



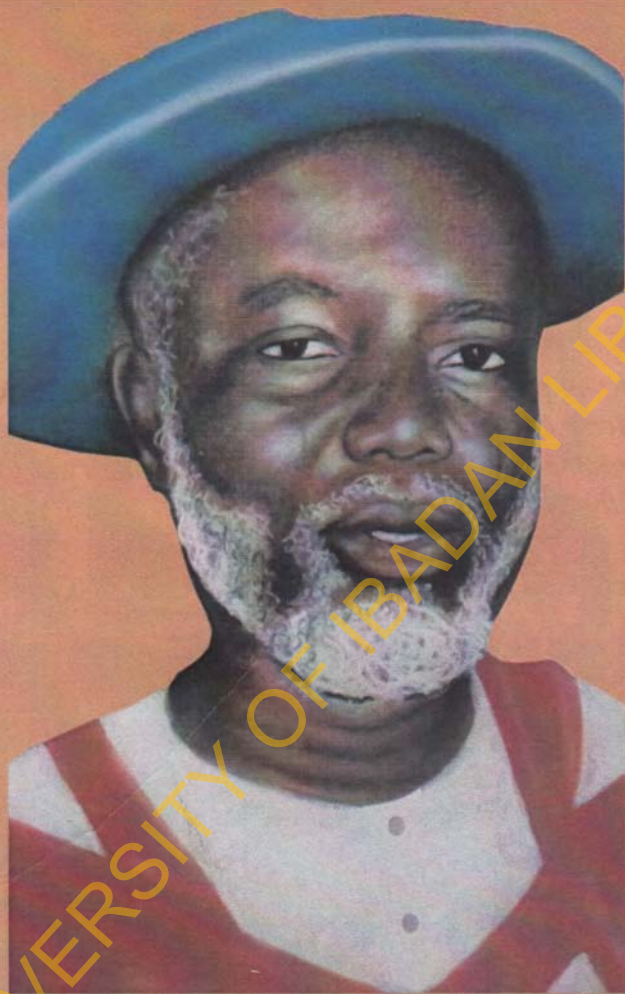
**THE HERITAGE OF**  
**ISLAM**  
*In Nigeria*

ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF  
**DR. DAWOOD ADEKILEKUN TIJANI**

1942 - 2006

Edited By  
Siyan Oyeweso  
Mikail Adebisi Folorunsho  
Rafiu Ibrahim Adebayo

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**The Heritage of Islam in Nigeria: Essays in Memory of Dr. Dawood  
Adekilekun Tijani (1942-2006)**

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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURE,  
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## CHAPTER TEN

### THE PRESIDING CHIEF IMAM: FROM ISMAIL AYINLA BABATUNDE BALOGUN TO DAWOOD ADEKILEKUN TIJANI: THE GROWTH OF UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

By

**Mubarak Ademola Noibi**

#### **Introduction**

The University of Ibadan Muslim Community is a household name in the Southwestern part of Nigeria. Its popularity is engendered by the fact that it is a community where the light of Islam is beamed to the larger society. The Community is reputed for blending global best practices with the pristine teachings of Islam. These commendable attributes associated with the Community is not unconnected with its leaders who demonstrated sincerity, discipline and dedication towards its growth and development. At the fore-front of this gallantry and exemplary leadership is the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University. The role of the Department in the fostering and the nourishing of the Community cannot be over emphasized. Notable among the leaders were Professor Ismail Balogun, Professor Musa Abdul, Professor Dawud Noibi, Professor Sayyid Malik, Professor Wahab Nasiru, Professor Asif Ahmad, Professor Miftah Abdul-Rahmon, Dr Dawood Tijani, Professor Kamil Oloso and Dr Abdul-Wahid Rufai. There were some other notable individuals who though are not listed above or might not have served in the Department but played leadership roles in the Community.

Whereas some studies have been carried out on some members of the University of Ibadan Muslim Community (hereafter referred to as the Community) none has examined the growth of the Community. Therefore, this study investigated the roles played by the leadership of the Community and how these roles contributed to the growth and development of the Community starting from Professor (then Dr) Ismail Balogun in 1967 and ending with Dr Dawood Ahmad Adekilekun Tijani in 2006. The significance of choosing the period between the two individuals above is that they were both spiritual heads of the Community at different times respectively. The paper is divided into five sections. This section introduces the study while the second section traces the establishment and coordination of the Community. Moreover, the third section discusses the leadership of the Community while the next section to it addresses its roles and activities within and outside the University. This is followed by the section which concludes the paper.



