askiya Muhammad Toure with Mansa Musa, a champion of the cause of Islam. On Askiya's coming to power, he established Islamic law and arranged a large number of Muslims to be trained as judges. He gave his munificent patronage to the scholars and gave them large pieces of land as gifts. He became a great friend of the famous scholar in West Africa, Muhammad Al-Maghilli. It was because of his patronage that eminent Muslim scholars were attracted to Timbuktu, which became a great seat of learning in the 16th century. Timbuktu has the credit of establishing the first Muslim University, called Sankore University, in West Africa. The University's name is commemorated till today in Ibadan University where a road to staff residential Quarters has been named after it "Sankore Way". Under Askiya Muhammad (1493-1529), the Songhai's borders extended far beyond any previous West African empire while its state patronized Islamic institutions sponsored public buildings, mosques and libraries. The Songhai Empire ended when Morocco conquered the state in 1591. The fall of the Songhai marked the decline of big empires in West Africa.

While the presence of Islam in West Africa dates back to eighth century, the spread of Islam in regions that are now modern states of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Nigeria, was a gradual and complex process.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the emergence of Islam and its impact in Songhai Empire.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The credit of the beginning of Islamic faith in Ghana, Mali and in Songhai was given to those itinerant North African traders who were Muslims. They carried along their commercial activities with their faith. West Africans who were interested in their religion embraced it without being forced on them. This is contrary to what the Orientalists wrote on Islam that it came into West Africa with sword on the right hand and the Quran on the left hand.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, we have treated the emergence of Islam in medieval Mali and Ghana and gave an insight into Songhai Empire. We have also discussed how Islam entered into these two ancient empires through the contributions of some scholars and rulers in such places as Timbuktu and Gao. Ruler of these regions contributed immensely to the growth and spread of Islam in their territory until these Empires collapsed.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the beginning of Islam in Ghana and Mali.
2. Describe the impact of Islamic thought in Ghana and in Mali.
3. Outline some West African rulers that contributed to the growth of Islam and its thought in Ghana and in Mali.
4. Explain how Songhai Empire was founded and mention two persons who were among its important rulers with their contribution to Islam in the area.
5. Mention three places where Islamic impact is being felt in Mali till today.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Hunwick, J.O. (2006). *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Trimingham, J.S. (1970). *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Doi. I. A. (1984). *Islam in Nigeria*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Limited.
- Mallam Muhammed Belly. (1982). *The African Landmarks Islam*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- Muhammad Rida (1975). *Muhammadu Rasulu Llahi*. Beirut: Dar al-maktabah al- 'Ilmiyyah.
- Doi. I. A. (2006). *Islam in West Africa*.  
<http://spice.stanford.edu>

## **UNIT 4 EMERGENCE OF ISLAM IN NIGERIA.**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Islam in Northern Nigeria
  - 3.2 Islam in Southern Nigeria
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Before the colonialists landed on Nigerian soil, Islam had been firmly established in some part of Nigeria. In this unit, you will learn how Islam got into Nigeria together with its culture and civilization. You will also learn about the spread of Islamic thought in the country.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the initial spread of Islam to Nigeria.
- Describe the initial spread of Islam to Northern Nigeria.
- Discuss the initial spread of Islam to South Western Nigeria.
- Describe the initial spread of Islam to Southeastern Nigeria
- Highlight four ancient towns and cities where Islam had firmly been established before the arrival of colonial masters.
- Discuss the vessel through which Islam got into Nigeria.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Islam in Northern Nigeria**

The beginning of Islam in Nigeria could be traced back to the time it was known in the Northern part of the country. Scholars who were also traders from North Africa made their ways across the trade routes of the Sahara desert, bringing with them both Islamic culture and learning. The part of Nigeria in which Islam had its earliest contact was the extreme north-east, in the Kanem-Borno Empire which flourished as early as the thirteenth century A.D. Many itinerant scholars had come to KanemBorno Empire as well as other Hausa towns in the north to propagate Islam and Islamic knowledge. Islam was first documented in

Nigeria in the 9th century. Islam had its earlier roots in the extreme north-eastern part of Nigeria. That is, the Kanem- Borno empire. The empire had its first Muslim ruler (Umme) towards the end of the eleventh century. The credit of this early embrace of Islam could be given to the Umayyad refugees who entered into Kanem from Damascus. The ruler of Kanem, Umme Jilmi, who ruled between 1085 and 1097 embraced Islam at the hand of a great Islamic scholar, Hamed Muhammad Mani. The learning of Arabic and Islam continued to flourish in this empire even after the demise of the ruler. His son, Dunama I (1097- 1150) later took after him as far as Islamic learning was concerned and eventually went on pilgrimage to Makkah. At the time of Dunama II (1221- 1259) contacts were made with Tunisia and Maghrib. These were done through correspondence. As a result of the contact, Kanem embassy was established in Tunisia in 1257. The relationship between the Kanem and the Muslims in North Africa was so cordial to an extent that a college and hostel was built for Kanem students in Cairo (Madrasah al-Rashid). So far Arabic is considered as the language through which Islamic scripture was revealed, Arabic learning was encouraged at this early period to an extent that correspondence were exchanged between the Kanem people and some Arab nations. Kanem also established further diplomatic relations with different Muslim countries by the middle of the thirteenth century. Examples of such countries are: the Hafsid state of Tunis and Tuat (in the Sahara of Algeria). Scholars were also invited from Mali to boost the Islamic learning. Kanem became a centre of Islamic learning towards the end of the thirteenth century. It was when the capital of the Kanem-Borno was moved down to Borno at the end of the fourteenth century that the consolidation of Islamic thought and influence in north-eastern Nigeria was further strengthened. There were diplomatic relations between the Kanem and some Muslim countries such as Tunisia and Algeria of then.

All these activities gave birth to many Kanem Arabic scholars.

Religious archives showed that Islam had been adopted as the religion of the majority of the leading figures in the Bornu Empire during the reign of Mai (king) Idris Alooma (1571–1603), although a large part of that country still adhered to traditional religions. He furthered the cause of Islam in the country by introducing Islamic courts, establishing mosques, and setting up a hostel in Mecca, the Islamic pilgrimage destination, for Kanuris. When Mai Idris Alooma came into power, Borno was really islamised. Islamic schools were established. These schools were of the same pattern with that of other Muslim countries. The power of Borno faded after the sixteenth century but remained until the nineteenth century the one area in Nigeria that can be duly described as a Muslim state with an Islamic dynasty and tradition.

The spread of Islam to other part of northern Nigeria was much slower and much more uneven. In Hausa land, the penetration of Islam into the land neither depended on conquest nor the conversion of its rulers. It lied on the shoulder of traders (Wangarawa traders) and scholars who came into the area in the early fourteenth century. Kano had its first Muslim ruler in the fourteenth century who was succeeded by six non-Muslims. Islam entered into Kano during the time of Ali Yaji who ruled from 1349 to 1385. A mosque was built at that time while an Imam, a *Muazzin* as well as a *Qadi* were appointed in the mosque. At the time of Yaqub (1452-63) some Fulani scholars migrated to Kano. There they taught Islamic theology and jurisprudence with the books they brought with them. During the reign of Muhammad Rumfa Muslim scholars from Timbuktu came into Kano to teach and disseminate the religion of Islam. Muhammad Rumfa consulted a famous Muslim scholar and theologian, Al –Maghīlī, (a unit shall be dedicated to his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa in the subsequent module) who visited Kano in the fifteenth century to write a book on Islamic government (The Obligation of Princess).

Islamic thought also gained ground in Katsina at that period. Scholars from Sankore University in Timbuktu brought with them books on Islamic divinity and etymology into Katsina. With all these academic activities, Katsina was able to produce Islamic scholars of high standard. Among these native scholars were: Muhammad Dan Masina (d. 1667) and Muhammad Dan Marina (d. 1655). There was an intellectual harmony among native scholars at that period while the state of learning was much higher. One of the factors that facilitated the scholarship activities and intellectual glory was the contact the scholars used to make with Timbuktu which was an excellent citadel of intellectual activities done with Arabic language at that time. Islamic education which was done in Arabic language gave cultural prestige to Islam at that age.

Arabic and Islamic learning was spreading from town to town in northern community; native scholars were increasing till the time of Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi (d.1817), one of the most important activities of ‘Uthman bn Fudi was the education of female child. He campaigned for and worked towards it. He gave women opportunity to participate in education. His daughter Asmaa’ an Arabic and Islamic scholar was an epitome of a woman Islamic scholar. Shaykh ‘Uthman wrote a book (*Ihya’ Sunnah wa ikhmadil bid’ah*) wherein he enjoyed women to search for knowledge just as their male counterpart. The high standard of Arabic and Islamic education continued until colonialists entered into Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Islamic thought, which was highly embedded in the Sokoto leaders, gave the Empire an indelible hallmark till the present time.

### 3.2 Islam in Southern Nigeria

As far as the southern Nigeria is concerned, the case is divided into two: Emergence of Islam in the Southwest (predominantly Yoruba) and emergence of Islam in the Southeast/Southsouth. In the case of the South-West, the actual date of introduction of Islam to South Western Nigeria is unknown. However, Balogun (1998) has confirmed that Islam made headway into the land for the first time around the second half of the eleventh century by the *Murabitun* mistakenly taken by some historians as Hausas. One can also infer from the nomenclature *Imale* given to Islam in the south-western Nigeria that the religion came from Mali and spread by the *Murabitun* whom they believed to be Malians. This confirms the submission of AlAluri (1978) that Islam made its appearance in Yorubaland in the 13<sup>th</sup> century during the tenure of Mansa Musa of Mali. Islam entered into different towns and cities in Yorubaland in different times. Ilorin, though, classified as Northern part, has a sizeable amount of its inhabitants as Yoruba indigenes. Islam had reached there before its spread across other Yoruba towns. Hardly could any Arabic/Islamic scholar in Yorubaland count his teacher without having one of them from Ilorin.

Islamic thought moves together with the preaching of Islam carried out by the scholars in terms of education, culture, politics, commerce, morality etc. Islamic scholars entered into Yorubaland from the North through Ilorin. Scholars like Ahmed

Qifu and ‘Uthman bn Abu Bakr came to Ibadan within the first few years of the foundation of Ibadan town during the reigns of Oluyedun and Basorun Oluyole respectively. Their impacts were greatly fetched in the reformation of the culture met on ground. Contribution of Shaykh Abu Bakr bn al-Qasim who originated from Ibadan, in the twin fields of Arabic and Islamic Studies cannot be over- emphasized. He started a large Arabic/Islamic school where Arabic grammar, Islamic Theology, Quranic studies and the Prophetic traditions were taught. Students from different parts of the country drank from his ocean of knowledge and thus spread over the country to disseminate Islam. Many Arabic/Islamic schools were established in the South West by different scholars in different towns and cities different in structure and composition to what was widely known of Arabic school in local and traditional method. Before the independence, *Markazu Ta’leem al-‘Arabi al-Islami* was established in Abeokuta (it was later moved to Agege, Lagos), *Al-Madrasah al Kharashiyyah* was also established as well as *Al- Ma’had Al –Arabiyy* both in Ibadan. Their likes are also in Ede, Iwo, Osogbo and Abeokuta. Almost all of these Arabic schools, if not all, are not integrated with Western education at that period. Fortunately, there has been a recognizable integration with Western education, to some extent,

in some of them at present time. These schools aimed at training Muslim children in both Arabic and Islamic Studies with a view to producing Arabic teachers and scholars who are well furnished with the Islamic spirit and thought in every sphere of life.

Furthermore, Islamic thought had led to the establishment of *Shari'ah* in Yorubaland at a time in history before the arrival of the colonialists. Oba Abibu Olagunju, the first Muslim monarch of Ede, gave *Shari'ah* official recognition in the second half of the nineteenth century. Oba Momodu Lamuye in Iwo also established the *Shari'ah* during his reign. Likewise, Oba Aliyu Oyewole (d. 1906) of Ikirun opened a *Shari'ah* court in his own jurisdiction. All these show that the spirit of Islamic thought had been celebrated in the past before it was systematically crushed down by the British imperialists.

Moreover, Southeastern Nigeria is predominantly inhabited by Igbo tribe who are found in several major towns such as Umuahia, Nsukka, Owerri, Aba, Enugu, Onitsha, Abakaliki, Ehele, Arochukwu, Afam, Obigbo, Ndoni, Ossomari, Nri, Okigwe, Akri Ogidi among others. Islam came to Igboland and Nsukka area in particular around the eighteenth century. That was before the arrival of the Europeans or Christian missionaries. Although the Hausa-Fulani and Nupe Muslims had commercial dealings or trade contacts with the Igbos of Nsukka and its environs much earlier than the nineteenth century, it was the Fulani Jihad of the nineteenth century that gave stronger impetus to the spread of Islam in the area. Islam had penetrated this part of Nigeria through the trade routes which have increased the volume of dealings and interactions between the people of Nsukka and other people to the North, East and West. Nsukka, a Division where Islamic influence in Igboland began is 'the fourth largest and northernmost administrative division of former Eastern Nigeria and Igboland, and the last area of Igboland to be effectively conquered and occupied by the British.

Islam emerged as yet a new religion in the Igbo horizon when the village of Amufie in Enugu Ezike in the old Nsukka Division in northern Igboland accepted a Muslim of Nupe origin known as Ibrahim Aduku. Aduku was regarded as the first Muslim from Amufie in Enugu Ezike based on the fact that he had naturalized himself as Igbo citizen in 1918 and that was quite before Garba Oheme's conversion to Islam which took place in 1937. Islam enjoyed a remarkable progress among the Igbos in 1940s through their contact with some Northern Muslims especially at Afikpo around which they had a cattle trade route running from Abakaliki to Umuahia which passed by the village-group. Few of these Northern Muslims lived at Afikpo, many others were itinerant cattle traders engaging in trading activities with the indigenous people of the area. These commercial activities had significant contributions in the spread of Islam and its culture among the indigenous people. From one

time to another and one place to another, and with the growing number of indigenous converts to Islam, hostility towards Muslims continues to exercise itself. The situation remained unchanged in some places till today.

However, the growth and spread of Islam in the region was facilitated by efforts of other people: Shaykh Ibrahim Nwagui efforts in establishing Islamic centre and his preaching activities around the Igboland led to conversion of many Igbo indigenes to Islam. The success was greatly felt more in the old Nsukka Division than in other parts of Igboland. Islamic cultural influences penetrated the entire Division through the residents of the neighbouring areas of Igboland who are non-Igbos. This was significantly felt especially after the Igala conquest of Nsukka and the establishment of Igala occupational personnels in key village positions which put some of them in advantageous place to propel the spread of Islam among the people. The positive impact of Nupe Islamic scholars, as well as intermarriages between Nupes, Igalas, Igbos and Hausa-Fulanis living in the area at that period in the spread of Islam cannot be underestimated. In the same vein, some Igbo leaders who had embraced Islam through the preaching activities of Shaykh Ibrahim influenced their subjects in this time. Among them are: Okpoto-Igala, Chief of Ankpa, Alhaji Tijani Akubuo of Orlu, Alhaji Isa of Amuze, Alhaji Okpaloko of Owerri, Musa Udaemba Eme of Aberiba, Umar Usu of Ndibe (Afikpo) and Ibrahim Chukwu Idam. The external support given to Islamic propagation in the Southeast should also be factored together with other contributors. A good example of this is the strong financial support from the Saudi Arabian government in building large Islamic centre comprising a large mosque, a primary and Qur'anic school, a library, and a small hospital. Another example of the spread of Islamic thought, culture and education in the Southeast can be found at Efikpo, a town in Enugu State, which is enjoying an integrated Arabic and Islamic school till the present time. Students of these school offer both Arabic and Islamic subjects together with Science, Commercial and Arts subjects. Products of this school are usually well versed in both spoken Arabic and English just like their counterparts in northern modern Arabic Schools and those in the Southwest.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the emergence of Islam and its impact in Mali Empire.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Islam has been known in Nigeria since the 9<sup>th</sup> century. As the struggle for the attainment of greater height in the religious sphere at some areas where Islam has gained a momentum was going on, the same thing was



going on in the northern Nigeria (being the first place where Islam reached in Nigeria). Though, the earlier preachers faced different challenges in each part of the country while spreading the Islamic thought in various aspect of life; Islam was firmly established. At the same time, both the foreign and the indigenous propagators contributed to this struggle.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have treated the emergence of Islam in Nigeria, how Islam entered into what is now known as northern Nigeria. How Islam flourished and established an alluring legacy has also been looked into. In the same vein, the experience of the South from the dawn of Islam in the area which covers both the Yoruba and the Igbo lands was also discussed.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the initial spread of Islam to Nigeria.
2. Explain the beginning of Islam in Northern Nigeria.
3. Describe the beginning of Islam in Southwestern Nigeria
4. Describe the initial spread of Islam to Southeastern Nigeria
5. Enumerate four ancient towns and cities where Islam had firmly been established before the arrival of colonial masters in the North and in the South.
6. Discuss the vessel through which Islam got into Nigeria.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Abdurrahman I. Doi. *Islam in Nigeria*, Zaria, Nigeria, Gaskiya Corporation Limited, 1984.

Al-Aluri, Adam (1978) *Al-Islam Fi Naijiriyyah Wa Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi al – Fulani*.

Al-Aluri, Adam (1990) *Nasim Saba fi Akhbaril-Islam wa ‘Ulama’ Biladi Yuruba*. Cairo:Maktabat Wahabat).

Balogun S.U (1998). Islamization of knowledge in Nigeria: The Role of the Sokoto dynasty” *Hamdard Islamicus* Vol. xx1 Oct. – Dec. 1998, NO. 4.

Uchendu, E. (2010). Evidence for Islam in Southeast Nigeria. *The Social Science Journal*, 47, pp.172-188.

Uchendu, E. (2010). Being Igbo and Muslim: The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria and Conversions to Islam, 1930s to recent times. *The Journal of African History*, 51:63:87.

Ahmad Rufai S. (2012). A foreign faith in a Christian domain: The historical development of Islam among the Igbos of Southeastern Nigeria, *Journal Hadhari*, 4 (2) (2012) 137 – 154.

Akintola, I. n.d. *Shari‘ah* in Nigeria: An Eschatological Desideratum.

