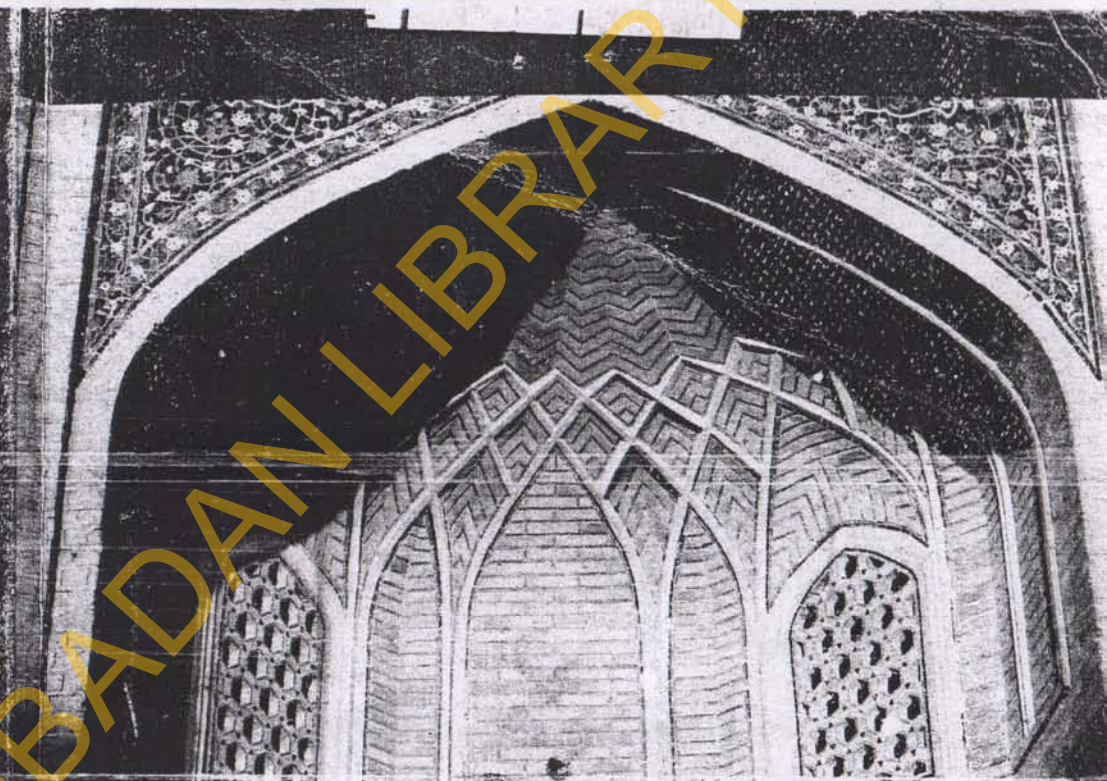


is a religion and a way of life for the Muslims. It consists of  
p of the creator and goodness to others to ensure a just society  
Salat is a very important duty in Islam as it distinguishes Muslims  
thers. It is an institution of the Muslim congregation in a locality  
he imam as the head and mosque as his office. There are divine  
nd regulations guiding the administration of the mosque, just as  
e qualifications and qualities for the appointment of the  
hey are: adequate knowledge, honesty, justice and selflessness  
others. In Yorubaland, there was total compliance by Imams with  
mic requirements at inception. With the expansion of Islam in the  
and the availability of more scholars, Imamship became more  
ve and respectable. People seek for it using all means possible. In  
places, Imamship is by heredity while in others, Imam is selected  
a single family. In some areas, the king is the selecting and  
ing authority and in most cases, he appoints his loyalists without  
eration for qualification and quality. In some places like Ibadan,  
re two lines to Imamship.

Lateef Abbas



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Imamship Practices in Yorubaland, Nigeria

Lateef Abbas

# Ideals and Realities of Imamship Practices in Yorubaland of Nigeria

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978-3-8433-7139-1





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LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing

**Impressum/Imprint (nur für Deutschland/ only for Germany)**

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek: Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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Coverbild: [www.ingimage.com](http://www.ingimage.com)

Verlag: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG  
Dudweiler Landstr. 99, 66123 Saarbrücken, Deutschland  
Telefon +49 681 3720-310, Telefax +49 681 3720-3109  
Email: [info@lap-publishing.com](mailto:info@lap-publishing.com)

Herstellung in Deutschland:  
Schaltungsdienst Lange o.H.G., Berlin  
Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt  
Reha GmbH, Saarbrücken  
Amazon Distribution GmbH, Leipzig  
ISBN: 978-3-8433-7139-1

**Imprint (only for USA, GB)**

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek: The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

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Publisher: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG  
Dudweiler Landstr. 99, 66123 Saarbrücken, Germany  
Phone +49 681 3720-310, Fax +49 681 3720-3109  
Email: [info@lap-publishing.com](mailto:info@lap-publishing.com)

Printed in the U.S.A.  
Printed in the U.K. by (see last page)  
ISBN: 978-3-8433-7139-1

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## ABSTRACT

### IMAMSHIP IN ISLAM: ITS CONCEPT AND PRACTICE AMONG THE YORUBA OF OYO AND OSUN STATE

The effects of tradition and culture on different aspects of Islamic practices vary in form and magnitude from one culture to another. Among the Islamic institutions that have been subjected to cultural imposition among the Yoruba people is the institution of Imamship. The objective of this study is to establish that whereas the Islamic prescriptions identify certain criteria (*Shurut al-Imamah*) as qualifications for appointment as Imam, cultural practices that have antecedents in tribal history have subjected these criteria to various modifications among the Yoruba people.

This study, while benefiting methodologically from the historical approach to research, is essentially analytical. Information from field-works in all the major cities of the Oyo and Osun States featuring archival manuscripts, books, journals, magazines, court rulings on Imamship litigation as well as interview were painstakingly to form the information base of this study.

The significance of this thesis is that it highlights the extra *Shari'ah* factors that were always at play in the appointment and designation of an Imam. It also identifies the method of juxtaposition between the purely *Shari'ah* prescriptions and local customs. This is in view of the fact that attempt to accommodate local customs in the application of *Shurut a-l Imamah* has given birth to a kind of legal metamorphosis that suits only the Yoruba Muslims. In the Islamic statute books, traditional authorities are recognized neither as factors nor as participants in the appointment and designation of function of Imam. This study establishes however, that the Yoruba understanding of an Oba as the father of all his subjects has conferred the consenting authority of Imamship on the traditional ruler in our study area irrespective of his religious belief.



## DEDICATION

To Allah (The provider of all needs)

To my parents (Alhaji L.M. Abbas and late Mrs. S.A. Abbas).

To my brothers,

To my wife (Alhaja Gbemisola Abbas)

To my children: Sururah, Ashraf and Hameedah.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude first goes to Allah, the Most high, for endowing me with all the where withal needed to complete this work. Then to my Supervisor, Dr. M.O. Abdul Rahmon who not only inspired me, he painstakingly went through the manuscripts. His invaluable advices can not be forgotten.

I also must not forget the current Head of my Department and Chief Imam of the university, Dr. D.A.A. Tijani. Of particular note is the cooperation of Dr. A.F. Ahmed, Dr. K.K. Oloso, Alhaji A.A. Rufai, Dr. S.A. Shittu, Dr. A.A. Oladosu, Messrs O.I Tijani and M.L Kareem towards this success.

Of special mention is the contribution of Elders, friends and a host of many others who kept on reminding me of the need to complete the work early enough. To Miss Ganiyat Tijani, my computer typist, I thank you for being patients enough during the typing and correction of this work.



I thank you all and I pray Allah *subhanahu wata'ala* to reward you abundantly.

### CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by **Mr. Lateef Oluwole ABASS** in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan.

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July, 2003



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## GLOSSARY OF NON ENGLISH WORDS

'Adalah	- Justice, fairness and Impartiality.
Adhan	- Call to prayer. It is made to sensitize the Muslims of the time of <i>Salat</i> .
Adh-Dhikr	- Remembrance (particularly) of Allah.
Ansar	- Helpers. The Medina Muslims, at the Migration of the prophet Muhammad and Meccan Muslim to Medina Served as host to the emigrants and helped them.
Al-Qur'an	- The word of God sent through prophet Muhammad to the entire world within a period of 23 years.
Aqiqah	- Naming ceremony of a newly born baby.
Baale	- A traditional head of a village or community within a town or city in Yoruba land.
Babalowo	- A Yoruba traditional priest.
Baytullah	- House of Allah, Ka'bah in Mecca is always refers to as Baytullah. Mosques generally bear the name.
Baytul-Ma'mur	- The frequented house. It is said to be situated in heaven where Angels worship Allah.
Bulugh	- to attain maturity (age of puberty).
Burdah	- Muslim outer garment. It is used by Imam or leader of Muslim Community.
Da'wah	- call to the way of Allah.
Khalifah	- Caliph, Successor to the head of the Muslim Community.

Kharaj	- Land tax under the <i>Shari'ah</i> .
Fatwa	- Is a formal legal opinion given by a <i>Mufti</i> .
I'tikaf	- seclusion of a fasting Muslim during the last ten days of Ramadan fast. It is done only in the Mosque.
'Id	- Festival (particularly) of <i>fitri and adha</i> i.e. after the completion of Ramadan fast and the day after' " <i>Arafah</i> ."
Iftar	- Breaking of fast at sunset.
Haram	- Sacred e.g. The sacred Mosque of Ka'bah or that of prophetic Mosque in Medinah.
Hijrah	- Migration of prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medinah.
Jurham	- A tribute in Mecca from which prophet Ismail Married.
Khattu	- writing.
Khutbah	- Sermon.
Madrasah	- School (particularly) lower than secondary.
Maghrib	- sunset
Ma'sum	- Infallible, sinless.
Maqamah Ibrahim	- The place where prophet Ibrahim usually stood up in the Ka'bah for <i>Salat</i> .
Masjid	- Mosque
Minbar	- Pulpit.
Mufti	An Islamic legal Authority.
Mogaji	- Head of quarter or family or Compound.

Mu'adhdhin	- Caller to prayer.
Mufassir	- Interpreter (he who gives meaning and explanation of Quranic text).
Muhajirun	- Emigrants.
Qiblah	- Direction to which Muslims turn in prayer.
Qiyas	- Analogical deduction
Sadaqat	- Alm, charitable gift.
Salat	- Practical act of worship in Islam.
Salat al-Jaanazah	- Funeral prayer.
Shi'te	- A Muslim sect, followers of Ali (the third Caliph) who do not recognize the three earlier Caliphs.
Shurah	- Consultation.
Sunni	- Practitioners of the tradition of prophet Muhammad.
Ulama'	- Learned, scholars.
Ummah	- Community.
Zakat	- Obligatory charity.
Zawaj	- Marriage.
Zuhr	- Noon, mid-day or mid-day prayer.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Imamship as a Concept

The Arabic word imam ( امام ) is derived from the Arabic verb 'amma ( ام ) which connotes three different meanings. The first one means to go, betake oneself, go to someone and has ('ammun) ( ام ) as its verbal noun ( مصدر ) the second one means to lead the way, lead someone by one's example, to lead someone in *Salat* and it has *Imamah* ( إمامة ) as its verbal noun. The third one means to be or become a mother and it has 'amumah ( امومة ) as its verbal noun<sup>1</sup>.

The term Imam is used as the leader for different functions thus:

- (a) **Imam as a Political Head:** The head of Muslim government could be the Imam or the Khalifah. The four orthodox



Khalifah succeeded the prophet in both spiritual and political administration of the Muslim State.

(b) **Imam as Leader of Theology or Law:** Eminent scholars of Islam are referred to as Imams. Such are the founders of the orthodox schools of theology. They are Imams Abu Hanifah, Maliki, Shafi and Ahmad b. Hambal.

(c) **Imam as it applies to the Shiite:** The Shiite as a sect, more than the Sunnis applies the title Imam on both the spiritual and the political head of the community. It even specifies the kind of people to be honoured with the title. We shall discuss more on it later in this chapter.

(d) **Imam as leader of prayer in the Mosque:** This type is a person elected or appointed based on some qualifications like knowledge of Islam, good manners etc. to lead the Muslim congregation in either daily salat or Friday or id salat. This type is the focus of this thesis.

Originally, leader (امام), particularly caravan leader means anyone who guides a column of camels synonymous to *hadi* (هدى), a guide. Imam is therefore a person or thing that serves as a guide or a pattern<sup>2</sup>. The Imam in the religious context serves as a guide in prayers. He guides other worshipers in all the activities of prayers (*Salawat*).

## 12. Imamship in the Qur'an

The holy Quran discusses Imam in many chapters of the book connoting different meanings. These shall be itemized and examined.

### i. *Imam as a leader.*

The word Imam ( ) as it occurs in the Qur'an means a leader in the religion, a pattern, a model and a guide. A book of evidence or record or a book of guidance and instruction. Allah says to Prophet Ibrahim (ASW).

Translation: **إني جاعلك لناس إماما**

"... I will make you (Ibrahim) leader in religion for mankind (Q: 2: 124). Here Allah makes Ibrahim the leader of

religion. Also, Imam as used in the Qur'anic verse means that Ibrahim was a good example in the worship of Allah. Therefore, he is worthy of emulation.

ii. **Imam as a model**

Here, Imam is used in the sense of a model. This occurs in the Holy Qur'an where Allah describes the characteristic behaviours of His servants as those who, among other things pray:

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا  
وَدُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

**Translation**

.. Our Lord, grant unto us wives and offsprings who will be the comfort of our eyes and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous (Q. 25: 74).

iii **Imam as a guide**

The Holy Qur'an also gives the word Imam the meaning of a guide, it states: (أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدًا

مِّنْهُ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهِ كِتَابُ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً

**Translation**

Can those (who desire the life of the present and its glitters) be (like) those who accept a clear (sign) from their Lord, and whom a witness from Himself do teach, as did the Book of Moses before it ... a guide (Imam) and a mercy?" (Q. 11: 17).

Yusuf Ali, in his commentary on this Qur'anic verse has this to say:

Guide: the Arabic word here is Imam, a leader, a guide, one that directs to true path. Such direction is an instance of mercy and goodness of God to man. The Qur'an and the Apostle Muhammad are also called each; a guide and a mercy and so are these epithets (Guide and Mercy) applicable to previous books and Apostles<sup>3</sup>.



Thus, as an Imam leading a congregational prayer, guides other worshippers in all acts of devotion. So do revelations from Allah guide the believers in their thoughts and actions.

#### iv. Imam as example

In the Holy Qur'an, another meaning is given to the word Imam which denotes examples:

فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمَا لَبِإِمَامٍ سَبِينِ

#### Translation:

So we took vengeance on them. They are both on an open highway, plain to see" (Q. 15: 79).

The verse above shows that, the Qur'an discusses two categories of wrong doers punished openly for all to see. Ibn Kathir<sup>4</sup> refers to the two as at Shu'aib and that of Lut. The Qur'an in another sense uses the word Imam as meaning a

model. It states: **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُم مَّا كَلَّ شَيْءٌ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ**

#### Translation:

Verily, we shall give life to the dead and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind and of all things have we taken account in a clear Book (of evidence) (Q.36:12).

The above quoted verse uses Imam as a Book of record or evidence as already explained. This however is not directly applicable to this search. So Imam as a leader, model, pattern, example and guide will be applied in this case. Thus, Imam is the one who is known as the leader of a Muslim Community. The leader, who guides the Muslims in both their religious and mundane activities. The leader (Imam) is a good model, pattern and an example for the Muslims to emulate. In short, Imam is the religious, moral, political and social head and leader for the Muslim community.

#### 1.3. Appointment and Function of an Imam

For a candidate to be eligible for the post of Imam, he must possess certain qualifications and quality that could make

him fit for this important religious job. The qualifications are as follow:

**(i). Male Gender**

The Imam must be a male. A female is not qualified to be an Imam on the ground that her function are more at home than in the public, whereas most of the duties of the Imam are done in the Public<sup>4</sup>. Again, by her natural make up, a female has to forgo salat for some days of month. This goes to support that she is not fit to hold the post. She however leads where only females are present.

**(ii) Free Status**

A candidate for the post of the Imam must be a person of free status<sup>5</sup> whose freedom will not be at the mercy of another person or an institution. He is also has an independent mind. Therefore, a slave or someone in captivity is not qualified to be considered as an Imam.

**(iii) Religion Affiliation**

The Imam must be a Muslim<sup>6</sup> since his job is to lead the Muslim community. A non-Muslim, however, knowledgeable in Islam, shall not be considered other for the post of Imam. The Holy Qur'an has rejected other forms of religious practices than Islam. It says: وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

**Translation:**

... And whoever seeks a religious other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him and in the hereafter, he will be one of the losers (Qur'an 3:85).

**(iv) Age**

Candidate for the post of Imam must have reached the age of majority (*Bulugh*). This is so considering the serious nature of the job. An under age can certainly not appreciate the enormity of the responsibilities and importance Imamship.



Even through a boy could lead Salat, he cannot be made an Imam.

**(v) Knowledge**

Among the qualifications required of an Imam is adequate knowledge of Islam. He should possess vast knowledge of the *Shari'ah* to enable him discharge his responsibilities satisfaction since the Imam is to be followed (*al-matbu*) and not a follower (*at-Tabi*), he needs to equip himself with sufficient knowledge that could make him be capable of formulating decisions in theological matter.

Having vast knowledge of the *Shari'ah* does not however, prevent the Imam from making consultation when necessary. The Qur'an recommends that a leader should consult other while making decision especially in difficult matter. The Qur'an says: "consult them in the affairs (Q. 3:59). Ability to consult widely and to harmonize different opinion into a single but correct view makes a good and effective Imam.

**(vi) Piety**

Another in the group of the acquired virtues is piety. The Imam must have God's consciousness<sup>9</sup> at all times. A proven sinner or hypocrite should not be entrusted with the management of affairs of the Muslim.

**(vii) Justice ('Adalah)**

Imam must be just<sup>10</sup> because among his primary functions is the administration of justice according to the Holy Qur'an. In the Qur'anic verse which refers to Prophet Dawud as God's vicegerent on earth, Dawud was enjoined to judge between men impartially. The Qur'an States

(يَدَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا

تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

**Translation**

O Dawud! We did indeed make you a vicegerent on earth, so judge men in truth and justice (Qur'an 38:26).

**(viii) Sound Mind**

The mind must be of sound mind<sup>11</sup>. An insane person is not fit for the post of Imam.

**(ix) Bravery**

The Imam must be brave<sup>12</sup> and not be a coward. His bravery will assist him in taking positive and sound decision without entertaining fear from individuals or groups. He should in addition be rational in thought and action.

**(x) Physical Fitness**

The Imam is required to be physically and mentally fit in the discharge of his duties as a leader. As regards the sense organs like sight, it<sup>13</sup> has to be very effective otherwise its loss would incapacitate him in the performance of his duties when ever needed as a visually disable Imam cannot carry out those functions of great burden associated with his office.

Hearing is another factor in the group. A deaf person who cannot hear<sup>14</sup> properly or who cannot hear at all is not

suitable for Imamship even though deafness and weakness of sight may not be prejudice to the position. But because the Imam needs to engage in much talk when he presents sermons on the pulpit, when he leads prayers and when he preaches at open air services etc.; his voice has to be clear, sound and must be free from any defect that could render it ineffective. Therefore, a dumb person is not fit<sup>15</sup> for the post.

With respect to loss of body parts, any limb whose absence has no impact on the sense (brain) and has no direct role on the job of the Imam, is not a prejudice<sup>16</sup>. However, whichever part whose loss can impede the effectiveness of an Imam like loss of the two legs and hands is considered a defect that could disqualify one from being appointed as an Imam.

In case of Imam becoming one eyed or having his nose cut of, the consensus of the jurist is that since this kind of defect does not impede the function of an Imam, it does not disqualify a candidate. However, some radical opinions hold



that such a defect amounts to an ugly sight and that it can detract people's attention, resulting to ridicule for the Imam by members of the congregation<sup>17</sup>.

Some other scholars consider the opinion as uncondition to disqualify a candidate. Their reason is that since handsomeness of a person does not form part of the requirements for Imamship, ugliness should not also be a condition for disqualification<sup>18</sup>.

Another important quality for Imamship is being from the Quraysh tribe. This provision is added following an hadith<sup>19</sup> against any candidate not from Quraysh descent. Many jurists supported this hadith believing that it is authentic. The only known jurist who opposed it is Dirar b. 'Amr<sup>20</sup> but many 'Ulama' are of the opinion that a very few people reported the hadith and as such lacks the necessary frequency<sup>21</sup>.

Another angle to it is that an authentic hadith will normally take into consideration, future happenings and, in this case, it could not have been the intention of the Prophet that

other nationals would only wait until they found someone of Qurayshi descent to lead them as Imam. Al-Juwayni argues that the hadith does not reach the status of (*tawatur*) frequency<sup>22</sup>.

Having met the above stated requirements for the appointment of an Imam, a candidate for the post can be appointed through two ways. It can be by election or by designation, that is, he may be elected by an electoral college (*Shurah*) or through nomination by the ruling Imam<sup>23</sup>. The first caliph, Abubakr, was elected by five persons.