### **The Establishment and Coordination of the Community**

The University of Ibadan was established in 1948 by the Colonial Administration for teaching research and service. As part of the mission statements of the University is to contribute to the transformation of the society through creativity and innovation, and serve as a dynamic custodian of societal salutary values and thus sustain its integrity<sup>1</sup>. At the inception of academic activities in the institution, there were few Muslims workers and students in it. Also, most of the Muslim staffers were low level workers. In addition to that, the Muslims observed their prayers individually<sup>2</sup>. There are indications that a Muslim community had existed before 1959 when Professor (then Mr) Dawud Shittu (later Noibi) was invited by a friend, who was a student in the Department of History, as a guest Imam for the Friday service of the Community at the University College's (later University of Ibadan) temporary site at Eleyele, Ibadan. The Friday service was done at in a room and the congregation was few<sup>3</sup>.

The situation continued until 1963 when a mosque was built in the University. Though this era did not witness any well coordinated Muslim community, prayers were led by one Alhaji Jimoh, a steward at Mellamby Hall and an indigene of Ilorin, who took it upon himself to lead when there was no one else to do so. The imamship of the mosque was later rotated between Alhaji Jimoh, representing the workers on one part and the Muslim students on another part based on an understanding that the later would lead during session while the former would lead during off-session. This notwithstanding, in 1967 a crisis of occurred between the two parties. This crisis was referred to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies where it was resolved after which a Muslim community was coordinated and given leadership<sup>4</sup>. It should be noted that at that time, Professor (then Dr) Ismail Balogun was the only Nigerian Muslim academic staff available in the Department as Professor (then Mr) Abdul was away in Canada for his Ph.D. program.

The coordination of the Community marked the beginning of an array of roles that had to be played by the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Invariably, the Muslim members of staff and students had to subsequently give the Community they had helped to form the much desired leadership. It is worthy of note that the since then, the membership of the Community has gradually swelled. The situation where only the low level workers and students were the key actors in the community has been reversed. The Community has played prominent roles in the areas of welfare of staff and students, elimination of cultism, fostering of religious peace and harmony and maintaining meaningful cooperation with the authorities. The Community equally plays its part in the wider society through community services and religious cooperation.



## Leadership of the Community

After the formation of a the Community, Professor (then Dr) Ismail Balogun of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies was made both the substantive Chief Imam and Chairman of the Community [Abbas, 2008, 21] under the name "Mosque Management Committee". According to Abbas (2003 & 2008), this leadership changed hands in 1974 when Professor (then Dr) Musa Abdul of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies took over as the Chairman of the Community. The change in leadership, he claimed, was as a result of the anger expressed and the negative verdict passed on the status of the prayers of the congregation led by Professor Balogun, who was a member of the Ahmadiyyah Mission, by the delegation of the Saudi Arabian government who came to inspect the mosque. After the discussion about the anger and negative verdict of the Saudi Arabian government delegates at the mosque management committee level, Professor Ismail Balogun voluntarily resigned his position as Chief Imam and Chairman of the Community<sup>5</sup>.

However, the period between December 1973 and January 1974 was full of trials and tribulations for the Ahmadiyyah Society and indeed Professor (then Dr) Ismail Balogun, (then an Ahmadi) who, in addition to his position as Chief Imam and Chairman of the Community, was also the Chairman, Western States Pilgrims Welfare Board. The Muslim World League had earlier passed a *fatwa* (Islamic verdict) declaring Ahmadiyyah as a non Islamic Organization<sup>6</sup>. Subsequently, in December, 1973 the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Nigeria vehemently denied the Ahmadiyyah members the travelling to Makkah *Hajj* (pilgrimage) and 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) meant for January, 1974. This incident created a lot of din and controversy in the Country<sup>7</sup>. In my opinion, this developments may have led to a protest by some Muslim students under the leadership of Professor (then Mr) Agbetola against Professor (then Dr) Ismail Balogun as the Imam of the Community, demanding that he abdicates the position of imam since a non Muslim cannot lead prayers for Muslims<sup>8</sup>. Professor Ismail Balogun did not only resign his positions in the Community but also published a well researched academic paper titled "*The Ahmadiyyah Problem in Nigeria*" in the "Sunday Times" of 20 January, 1974<sup>9</sup>. There, he exposed the fallacies of the Ahmadiyyah Society, an indication of his exit from the sect.

The period of the leadership of the Community by Professor Musa Abdul witnessed the policy of rotating the imamship among the students of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies who must have demonstrated the qualities of an imam. This he did by choosing an undergraduate student running his second year at the University to act as the Imam for a term of one academic session after which another student was appointed<sup>10</sup>. There are, however, indications that some of the student imams might have served for two academic sessions. The student imams were Mr (later Ambassador) Mustapha Adeyanju,



Mr (later Professor) Wahab Nasiru,<sup>11</sup> Mr Bushrah Sulayman<sup>12</sup>, Mr (later Professor) S.A. Agbetola, Mr (later Dr), A.J Amoloye, Mr (later Professor) M.A. Muhibū-Din<sup>13</sup>, Mr (later Dr) D.A.A. Tijani, Mr Ismail Oladiti, Mr Ashade<sup>14</sup>, Mr Badmus, Mr Akashat<sup>15</sup>, Mr (later Dr) M.O. Rahimson (1983-1985) and Mr (later Alhaji) Ajikanle<sup>16</sup>.