## **UNIT 5 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF ISLAM AND ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WEST AFRICA.**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The spread of Islamic thought in West Africa is as old as the history of Islam in Africa. The first Muslims on the land met people hanging on their ways of doings things which were alien to what Islam really thought, such as in their culture, belief system, festival, economic life, foods and drinks, ways of salutation, what is moral and what is immoral etc. The most important of this was their belief system. West Africans had their own belief in deities and ancestors before Islam came to them. The thought in Islamic way of life is greatly felt in this type of environment. We can say that this was the beginning of Islamic thought in West Africa. Through the efforts of the scholars, the rulers and the preachers some aspects of their life changed gradually while some did not change, even till today, in some areas. In this unit, we shall look at some major factors contributing to the growth of Islam and its thought in West Africa.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss four major factors that contributed to the growth of Islam and its thought in West Africa
- highlight, at least, two other factors that aided the spread and growth of Islam and its thought in West Africa.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Among the factors that contributed to the spread and growth of Islam and its thought in West Africa are:

- **COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES**

There were commercial contacts between North Africa (Al- Maghrib) and West Africa between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Different routes were established through which caravan traders passed into Western Sudan for commercial reasons. The language of transaction between the buyers and the sellers then was Arabic and the traders were Muslims and Islamic scholars were among them. Centres were established in different part of West Africa, such as that in Gao, Timbuktu, Katsina, Janne, Bornu, and Kanem. The traders' language, culture and religion were showcased in these centres. The noble person during those days was that person who identified himself with these North African traders/ Islamic preachers.

- **STRUGGLE OF THE JIHADISTS AGAINST SYNCRETISM**

When syncretism pervaded the Muslim community in some parts of West African countries, a need for reform of Muslims from adulterating the pristine doctrine, teachings, and ideology of Islam was felt. There was no way to do this save waging a religious war. This was based on the fact that authorities that supported those acts of syncretism were on throne; hence, all voices calling them to order fell on deaf ears. The only method left was therefore confrontational struggles and forces. The most important among these reform forces was the Jihad of 'Uthman bn Fudi (Fodio) which took place in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The whole northern Nigeria, as at present, experienced reform in almost all its aspects known at that time; be it religious, intellectual/educational, economic, social, political, and moral. That was how Sokoto Caliphate was founded. A good number of the Jihad leaders and their progenies contributed in no small measure to the growth and spread of Arabic and Islamic thought in West Africa.

- **SCHOLARSHIP**

The role of Arabic and Islamic learning contributed to the spread and growth of Islamic thought in West Africa. Education always goes side by side with the propagation of the religion in the sub-region. Many learning centres and institutes were established. Good examples are Timbuktu and Sankore. Many institutes of Arabic and Islamic learning were established in northern Nigeria different in form and type. The same thing could be seen in southern part of Nigeria. Moreover, other nations such as Ghana, Senegal, Benin Republic, Togo, Ivory Coast etc, have Arabic institutions in different forms and types. Universities where either Arabic or Islamic Studies or the two together are studied are many in West Africa. Consequently and naturally, Islamic thought in all spheres must gained momentum

- **EFFORTS OF SOME WEST AFRICAN RULERS**

Some rulers who had embraced Islam developed interest in promoting its cultures among their subjects, particularly in the periods before the colonial subjugation and hegemony. Among these rulers were Mansa Musa of Mali (1307-1332), al- Hajj Muhammad Ture (Askiya the Great of Songhai Empire, 1493 – 1528), Muhammad Rumfa of kano (1463-1499), and Idris Alooma of Borno (1570-1602). These influential rulers used their greatness for the cause of Islam and the spread of Islamic thought. There were many versed scholars among their secretaries. Some of these rulers were themselves proficient in both spoken and written Arabic believing that Islam could not be duly understood outside Arabic language. At times, they wrote few treatises on various issues in Arabic. This action then was an incentive for Arabic and Islamic learners.

- **CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ARAB NATIONALS**

Sponsored citizens of the Arab land come to West Africa and aid in teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies to the West Africans in various Arabic and Islamic learning schools. By so doing, they spread both the Islamic culture and thought among their students. An example of this is Egypt. The Egyptian government was fond of sending scholars to Arabic and Islamic schools in Nigeria which is still happening till the present time. Another example is that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Many West African children go to Saudi Arabia for their tertiary education. During their stay there they imbibed the Islamic culture that has been firmly established in their community together with their own Arabian cultural practices. We have among them those who are later sponsored by the Saudi government as teachers of either Arabic or Islamic Studies to some of the tertiary institutions in West Africa.

- **EFFORTS OF ITINERANT NORTH AFRICAN SCHOLARS TO WEST AFRICA.**

Notable Islamic scholars from some African nations such as Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria, who traveled down to Western Africa for the purpose of teaching Arabic and Islamic sciences to the Muslims contributed to the spread of Islam in West Africa. We have among them families who later took West African towns and cities as their homeland. A good example of this family is Al- Maghīlī, who is well known in West Africa. He hailed from Tlemcen (now an area in Algeria) and taught in kano, Katsina, and other cities in Bilad Sudan. A unit shall be dedicated to his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa. The

families of al- Aqit, Jalaludeen as- Suyuti from Egypt, Ahmad Baba who settled in Timbuktu, al- Andugu Muhammad, Muhammad al- Baghayukhi. Muhammad bn Yusuf al- Andalusi who was once a grand qadi of Maliki school of thought in Egypt also stayed in West Africa and left their contributions to Islamic thought in different ways. At times they were teachers while at another time preachers and political advisers.

- **COMPETITION AMONG FAITHS AND IDEOLOGIES**

The quest for power, recognition, authority between Islam and other religions in West Africa, Christianity in particular, spurred the Muslim preachers and scholars to think Islamic in every way. This was so evident during and after the colonial masters had physically left West African soil. When the Western culture, language, ideology, religion, economic system, polity and thought began to sweep off what had been firmly established by the Muslims, Muslims were adversely affected. Islamic scholars therefore continued to strengthen their thought in all facets of life. This could be seen in marriage and divorce, inheritance, education etc. The Western colouring with which intellectual activities have been painted, posited great challenge to Islam and the Muslims. In so far as Islam is a total way of life there is nothing a Muslim should look for outside it. Activities of some Islamic organizations, such as International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT) therefore, try to see to the Islamisation of every field of knowledge in this regard.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

What are the factors that contributed to the growth and spread of Islamic thought in West Africa?

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Major factors that aided the growth of Islamic thought in West Africa are commercial relationship between North African and West African of the old, competition among faiths and ideologies, scholarship and efforts of itinerant North African scholars to West Africa.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit we have treated the major factors contributing to the spread and growth of Islamic thought in West Africa. Each of them is clearly explained.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss four major factors that contributed to the growth of Islam and its thought in West Africa.
2. Describe other factors that aided the spread and growth of Islam and its thought in West Africa.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Trimingham, J.S. (1970). *A History of Islam in West Africa*. London. Oxford University Press.

Galadant, A.S (n.d). *Harakah al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah wa adabuha fi Naijiria*. Cairo. Dar-Al-Ma'arif.

Hunwick, J.O. (2006). *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton. Markus Wiener Publishers.

Clarke P.B (1982). *West Africa and Islam*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.

Hunwick, J.O. (1964). 'The Influence of Arabic in West Africa'. *Transactions of the History Society of Ghana*, vol. ii, Legion, Ghana.

**MODULE 2                      SELECTED                      WEST                      AFRICAN  
ARABIC/ISLAMIC                      SCHOLARS  
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISLAMIC  
STUDIES IN WEST AFRICA**

Unit 1	“Uthman bin Muhammad Fudi and his Contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.
Unit 2	Muhammad al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka al-Kanemi’s contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.
Unit 3	Al-hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti and his Contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.
Unit 4	Abdullah bin Fudi, and his Contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.
Unit 5	Ibrahim Niass and his Contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa
Unit 6	Adam Al-Iluriy and his Contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa.

**UNIT 1                      “UTHMAN BN MUHAMMAD FUDI AND HIS  
CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN  
WEST AFRICA**

**CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi was known to be one of the most influential Islamic thinkers of his time in the history of Islamic growth in Nigeria in particular and the whole of West Africa in general. The impact of his contribution to Islam and its thought in West Africa still lives till present day. In this unit, we shall discuss his biography and his contributions to Islam and Islamic thought in West Africa.



## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to do:

- discuss the biography of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi
- discuss his contribution to Islam and its thought in West Africa
- outline at least ten works written by Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### BIOGRAPHY OF SHAYKH ‘UTHMAN BN MUHAMMAD FUDI

Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi al-Fulati was one of the most influential Islamic scholar in the history of Islam in West Africa. He was born on December 15, 1754 in north- western Gobir village named Maratta to the family of Fodiawa. The family later moved to Degel during the childhood of Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi. The birth of Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi was preceded by prophesy from a Fulani woman saint named Umm Hani. She said that a saint who will reform religion, revive the Sunnah and establish a community would be born. In her prophesy she said that the saint would be renowned far and wide while both the common people and the nobles will adhere to his command, and those connected with him will be known as the *Jama'ah*. In addition to this, their sign is that they would not tend towards cattle rearing as is customary with the Fulani. She added that whoever witnesses that time should follow him.

The Fodiawa is from the Fulfulde word fodiye - meaning ‘learned man’ (Hausaised as fodio and Arabicised as fudi). Their language is called Fulfulde in Nigeria and Masina; Pular in Senegal, and Pulpule in Futa Jalon. The Fodiawa was a family that had settled in north-western Hausaland on the edges of the Kingdom of Gobir. The Fulani are found all over West Africa from the Futa-Jalon region to the Cameroons. Some people say that they originated from Persia, some say from India and some others even connect them with the Philistines of the Bible. They are accepted as Hamitic by race. In another account it was recorded that they migrated to the south-west from Fezzan in order to escape the oppression of the “Gara”, identified by him and others with the Garamantes of Herodotus. Another account holds that the Fulani are probably a very ancient Libyan tribe whose original home was Egypt or Asia who are the purest representatives of the Hamitic element in Nigeria. It is a recognized fact that within historic times the people were known to exist in Africa and also to be migrating from west to east in the continent, although their precise origin seems hidden. They were as well known to be a distinct race from the negroid peoples with whom they lived and intermarried. Different peoples called them different names: Peuls or Peuhls by French writers, Fulani by the Hausa and the Moors, Felata by the Kanuri, Teda and Eastern Sudanese.

Shaykh's genealogy was traced back to a Musa Jokollo, the eleventh ancestor of 'Uthman dan Fodio who was said to have migrated from Futa Toro to Birnin Kwoni in the Hausa state of Gobir where 'Uthman himself later engraved his name on a hallmark of West African rock. The migration was as a result of religious persecution in the fifteenth century. The eleven generation between Shaykh 'Uthman bn Fudi al-Fulati and his ancestor Musa Jokollo may be assumed to cover a span of 300-350 years. His mother, Hawwa', belonged to the same clan whose ancestry through her grandmother was traced back to the Idrisi Sharifs of Morocco and down to the Prophet.

Shaykh studied under different scholars but principally under his paternal and maternal uncle: 'Uthman Bindduri and under a Tuareg reformer, Jibril bn 'Umar. The two of them in had tremendous influence on his career. These two figures could be said to have laid firmly the foundations of the principal aspects of his career. That is, the political acumen and religious prowess. In addition to these two masters, he also studied al Bukhari from al-Hajj Muhammad bin Raj. Shaykh's practical basis of his religious life is credited to his paternal and maternal uncle, 'Uthman Bindduri. This is based on the fact Shaikh 'Uthman imitated him in states and in deeds, designed himself according to his pattern in piety and in ordering the right and forbidding the wrong. One could deduce the possibility of this through accompanying the teacher for almost two years. It was this teacher that taught 'Uthman the most authoritative legal book of the Maliki school of law in Islam, called al-Mukhtasar. His second principal teacher, Jibril, taught him theology; gave him licence to teach what he had known from him. It was this teacher who, after his second pilgrimage, presented a flag of victory to 'Uthman and was the first person to pledge allegiance to him even before the *Jihad*. Before the presentation of the flag, Jibril had been preaching for a reform of Islam in Hausaland.

Shaykh 'Uthman placed Jibril in high esteem. However, this did not make him accept his idea dogmatically despite Jibril's tremendous influence on 'Uthman. At a time when there was a theological conflict between both of them on how to classify a Muslim who commits a grave sin. Jibril held the Kharijite view that such a sinner was an unbeliever (*kafir*) while 'Uthman held the orthodox view that he was only a disobedient Muslim (*'āsi*) and not an unbeliever. He furthered his argument that to call a Muslim a *kafir* automatically makes the accuser himself a *kafir*. To show a reverence for his teacher, Shaykh 'Uthman gave Jibril the benefit of doubt by concluding that he must have had his reason for holding the view he held on the question and that it must not be counted against him.

Initially Shaykh ‘Uthman read the Qur'an with his father and studied other sciences from a number of learned teachers who reigned during his time. He went through the traditional Muslim system of education comprising the memorisation of the Qur'an, rudimentary reading and writing, followed by the translation of the Qur'an, some knowledge of the hadith. Furthermore, the study of law, grammar, rhetoric, simple arithmetic came thereafter. The student, who is often attached to his teacher used to go from one teacher to another for the acquisition of specific branches of knowledge. At the end of the courses, certificates of licence (*ijaza*) were awarded by the lecturers to the qualified pupils. These certificates served as authorities for the pupils to teach others the knowledge acquired. Shaykh was a great Islamic Reformer and an epitome of a sturdily built figure for Jihad in the nineteenth century. His family was vibrant with their knowledge of Islamic Sciences. He was the first member of his family that propagated the popularity of their family which had once been strictly confined to their immediate area.

Despite the relatively short time Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi spent with his teacher, Jubril bin ‘Umar, he had great influence on him as earlier mentioned. At the time Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi intended to accompany his master, Jibril, on pilgrimage in 1774-1775 his father disallowed him to embark on such a journey at that period. This consequently left him as a preacher and a teacher in Zamfara, Kebbi and Gobir for approximately a period of twenty years. During this period, he was able to gather around himself loyal disciples and followers (*Jama'ah*).

As time went on, in 1794, Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi claimed to have seen in his dream the Prophet, the early Caliphs and ‘Abd al- Qadir al-Jilani. It was in the dream, according, to him that he was given the ‘Sword of truth’ to be drawn against the unbelievers. The Hausa/Fulani society at that period was corrupt and not morally well. A number of corrupt and unscrupulous kings had developed while Islamic ideals and morals were mixed with local superstitions and practices. People were also overburdened with heavy taxes. The government was corrupt with oppression, tribalism and dynastic rules. Women were also heavily oppressed on the land. Initially, Shaykh ‘Uthman did not begin with the *Jihad* of sword but tried as much as possible to build relations and understanding between him and successive rulers of Gobir. Being a herculean task, he was unable to record absolute success every time he did so. He thereafter spent ten years to strengthen his disciples intellectually, spiritually, and physically ahead a struggle with the rulers of Gobir in particular, and with other Hausa rulers in general. Among the Hausa leaders he fought was Yunfa, Sultan of Gobir. This was after sending different correspondence on mutual understanding and cooperation between both of them to him and other notable rulers.

After the fight with the Gobirawa, he and his disciples fled (embarked on *Hijrah*) from his base at Degel to Gudu which was beyond the boundary of Gobir territory and thus, established a *Dar al-Islam* separate from the region ruled by the infidel Hausa rulers. This migration began on 23 February, 1804. Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi felt the obligation of *Hijrah* and drew a manifesto of the Jihad, in which its aims and objectives, mission and vision were clearly outlined. Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi was proclaimed *Amir al-Mu’minin* at the end of the Hijrah and thus established the Sokoto Caliphate when the Gobir state was overthrown and other Hausa States, such as Kano, Katsina, Zaria and Zamfara. Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi was able to found the city of Sokoto, five years after the Jihad. In 1812, he divided the administration of the new Islamic empire between his brother ‘Abdullah and his son, Muhammad Bello and finally, he went into seclusion worshipping Allah till his demise in 1817.

Apart from Shaykh’s political and administrative acumen fashioned in line with the Islamic rule and guide, he was able to showcase his intellectual wealth in many literary works. Some of them were written before the Jihad while some were written after the Jihad. Many of his intellectual contributions to Islamic thought were put together in Arabic, while some of them were authored in Fulfulde.

Among his intellectual works are:

1. *Al-‘amr bi’l- ma‘ruf wa’l- nahy ‘an al- munkar.*
2. *Amr al- sa’a wa- ashратиha.*
3. *Usul al- din.*
4. *Irshad al- Ummah ila taysir al- millah.*
5. *Aqdu ‘aqidah al- ‘awamm.*
6. *Nur al- albab.*
7. *Iqtibas al- ‘ilm.*
8. *Qawa‘id talab al- wusul ila Allah.*
9. *Bayan al-bida‘ al- shaytaniyyah allati ahdathaha’l- nas fi abwab al- milla al- Muhammadiyyah.*
10. *Manhaj al- ‘abidin.*
11. *Hidayah al- Talibin fi usul al- din.*
12. *Haqa’iq al- iman wa’l- Islam.*
13. *Qasidah daliyyah*
14. *Hukm juhhal balad Hawsa.*
15. *Irshad al – ikhwan ila ahkam masa’il al- niswan.*
16. *Al-‘Amr bi- muwalat al- mu’min wa’l- nahy ‘an muwalat al- Kafirin.*
17. *Tuhfat al-habib ila’l- Habib.*
18. *Kifayat al- Muslimin.*
19. *Mi‘raj al- ‘awamm ila sama‘ ‘ilm al- kalam.*

20. *Ittiba' al- sunna wa- tark al- bid'a.*
21. *Ihya' al- sunnah wa ikhmad al- bida'.*
22. *Umdat al- 'ulama'*
23. *Tamyiz ahl al- sunna ansar al- Rahman bayn nuffaq al- din wa fussaqa al-din wa hurras shay' min mata' al- dunya.*
24. *Hidayat al- tullab.*
25. *Asanid al- da 'if al-nmutashaffi' bi'l- mushasha ' Ahmad al-sharif.*
26. *Usul al- wilayah wa- shurutuha.*
27. *Asanid al- faqir al- mu 'tarif bi'l- 'ajz wa'l- taqdir*
28. *Anwa' mal Allah allati yajuz li'l- umara' qabduha wa- sarfuha.*
29. *Wird*
30. *Kaff at- talibin 'an takfir 'awamum al- Muslimin.*
31. *'Umdah al- muta'abbidin wa'l- muhtarifin.*
32. *Shifa' al- nufus.*
33. *Masa'il muhimma yahtaju ila ma'rifatiha ahl- Sudan.*
34. *Mir'at al- tullab fi mustanad al- abwab li-din Allah al- Wahhab*
35. *Shifa' al- ghalil fi- maashkala min kalam Shaykh shuyukhina Jibril.*
36. *Al- Slasil al- Qadiriyyah.*
37. *Shams al- ikhwan yastadi'una biha fi usul al- adyan.*
38. *Tabshir al- Umma al- Ahmadiyya bi- bayan ba'd manaqid al- Qadiriyyah.*
39. *Qasidah lamiyah.*
40. *Talkhis asrar kalam al- Muhasibi.*
41. *'Ulum al- mu'amala.*
42. *Nasihah ahl al- zaman, nush li- ahl al- sudan min al- 'Arab wa 'l 'ajam fi jami' al- buldan.*
43. *.Al- Ajwiba al- Muharrara 'an al- as'ilah al- muqarrara fi wathiqat Shismas.*
44. *Bayan wujub al- hijra 'alal 'ibad wa bayan wujub nasb al-imam wa iqamat al- jihad.*
45. *Muddat al- Dunya.*
46. *Najm al- ikhwan yahtaduna bihi bi- idhn Allah fi umur al- zaman.*
47. *Lamma balaghtu.*

Although, there are some works that cannot be authentically ascribed to Shaykh 'Uthman bn Fudi; more than one hundred Arabic works were authentically credited to him. His contribution to Islamic thought is the re-awakening of Sunnah and extermination of bid'ah as shown in one of his work titled: *Ihya' al- Sunnah wa ikhmad al- Bida'*.