The election of a less qualified person in the presence of a more qualified person is perfect and legal as long as the former fulfils all the conditions of the Imamate<sup>24</sup>. This view is at variance with the Shiites' claim that the inferior person cannot have precedence over a superior one. They assert that since Ali, the fourth caliph and his descendants were superior to the rest of mankind, any other person who assumes the Imamate office is, according to the shites, a mere usurper<sup>25</sup>. The above argument by the shites cannot hold for lack of merit. This is because Islam

does not provide for preference of one tribe over another. The Holy Prophet in his last sermon, warned against this.

If there is only one candidate for Imamship, he automatically becomes chosen and no election is required. However, some Sunni oppose this view and hold that election must hold even if there is only one candidate contesting, otherwise, the Imam cannot acquire the necessary legal status. Their insistence on election is obviously directed against the shites' theory of divine appointment. After being duly elected, the Imam is accepted by the community by taking an Oath of allegiance.

A ruling *Sunni* Imam can nominate a successor. This is based on Abubakr's example who nominated Umar b. al-Khattab (the second caliph) to succeed him. The Imam can therefore nominate any suitable person as successor provided he does not happen to be his father or son. In case of the latter, the consensus of the people who matter in the administration shall be necessary<sup>26</sup>.

The nomination of a person as heir apparent becomes effective only when he declares his consent to it. The Imam can nominate two or more heirs apparent to succeed him in turns<sup>27</sup>.

The duly elected *Sunni* Imam who functions as head of Islamic Government enjoys certain privileges. His name is mentioned in the *khutbah* (Sermon). Also, he wears *al-burdah* (the prophetic Mantle) on important occasions. In addition, he keeps in his custody, such holy relics as the staff or the seal. Finally, he enjoys the obedience of the Muslim community.

Other functions of the *Sunni* Imam is to safeguard and defend the Islamic faith. He must ensure that he upholds justice and fair play in matters of litigation in accordance with *Shariah* provision. He should also ensure that *Kharaj*<sup>29</sup>, *Zakat* as<sup>30</sup> well as *Sadaqah* are collected and distributed as stipulated by the *Shariah*<sup>32</sup>.

### 5.2.1 Appointment by Usurpation

Another legitimate method of the appointment of the Imam is by usurpation, i.e. the Imam assumes the office by himself



without being appointed by the community or the existing Imam, and asks people to give *bay'ah* (allegiance) to him. This method can, however, be applied only when there is no legitimate Imam in office<sup>33</sup>.

If the usurper possesses full qualification for Imamship and he is the best among the qualified people available, he is then considered as the legitimate Imam. The reason for his legitimacy is due to the urgent need by the Muslims for an Imam<sup>33</sup>.

### **5.2.2 The Nature of Appointment**

When an Imam is appointed, whether by the community, the predecessor or by usurpation, the appointment is binding permanently on all the Muslims as long as he fulfils all the required qualities and he is free from any of the circumstances which may disqualify a candidate, and as long as he does not commit any of the grievous offences that may lead to dismissal<sup>35</sup>.

Circumstances which require disqualification or dismissal of an Imam are those that conflict with the required qualities or the objective of the Imamship. They are as follows:

#### **i. Deviation from Islam**

The Imam shall be disqualified if he is found to have deviated from Islam or he commits apostacy<sup>36</sup>. He is not permitted to retain his position as the Imam even if he, thereafter, renews his faith (Islam). However, he is allowed to retain his position only if his appointment to the post is renewed by a new election.

#### **ii. Madness or Mental Disorder**

The Imam should be removed if he suffers from complete madness (*junun mutbiq*). A. Similar rule is applicable to any Imam who suffers from mental disorder, idiocy or defect in reasoning which obviously makes it difficult for the Imam to be independent and capable<sup>37</sup>.

All other defects that can render the Imam incapable of discharging his duties as Imam or which makes his duties very difficult are considered enough reasons for removing him. Such include blindness<sup>38</sup> deafness<sup>39</sup> and dumbness<sup>40</sup>. Others are offences that amount to sins against the Creator like adultery or fornication (Zinah) and stealing<sup>41</sup> etc.

**iii. Loss of Obedience.**

If the Imam no longer enjoys the obedience of his subjects and the relationship between him and the congregation breaks down as a result, he should be deposed<sup>42</sup> and another one, whom the people would obey, be appointed.

**iv Severe Illness**

If the Imam suffers from a chronic illness, which causes obvious defect in reasoning, he should be deposed<sup>43</sup>. This is because the congregation could not be left without a head for a long time, lest they lose direction and consequently disintegrate.

Whenever an Imam resigns or he is deposed, another one must be appointed immediately or at least a person be asked to act pending the appointment of a substantive Imam. This is so to avoid a vacuum. However, the appointment of a new Imam must be made only after the resignation or deposition of the current Imam<sup>44</sup>. A new Imam must not be appointed while the current Imam still holds fort.

**1.4 The Role of Imams in Early Islam**

From the inception of Islam and the emergence of the Muslim Community (*Ummah*), the word Imam has been applied to the person who leads in the ritual movement of each *raka'at* when the believers who assemble in rows for the canonical prayer behind him copy. From the beginning of *Ummah*, the Imam was the Prophet himself or in his absence, someone authorized by him. The Prophet, as the Imam performed the above enumerated roles being the leader of the Muslim Community (*Ummah*) as well as the head of the Islamic State.



The Prophet therefore, performed the dual roles of the religious and mundane head of the *Ummah*. Both roles have since been taken care of by the *Shari'ah*. No one else was qualified to lead others in the observance of *Salat*. All the companions usually assembled on a daily basis to get the latest revelation from him and ask questions on matters of mundane and religious interests. The daily session became a routine assembly where the companions had opportunities to get solutions for spiritual and mundane problems. The Prophet as the Imam usually used the occasions to teach his followers the details of religious obligations since the Holy Qur'an is not elaborate on many of such issues.

### 1.5 The Imam's Role: Caliphal Period

After the death of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), his successors (*Khulafa'*), the rightly guided caliphs or their delegates assumed the position of Imam since the caliphs succeeded the

Prophet as rulers of the *Ummah*. The conduct of public worship thus became one of the main duties of the *Khalifah*. But because of the pressing executive functions, the caliphs delegated their powers to the chief Judge (*qadi al-qudat*) in the area of judicial matters and chief Imam in the area of religious duties. The *Khalifah* usually led the divine service in addition to his duty of deciding the fate of the *Ummah*, which he leads.

The type of administration run by the four caliphs encompassed the political, economic, religious and judicial lives of the *Ummah*. Many of their successors among the *Umayyad* and *Abbasid* caliphs also assumed Imamship positions both as political and spiritual leaders. However, in view of some of their moral lapses, they were never considered serious Mosque Imams. Some of these caliphs really recognized this as serious shortcoming and on their own volition, appointed from their subjects, those they considered pious enough as Mosque Imams<sup>6</sup>.



To the Sunni<sup>7</sup>, the Imamate is not restricted to the family of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the Shi'ite<sup>8</sup> would want us to believe, or to any family, for that matter. The Imam, according to the Sunni, needs not be irreproachable or infallible (*Ma'sum*) in his life. He needs not be the most excellent or eminent person of his time. As long as he satisfies the prescribed conditions for the post such as being free, adult, and sane and having capacity to attend to ordinary affairs of the Muslim Community, he is qualified to be elected or appointed. They (Sunni) also hold that the vices or the tyranny of the Imam cannot reasonably justify his deposition. They however, contend that the evil conduct of the Imam (or those who preside at the public services) invalidate the prayers of the faithful<sup>9</sup>.

The Sunni further hold that the Imam as head of State is indivisible and that it is not lawful to have two Imams in a State simultaneously. The indivisibility of Imamate is however applicable only to one and the same country or two countries contiguous to each other. But when the countries are so far apart, and it happens that the power of one cannot extend to the

other, then it is lawful to elect a second Imam. The Sunni hold Imam a patron and trustee of all Muslims in his state. He is at the same time the guardian of their interests during their lives as well after their death. The Sunni-Imam is vested with powers to nominate his successor, subject to the approval of the community<sup>10</sup>.

### 1.5 The Shi'ite Perspective of Imamship

Shi'ism is a sect that embraces a variant doctrine in Islam. This group forms about ten percent (10%) or less of the total Muslim population in the world. The Shi'ite concept of Imamship is significantly different from that of the orthodox Sunni majority.

The Shi'ites hold the belief that the spiritual heritage of Imamate or caliphate bequeathed by Prophet Muhammad devolved on Ali b. Abi Talib and his descendants<sup>12</sup>. Consequent upon this, they (Shi'ites) repudiate the authority of the *Jama'ah* (the people or the community) to elect a spiritual head who should supersede the rightful claims of the Prophet's family<sup>13</sup>. The



Imamate, according to the Shi'ite, descends by divine appointment in the apostolic line<sup>14</sup>. The Imam, apart from being a descendant of the Prophet, must possess certain qualities. One of these is that he must be *Ma'sum* (infallible or sinless). He also must bear the purest and most insullied characters. In addition, he is excepted to be distinguished above all other men in truth and purity. It is not proper, the Shi'ites contend, nor could it be the intention of Almighty Allah, feat a man whose character is not unimpeacable 'should have the direction of the human conscience<sup>16</sup>. Human choice, they assert, is fallible as is proved by history of mankind, and people have often had the worst men for their leader<sup>17</sup>.

The Shi'ites opines that God could never have left the religious needs of man to his unaided faculty<sup>18</sup>. If an Imam be needed, they said, he must be one whom the conscience must accept<sup>19</sup>. It is the belief of the Shi'ites that if the choice of an Imam be left to the community, it would be subversive of all morality and consequently the spiritual guidance of mankind has been entrusted to divinely appointed persons.

The above assertion of the Shi'ites lacks merit in that Islam never prefers any tribe or family or colour over and above others. The Prophet therefore could not have directed that his blood relations be made to head the *Ummah*. Muslims are human beings endowed with reasoning faculty and are also guided by the Holy Prophet Muhammad in all their religious as well as mundane activities. As long as they follow the practical examples laid by the Prophet, they are very okay. No man should be considered as hilling received divine inspiration after the exit of Prophet

Muhammad.

Again, the system of selecting the Imam in some Shi'ite sects leaves doubt to the sincerity of the ruling Imam, a situation where whoever is nominated by the ruling Imams is considered infalible leaves much to be desired. There are five groups into which Shi'ites as a sect is split on the issue of *Imamate*. They are the *Zaydiyyah*, the *Kaysaniyyah* the *Ghaliyyah* or *Ghulat*, the *Isma'iliyyah* or the *Rawafid* and the *Ithna - 'Ash'ariyyah* or *Imamiyyah*<sup>20</sup>.

The *Zaydites* are the followers of *Zayd*, son of 'Ali II popularly known as *Zaynul - 'Abidin* (the ornament of the servants of Allah). He was son of *Husayn* nicknamed *Shahid Karbala* (the Martyr of Karbala). The *Zaydites* affirm that Imamate descends from Ali b. Abi Talib to Hasan, then to Husayn from Husayn to 'Ali II (*Zaynul 'Abidin*). From him, they opine, it passed to *Zayd*, and not, as is held by the *Ithna - 'Ash'ariyyah* and to Muhammad *al-Baqir* (the explainer of mysteries of the profound)<sup>21</sup>. Their doctrine is such that resembles of the *Sunni*. They hold that people are at liberty to appoint their spiritual head from among the descendants of the Prophet. They equally believe that it is lawful to elect a less eminent whilst the most eminent is present. Because of this stand, they endorsed the Imamate of the first three caliphs that were rejected outright by sect of the Shi'ites<sup>22</sup>. They state that though Ali b. Abi Talib was the most qualified of all the companions of prophet Muhammad, and by right of descent as well as by his qualities, entitled to the Imamate, yet as a policy and to stem the confusion consequent upon the death at the Prophet, to settle the minds of the people as well to unite the tribes together, a man of matured age was

required to fill the vacancy<sup>23</sup>. Hence they endorsed the election of Abubakr, who had acted<sup>24</sup> as Imam during the lifetime of the Prophet when the latter was sick. They also endorsed the Imamate of Umar b. al-Khattab, the second caliph. The acceptance of the first two caliphs brought upon the *Zaydites*, the name *Rawafid* (Dissenters) by other sects of the Shi'ites<sup>25</sup>. They also contend that, for the Imamate office, the Imam should be brave and should have the capacity of asserting by force of arms his right to Imamaet<sup>26</sup>.

The *Isma'iliyyah* group of the Shi'tes is also sometimes called *sabiyyun* (seveners) because they recognize only seven Imams. They are:

- (1) 'Ali
- (2) Hassan
- (3) Husayn
- (4) Ali II (*Zaynul' Abidin*)
- (5) Muhammad al-Baqir
- (6) Ja'far as-Sadiq and



(7) Isma'il<sup>27</sup>.

The *Isma'iliyyah* derives its name from Ismail, a son of Imam Ja'far b. as-Sadiq, who died before his father. The *Ismailities* hold that upon the death of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq the mantle of leadership fell on Ismail's son, Muhammad nick-named *al-Maktun* (the hidden), and not on Ja'far's son, Musa al-Kazim as believed by *ithna-Ashira'rites* and generally by the Muslims<sup>28</sup>. According to the *Ismailites*, Muhammad al-Maktun was succeeded by Ja'far al-Musaddaq, whose son Muhammad al-Habib was the last of the unrevealed Imams<sup>29</sup>.

The *Kaysaniyyah* is another group of the Shi'ites. This subgroup is very political in outlook and incidentally gone into extinction. It is named after Kaysan, a client of Ali. The group considered Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah (Hassan and Hussayn's half brother) and his children as successors to the Imamate after Ali b. Abi Talib and his two sons (Hassan and Hussayn).

The Ghuliyah or the Ghulat is also a sect of the *shi'ites*. This, in reality is the descendant of the old Gnostics, who based Islam on

the substitution of Muhammad or Ali (particularly Ali) for Christ<sup>30</sup>. They consider individuals they regard so highly as incarnations of the deity. They also believe in the Imam as God's incarnate.

The group that is considered to be Shi'ites proper is called *ithna 'Ash'ariyyah* (the twelver). They are the followers of the Imams of the house of the Prophet Muhammad. They are so named because they accept the leadership of twelve Imams. They are also known as *Imamiyyah* (followers of all the twelve Imams). They hold that the Imamate descends by appointment in the order<sup>31</sup> of genealogical arrangement below.

### The shi'ite Imams

1. 'Ali
2. Hasan
3. Husayn
4. Ali 11 (zaynul 'Abidin)
5. Zayd (The Zayd) The Zaydite    5 Muhammad al Baqir
6. Ja'far as Sadiq
- 7 Musa al kazim
- 8 Ali 111 ar Rida
- 9 Muhammad- al-Jawaad
- 10 Ali 1V al -Hadi
11. Hasan al 'Askari
12. Muhammad al- Muntazar (he disappeared in Samora in 74 C.E.)

### The Fatimids (in Egypt)

### NOTES AND REFERNECES

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4. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Adhimah* (Baerut, Maktab at-an-Nur al 'Ummiyyah 77 A.H.) p. 537
5. C.L. Huart, the Article "Imam" in the Encyclopedia of Islam. Vol. II (London, E.J. Brill Limited 1934), p. 473
6. The Encyclopedia of Islam, op. cit. The Article 'Imam' p. 473
7. Sunni are those Muslims who endorsed the four Orthodox schools of theology.
8. Shi'ites are the followers of 'Ali and his descendants. They hold the view that the first three caliphs usurped 'Ali's position and so were not recognized.



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65. Amir, op.cit.p.321
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## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 THE MOSQUE, ITS FUNCTIONS AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE EARLY ISLAM

#### 2.1 Introduction

The mosque could be described as the spiritual, political, social and educational center of Muslims. It is also the national centre of Muslims in the most comprehensive sense of the world. This is so because prayers (*Salat*) and other Islamic religious activities are held in it. It also serves as an assembly where matters affecting the Muslims and the welfare of the public are discussed. It also serves as a centre of learning and that of Islamic social gathering.

Every mosque will ordinarily have workers headed by the Imam who is appointed by the community. It is the responsibility of the Imam to lead the prayers, (*Salat*), deliver the sermon (*Khutbah*) on Fridays and conduct other religious activities of the Mosque. The Imam therefore has his office situated in the Mosque.

The Arabic word for mosque is *Masjid* or *Musalla*. The two words literally mean any place in which one performs the acts of prostration (*Sujud*) and acts of worship or devotion<sup>2</sup>. *Masjid* also means *Jami'* which connotes Central Mosque where Muslims of a locality, town or city assemble for the Friday service. There exists, according to the above definition, three types of Mosque. The first type is the *Musalla*, which is an open space marked off in front of the house or a compound or even around working places, for the purpose of observing daily ritual prayers. It can be circular or rectangular in nature. The second type is the *Masjid*. It is usually a building with all the facilities for congregational prayers and it is principally meant for the performance of Friday prayers<sup>3</sup>, though the daily ritual prayers are allowed therein.

#### 2.2 Origin and Purpose

The origin of the Mosque is traced to the Kaba'h in Makkah. It is the first house of worship<sup>4</sup> that was ever built on the surface of the earth. (Q.3:95).



The Ka'bah as it is, presently, contains a cubic-like structure standing in an oblong square of two hundred and fifty paces long, and two hundred board<sup>5</sup>. It also looks like a rectangle. The Mosque has about one hundred and fifty two domes from outside and its pillars are of twenty feet height and one three quarters in diametre<sup>6</sup>. The exterior of the Mosque is adorned with seven minarets, which were irregularly distributed.

There are different accounts about the founding of the Ka'bah. One of the accounts relates that the original Ka'bah is situated in heaven<sup>7</sup>. After Adam's expulsion from paradise, as a result of his and his wife's disobedience<sup>8</sup> to Allah's directive; he wandered around and finally found himself in Makkah. He later realized that he had been cut off with the angels who go round the original Ka'bah in heaven with the praises of Allah on their lips. He was said to have prayed to Allah to allow him erect a building, the like of which had seen in heaven called Baytul-ma'mur<sup>9</sup> (the frequented house). God accepted his request and let down a replica of that house in curtains of light and set it in Makkah,

perpendicularly under its original. He then ordered the patriarch to turn towards it while praying and to compass it by way of devotion.

After his (Adam's) death, his son Shith built a house in the same form of stone and clay which was later destroyed by deluge<sup>10</sup>. It was consequently rebuilt by Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail following the command<sup>11</sup> of Allah.

According to another legend, when after the fall of Adam, he was sent out of paradise to the earth, he wandered down to Makkah. A foundation, which had already been laid in the seventh heaven, was uncovered in Makkah by Angel Jubril, using his wings. This was as a result of Adam's request when the higher spheres were closed to him and could not communicate again with the other hosts around Allah's throne<sup>13</sup>, as a result of his fall. The angels threw blocks down from surrounding areas like Lebanon, the mount of Olivers, (Jabal-al-judi and that of Hira) which filled the hole to the level of the surface of the earth. God then sent a tent of red jacinth from paradise in which Adam lived<sup>14</sup>.



Another story is told that when Ismail was as a baby, Ibrahim was commanded by his Lord to take his son to the Holy Land of Ka'bah in Makkah and leave him there so, that when he grew up he would spread<sup>15</sup> the word of Allah there. In obedience to this order, Ibrahim took his wife Hajar and Ismail to Makkah and left them there. The spot was near a tree, where later on, the well of Zamzam was found. Makkah was then an uninhabitable valley where there was neither any trace of water nor any life. He left with them only a leather bucket of water and a pack of dates for sustenance<sup>16</sup>. He left with prayers that Allah might provide for them.

When after some days the water got finished, both the mother and child suffered severe thirst and in a desperate attempt to get water for her child, Hajar ran up and down until she came to discover that water had gushed out of the earth beneath the feet<sup>17</sup> of the child. It was this water she was using for the child and herself as the water continued to gush out.

Later, some men of the tribe of *Jurham*<sup>18</sup> came to stay in the lower part of Makkah. This tribe later discovered that there was

water at Hajar's side and they sought for her permission to use the water and as well to stay<sup>19</sup> with her in that valley. Hajar agreed and they became neighbours. Ismail grew up among them and learnt Arabic language from them and later married from the tribe<sup>20</sup>. At this period, Ibrahim used to visit his family at some intervals. During his fourth visit, Ibrahim informed his son Ismail of Allah's directive that both of them should build<sup>21</sup> a house on the side of the valley, which was higher than its surrounding areas. Both of them thus laid<sup>22</sup> the foundation of the Ka'bah. The house was later made a place of assembly and sanctuary for mankind. Ismail took care of the Ka'bah after the demise of his father and when he died, its custody passed on to his eldest son Nabit. At a later stage, the care passed on to Quraysh<sup>23</sup> b.Kilab and later on to the hands of Hashim, the tribe from which Prophet Muhammad emerged. Besides the Ka'bah, there are other mosques that are of antiquarian origin in the history of Islam. These are the Quba, the Prophet's Mosque. (*Masjid al-Aqsa*).

### 2.3 The Quba' and the Prophet's Mosque



The Migration (*Hijrah*) of the Muslims from Makkah to Madinah in the year 622. C.E.<sup>24</sup> caused the need for and subsequent construction of both Quba' and Prophet's Mosque.