Furthermore, it was during the imamship of Mr Ajikanle that the members of the Community moved to the new mosque which is far bigger than the old one. By the time of movement to the new mosque, the old mosque accommodated between 12 to 15 rolls of worshippers during Friday service<sup>17</sup>. After the movement to the new mosque, however, the roll of worshiper only stood at two lines due to the largeness of the mosque<sup>18</sup>. Following the demise of Professor Musa Abdul in February 1986, Professor (then Dr) Dawud Noibi became the substantive Chairman and Chief Imam of the Community in line with its constitution<sup>19</sup>. At the same time, Professor (then Dr) Wahab Nasiru and Dr Dawood Tijani were appointed as first and second Deputy Imams by the Mission Board of the Community respectively. For reasons of maintaining the quality of sermons for which the Community is known for<sup>20</sup> and the demand for stable imam by worshippers,<sup>21</sup> Professor Dawud Noibi personally led the Friday service as against what hitherto operated<sup>22</sup>.

Following the absence of Professor Noibi from the University on Sabbatical and leave of absence, Professor Malik being the most senior academic staff of the Department of Arabic and Islamic acted as the Chairman of the Muslim Community while Professor (then Dr) Nasiru briefly acted as the Imam before voluntarily handing over to Dr Tijani. On the voluntary retirement of Professor Noibi from the employ of the University in 1996, Professor Malik became the substantive Chairman of the Community while Dr Tijani became the substantive Chief Imam. In May 1996, the Fatwa and Ceremonies Committee which had the power to appoint the Imam and his deputies, under the chairmanship of Professor Malik, appointed Professor (then Dr) AbdulRahman and Dr Rufai both of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies as the first and second Deputy Imams respectively<sup>23</sup>.

Dr Tijani was an orator whose *Khutbah* attracted the attention and admiration of many Muslims. However, there were general reservations by members of the congregation on the length of his *khutbah*. The issue was resolved with the active participation of Dr Tijani himself. Hence, the decision to rotate imamship of Friday services on a weekly basis with Dr Tijani retaining his position as the Chief Imam as done in the two holy mosques of Makkah and Madinah. Accordingly, Dr Tijani, Dr Abdul-Rahmon, Dr Rufai, Professor (then Dr) A.F Ahmed and Professor (then Dr) K.K. Oloso were chosen to lead Friday services in turns<sup>24</sup>. Dr Tijani died in 2006 after a brief illness and was succeeded by Professor Abdul-Rahmon.



In the realm of administration, Professor Malik had to resign his chairmanship of the community due to his commitment to a national assignment at Abuja. Consequently, Professor Hussain who was his Vice-Chairman acted as the chairman of the Community for a while. Meanwhile, there was a constitutional review which led to the removal of the restriction of the chairmanship of the Community to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. After the ratification of the new constitution, Professor Lateef Hussain was made the substantive Chairman of the Community. Professor Bada later became the Chairman after Professor Lateef Hussain.

### **Reorganization of the Community**

In 1987 the elders of the Community from other departments and units invited the members of the academic staff of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies to a meeting at the residence of Professor Lateef Salako. At the meeting, some of the elders from other departments accused the Chief Imam of delivering series of *Khutbah* against the mode of dressing of female Muslim students, their children inclusive. They also alleged that he failed to supplicate for late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in his *Khutbah*. At this juncture, it would be beneficial to state that one of the elders from the other departments had approached the Chief Imam on certain occasions suggesting to him to dedicate a Friday service *khutbah* to late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in recognition of his contributions to the welfare of the Muslims. He also requested that the Chief Imam should seize the opportunity to along with the congregation supplicate for the forgiveness the late sage's shortcomings. After much pressure, the Chief Imam dedicated a *Khutbah* to the perceived contributions of the late sage to the welfare of the Muslims. Apparently, the *Khutbah* did not go down well with some of the congregation who had passion for the late politician. The Chief Imam however failed to supplicate for the forgiveness of the sins of the late legend on the grounds that it was unislamic to do so<sup>25</sup>.

Furthermore, the elders from other departments alleged that a number of the Chief Imam's *Khutbah* were political in content. Finally, there was the complaint that the 'missionary activities' of the staffers of the Department had gone beyond bounds and that if they were not curbed, the Department might not be able to produce a professor after the demise of Professor Musa Abdul even ten years after<sup>26</sup>. The Chief Imam of the Community who was also the Acting Head of Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies Professor (then Dr) Dawud Noibi responded to the above allegations in the following manner.