#### *IHYA' AL- SUNNAH WA IKHMAD AL- BIDA'.*

This work is the *magnum opus* of Shaykh 'Uthman bn Fudi. It is also the most voluminous of his work. It was Shaykh 'Uthman bn Fudi's first

important work written in Arabic. In the preface to the book, Shaykh says that he has arranged each chapter in such a way that it would facilitate the understanding of any specific area discussed in the book while each of the chapters constitutes a complete and independent whole. Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi followed this principle throughout the book. Certain expressions in each chapter of the book were repeated. Shaykh started the work by expressing what he intended to do and what he did not want to do:

ليعلم الناظر في هذا الكتاب أن مقصودي فيه إن شاء الله إحياء السنة المحمدية وإخماد البدعة الشيطانية وإن كانت النيات لا تخلو من خلل ونقص. وليس مقصودي فيه هناك أستار الناس والاشتغال بعيوبهم.

Meaning:

‘Let the critic of this book know that my aim in it, God willing, is the revival of the Sunnah of Muhammad and the removal of satanic innovation; though intentions may not be free from errors and mistake. And my intention in it is neither to showcase people’s shame nor to engage in pursuit of their faults.’ The work is considered to be a work on theology and law written for an audience whose knowledge of the basis of Islam is admitted but have elements of syncretism and superstitious practices in their religion. The author’s goal in writing the book is to move the target group away from unacceptable practices and to bring them into the right way. The book dealt much on *bid‘a* more than it did with *sunna*, perhaps, because the target group could not identify what *bid‘ah* is in their lively affairs. The book has thirty-three chapters which can be classified under the following headings:

- 1- Definitions (Chapters 1 &2)
- 2- The need for adherence to *sunna* (Chapter 3)
- 3- Theology ( Chapter 4)
- 4- *Fiqh* (Chapters 5- 30)
- 5- Mysticism (Chapters 31- 33)
- 6- Conclusion.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the life and contribution of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi to Islamic thought in West Africa.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi was a great Islamic thinker, a reformer, a Jihadist, a writer and a scholar whose contribution to Islamic thought can never be over-emphasized in West African in particular and in the whole Islamic world in general. His contribution to Islamic thought is

manifest in his political will, administrative power, religious consciousness and intellectual properties. Most of his works were written in Arabic. The reformation movement he led with the Jihad is a practical establishment of the Islamic ideology and culture he taught and preached. In addition to this, most of his writings were on religious themes, morality, didactic or Sufism.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi was born into a family whose religious consciousness was testified to by the people of their time. He was initially under the tutelage of his father and later studied under two scholars who had great contribution to his life. Most of Hausa leaders detested his preaching, ideology and teaching. He tried as much as possible to make them understand his call which proved abortive and thus led to his migration. Consequently, the need for the Jihad that was carried out in 1804 was greatly felt. After the Jihad Shaykh ‘Uthman was able to establish the Sokoto Caliphate, after his victory over most of the Hausa territories. Shaykh was a prolific writer, who combined writing with teaching and preaching. He is in this regard a role model for most Muslim thinkers. After the Jihad and the consolidation of his caliphate he went into seclusion worshipping God until he was called to the great beyond in 1817.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1- Write a short biography of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi.
- 2- Discuss the contributions of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi to Islamic thought in West Africa.
- 3- Explain the contents and features of Ihya’u Sunnah and Ikhmad al-Bida‘of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Trimingham, J.S. (1970). *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press.

*Naijiria* Galadant, A.S (n.d). *Harakah al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah wa adabuha fi*. Cairo. Dar-Al-Ma‘arif.

Hunwick, J.O. (2006): *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton. Markus Wiener Publishers.

Hunwick, J.O. (1995). *Arabic Literature of Africa*, Vol. II. The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa, Leiden. The Netherlands E.J. Brill.

Al –Ilori, A.A. (1971). *Al Islam fi Naijiriya wa ash- Shaykh ‘Uthman bun Fudi al-Fulaati* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

Ismael A.B. Balogun. 1975. *The Life and Works of Uthmān dan Fodio: The Muslim Reformer of West Africa*. Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau.



## **UNIT 2 MUHAMMAD AL-AMIN BIN MUHAMMAD NIMKA ALKANEMI AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WEST AFRICA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit we studied the biography of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa. In this unit, we shall look at the contribution of another Nigerian scholar – a Bornu scholar - to Islamic thought in West Africa. His name is Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka Al-Kanemi.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the life of Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka AlKanemi
- explain how Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka Al-Kanemi acquired his military power
- highlight Al- Kanemi’s contributions to Islamic thought in West Africa.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **MUHAMMAD AL-AMIN BIN MUHAMMAD NIMKA**

Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka was one of the Jihadists whose Jihad’s spirit was inspired by the Jihad activities of Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi. He was born in Fezzan to Kanembu scholar. His father was from Fahi a village near Mao in Kanem while his mother was a daughter of a wealthy Arab merchant. It was when his father came to Fezzan that he married the Arab woman. Initially, Muhammad Al-Amin studied in Tripoli and thereafter followed his father to Hijaz for pilgrimage in the 1790s. Unfortunately, his father died in Hijaz and was

buried there, in Madina to be precise. Muhammad Al-Amin returned to Borno after staying for ten years in Hijaz following the death of his father. He, therefore, settled near Ngala where he sought for the hand of a daughter of the Mai of Ngala and succeeded in having her as wife. When he saw that Islam in its pristine form was being adulterated in the capital of the Mai of Bornu, Gazatgamu, he waged a Jihad war against the local Fulani force and drove them out of the place. With the booties of war as well as benefit of gifts of land, cattle and slaves acquired, he was able to consolidate his territory. He, henceforth, became the only effective military force in Bornu and thus, pioneered the founding of Bornu's dynasty. He was an effective ruler of Bornu, having its seat of power in Kukawa. He died in 1937 and was buried in Kukawa. After his death, his sons and grandsons succeeded him.

In addition to his administrative and political contributions to Islamic taught, he had few literary contributions to intellectual field to his credit. We can also count different epistles he sent to some of his relatives, followers, subordinates as well as to some scholars among his contemporaries, which could be considered as part of his contributions to Islamic thought in West Africa. This is based on the fact that, looking at the set of people the epistles were sent to, one could deduce that most of the correspondences and epistles were basically on Islamic issues and spread of Islamic thought. Scholars like Yusuf bin Abdul- Qadir used to come to his community at Ngala.

#### WORKS OF MUHAMMAD AL-AMIN BIN MUHAMMAD NIMKA AL-KANEMI

- *Qasidah Daliyyah: Nasim al- saba arajta rab 'an bi- Kukawa Wa shahadta man bi'l- babi min mutaraddidi.*
- *Nasihah al- hukkam al- fahm.*
- *Rasa'il:*  
Which were addressed to the following people: i- Sultan Ibrahim bin Sultan Ahmad.
- ii- All the wise men. iii- A certain scholar. iv- The scholar Hamid. v- Shettima Mustafa vi- Yusuf and Muhammad al- Habib. vii- His sisters, Ruqayyah and Fatimah and his daughter. viii- All the people of the region.
- ix- Fallata nobles x- Sultan Ibrahim bin Sultan Umar.
- xi- Khalifa 'Ali bn Khalifa Bukar.
- xii- Al-hajj 'Ali Fatiwi xiii- Ahmad bin Abd al-Salam.
- xiv- All the brethren. xv- Our entire community. xvi- The brethren in the faith. xvii- Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Shaykh Ibrahim. xviii- The scholar Ahmad al-Talib.
- xix- A portion of the correspondence between al-Kanemi and Sokoto leaders. This can be seen in *Infaqul Maysur*.

- xx- A collection of letter to and from Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi and Muhammad Bello.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the life and work of Muhammad Al-Amin bn Muhammad Nimka AlKanemi.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Muhammad Al-Amin was one of the West African Muslim scholars who contributed their quota to Islamic thought and its spread in West Africa. Muhammad Al-Amin was the founder of Shaykh Bornu’s dynasty after the Jihad he fought and won. This was after his return from Hijaz where he had stayed for ten years following the death of his father. His contribution to Islam and its thought was, among others, as a result of the inspiration he got from Shaykh ‘Uthman bn Fudi’s legacy.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Write a short biography of Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka AlKanemi.
2. Explain how Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka Al-Kanemi was able to establish a dynasty.
3. Discuss the contributions of Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka AlKanemi mto Islamic thought in West Africa.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Hunwick, J.O. (1995). *Arabic Literature of Africa*. Vol.II. The Writtings of Central Sudanic Africa, Leiden. The Netherlands E.J. Brill.

### **UNIT 3 AL-HAJJ ‘UMAR AL-FŪTI AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WEST AFRICA**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, we studied the biography of Muhammad Al-Amin bin Muhammad Nimka al-Kanemi and his contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa. In this unit, we shall look at the contribution of another Nigerian scholar, a veteran leader of Tijaniyah Sufi order, to Islamic thought in West Africa. He is al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the life of al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti.
- Explain how al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti contribute to Islamic thought in West Africa.

#### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti bin Sa'id was born in 1796/1797 in a place called Halwar in the Imamate of Futa Toro, in the present day northern Senegal. In another account, he was born in the Futa Toro near the town of Podar on the Senegal River. He was an erudite Islamic scholar, a talented author, a shrewd political leader, a dedicated social activist and a military commander who founded a brief far-reaching empire, after a holy war on the Upper Niger encompassing much of what are now Senegal, Guinea, and Mali. He was one of the most famous of all Tijaniyah figures in the nineteenth century.

He hailed from the noble Fulanis who were popular for their Islamic scholarship throughout West Africa in the seventeenth century.

His father was a Muslim teacher who studied at the famous Islamic university of Pir Sanikhor in Senegal. Saidu, al-Hajj Umar's father, lived

the life of a simple farmer, devoting himself to studies and worship rather than participate in the Fulani jihad of Abd al-Qadir Kane, which took place in 1776. Al-Hajj Umar's mother, Soxna Adama Aise, was a saint who had great reputation for piety. She was a niece of the renowned Qadiriyyah scholar and Jihadist, Sulayman Bal.

Al-Hajj 'Umar was a precocious student of Islamic sciences. He started his education with his father while he was young. It was with his father that he memorised the Qur'an at a young age and later got trained to be a Qur'an school master by his elder brother Alfa Ahmadu. He also studied under many of the renowned and prominent Muslim scholars and teachers among Tijaniyyah brotherhood in Futa Toro and other scholars of his day, such as Yero Buso, Serin Demba Fal, Amar Saydi, Cerno Lamin Saxo and Horefonde, before embarking on Hajj in 1820. His studies in Futa led him to the famous school of Pir Sanikhor, where his teacher, Serin Demba Fal, observed in him outstanding intellectual and scholastic ability. In his quest for knowledge, he traveled wide to places such as Mauritania (two times) and Hijaz. While in Mecca he completed his religious studies which brought a turning point in his life. There was a time he camped near Damascus when he was returning from Makkah and thus got inspiration from the trend set by Ibrahim Pasha as earlier mentioned. He was an authority in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). He was initiated into the Tariqa Tijaniyya by Abd al-Karim al-Naqil, a student of Mawlud Fal. The two became close companions, and traveled together to Futa Jallon where Umar spent years in the company of Abd al-Karim, leaning from him the litanies of the order and some secrets such as the prayer *hizb al-sayf*. In 1826, after many years of scholarship, Umar al-Futi Tal returned from Makkah with the title *Al-Hajj* and assumed the caliphate of the Tijaniyya sufi brotherhood in the Sudan. He was initiated into the leadership of the Tijaniyya order, earning the designation, khalifa of the Western Sudan. As a result, he had access to the ruling hierarchy throughout the entire Sudan, which facilitated his later political career. After his settling in Sokoto, Umar al-Futi took several wives, including a daughter of the Sultan of Sokoto, Maryam at that period. He eventually moved, after the death of the Sultan of Sokoto to the Imamate of Futa Jallon and then to Dingiray, in the present-day Guinea, after travelling across West Africa, where he began preparations for his jihad. He died in an explosion of his gunpowder reserves on February 12, 1864.

Among his contributions to Islamic thought we can say the following words: As far as his intellectual contributions to knowledge and to Islamic thought is concerned, he authored a book which could be considered his magnum opus, the *Kitab rimah hizb al-rahim 'ala nuhur hizb al-rajim*. The book is considered a veritable compendium and one

of the most important works of the nineteenth century anywhere in the Muslim world.

The book, *Rimah hizb al-rahim 'ala nuhur hizb al-rajim*, is one of the most elaborate expositions of the doctrine of the Tijaniyya Sufi order. It is a good illustration of the special privileges that God bestows, according to the book, on followers of Sufi orders. The book also says that all disciples of the Tijaniyya will be spared from the agonies of death, they will not be persecuted in their graves by angels, and they will be safe from all tortures in the grave from the day of their death until the day they enter Paradise. It also postulates that God will forgive all their sins and they will give no account on the Day of Resurrection. In addition to this, they will be among the first group of believers to enter Paradise together with Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. They will die as *awliya* (friends of God) because of their love for the founder of the Tijaniyya. For this reason as well, they will not only go to Paradise, but members of their relations will also go to Paradise.

Shaykh Umar recorded an occurrence in the book of some significance in unveiling the connection between the Sultan and the Shaykh. The following passage from the book describes the Sultan's profound respect for the Tijaniyyah. Shaykh Umar cites here a dream which Sultan Bello had on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Rabi al-Awal in the year 1251 A.H., which he had recorded and presented to the Shaykh in writing:

I saw in the state of sleep ... that the Hidden Pole (*al-Qutb al-Maktum*), the Sealed Isthmus (*al-barzakh al-mukhtum*), the Seal of the Saints, Shaykh alTijani (may Allah be pleased with him and us on his account), had come to our land and rallied the people to him. When I reached him, I found in his presence the fortunate and successful Sayyid 'Umar b. Sa'id as his lieutenant. The Shaykh was telling him, "The people of this country will not derive benefit from any (new) knowledge in addition to their (present) knowledge." I (Bello) said to the Shaykh, after greeting him with the salutation of peace, "You should know that I am one of those who love you, and this only for the sake of Allah Most High, out of Divine command, not for any worldly cause or reason, praise be to Allah. I have noticed the mention of the Seal of Saints among the discourses of the elite." He said, "You knew or saw his remembrance in the origins (*lawaqih*) of the lights." Then I said, "I have heard from our Shaykh (Usman bn Fudi) that he met with you (Shaykh Tijani) next to his house in Degel ... I want your assurance that as I am seeing you here now, I will see you in Paradise," and I repeated these words three times with all my spiritual zeal (*himma*) ... Then he sent me in search of some radish seed powder for some medicine, so I went in search of it, then I recovered consciousness.

Al-Hajj Umar relates then that when Sultan Bello came to tell him of the dream, he filled a large vessel with radish seed, brought it to him, and said, “Take what your Shaykh instructed me to bring him, for you are his *khalifa* and his representative (*na’ib*).”

Furthermore, he also had keen interest in books and poetry detailing the life and character of the Prophet Muhammad. As a dream pursuer, he combined the greater holy war (*jihad al-akbar*) against the ego-self (*nafs*) with the lesser war of arms (*jihad al-asghar*) in the hope of establishing a Muslim empire of justice and peace in West Africa. Even after his establishment as a Sufi Shaykh, scholars used to visit him in Dingiray to discuss with him jurisprudential issues. Though his legacy varies by country; through an Islamic lense he remained a hero in Senegal, Guinea, and Mali who fought against Christian French colonial army and also resisted animist Bambara kingdoms of Kaarta and Ségou whom al-Hajj Umar accused of grave injustices. This is because they enslaved Muslims and threatened them for the practice of Islam. Nevertheless, he also fought against smaller Islamic states of the region, such as the Massina imamate of Hamdullahi. He did this when he found evidence of an alliance against him between the animist Bambara kingdom and the Muslim state of Masina whose capital was Hamdullahi. This however raised questions and arguments between his supporters and the supporters of Masina. He later installed his son Ahmadu Tal as imam of Ségou. He also waged war against several non-Muslim neighborhood, Malinké regions, the present Kayes in Mali and succeeded as victor by conquering a number of cities and building a fortification near the city of Kayes which is today a popular tourist destination.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the life and contributions of Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti bin Sa’id Tall to Islamic thought in West Africa.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti bin Sa’id Tall was a West African Muslim scholar of Tijaniyyah Sufi Order, who contributed his own quota to Islamic thought and its spread in West Africa. He was a man of many virtues: a scholar, a warrior, an author, a saint, an administrator, a husband, a teacher and an Imam.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti bin Sa’id Tall was a Fulani descendant who was born by a parent whose versatility in religious affairs is widely recognized. After fighting and winning Jihad, he built a relatively wide Empire that lived shortly. His sojourn on different lands while searching for knowledge offered him great opportunity to actualize his dream. This was after his return from Hijaz where he went for both hajj and for scholarship. His contribution to Islam and its thought was in the area of Sufism in Islam.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Who was Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti bin Sa’id Tall?
2. How was Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti bin Sa’id Tall able to build an empire?
3. Discuss the contribution of Al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Fūti bin Sa’id Tall to Islamic thought in West Africa?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Malise Ruthven (1997). *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

John Hunwick.(1992). An Introduction to the Tijani Path in *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara*.

Avidson, Basil. (1995). *Africa in History*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Robinson, David. 1985. *The Holy War of Umar Tal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunwick, J.O. (1995): *Arabic Literature of Africa*, Vol.II. The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa, Leiden: The Netherlands E.J. Brill.