Both the Makkan (*Muhajirun*) and the Madinan Muslims (Ansar) left the city of Madinah to welcome the Prophet into the city. When they were all returning to Madinah, the Prophet stopped at the residence of the tribe of 'Amr b. Awf in Quba'<sup>25</sup> – a suburb of Madinah-he lived with Kulthum b. Hadam where he built the famous Quba' Mosque, the first to be built during prophet Muhammad's mission<sup>26</sup>. On the fourteenth day of his stay in Quba' he set out to Madinah. On arrival at Madinah, the companions were competing with one another to host him as they were leading the camel, which the Prophet rode to stop in their house or very near it. The Prophet ordered them to leave the camel alone as it was being divinely guided. At near one Abu Ayyuba's house, the camel stopped and the Prophet disembarked. He decided to build a Mosque on the very spot of the land on which the camel stopped<sup>27</sup>. He therefore, requested the owners of the land, Sahl and Suhayl of Abu Najar's tribe to sell the land to him. The owners preferred the

Prophet's use of the land to be free of charge, which he refused. He paid ten *dinar* to the owners as price for the land<sup>28</sup>.

#### 2.4 AL-Aqsa Mosque.

Al-Aqsa mosque, situated in Quds, Palestine<sup>33</sup>, was the second mosque built on the surface of earth after the Ka'bah in Makkah. It was named al-Aqsa because it was the farthest mosque<sup>35</sup> to which people pay visit in worship. The interval between the construction of the ka'bah and *al-aqsa* is said to be forty years.<sup>36</sup> The building of the mosque commenced with prophet Dawud (A.S.) during his reign. Allah commanded him to begin the construction and told him that his son Sulayman would take it over after him. Prophet Dawud therefore ordered some Israelites to do the work with him. For eleven<sup>37</sup> years, they built the mosque, though not completed; they observed Salat in it for some years before prophet Dawud died. Allah thereafter ordered prophet Sulayman<sup>38</sup>, to complete the Mosque. In obeying Allah's directive, he assembled the *jinn* and men and divided the work among them. Part of the materials used was marble slab<sup>39</sup> in different colors like



white, pink and green to accord the Mosque a deserved beauty. When completed, prophet Sulayman was full of joy and gratitude to Allah for a job he considered very rewarding. To demonstrate his joy, he declared a day of festival in its commemoration. He prepared a lot of food and drinks of different kinds with which he entertained people who came to celebrate with him.<sup>40</sup>

The above account is, however, different from that of the Qur'an. There, it was said that the *jinn* were still working on the Mosque when prophet Sulayman died. But the stick on which the prophet leaned for support prevented him from falling down until such a time when some worms had eaten deep into the stick, which made it to give way and the prophet fell<sup>41</sup> down. The Qur'an states; "then, When We decreed death for Sulayman, nothing informed them (*jinn*) of his death, except a little worm of the earth which kept gnawing away at his stick so when he fell down, the *jinn* saw clearly that if they had known the Unseen, they would not have stayed in the humiliating torment (Q.34:14).

Al-Asqa Mosque is important to the Muslims in that it is the second of the Mosques, after the Ka'bah, through which the prophet performed his journey to heaven as recorded by the Qur'an<sup>42</sup>. It is the third most important<sup>43</sup> Mosque in Islam to which Prophet Muhammad recommended pilgrimage, the first and second being Ka'bah in Makkah and the prophetic Mosque in Madinah respectively.

It is reported that all the prophets of Allah used the Mosque for worship (Salat) and that there was no space left unused<sup>44</sup>, in the Mosque by the prophets. The Mosque served as the first direction (*Qiblah*) for prayers before prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was ordered to change his direction to Ka'bah. The importance of the Mosque is that it was reported that whoever dies in heaven<sup>45</sup> and that all his sins will be forgiven. Also, a Salat performed in al-Aqsa Mosque is five hundred<sup>46</sup> times better than one performed in other Mosque except in the Ka'bah and the prophet's mosque in Madinah.

## 2.5 Other Mosques



After the passing away of the prophet (S.A.W), most of the mosques founded were during wars. This was as a result of the circumstance prevalent at the period. Such mosques could be found in Basrah, Kufa and al-Fustat<sup>47</sup>. The Basrah Mosque was placed in the newly established town. The Mosque was placed in the centre<sup>48</sup> of the town with the commander's quarters and the prison yard beside it. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, a companion of the prophet, later rebuilt the Mosque with clay to suit the latest of the time.

In Kufah, a similar system to that of Basrah was used when founded in 17 A.H Hijrah by Sa'd bn Abi Waqqas. Initially the Mosque was simply an open quadrangle with enough space to cater for about four thousand worshippers. In some other cases, Mosques were built in old towns that were conquered, or surrendered by treaty<sup>49</sup>. It is noteworthy that, when a town is conquered, the Muslims would build a Mosque in the centre of the town to ensure easy accessible of all. This practice remained up till the reign of Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan as Caliph.

## 2.6 Tribal and Sectarian Mosques

The establishment of Mosque on tribal and sectarian basis was allowed in Islam. Even during the lifetime of the prophet, such was approved by him<sup>50</sup>. Some tribes, after accepting the faith, founded their own mosques. For instance, the tribe of Sa'd b Bakr in the 5<sup>th</sup> years of Hijrah, founded their Mosque in Madinah, <sup>51</sup> and in the year of Hijrah. Ibn Jahimah tribe built<sup>52</sup> its own mosque near Makkah. The famous Quba' Mosque belonged to the tribe of 'Amr b. Awf. In fact there was jealousy of the mosque by the tribe of Ghanam who, because of that, built its own.

Tribal Mosques were not only allowed by the prophet, he even visited and offered ritual prayers in some of them. It was during a Salat session in the Mosque of Salimah tribe that the revelation of chapter two, verse one hundred and forty four was received by the prophet.<sup>53</sup> The verse ordered him to change *Qiblah* toward the direction of the Ka'bah. Thus the mosque came to be known as the mosque of the two directions. (*Masjidul-Qiblatayn*)<sup>54</sup>. Among prominent tribal mosques at the time were those situated around the city of Madinah. They were built by tribes like Quraysah, Haritha, Dhayar, Wa'il, Haram and Zurayk where the Qur'an was



said to have been read publicly for the first time.<sup>55</sup> Although tribes had their own Mosques, there was usually one chosen as the Chief Mosque where Friday (*Jum'ah*) services are held by congregation of all Muslims in a locality. This was the position during the Prophet's lifetime and it was maintained thereafter. Allowance of tribal mosques meant independence of tribes in Islam.

Just as there were tribal Mosques in the community, there arose Mosques belonging to different sects.<sup>56</sup> The Hanbalites (named after Imam Hanbal) in Bagdad built Mosques to cater for this congregation<sup>57</sup>. The *Hanafis*, the *Shafi'is* had separate Mosques.

Individuals too joined in the building of Mosques. While some did it as a general pious work in accordance with the tradition of Prophet Muhammad, others engaged in it for personal and specific reasons like building the Mosques to show ones gratitude for seeing the Prophet (SAW) in a dream or for some special request from Allah.

### 2.7. Sanctuaries becoming Mosques

The spread of Islam, particularly during the wars, made some of the Jewish sanctuaries and churches in the conquered cities fall into the Muslims and these were converted to Mosques. In some Places, churches were willingly surrendered to the Muslims and about fifteen<sup>58</sup> such churches were handed over to the Muslims in Damascus because members have all converted to Islam. However, there were some towns which made treaties with Muslims to retain their churches, and to retain their faith were permitted<sup>59</sup>. Many of these churches and synagogues taken over were used for official residences and government offices.

### 2.8. Memorial Mosques

Building of Mosques in memory of pious leaders for their good deeds evolved in early Islamic period. In fact the practices started with the memory of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) himself. There were several Mosques built in places where the Prophet had observed *Salawat* and of particular mention is the Makkah - Madinah road. Abubakar as-Saddiq, was



reported to have built a mosque on the road to Badr because the Prophet once offered Salat there<sup>60</sup>. A mosque was also built outside Taif on a hillock at the exact spot where the Prophet performed *Salat* during the siege in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the Hijrah. Many Mosques were built in and around Medinah because the prophet had at one time or the other prayed in these places.

Some Mosques were built in the city of Makkah mainly because the places in which they were situated had one association or the other with the prophet. The house of the first wife of the prophet, Khadijah, was made a Mosque<sup>61</sup>. This Mosque was considered by the Makkans as the most honoured house next to the Ka'bah. The house in which the prophet was born was bought over by the mother of Harun ar-Rashid and made into a Mosque in memory<sup>62</sup> of the Prophet. The place where the Jinn overheard<sup>63</sup> the preaching of the Prophet was made a Mosque. The place where the first delegation of the people of Medinah met the Prophet to discuss his migration to Madinah was bought and made a Mosque

to commemorate the deal. It is named *Masjid al-Bay'ah*,<sup>64</sup> (the Mosques of treaty).

Some Mosques were built and named after the companions of the Prophet (S.A.W) or his wives. Some were even named after some earlier Prophets. For instance, there were Masjid Abubakr.<sup>65</sup> (Abubakr's Mosque) and Masjid Bilal.<sup>66</sup> (Bilal's Mosque) both in Jeddah. There were Mosques in memory of Khadijah and Aishah.

Some Mosques were built in the memory of the birthplaces of Hamzah, Umar and Ali.

## 2.9 Functions of the Mosque:

Mosque (Masjid) is primarily built for the purposes of Salat both congregationally and individually. Though Salat observed at any place other than the Mosque is acceptable, the one observed in the Mosque is more meritorious<sup>67</sup>. Also, it is in the Mosque where God's name is mostly remembered<sup>68</sup>. And as all religious houses are generally resorted to once a week, the Mosque is visited at least five times a day for the remembrance of God's name. The call to prayer at these hours which rends the air with cries of greatness

and unity of God further gears the adherents up to their responsibility.

### **2.10. Mosque as a Center of Equality**

The Mosque, being a meeting place of all Muslims, serves as a training ground where the doctrine of equality and fraternity of mankind is put into practical use. This is demonstrated when the faithful stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a row before their Creator, with no different of colour or rank, and all following the lead of a fellow man, Imam. All differences and distinctions are obliterated during the periods of five daily prayers.

### **2.11 Mosque as a Social Centre**

Since Man is a social animal, he certainly must engage in social activities. Though as a Muslim, the level of his activities should be within the approved limits of the Islamic Law (*Shari'ah*). It is another opportunity to meet with one another, which further promotes unity among the Muslims. Also funeral prayer (*Salatu-Janazah*) can be performed in the Mosque. A'ishah, the wife of Prophet Muhammad, once reported that, the body of one Suhayl b

Baida' was brought to the Mosque and the Prophet led the prayers<sup>69</sup> on it. Umar b al-Khattab (the second Caliph), is also reported to have performed funeral Salat on Abubakr as-Siddiq in the Mosque of the Prophet, so also Umar's funeral prayer was performed there.

### **2.12. Mosque as Counselling Centre**

The fact that Mosque is open to the Muslims for greater parts of the day serves as an advantage for counseling purposes. Many members of the Muslim Community, who may not easily, determine the next line of action in life could be brought together and guided. There is need for proper counselling to ensure right choice of courses or job to engage in. This was practised during the reign of Prophet Muhammad.

### **2.13. Mosque as Accommodation**

Residential apartments could be attached to Mosque to be used as houses for the guests and the way-farers. The Prophet was quoted to have lodged his Thakifi delegates in the Mosque.<sup>70</sup>



Instead of looking for where to lodge such guests of the community either from philanthropists or in a hotel, an apartment could be reserved from the Mosque for such purpose

#### **2.14. Mosque as Pilgrimage Centre**

In Islam, visit to Mosque particularly the three principal ones (Ka'bah, almasjid an Nabawi and almasjid al-Aqsa) is made an act of worship (Tbadah), Prophet Muhammad once said:

One should only mount into the saddle to visit three Mosques: *al-Masjid al-Haram; al-Masjid an-Nabawi and al-Mosjid al-Aqsa*.<sup>71</sup>

Besides, the Quar'an has prescribed pilgrimage to Makkah an important duty with a visit to the Prophet Mosque in Madinah. A visit to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is equally rewarding. In the year 140 Hijrah, it was reported that Abu Ja'far Mansur on his Hajj, visited the three mentioned Mosques.

Another very important Mosque in Islam is that of Quba'. A Salat performed in this Mosque is said to be as meritorious as that

of a lesser pilgrimage (*Umrah*) or two visits to Aqsa Mosque<sup>72</sup>. The Mosque of Kufa is, according to the fourth Caliph, Ali, rated high behind that of Jerusalem. He was quoted to have said that a Salat performed in the Mosque of Kufa is equal to ten in other Mosques<sup>73</sup>. Whenever Prophet Muhammad visited or arrived any town, his first point of call was Mosque, where he would perform Salat.

#### **2.15. Mosque as Court of Justice**

Mosque is used as courts where cases are adjudicated. In early Islam, when the Prophet and the Caliphs combined the position of head of state with that of the Chief Justice, there were no separate buildings for Courts, and cases were administered in the Mosque<sup>74</sup>. Moreso, when it was the Quran and Sunnah that were used for adjudication.

#### **2.16. Mosque as a Place for Spiritual Elevation**

Recitation of the Qur'an by groups and individuals is done in the Mosque. This practice is considered as a pious work. Many others who may want to engage in special recitation of the Qu'ran for specific requests from Allah do so in the mosque. Also, praises



of God (adhkar), an esoteric duty of the Muslim mystics are performed in the Mosque.

People do engage in the recitation of the Qur'an from the early morning after the *Subh* prayer till *duha*. (Noon) this, they do, in compliance with the directive of the Qur'an thus:

Perform Salat (prayer) from mid day till the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur'an in the early dawn. Verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is ever witnessed (attended by the angels in charge of mankind of the day and the night) Q. 17:78.

During the period of Ramadan every year, Muslims engage in seclusion (*I'tikaf*) in the last ten nights of the month. The devotees recite the Qur'an, perform *Salat* and engage in the remembrance of Allah throughout. They eat, drink and even take bath there. They do not go out of the Mosques premises except for very important mission.<sup>76</sup> Many other activities are done in the Mosques for

example, in the trouble, people go to the Mosque to pray for God's help. If, for instance, there is drought, prayer for rain (*Salat al-Istisqa*) is usually observed outside the city (*Musalla*). There is a specific system to be followed in such prayer. Also in time of plague or pestilence, processions, weeping and praying with the Qur'an are held in the Mosques or on the *Musalla*. Baren women are made to visit certain Mosques to pray for children. An oath if taken in the Mosque is particularly binding, and this is true of the Ka'bah.<sup>77</sup>

The Mosque generally serves, as the only centre for all kinds of Muslim activities as it is where important national question were settled. When the Muslim Community was forced take up arms in self-defense, it was in the Mosques that measure of defense and expeditions were arranged. When there arise need to give certain important information to the community, it is in the Mosques that such information is conveyed. During the reign of 'Umar, the second Caliph, two advisory councils which the appointed were inaugurated in the mosque, deputations from Muslims as well as non-Muslim tribes were received in the mosques and some of the deputation's were even lodged<sup>78</sup> in the mosque.



During festival, the prophet once allowed certain Abyssinians to give a display with shield and lance in the Mosque. The Mosque is thus not only the spiritual centre of the Muslims, but also a centre where matters of political, social, and communal are administered.

However, the fact that the Mosque may be used for other matters than observance of prayer does not in any way detract it from its sacred form. Its primary role of divine worship must be kept. Programmes other than those that relate to the welfare of the Muslim Community are not allowed in the Mosque. Transaction of any business or trade in the Mosque is forbidden<sup>79</sup>. Due respect must be accorded the house of God. One must not unnecessarily raise his voice in the Mosque nor spit<sup>80</sup> in it. All forms of dirt must be kept away from the Mosque.

### **2.17. Mosque as an Educational centre**

In the early days of Islam, the Mosque was being used for observance of Salat, so also was it used to teach the Muslim Community about its religion and the knowledge of the Qur'an.

Apart from the study of the Qur'an, when *Hadith* was collected and codified in later centuries, its scientific study also began in the Mosque.<sup>81</sup>

In the third century, Imam Shafi' taught various subjects in the Mosque of 'Amr Ibn al-'As. In the year 326, H. (938 C.E.) there were about fifteen groups belonging to both Safi's and Maliki's learning fiqh in the Mosque of 'Amr Ibn al-'As, while Hanafis had three groups<sup>82</sup> at the same time. Apart from the study of fiqh and the Qur'an, Arabic philological studies were carried out in the Mosques. For instance, Sa'id Ibn Musayyib (d. 95 H) discussed Arabic poetry in the Mosque at Madina.<sup>83</sup> In Canada; a Nahwi (grammarian) delivered various lectures on grammar to people in the Mosque. Thus, the Mosques were, from the very beginning, the centers of learning.

### **2.18 Structure and Organization**

In building a Mosque, there is need for proper planning and implementation to make its use easy for the faithful. In planning for the main building of the Mosque, the following



should be put into consideration. Area allocated should be according to the needs of the community and density of the population growth, so that there would not be need for expansion in no distant future and the building materials available in the area should be used in erecting the Mosque. There should be simplicity in internal and external designs and there should be no decoration of sort or drawings in the Mosque, which could draw attention of the people away from prayer.<sup>84</sup> It is necessary that the internal and external appearance of the Mosque be Islamic and should include a minaret.

A Mosque should be provided with enough sanitary facilities like toilets, Bathrooms, adequate ventilation and bright lightening.<sup>85</sup> Doors installed should always be made to face the direction (*Kiblah*) of the Ka'bah in Makkah so as to avoid inconvenience for people sitting in the Mosque. Provision should be made for a door for the exclusive use of the Imam. Mosque should as much as possible be located away from dirty places and amusement centers in order to preserve its sanctity. The mosque

should comprise of two parts, the front and the rear. While the front part should normally be for men, the rear one should be for women who should be separated by a screen and separate doors be provided for them to prevent direct access to men folk. The direction of *qiblah* should be decided before the commencement<sup>86</sup> of the prophet and the pulpit (*Minbar*) should be located in the middle of the direction of the Mosque.

Ablution area should as much as possible be made separate from the Mosque hall (*Jami*) to prevent waterlog in the Mosque. Provision should be made for seclusion (*i'tikaf*) and the night vigil<sup>87</sup> (*tahajjud*) by members of the Community to discourage the use of the hall for other purposes. Resident apartment could be attached to the Mosque to serve as hostels for guests and wayfarers. Availability of adequate water is always essential because of its need at every hour for prayers, as well as for cleaning purposes. It is important to ensure access to the Mosque and where possible, parking lots, should be provided; particularly, for central (*Jami'*) mosques.



A well-equipped library<sup>88</sup> should be attached to the Mosque which should be stocked with current and relevant texts, religious journals and even newspapers. This would go a long way in improving the quality of learning or knowledge of the Imam and the congregation. Efforts should be made to set up a small clinic<sup>89</sup> attached to the Mosque where simple diseases like cold, cough, malaria etc would be treated. It is desirable if for this purpose, the Imam and some few Mosque workers could be taught basic health care. Precedence of this existed in the early history of Islam where for example, the Holy Prophet ordered a tent to be laid in the Mosque of Madinah for the treatment of the sick<sup>90</sup>. A nurse was then appointed to look after the patients. The prophet also ordered that sa'd b Mu'adh, a companion, who was wounded should be taken to the companion, who was wounded should be taken to the camp in the Mosque for treatment<sup>91</sup>.

### 2.19. Minaret

A minaret is a very important facility of the Mosque, though it was introduced at a later period of Islam. There is no doubt

that it serves a good purpose. It enables the Muslims, particularly strangers, to know that the Mosque is around. It also serves as a place where *adhan* (call to prayers) is called apart from the beauty it gives the structure.

### 2.20 Minbar

This is an elevated stand from which the sermon (*Khutbah*) is presented. It was introduced by Prophet Muhammad himself so that the congregation can see the Imam and follow him. Announcements of other programmes were also made from the *Minbar*. Another Mosque facility is *Dakka*, which is a platform<sup>93</sup> through which a staircase leads up to the *Minbar*. It is also used as a seat by the *Mu'adhdin* (the caller to prayer) when pronouncing the call to prayer in the Mosque, particularly on Fridays.

There is also, as part of the Mosque equipment. *Kursi*, Qur'an and relics. A *kurisi* is a wooden stand with a seat and a desk. The desk is where the Qur'an is put while the seat is for the reader

(qari) of the Qur'an. This makes the reading of the Qur'an easy in the Mosque.

### 2.21. Lighting

Whenever evening salat, meetings and vigils take place; artificial lighting becomes inevitable. In this modern age, when electricity is in abundance, it should be given priority because, in addition to illumination, it provides comfort when it is hot through the use of fan or air conditioner. Lightning the Mosque is not a modern practice; it is on record that on Uqba ibn Al-Arzaq was the first person<sup>94</sup> to bring light into the ka'bah. He placed the lantern on the *Maqamah Ibrahim*.