On the issue of dressing of female Muslim students, he explained that there was need for female Muslim adults to be properly dressed in accordance with the teachings of Islam (Q24:31 & Q33:59). He concluded that, despite the *Khutbah* on this subject matter, some of the female members of the congregation still felt



free to be dressed as they desired without any inhibition from the mosque authorities. If they chose to do so, others should be equally free to be given the right guidance in the course of the *Khutbah*. Commenting on the issue of supplications for Chief Obafemi Awolowo, he said he could not do so because of the express injunction in the Quran prohibiting such an action for a non-Muslim (Q9:113-114)<sup>27</sup>.

On the matter of the perceived political content of his *Khutbah*, the Chief Imam explained that it was necessary to reflect in the *Khutbah* how governments have failed to stop Christian indoctrination of Muslim children in public schools and how these children had been denied the offering of Islamic studies. These actions against Muslim pupils and students, he noted, violated the relevant provisions of the Nigerian constitution and the National Policy on Education<sup>28</sup>.

Commenting for what the elders from other departments considered as 'missionary activities', Professor (then Dr) Noibi explained that academics were to teach, research, publish and offer community services to the wider community, adding that what some perceived as 'missionary activities' were mainly the enlightenment of the wider community about the pristine teachings of Islam and how to peacefully defend their rights against oppression and stereotypes. He then assured the meeting of the fact that academics in his department were adequately engaged not only in such community services but also in teaching, research and publication which are what it takes to rise to professorship<sup>29</sup>. Incidentally, the Department has since succeeded in producing six professors, two of whom emerged within four years following the death of Professor Abdul.

Finally, the meeting decided on four major issues. Firstly, that a governing board to which the executive council will be responsible should be established. Secondly, that the most senior member of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies should continue to retain the position of Chief Imam and Chairman of the Community. Thirdly, that the secretary to the executive council of the Community should be the most senior Muslim administrative staff while lastly, that the treasurer should be the most senior Muslim staff in Bursary/Accounts unit. The fallout of that meeting was a constitutional review which brought in new executive members. Professor Mosobalaje Oyawoye became the President-General, Professor (then Dr) Dawud Noibi retained his position as both the Chief Imam/Chairman of the executive council of the Community while Professor Lateef Hussain became the Vice-Chairman, Alhaji Kehinde Okunsanya took over from Professor (then Dr) Sayyid Malik as the Secretary and Alhaji O. Dele became the Treasurer<sup>30</sup>.

### **Roles and Activities of the Community**

The Community has involved itself in some activities and has played several valuable roles within the University and at the larger society. These roles and



activities have in no small measure contributed to the growth of the Community. This paper identifies nine of these roles and activities. They are explained as follows.

### **i) Construction of Mosque**

In 1953, the University of Ibadan (then University College) started moving to its permanent site where it currently occupies. Prior to the movement, it made arrangement for an extensive land-space for the building of places of worship. Consequently, a sum of €40,000 (forty thousand Pounds Sterling) was made available to the Muslims and the two Christian groups comprising Protestants (Baptist, Methodists and Anglicans among others) and Roman Catholics. The grant was shared in accordance with the proportion of students in each of the three religious groups. Hence the Protestants had €28,000 (twenty-eight thousand Pounds Sterling), the Roman Catholic €8,000 (eight thousand Pounds Sterling) and Muslims €4,000 (four thousand Pounds Sterling)<sup>31</sup>. Subsequently, the construction of University Central Mosque came last of the three places of worship with it being opened for use after its commissioning by the first Prime Minister of Nigeria and the University Chancellor in 17 November, 1963 as part of his installation ceremony on the Foundation Day. The unique dome mosque was estimated to have cost about ₦2,000,000 (two million naira) part of which was sourced through miscellaneous sources<sup>32</sup>.

As time went by, the congregation of Muslims at the Community mosque swelled and it became apparent that it was only a matter of time that the existing mosque would be overfilled with worshippers. The plan to construct a new and more spacious mosque for the Community may have started in the early 1970s. The reported visit of the Saudi Arabian government delegation to the Community in 1974 as explained earlier is a pointer to the fact that the Community had approached the Saudi Arabian government for financial assistance. Although that initial attempt did not work out as expected, the members of the Community had a strong resolve to achieve the objective. The zeal led to the congregation jointly raising a sum of ₦300,000 (three hundred thousand naira) from their contributions. They were also able to raise another ₦500,000 (five hundred thousand naira) from philanthropists within the Country<sup>33</sup>.