Oloruntimeehin, B.O. (1972). *The Segu Tukulor Empire*. New York: Humanities Press.

Wise, Christopher. (2001). *The Desert Shore: Literatures of the Sahel*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner.

Wise, Christopher (1999). *Yambo Ouologuem: Postcolonial Writer, Islamic Militant*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner. Internet resource: <http://www.tijani.org/al-hajj-umar-al-futi-tal>. Retrieved.



September 14, 2012 Internet resource:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Hadj\\_Umar\\_Tall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Hadj_Umar_Tall). Retrieved Sept,  
14, 2012

## UNIT 4      **ABDULLAH BIN FUDI AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WEST AFRICA**

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The scholars of Sokoto Caliphate pioneered the course of Islamic thought in Nigeria. History of Islam in the land without a proper mention of Sokoto leaders is likely to be considered an injustice to Islamic scholarship. The founder of the Caliphate, Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi as well as his family members, like Muhammad Bello, Asma’ and Abdullah bin Fudi hallmarked the memory of the Caliphate till the present time. In this unit, we will look at the life and works of Abdullah bin Fudi as an Islamic thinker in West Africa.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the life of Abdullah bin Fudi
- count Abdullah bin Fudi’s contribution to Islam and Islamic thought in West Africa
- appraise the contents and features of *Tazyin al-Waraqat* of Abdullah bin Fudi.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Abdullah bin Muhammad Fudi, known as Abdullah dan Fudi, Sultan of Gwandu (1819–1828) was born in 1764. Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi and Abdullah bin Fudi were of the same parental background. By his (Abdullah) own record, he was about twelve years junior to ‘‘Uthman bin Fudi. Their father, therefore, entrusted the young Abdullahi under the care of his elder brother (‘Uthman) who served both as teacher and guide in matters of religion to him.

But for Abdullahi’s outstanding piety and intellectual prowess he would have been completely overshadowed by his elder brother and by his nephew Muhammad Bello. He was a member of Qadiriyyah Sufi Order

into which his uncle, Umar, initiated him. He also familiarized him with the *Shādhiliyyah* and the *Khalwatiyyah* Sufi orders. He commenced his life as a student of his father in the learning of the Quran. At the age of thirteen, he studied *al-‘Ishriniyyāt* and *al-Witriyyāt* which are panegyric works on Prophet Muhammad. It was this brother of his that taught him many other works.

Abdullah was regarded by his contemporaries as a “moving encyclopedia” because he was an authority in Quranic exegesis, Sufism, Hadith, Canonical laws, Arabic language, Usul and the art of Qur'anic recitation (Tajweed). Some of his students also referred to him as an Arab of Hausaland.

In his book, *Ida’ al-nusukh*, he gives a full account of his education and gives a list of other local Shaykhs of whom we know little. Among them were al-Hajj Jibril bin ‘Umar, under whom Abdullah studied *usul al-fiqh*. Others were Muhammad bin Raj (his uncle), and Muhammad Thambu bin Abdullah. Abdullah bin Fudi was brought up in a family whose emblem was scholarship. He grew up in an environment that sings the praise of Sufism.

As a sound thinker in Islam, he was a prolific writer, valiant warrior, astute politician, competent administrator, devoted teacher and pious religious leader. Shaykh Abdullahi lived life in accordance to the dictates of Islam, by following the training given to him by his elder brother, Shehu ‘Uthman bin Fudi. All of these men were famous for their erudition and piety. Among his pupils was al-Mustafa bin Muhammad, father of ‘AbdulQadri bin al-Mustafa.

After the Jihad led by his brother, both of them embarked on preaching tours moving from one town to another. Abdullah bin Fudi, in the later part of his life, sacrificed good time for his brother, Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi. He did this to show his indebtedness to him. Abdullah’s lasting interests in religious studies and Sufism were credited to Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi. This is contained in his work *Ida’al- Nusukh*. Abdullah’s life and that of his brother were dedicated to Islam and Islamic thought in every way. He partook in his brother’s jihad and used his intellectual prowess to eulogise its heroes and write elegy on its deads. He gathered his poetry relating to the movement and enlivened it in the pages of his work, *Tazyin al-waraqat*. When their Jihad was at its peak, Abdullah was overtaken by spiritual crisis. He was so disheartened by the laxity on the part of many members of the community. This deterioration in Islamic ways of life and inclination towards earthly wealth and possessions, moral laxities, dereliction of religious duties, among others, made him dissociate himself temporarily from the jihad and seek solace in going on visitation to the holy land (*Ziyārah*), in

Makkah in which he was persuaded to return and rejoin the Jihad struggle. Before returning to the Jihad, he went into the jungle with those who shared common views with him among his followers who were five in number. They stayed in the wilderness for three days and three nights without seeing anyone or traces of anything other than the tracks of elephants. They arrived at the city of Kano. Unfortunately for them, the moral decadence of the people in Kano was not better than those of where they left. This event later became the subject matter of his *bāiyyah* (i.e., a poem rhyming in *bā*).

In 1813 ‘Uthman, being more of a scholar than a politician, assigned the practical regency of the western territories of the Islamic state established by the Jihad to ‘Abdullah as the chief administrator while the eastern part was assigned to his son,

Muhammed Bello. After Shaykh ‘Uthman’s death in 1817, Abdullah relocated to Gwandu where he later became the Emir of Gwandu. During the Shehu’s lifetime he had functioned as his wazir. He later devoted himself wholly to religion after the time the town of Kalembina was sacked around 1820. He thus left the conduct of affairs to his son Muhammad till his death in 1829.

HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WEST AFRICA  
 ‘Abdullah literary output is wide-ranging and is difficult to categorise. He wrote extensively on almost all issues affecting his society and that served as a reference point for generations about two hundred years ago. He wrote extensively on administration most especially on the rights and duties of both leadership and the followership. Over one hundred books were discovered among his literary works.

Like his brother ‘Uthman, he wrote on the theory of Islamic government, but less to justify the Jihad than to lay down actual principles of state. Like him, too, he wrote on Sufism and *Fiqh*, but again wrote more extensively on principles (*Usul al-Fiqh*) than on specific issues. The two fields in which he was distinguished were Arabic language and *Tafsir*. His interest in *Tafsir* led to the voluminous *Diya’ al –Ta’wil* which has been widely used in West Africa, and later had its abridged version under the title *Kifayat al-Du’afa’ al – Sudan*. He has several works on Quranic sciences. He also wrote on Hadith, Asceticism, Logic, prophetic ethics and Fulani genealogy. In addition to his Arabic works, he composed poetry in Hausa. Four volumes have so far been published with analytical commentaries of varying opinions. These are: *Tazyin al- waraqaat*, *Diya’ hukkami*, *Miftahu Tafsiri*, and *Diya’ Siyasati*.

\

Among the written works firmly attributed to Shaykh ‘Abdullah are:

- *Bayan al- arkan wa al- Shurut li al-Tariqa al- Sufiyyah wa talqin al- asma’ al- sab’ ‘ala tariqah al- Khalwatiyyah.*
- *Bayan al- nasiha al- warida min al- ahadith al- sahihah.*
- *Daw’ al- Musalli.*
- *‘Alamat al- Muttabi’ in li sunnah rasul Allah.*
- *Alfiyyat al- usul wa bina’ al- furu’ ‘alayha.*
- *Asanid al- Bukhari.*
- *Miftah al- qari’ sharh siraj al- Bukhari.*
- *Minan al- Mannan li man arada shu‘ab al- iman.*
- *Sabil al- salama fi al- imama.*
- *Sabil al- sunna al- muwassil ila al- janna.*
- *Nazm al- Wusta.*
- *Tahdhib al- ihsan min khisal al- shaytan.*
- *Taqrib fi ‘ilm al- awliya’ ahl- al- dhawq. - Tariq al- salihin.*
- *Tazyin al- waraqat bi jam‘ ba‘d ma li min waraqat.*
- *Talkhis al- hisn*
- *Al- Bahr al- Muhit.*
- *Qasa’id (of different letters, i.e., rhyme ending). One of them, Qasidah al- Daliyyah, will be analysed in this unit.*
- *Rawd al- ‘ashiq fi madh khayr al- khala’iq.*
- *Qawa’id al- salat ma ‘a qawa’id al- falah.*
- *Dawa’ al- waswas wa al- ghafalat fi al- salat wa qira’at al- Qur’an wa al- da‘wat.*
- *Dir‘al- kay’a fi hayja’ ‘ilm al- hay’a.*
- *Diya’ ahl al- ihtisab ‘ala tariqah al- Sunnah wa al- sawab.*
- *Diya’ ahl al- rashad fi ahkam al- hijra wa al- jihad wa al- sunnah fi siyasa al- ‘ibad.*
- *Diya’ al- anam fi hukm al- halal wa al- haram.*
- *Diya’ al- fawa’id. - Sabil al- najat.*
- *Siraj Jami’al- Bukhari.*
- *Sulalat al- miftah. Adab al- ‘adat ‘ala Sunnah al- rasul wa tabi’ihi al- sadat.*
- *Adab al- Mu ‘ashara li talab al- najat fi al- dunya wa al- akhirah.*
- *Akhlaq al- Mustafa.*
- *Diya’ al- Muqtadin li al- Khulafa’ al- rashidin.*
- *Diya’ al- hukkam fi ma lahum wa ‘alayhim min al- ahkam.*
- *Diya’ al- imam fi islah al- anam.*
- *Diya’ al- khulafa’.*
- *Al- Tibyan li huquq al- ikhwan.*
- *Diya’ al- mujahid humat al- din al- rashidin.*
- *Diyat ‘ulum al- din*

- *Fath al- Latif al- Wafi bi 'ilmay al- 'arud wa al- qawafi.*
- *Fath al- basher fi 'ilm al- tabsir.*
- *Al- hisn al- rasin.*
- *Ida' al- nusukh man akhadhtu 'anhu min al- shuyukh. - Lubab al- madkhal fi adab al- din wa al- fadl.*
- *Diya' al- qawa'id WA al- nathr al- fawa'id li ahl al- Maqasid.*
- *Diya' al- Sanad.*
- *Al- lu'lu' al- masun fi sadaf al- qawa'id al- 'uyun.*
- *Matiyyah al- zad ILA al- ma'ad.*
- *Al- Miftah li al- tafsir.*
- *Nayl al- maram min shiyam al- kiram.*
- *Al- Nasa'ih fi ahamm al- masalih.*

AN EXCERPT FROM “IDA'AL- NUSUKH MAN AKHADHTU 'ANHU MINA AL- SHUYUKH” OF ABDULLAH BIN FUDI

This work is a compilation of names of scholars who benefitted 'Abdullah with their wealth of knowledge and teachers of his brother, 'Uthman bin Fudi. It is a combination of both prose and poetry. The Arabic text of the work is as follows:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله الذي انعم علينا بنعمة الإيمان والإسلام، وهدانا بسيدنا محمد عليه أفضل الصلاة والسلام، وعلى آله وأصحابه الأعلام، وجميع شيوخ الذين هم أصحاب التعلم والإعلام.
2. أما بعد، فيقول الفقير إلى الله عبد الله بن محمد قد سئح في خاطري أن أكتب الشيوخ الذين أخذت عنهم واستفدت منهم إشهاراً لهم وتعليماً لمن جهلهم وإعلاماً لمستندني في النقل. وربما ذكرت من انجزّ الكلام إليه من شيوخهم وغيرهم لفائدة. والله أسأل أن يسهل ذلك بمنه وكرمه. وسميته "إيداع النسوخ من أخذت عنه من الشيوخ".
3. وأولهم هو الذي أخذت القرءان منه وهو محمد ولقبه فودي بفاء مضمومة ضمّة إشمام وبعد الواو دال مهملة مضمومة وبعدها ياء ممالّة، ومعناه في لغتنا الفقيه وهو ابن عثمان بن صالح بن هارون بن محمد الملقب غورط وهو ممن تأمر على قبيلتنا فيما نسمع وكذا أبوه جبّ بن محمد ثنب بن أيوب بن ماسران بن بوب باب بن موسى جُكَلّ.....

## TRANSLATION

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God who has granted us the favour of faith and Islam, and has guided us by our master Muhammad, on whom be most excellent blessing and peace, and upon his family his noble Companions, and all the Shaykhs who teach and are learned.
2. Now the needy of God, ‘Abdullah bin Muhammad says: It occurred to my heart that I should record in writing the Shaykhs from whom I acquired knowledge and by whom I profited, in order to make them known, and for the instruction of those ignorant of them, and for the information of him who relies on me in transmitting knowledge. Sometimes I have mentioned Shaykhs of them and of others than them to whom certain speech has been attributed, in order that it may be of use, and it is God who I ask to make that easy by His favour and his generosity. I have called it ‘*the repository of texts- those of the Shaykhs from whom I took knowledge*’.
3. The first of them was my father from whom I learnt the Qur’an. He was Muhammad whose nickname was Fudi with *fa* pronounced with the *damma* which gives to one vowel a scent of another, and after the *waw dal* without diacritical points, pronounced with *damma* and after it *ya*’ inflected with *kasra*.

Its meaning in our language is ‘one learned in the law’. He was ibn ‘Uthman ibn Salih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad nicknamed Ghurtu, and he was one of those who were in authority over our tribe, according to what we have heard. Thus also his father Jubbu bin Muhammad Thanbu bin Ayyub bin Marsirana bin Buba Baba bin Musa Jukullu....

Shaykh ‘Abdullah had many poetical works to his credit. He states in his *Tazyin al- Waraqat* that his first composition of note was a *takhmis* (that is, rendering into pentastiches) of the panegyric *Daliyyah* which his brother composed on Prophet Muhammad. Unfortunately, this poem which, he composed in 1198 A.H/1784 A.D., is reported to have got lost. In 1202 A.H / 1788 A.H, he composed another panegyric on the Prophet, which was *Mu‘aradah* (i.e., emulation of poem in its theme, metre and rhyme letter) of his brother’s *Daliyyah*.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the life and the contribution of Abdullah bin Fudi to Islamic thought in West Africa.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Shaykh Abdullahi bin Fudi was a religious leader just like his elder brother; he was a prolific writer, a valiant warrior, an astute politician, a competent administrator, a devoted teacher and a pious religious leader. He lived his life in accordance to the dictates of Islam following the foot step of his brother, ‘Uthman bin Fodio. His contribution to Islamic thought can never be over-emphasised.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

Abdullah bin Fudi was born in 1764 and died in July 1829. He commenced his life with the learning of the Quran which he acquired from his father who was a scholar and a devoted Muslim. He later studied under his brother Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi and later under scholars such as his uncle, Muhammad bin Raj, Muhammad Thambu bin

Abdullah and al-Hajj Jibril bin ‘Umar. He partook in his brother’s jihad. He, during the Jihad struggle, left his countrymen for laxity in their religious affairs and inclination to worldly affairs and later came back to them relocating to Gwandu as the Emir. His life was dedicated to Islam like that of his brother, ‘Uthman bin Fudi. He is renowned for Islamic scholarship; a prolific Arabic writer, an administrator, a Jihadist, a poet, and a religious leader. His contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa is greatly appreciated by the history.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the contribution of Abdullah bin Fudi to Islam and its thought in West Africa.
2. Compare and contrast between Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi and Abdullah bin Fudi as prolific writers, preachers, Jihadists, administrators and religious leaders.
3. Examine the themes and features of *Tazyin al-Waraqat* of Abdullah bin Fudi.
4. Appraise the content of *‘Ida’ al-Nusukh* of Shaykh ‘Abdullah bn Fudi.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Trimingham, J.S. (1970): *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press.

*Naijiria Galadant, A.S (n.d). Harakah al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah wa adabuha fi Naijiriyya. Cairo: Dar-Al-Ma‘arif.*



Hunwick, J.O. (2006). *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.

Hunwick, J.O. (1995). *Arabic Literature of Africa, Vol.II. The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa*, Leiden: The Netherlands E.J. Brill.

Al -Ilori, A. A. (1971). *Al Islam fi Naijiriya wa ash- Shaykh 'Uthman bun Fudi al-Fulaati*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed).

Ahmed, A. F. (1980): *Arabic Sufi Poetry of Northern Nigeria*. A dissertation in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan.

## UNIT 5 SHAYKH IBRAHIM NIASS AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WEST AFRICA

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Religious activities of some notable *Sufi* scholars of different orders, such as the Tijaniyyah and Qadiriyyah aided the growth of Islam in West Africa. Initially, most of the pioneer Islamic teachers, preachers and Jihadists who implanted the seed of Islam for subsequent germination in the land were Sufi scholars. Hence, their efforts expended towards the growth of Islam and are worth documentation. In this unit, a famous Sufi scholar who dedicated his life to Islam and Sufism shall be looked at with a view to re-counting his contributions to Islamic thought in West Africa.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Write the biography of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass.
- Outline his contributions to Islam and *Sufi* scholarship in particular.
- Discuss his contributions to Islamic thought in West Africa.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Shaykh Ibrahim Niass al-Kawlakhi was born in 1900/1902 to the household of Alhaji Abdullah Nas (1840–1922), the main representative of the Tijānī Sufi Order.

His birth was in the evening hours of one Thursday towards the end of the lunar month of Rajab in the year 1320 A.H. His birth place was a village called Taybah Naseen between the Senegalese city of Kawlakh and the border of Gambia. It is situated in the Sin Saloume Province of the present day Republic of Senegal. An ‘Adnan (the great grandfather

of Prophet Muhammad, SAW) descendant, Bakrin bin Muhammad al-Amin bin Muhammad Sambu bn ar-Rida was a great *Sufi* scholar of Tijaniyyah Order at that time.

Shaykh's mother, Aishah bint Ibrahim was famous for her uprightness, piety and religiousity. In 1910 C.E, when Shaykh Ibrahim was about eight or ten years old, he moved with his father, who initiated him into Tijaniyyah Order, to the city of Kawlah where they established the *Zawiyah* (religious center) of Lewna Naseen. His father also was initiated by Shaykh Mamadu (Muhammad) Diallo of Futa Jallon in 1875. He renewed his initiation with Shaykh Sukayraj of Fez. Shaykh Ibrahim's elder brother later became the khalifah of their father after his (father) death in 1922.

Shaykh Ibrahim combined farming with teaching at his youthful age in the nearby village of Koosi Mbitteyeen. At that time, he was not more than twenty-two years old. As a role model for others, his Sufi inclination did not obscure him from having source of livelihood which he did with his own hands. It was in 1929 declared that he had been given the secrets of Knowledge of God, something no one else possessed and that anyone who wished to know God should follow him. He thus became the Khalifah of Shaykh Tijani in the Tijaniyyah Order, a position yet to be attained by anyone at that time. He later gained many people into his followership. Although his disciples remain a minority within Senegal, most of his father's disciples became his followers in spite of his junior status in the family. His fame spread throughout the countryside very fast to an extent that several leaders of the Arab 'Idaw 'Ali tribe from Mauritania became his disciples.