### 2.22. Incense

To give the Mosque a lovely and fine smell, incense is allowed to be burned in the mosque, be it during the course of Salat or Khutbah. This practice was initiated by the Prophet<sup>95</sup> himself. During Umar Ibn al-Khattab's period, he assigned

one Abdullah the job of burning it whenever he was on the pulpit delivering his sermon<sup>96</sup>. (Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam p. 346).

### 2.23 Carpets

Carpets are used to improve the appearance of the Mosque. It prevents dust, which could disturb the observance of Salat and at the same time, keep the worshippers tidy. The practice started with the prophet. He was said to have used a piece of cloth as carpet when he and Anas Ibn Maalik were to observe prayer at the latter's grandmother's house<sup>97</sup>P.345 (shorter Encyclopedia).

### 2.24 Sanctity of the Mosque

The Mosque is referred to as the house of Allah<sup>98</sup> (*Bayt Allah*) and should be treated as such even though He cannot be physically seen therein. Once it is built and dedicated to Him, all forms of indecency must be avoided in and around it. A



person in a state of impurity must not enter it. Ablution or shaving cannot be undertaken there and one cannot spit in it<sup>99</sup>. Whoever intends to enter a Mosque should have a good intention of either coming in to worship or to learn something or even to teach something to others. Engaging in trading is forbidden in the Mosque. One should not make noise in it in order not to cause attention of men.

### **2.25. Conditions for Building a Mosque**

When a person intends to build a Mosque, his intention should be made clear either for private (family) or for general (public). If however he builds a Mosque in his compound, it remains part of his property until he separates both the area occupied<sup>101</sup> by the mosque and also the road and the entrance into the Mosque from his own property. If a person appropriates ground for the purpose of erecting a Mosque, he cannot afterwards resume or sell<sup>102</sup> it, neither can it be claimed by his heirs and be inherited. This is because the land has been alienated altogether from the right of individual and appertained to God.

When a man has an unoccupied space of land fit for building upon, and has directed a body of persons to assemble on it for prayers, the place automatically becomes a Mosque. If the owner gives express permission to pray on it forever, or in absolute terms, it becomes the community's property and his heirs cannot claim it

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95. Ibid. p. 345.
96. Uches, op cit p. 30

97. Ali, op cit p. 385.

98. Ibid

99. Ibid

100. Uches, op cit p.30

101. Ibid

### CHAPTER THREE

#### 3.0. A BRIEF HISTORY ON ISLAM IN OYO AND OSUN STATES

##### 3.1. Introduction of Islam into Oyo Osun States

The old Oyo State is one of the constituents of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It came into existence with the break-up of the old Western State of Nigeria during the states' creation exercise of 1976.<sup>1</sup> Ibadan which is reputed to be the largest indigenous city in Africa, south of Sahara, has been serving as capital since the old days of regional government.

Osun State was excised out of Oyo State in another nationwide States' creation exercise of 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1991<sup>2</sup> with Osogbo as the capital. The two States are Oyo by Origin and they both speak the same Yoruba language and Oyo dialect, though there exist two major tribes whose dialects differ from each other and from that of the Oyo. They are the Ijesa and Ife.<sup>3</sup>

The present Oyo and osun States are the core of Yorubaland of South West of Nigeria and Ibadan serves as the rallying point of all



its citizens. Therefore, the emergence of Islam into the two States cannot be done in isolation of Yorubaland.

The date of Islam to Yorubaland is uncertain. Historians put different periods to its arrival there. This is so because of the non-formalization of the traditional record system.

However Ahmad Baba al-Timbuktu (d. 1627 C.E) in his work *Al-Kashuh wal- bayan li Asnaf majub al-sudan*, puts Yorubaland as a place where "Unbelief predominates and Islam was rarely found"<sup>4</sup> This implies that some Muslims had penetrated the land by this time. Johnson puts the time of spread of Islam into Yorubaland at the close of eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> What is important is that Islam had been firmly established before the Fulani *Jihad* of 1804. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even European travelers testified to the flourishing State of the Muslim Community in Yorubaland.<sup>6</sup>

Islam was introduced to Yorubaland through peaceful means and the process of its introduction was mainly by traders and mendicants who came from Muslim lands. Notable among the

areas of these people were Kanem-Bornu and the Hausa Kingdoms where Islam had been established since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The direct routes between the Northern and southern parts of the Country greatly facilitated the spread. The routes were: (a) the land between Bornu and Benue (b) the Kano-Badagry land routes and (c) the Niger-Benue waterway.<sup>7</sup>

A close examination of how Islam got to Yorubaland in general and Oyo and Osun states in particular shows that towns and cities embraced the religion at different times and under different circumstances. We shall now examine how Islam got entrenched in major towns of the two states under study.

### 3.2.0 Oyo State

#### Ibadan:

When Islam was introduced into Ibadan around 1829<sup>8</sup>, very few Muslims could be identified. They were introduced to Islam by the

first Imam called Gunnugun or Igun Olorun.<sup>9</sup> In the 1830s when Islamic teachers from Hausaland through Ilorin, came to Ibadan and started to preach the religion, many converts were recorded. Notable among these major scholars were Uthman Abubakr Basunu I and Ahmad Qifu, who were second and third Chief Imam of Ibadan respectively<sup>10</sup>.

While Ahmad Qifu came during the reign of Oluyedun, who was said to be a grand son of one of the Alafin of Oyo, Uthman Abubakr Basunnu I arrived Ibadan during the reign of Bashorun Oluyole. He was of Katsina Origin who initially settled in Bornu before embarking on a preaching mission to Ijebu Ode; Abeokuta and Ibadan. While in Ibadan, he was

hospitably received and lodged near Oluyole's residence. This was done in compliance with the directive of Bashorun Oluyole's priest that a Shaykh from outside Ibadan, whose prayers were always answered by God, would arrive Ibadan, and that he (Bashorun) should accommodate<sup>11</sup> him well. That was how Uthman Abubakr

Basunu and his pupils settled in Ibadan. He was the Chief Imam between 1839 and 1871. His period witnessed a tremendous growth in Islam, with conversion to Islam of many indigenes.

The proselytisation activities of itinerant Shaykhs from Ilorin at this time helped a great deal in gaining a large number of adherents in Ibadan. The establishment of a Qur'anic School by an Ilorin based Shaykh of Ibadan descent called Abubakr b. al-Qasim further aided the influx of people from other faith to Islam. The school was, according to Adam al-Ilori, reputed to be as high in standard as that of traditional Muslim Universities<sup>12</sup> Shaykh Abubakr b. al-Qasim was a native of

Ibadan whose father had settled in Ilorin over a period of time.

On hearing that a particular son of Ibadan who was very versed in all branches of Arabic and Islamic Studies resided in Ilorin, the Muslim Community sent for him to come and benefit his people with his knowledge. On arrival, he settled at Oke Aremo in the heart of the city and founded a school there. His school was



patronized by students from all parts of Yorubaland. The school produced famous Islamic schools such as Shaykh Haroon son of Matanmi, a king of Osogbo. Haroon later became the Chief Imam of Ibadan in 1922. 13.

### 3.2.1 Oyo

It is difficult to establish with accuracy the time Islam got to Oyo town. What is certain however, is that, the religion was practiced during the reign of Alaafin Ajiboyede between 1582 and 1570<sup>14</sup>. At this time, the Oba's first son died after the famous *Bebe* festival was celebrated. *Bebe* was a festival of peace during which no one should fight another and when no one should be prosecuted at any court<sup>15</sup>. People of the town, among them noble came to commiserate with the Oba on the loss. The Oba, rather than appreciate their sympathy, ordered these nobles to be killed, for he thought they were responsible for the death of his son, and that they were only feigning condolence. He also alleged that their hands smelt food at a time he was undergoing grief, sorrow and fasting as a result of his dead son. A Muslim priest from Nupe land called

*Baba Kewu* (father of Arabic) or *Mallam* heard of this development and sent his son *Baba Yigi* to tell Alaafin that it was wrong, immoral and wicked to kill people as he liked. He said that it was a sin against God for nobody other than God killed his son.

Alaafin pondered on this warning and was convinced of his tyranny. He therefore, convened an assembly of Oyo indigenes and publicity sought for their pardon<sup>16</sup>. The mention of *Baba kewu* or *Mallam* is an indication of the presence of Muslim scholars in the old Oyo who had engaged in the teaching of Arabic language as well as preaching Islam, it also shows that the *Mallams* is an indication of the presence of Muslim scholars in the old Oyo who had engaged in the teaching of Arabic language as well as preaching Islam. It also shows that the *Mallams* were not only recognized, they were also respected in the society.

Most of the earliest Muslims in Oyo town were slaves who could not publicly practise Islam because their traditional masters would not allow them.

### 3.2.3 Ogbomoso:



Islam was introduced to Ogbomoso precisely in June 1840 through an Hausa cattle rearer who drove cattle from Borno down to Ogbomoso. This was at the time Soun Oluwusi was on the reign<sup>1</sup>

Shuaib, the head of the visiting cattle Marchants came, accompanied by his two brothers, Badiru and Zubair. They were well received by the Soun who settled them, in a large space within the present Parakoyi<sup>18</sup> Compound to enable the visitors accommodate the large cattle brought along. Like in other areas of Yorubaland, the people of Ogbomoso were predominantly idol worshippers. Shuaib therefore saw his presence and that of other colleagues as a challenge. They began in earnest to preach and teach Islam to people along with their apparent sterling qualities, people readily accepted them and the religion they brought.

When Shuaib died, Badru, his brother took over and improved upon the *Jihad* exercise shuaib left behind. Within a short time, the town had become predominantly Muslim. Many mosques were built, Qur'anic schools established and open air services were held mostly by the invited Mallams from other towns particularly Ilorin.

#### 3.2.4 Ikoyi-Ile:

One of the notable and important towns in the old Oyo Empire was Ikoyi-Ile. It was very famous for Yoruba tradition and idol-worship. The emergence of Islam in the town in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century was mysterious as it had been predicted by an *Ifa* Priest called *Baba Ifa*<sup>19</sup>. At a traditional festival in honour of the divinity, the *Ifa* priest in the town divined for then traditional ruler that before the next festival, one of his wives would be delivered of a female child who should not be initiated into any traditional worship. She should rather be encouraged to take to the religion whose sign would be seen with her. Not quiet long, the child was born a head tied around her head, a small skin of animal with an unbiblical cord tied round her arm like rosary.

In compliance with the priest's directive, the traditional ruler named the child Nana and immediately handed her over to a Mallam in Adodo village near old Oyo to be brought-up in an Islamic way. The Mallam took very good care of Nana and when she



grew up, she was married<sup>20</sup> to her guardian. That was the beginning of the presence of Islam in the area.

Many people saw the happening as very strange and considered it a clear manifestation of good things to happen. They therefore embraced the religion. Many Ikoyi indigenes thereafter began to pay visits to the Mallam at Adodo with a view to learning the act of Islamic worship from him. Little by little, people were drifting away from idolatry and the number of Muslims consequently increased.

### 3.2.5 Iseyin: ---

Islam is believed to have arrived in Iseyin in about 1760<sup>21</sup> through one Mallam Aboki who was said to have hailed from Katisna in the North. Mallam Aboki practised Islam all alone for some time before he could get some converts. He was able to build a mosque in 1770 at Idi Ose<sup>22</sup> area of the town, ten years after his arrival there. The arrival of some Kanuri and Dindi Muslims however complimented Aboki's efforts at propagating the religion. This team of the early Muslims led by Mallam Aboki established the first Qur'anic School

in the Mosque. Eleven years later, when many of the people had accepted the faith and the only mosque could no longer accommodate members, another one was built not too far away from the first and that was in 1781<sup>23</sup>. There too, a Qur'anic School was established. It therefore became a norm that in every mosque built a Qur'anic School would be located there. In addition to mosque and schools, Mallam Aboki and others began to organize open air services almost every evening after Isha prayers with the aim of bringing Islam to the door steps of the people. This development provoked the anger of the idol worshipers, particularly their leaders who launched attack on the Muslims. The attack caused a set-back in the propagation of the religion as open air services had to be put on hold<sup>24</sup>. It was only resuscitated after some prominent leaders of the Idolaters had been won over to Islam. They then assured the leadership of the Muslims for safety at night services.

The conversion of notable ones front among the idolaters to Islam strengthened the Muslims towards serious *Jihad* activities

and within a few years there after, the town had become predominantly a Muslim one.

### 3.2.6 Saki:

The coming of Islam to Saki was through one Saliu Dindi from Dahomey<sup>25</sup>. On his arrival, he settled at Asun-nara compound and brought along with him some spiritual items like a copy of the Arabic Qur'an, an ablution kettle, prayer skin, slate and rosary. Four of his pupils followed him down. Having settled down, Mallam Saliu, together with his pupils, engaged in open air services as well as the teaching of Arabic and Islam to the people. They ensured that their services covered all parts of the town and their adjoining villages. These activities resulted into conversion of many indigenes. Some of the early converts were Sadiku of Oke Oro Compound who later became Balogun of Abudu Compound (*now Imole fe Alaafia*) and Amodu Adeosun of Agbede Compound<sup>26</sup>.

### 3.2.7 Igbeti:

The arrival of Islam to Igbeti was through the efforts of one Sanni Olajide, a trader who dealt in traditional cloth (Aso Oke). No record of his place of Origin or from where he got to Igbeti<sup>27</sup> is available. It was said that the presence of many weavers of traditional cloth in the town caught his attention and interest to stay there grew tremendously. He first resided at the court of Onigbeti where he consolidated his trade and in addition, the propagation<sup>28</sup> of Islam. Among the first set of his converts were Salami Oguntona of Agbede Compound, Sanusi, Agboola of Oloro Compound and Saliu Alagbaa.

### 3.2.8. Iganna:

The emergence of Islam was felt in Igbanna in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through traders and nomadic Fulanis. Specifically, Islam came to



the town through one Mallam Mumini of Fulani Origin, who left Oyo Oro when it was sacked<sup>29</sup>. He was actually on his way to the republic of Benin when he had a stop over at Iganna. While there, he resided with his tribe's men for the short period of his stay. During this time, the prophet prophesied for one prince Adelekan (a.k.a Baba Pupa) that he would surely become the Oba of the town.

When later Adelekan became the Oba, he sent for Mallam Mumini and appealed to him to stay in Iganna to serve as his spiritual consultant.<sup>30</sup> The Mallam accepted and was accommodated at Ajimoti's Compound, a short distance from the palace. As part of strategies to ensure his permanent stay, the Oba gave him one of his daughters for marriage. Mallam Mumini therefore had all the needed freedom to practise his religion and propagate it as well.

Within a short time, the Mallam succeeded in converting to Islam, some people of the town and they, together with him, established a congregation and built a Mosque near his residence. It was to be the first mosque in the town.<sup>31</sup> The Mallam in addition began to

teach some of the converts willing to learn the Qur'an in the only mosque. Some of his students later become very good scholars.

His effort in the area of Qur'anic education was later complemented by the return into the town of one Mallam Yunusa, a native of Iganna, who had studied the Qur'an at Iseyin where he had lived for a long time. Shortly after his arrival, he built a mosque in Yabie, his family's compound. The mosque was the second in the town.

The combined efforts of the two Mallams generated progress for the development of Islam in Iganna. Not only did many people accept the religion, greater percentage of these converts registered in the Qur'anic school and studied it well.

### **3.2.9 Okeho:**

Okeho as it is presently, was so named in 1916<sup>32</sup> when its inhabitants finally settled there. They were said to have moved down there from their place of abode called *Oke-Ahoro*, a place between the Iganna and the present Okeho.

The of people of Okeho then were predominantly idol worshipers who believed so much in their leader, an Ifa priest called Bibilari.<sup>33</sup> Bibilari had a lot of followers both within and outside the town. Other areas of his operation were Iseyin, Okaka, Oyo and Ibadan. He used to travel to these towns for spiritual consultancy and whenever he was to return to Okeho, his people would receive him well.

During one of his tours to Ibadan, he came in contact with Islam and accepted it as a religion. On his return to Okeho, people receive him with fanfare and great celebration. Thereafter he announced to his people that he had adopted Islam as a religion and also that he had chosen Lawal as his new name<sup>34</sup>. As would be expected, the development stunned most of his followers. Many of them could for some time not believe the information. But because of their love for him and the belief that Bibilari could only lead them aright, many of them unconditionally embraced Islam and remained his followers while some view others rejected him and remained with the age long religion.

Bibilari and his people found a new settlement at a place called Bode<sup>35</sup> in Okeho. There, he built what became the first Mosque in the town. While he himself led the congregation in the performance of five daily prayers there, Imams were invited from Iseyin to lead the Jum'at prayers on Fridays on rotationally basis.<sup>36</sup> This is because he thought that it required a sound knowledge of Islam for one to lead the Jum'at service. During this time, Bibilari organized a Qur'anic session where he undertook to study Islam. When he was convinced that he had learnt enough to lead the community, he was installed the first Imam leading all prayers including Jum'at and the two 'ids.

Alfa Lawal Bibilari established Qur'anic school where many of the congregation received basic Arabic and Islamic education. Within a very short time, the town became a predominantly Mulism town.



### 3.2.10: Igboho

Islam got to Igboho through some Hausa and Tapa people who followed Alaafin to Igboho.<sup>37</sup> Though few in number, they were known to be Muslims through their observance of five daily prayers at any neat place whenever its time caught up with them. When later Alaafin moved away from Igboho, these people moved with him leaving the town as it were a virtually idol place and without Muslims.<sup>38</sup>

Not quiet long, some of the inhabitant of the town like Ikoyi-Ile, Ilorin and Osogbo during the course of their travels started to practise Islam on individual basis. In view of their few number, they were troubled by the idol worshipers who considered their practice of Islam as an insult to their deities. The ruling Oba,<sup>39</sup> however gave the needed protection. Some of the early Muslims at the time were Agbojule Olorun, Ibrahim Asinta Balogun, Sulaimon Ibadawaki, Uthman Baba pupa and a few others. Congregational prayers were not being observed because none of them had the required knowledge to lead as Imam.

Around this time, there came a man called Mallam Sulaimon. He arrived in the town at *Maghrib* time and he was very happy to hear the call (*Adhan*) for *Salat*. Observing the knowledge of Islam, the people asked him to lead them in prayer. After the prayer, he brought out of his bag three copies of the Holy Qur'an in Arabic language and handed over to Oba Orogunloye as donation. He asked the Oba to bury one of the copies in the market, another one in front of the Oba's palace while the third one should be preserved for recitation any time there was a problem or an attack.<sup>40</sup>

The people of Igboho found the copies of the Qur'an very useful in that peace and tranquility reigned supreme in the town at this period more than before. Efforts of Mallam Sulaimon towards propagation coupled with his simple lifestyle endeared many people to the faith. The Mallam died at Igboho. After him came another Islamic scholar from Iseyin. His name was Shakyh Abubakr. He was a native of the town from Bonni compound. He used his preaching against all forms of idolatrous practices. His efforts had positive effects on the people generally and specifically, his area, Bonni which hitherto had no muslim when he arrived.



### 3.2.11 Ibarapa:

Ibarapa land treated as a bloc is an area situated in the south western part of Oyo state. It comprises seven major towns including Eruwa, Igbo-Ora, Iṣṣanlẹ, Idere, Tapa, Ayete and Iganna.<sup>41</sup> The area is also close Oke Ogun in Oyo State both in dialect and tradition. However it has for a long time, been part of Ibadan / Ibarapa division for administrative purpose.<sup>42</sup> This area was in 1997 divided into three local Governments namely: Ibarapa east with headquarters at Eruwa, Ibarapa Central having its headquarters at Igbo-Ora while Ibarapa North has its seat of government in Ayete.

The date of arrival of Islam to the entire Ibarapa is not known. Oral traditional however shows that Igbo-Ora first had contact with Islam in the whole area. That may have been the reason why the town, up till present, remains the beehive of Islam activities.

Specifically, Islam was introduced to Igbo-Ora in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by a Tapa man from Bida in the present Niger State of Nigeria. His name was Soliu Bida.<sup>43</sup> Alokoloja is another name given to him by his hosts. Initially, some people embraced the new

religion through him and being the only one that had the knowledge of Islam, he automatically became the first Imam. He first settled at Akinyemi's compound where he built the first mosque. The mosque was later used for Jum'at services after it had been expanded for the purpose. The mosque did not serve the Igbo-Ora Community alone, as some muslims from surrounding towns and villages were also coming there for worship.<sup>44</sup>

In Igangan, Islam is said to be old as the town itself because it was at the time the town was founded that Islam came in there. Although the time of its arrival could not be ascertained, it was introduced there by some indigenes of Iseyin who had been Muslims and had come down to the town at its foundation. Iseyin was one of the dominant Muslim towns in Yorubaland of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and records show the influx of Islamic scholars from there to other Yoruba towns.<sup>46</sup>

Some of the early converts were Kasumu Parakoyi, Aliu Mogaji and Idris Balogun. One Sanni, a native of Igangan who lived in Iseyin and had become an Islamic scholar came back home and began to



practise the religion. He was much better than those Muslims he met back home. He took time to teach his people who joined him in congregation prayers. The activities of the Muslim congregation attracted some other people into the faith. Within their entrance into the fold, the number of Muslims increased tremendously.