After the initial local efforts at raising fund for the construction of the mosque, the community sent a delegation of three men comprising Alhaji Abdul-Rahman Okene who was the Chairman of the Governing Council of the University, Professor (then Dr) Malik and Alhaji Adaranijo to Saudi Arabia to solicit for financial assistance towards the project. Professor (then Dr) Malik together with Mr Adam, a technical aid staff from Saudi Arabia undertook a second trip to Saudi Arabia where they were able to raise 1,000,000 SR (one million Saudi



Arabian Riyals) from the Saudi Arabian government and another \$41,000 (forty-one thousand US dollars) from philanthropists in that Country within a period of 22 days. Another trip had earlier been made by Professor (then Dr) Malik and Professor (then Dr) Oloso to Kuwait where \$71,000 (seventy-one thousand US Dollars) was raised from one Abdullah Al-Hafeez within a period of 41 days. With all these efforts, a total of ₦41,000,000 (forty-one million naira) was available for the building of the new mosque<sup>34</sup>. The mosque was eventually built and commissioned for use in December, 1985<sup>35</sup>.

Apart from the two mosques discussed above, there are two other mosques: Abadina Mosque and Awo Hall Mosque. Issues surrounding the establishment of the two are discussed as follows. At this juncture, it is pertinent to note that Abadina area of the University is mostly occupied by low-cadre staffers. These included Muslims mostly from Auchi, Edo State. As at 1972, Muslims at Abadina had secured a space for worship. The space was demarcated with stones by one Baba Garba. The members of the congregation included Baba Garba himself, Alhaji Adaranijo, Alhaji Ogunbosi, Alhaji Ali and Alhaji Kassumu among others and was led by one Mr Adamu. With time, the mosque was demarcated with straws containing sands before it was later built with bricks due the assistance of the Community. The female members of the congregation constituted had themselves into a prayer group called "*Asalatu Abadina*" and usually met at the Central mosque<sup>36</sup>.

Concerning Awo Hall Mosque, the University authority under the leadership of the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Omoniyi Adewoye built a mosque for the Muslims in the Hall. The reason for the construction of the mosque was as a result of cultists' attack on the Muslims who were going to the Central Mosque for prayers. To console the Muslims and prevent future occurrences, the space which the Muslims used for prayers in the Hall was expanded and turned into a mosque. The need to erect a perimeter fence to protect the Hall and its inmates necessitated the relocation of the mosque to another area within the vicinity of the Hall under the leadership of the immediate past Vice-Chancellor, Professor Isaac F. Adewole<sup>37</sup>.

## ii) Cross-Mosque Issue

The Cross-Mosque issue was one of the most challenging issues that the Community had ever confronted. It all happen that on 13 August 1985, just 13 days to '*īdul-Kabīr* (*Ileya* Festival), the Muslims were surprised to notice that the mosque premises was being fenced in by the neighboring Protestant Church otherwise known as the Chapel of Resurrection. Moreover, the fence had encroached on the open space where the Muslim congregation usually used for their '*īd* (festival) prayers. It took the timely intervention of Professor Abdul to



prevent the crisis that would have occurred from the anger of the Muslims on that occasion. The Muslims soon noticed that the space that Christians encroached on was to house a church hall. Two days later, precisely on the 15 August, 1985, Professor Abdul in his capacity as the Chairman of the Mosque Management Committee wrote a letter to the Vice-Chancellor Professor Ayo Banjo urging him to take prompt action on both the encroachment and the fencing in of mosque premises as 'īd prayers were to take place on 26 August, 1985<sup>38</sup>.

In the meantime, the Muslims had discovered an alternative space northeast of the new mosque. The congregation then noticed that the new mosque was directly in front of a white concrete cross and that worshippers in the mosque would be directly praying towards it in their bid to facing the *Qiblah* (direction of the Ka'abah). This is by all means antithetical to the authentic creed of the Muslims. Consequently, on the 27 November, 1985 the Community wrote another letter to the Vice-Chancellor with the request that the cross be move near the Protestant Church to which it belonged so that it would no longer be in the direction of the *Qiblah*. Then, there began series of meetings between the Vice-Chancellor and representatives of the Muslims and Christians. The first meeting was held on 19 December, 1985 where the Vice-Chancellor expressed his indifference towards the suggested request to move the cross close to the Protestant Church. However, in another meeting of 3 January, 1986, the Vice-Chancellor expressed a different opinion claiming that the cross was a university landmark which should not be moved. Professor (the Dr) Noibi, who led the Muslim delegation due to the illness of Professor Abdul, then asked the Vice-Chancellor a rhetorical question on whether the University was a Christian university which must have cross as its landmark. The Vice-Chancellor called for another reconciliatory meeting on 14 January, 1986<sup>39</sup>.

Furthermore, the meetings of 3 January, 1986 and 14 January, 1986 were full of compromises which were approved by all parties concerned. The compromises included the immediate screening off of the cross from Muslim worshippers' view in the new mosque and the erection of the symbol of other religious, especially the crescent for the Muslims, on the holy land. The Vice-Chancellor did not implementation any of the above stated resolutions for a period of six months in spite of verbal and written reminders to him from the Community<sup>40</sup>.