As far as his education is concerned, his father, Abdullah, was his first teacher. He received his early Arabic and Islamic education from him. He also memorised the whole of the Holy Qur'an at a very early age. After this he learned other Islamic sciences. He later studied works of North African and West writers together with works of great Arab scholars comprising both their prose and poetry works. From the age of twenty, Shaykh Ibrahim started preaching while at the same time taught Arabic and Islamic subjects. He used his father's *zawiyah* as a centre for this. It was when the place could no longer accommodate his students and disciple together with the crisis between his brother's disciples and his own that he moved together with his disciples to a new place on the outskirts of the town called *Al-Madinah Al-Jadidah* (the new city). In 1930 he began to build a *Zawiyah* which could accommodate about ten thousand people. This *zawiyah* has since been serving many purposes. It is used primarily as a spiritual centre and for imparting Islamic education. Furthermore, his fame spread rapidly across the territories of his country and beyond. This was due to his teaching and preaching

activities. His students cut across the whole Africa, even up to Europe. As the students return to their various villages, towns and cities they continued to spread their master's fame through teaching, establishment of *Zawiyah*, and preaching.

Shaykh Ibrahim had many works to his credit ranging from Arabic Language, Sirah, Fiqh, and above all, Tasawwuf. These works are up to seventy. Some of his literary works contain information that would guide his disciples and Muslims generally. He also used to disseminate both the doctrines of Tijaniyyah *Sufi* Order and the teachings of Islam together. His group formed the largest branch of Tijaniyyah in West Africa. His *da'wah* activities made him visit many countries on the globe, such as; New York (USA), London (UK), and Mexico in addition to many West African countries.

Moreover, Shaykh Ibrahim was an erudite poet. He had many poetical works to his credit. The subject matters of the poems vary. We have those that sing the praise of Tijaniyyah Sufi Order, the Eulogy of the prophet Muhammad, Sufism, and others on Islamic teachings. However, some of his works are published while many of his works are still unpublished. Among the published ones are:

1. *Tabsiratul-Anam fi annal-ilma huwa 'l-Imam* (Showing the people that (acquisition of) knowledge is the leader of all obligations).
2. *Al-Bayan wa at-Tabyin an at-Tijaniyyah wa at-Tijaniyyah* (Expositions and Explanatory Comments on the Tijaniyyah Order and its Adhrents).
3. *Nujum al-Huda fi Kawn nabiiyin Muhammad afdal man da 'aila al-Haqq wa hada* (The stars of Guidance (establishing) Prophet Muhammad's Position as the Noblest (of those) who invited and guided to the Truth).
4. *Raf 'al-Mallam an man qabada wa rafa 'a iqtida'an bi Khayr al-Anam*. (Exoneration of one who folds up (his hands) and raises them up (in prayer) following the example of the best of mankind).
5. *Kashif al-Albas (an-Faydah al-khatm Abinal-'Abbas* (Removing all the ambiguities about the spiritual flood of the seal of the saints) Abu al-Abbas) (Ahmad at-Tijani).

Shaykh Ibrahim poetical works are embedded with Islamic teachings, eulogy of the Prophet (SAW), eulogy of Sufi leaders as well as Tijaniyyah doctrines, Sufism.

Some of his poetical works are:

- i. *Ruh al-Adab* (The spirit of (Sufi) Ethics).
- ii. *Tib al-Anfas fi Madhi Abi al-'Abbas* (Sweet for disciplines' hearts in praise of Abu al-'Abbas).
- iii. *Aqidah Ahl-ar-Rusukh* (The creed of the learned people).
- iv. *Nayl al-Mafaz* (Achieving success).
- v. *Nuzhah al-'Asma' wa al-Afkar fi Madh al-'Amin wa ma'ani al-Mukhtar* (Felicitation of the Ears and Thoughts in Praise of the Trustworthy and the Attributes of the Chosen Prophet).

He also had poems on different themes. Among them are: devotion to the Prophet's love, attacking the detractors of Islam, spiritual experiences and feelings, panegyrics of the Prophet, the beauty of Islam, addressing the Prophet, doctrine of Muhammadan reality, and supplicatory poem. Some of his speeches in different international meetings and conferences have been compiled and titled *Jawahir ar-Rasa'il* (Pearls of Letters) by a scholar named Ahmad Barnawi of Maiduguri, Nigeria. All these are his contribution to Islamic thought in particular and to Islam in general.

#### AN EXCERPT FROM HIS POEM ON THE BEAUTY OF ISLAM

- |                               |                              |     |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----|
| شممت أريج الهاشمي فأرخوا      | خيال سري أم حل طيبة كولخ     | 1.  |
| يعيد المقفي وهو المسك يضمخ    | ختام نبوات النبيين لات رى    | 2.  |
| أتانا بدين ثابت الاس يرس خ    | خليلي أحمد الخاتم الذي       | 3.  |
| بأن إلهي بارئى من يؤبخ        | فأركانہ التوحيد هل مان قائل  | 4.  |
| خلت من صلاة قط فالشأن أشمخ    | كذاك نصلي ما درينا شريعة     | 5.  |
| وهل عاب صوما عاقل من يؤرخ     | نصوم كما صام النبيون قبلنا   | 6.  |
| من الشمس أضوا بل من الشم أرسخ | كذاك زكاة ثم حجّ فكلها       | 7.  |
| ولا عمر الداران أين المويخ    | ولو منع التزويج ما كان عابد  | 8.  |
| تعود لنسوان إلى يوم ينفخ      | وتعداد زوج الشرع جاء لحكمة   | 9.  |
| تخالف أحكاما وكيف توبخ        | فإن لم يكن تلفى جموعا عوانسا | 11. |
| فظاه على الأك وان يسمو ويشمخ  | نعم وغزا ردّ اعتداء وما عدا  | 11. |
| وءال وصحب ما المحب يؤرخ       | عليه صلاة الله ثم سلامه      | 12. |

#### TRANSLATION

1. Is a spirit moving or has the city of Kawlakh been transformed into Taybah?  
I begin to feel the fragrance of the Hashimite Prophet.
2. The seal of all the Prophets. No other Prophet is to be expected after the Guide who has been anointed with musk.
3. My real friend is Ahmad the last Prophet who came to us with a firm and well established religion.
4. Belief in the unity of God is (one of) its pillars. Do you call one who declares Allah as his creator a liar? O you who reproach?
5. We also observe prayers. We do not know of a religion devoid of prayer. The matter (of prayer) is high indeed.

6. We fast as Prophets did before us. O you who reproach! Have you ever seen a sane man condemning fasting?
7. So are Zakat and Hajj. All these are clearer than the sun and more firmly rooted than the mountain.
8. Had marriage not been instituted, there would be no more worshippers and no one again to inhabit the land. Why then do you reproach?
9. Polygamy is allowed for some wisdom it has. It is in the women's interest. It will forever be like that.
10. If (marriage) is not instituted, you would have seen groups of unmarried ladies. This is contrary to wisdom. Why again do you rebuke me?
11. Truly the Prophet fought wars to check transgression. The Prophet *Taha* is high above all human beings.
12. May Allah's peace and blessings be unto him and his companions and associates as long as the lover (continues to) put his experiences on record.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Briefly discuss the life and works of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Considering Sufism as an integral part of Islam in West Africa by some Muslims, Shaykh Ibrahim Niass' contribution to its spread, especially along with the Tijaniyyah Order, is worth mentioning. While disseminating its doctrines, it was done side by side with the dissemination of Islamic doctrines. Having been recognized as the Khalifah of Tijaniyyah, he was revered in nooks and crannies, where his followers are found. It was said that when Shaykh Ibrahim travelled to Fez in Morocco, Shaykh Ahmad Tijani's pair of sandals, walking sticks and important books including a hand-written copy of *Jawahir al-Ma'ani* endorsed and certified by Shaykh Ahmad Tijani were handed over to him by his family.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

Shaykh Ibrahim was born by a *Sufi* parent. It was from his father he got his elementary education and thus committed the whole Quran into memory in his tender age. Likewise, he attained competency in both Arabic and Islamic knowledge at youthful age having studied Arabic prose and poetry works of eminent scholars. He moved to Kawlakh with his father who initiated him into Tijaniyyah Sufi Order. He later claimed the *Khalifah* of the founder of the Order, Shaykh Ahmad Tijani. Shaykh took farming as his occupation from which he acquired his

livelihood together with teaching and preaching of Islamic cultures. He taught both Arabic and Islamic subjects. With his oratory power, the dissemination of Islamic culture and the doctrines of Tijaniyyah Sufi Order, he was privileged to travel to different places on earth. As a prolific writer, he did not let all other *da'wah* activities prevent him from writing. He had to his credit, many Arabic literary works, including different sermons of scholarship standard.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1- Write an abridged version of the biography of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass.
- 2- Mention his contributions to *Sufi* scholarship in particular and Islam in general.
- 3- Shaykh Ibrahim is an Islamic thinker. Discuss.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Tijani D.A.A. (1991). *Sufism in the Arabic Poems of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass Alkawlakhi*. An unpublished Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. University of Ibadan

Paden J.N (1973). *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Quadri Y.A (1981). *The Tijaniyyah in Nigeria: A case Study*, An unpublished Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan.

Maigari M.T, (1979). *Al-Shaykh Ibrahim Niass a-Singhali: Hayatuhu wa ara'uhu wa ta 'limuhu*, Beirut: Dar-al-'Arabiyyah.

Y.A. Quadri. (1985). Islam and the modern age. *Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic*.

*Studies Quarterly Journal*, Jamia Millia Islamia, Jamia Nagar: New Delhi, Vol. XVI, No. 2.

**UNIT 6      SHAYKH ADAM ABDULLAH AL-  
ILURIY      AND HIS  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN  
WEST AFRICA**

**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi was an Islamic thinker from the Northern part of Nigeria as well as al- Hajj Umar al-Futi and Abdullah bin Fudi. The southern part of Nigeria also has their equals, to some extent, among whom is Adam Abdullah al-Ilori. In this unit, the biography and contributions of Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al- Iluri’ to Islamic thought in West Africa shall be examined.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- give an account on who ‘Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al- Iluri’ was.
- discuss the contribution of Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Iluri’ to Arabic/ Islam thought in West Africa.
- assess, at least, one of the Arabic Literary works of Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al- Iluri’ written on Islam.

**3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri was born in 1917, at Wasa, a place near Djougou, Republic of Benin, to a Yoruba scholar from Omoda, Balogun Ajikobi Ward, Ilorin. His mother was a princess of the town in Republic of Benin. He grew up in Benin until about the age of thirteen when his parents returned to the city of Ilorin.

Historically, his ancestors were from old Oyo-Ile in Southwestern Nigeria, before his great grand father, Abdullah, migrated to Ilorin, as a religious teacher and preacher of Islam. He initially studied in Ilorin before coming to Ibadan in search of knowledge under Shaykh Salih



Esinniobiwa, a student of Yusuf Agbaji and Shaykh ‘Umar Agbaji. He also studied in Lagos. It was in Lagos he was positively influenced by the Kano scholar Adam na-Ma‘aji.

In 1946, he traveled to Sudan and Egypt and eventually to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage. That was his first sojourn out of the country. When he was in Egypt, he studied briefly at Al-Azhar University, visited members of the Nigerians in diaspora and also met with Hasan al-Banna in Egypt. After his arrival in Nigeria, he was employed as Arabic and Islamic teacher at Ansar al-Din Society of Nigeria at Abeokuta. This he did for some time. His second opportunity of travelling to Sudan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia was in 1951. However, his contact with Arabs who lived in

Lagos together with two of the prominent scholars of the Hijaz, al-Sayyid al-Alawi al-Maliki and Hasan al-Mashshat (d. 1979) greatly spurred him to devote his life entirely to Arabic education. In 1989, he was honoured by Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri later left Ansar al-Din and founded his own Arabic school in Abeokuta in 1952 which was later moved to Agege, Lagos in 1955 and named *Markaz al-Ta‘lim al-‘Arabi al-Islami*. He was the principal of this school till his death. It was in this Arabic and Islamic centre that he was able to air and echo his personal opinion on both Arabic and Islamic issues, as a scholar. His contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa is a function of the centre to the Muslims of the Western Africa sub-region. Among such activities are: Daily prayers (Five times in a Day), *Jumu‘ah* (Friday Prayer), religious meetings at different times, Tafsir during the month of Ramadan, as well as Festival prayers (*‘Id al-Fitr and ‘Id al-Adhaa*). This was coupled with the printing press where many Islamic printing works as well as his personal intellectual works were produced. Due to critical attitude he had towards religious and political leaders in northern Nigeria as a result of discriminatory behaviours they exhibit towards their southern Muslim counterparts, he founded the League of Imams and Alfas (*Rabitah al-A‘immah wa’l-‘Ulama’*) of the Yorubaland.

Many of the graduates of his Arabic and Islamic centre have turned out to be his ambassadors in both Nigeria and West African nations. Many of them are great Arabic and Islamic scholars now in Southwestern Nigeria. The two prominent Hijaz scholars whom he met while in Saudi Arabia were among the pioneer founders of the Muslim World League. Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri was also a member of this Islamic body for many years. He had many Arabic publications (over seventy publications) to his credit. His scholarly work is widespread throughout Nigeria, North Africa, Middle East, and South East Asia. This could be counted as his first work in authorship. Some of his students and many

other scholars have also spread his works in the Western world. Nevertheless, some of his books were published for learning purposes. He died on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1992 and was buried in his Arabic centre, Markaz, Agege.

#### AL-ILURI'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARABIC/ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WEST AFRICA

The following are part of his contributions to Arabic/Islamic Thought in:

- *Falsafah al- nubuwwah. - Kitab al- ikhtilaj.*
  - *Al-Fawaqih al- saqitah*
  - *Qawa 'du al-salat*
  - *Nasim al-sabaa fi akhbar al-Islam wa 'ulama' bilad Yuruba*
  - *Sharh Jawharah al-tawhid - Asrar al-Fasahah.*
  - *Durus al-tawhid wa'l-'aqidah.*
  - *Nizam al- ta 'lim al- 'Arabi fi Nayjiriya.*
  - *Qal al-Shaykh.*
  - *Anashid markaziyya.*
  - *Al- Tarikh al- Islami.*
  - *Matn al-Waraqat fi usul al- fiqh. Taqrib al-Nahw. Nusus al-tawhid wa adillat al- i'tiqad.*
  - *'Uyun al-lamiyyah al-'arabiyyah.*
  - *Al- Islam al-yawm wa- ghad fi Nayjiriya.*
  - *Muqaddimah al- risalah.*
  - *Al- Islam bayn du 'atihi wa ad 'iya'ih.*
  - *Kitab al- wa 'iz.*
- 
- *Arba 'una Bastiyyah.*
  - *Idhn al- hakim bi sharh nazm al- karim.*
  - *Al- Imam al- Maghīlī wa atharuhu fi'l- hukuma al- Islamiyyah fi'l- qurun al- Wustaa fi nayjiriya.*
  - *Taqrib al- lugha al- 'Arabiyyah li- abna' Ifriqiyya al- gharbiyyah.*
  - *A'mal Markaz al- Ta 'lim al- 'Arabi al- Islami, Nayjiriya, fi 'ishrina*
  - *'amman.*
  - *Ma la yulamu 'alayhi 'ulama' Nayjiriya.*
  - *Ashi 'ah al- 'uqul wa'l- nuqul 'ala Adwa' al- qindil wa'l- fudul.*
  - *Aslu qaba'il Yuruba.*
  - *Dalil qira'at al-mushaf.*
  - *Athar al- falsafa wa'l-tasawwuf wa'l- 'ilm fi masirah al- da 'wah al- Islamiyyah.*
  - *Bayan al- mirath fi'l- Islam*
  - *Khulasah sirah al- nabawiyyah.*

## CONTENT OF *AL- ISLAM FI NAIJIRIYA* OF ADAM ABDULLAH AL-ILORI

The work was firstly produced by Adam al-Ilori in the 1950s while the second edition was in 1971. It contains history of the past events regarding Islam in Nigeria. It also contains the description of the following in its content:

- An overview of Nigeria.
- Between North and West Africa.
- Islam in West Africa.
- ‘Uqbah bin Nafi’: Conqueror of West Africa.
- Empires of West Africa.
- Ghana Empire.

Al-Moravid’s nation.

Mali Empire.

Songhai Empire.

Muhammad bin Abi Bakri Ture Kanem-Borno Empire.

- Islam in Hausa land.
- Islam in Yoruba land.
- Islam and its development in Niger valley.
- Sets of people that brought Islam to West Africa.
- Qadiriyyah Sufi Order.
- Tijaniyyah Sufi Order.
- Sanusiyyah Sufi Order.
- Relationship between Nigeria and other Islamic World.
- Arabic culture in West Africa.
- Teaching curriculum in the Qur’anic schools. - Adult schools.
- Schools curriculum
- Eminent Arabic culture proponents in Niger Valley.
- Scholars in the land of Wangara and Tukrur.
- Scholars of Timbuktu and Jenne.
- Scholars of Hahiri Agadez and Takkidah.
- Scholars of Baghram and Borno.
- Scholars of Hausa land.
- Ibn Fudi and those with him and those after him.
- Scholars of Yoruba land.
- Judicial system in Niger and its surrounding.
- Al- Maghīlī’s collection on administrative/ ruling affairs which he wrote for Amir Kano.
- Another legacy left behind by al- Maghīlī for Sultan of Kano.

- A correspondence from Imam al-Suyuti to rulers of Takrur land and to Sultan Kashina.

Who is al-Maghīlī and who is al-Suyuti.

Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi al-Fulani.

The Fulanis and their emergence.

‘Uthman bin Fudi genealogy.

Ibn Fudi: a Maliki a Jihadist.

- Ibn Fudi: the attracted (majdhub).
- Between ibn Fudi and ibn abd al-Wahhab.
- State of the land before Ibn Fudi commenced the guidance.
- Ibn Fudi’s method in preaching.
- His migration and beginning of his Caliphate.
- The completion of the oath of allegiance (to him) and the standing of the Caliphate.
- The flag bearers of Ibn Fudi and his workers.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in Kashina’s regions.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in Zaria regions.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in Bauchi and Gombe’s kingdom.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in Kano.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in upper Benin.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in Dorih and Hadejia.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in Nupe land.
- The fall of Borno in Ibn Fudi’s rule. - Between Ibn Fudi and al-Kanemi.
- Extract of Muhammad Bello’s response.
- Ibn Fudi’s flag in Yoruba land.
- Afonja: a warrior exile in Ilorin.
- The emergence of Islamic government in Yoruba land.
- Islam in Dahomey.
- Islam in Benin land.
- Islam in Ibo land.
- Among the contributing factors to the spread of Islam in Yoruba land.
- Role of the preachers in spread of Islam.