Seeing that their number was substantial, the congregation proposed to have someone to lead it as the Imam. They unanimously selected Alfa Sanni. He initially declined the offer on the ground of being a bachelor and did not plan for marriage in the nearest future. The community succeeded in convincing him of the need to get married and eventually got him a wife. All expenses of the wedding were also borne by the community. Thus, Alfa Sanni became the first Imam<sup>47</sup> of the town.

At Eruwa, Islam was introduced there during the reign of the second Eruwa, Oba Omoni, and that was during the Dahomey invasion of the 1860s.<sup>48</sup> The influx of non-native Muslims who were either on trade mission or for other purpose helped in the establishment of the religion. Though Oba Omoni was not a

Muslim, he did encourage people of his place to embrace Islam. Similarly, the Asawo (the Oba) of Ayete supported the religion and even encouraged<sup>49</sup> its acceptance by his subjects. The positive attitude of Asawo towards Islam and the Muslims was certainly not unconnected with one event connecting one Mallam Ja'far.<sup>50</sup> It happened that for some time, the town experienced drought and all the traditional rites performed to get rain were in vain. Mallam J'afar led other Muslims in prayers for the rain (*Salatul-Istisqa*). No sooner the prayer ended than the rain started to fall and all those who partook in the prayers got soaked in the rain. To show his gratitude to Mallam Ja'far, the Oba gave his younger sister in marriage to the Mallam and the woman had many children for him.

The entrance of Islam into Lanlate was through iseyin. While records of those who actually introduced it there could not be obtained, some of the early converts, according to Allahji Yunus Babatunde<sup>51</sup>, were Kareem Anikulapo, Sanusi Fasasi and Gbadamosi who became the first *Mu'adhin*. The coming of Islam into the town was during the reign of Ladiran as *Baale* (head). He



gave the few Muslims his full cooperation and he actively partook in the Islamic festivals. Unlike other five major towns in Ibarapa where Islam flourished well, Eruwa and Lanlate recorded and still record rather very low Muslim population. Information shows that the situation was a result of the presence of Christian missionaries whose grip<sup>52</sup> on the people was very firm in these places.

As far as Idere is concerned, Islam got there through Muslim traders who used to stay there for a while on their way to either Iganna or Okeho. Later, the introduction of the religion was formalized by one Mallam Sanusi<sup>53</sup>, a native of Ilorin who came to settle there. On his arrival, he met the few Muslims concentrated in a place called *Ita* -Dongo (Dongo Square). He then organized them into a congregation and were performing the daily prayers together. There, he made a makeshift structure called *gii gii* as Mosque. Because most inhabitants then were idol worshippers, Mallam Sanusi found it difficult to sell the 'new' religion to them with much success. Nonetheless, he did not relent, he used his talent to attract some of them into the fold.

He used to invite a person to his house and would ask him of the type of food he wanted. He would go into his bedroom and bring it out fresh to the astonishment of his visitor. Many people so treated thought that it was Islam that taught him the 'magic'<sup>54</sup>. They therefore began to embrace the religion one after the other.

### 3.3.0. Osun State

#### 3.3.1. Osogbo:

Osogbo, a prominent Yoruba commercial town and the capital of Osun State, was typical of commercial glorification of idolatry. The coming of Muslim traders from far and near into the city for business purpose informality brought Islam into the city around the 1820s<sup>55</sup>.

However, the religion was formally introduced into the town through a prediction of an *Ifa* oracle, during the reign of Oba Matanmi I. the Oba had been foretold of the coming of three Mallams into the town. It was usual traditional rite of the town to contact the *Ifa* Oracle called Agbaalu during the annual *Ifa* Festival which usually preceded Osun Festival, to know what the future



had for the Oba, the and its people in general. One Kujenyo, an *Ifa* consultation (*Babalawo*), 'saw' in his divination that three people with turbans on their heads and carrying loads on their shoulders would arrive through *Idi Baba*<sup>56</sup> (a boundary towards Ibokun). He advised the Oba to ensure that they were well received and accommodated. He should in addition request them to recite their *Tira* (Al-Qur'an) for the progress and development of the town.<sup>57</sup>

Nineteen days after the prediction, the visitors arrived as predicted, through *Idi Baba* and were welcomed by the boundary guard called *Ajala*.<sup>58</sup> They were migrant Mallams who came from Borno in the Northern Nigeria. Their Language was neither Yoruba nor Hausa, it was pure Arabic. From there, were taken to *Ataoja* who welcomed them hospitably and accommodated them. On the second day, the visitors requested their host to allow them continue their journey to other areas of Yorubaland, but were persuaded against the move by the *Ataoja*. He asked them to recite their *Tira* (al-Qur'an) for the progress of the town and in particular for one of his wives who was barren wife so that she could bear children. He pledged that should the barren wife bear a child, he would be made

to learn their *tira*. Prayers were offered by the Mallams and the Qur'an was recited. Not long after, the wife became pregnant and was delivered of a baby named Harun.<sup>59</sup>

However, the visitors still willing to leave Osogbo renewed their earlier request for permission from the Oba to proceed on their journey. The Oba accepted their request with a proviso that one of them should stay back so that prayer and recitation of the Qur'an could continue to sustain the town and its entire domain. Surprisingly, the Mallams agreed and the most elderly among them, Ibrahim Uthman, volunteered to stay behind with the intention to spread Islam in the area. He however charged his colleagues to keep him informed of their destination to facilitate contact.

One of the other two was said to have stayed in Ibadan while the third proceeded to Abeokuta where he settled. Mallam Ibrahim settled down at *Idi Ako* near *Okoko River* and there he built the first mosque in Osogbo. In appreciation of the activities of the Mallam, Oba Matanmi I gave one of his daughters in marriage to

him and she gave birth to Ashir who succeeded his father as Imam when the former died. Harun, the son of the Oba, born as a result of the prayers by the visiting Mallams was, as pledged, sent to Idi Ako to learn the Qur'an. He later travelled to Ibadan and settled at Oke Gege area where he became a prominent Islam scholar. He also became the 9<sup>th</sup> Chief Imam of Ibadan between 1922 and 1935<sup>60</sup>.

### 3.3.2. Iwo:

The introduction of Islam to was through the then ruler of the town – Oba Oderinlo Alahusa<sup>61</sup>. Towards the ends of the eighteenth century, some Hausa traders and cattle rearers migrated from the North down to the South West of Nigeria and settled at a village near Iwo called Ogbaagbaa. They were Muslims and were said to be heading people of various diseases using prayers from the Holy Qur'an and amulets. This news got to the Oluwo, Oba Oderinlo, who sent for them to assist him combat the outbreak of an epidemic in his domain. Mallam Abdullah, the leader of the Hausas and his team were able to heal the sick in the Oba's palaces. The

Oba was impressed and in appreciation, encouraged the visitors to settle in Iwo with a promise of treatment. They were housed at Mogeai's compound<sup>63</sup>.

People were generally convinced of the efficacy of the prayers of these Hausa visitors. Some of them converted to Islam and started to practise it with them. The tempo of conversion increased tremendously during the reign of Oba Muhammad Lamuye. He was brought up by the first Imam of Iwo, Muhammad Hadeetha,<sup>64</sup> an Hausa Mallam from Borno. On his ascension to the throne in 1858, Oba Lamuye did not hide his opposition to idol worship prevalent in the town. He caused many shrines to be destroyed including the one in front of the palace where the Central Mosque is now situated.<sup>65</sup>

What aided Islamic expansion was mainly the royal support of Oba Lamuye. Many of his Chiefs accepted the religion and each of them in return, encouraged their people to support the new faith. Another factor that helped the spread of the religion in Iwo was the migration of both the Hausa and Yoruba Muslims from Oyo as a



result of the intra tribal civil wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among those who migrated to Iwo then were Imam Gbadamosi Akinlade, Imam Inatapere and Alfa Uthman who was said to have initiated the building of Iwo Central Mosque.<sup>66</sup>

Oba Lamuye personally built a Mosque for the Muslim Community and appointed an Imam to man it. He initiated the recitation of the whole Qur'an in the palace by the Alfas every Friday morning with the aim of warding off evil spirits and diseases. It was also aimed at requesting Allah's mercies on the entire citizenry in his domain. Since then, the session is still being observed till present.

The Oba supported and encouraged the establishment of Qur'anic Schools by Mallams and that development aided the propagation of Islam. Many of these schools were later upgraded to *madaris*<sup>67</sup> where people from all over Yorubaland came to learn Arabic and Islamic Studies.

### 3.3.3 Ede:

Ede is reputed to be one of the earliest towns in Yorubaland to embrace the religion of Islam. Although, characteristic of most towns and cities of the land, the time of its arrival is unknown. Oral information however revealed that it arrived during the reign of Timi Bangbaye,<sup>68</sup> the second ruler of the new empire.

There were very few Muslims in the town at this period. The few ones were not even among the original indigenes of Ede. They were either slaves captured in the war fronts or bought at slave markets. They were individually and unofficially practising Islam because of their status and the predominance of idol worship in the society.

The practice of Islam in Ede got a boost through the invitation of a Nupe Mallam called Ibrahim by Timi Bangbaye. Ibrahim was invited to help prevent an attack that was to be launched on the town by the Ibadan warriors<sup>69</sup> under the leadership of Balogun Oderinlo. Ibrahim popularly called Owonlaarogo was a marabout who used his spiritual power to cause rain to fall continuously for

three days, thus rendering the Ibadan people dejected, frustrated and defeated<sup>70</sup>. They had to retreat to their base.

The Oba and the people of Ede were very happy at the defeat of Ibadan. The Timi, therefore settled Ibrahim Owonlaarogo in the town so that he might be helpful in possible subsequent attacks. Islam started to be known through the activities of Owonlaarogo as a local medical man. People consulted him and through him were getting attracted to the religion. Owonlaarogo was not questioned on his practice of Islam by the idol worshippers because of the help he had rendered to the town. He was also officially invited by the palace. Interestingly, he did not pay attention to preaching, teaching or converting people to Islam. He rather concentrated on the practice of healing which he was so proud of. This might be due to his apparent limited knowledge of Islam. The person who could be said to have brought Islam officially to Ede was Abibu Olagunju, a prince, who later became the Timi of Ede. He was born into the Royal family of Olagunju and, as was the custom among the Yoruba at that time, Ifa Oracle was consulted as to which deity the baby would worship. The Oracle foretold that the young child

would not be a devotee of any of the deities, but a worshipper of the great God of Gambari<sup>71</sup>. The result surprised the parents. Though they decided to heed the Oracle's prediction, they gave him a name after Sango Oracle to at least reflect his parent's faith. The boy was taken to some few Muslims around for naming and was named Abibu. The parents added Sangolami Olagunju.

Young Olagunju grew up as a brave and tough boy. He left for Ilorin where he enrolled in a Qur'anic school as a pupil. He later left Ilorin and travelled further into the northern part of the country in search of knowledge of Arabic and Islamic Studies. He, in addition, learnt weaving of cloth with needle and leather works while at Ilorin.<sup>72</sup>

During his search for knowledge, he came across one Shaykh Nuh, a Malian by origin and an itinerant preacher in the northern part of Nigeria. Shaykh Nuh saw in Abibu a potential ruler. He told him and also prayed for him before they departed.

Abibu Olagunju came back home as a Mallam with a long beard and big turban. He later became the Timi of Ede but his



tenure was full of crisis caused by his subjects who hated him and did not cooperate with him. Their grouse was the allegation of being too tough and high handed. Another allegation was that as the Timi, he promoted Islam over their idols. They even feared that their idols might be exterminated by the Oba.

When Abibu could not enjoy the reign and was looking for a way out, he learnt that Shaykh Nuh whom he had once met in the north was at Ogbaagbaa, a village near Iwo. He sent for him on his arrival, pleaded that the Mallam should stay to assist him with prayer so that he might be successful as the ruler.

Shaykh Nuh accepted and he together with his team, was housed at Olusokun's compound where Mallam Ibrahim Owonlaarogo resided. Thereafter, the Timi made him the Chief Imam of the town. No sooner had he settled down than he and his team started to teach, preach and convert people to Islam. Unfortunately as many people began to embrace the religion, so were their people rejecting and sending them away from their compounds. They had to flee to Shaykh Nuh who allowed them all

to stay with him in his apartment. In no time, his house became filled with the converts. Thus the Shaykh was nick named *Adekilekun* which literally means "he whose coming brought a full house".

The coming of Imam Nuh Adekilekun facilitated the practice of Islam in Ede. This was because both the palace and scholars cooperated to further the cause of Islam in the town. Many Mosque were built, many Qur'anic Schools were established and Islam became a pride to the generality of the people, including the traditional chiefs. Since then Ede has become a predominantly Muslim town.

#### **3.3.4 Ile Ife**

Ile- Ife is one of the most popular cities of Yorubaland and is always referred to as the cradle of the Yoruba<sup>74</sup>. Islam was introduced to Ile-Ife during the reign of Ooni Kurubusu by one Mallam Kasumu Adeosun. A native of Ile-Ife, Kasumu spent his childhood days in Lagos and acquired Islamic education during his stay there.

Before his return to Ile-Ife in the late 1860s, there was one Mallam Danialu who was a spiritual consultant to Chief Orunto Balufe, one of the high Chiefs in Ile-Ife. Mallam Danialu was a native of Ilorin, Kwara State of Nigeria. He specialized in fortune telling for the Orunto Balufe. Though a practicing Muslim, Danialu was not reported to have preached or taught Islam to the people of the city who were mainly idol worshippers.

However, having acquired Islamic education in Lagos, Kasumu Adeosun started preaching Islam to his people. The first congregational prayer (*salat*) was observed within his Iredunmi family compound with only eleven followers<sup>75</sup>. The news got to the Ooni who sent for and queried him on why he should be worshipping another 'god' beside that of his people and their ancestors. All attempts to explain the new religion to the Ooni was rebuffed. This development however did not affect Kasumu Adeosun's practice of Islam as he, thereafter, began to observe prayers secretly. That notwithstanding, his followers continued to increase steadily, more so with the return of people like Hasan Omidiora Akintola, a prominent person in the town; who had

teaching Islam in Lagos. Kasumu Adeosun concentrated on teaching Islam to both the adults and the children and he paid particular attention to the latter.

After the death of Ooni Kurubusu, Olubuse succeeded him and coincidentally Kasumu was maternally related to him. Seeing this as an opportunity, he started to introduce his faith to people with tact.

During the Olojo<sup>76</sup> festival Kasumu, together with his followers including students of his Qur'anic school joined the Ooni in his procession from his palace to Ogun Shrine. While others were chorusing the festival songs, his followers were singing another thus: "*Mim, Lam, Kam, lasa, ya, waw, minara*"<sup>77</sup>. It was repeated until they arrived at the venue of the ceremony. There, Kasumu asked one of his followers to recite surat al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) aloud. As this was being done, students of the *madrasah* (school) joined to give it a voice and it caught peoples' attention. The Ooni too looked through his beaded crown to see for himself. On his return to the palace, Ooni Olubuse



sought for more explanation from Kasumu about the new language he heard at the shrine. Kasumu explained in detail to the satisfaction of the Oba. Though he refused to embrace the religion, he gave Kasumu a free hand to propagate his religion in the city. He in fact allowed the few Muslims present to observe their afternoon (*Zuhir*) prayer in the palace that day. One Oloko made the *adhan* while Kasumu asked Mallam Danialu to lead the prayer.<sup>78</sup>

After the prayer, the Ooni asked Kasumu Adeosun to look for land of his choice for a mosque around the palace. Thus, a space was allocated to the Muslim at Ila Akogun where the first mosque<sup>79</sup> was erected and thus Islam began to grow in Ile-Ife.

### 3.3.5 Modakeke:

Modakeke, a neighbouring town to Ile-Ife had Islam introduced to it around 1884 through one man called Saliu<sup>80</sup>. A Tapa descent from the Northern part of the country, Saliu came down south on a trade mission and had to stay in the town. As a Mallam, he engaged in spiritual consultancy services for his hosts.

Noticing that Mallam Saliu's prayers were efficacious, many of his clients started to embrace the religion. When he felt that a reasonable number of converts had been recorded, he organised them into a community and began to lead them in congregational prayers.

When in 1885, he saw that the small community had been solidly established, he organised a Qur'anic school for them. There, members were taught chapters and verses of the Qur'an. Within eight years, the number of these schools had increased to four<sup>81</sup>. In the same manner, ratibi mosque increased steadily. At present, there are 36 register ratibi Mosques with one Central Mosque. The only other central mosque is owned by the Ahmadi.

The town is unique in that it enjoys unqualified religious peace and mutual cooperation among Muslims and and Christians. The adherents of the two religions rather than fight on sectarian differences, worked together to wipe out idol shrine<sup>82</sup>. The support of the traditional rulers of the town helped the more in

accomplishing the objectives. Today, no Egungun festival is observed in the town.

### 3.3.6 Ilesa:

Islam came into Ilesa partly through the commercial activities of the *Osomalos*<sup>83</sup> for which Ijeshas were long known. Their constant travels made them to have contact with Muslims of other towns and cities like Lagos, Epe, Badagry and Ilorin. Many of them lived with their customers for sometime and imbibed their religion. On their return, they brought Islam to their people. Between 1860 and 1890, some of the returnee Muslims were Saidu Ogun of Okesa, Abubakr Kanmodi of Iwere (now Oke Ola) and Abdul Salam of Egbe Idie. Other notable ones were Olowo Bakare of Erungba who came from Epe, Owoso Lawani of Okesa from Iseyin and Sanni Arewa from Ilorin.<sup>84</sup>

With the zeal of their newly found religion, some of them resolved to put all resources at their disposal to its progress. Among those people were Suaibu of Okesa, Rayese and Salami both from Egbeidi quarters. They all teamed up with Seidu Ogun

who was chosen as the leader (Baba Imole) and Suaibu who was selected to lead them in prayers since he seemed to be more knowledgeable than others.<sup>85</sup>

The propagation group under the leadership of Seidu Ogun took up the responsibility of organizing the few Muslims into a community and with the support of one Abu Momodu, a Nupe man, a temporary mosque<sup>86</sup> was erected where prayers were offered and meetings held. When later the congregation increased, the need to have a bigger mosque was felt and with the help of the ruler of the town, Cheilf Obanla Ogedengbe Orisarayigi of Ijesa, a fairly spacious piece of land was allocated to the community at Okesa.

There, a structure that can really be called a mosque was erected in 1890. It was the first mosque recorded in the history of Ijesaland. The presence of the new mosque coupled with the untiring efforts of Seidu Ogun and his group in preaching Islam further increased the numerical strength of the faithfuls. In addition, the town recorded more Muslims visitors among whom were people who already had the knowledge of the Qur'an. News of the happening in



Ijesaland attracted them to the town for they wanted to see for themselves.

The arrival from the coast of two brothers from Owas ruling family boosted the progress of Islam and seriously complemented the propagation activities of seidu Ogun and his group. They were the prince Ajimoko who later became Ajimoko 1 of Ilesa in 1896 and his half brother, Abubakr Orimogunje,<sup>87</sup> a trader in Lagos. The period of Arimogunje reign between 1896 and 1901 saw tremendous progress of Islam as his brother Abubakr exploited the royal might to strengthen the religion.

It was the credit of Ajimoko 1 that the land on which the present central mosque, built in 1901, was given out by him. The mosque was completed and commissioned for use in 1902<sup>88</sup>. shortly thereafter; it became a pride in the town to be a Muslim. Qur'anic school were established in about four quarters at the same time to accelerate people's understanding of the Quran, which was designed to facilitate the practice and understanding of the religion. In showing his love for Islam and in appreciation of the efficacy of

prayers, the ruler approved a weekly prayer session by the Muslim leaders in the palace on every Friday morning. The intention of the prayers was to bring peace and tranquility into the community. However, the combined efforts of Christian missionary activities have slowed down the pace of Islamic spread in the town since independence in 1960.

#### 3.3.7. Ila Orangun:

**Ila Orangun** is a principal Igbomina town and an important town in Yorubaland<sup>89</sup>. Typical of prominent Yoruba towns, the actual date of the introduction of Islam to it remains uncertain. It is however believed that the religion was noticed in the town during the reign of Orangun Adedeji Aniyeloye, the twelveth ruler. An itinerant Muslim cleric, one Mallam Muhammad Mustafa Ibrahim from Ilorin, came to settle at Ila. The Mallam and his households were welcomed and hospitably accommodated at Olori- Awo's compound, near the market square. The Islamic system of worship and other rites carried out by the Mallam was so strange and

interesting to the people that they always flooded the place to watch the new faith in practice.

The Mallam started introducing Islam to the people, though with little success. There was however, a remarkable progress during the reign of Orangun Olajolobi Agboluaje 1<sup>90</sup>. Oba Agboluaje married an Ilorin Muslim woman and did not prevent her from practicing her religion, a very rare allowance granted Oloris at the time. She was even given the freedom of going to Olori Awo's compound to join the Muslims in performing the daily prayers.<sup>91</sup>

The woman was said to have given birth to Folayan Atobatele, who later became the 19<sup>th</sup> Orangun in 1909. The involvement of this Olori in Islamic activities, with the support of her husband, helped a great deal in the spread of Islam in the town. It was during this time that the Muslims could practise Islam publicly without fear of molestation by the idol worshipers. This gave many people the confidence they require to embrace the religion at that time.