The narration in some quarters that the Muslims demanded for a high demarcating wall between the Mosque premises and the adjoining Protestant Church has been disproved as untrue. This is because the Muslims never for once desired nor requested for a high demarcating wall but rather a dwarf wall concealed with hedges. Furthermore, the Muslims under the leadership of Professor (then Dr) Dawud Noibi had on the 16 December, 1987 written to the Vice-Chancellor reiterating the objection of the Community to a high wall and asking for his intervention in that regard. What necessitated that letter was the



Community's observation that the said fence, under the supervision of the Director of Works, was raised high as against the original plan and agreement. The Vice-Chancellor then expressed the view that he thought the idea of the high wall came from the Muslims, which Professor (then Dr) Dawud Noibi refuted. The Vice-Chancellor then advised the leadership both the Christians and the Muslim communities to go back to the then Oyo State Commissioner of Police (CP) for clarification, as the CP had been the mediator who had helped to resolve the conflict<sup>41</sup>. This was done and the CP confirmed that the idea of erecting a high wall was his, but consented to the desire of both parties to reduce it to a dwarf wall concealed with hedges<sup>42</sup>. The issue has since been resolved and the Muslim and Christian like in utmost cordiality.

### iii) Participation in the Shariah Debate

The compliance of Muslims with the dictates of Allah as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is enshrined the Islamic law otherwise known as the Shariah. Muslims are expected to be subjected to the Shariah in their private and public lives. An aspect of the implementation of the Shariah in the public sphere is the adjudication of cases concerning Muslims according to the dictates of Allah. It is axiomatic that Islam preceded Christianity in Nigeria. It is therefore natural that the Islamic law preceded the common law in Nigeria. Although the Shariah law had been reduced to personal status in Nigeria there were calls for its abolition by a cross section of Nigerians. In 1977/78, there was a controversy on the recognition of the Shariah in the proposed 1979 draft constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. To start with, in February 1978, Professor (then Alhaji) Noibi and Professor (then Dr) Malik on behalf of the Community presented a 25 page memorandum to the Constituent Assembly which was to draft the 1979 constitution. The document refuted the claims of the opponents of the Shariah and made a strong case for the inclusion of the Shariah in the 1979 draft constitution<sup>43</sup>.

However, the media continued to carry negative views on the application of the Shariah in Nigeria with few responses from the Muslims. It should be noted that the responses from the Muslims were majorly from the North rather than the South. The Community under the auspices of the Mission Board represented by its chairman, Professor (then Alhaji) Noibi took it upon itself to respond to the negative comments on the proposed inclusion of the Shariah in the 1979 draft constitution. Consequently, Alhaji Isa Yagboyaju, a devout Muslim philanthropist, sponsored an enlightenment program on the Broadcasting Cooperation of Oyo State (BCOS). The program which was anchored by Professor Noibi devoted a substantial number of its episodes to the education of Muslims and non-Muslims about the Shariah. When eventually the program



stopped due to paucity of fund, many people were worried and felt uncomfortable. Among those who showed concern for the stoppage of the program was Professor Bodunrin, a Christian in the Department of Philosophy and former Dean of Arts, who expressed surprise that such an enlightenment attracted fees saying that "the Christians have had their own share"<sup>44</sup>.

Furthermore, in the early 1980s, Professor Noibi (then Alhaji) represented the Community on a live Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) program tagged "The Controversy". On the one hour Shariah debate program featuring him and Professor Olumbe Basir of the Department of Biochemistry, University of Ibadan, Professor Noibi successfully defended the Shariah as contained in the 1979 draft constitution. Similarly, in 1986, Professor (then Dr) Noibi as the Chairman and Chief Imam of the Community took part in an interview program on the BCOS where two journalists threw series of challenging questions to him on the Shariah. He was however, able to satisfactorily answer those questions and effectively defended Islam and the Shariah. Even while in the United Kingdom on leave of Absence, Professor Noibi continued to offer enlightenment services on Shariah issues in Nigeria on the BBC World Service and sometimes the Irish Radio, as he was often invited by these media institutions to comment on the issue<sup>45</sup>.

#### **iv) Conduct of Ceremonies**

The University of Ibadan Muslim Community through the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies conducts ceremonies such as Nikah (marriage), aqiqah (naming ceremonies), house warming events and thanksgiving services among others for members of its community and beyond. These events are conducted in line with strict Islamic rules and global best practices. The service of the Community in this regard which extends to the nook and corner of the South West of Nigeria was the first of its kind in the region. At the inception, Professor Abdul maintained the policy of asking any of his of the students in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies present at the event to perform various roles at such ceremonies without any prior notice. This kept the students always prepared and alert<sup>46</sup>. Although the practice of engaging students in such ceremonies has ceased, the students of those days have imbibed the training and are making use of the lessons learnt in their various locations. The exemplary performance of the Community at ceremonies has made many individuals to demand for the unique services of the Community on appropriate occasions.