Islamic celebrating parties in Yoruba land.

Impact of Islam in Sudan.

The entering of French into West Africa.

Cold crudase and the deterioration of the Muslims.

The Islamic organizations and their schools.

- Ahmadiyyah in Nigeria.
  - Arabic schools and religious institutes.
  - Dual learning.
  - Colonial rules.
  - The beginning of nationalism awareness in West Africa.
  - (Political) Parties and unity of government.
  - Cause of (political) tension between the North and the South.
  - Assassination of the northern leaders.
  - Separate government in Biafra.
  - Among the secret of our civil war.
  - Among the causes of our victory over Biafra.
  - Muslims' predicaments at present.
  - Islam today and tomorrow in Africa.
- Conclusion

This book shows the scholastic capacity of Shaykh Adam al-Iluri in history and historiography. It is a reference for Islamic history in Nigeria in particular and West Africa in general. It is wide in scope in spite of little description of some areas that needed to be expanded. Notwithstanding, that creates a gap for other scholars to fill in their works.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Write a short biography of Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory.

Mention the areas in which Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory contributed to Islamic thought in West Africa.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The contributions of shaykh Adam Al-Iluri to Islamic thought in West Africa are of great importance in that no literary contributions of other scholars among his contemporaries in Yorubaland could be equated with his. He was an erudite jurist, linguist and historian. In addition to this, he was a prolific writer, an orator, a competent Arabic teacher, a spiritual guardian, an Imam as well as a radical thinker. Despite all the challenges he faced during the course of establishing the centre and thereafter, he was able to engrave his name on the rock of history of Islam/Arabic in West Africa.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

Shaykh Adam was born in 1917 to a religious father and a royal mother. He acquired Arabic and Islamic knowledge both in Nigeria and outside the country. He founded his Arabic school which was later moved to Agege, Lagos as a full-fledged Arabic and Islamic centre. Many Nigerians and West African citizens have passed through the center as students. He was a prolific writer that had more than seventy publications written in Arabic. He also owned Arabic printing press, where literary works are produced. His contributions to Arabic and Islamic thought in West Africa cannot be over-estimated, most especially in the area of authorship. He died in 1992 and was buried in the Arabic and Islamic centre at Agege Lagos.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Write the biography of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri.
- Discuss the contributions of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Iluri' to Islamic thought in West Africa.
- Highlight the content of *al-Islam fi Najiriya* of Adam al-Iluri.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

Hunwick, J.O. (1995). *Arabic Literature of Africa*, Vol.II. The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa, Leiden. The Netherlands E.J. Brill.

Al-Iluri, A. A (1971). *Al Islam fi Najiriya wa ash-Shaykh 'Uthman bun Fudi alFulaati* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

Adetunji, B. *et al.* (2011). *Al-Mutala'ah Al-Tawjihiyah li- tullab al-'Arabiyyah fi Ifriqiyya al- Gharbiyyah.* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Total Qiblah Ventures.

**MODULE 3                    CONTRIBUTIONS                    OF                    ITINERANT  
PREACHERS/SCHOLARS                    TO                    ISLAMIC  
SCHOLARSHIP IN WEST AFRICA UNDER  
THE COLONIAL RULE AND AFTER  
POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE**

- Unit 1                    Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba and their contributions to  
Islamic thought in West Africa
- Unit 2                    Islamic Scholarship in West Africa under the Colonial  
Rule
- Unit 3                    Islamic Scholarship in West Africa after Political  
Independence
- Unit 4                    Revisions

**UNIT1                    AL-MAGHĪLĪ AND AHMAD BABA AND THEIR  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN  
WEST AFRICA**

**CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
- 3.1    Muhammad bin Abdul-Karim Al-Maghīlī
- 3.2    Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0 T Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

**1.0    INTRODUCTION**

The struggle for the stay of Islam on West African soil was not single-handedly championed by the natives of the land alone. It was greatly corroborated with the efforts of non-native scholars. Some of them were itinerant scholars/preachers while some later settled down on the land. In this unit, effort shall be made to unveil the contributions of two foreign scholars to Islamic thought in West Africa. They are:

Muhammad bin Abdul-Karim al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the life of Muhammad bin Abdul-Karim al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti
- outline the contributions of Muhammad bin Abdul-Karim al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti to Islamic thought in West Africa
- describe the content of one of the Arabic literary works of Muhammad bin Abdul-Karim al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti on Islam.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Muhammad Bin Abdul-Karim Al-Maghīlī

Muhammad bin Abd Al-Karim bin Muhammad (Umar) Al-Maghili (d. 1503/4 or 1505/6) was born at Tilimsani in Twat (a city situated in modern-day north-west Algeria) into a Berber family of the Maghila tribe. He, commonly known as Muhammad al-Maghīlī, moved to Fass where he completed his studies. He was a Sunni of Imam Malik school of thought who does not take the principle of Ijtihad (personal opinion). He was a scholar and jurist responsible for much of the traditional religious law of the area which later became one of the principal texts for study of the legal history of the Western Sudan. As a Muslim jurist, theologian and reformer, his impact on both North and West Africa was far felt more than impacts of many other African scholars. He started to be recognized at the time he largely spearheaded a theological debate and discuss which eventually led, in 1492, to the successful battle against both Jews and Christian communities who migrated to Twat after the Roman Sack of Jerusalem. He expelled them from Tilmisan and their established synagogue was destroyed. This happened in the south of the strait of Gibraltar at the same time the Christian fundamentalist of the north were expelling their own doubtful followers. When the local African community opposed al-Maghīlī's position, he appealed to authorities in North Africa and his course was supported. Being a staunch proponent of Sunnah and very hostile to non-Muslims and Jews in particular, he waged a campaign against the Banu-Wattas in the area. This was because of their inability to check the growth of Christian power and Jewish influence in Morocco, though the campaign and opposition was not fruitful. As a result of this fruitless campaign against Banu Wattas, he did not feel comfortable to live in that environment again; he therefore came to West Africa. Al-Maghīlī's activities while in North Africa to see that the land was cleansed from unIslamic materials and activities later was made him leave for Western



Sudan. He embarked on a series of travels, which spread his influence throughout the Western Sudan.

Here, he became one of the greatest scholars in both Kano and Gao. While he was in Western Africa, he exerted a more peaceful and scholastic influence as a great renovator of Islam in places like; Gao, Katsina, Air, Takidda, and Kano. He also adopted a systematic study of Islamic sciences by subjecting Islamic knowledge in West Africa to discussion, dialogue and was interested to make his students and his fellow scholars refer to the Quran and the Sunnah. All his efforts at seeing to the upliftment of Islam in his homeland before his sojourn to West Africa could be counted among his contribution to Islamic thought over there.

While he was on the soil of Western Sudan, he served as an advisor in Hausaland, to Muhammad Rumfa, Emir of the Hausa city of Kano. He was the strong central pillar behind the throne, directing Rumfa in his plan to make Kano an authentic Islamic state. He wrote his influential treatise on government, titled *The Obligations of Princes* as a handbook for the King. He also corresponded with Rumfa throughout his life and later wrote different religious verdicts and political advice for the ruler. He thus had particular influence over Muhammed Rumfa of Kano for all these. Meanwhile, his handbook on government (*The Obligation of the Princes*) could be favourably compared with what obtained in Italy at that time. It was written about the same time Cicero's classical treatise *On Moral Obligation* and Machiavelli's *The Prince* were published in the second half of the fifteenth century.

#### AN EXCERPT FROM THE TREATISE OF ADVICE WRITTEN BY AL- MAGHĪLĪ FOR THE RULER OF KANO MUHAMMAD RUMFA

##### □ مجموعة المغيلي في شؤون الإمارة

كتبها لأمير كنو:

أما بعد: وفقك الله للتقوى، وعصمك من نزغان الهوى. فإن الإمارة خلافة من الله ونيابة عن رسول الله، فما أعظم فضلها، وما أثقل حملها، إن عدل الأمير ذبحته التقوى بقطع أوداج الهوى، وإن جار ذبحه الهوى بقطع أوداج التقوى. فعليك بتقوى الله (كل نفس ذائقة الموت فإنما توفون أجوركم يوم القيامة فمن زحزح عن النار وأدخل الجنة فقد فاز وما الحياة الدنيا إلا متاع الغرور).

**الباب الأول:** يجب على الأمير حسن النية في الإمارة، ويجب على كل ذي عقل وديانة أن يبتعد عنها إلا إذا لم يكن له بد منها، فيتوكل على الله فيها ويستعين به في أمره كله، وينوي أن ينال رضا الله في إصلاح أمور عباد الله الدينية والدنيوية. ويعلم أن الله ما ولاه عليهم ليكون سيدهم بل ليصلح لهم دينهم ودنياهم، ورأس كلّ بلية احتال به عن الرعية.

**الباب الثاني:** فيما يجب على الأمير من تحسين الهيئة في مجلسه بإظهار حب الخير وأهله وبغض الشرّ وأهله. وفي لباسه أن يلبس المباح

للرجال غير متشبه بالنساء ولا مفسد لبیت المال ولا يتزين بذهب ولا فضة ولا حرير..."

MEANING:

**Al- Maghīlī's compilation on affairs of rulership** He wrote it for the ruler of Kano:

Therefore, May Allah guide you to piety and protect you from the inspiration of the soul desire. Verily, political power is a vicegerency from Allah and representation of Allah's Messenger. What a great virtue it is and what a heavy burden/load it is. If a ruler is just (it means that) piety has slaughtered him by cutting the jugular vein of his soul's desire. And if he is unjust (it means that) soul desire has slaughtered him by cutting piety's jugular vein. It is therefore incumbent upon you to have the fear of Allah (Every soul shall taste death. You will be accorded your rewards on the day of resurrection, whoever is moved away from the hell fire and put into paradise has surely gained, and this life is nothing but a deceitful pleasure).

CHAPTER ONE: It is compulsory for the ruler (to have) good intention while in power. And it is good for every sane and religious person to move away from power (seeking authority) unless there is no way to avoid it. He has to rely on Allah in it and seek His assistance in all his affairs, and thus, must have the intention of attaining Allah's pleasure in reforming both religious and worldly affairs of His servants. He must know that Allah did not make him a guardian on them in order to become their master but to reform both their religion and their world. And it is a great misfortune for a ruler to shy away from responsibilities of his subjects.

\\ \\ \\

CHAPTER TWO: Among what is compulsory on the ruler (is) to have good appearance in his office by showing likeness for good and its upholders and (also show) hatred for evil and its upholders. On his dressing, he has to put on the acceptable (dress) for male, not resembling female and must not mismanage public treasury. He must (also) not use gold, silver or silk in his dressing...

It was also in Kano that Al-Maghīlī wrote his famous *al-Mantiq (Aristotelian Deductions)*. He taught the scholars of Kano what he knew and he was appointed as a judge and a verdict giver on cases that arose in the city. Thereafter, Al- Maghīlī moved to Katsina which also became a centre of Islamic learning during the fifteenth century. He spent some time there.

After his departure from Hausaland, he later moved to Gao where he collaborated with the ruler Askiya al-Hajj Muhammad. There, he met its ruler, Askiya Al-Haj Muhammad and instructed him in Islamic law. The ruler later contacted him on various issues and bestowed on him some favours. His influence was so strong that Askiya Muhammed asked him to answer questionnaires for him on Islamic practice. also asked him to

respond to seven issues that were creating problems for the ruler of Songhai. Among his questions was on the scholars who are in occult practices in which al-Maghīlī showed his uncompromising attitude in responding to the question by saying that those scholars are corrupt and are more harmful to Muslims than mischief makers. However, answers of al-Maghīlī to questions and questionnaires from Alhaji Askiya Muhammad are contained in manuscripts in the National Library in Algeria. Dozens of books and commentaries were also credited to him. There was a time when issues regarding the status of Logic in legal ruling (*Hukm shar'iyy*) erupted between Al-Maghīlī and As-Suyuti. The former opined that Logic is legal (*Halal*) while the latter opined that it is illegal (*Haram*). The argument had a space in the book, '*Tatriz ad-Dibaj*'. Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti, in his book *Nayl al-ibtihaj* mentioned twenty-one of them. Among his works are *Mughni al-labib fi sharh Mukhtasar Khalil*, *Iklil Mughni al-labib*, *al-Badr- al- Munir fi 'ulum al-tafsir*, *Misbah al-arwah fi 'usul al-falah*, *Kitab 'ajib fi karasin*, *sharh buyu' al- ajal.*, *miftah al- nazar fi ilm al- hadith*, *sharh al-Jumal fi al-mantiq* and *al-Mansiyat*. Original manuscripts of his work are available from the United Nations World Digital Library.

Al-Maghīlī's popularity continued to grow after his death. His book, *The Obligation of Princess* became a text for Muslim rulers who wish to apply the *Shari'ah* in their territory. For example, 'Uthman bin Fudi used *The Obligation of Princess* as a guide to reform the Hausa states after the Jihad. Al-Maghīlī was also famous for founding one of the major Islamic brotherhoods, the Qadiriyyah, which later spread throughout West Africa and became a major factor in its Islamisation. The death of his son at Touat led him to return there in 1503, where he once again, resumed his active campaigning against the Jews and their influence until his death a year or two later. He died and was buried in Touat.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Write on the life and contributions of al- Maghīlī to Islam and Islamic thought in Africa.

### **3.2 Ahmad Baba and his Contribution to Islamic thought in West Africa**

Ahmad Baba was born on October 26, 1556 at Araouane. His father, Ahmad bin al-Hajj Ahmad bin Umar bin Muhammed Aqit was a teacher. Ahmad Baba's full name was Abu al-Abbas Ahmad bin Ahmad al-Takruri Al-Massufi al-Timbukti. Some people also call him Ahmed Baba al-Sudane or Ahmed Baba the black. He was a descendent of the Sanhaja tribe, one of the largest Berber tribal confederations of

the Maghrib. He moved to Timbuktu at an early age, to study with his father and with a scholar known as Mohammed Bagayogo. He was a product of the Islamic influence in the Western Sudan. Not that alone, he happened to be a celebrated and most brilliant erudite scholar of 16th century in West Africa and one of the forerunners of West African nationalism. He made an impressive achievement in the intellectual arena in Western Sudan.

Ahmad Baba was considered the *Mujjaddid* (a religious reformer) of the century. He was a medieval West African writer, and an Islamic scholar in Western Sudan. He was also considered as Timbuktu's greatest scholar during his time. At the time he was a lecturer at Marrakech University, after a partial release from detention (he was later given his total freedom), he introduced the study of Fiqh and Hadith. He arrived at Timbuktu on 27 March 1607 where he continued as a lecturer in the University of Timbuktu.

More than 40 books were credited to him. A number of the work credited to him was written while he was in detention in Morocco, over accusations of sedition, including his work where he presents the biography of al-Maghīlī. There are no other records of his activity until 1594, when he was taken to Morocco. Even while in exile, he was proud to write a poem describing his condition in detention to people in Timbuktu. After his partial release from detention, while answering questions from his Arab entourage, at Marrakech, he gave eloquent and scholarly responses on matters relating to Islamic law, Islamic faith and others. With this, he was able to prove his ingenuity, brilliant and intellectual worth. His (Ahmad Baba) surviving works remain the best reference for the study of al-Maghīlī and the generation that came after him. Some of his books are on grammar, and Maliki principle of jurisprudence. While his main book remains *al-Dibaj al Mudhahhab fi ma' rifah a 'yan 'Ulama' al-madhab*. Among his books are: *Al- kashf wa al-bayan li asnaf Maghoub al-Sudan, Min al-Rabb Al-Jali fi Bayan Muhimat Khalil, Durar Al-Washyih fi masalih al- zawaj, Sharh Mukhtar Khalil, Tartib Jami al-Mi'yar* and *Sharh lamiat bn Malik..*

The event that led to his capture and detention was that after the defeat of Songhai in 1591 by the Moroccan army and Mulay Ahmad Al-Mansur in Marrakech attained the helm of affairs, the occupation of Songhai Empire was considered illegal by Ahmad Baba and Sudanese intelligentsia. They thereby challenged the invaders.

This was headed by Ahmad Baba. Showing their valliance and courage, they refused to recognise the authority of the prince at Marrakech at the time and the Songhai army adopted the guerrilla warfare system of

defense against the invaders. He stood firmly against the invasion, trying to defend legally the right to life of his people under non-Muslim foreign authority, and later the right for the independence of the Sudan people. They believe that this would eventually facilitate the spread, growth and development of Islamic cultural heritage in the region. Consequently, Ahmad Baba, his family, relatives and those who opposed the Moroccan colonisation, were arrested and deported in chains to Marrakech. He was detained for some years. This led to loss of several valuable scholarly documents. However, with all the brutal treatment given to them, Ahmad Baba was so determined that he did not allow the situation to demoralise him. He died in 1627.

It is very obvious in the introduction of *Nayl Al-Ibtihaj* of Ahmad Baba that the book was produced under horrific condition. He thus says:

“... I have still been thinking since long time to include in that writing what had been missed or written later by great Imams. For, I was in remote area where nothing was available since it was far away from the cities of sciences and books. I was not fully assisted due to the problems of that time and troubles that occupied minds and threatened situation of people. ... If it was not the favor and help of the Lord Who opens for whoever He wills different favours (from Him) these writings could not have been collected and mention of those scholars I was able to gather could not have been made in Ibn Farhoun "*Dibaj*". I also added some points to biographies of persons, whose some information about them were missed. The book was – by the grace of Allah – above my expectation and intention. Therefore, I named it "*Nayl al- Ibtihaj bi triz al-dibaj...*"

Through the lense of the above excerpt from the introductory path of *Nayl- Ibtihaj*, one could logically see its subject matter as a book on the biography of past eminent scholars with their chain of authorities in Islamic history.