### **3.3.8. Ikire:**

Islam got to Ikire in about 1813 through Apomu,<sup>92</sup> a nearby town. At this period, the raging intra tribal war seriously affected Apomu and had made the inhabitants to flee to neighboring towns and villages. Worried about the situation, the reigning ruler sent for one famous Islamic scholar who was said to possess very powerful prayers that could stem such problems. Mallam Ahmad from Olokunesin compound, Oyo came and started the prayers against the war. Soon after, the war came to halt and peace returned to the community. Immediately the situation became calm, people returned to their homes. This rare feat convinced people of the town and beyond of the efficacy of the Islamic prayers. People therefore began to embrace the religion and Mallam Ahmad became popular in the area.

After sometime, Ikire was threatened with war and the reigning Oba Olubooye did not waste time in sending for Mallam Ahmad at Apomu to come and "perform his miracle"<sup>93</sup>. The man came and engaged in serious prayer sessions and the war was averted. Oba Olubooye retained the Mallam in Ikire and lodged him at Yelo Compound where he established a Qur'anic school and a



prayer centre. Ikire people who had been predominantly idol worshipers enjoyed the Mallam's spiritual prowess, and gratefully embraced the religion in multitudes<sup>94</sup>. When there was a sizeable number of the Muslims in the town, the Oba made Mallam Ahmad the chief Imam. He thus became the first Chief Imam of the town and operated in a Mosque he himself built at Oke Ada<sup>95</sup> area of the town.

The period of the reign of Mallam Ahmad as the chief Imam produced some graduates of the Qur'anic school and many of them became great Mallams. Islam had been solidly established before the Mallam died.

### 3.3.9 Ilobu:

Islam was introduced to Ilobu by professional warriors. There were those always hired to fight on agreed wages. About eight of them were famous in the job at Ilobu.

In about 1880, these people, led by one Isa Arohun were engaged in a war in Ilorin and its surroundings<sup>96</sup>. There, they met colleagues who were fighting on their side but were Muslims. Some

of them were Ilorin indigenes while others were from Hausa land. The Muslims among them introduced Islam to others but they refused. After some time and upon insistence, they considered the option and all the eight embraced the religion.

After the war, they all returned to Ilobu with some of their Muslim colleagues who preferred to settle in Ilobu. At home, they all continued to practise the religion and were led in Salat by those from the northern part of the country, since they understood the religion better.

As expected, the people at home were hostile to them. They considered it an insult for them to practice another religion than that of their forefathers. Some of these returnee Muslim were banished from the town while some were severely punished. There was even a case of one Ojo who used local medicine to render his son, Oke, mad for daring to accept Islam. He remained in the state of inanity for about twenty years before he died.<sup>97</sup>

The few Muslims had to compromise some aspects of the faith with the infidels in order to get acceptability. They sought for some



working relationship with the tough ones among them. These set of people provided cover and security for the Muslims by following them to the praying ground (eid) during both al-fitr and al-Adhal festivals. They in return would provide food and palm wine for the disbelievers.<sup>98</sup>

Another compromise adopted to curry the disbelievers' favour was that they engaged in storing farm products during the harvest time and would distribute it free to people at the famine time particularly to the identified tough and influential ones among the idolaters. Through this, some souls were won into the fold while those who did not convert became friends of the faithful ones. Later, many join the fold, having been convinced by the generosity displayed by the Muslims. All along, the community remained unformalized and no Mosque could be founded because the situation was not conducive<sup>99</sup> enough.

When later a greater percentage of the people had converted to Islam and the Muslims were strong enough to organize themselves, they began to construct the town's Central Mosque and some

Qur'anic Schools to cater for the spiritual development and Islamic education of their members. This was done around 1903, and by 1905 the Mosque was ready. Thus Islam became a pride in the town and its adherents were practising it without any form of molestation. Today Ilobu remains one of the predominantly Muslim towns in Osun state.

#### **3.4.1 A Survey of the Hierarchical Structure of the Muslim Communities of Oyo and Osun States.**

At the early period of evolvement of the Muslim Community, the affairs of Islam and Muslims were coordinated and managed by the Mallams and Imams of each town or city. This was so because they were the only ones in the community who understood Islam and possessed the required knowledge<sup>100</sup>. Islam being a religion that encompasses all activities of man both spiritual and mundane, therefore, only those who could explain and interpret it to people were Imams and the Mallams in the society, especially the Holy Qur'an and other Islamic literatures were only in Arabic language. Some important personalities and people of substance outside the



circle of 'Ulama' who could have been of immense benefit in the area of administration of the community, could not fit into the system owing to their ignorance of the Islamic creeds and law. They therefore, left the management of the religion in the hands of the Mallams. However, some religious societies like the Ahmadiyyah, Ansar-ud-Deen society of Nigeria, Nawair-ur-Deen society of Nigeria etc. later emerged and different categories of Muslim personalities in the business sector, civil and public services joined them.<sup>101</sup>

Even with that, these people were only able to function in their respective societies and not with the traditional Mallams who form the core of the Muslim Community. That is why up till today, the religious societies are rich with top people of different professions. These societies are managed by both the executive and the mission board with clear definition of the roles of each arm in the society's constitution. Their activities are most of the time, limited to the branch, state and the national offices while the traditional Mallams hold on to the Mosque for their operation both at *ratibi*<sup>102</sup> *Jumu'ha*<sup>103</sup> levels. That each group was functioning relatively on its own was responsible for lack of the needed concerted efforts to pursue

the common goal of Islamisation of the society. This trend continued till some time in 1953 when the need was felt for a link with the government of the western region. After serious pressure, the regional government in 1954 approved for the Ibadan Muslim community the post of *Baba Isale Musulumi* (Patron of the Muslim Community) a government paid officer, to serve as a link between it and the Muslims of Ibadan. The officer was selected and ratified<sup>104</sup> by the government itself presumably from among its loyalist.

This arrangement has been for the Ibadan city alone. Other towns do not enjoy that privilege. The only platform through which Mallams from different areas operate is at state level, under an umbrella society called the league of Imams and Alfas of Yorubaland<sup>105</sup>. The chief Imams of Ibadan and Osogbo are Chairman of their respective State and in Oyo State, chief Imams of other principal towns that follow Ibadan in rank are Oyo, Ogbomoso, Iseyin, saki, Igboho, Okeho, Igbo-Ora, Kisi, Igbeti etc. in that order.



In Osun State, the Chief Imam of Osogbo is followed in rank by the Chief Imams of Iwo, Ede, Ikirun, Ejigbo, Ilesa, Ile-Ife, Modakeke, Ikire, Ila Orangun and Obokun in that order. Two main factors are considered in the allocation of positions of the council. They are mainly the importance of the town and population of the Muslims there.<sup>106</sup>

Each city or town is considered on the level of its importance in terms of size and Islamic scholarship. For instance, Ibadan and Osogbo are big cities and their records of Islamic scholarship are no doubt significant and recognized. Both are also state capitals, which give them political and administrative edge over others.

Consideration is also given to Muslim population of each town. In Osun State for example, Ejigbo with a smaller size takes precedence over a more populated Ilesa. This is because while the former has eighty percent Muslim inhabitants, the latter has about ten percent<sup>107</sup>.

Apart from principal Imams in the hierarchical structure, notable Islamic scholars, particularly those who hold positions in

the council of Imam of their respective cities and towns are also given positions of responsibility in the state. At states functions, such scholars are always assigned roles to play. In Oyo state for example, the grand Mufti (Jurist consult) of Ibadan is the head of all Muftis in the state. He is therefore, their spokesman<sup>108</sup> at state functions. This system is however different in Osun State. The current *Mufti of Ikirun* is appointed the grand *Mufti* of the state. The state grand Mufti holds a position only next to the principal Imams. In some cases, he is even recognized next to the Chairman of the State's Council of Imams and Alfas in matters of scholarship.

It is the belief of the traditional Imams that they alone are the people's Imams and spiritual leaders for the fact that they manage the towns' Central Mosques and *eid* grounds owned by all Muslims irrespective of the societies they belong to. They, therefore, refused to give equal recognition to societal Imams. Their belief is that the roles of these Imams are limited to members of their societies. These attitudes of the traditional Imams forced the societies to confine the activities of their own Imams and scholars to their respective members. This for a long time created a wide gap



between the various categories of Imams and scholars. It has not always allowed for joint decisions and actions required on issues of common interest.

### **3.4.2 An Attempt to Unify the Muslim Community of Oyo State.**

In 1986, when Colonel Adetunji Olurin (now a retired Brigadier General) was the Military Governor of Oyo State, there were ten appointed Civil Commissioners out of which five were Muslims. This development gladdened the hearts of the Muslims who hitherto never had it so good. In order to make good use of the rare opportunity, a committee, comprising notable Muslim leaders, Imams, Islamic scholars, Muslim Commissioners and the few Muslim Chairmen of Government Boards and parastatals was constituted to deliberate on matters affecting the *Ummah* and to find solutions to them.

The committee was headed by the Chief Imam of Nawairu-ud-deen society in Oyo state, Alhaji Shayau Oloriaje. It met regularly on a monthly basis for about two years before the committee die

off. This committee would have developed into a United Muslim Community for the state.

In 1992, after Osun State was created out of the Oyo State, some Muslim youths in the new Oyo State became worried about the lack of unity among the Islamic societies and organizations, the mutual suspicion among the Muslim title holders and other notable Muslims in the society, and the attendant weak position of Islam and Muslims in the state. They also thought of rejuvenating the moribund committee with a view to making it a standard community, strong enough to take care of all Muslims' aspirations and problems.

The youth in collaboration with some few but committed Muslim title holders founded a body known as Muslim Forum of Ibadan. The intention was to use Ibadan as an experiment and later extend the scope. They invited notable Islamic scholars from different societies, top government Muslim officials and notable Muslims to discuss ways by which unity could be achieved among the Muslims and to ensure progress for Islam<sup>109</sup>.

The inaugural meeting was held at the residence of Alhaji Arisekola Alao, the leader of all Muslim title holders of Yoruba land. It was done purposely to attract notable personalities and to ensure a solid foundation for the new body. This objective was realized as the meeting attracted the cream of Muslims in Ibadan. Invitation to the meeting was made open to all Muslims living in Ibadan regardless of their towns or States of Origin. The meeting rotated among members for more than five years.<sup>110</sup>

The forum later metamorphosed into the Muslim Community of Oyo State with its scope covering the entire state. Branches were opened in all Local government headquarters of the state and the body has been registered with the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Two people have been selected to administer the body in an acting capacity. They are the chairman and the secretary. In addition, an administrative secretary was employed as a permanent officer of the body who sees to the day to day running of the office. The chairman is made the political head of the community while all

the Imams and the scholars of different towns, groups and societies are recognized as the spiritual heads.

This arrangement has given the Muslims of Oyo State a new structure. It is to this body that the government refers on any matter of Islamic importance. The body has been able to bring together Muslim communities of different areas of the state. Through it, many problems confronting various Muslim communities in the state have been addressed. The idea is being borrowed by the Muslims of Osun State. Like that of Ibadan, the Muslim forum of Osogbo was established a few years ago with the intent of promoting it to the level of the Muslim Community of Osun State. When it materializes, it is hoped that the right people would be made to direct its affairs in order to give it the required focus.

In the Muslim Community of Oyo State, the spiritual arm is headed by the Chief Imam of Ibadan being the Chairman of the state branch of the League of Imams and Alfas, while the administrative arm is headed by a bureaucrat, Alhaji Muritala



Lapade, a former Commissioner in the old Oyo State<sup>111</sup>. The Islamic title holders serve as advisers and operate behind the scene, while the youths are given the secretariat and operational functions. With this arrangement, every section of the community is taken care of and is carried along.

### 3.4.3. The Ancient Mosques and their Pioneer Imams

The mosque occupies an important position in the life of Muslims. This is so because of the importance of prayers (*Salat*) in Islam and its frequency on a daily basis. This is the true position in the villages, towns and cities of our coverage area and indeed all areas where Muslims operate. Therefore, the aspiration of the Muslims is to get a befitting place of worship which they would be proud of. These laudable aims are however hindered by lack of resources, particularly at the early periods of Islam in those places.

The absence of mosque does not, however, prevent the observance of daily *salat*. The usual practice has been to get a place earmarked for the performance of *salat*. Such a place is

demarcated to preserve its sanctity and prevent it from being used for other purposes. This is done until such a time when resources would be available for the building of a mosque.

In Ibadan, attempt at building a central mosque was first made in 1830 during the reign of Iba Oluyole<sup>112</sup>, the Basorun of Ibadan. The Mosque was however destroyed during the turbulent days of the same ruler. In 1850, Osundina, a prominent Muslim and a Chief of Ibadan sought the permission of the then ruler, Baale Ope Agbe to have an expansive land near the city hall (Mapo) as a site for the Central Mosque. The request was granted at the present Oja Oba location, while the owners of the site were allocated another place and were given funds to erect new buildings of their choice.

A small Mosque made up of mud walls and thatched roof was put up. It was later replaced with corrugated iron roof in the year 1900. When in the year 1921 the community felt the need for a much bigger central mosque, the old but small one was demolished and a new one, big enough to cater for the size of the faithful at



that time was erected at the same site. This was in use until 1954 when it could no more accommodate the members.

In 1955, the community thought of putting up a mosque that would be modern enough to stand the test of all times. A committee<sup>113</sup> was set up for the purpose. Series of levies and launchings were made and the building of the mosque, which commenced in 1955, was not completed until 1982, when it was formally commissioned for use.

In Ogbomoso, the first central mosque was sited at Jagun market. In 1945, it was moved to the present site, Oja'gbo, near the Oba's palace. In fact, the decision to move the mosque to its present place was said to be that of the spiritual powers to be beaming into the palace and also to conform with the tradition in most towns of Yorubaland whose central mosques are located near the Oba's palace.

To achieve the objective, fund raising for the new mosque was launched in Nigeria and Ghana, where many Ogbomoso indigenes resided. Soun Oyewumi himself led the campaign for the fund drive

and the mosque was completed two years later and was put to use. Since then, it has been renovated about three times.

The first chief Imam of the town was Shaykh Nafiu Abogunde. He had lived for long in Bida in the northern part of the country and had become an erudite Islamic scholar before he returned home. He was even said to have been an Imam while at Bida.

At Iwo, the present site of the town's central mosque has been the same one allocated for the purpose by Oba Oderinlo through whom Islam arrived in the town. The mosque had passed through some stages of rehabilitation and rebuilding until 1943, when it was last rebuilt into its present form<sup>115</sup>. The community is now planning to give the mosque a total face-lift to conform with modern time. The pioneer Imam was Shaykh Muhammad Hadeetha. The period of his Imamship appointment was not in record up till 1870, when he died.

The story of the site of Ede Central Mosque was similar to that of Iwo, in that it was the same site earmarked for it since its inception that it still occupies till present. It is made to face the



Timi's Palace. Although, the date of its early construction is unknown, it has been rebuilt twice in 1960 and 1983. That of 1983 was a total transformation from old type to the modern one<sup>117</sup>. Shaykh Nuh Adekilekun was the first Imam of Ede and was in office for a period of 53 years between 1850 and 1903.

Of the very few Mosques whose building was completed within a very short time was that of Ilesa Central Mosque<sup>118</sup>. The site of the Mosque was donated to the Muslim community by Oba Ajimoko 1 in 1900. Its construction started in earnest 1901 and was completed in 1902<sup>119</sup>, a period of about one year. As would be expected, its renovation has taken place several times, since then. The first permanent Imam appointed was Mallam Disu Kannike, an Hausa.

The site on which the central mosque of Ile-ife was built was donated to the Muslim Community by the Ooni Olubuse 1. Though a non- Muslim, he was impressed by the activities of the Muslims whom he thought could spiritually benefit the city. The site was very close to the palace at Ita Akogun in the heart of ancient city

<sup>120</sup>. The first Chief Imam was Mallam Danialu, a native of Ilorin. He was actually nominated by Mallam Kasumu Adeosun, an indigene, not because the former was most knowledgeable, but because of the age consideration.

In Osogbo, the first central mosque was built long time ago. Its date of construction has not been discovered.<sup>121</sup> What is well known is that a new one was built in 1935, after the old one was demolished. From inception, the site of the Mosque has been at Isale Osun area of the town where the present one is situated. It faces the Oba's palace.

In 1960, however, the Muslim community felt the need for a new and bigger Mosque since the existing one had become unfashionable and inadequate to accommodate the size of Muslims in the town. A reconstruction work on it was completed in 1961 and it was commissioned for use the same year. It has, however, been renovated a number of times since then. The pioneer Imam was Mallam Ibrahim Uthman, an Hausa, who was said to have

introduced the religion into the town. He led the community for a consideration number of years before he died.

1. **NOTES AND REFERENCES**

2. Souvenir Programme of the Swearing in Ceremony of the Governor of oyo State, Alhaji Lamidi Adesina at the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1999, p.17.
3. Osun State, *the State of the Living Spring*, Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited, 1992, p.1
4. Ife and Ijesa are two distinct tribes of the same senatorial district of Osun State. On the other hand, greater parts of Igbomina people belong to the neighbouring Kwara State. While the three tribes now occupy twelve out of thirty local governments in the State, the rest belong to Oyo people.
5. A.R.I., Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, Gaskiya Corporation Limited, Zaria, p.109.
6. S.Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* C.S.S Book Shops, Lagos, Reprinted 1969, p.26.
7. Ibid.
8. Doi, op.cit.



9. F.H. EI-Masri, "Islam in Ibadan" in P.C.Lloyd Mabogunje and AWE(etal) (eds.) The city of Ibadan ( Ibadan oxford university press, 1967 ) ,p 250.
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. M.O Abdul-Rahmon, "A thematic and stylistic study of Arabic Poetry in Ibadan (1876-1986)" a Ph. D. thesis, Department of Arabic and Islamic studies university of Ibadan 1989, P.22.
13. El- Masr, op. cit. 14
14. Ibid
15. E.D Adelowo "Islam in Oyo and its districts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century" a PhD. thesis, Department of Religious studies, university of Ibadan, 1978, p. 164
16. Ibid.
17. Abdul Rahmon, op cit., p.18

18. Oral interview with the chief of Ogbomoso of shaykh Hamzah Alawiye (110) on 17/07/2000.
19. Ibid
20. Adelowo, op. cit., p.58.
21. Ibid. p. 45
22. A.A Al-Ilori Nasimus saba fi alkhbaril- Islam wa 'ulama' al-Yoruba, Maktabatul Adab Jamaiz, Rabat p.132.
23. Ibid
24. Oral interview with shaykh Hamzat Abdul Rahim, (51) founder and principal of Markat Ta'limul' Arabi, Iseyin on 3/4/2001.
25. Oral interview with Shaykh Hamzat ibid.
26. Oral interview with pa Tijani Masa, (80) on 25/7/2000 at Saki. Pa Masa is the leader of the Muslim Community of Saki and a member of Trustees of the Muslim Community of Oyo state.

27. Adelowo, op. cit., p. 59.
28. Oral interview with the present Chief Imam of Igbeti, Alhaji Abubakar Yusuf 62, on 26/7/200. At his Igbeti residence.
29. Oral interview with Chief Imam of Igbeti ibid.
30. Oral interview with Alhaji Amusat Mobolaji Sukurat, (46) the Mufassir (Exeget) of Iganna on 25/02/2001. He is also a lecturer of Arabic at Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo.
31. Oral interview with Sukurat ibid.
32. Ibid
33. Oral interview with Alhaji Amusat Ariyo, (84), the Mufassir (exeget) of Okeho on 19/4/2002 at his residence, Bode Area, Okeho.
34. Oral interview with Mufassir ibid.
35. Ibid
36. Ibid

37. Ibid
38. Adelowo op. cot., p. 53.
39. Ibid.
40. Oral interview with the A.g Imam of Igboho, Alhaji Saliu Bello, (80) on 26/7/2000. He said that Oba Oroganloye though a Christian, he supported the Muslims.
41. Oral interview with the A.g Imam Ibid.
42. A.B Yusuf, "the impact of Muslim Organizations on the people of Ibarapaland". A long Easy in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, 1991 P.1.
43. Ibid
44. Oral interview with the Chief of Igbo- Ora, Alhaji Ibrahim Abbas, (46) on 02/03/2002.
45. Ibid
46. Oral interview with Shaykh Muhibuddin, (85) the Parakoyi Adini of Igangan on 20/09/2001.



47. See Adewolo op. cit. p. 54.
48. Ibid
49. Oral interview
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Oral Interview with Alhaji Yunus Babatunde, (90) the Chief Imam of Nurudeen Soceity of Lanlate, on 18/09/2001. Alhaji Babatunji until year 2000, was a leading member of the Muslim Community. He was even Olori Omo kewu (head of the Scholars). The crisis between him and the town's Central Mosque for Nurudeen Soceity, Lanlate Branch.
53. Oral interview with Alhaji Babatunde Ibid.
54. Oral interview with Alhaji Hasan Abdul-Salam, (45) on 27/09/2001.
55. Ibid. He is prominent leader to the Muslim Youths in Idere.