#### **v) Moon Sighting and Muslim Unity**

Muslim unity is an imperative. Hence, the Community is passionate about and had always hammered that whenever the opportunity to do so occurred. This advocacy was most prominent in the League of Imams and Alfas. One of the



factors that endangered the unity of Muslim was the period of starting and ending Ramadan fasts. In the late 1970s to early 1990s, poised to be properly guided on religious matters, Professor Noibi as the Chairman of the Mission Board and later Chairman and Chief Imam of the Community consulted the metrological centre on behalf of the Community for information on when it was likely for the crescent to be sighted and where such sighting was most likely to take place. It was based on this that the claim of sighting the crescent in any part of Nigeria, and by extension the world was authenticated. The Community tried to sell their idea to the League of Imams and Alfas to no avail. The community has since started going along with the guidance of the League of Imams and *Alfas*, perhaps for the sake of uniformity and unity of the *Ummah*<sup>47</sup>.

#### vi) Arabic/Quranic Literacy

Arabic/Quranic literacy for the children of Muslim staffers in the Community started in 1983 when Professor (then Dr) Nasiru engaged the services of Mr Akashat, his students in the Department to teach his children Arabic/Quranic literacy. The Arabic teacher was paid ₦60 (sixty naira) by Professor (then Dr) Nasiru and the venue of the class was the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan. Later, children of some other members of the Community joined and more teachers were engaged<sup>48</sup>. The Arabic/Quranic school was later moved to Barakat Nursery and Primary School beside the Lekan Salami Estate in New Bodija, Ibadan. Though, the reason for the movement cannot be ascertained, it was most likely that as the classes were getting larger, the Department could not contain the students, hence the movement was imperative. After the completion of the new mosque in the Community, classes were shifted to it.

Similarly, some Muslim women on Campus who had no opportunity of learning the recitation of the Quran received Arabic/Quranic literary training from Professor Sayyid Malik. The Arabic/Quranic literary classes which commenced at the residence of Professor Shobulo had personalities like Alhaja Salako, Alhaja Shobulo, Alhaja Dele and Alhaja Oduye to mention a few as students. However, this effort was not conclusive<sup>49</sup>.

After the retirement of Professor Balogun from the University of Ilorin and his relocation with his family to Ibadan in April, 1991, Alhaja Dele, a former student of Professor Sayyid Malik, approached Alhaja Ganiyat Balogun at a program organized by the Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) with the request that her husband teach her and some other women Arabic/Quranic literacy. On Alhaja Ganiyat Balogun's delivery of the message to Professor Ismail Balogun, he enthusiastically welcomed the idea and subsequently gathered the interested Muslim women including some of those



formerly taught Arabic/Quran by professor Sayyid Malik, at the University of Ibadan Central Mosque with the students providing for the classroom furniture and started teaching them Arabic literacy and Quranic recitation. This successful and conclusive attempt by Professor Balogun, which lasted for 15 months culminated in the traditional *walimah* ceremony which was the first of its kind in the Community. About 32 of the 35 students who started the program graduated. They included Alhaja Dele, Alhaja Badamas, Alhaja Lagundoye, Alhaja Amoo Alhaja Nasiru, Alhaja Adisa and Alhaja Babalakin among others<sup>50</sup>.

The issue of sharing the proceeds of the *walimah* ceremony between Professor Balogun and the Community, which housed the program, led to some challenges. Although the proceeds were later released in whole to Professor Balogun, he was banned from using the Community for such programs in future. The situation did not only lead to a vacuum in terms of adult Arabic/Quranic literary classes in the Community but also manifested in a popular belief and saying that the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies was incapable of organizing a similar program<sup>51</sup>.

Consequently, Dr Tijani rose up to the challenge by starting an adult Arabic/Quranic class with the assurance that students would graduate in one year. This effort proved successful as highly placed individuals within and outside the Community graduated in record time and *walimah* ceremony followed in a grand style with proceeds from it deposited in the coffers of the Community<sup>52</sup>. Dr Tijani was assisted in his subsequent Arabic/Quranic literacy efforts by Dr (then Mr) Kareem. As the classes were getting larger, the need to engage the services of additional personnel became apparent. This led to Mr Oladejo joining the duo in carrying out the task. It should be noted that the three Arabic/Quranic instructors performed the task without any financial compensation<sup>53</sup>. The successful effort sent positive image of the Community to the wider society. It was the first known Quranic class that graduated competent literates in the Quran within one year. This served as categorical imperative for various mosques and organizations<sup>54</sup>. The Arabic/Quranic class has continued even after the demise of Dr Tijani.