This is part of the contributions of Ahmad Baba to Islamic thought in West Africa. As a symbol of honour and an emblem of scholastic achievements of a great West African scholar, Ahmad Baba's library is the only public library in Timbuktu at the present time, the Ahmed Baba Institute stores over 18,000 manuscripts.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Write on the life and contributions of Ahmad Baba to Islam and Islamic thought in West Africa.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Some North Africa nationals from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia or Morocco migrated to West Africa purposely for the dissemination of the religion of Islam in its entirety in different capacities. Some of them combined different capacities, such as being teachers of Arabic and Islamic sciences, erudite jurists and as political advisors. At times, we found among them those who were preachers, teachers and writers at the same time. Among them are al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba. Their contributions to both Arabic and Islamic culture in West Africa motivated those that came after them to fight for the same course till today.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba were among the Islamic thinkers of their time who contributed towards the growth of Islam in West Africa. They were both descendants of Berber tribe from Maghrib and Tilmisan respectively. They both contributed in similar ways to Islam and its thought in West Africa, such as in political thought, administrative thought, literary activity and military struggle.

#### 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Write short biographies of Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba.
2. Discuss the contributions of Al-Maghīlī and Ahmad Baba to Islamic thought in West Africa.
3. Explain the content of *Kitab nayl al-Ibtihaj* of Ahmad Baba.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Hunwick, J.O. (1995). *Arabic Literature of Africa*, Vol.II. The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa, Leiden. The Netherlands E.J. Brill.

Al –Ilori, A.A. (1971): *Al Islam fi Naijiriya wa ash-Shaykh ‘‘Uthman bun Fudi alFulaati* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

Hunwick, J.O. (1964). "A New Source for the Biography of Ahmad Baba alTinbukti (1556-1627)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27: 568–593, JSTOR 611391.

Davidson, B. (1965). *The Growth of African Civilisation. A History of West Africa 1000-1800*. London. Longman.

- Hunwick, J. O. (1985). *Shari'a in Songhai: the Replies of al-Maghīlī to the Questions of Askia al-Hajj Muhammad*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hunwick, J.O. (2006). *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers
- Clarke P.B (1982). *West Africa and Islam*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.
- Paden, J., (1974). *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, Berkeley: University of California Press,.
- Ibn Shaqrun. (1351). A. H. *Kitab al- dibaj al- mudhahha fi ma'rifah a'yan 'ulama' al- madhhab/ Nayl al-ibtihaj*. Cairo: al- Fahhamin. 330.
- Trimingham, J.S. (1970). *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London. Oxford University Press [www.gamji.com](http://www.gamji.com) , <http://patachu.com/al-Maghīlī>.

## **UNIT 2 ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP IN WEST AFRICA UNDER THE COLONIAL RULE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Islamic Scholarship in West Africa before the Colonialists
  - 3.2 Islamic Scholarship in Northern Nigeria before the Colonialists
  - 3.3 Islamic Scholarship in Southern Nigeria before the Colonialists
  - 3.4 Islamic Scholarship in Northern Nigeria under the Colonialist
  - 3.5 Islamic Scholarship in Southern Nigeria under the Colonialists
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Before the arrival of the colonial masters, the intellectual level attained by the West Africans was mostly influenced by Islam and Arab culture. The system was, unfortunately altered as you shall see in the following discussion. In this unit, we shall examine the status of Islamic education in West Africa under the Colonial rule, with particular emphasis on Nigeria.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit. you will be able to:

- discuss the state of Islamic scholarship before the colonialists came into West Africa
- identify the form which Islamic education used to take in northern Nigeria before the arrival of colonial masters
- discuss the state of Islamic scholarship during the time of the colonial masters in West Africa and in Nigeria in particular.
- identify the form which Islamic education took during the period of colonial rule in Nigeria.



### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Islamic Scholarship in West Africa Before Arrival of The Colonialists**

It could be somehow absurd to talk about Islamic education in West Africa during the colonial rule without even, a glance at what was in operation before the coming of the colonialists. In module one, we discussed the emergence of Islam in West Africa as a whole and how Islam came into different countries in the region. There is no way one would talk about this without a brief mention of subtle substances on Islamic education together with Islamic growth and spread in each area. You should remember that mention was made of contributions of some rulers in both Ghana and Mali empires to Islamic growth in which Islamic education was an integral part of the growth. Examples of this could be seen in what you have known about ancient Ghana Empire, where the King of Jenne gave support to Muslim scholars, Islamic scholarship (according to the standard of that age) and Islamic propagation. Likewise in Mali, Mansa Musa of Mali Empire invited an Andalusian scholar, Abu Ishaq al-Sahili when he was returning from Makkah to Timbuktu where learning and other literary activities were well known. To sum it up, before the arrival of the colonials, the intellectual level attained by the West Africans was mostly influenced by Islam and Arab culture. It was when the French, the Portugese and the British colonialists entered into the land that the long-built legacy started to collapse.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

In what ways did the West African Muslim rulers contribute to Islamic education in West Africa before the coming of the colonial masters?

#### **3.2 Islamic Scholarship in Northern Nigeria Before Arrival of The Colonialists**

Talking about Nigeria, there is no place Islam reached without carrying its educational system there. As soon as Kanem-Borno embraced Islam, its rulers started to make contact with Muslim worlds in quest for knowledge, among other purposes. As you have read in Module One, places like Tuat, Tunisia, Cairo, Makkah were contacted at that time and thus facilitated an influx of scholars into the region and this made scholarship possible in the area. Most importantly, during the time of Mai Idris Alooma (1570-1602), Arabic and Islamic schools were established following the pattern of schools in other Muslim countries. In Hausaland, Islamic scholarship was highly encouraged by Muslim rulers, such as ‘Ali Yaji of Kano (1349-1385), Yaqub

(1452-63) and Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499). Islamic books on Theology, Jurisprudence and Islamic principles were taught by Muslim scholars who were at that period invited into the city from Timbuktu such as al-Maghīlī. Similar scholarship activities such as that of Kano were also known in Katsina, which became centre of Islamic learning during the fifteenth century. Native scholars such as Muhammad Dan Marina (d.1655) and Muhammad Dan Masina (1667) were among the products of that scholarship activity in Katsina. It was also recorded that Al-Maghīlī visited the city during the reign of Jan Hazo Bakki (1618-1648), when Katsina had acquired a sizeable amount of recognition and reputation in Islamic scholarship.

In addition to this, activities of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi, his brother Abdullah bin Fudi, and his children such as, Muhammad Bello bin ‘Uthman bin Fudi together with Asma’ bint ‘Uthman bin Fudi, left indelible marks on scholarship in Islamic education in Nigeria and Western Africa before the colonial occupation of the land. At the time Arabic and Islamic learning was spreading from town to town in northern communities, native scholars were increasing till the time of Shaykh ‘Uthman bin Fudi (d.1817) who led the campaign against molestation of female child or against denying them right to education. Besides the reformation brought by the Jihad movement of Sokoto, the Sakkwato town rapidly led Islamic scholarship in the area during the reign of Muhammad Bello bin ‘Uthman bin Fudi. It was on record that when colonial rule entered into the Northern Nigeria, Lord Lugard estimated that about twenty thousand Quranic schools were available in Northern Nigeria. These schools contained about two hundred and fifty thousand pupils. With this figure, one may conclude that the legacy built by Muslims with regard to education in Nigeria in particular and West Africa in general is very huge.

### **SELFASSSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the state of Islamic education in Northern Nigeria before the arrival of the colonial masters.

### **3.3 Islamic Scholarship in Southern Nigeria before the Arrival of the Colonialists**

In the southern part of Nigeria, Islamic education has been established before the Christian-oriented Western education which was brought by the Christian colonialists and the missionaries. As earlier said, Islam goes together with its culture, educational policy and thought in all ramifications. There is no place where Islam is established without creating a place where rudimentary knowledge of the Qur’an, the Hadith and the *Shari’ah* would be impacted on its adherents. To the Muslims,

Islam is synonymous with scholarship and vice-versa. Islam came into the South, Yorubaland, in particular, before the Jihad of ‘Uthman bin Fudi. That of the Southeastern part was quite after the colonialists had entered into the country. You must have taken cognizance of this in Module One. In the 1830s, some learned Islamic scholars from the North came to Yorubaland through Ilorin. At that time, Ilorin had become a home for Islamic scholars who came from different parts of West Africa including Kano, Katsina and Borno. It had also become centre for Islamic learning where there were many small Quranic schools and some higher learning centres.

Ahmad Qifu came to Ibadan within the first few years of founding Ibadan during the reign of Oluyedun. ‘Uthman bin Abu Bakr who hailed from Katsina but settled down at Borno also came at that period during the reign of Bashorun oluyole. He decided to come to the south Abeokuta, Ibadan or Ijebu-Ode for *da‘wah* activity. He eventually stayed at Ibadan and in 1839, was made the Imam of Ibadanland. Shaykh Abu Bakr bin al-Qasim who pioneered the establishment of Arabic and Islamic learning centres in Ibadan also contributed to this scholarship struggle in Ibadan. Though, the structure, pattern and form of education at different places in West Africa during the era was quite different from what we have at present time, the introduction of Islam and its educational thought could be seen as the beginning of literacy and formal education (to some extent) at that time in the whole of West Africa. Basil Davidson, in his *Old Africa Rediscovered* says that some of the states in West Africa such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhai Empires together with places like Bornu, Katsina and Kano were in existence during early medieval Europe and may at times be judged superior to Europe in terms of civilization. He observed further that during that period.... the Christian West had remained ignorant, rude and barbarous, while Saracenic (Arab) culture passed on the torch of civilizations to future ages.

Nevertheless, the Islamic educational system was quite different from the present Nigerian educational system. There was no division into primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The examination barriers along the ways of the students were not there. No promotion from one class to another. No rigid time table, no age limit, no classes. The pattern then was so simple: First level which was the elementary level and the second which was the post elementary. The First level was also known as the Quranic School. In Hausa language is called *makarantan alqurani* (schools of the Quran) or *maqarantan allo* (schools of the slate). Impacting instruction in this stage was by rote-learning. The basic objective of this level was the exposure of the child to the Quran by giving the children rudiments of healthy spiritual and moral life that would eventually lead to attainment of joy in the hereafter. This would

be impacted on them as taught by the Qur'an. Studies in this Quranic School used to take as many as ten years and at times, a couple of years. *Almajiri* system of impacting Islamic education in the North could also be categorized under this. In this *Almajiri* system, pupils used to be with their *Malam*. To earn livelihood, the *Malam* would wander from one place to another searching for generous people that could provide for his need. The pupils also followed suit in searching for their own daily meal after having Quranic class with the *Malam*. They used to bring down home for their *Malam*, in some cases, the food and materials they got from their wandering. This could be tagged in a social term as beggary. On the other hand, the post elementary level which was the advanced continued for as long as the student wished. At times, it took about twenty years or the whole life time. The student's ability to continue is confined in the contentment and satisfaction of the teacher that the student had the ability and capacity to continue with the study. It was in this advanced stage that students were introduced to different Islamic sciences as well as advanced Arabic studies. In Hausa tongue, it is called *makarantan 'ilmi*. It was quite unfortunate that there was a heavy omission that made Islamic education at that period before the coming of the colonialists defective despite the fact that the curriculum could be placed side by side with the one used during the heyday of the Abbasid Caliphate. This defect was the omission of the study of natural sciences which was then a feature of Islamic learning under the Abbasids and the Umayyad in Spain. This was quite unfortunate based on the fact that it was one of the most invaluable heritages of Islam which could have had the strength to compete with Christian- oriented Western system of education when it entered into West Africa. The Christian- oriented Western system of education later brought the study of natural sciences as if it were their personal property.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the state of Islamic education in southern Nigeria before the arrival of the Colonialists.

### **3.4 Islamic Scholarship in Northern Nigeria Under the Colonialists**

Islamic education in Nigeria under the colonial rule relapsed. Meanwhile, its influence continued to expand steadily and almost unnoticed for the next sixty years largely obscured by the political situation and the administrative structure, which the British imposed on their new Protectorate. Among the poison injected into the Islamic spirit of searching for knowledge anywhere anytime by the British imperialist was the creation of territorial boundaries between Nigeria and North Africa. This naturally reduced the cultural contacts which had been in

existence for more than one thousand years before the usurpers came into the land.

Sokoto Caliphate began to have an inside shrink in order to defend its inheritance from European imperialism. The community of Muslim scholars in the big cities lost the influence on public affairs which they had long possessed. This was because the northern leaders had adapted themselves to the power structure of their new masters through Indirect Rule. All the incentives that used to propel the public to Islamic education were threatened and negatively wetted. This caused the scholars to encourage what could be called a resistance movement in order to avoid collision with the opposing cultural forces and to find a chance of building on the foundations already laid down quietly. Consequently, the practical expression to religious ideals which was led by Sokoto Caliphate and the zeal for learning and scholarship which Islam had nurtured in the land for a long period began to deteriorate and the strength that had previously been built by Islam began to weaken.

In spite of the ruin done to the European military power by the South African or Boer War at the beginning of that century it was still very strong, but its armies and navies were thinly spread across the globe. Fortunately for the British, the possibilities of hostilities with their traditional enemy, the French, had weakened. After the British Colonialists had acquired additional territory (the Niger area including the northern part of the present Nigeria) to its colonial empire, their main focus right then was to preserve it from external aggression and to prevent any internal uprising which they must achieve with the fewest possible resources. The British was however very cute in shoving their cards right here because they had counted their loss in what they experienced with one Islamic movement (the Mahdist) in Sudan. They never wanted such an ugly happening anymore in the northern part of Nigeria. As such, they saw a need for a risk-free policy to rule the North. This became difficult to handle due to the strength of legacy left behind by the established Islamic government. They therefore embraced the cooperation of the the local rulers and showed a sympathetic attitude towards local belief and culture of the people. Indirect Rule was the child of this ideology while Lord Lugard was its father.

However, there is no place the West would go without taking their interest along with them. Everything they do is mostly to protect their interest.

Any rebellion or objection to their interest is synonymous with their enemy. The Indirect Rule was meant to rule the North. This proved difficult for them unlike the South. Nothing caused this difficulty other than Islam, which had been firmly established before the British came to

uproot it with guns, artilleries and weapons. To facilitate the administration and control of their new colony, some of their new subjects must be educated regardless of whether the system of the education suits both the faith and cultural practices of the masses. In order to educate most of their colonies, the European imperialists imported the Christian- oriented Western education of their homeland within the limit set by government budget. They also left the matter of education to individuals and missionaries who wished to invest on education by following the laid down guidelines. The Christian missionaries were very eager to do this by building schools, providing teachers and every other incentive. As a matter of fact, this did not bring any significant problem to them in other places it was done. But the reverse was the case in the northern Nigeria. It was almost impossible in northern Nigeria. The British amazingly discovered that a formal system of Islamic education already existed, and that it embraced at least a quarter of a million pupils. How to do with this Islamic educational system was very difficult for them to determine. Lugard's famous declaration in 1903 was the only promising solution the colonialists thought of. Lugard stated thus: 'Government will in no way interfere with religion. All men are free to worship God as they please. Mosques and prayer places will be treated with respect by us'. Looking into the purported meaning of this statement of policy, one will see that it posed a difficult problem to solve. How will it be possible to separate education which had been coated with religious colouration in a place like Nigeria?

It was very difficult to intervene in education without a clear intervention in religious matters. The British were unable to address the issue sincerely. What the Colonial administrators were just working towards was to devise a system of education which would take care of traditional Islamic schools and get them intergrated for modernization with a view to producing candidates who were literate in English for both government and local authorities' services. With this, their ruling of the region would be simplified. They used to move from one policy to another when it looked cumbersome for them to take over the Islamic schools. One could conclude that they never felt the need to develop a logical, straightforward philosophy of education. Katsina College scenerio is a good example of the way in which the various policies and opinions on education within the British administration shifted from time to time. In its early years, Arabic and Islamic instruction had a prominent place in the curriculum. In 1930, when Katsina College broadened its scope and introduced science and other modern subjects, the time allotted to Arabic and Islamic studies was drastically reduced. Similarly, in Borno, attempts to broaden the curriculum in Quranic schools were stopped mainly because the colonial authorities had no interest in it and not from lack of funds which they claimed.

With all these absurdities, the northern Muslims were never ready to sacrifice their Islamic faith for an education that had been painted with Christian culture and ideology. They thus continued with their traditional ways of impacting Islamic education on their people. The colonialist attempts to avoid the problem show the prejudices and set ideas which still affect the Nigerian educational system till the present day. The problem persisted from 1900 till the time Nigeria got independent in 1960. This was very obvious from 1939 to 1960; the Colonial administrators paid little or no attention to encouraging a workable union between the Islamic and Christian-Western systems of education.

Consequently, the British inability to find solution to the problem raised suspicion of hypocrisy from the northern Muslims against them; as the Hausa expression implies, *ilmin boko* or Western-type learning was untrustworthy. They believed that the British shifted from one policy on education to another and never had a clear-cut educational policy in Nigeria. The political pressures that were mounted on British administrators in northern Nigeria that education should be rapidly spread throughout Nigeria in order to bring the backward north by the side of advanced south to facilitate the political independence, made Islamic education to be seen as an enemy of progress to the creation of a united and independent nation. Many people levelled this against Islam without considering those years of official neglect by the colonialists without finding solution to the problem of educational policies in the Muslim populated North. This was one of the most unfortunate parts of the legacies of sixty years of colonial rule in Nigeria.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Explain the status of Islamic education in northern Nigeria under the Colonial rule.