56. A.F.K., Makinde, "A Study of the life and Arabic works of Alhaji Ashiru Irewole 'Uthman of Osogbo". An unpublished Long Easy in the department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan. 1990, p.4
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid. p. 5.
60. Ibid.
61. Harun Matanmi later became a famous Islamic Scholar in Ibadan and was subsequently installed the 9<sup>th</sup> Chief Imam of the City. See El-Masri, op.ct. p. 257.
62. Oba Oderinlo was popularly known and called Oba Alahusa because it was during the time Hausa brough Islam to Iwo and they came at the Oba's invitation.
63. Interview with the Chief Imam of Iwo, Shaykh Murana Imoro

64. T.K. Hamzat, "Imamship Insitution in Iwo Central Mosque, Iwo Oyo State". An unpublished Long Essay in the Department of Religion, University of Ilorin, 1991, p.9.
65. Ibid. p. 10.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid. p. 11
68. Such Schools are Markaz Shabbabul Islamic and Amin Arabic institute. They are still very much alive and are still producing very good scholars.
69. Oral interview with Dr. Daud A.A. Tijani (58), a Senior Lecturer in The Department of Ibadan and also the Chief Imam of the University on 12/02/2001.
70. G.M. Adejumo, "Influence of Islam in Ede". An Unpublished M.A. Project in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, 1995.
71. Ibid. p. 8

72. Ibid. p. 12.
73. Oral interview with Dr. Daud A. Tijani op. cit.
74. Ibid.
75. A. Adetogun "Thirty years of Imamship dispute in Ile-Ife". An unpublished Long Essay in the Department of Religious Studies, Oyo State College of Education Ila-Orangun. 1982, p.4.
76. Oral interview with Alhaji Abudul Sami' Hamid (48). He is the current *Mufassir* (Exeget) of Ile-Ife on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2000. He holds a B.A. Degree in Arabic from the University of Jos and teaches the subject at the Federal Government Girl's College, Ipetumodu.
77. Olojo, an annual traditional festival when Ooni (the Oba) will be in his traditional official dress and lead the chiefs and members of the city to worship at the Ogun shrine.



78. These are Arabic words, which in local Qur'an classes, are taught using musical tunes in order that the learner may grasp them quickly.
79. Oral interview with the *Mufasssir* of Ile-Ife op.cit.
80. Ibid.
81. Oral interview with the Chief Imam of Modakeke, Alhaji Kareem Oladipupo (82), on 10/3/2002.
82. Oral interview with the Chief Imam of Modakeke *Ibid.*
83. Leaders of Islam and Christianity including the traditional ruler (himself a Christian) met several times and agreed to wipe out idol worship. The cooperation of the two groups led to the extermination of idol practices from the town.
84. Osomalo is a system through which an ijesa cloth trader would get his money from his debtor. The practice was such that he would sell his products on credit and whenever he decided to take his money, he would intimidate the buyer to pay at all costs. He would neither sit nor stand. He would

only squat for as long as his debtor refused to pay just to cause embarrassment.

85. M.O., Adeleye, "The spread of Islam in Ijesa land (1860-1968)", a Ph.D. Thesis in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies University of Ibada, 1988, p. 49.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid. p. 51
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid. p. 51
90. R.I: Adebayo, "The Introduction, Spread and Impact of Islam in Ila Orangun" (ed) in (Ila Orangun, the principal city of Igbomina people), Swifts Prints Nigeria Limited, Osogbo, 2000, p. 85.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.

93. S.K.A. Oyesomi, *Iwe Itan bii Islam se de Ikire*, (Saka Printing Words, Ibadan, 1963) p.5.
94. There abound at that time, inter town and ethnic wars, each town was trying to protect itself from rebellion that could be unleashed at any time.
95. Oyesomi op.cit. p. 6.
96. Ibid.
97. Oral interview with Pa Raji Bello (92), the current Deputy Imam of Ilobu on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2001.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Oral Interview with Alhaji Yushau Motala (72), on 7/2/2001. He is the Ag. Grand Mufti of Ibadan and secretary to the Imam in-Council.

102. These societies were established by those who and western orientation. Their likes who joined, found them easier and convenient to deal with since all their operations are formalized and well organized.
103. Ratibi mosque is a Local compound mosque. Only five daily compulsory salat are performed there.
104. Jum'ah mosque is a general or central mosque. It is generally meant for Jum'ah Salat but the five daily prayers are also performed there.
105. Three people (including the current holder) have been appointed on the post. They are Pa Bello Alesinloye (1954-1989), Pa K.O.S. Are (1989-1992) and Pa M.O. Akanbi (1992 till date).
106. It is commonly called *Rabitah*, a shortened form of *Rabitatul Aimmah wal-Ulama'*. It was founded in 1972.
107. Oral interview with Alhaji Motala op.cit.
108. Oral interview with the Musfassir of Ile-Ife op.cit



109. Oral interview with Alhaji Motala op.cit. he admitted the assertion and explained that any matter of scholarship has to be directed by him. Hitherto, there was no recognized body that could speak on behalf of the Muslims in the state like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). Instead, Government would invite individual notable Muslims on Islamic matters.
110. Meetings have since then been held at the site of the Muslim hospital which is still under construction.
111. The thinking is that the Chairman would be able to use his experience to direct the affairs aright and to penetrate the inner workings of government for the benefit of the community.
112. M.O. Abdul Rahmon, op.cit.p. 24.
113. The committee's name was "Ibadan Central Mosque Building Fund Committee". It was headed by one Salami Laniyan Alli. See a Pamphlet of programme of events captioned, "Laying of the foundation stone of the Ibadan Central Mosque". Dated 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1964.

114. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Ogbomoso op. cit.
115. Hamzat, op.cit.p.50
116. Ibid. p.28.
117. Oral Interview with Dr. D.A.A. Tijani op.cit.
118. It has been the general belief that mosque buildings take a very long time to complete, the reason being the poor financial position of the few committed ones. That of Ilesa was one of those that was thought would take a longer time, going by the size of the Muslims there.
119. Adeleye, op.cit. p. 51
120. The palace remains the mosque up till present.
121. Both the current Chief Imam, Shaykh Ajisafe, and Alhaji Kolapo (90), the Baba Adini of Osogbo claim ignorance of the time.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 THE PRACTICE OF IMAMSHIP IN OYO AND OSUN STATES

#### 4.1 Appointment of an Imam

In chapter one, we discussed the various qualifications a person must have to be selected to the exalted position of Imam as spelt out in the Islamic law (Shari'ah)<sup>1</sup>. This chapter will focus the actual practice of the institution of Imamship in the various communities of the coverage areas.

Various Muslim communities and Islamic organizations have been discovered to adopt different methods in selecting or appointing their Imam. These methods followed a particular paradigm at the initial stage of the emergence of Islam in Yorubaland.

Among the traditional communities<sup>2</sup> for example, the system usually adopted was based on what was in operation at the inception of the city with little or no amendment.

##### 4.1.1 Ibadan City

In Ibadan, appointment to the post of Chief Imam was at the early stage not contested for, rather, the first Chief Imam, Abdullah Igun Olorun or Gunnugun<sup>3</sup> was the only learned person in Islam at that time and therefore, was made the Chief Imam. Subsequent to the growth of Islam, Chief Imams were appointed from among the sons of the departed ones<sup>4</sup>. This was so

because most of the children of Imam had no other professions than Arabic learning and Islamic evangelization. That was why the position was usually occupied and rotated in turns by the sons of the departed Imams who become Mogajis of their fathers after their death.

Other scholars were never Imams and would naturally not be happy to their exclusion from the post; they therefore collaborated and seized any opportunity that could elevate them into the position. The first test case was when they sponsored Shaykh Abubakr Alaga, a very brilliant and famous scholar, to break the perceived jinx. Unfortunately, the plan did not materialize because of his (Alaga's) sudden death<sup>5</sup> on his way to Makkah to perform Hajj at Ibariba.

The death of Shaykh Abubakr Alaga was a setback to the circle of *Mallam's* in Ibadan in that he had laid the foundation of Islamic learning<sup>6</sup>. His school was frequented by Muslim students from all parts of Yorubaland. There, he taught them advanced courses in different subjects like an-Nahw (Arabic grammar), Tawhid (theology) al-Lugghat (Philology), Qur'an and *Hadith*, a departure from the existing schools where only the Qur'an was taught. He produced many distinguished scholars like Aminullah, Malik bn Hussayn and Harun, Son of Matanmi, the Ataoja of Osogbo who later became a Chief Imam<sup>7</sup> of Ibadan.



The death of Shaykh Abubakr Alaga was alleged to have been plotted by the reigning Alaafin of Oyo who was said to be equally an Islamic scholar and in fact a contemporary as well as a friend of Shaykh Alaga. It was due to their cordial relationship that informed Alaga's decision to branch at Alaafin's place with his team. What caused Alaafin's anger was the way Shaykh Abubakr behaved to him. He was said to have shaken hands with Alaafin in greetings and his shoes were on while other members of the team removed theirs and laid flat in prostration for the Oba. Thereafter, Alaafin offered to host them for some days before proceeding on their journey. During their stay, Alaafin was said to have organized a death squad against the visitors. On getting to Borgu area, the Makkah bound travelers were attacked and only Shaykh Alaga was killed<sup>8</sup>. The fact that only Shaykh Abubakr lost his life goes a long way to confirm the allegation. Having lost their leader and returned home.

Meanwhile, the efforts of the scholars became fruitful when in 1922 the post of Imam became vacant as a result of the death of the incumbent, Muhammad Lawal Qifu II. Shaykh Harun Matanmi was appointed the Chief Imam. Initially, he declined the offer saying he was satisfied with his being an Alfa (Islamic Scholar). He was nonetheless prevailed upon by other scholars considering the depth of his knowledge, his old age and ostensibly to break the monopoly of the Mogajis<sup>9</sup>. In reality, Shaykh Matanmi was the only surviving scholar of his generation; others had departed to the great beyond. When the pressure on him became too much, he accepted the offer, only to satisfy his Alfa

colleague. He however delegated Alfa Ali Muhammad Ajagbe, a willing person, to act for him as Chief Imam. His fear in taking up the job centered on the enormity of its responsibilities coupled with great consequence of its abuse. With this feat accomplished, the Alfa line was created.

Alfa Ali Ajagbe from then acted as the Chief Imam till when Alfa Harun Motanmi died in 1935<sup>10</sup>. Having acted creditably for thirteen years, and considering the experience he had acquired, he was appointed the substantive Chief Imam in the same year. With his appointment, the intention of the scholars was fulfilled and since that time, two distinct lines of succession to the post of the Chief Imam on rotation were officially recognized<sup>11</sup>. The arrangement provides of Mogajis with Mogaji Agba (Chief Mogaji or the most senior Mogaji) as next to the Chief Imam in one line and Alfas with Alfa Agba (grand mufti) as also next to the Chief Imam in the other line. At the existence of vacancy for Imam, the chief of the next line to produce Chief Imam would automatically be selected and appointed.

This arrangement subsisted until the period of Imam Sadiq Folorunso<sup>12</sup>. After he had become the Chief Imam, the position of Chief Mogaji (Mogaji Agba) became vacant with the death of Alhaji Wahab Alagunfon in 1980. The Chief Imam appointed Alfa Muhammad Hadi Bello Inakoju to succeed him as the Mogaji Agba instead of Alfa Baosari Suara<sup>13</sup> who was Inakoju's senior in the hierarchy. This action provoked the anger of some members of the council who considered it an injustice to fellow colleague.



Inakoju's appointment as Mogaji Agba implied that he was the deputy Imam who could act whenever the Imam was not around. This is because by rotational arrangement, he was to be the next Imam should there be vacancy. Incidentally that was not to be for about three years before the death of Imam Sadiq, he delegated Alfa Muhaththir<sup>14</sup> Abdul Salam from Alfa line to act for him as Imam instead of Alfa Inakoju, the Mogaji Agba.

When in 1988 Imam Sadiq Folorunso died, Shaykh Muddaththir Abdul Salam took over as the Chief Imam. The decision to appoint him was based on his excellent performance during the period he acted<sup>15</sup>. It was said that the former Imam had tacitly nominated him for the post. With the appointment of Imam Muddaththir, there were two successive Chief Imams from the Alfa line.

Meanwhile, Shaykh Inakoju retained his position as Mogaji Agba, while Shaykh Abdul Kareem Rufai Bello was elevated to the post of Alfa Agba (the grand Mufti). After the death of Imam Muddaththir in 1991, the grand Mufti contested against Shaykh Inakoju, the Mogaji Agba and lost. He was however not satisfied and therefore went ahead to challenge Inakoju nomination in a law court on the ground that Inakoju was not qualified, base on Shari'ah provision. He was however prevailed upon to withdraw the case from the court after which he was compensated with the post of deputy Imam (Naib Imam) specially created for him to settle the rift<sup>16</sup>. Imam Inakoju spent about one year on the position. After his death, his deputy, Shaykh Abdul Kareem Rufai Bello

took over peacefully with nobody contesting against him and the position of Naib was thereafter scrapped.

The death of Imam Rufai Bello in 1995 brought some crisis into the Imamate in Ibadan. The problem of Succession became more problematic than ever before. Three members of Imam in council openly contested for the post. They were Shaykh Abdul Rauf Matanmi, son of the 9<sup>th</sup> Imam and the grand Mufti of the community, Alfa Abdullah Titilayo Basumu, son of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam from the Mogaji line and Abdul Salam Daniyan who was Mogaji Agba and who, going by the agreed procedure, should be the next candidate since it was Mogaji line that should produce the next candidate. For weeks, no consensus candidate emerged<sup>17</sup>.

Another dimension was introduced into the matter by the Muslim youths. They insisted that the Shari'ah provision should be applied henceforth in the appointment of the Chief Imam. They rejected the system of heredity and rotation amongst two identified groups. They posited that since the post, by the law of Islam, is open to all Muslims in the locality, there should be a test to select the most suitable candidate. While one of the three contestants, Alfa Abdullah Basunu agreed to the Shari'ah provision as proposed by the youths. Alfa Daniyan, the Mogaji Agba was opposed to it because according to him, it had not been in practice and that it was a ploy to edge him out of the race. He pleaded that he be allowed to take his turn and thereafter start to adopt the new system. It was even said that Alfa Daniyan was actually not a scholar of



Islam, he was in fact a tailor by profession. He only became Mogaji of his family when his father died and got promoted until he got to post of Mogaji Agba.

While still grappling with the problem of succession, a competent scholar was selected to lead the congregation in acting capacity, pending the resolution of the matter at hand. He was Shaykh Adiamoh, popularly known as (Baba Saki). He acted for 22 days that the crisis lasted. Several meetings were convened by the Baba Isale Musulumi<sup>18</sup>. of Ibadan, Alhaji Muibi Akanbi to resolve the issue. Invited to the meetings were Muslim title holders of Ibadan origin, representatives of the youths and, of course, the proprietor of the Arabic Institution, Ibadan, Shaykh Murtadha Abdul Salami<sup>19</sup> At a time, the meeting agreed to conduct a qualifying test for the contestants and Shaykh came back to report that none of the three was found suitable for the post.

The result made the issue to be more complicated and therefore difficult to resolve. While the disqualification of the three candidates seemed to have validated the position of the youths, it dampened the hope of other members of the meeting, particularly those who belong to different groups supporting the three candidates<sup>20</sup>. The youths insisted on re-conduct of test and even called for more candidates. The situation became more worrisome with the allegation that all the three contestants had started to lobby members of the meeting with large sums of money as inducement for support.

A suggestion that the matter be suspended till the arrival of the leader of all the Muslim title holders, Alhaji Arisekola Alao<sup>21</sup> was taken and adopted. The Aare Musulumi left for Europe a few hours before the death of Imam Rufai. On arrival, he was briefed of the situation. When he confirmed that some aspirants were lobbying, he ordered that they be disqualified in accordance with the *Shari'ah* provision<sup>22</sup>. He thereafter called for the next person in the council who did not lobby to be appointed and installed. Thus, Shaykh Baosari Surara Haruna was selected<sup>23</sup>. He is a grand son of the fourth Imam.

The selection of Shaykh Haruna helped to a large extent in dousing the already charged atmosphere in the community. Some of those who did not agree with the verdict could not voice out their displeasure because of the personality of Arisekola in the entire Muslim community of Yorubaland. Though the youths liked the way the lobbyists were edged out of the race, they still disagreed with the manner adopted in the selection of Shaykh Baosari. They organized a press conference at the press center, Iyaganku, Ibadan which was addressed by the leader of the organized youths, Alhaji Ishaq Kunle Sanni. Three points were mentioned in the address, they were:

- i. That Islam is opposed to lineage and heredity in the appointment of Imam, they therefore sought that both Alfa and Moggaji lines be scrapped immediately.



- ii. That the modality of selecting Imam bequeathed to the Muslims by Prophet Muhammad in which knowledge of the Qur'an, Hadith and jurisprudence be tested among the contestants be accepted and
- iii. That lobbying to the position of Imam be discouraged forthwith<sup>23</sup>.

The press conference notwithstanding, the leadership of the community went *a head* to install Shaykh Baosari Suara Haruna as the 17<sup>th</sup> Chief Imam<sup>24</sup>. This development aggravated the anger of the youths who vowed to go to any length in getting their views accepted. They went ahead and filed a suit at the Oyo State High Court holding in Ibadan, challenging the appointment. Joined in the suit were Alhaji Abdul Azeez Arisekola Alao; the Aare Musuluni of Ibadan and Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, the Balogun Adini of Ibadan<sup>25</sup>.

The legal action was an embarrassment to the entire Muslim community, particularly the person of Alhaji Arisekola Alao. He wondered why a matter of Islamic importance could be referred to a secular court for settlement more so when those directly concerned seemed to be satisfied with the appointment. He, however, called for dialogue with the aggrieved youths. At a meeting held at Arisekola's Bodija residence, it was resolved that the appointment be allowed to stay and supported. He, however, called for dialogue with the aggrieved youths. Also that the suit filed in court be withdrawn, while the meeting noted the points made by the youths and that two representatives of the youths be *incorporated* into the Imamship into the Imam in council. Though the suit was

immediately withdrawn from the court, none of the youths has been brought into the council as earlier on agreed to by both parties.

#### 4.1.2 Oyo Town

There has not been any specific system jointly agreed to by the community in the appointment of the Chief Imam in Oyo town. The first Imam was Alfa Mukaila Sulaiman, a Kanuri origin from Borno. He migrated to the old Oyo and later settled at Otefon<sup>26</sup>. At this time, Alaafin Atiba sought for an Alfa who would serve as the spiritual consultant and as well engage in prayers for the stability of his domain. Alfa Mukaila Sulaiman was identified and appointed by the Alaafin. He was accommodated and was well taken care of by the royal family.

There was no mosque around at this time. The only mosque in the whole Oyo then was at Agun popo, some kilometers away from the place. This mosque was being used for both *ratibi* and Jum'ah services and Mallam Mukaila was attending it but was not quite convenient for him. He then complained to the Alaafin that the mosque was too far for him and that he should establish one near the palace<sup>27</sup>. The Alaafin agreed and built a mosque where the present central mosque is situated. He also appointed Alfa Mukaila as the Chief Imam. The descendants of Alfa Mukaila Sulaiman are known as Ajokidero family. Incidentally, the subsequent Imams after Imam Mukaila have always been chosen from this same family. It later became a common belief in Oyo that only



Ajokidero compound could produce the town's Chief Imam and the post of assistant Imam was zoned to Parakoyi compound<sup>28</sup>.

This system had been the practice in Oyo town until 1945 during the reign of Alaaḥin Adeniran. In that year, the substantive Imam died and Alaaḥin appointed one Alfa Ahmad, also from Ajokidero compound to act as the Chief Imam. When after two months, he could no longer perform creditably as a result of old age, the Alaaḥin had to appoint one Alfa Tukur as the substantive Chief Imam. Though Imam Tukur was not from Ajokidero family, his appointment was based on the level of his knowledge of Arabic language and that of Islamic jurisprudence, which surpassed that of others.

The choice of the Alaaḥin of a person outside Ajokidero's compound did not go down well with the family members and was considered a breach of tradition. The family petitioned Alaaḥin on the matter and the petition seemed to have worked because when five years later, Imam Tukur died, the same Alaaḥin Adeniran appointed Alfa Muibi Ajokidero<sup>29</sup> as the next Chief Imam. The status quo ante remained until 1955 during the reign of Alaaḥin Adeyemi II.

The political situation that led Alaaḥin Adeyemi II to be banished in 1955<sup>30</sup> caused confusion and a crack in the rank of the Muslim community of Oyo town, with the result that the community broke into two. The faction that was in sympathy with the Alaaḥin and mainly from the Parakoyi compound saw no reason for their continued stay in the Central Mosque and went ahead to

convert a *Ratibi* Mosque at Parakoyi area to *Jami'* Mosque<sup>31</sup>. The deputy Chief Imam, who was from Parakoyi compound, was tipped as their Chief Imam. He, however, declined saying that it was improper to break the congregation on political differences. Thus he did not attend any of the two Mosques for seven consecutive Fridays of being micro presented and misconstrued.