#### **vii) Welfare of the Indigent and the Needy**

The rendering of assistance to the needy is one of the cardinal principles of Islam. As such any organization that does not pay attention to the needy is grossly insensitive to the reality in its environment. The Community under the leadership of Professor Noibi paid attention to the indigent and the needy. It was at this time that the Community started setting aside a percentage of the donations after Friday service to the needy<sup>55</sup>. The generosity of the Community increased tremendously during the era of Dr Tijani as the Imam. Dr Tijani was passionate on the need to render assistance to the poor and the needy especially among the



Muslim students. His sermons were always replete with continuous call for the increase in financial contributions in order for the Community to be in a better position of rendering of financial assistance to the less privileged in the society. Moreover, Dr Tijani vehemently advocated the setting aside of a welfare package for the Muslim indigent students. He gave free accommodation to several students in his Samanda residence which was deliberately located close to the University. Dr Tijani was responsible for personally paying the school fees and allowances of indigent students within and outside the Community<sup>56</sup>.

### **viii) Advocacy for Teaching Islamic Studies in Schools**

In the early 1980s, few schools in the southwest of Nigeria had their Muslim pupils and students taught Islamic Studies, rather, they were compelled to offer Christian Religions knowledge. In those days, there were only four schools within the University of which two: Staff School and the International School belonged to the University while the other two: Abadina Primary School and Abadina College belonged to the Oyo State Government. Professor (then Dr) Noibi and Professor (then Dr) Malik on behalf of the Community wrote to the principals and Headmasters/Headmistresses of the schools on campus on the need to ensure the teaching Islamic Studies as against Christian Religious Knowledge to Muslim pupils/students. They also wrote letter to the Board of the International School and the Staff School, and even met its Chairman to make cases in defense of the rights of Muslim students and pupils. When all efforts to make the Board do what was needful proved abortive, the Community proposed to the Board that it would recruit an Islamic Studies teacher for the International School and pay his/her salary for the first two years after which the University/school will take full responsibility. This struggle was a tough one but it later yielded positive results<sup>57</sup>. The larger society of the Muslim community was not left out in the struggle for the right of Muslim children to be taught Islamic Studies in public schools. In the 1980s, the Community worked closely with the Chief Imams of towns and cities in ensuring the educational rights of Muslim children. Professor (then Dr) Noibi and Professor (then Dr) Malik on behalf of the Community met with a number of Muslim communities in the South West of Nigeria to strategize on the best way to demand for their rights. Letters were also written to the various governments in the South West of Nigeria to employ Islamic Studies teachers and ensure the teaching of such in government schools. These efforts were largely successful<sup>58</sup>.

### **ix) Enlightenment of the Muslims**

In the early 1980s, the Community under the leadership of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies commissioned some Muslim youths including



students to travel the length and breadth of Oyo State with the principal aim of enlightening and sensitizing the Muslims on their roles in the society. It should be noted that Professor (then Alhaji) Noibi, on behalf of the Community, supervised the university branch of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria and was regarded as a patron and an advisor to the state unit of the society. The extensive enlightenment campaign coordinated by the Community and the eventual ban of the Muslim Students' Society in Oyo State by the then Executive Governor Chief Bola Ige led to the proliferation of Muslim youth organizations. In order to coordinate the activities of the Muslim youth organizations, Professor Noibi proposed the establishment of an umbrella body for Muslim youth organizations in the State. This proposal was welcomed and a new organization called Council of Muslim Youth Organization (COMYO) was formed at the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan<sup>59</sup>. This organization was replicated in the southwestern states of Nigeria and later became a national organization. The name has since been changed to National Council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the University of Ibadan Muslim Community which began over forty decades ago has grown tremendously in strength and influence. There is also very high regard for the Community within the larger society. The most noticeable driver of the Community was the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University. The Department has produced dynamic leaders who have distinguished themselves in the propagation of Islam. Through its indefatigable leaders starting from Professor Balogun and ending with Dr Tijani, the impact of the Community has been felt far and wide. The Community has produced the manpower required for the religious uplift of the society. The reorganization of the Community which led to the interplay of personalities from different professional callings has not only engendered dynamism and synergy in its administration but has also created a sense of belonging in members. The Community has developed Arabic/Quranic literary skills in members who lacked the opportunity through the exhibition of unique and exemplary pedagogical competence. Moreover, the Community has raised the banners of Islam to greater heights within the South West region of Nigeria. It has demonstrated the ability to make changes through courage, doggedness and determination. Without any iota of doubt, the University of Ibadan Muslim Community has become a categorical imperative for the Muslim communities that desire meaningful growth and development.



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