### **3.5 Islamic Scholarship in Southern Nigeria Under The Colonialists**

As far as the Southern Nigeria is concerned, there was no significant problem with both the south south and the southeast with the colonial imperialists regarding Islamic education. This was basically based on the fact that Islam had not entered into the region before the colonials. All what was brought to them of colonial policy on education suits them except the crisis that erupted as a result of their unreadiness to leave their cultures, faiths and traditions totally. In the Southwest, Islam and Islamic education had gained significant history before the colonial masters entered into the region. Evidence from what had happened before the colonial masters and slave traders entered into the Southwest

showed that Islam and Islamic education had been implanted on the land before the so called imperialists came to uproot them tactically and systematically. Tajudeen gbadamosi opines that Islam entered into Yorubaland in 1775. With this, among other proofs, all other opinions expressed by non-Muslim writers on the initial date of Islam in Yorubaland were debunked. The existence of the *Shari'ah* in Yorubaland before the era of Colonialism presupposes that Islam and Islamic education had been known in Yorubaland before the arrival of the colonialists. The first time Christianity was known in Yorubaland was in 1842 in Badagry, Lagos State. With this, we can conclude that Islam had spent almost seventy years in Yorubaland before Christianity came in. Just as the existence of the *Shari'ah* was clearly evident in the North, it was clear in the South as well. The first Muslim King in Ede (Osun State) Oba Abibu Olagunju, was known for giving *Shari'ah* official recognition in his domain. This was in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is also on record that the *Shari'ah* was practiced in both Iwo and Ikirun during the reign of Oba Momodu Lamuye (d.1906) and Oba Aliyu Oyewole (d.1912). Unfortunately for the Yoruba Muslim, the *Shari'ah* was crushed by the Christian colonialists with the power they possessed at that period without recognising the functionalities of the *Shari'ah* among the people at that period. Above all, it could not have been possible to establish the *Shari'ah* on a land without Islamic education preceding it. The knowledge of Islam in one community usually gives birth to the implementation of the *Shari'ah*. Nevertheless, before the colonial hijackers, Islamic education was initially in a traditional way in Yorubaland just like that of the North. Local scholars used to teach people how to read the Quran and some rudimentary knowledge of Islam. Some of the Southern Muslims used to travel far north in search for both Arabic and Islamic education. Those that could not afford travelling to the Northern Nigeria stayed with the Northern scholars that came purposely for da'wah activities in the Southern part. Scholars who travelled down south used to establish their own training centres when they arrive. Whoever had interest in their area of specialisation would go to them. Through this, pupils moved from one *Malam* (Alfa) to another *Malam* (Alfa) to study different subjects. For instance, if a student should complete his study with a *Malam* whose specialization is *Fiqh*, he would need to go and consult another *Malam* who is a specialist in another Islamic science or Arabic, such as Arabic Grammar, Arabic Prosody, Prophet's eulogy, Hadith, Tafsir, and so on. That was why we have different scholars' quarters in places like Ibadan, named after a scholar's specialisation. For instance: "*Ile Onishiniyan*" (The quarter of scholar of *Ishriniyyah*), and "*Ile Katibi*" (The writer's quarters). Most of these scholars used to live on farming and trading and the money they made from praying for people. They were, also at times, presented gift.



When the slave masters came in, things began to change for worse regarding Muslims' fate on the land with respect to education. The Christian Missions monopolised the Nigeria's education sector while money was offered as grant by the colonial government to the major Christian Missions in Lagos. At that time, there was no single Islamic mission for education. One of the basic requirements for admission into the Christian-oriented schools was being a Christian or readiness to convert to Christianity. This is because most of the schools were owned by the Christian Missionaries. This posed a heavy threat on Muslims of the Southwest and happened to be one of the problems the Colonials were unable to solve at that period. They later promulgated in 1882, the first Education Ordinance as a result of the outcry by Muslim parents. The ordinance gave chance for the Muslims to acquire Western education, as schools were categorised into two: government schools and assisted schools (that could be owned by both individuals and religious missions). Teaching of religion was not made compulsory in Government schools but in Assisted Schools it was optional. The Education Ordinance paved way for the Muslims to patronize Western schools though, the population of Muslim children in schools did not improve until a board was set to look into the matter. The board later suggested that the Muslim leaders and the Islamic teacher in each area should be enlightened on the importance of western education. This was because the Muslim parents, Islamic teachers as well as the Muslim leader saw the introduction of western education as a devise of the colonialists to penetrate into Islamic system of education with a view to diluting it. However, with the government intervention, the Muslims' attitude to Western education improved. Drastically, Muslim education system changed by means of teaching Islam in the Western school system.

Consequently, to meet up with the challenges of the period, some of the Qur'anic schools were converted to government Muslim schools. An example was the Quranic School at Akanni Street Lagos which was the first Government Muslim School in Lagos. It was converted in 1896. In Epe and Badagry, another Muslim schools cofinanced by the government and the Muslims were founded in 1898 and 1899 respectively. In this struggle to avert the evil of conversion from Islam to Christianity of the Muslim wards and children, individual Muslims also joined in the founding of schools of their own. Mr. Idris Animasaun, Muhammad Augusto, Mr Babatunde Salami and Mr. Abu Ahmad Sadiq, all in Lagos were good examples of these individual founders. To join the fight against the religious threat in the Southwest the Ansarudeen society was formed in 1923, followed by the founding of Zumratul Islamiyyah in 1926, and after this came the Nawairu Deen Society in 1934. The Ansarul-Islam Society came in 1945. These

organisations founded schools which were only by their names Islamic and were to a large extent Western in nature.

Though, they had Islamic Religious Knowledge as a teaching subject in their curricula but they are more of western orientation than Islamic. Thus a period of Westernization of Muslim education set in. Products of these schools could not be fully called Muslims.

By the time the Yoruba Muslims were faced with the ideological and religious prejudices from the Christian missionaries, Islamic education was going uninterrupted in Hausaland as the Christian missions found it exclusively difficult to dismantle the North. When eventually they were able to gain access to the North, the Muslims glued themselves to their Islamic system of education and they looked at Western education with contempt. To a big surprise, Arabic language was left as the medium of instruction in the few schools established by the colonialists in the province. In the 1950s, when about 82% of primary schools were established in Southern Nigeria only 18% were in the North. Likewise, at the time 93% of secondary schools were located in Southern Nigeria just 7% were located in the North. With the struggle between Islam and Christianity for survival in the southern Nigeria, priority and superiority was given to English over Arabic as the language of instruction while the Qur'an and 'Ilmi schools were gradually relegated to the background.

To support the struggle against Westernisation of Islamic education, many Arabic and Islamic schools were established near the time of independence in the Southwest by different scholars, such as; *Markaz* established initially at Abeokuta and later consolidated in Agege, Lagos, *Al-Madrasah al Kharashiyyah* in Ibadan and *Al- Ma'had Al-Arabiyy* in Ibadan. Their outlook was different in structure and form to what was widely known of Arabic school being handled in traditional method. They made it *Ibtidaiyyah* (Primary), *Idadiyyah* (Junior Secondary) and *Thanawiyyah/Tawjihiyah* (Senior Secondary). Students are expected to spend some years in primary schools, some years in secondary schools and some years in the tertiary institution. With this, the throughout-lifetime- system that was in operation was gradually coming to an end as we still have some Quranic schools run on that traditional method till the present time. These divisions later became well known and well established after the political independence. Unfortunately, at that time, the Arabic schools never allowed integration with Western education. However, the system used in the Christian-oriented western schools was copied with the aim of training Muslim children in both Arabic and Islamic Studies with a view to producing Arabic teachers and scholars. This unreadiness for intergration later caused great psychological, intellectual and sociological challenges to the graduates of these schools,

such as; inferiority complex between them and their counterparts from the Western schools, eligibility for employment in government schools and organizations, etc. This problem was later taken care of by the University of Ibadan when diploma/certificate courses were introduced for Arabic and Islamic teachers.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the status of Islamic education in southern Nigeria under the Colonial government.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Islam should not be considered as element of under-development and enemy of progress if we are objective in analysing the events of that period. It would arrest one's psyche on how a religion that had been firmly established which call people to oneness of God in all its affairs could be logically and systematically wiped out from such an organized society. That could be a great injustice. It was only for the fact that Muslims were very ready to protect their religion from any oppression or subjugation that they were tagged uncivilised.. The insincerity together with biased attitude found on the part of Colonials and the ugly style with which the Christian missions were hunting the Muslim children and wards somehow led to the rejection of the Western education by the Muslims at that period both in the North and the South.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

One of the cultural properties of Islam is knowledge acquisition as well as teaching; most especially, knowledge that is related to God. There is no place Islam will go without taking it along. Islamic education had been well established in West

African cities before the Colonials. It was after the arrival of the colonialists that it was victimized. Instruction language was Arabic in those days. However, when the Western education system came in, its proponents tried to use it as tool for conversion from Islam to Christianity. This made the Muslims, both in northern Nigeria and southern Nigeria, reject the so called Western education. It was strongly rejected by the northerners because of the insincerity of the Colonial administrators while there arose a crisis between it and the Muslims of the Southwest because of the Christians' effort to convert the Muslim wards to Christianity. The introduction of the Christian – oriented education system greatly affected the growth of Islamic scholarship in Nigeria.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the state of Islamic scholarship before the Colonialists entered West Africa.
2. Discuss the state of Islamic scholarship during the stay of the Colonials in both Northern and Southern Nigeria.
3. Identify the form which Islamic education took before the Colonial masters occupied both Northern and Southern Nigeria.
4. Discuss the status of Islamic education during the Colonial rule in Nigeria.
5. Identify at least three Arabic & Islamic schools in Southwestern Nigeria.
6. Explain how the Christian missions were converting Muslim children who wished to have Western education at that period.
7. What did the Muslims do to avert the situation where Christian mission schools were used as conversion tools from Islam to Christianity?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Hunwick, J. O. (2006). *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Fafunwa, A. B. & Aisiku, J. U. *Education in Africa. A Comparative Survey*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Abdurrahman M. & Peter Canham (1978). *The Ink of the Scholar: The Islamic Tradition of Education in Nigeria*. Lagos. Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Ltd.
- Doi, A. I. (1984). *Islam in Nigeria*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corp.
- Akintola, I. *Shari'ah in Nigeria: An Eschatological Desideratum*.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1991). *History of education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1992). *Education in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future*. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publisher Ltd.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1974). *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Basil Davidson. (1908). *Old Africa Rediscovered*. London: Gollancz.

### **UNIT 3 ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP IN WEST AFRICA AFTER POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The seeds planted by the colonials to erase anything Islam, continued to germinate even after their physical disappearance from Nigeria. It is believed that if they had left us to our affairs things would have changed for better. In this unit, you shall be taken through the status of Islamic education in West Africa after the political independence, taking Nigeria as case study.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit. you will be able to:

- discuss the state of Islamic scholarship in Nigeria after political independence
- explain the form which Islamic education took at the time of independence in Nigeria
- identify the only Arabic & Islamic Institute that survived the current of British educational system at the time of independence
- identify at least three Arabic & Islamic schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

#### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

In the northern part of Nigeria, after the independence in 1960, one of the first acts of the new Government of the Region was to appoint a Committee of Ministers to examine the traditional Islamic educational system in order to give it financial and professional support. This was based on the fact that the Northern Muslims were very adamant not to sacrifice their Islamic faith for any other faiths. The traditional Islamic education system in the North was able to survive those religiously biased educational system. For the new government to make much headway in ruling the North, something must be done to accommodate

the ever-growing Quranic schools which had more than half a million pupils. Much of these Quranic and Islamic learning centres were flourishing in Kano, Katsina and Sokoto provinces at that period. With the recommendations given by the committee in their report in 1962, the Quranic schools were encouraged to broaden their curriculum and were supported financially by the new independent government in the Northern region. They provided certain conditions for the Quranic and Islamiyyah schools in the North. The Ministry of Education of the Northern Region therefore endorsed the recommendation by issuing appropriate circulars following the elaboration of the recommendation by Quranic Schools Committee.

As a result of this, the past traditions of Islamic learning began to emerge gradually and to resume their former place in the mainstream of Nigerian education. This was a plausible encouragement given to the Northern Muslim institutes which would have almost gone into extinction should the Colonials rule continued. This was based on the fact that there was only the Kano Law School, which was established in 1943, as the only surviving Islamic educational institution hesitantly sponsored by the Colonial government in Nigeria at the time of independence. With the new development, things continued to change and the system also relatively changed. The elementary and the advanced level had changed to a large extent both in the south and in the north. For Muslims who are of sizeable percentage in Nigeria to retain their glory, their old/ traditional system of imparting knowledge must move up to accommodate new changes as Muslims are willing to learn more about Arabic in both the North and the Southwest.

Before the independence, government had in 1954 introduced a scheme where untrained junior primary school teachers had to receive training in order to raise their standard of education to improve their position in the society. A post-secondary course in Arabic and Islamic studies was organized as a preliminary to the establishment of the Abdullahi Bayero College. Students from the *'ilmi* schools and Muslim higher institutions moved towards post secondary–modern and university education. The Northern Region Ministry of Education and Abdullahi Bayero College of Kano (now part of the Ahmadu Bello University) worked out a comprehensive plan channelling traditional system of imparting Arabic and Islamic education towards the westernized system. Consequently, a general uniformity at the pre-university level was obtained both in Abdullahi Bayero College of Kano and the school of Arabic Studies in Sokoto.

Nearly similar exercise was embarked upon in the South. Government introduced Islamic studies at the government owned schools but was reluctantly taught in most of the schools headed by Christian

Headmasters / Principals. Christian Mission schools did not offer it at all while schools founded by Islamic organizations such as Ansarudeen and Nawarudeen offered it at that period. Another phase in the history of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Southwestern Nigeria was when the University of Ibadan introduced a diploma course to serve the department of history in 1962. This was to facilitate the understanding of West African history that was grossly written in Arabic. The Diploma in Arabic program was later changed to a full-fledged degree program followed by Islamic Studies in the same department. After some years, an attempt was made to raise the poor educational status and standard of Arabic teachers by introducing a Certificate course in Arabic and Islamic Studies in the same department. Students were drawn from the existing Quranic schools and institutes (*Madaris, Ma'ahid, Marakiz, and Kuliyyah*). Students were given sound training in English language, History together with Arabic and Islamic Studies. This, however, raised their standard of education. The situation was similar in both regions of the country. To meet up with the challenges of the time, some of the Arabic and Islamic training centres are now incorporating some Western subjects into their curriculum, such as; English Language, Mathematics, Government, Social Studies, Biology etc. This is aimed at producing students with minimum requirements to graduate in higher institutions and to serve in government and non-governmental establishments.

In the present time, efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria in looking into both the Quranic and Islamiyyah schools, especially in the North, for a successful intergration deserve to be mentioned. Many schools have been built for the *Almajiri* pupils who are in millions in the North while others are going on with different programmes for them.

There came a period when Muslims of the Southwest felt the need for establishing Diplomas of Arabic and Islamic studies where Diploma Certificates are awarded to their graduates with a view to producing graduates who would be able to further their education without having any Ordinary Level Certificate. These Diploma Colleges had their affiliation to one of the Nigerian Universities. Examples of these are: Mufu Lanahunmu Arabic College, Ibadan, Ansardeen Arabic College, Isolo, Lagos, Sulayman Arabic and Islamic College, Ososa, Ijebu-Ode and Arabic Institute of Nigeria Diploma, Olodo, Ibadan. Some of the graduates of these schools were able to gain admissions into the University without presenting O' Level certificate while some use the Diploma to secure employment. It was when some Universities such as the University of Ibadan made a policy compelling students coming in for any program to have credit pass in English Language and Mathematics that those Diploma students were unfortunate to gain admission. Whoever, among them, intends to come in should go and sit for O' Level before applying for any programme. These Diploma

Colleges later, in order to meet up with the challenges of the time changed their institutions to Educational Certificate Awarding Colleges. But with later upgrading, students are awarded NCE (National Certificate of Education) in these colleges. Courses beside Arabic and Islamic Studies were also introduced at these colleges. We also have Colleges of Education where Arabic and Islamic Studies are offered till present time in both Northern and Southwestern Nigeria. Many Universities also offer either Arabic or Islamic Studies or both courses up to Ph.

D level.

As far as the the Southsouth and the Southeast are concerned, much was not recorded there in the history of Arabic and Islamic scholarship. This was due to the fact that Islam came late into the region. This was after the arrival of the Colonial imperialists. Most of them at that period bowed down for Western culture and civilisation. Those that kicked against Western culture were doing that mostly on the basis of both their traditional and cultural inclinations. Muslims found in these two regions are very few in number compared to what we have in both the North and the Southwest till present time. Nevertheless, as Islam gets to any part of the region, Islamic education would be expected to commence. But they showed little or no tolerance to Islam and the Muslims among them. This made it very difficult for Islam to spread across their towns and villages just like the way it used to be in both the North and the Southwest. The spread and development was very slow. Meanwhile, an integrated Arabic and Islamic integrated with Western education school is known in Efikpo, Enugu State till present time. The school offers both Arabic and Islamic subjects together with Science subjects, Arts and Commercials. Products of the school usually come out as vast as their counterparts from the North and the Southwest both in spoken Arabic and English. In addition to this, we have Northern and Southwestern Muslims who live among them and aid the course of Islamic scholarship till the present time.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss Islamic scholarship in both the North and the Southwestern Nigeria from the time of independent till the present time.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

As most Nigerians believe that the North is responsible for the underdevelopment of Nigeria, but we can consider this as a fallacy. Both international and national bodies are striving as much as possible to intergrate Quranic and the Islamiyyah schools, most of which are in the



North as *Almajiri* system of Islamic education. Because with Western type of education, they would be able to meet up with the societal challenges and thus be able to contribute positively to the growth of the society. The cause of the backwardness in Western education in the North, as earlier mentioned was their sincerity for and loyalty to their religion, the Islamic faith.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

After the independence, different changes took place in the Islamic education system in order to fit the new societal challenges. The new Government of the Northern Region appointed a Committee of Ministers to examine the traditional Islamic educational system in order to give it financial and professional support. The Quranic and Islamiyyah schools gradually began to abandon the past traditions of impacting Islamic knowledge, and as a matter of fact started to assume their former place in the mainstream of Nigerian education. In the South, Islamic education was grossly taken as subject to be taught in only the schools founded by Islamic organisations. Missions' schools did not offer it while government schools headed mostly by Christian teachers cautiously took Islamic studies.

The University of Ibadan pioneered the introduction of the change to the standard of education of Arabic and Islamic teachers who had passed through one non-intergrated Arabic/Islamic school or the other. With the introduction of Certificate programme in Arabic and Islamic Studies, students were given sound training in English language, and History in order to meet up with the required standard of literacy/education in Nigeria at that period. Despite the fact that the Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan was initially for diploma in Arabic aimed at feeding students of history understanding of West African history written in Arabic. The programme was later converted to a full degree course. To rise to the challenges of the society, some private Arabic and Islamic Schools later introduced Western education system by introducing subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, and Government into their curriculum.

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the state of Islamic scholarship in Nigeria after political independence.
2. Explain the form which Islamic education took at the time of independence in Nigeria.
3. Identify the only Arabic & Islamic institute that survived the current of British educational system at the time of independence.

4. Identify at least four Arabic & Islamic schools in Southwestern Nigeria.
5. Suggest a possible solution to the problem of imbalance between Muslims and Christians as far as Western education is concerned in Nigeria.

## 7.0 REFERENCES /FURTHER READING

Hunwick, J.O. (2006). *West Africa, Islam and the Arab Worlds*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.

Doi, A. I. (1984). *Islam in Nigeria*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation.

Abdurrahman M. & Peter Canham (1978). *The Ink of the Scholar: The Islamic Tradition of Education in Nigeria*. Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Ltd.

Akintola, I. *Shari 'ah in Nigeria: An eschatological desideratum*.

Fafunwa, B. A. (1991). *History of education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: NPS Educational. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Fafunwa, B. A. (1974). *History of education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Fafunwa, B. A. (1992). *Education in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future*. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publisher Ltd.