When in 1971, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi became the Alaaḥin, he decided to settle the riot and reunite the congregation. He chose to use force by asking police to stop the conduct of Jum'at service at the old Mosque at Akesan so that the second Mosque at Parakoyi could function. Sensing that Alaaḥin took the measures to intimidate his perceived enemies at the old mosque and please his sympathizers in service and prevents the congregation from observing the Jum'at at the Parakoyi mosque. Meanwhile the congregation at the old mosque left the site and re-assembled at the Chief Imam's residence and offered the Jum'at *Salat* in the compound.

When the Alaaḥin saw the futility of force, he resorted to amicable resolution of the problem. He invited representatives of each of the two warring factions for amicable settlement of the dispute. At the meeting presided over by the Alaaḥin himself, he pleaded with the people for two things. First that people should in the interest of Islam, forget the problem that caused the breakup of the congregation into two and allow the operation of only one Central Mosque and one Chief Imam to operate in the town. Second, that the old central Mosque be



chosen for use while the other at Parakoyi be reverted to its old status of Ratibi. In addition, he sought the permission of the meeting to concede the Imamship to Alpha Mustapha of Parakoyi Mosque to serve as compensation for their sympathy to his father's cause.

The other faction thought over the Oba's proposal and later agreed since they were averse to the breakup of the community in the first instance. By the decision, the Chief Imam and his deputy both came from Parakoyi compound and it marked the second time the Chief Imam would be appointed from the outside Ajokidero's compound.

#### 4.1.3 Ogbomoso

At Ogbomoso, the system of appointing the Chief Imam is a little different from that of Oyo. The area of similarity is that like of Oyo, it is the Soun<sup>33</sup> that installs the Chief Imam, though after due selection by the council of Alfas on which Soun has a lot of influence.

The first Chief Imam of the city was Shaykh Nafiu. Abogunde. He had during his youthful age, participated in tribal wars to other regions particularly the north and did not return immediately after the war to Ogbomoso. He settled<sup>34</sup> down at Bida in the present Niger state. There, he was converted to Islam and was thought Arabic language and Islamic studies. He later became so

versed in the subjects that his host, Etsu Nupe at that time appointed him as the Chief Imam of Bida. When the Etsu became old, Imam Nafiu sensed that the Etsu's children might trouble him after the death of their father. He communicated this fear to the Etsu who promised to do something on it.

The Etsu Nupe then sent a message to the then Emir of Ilorin to help contact the then Soun of Ogbomoso of his plan to send one of the latter's subjects back home, and that he should prepare a good reception for him. Shaykh Nafiu Abogunde came with a retinue of slaves and a lot of money and property; he was given a heroic welcome and was made the Chief Imam<sup>35</sup> by the Soun. After he had settled down, he organized Jum'at service and led the first one<sup>36</sup>. He also organized the observance of the two eids (al-fitr and al-Adha) and even caused the completion of the only mosque he met under construction. He organized the construction of a Ratibi (local) mosque the each of the notable compounds like Parakoyi, popo, Menefa, Faki, Bode and Mosifa. He organized a council in charge of religious affairs. In general, the Muslim community became solid under his administration<sup>37</sup>.

To avert unnecessary competition and trouble which could lead to the breakup of the congregation after his death, Imam Nafiu Abogunde had, before his death, tipped deputy, Shaykh Musa, as the next Imam. That was why after the death of Abogunde; Shaykh Musa had easy elevation to the position of Chief Imam. Thenceforth, the arrangement has been from Mufassir (Exeget) to Deputy (Naib Imam) and to the Chief Imam<sup>38</sup>.



One remarkable thing about the system of appointment of Chief Imam in Ogbomoso is that the council is always conscious of the need for rotation of the post among notable compounds that make up the Muslim community. It is done in such a way that no compound holds the post in succession. It is rather rotated round the compounds without jettisoning consideration for knowledge which is the first criterion in *Shari'ah*.<sup>39</sup>

There was, however a disruption in the arrangement during the reign of the sixth Imam, Alfa Sanusi. When he became old and could no longer attend the mosque, he nominated Alfa Muhammad to act for him instead of Alfa Salawu, his deputy. Members of the Imam in council did not like the action of the Imam on the ground that it was a slight on the deputy Imam who was said to have possessed adequate knowledge of Islam to lead as Imam. It was also a slight on members of the council to have appointed Alfa Muhammad who had little knowledge of Islam. They all alleged that the indisposed Chief Imam did that because the candidate was very close to him.

When Imam Sanusi died, Alfa Muhammad knew that he could neither get support from his colleagues in the council for the needed confirmation as the substantive Imam nor get turbaned by the Soun. He began to lobby the Alaafin of Oyo who used his royal might, to turban Alfa Muhammad as the Chief Imam. He then sent six of his palace guards to escort the Imam to the Soun with an instruction that the Imam should be given all the rights of the

Chief Imam<sup>40</sup>. Soun could not do otherwise because Alaafin was his superior Oba.

Another disruption was recorded with the immediate past Imam, Shaykh Hamzat Ahmad Alawiye. He was the *Mufassir* up till 1976 when the former Imam *Ma'uf* died. He was made to jump the post of deputy to become the Chief Imam.

#### 4.1.4. Iseyin

The whole of Iseyin town was divided into four quarters which produce the Chief Imam in rotation. They were Layiwola, Lajori, Alalukimba and Agbede Ijemba. In the same way, the post of *Mufassir* was rotated among other four compounds. They were; Agarawu, Shafi, Ijemba and Olugbobiogun<sup>41</sup>. This arrangement did it however affect the first official Chief Imam. In about the year 1820,<sup>42</sup> Mallam Muhammad Duba was appointed the Chief Imam on merit, being the most learned person around. Though others after him were considered on merit in addition to the area of the town they belonged.

The above arrangement was not always adhered to. There were times when this arrangement was flouted by the "powerful people". For instance, there was a time when the position became vacant and instead of following the agreed system, one Yerokun, the official interpreter to the then expatriate District Officer, Captain consultant, Alfa Muhammad, installed as the Chief Imam. After his and that was how Mudaththir from Olokuta quarters came in.



In the 1950s, the imamate became a victim of the political situation in the Western Region with the disruption in the community. The reigning Oba, Adelabu, sponsored Alfa Mustafa because they both belonged to the ruling party, Action Group (A.G)<sup>43</sup>, on the other hand, the majority of the people preferred candidate.

This caused a division in the Muslim community and generated serious tension resulting in the two factions each deciding to install its own candidate. The two contending candidates were scheduled to be installed on the same day, though at different venues. The Semiu group, backed by the council of Imams had concluded the turbaning ceremony at Ijemba quarters before the commencement of that of Mustafa at the palace. While Imam Semiu and his followers danced through the palace to the market, there was a clash with Mustafa's group resulting in a fracas popularly referred to as *Ogun Olokuta* (the war of stone) because stones were used freely. While Mustafa's turbaning could not materialized<sup>45</sup>, Imam Semiu was able to spend his term.

After the death of Imam Semiu, Alfa Jamiu Olokuta came in as the new Imam without any controversy. There was relative peace in to the new mosque in the centre of the town. Imam Jamiu declined, saying that the would not be a party to breaking the Mosque into two. The community then elevated Alfa Abdul Baki, his deputy, to the post of Chief Imam of the new Mosque. About 85% of the Imam of the new Mosque,<sup>46</sup> while the rest stayed with Imam Mustafa. This incident split the community into two factions again. Since then, the town has

been maintaining two traditional Central Mosques. The present Imam (of the new Mosque) took over from Imam Abdul Baki when the later died in 1991.

#### 4.1.5 Iganna

Like most towns in Yorubaland, the manner through which Islam came to Iganna was unplanned and accidental. This necessitated the only Islamic scholar, Mallam Mumini to be appointed the first Chief Imam. When he felt that his health was deteriorating as a result of old age he delegated Alfa Saidu a ratibi Imam at Oke Afin, who was his student, to act as Chief Imam. Saidu was confirmed after the death of Imam Mumini<sup>47</sup>.

During Imam Saidu's tenure, one man called Baba Kewu, who had migrated from Okeho and had lived with the first Imam, was made Saidu's deputy. Imam Saidu did not hand over the Imamship to him, rather, he returned the *Khutbah* to the family of Imam Mumin when he felt he could not more attend the Jumat service due to old age. His action was based on the possibility of the family presenting one of the formed Imam's children. The family, however, handed over the *Khutbah* to the deputy who thus became the acting Imam.

However, when Imam Saidu died, against Baba Kewu's expectation that he would be confirmed as the Imam, the *Khutbah* was retrieved from him and handed over to Alfa Murtala, a member of the family, as the third Imam. Imam Murtala only spent three years as the Chief Imam when he died. Immediately



after his death another family member, Alfa Busari Arowosaye was turbaned as the fourth Imam but unfortunately he became sick shortly after he had been turbaned. The community then decided to appoint three deputies to act for the Imam on rotation. They were Mallams Tijani, Sanusi and Alhaji Alli who later lost his eye sight<sup>48</sup>.

In 1966, there was an attempt to replace Alhaji Alli with his nephew, Alhaji Atiku as a deputy Imam because of his eye problem. This led to the family breaking into two factions. The matter was however later resolved with Alhaji Alli's son, Salahudeen, taking over his father's position.

When in 1974, Imam Arowosaye died; two candidates came up from the two factions of the family to contest for the post. They were Alhaji Atiku and Alhaji Nasiru Yahya who was a grandson of the second Imam. Each led his faction in prayers in the same. In 1979, it dawned on the two suspended Imams that the community meant business, hence, they talked it over between themselves and Alhaji Nasiru Yahya agreed to step down for Alhaji Atiku Abdul Salam with a proviso that the former or his son would succeed the later. This was agreed to by the Muslim community and Alhaji Atiku was installed the fifth Imam. When in 1989, Imam Atiku died, the community fulfilled the agreement by making Alhaji Nasiru Yahya to succeed him as the next Imam.

#### 4.1.6 Okeho

The system of appointment of Chief Imam in Okeho was based on the intellectual competence of the holder of the position. The first Chief Imam, Lawal Bibilari actually laid a good foundation in that direction. He was an Ifa priest and in fact the leader<sup>50</sup>. Of idol worshippers in the town. He discovered Islam in Ibadan<sup>51</sup> through his various travels outside Okeho. He came back home to introduce the religion to his town, which was then predominantly idolatory.

Knowing his inadequate knowledge of Islam and the need to get an expert to lead the Jumat service, Bibilari appealed to a Mallam from Iseyin who used to come to lead the Juma'ah service for the congregation on every Friday. While the Mallam was coming, Bibilari himself enrolled in Quranic school to learn Arabic and when he felt that he had acquired enough knowledge to enable him lead as Imam, he became the Chief Imam<sup>52</sup>.

He encouraged the congregation to learn Arabic language which could qualify them to become Imam in future. People from different compounds heeded his advice and thus became Islamic scholars. He had before his death, nominate *Alfa* Habib to succeed him. *Alfa* Habib was from a different compound but of the same Bode area of the town. The structure is such that whoever would aspire to the Imamship of the town would normally come from Bode area.

An example of their abhorrence for a person from outside the area becoming the Chief Imam in one Alfa Saka Agba. He was a native of Igangan

and he had for long lived with one of the Imams. He once contested for the post of Chief Imam and was unanimously rejected despite his deep knowledge<sup>53</sup> of Islam and the length of years he had lived with them. The current Imam, Shaykh Muhammad Hadi Yushau was brought from Ghana when they could not get a satisfactory person at Okeho. He is the 10<sup>th</sup> Chief Imam of the town.

#### 4.1.7 Igboho

At the inception, the few Muslims in the town were satisfied with Ratibi (local) Mosques they were operating. The idea of having a Chief Imam and the Jum'at Mosque never occurred to them. Not even Mallam AbuBakr who came from Iseyin ever thought of becoming the Imam. He was all along preoccupied with how Islam could have a sound footing in the town and therefore engaged in prayers. One of those who benefited from his prayers was the reigning Iba of Kisi in a neighbouring town who contested for the position of Ibadan with the support of Mallam Abubakr<sup>45</sup>.

In recognition of the efficacy of his prayers, the Iba of Kisi decided to install him as the Chief Imam. When the news got to the Muslims of Igboho, they brought it to the notice of their Oba who pleaded with Mallam Abubakr to stay behind and be installed the Chief Imam of the town. That was how he became the second Imam after the death of the former. Imam Aliyu was actually a non native, he was from Saki. Some members of the congregation wanted to exploit his being a non-native to deny him the post, but the fact that his mother was a

native saved him of the sectional sentiment. He was about the longest serving Imam having spent close to a hundred years as the Imam<sup>56</sup>.

It got to a time when the post of Imam started to be rotated among the Mallams of Bonni and Modeke, the two main areas of the town to ensure equity and fairness. This practice was on course until the need arose to build a new Mosque which could accommodate the fast growing population of the Muslim faithful.

Trouble began when the treasurer and the financial secretary both of whom coincidentally came for Bonni, refused to surrender the account to the Imam. Rather, in collusion with members from other areas like Owode and Igbope, they commenced<sup>57</sup> the construction of another Mosque at Bonni. They also appointed their new Imam and started operating in another Mosque.

Each faction line up behind each of the Imams to contest the legitimacy of the other. This situation has even degenerated into a level of litigation, a case that has not been resolved till now. The intervention of the Oyo State Rabitah<sup>58</sup> has even not helped the matter.

#### 4.1.8 Igbeti

At Igbeti, the first Mosque built at Oja Oba and which was all along used as Ratibi Mosque was later converted to the Central Mosque where the first



Jum'at service was held<sup>59</sup>. Once Alfa Aliyu Gambari was installed the first Imam since the early Alfas in the town were Hausas, and he was the most learned among them. However, due to increase in population, the community moved to the newly built Central Mosque at Eyinke area in 1955<sup>60</sup>.

The system of appointment of Chief Imam since the death of Imam Gambari is such that the Oba would make a formal request at the existence of vacancy to the Imam in council. The council would formally forward the Name of the deputy (*Naib*) to the Oba and the turbaning would follow<sup>61</sup>. Members of the Imam in council are the Chief Imam, the Parakoyi, the Balogun, the Sarumi, the Otun Adini and of course the *Naibi* (Deputy) Imam.

When Imam Gambari died, his deputy, Alfa Faruq, an Ilorin indigene, automatically succeeded him while Alfa Sanusi, an indigene of Igbeti became the deputy. He himself subsequently became the Chief Imam after the death of Imam Faruq. The current Imam, Alhaji Abubakr Yusuf became the deputy Imam and served Imam in 1987<sup>62</sup>.

Just after his installation as the new Chief Imam, Zakariya Sanusi, Son of the immediate past Imam instituted a legal action in a high court against the appointment of Imam Abubakr. However, the judgement given in 1988<sup>63</sup> was in favour of the Chief Imam. The plaintiff also lost the appeal in 1994.

While the case lasted, Zakariya Sanusi and his faction deserted the Central Mosque and led another Jum'at service he created in his family's Ratibi

Mosque. The faction was later alleged to be disturbing the peace of the town and causing serious embarrassment to the Muslim community. It caused the intervention of the Police at the then Local Government Headquarters in Kisi for the matter to be resolved<sup>64</sup>. Meanwhile, the two mosques operate as traditional Jum'at Mosque of the town.

## IBARAPA

### 4.1.9 Igbo Ora

Imams in Igbo-Ora are appointed from the family of the first Imam. That is why the family compound was named Imam's compound<sup>65</sup>. When the first Imam, Soliu died, Alfa Bello became the Imam. Then came in Alfa Abbas. During the tenure of Imam Abbas, he introduced the selected of deputy (*Naib*) Imam into the council. He made Alfa Jamiu Alobelowo the first *Naib*.

When Imam Abbas died, the deputy, Jamiu Alobelowo succeeded him but refused to appoint Naib throughout his tenure. Despite all agitations and pressure by members of council and the congregation, he refused to approve the appointment<sup>66</sup>. When he died in 1996, the present Chief Imam, Alhaji Ibrahim Abbas succeeded him. He, like his predecessor, refused to appoint anybody to be deputy. But four years later in the year 2000, he succumbed to pressure and selected his deputy from another area of the town.



#### 4.1.10. Eruwa

The idea of appointing an Imam to lead the Muslims in Eruwa was mooted by the Eleruwa himself, Oba Omoni<sup>67</sup>, a warrior who had traveled wide in the country and beyond. Hitherto, the few Muslims were performing the daily prayers on individual basis. After a tour of some Oke Ogun towns, Oba Omoni, an idol worshipper, observed that in all areas he had visited, the Muslims there had someone called Imam who led them in prayers. On his return, he called on Iya kanka, through whom the religion was brought<sup>68</sup> to the town and intimated her with the idea, with a view to appointment someone as Imam.

Iya Kanka accepted the Oba's advice and immediately called on her brothers who were very religious, but had no knowledge of Islam at all. They all agreed to select an Hausa Mallam called Muhammad Bako<sup>69</sup>. He was made a *Ratibi* Imam for some time and after about six months, they made him the first Chief Imam leading the Jumat services. When Imam Bako died, one Mahmud, a relation of Oba Omoni was appointed to succeed him. During his period, another indigene, Alfa Abdul Rahmon Adesina came back from Lagos to settle at home.

Alfa Adesina had more knowledge of Islam than the Imam. This, the Imam himself recognized and appreciated. So whenever Alfa Adesina was around, the Imam would ask him to lead the Jumat and eid prayers, when Imam Mahmud died, it was clear that Alfa Adesina would certainly be installed

the third Chief Imam. Surprisingly, however, Alfa Adesina traveled out the town purportedly on a business trip since he was a trader. It was later discovered that he deliberately travelled to avoid being made the Imam<sup>70</sup>. When he could not be located, Alfa Raji who was an Ilorin indigene was made the Chief Imam. Raji incidentally died just after a year of his installation.

Immediately after the burial of the Imam, Alfa Abdul Rahmon, thinking that he could be called upon again to take up the appointment as the next Chief Imam, traveled out again to an unclosed place. The new ruler, Oba Ajao, who had followed the event, ordered the family members of Alfa Abdul Rahmon to produce him within three months. After some search, the family found him and he accepted the offer. He therefore became the fourth Chief Imam. He spent fifty years on the post. It was during Abdul Rahman's tenure that a move was made to create new Eruwa to avoid hills, which encircled the town, thereby preventing easy expansion. This move was championed by the Imam. Oba Bambeke, the then Eleruwa saw the move as a ploy to cause division in his domain and to destabilize him. He rejected the move and therefore decided to punish the Chief Imam for leading the rebellion against him. To break the ranks of the Imam in council, the Oba appointed a member of the council, Alhaji Mustafa, the new Imam. But when other council members rose against Mustafa, he renounced the post and apologized to the council.<sup>71</sup>

When the Eleruwa realized that he could not deal with the Imam and his council, he reported the matter to the then Olubadan of Ibadan, Oba Abbas



Alesinloye<sup>72</sup>. Oba Alesinloye considered the action as disrespectful to the royal authority and therefore ordered the arrest of the Chief Imam, the Balogun and the Olukosi, for three months they were under house arrest in Ibadan. When it was discovered that the then Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Ladigbolu was a distant relation of the chief Imam, members of the latter's family visited the former and related the story to him. Oba Ladigbolu quickly sent a message to the Olubadan ordering him to release the trio and he complied.

On hearing about the development, Eleruwa became jittery and confused. The two clashed again on Oro Festival which was fixed for Ramadan period. It snowballed into a very serious crisis during which the Oba died<sup>73</sup>. The Imam died much later and Alfa Mustafa succeeded him. He also gave up the ghost after serving for seventeen years. It was immediately after his death in 1989 that the present Imam, Shaykh Ya'qub Adesina was installed as the sixth Chief Imam of Eruwa.

#### 4.1.11 Lanlate

There have been seven Chief Imams including the present one since the arrival of Islam in the town<sup>74</sup>. The dates of the tenures of the first five of them are however not available.

Imams are selected from two compounds in the town. They are: Isale Togun and Isale Baale<sup>75</sup>. Posts of other functionaries of the council are spread over other areas such that all areas could feel a sense of belonging. The first Imam, Alfa Gbawonlada (a.k.a *Baba Rufai*) was a native of Ibadan who settled at Lanlate. He was the most learned person and that was why he was tipped to lead as Imam.

Imam Gbawonlada was succeeded by Imam Adesina. After him was Busari Elekunle, Sulaiman Igbaa, Adekanbi, the son of the third Imam, Fasasi Busari and the present one, Muftau Ajao Shittu who was appointed<sup>76</sup> in 1991.

The system of appointing Imam is such that the council would select the most knowledgeable candidate from the scholars of the two compounds<sup>77</sup> that normally produce Imam. Such a candidate would be presented to the Oba for ratification. As to the appointment of the present Imam, not all members of the council were carried along. The only one left out was the head of the scholars (Olori Omo Kewu), Alhaji Yunus who did not hide his displeasure about the whole issue and that was why he was a loggerhead with the Chief Imam.

The disagreement got to peak in the year 2000 after the return of the Chief Imam from pilgrimage. An attempt to correct the Chief Imam against observing the Jumat service well after two p.m. did not go down well with the Imam<sup>78</sup>. Since then, the former (Alhaji Yunus) and his sympathizers deserted the Mosque to establish a branch of Nasrudeen society of Nigeria. Alhaji Yunus,

who immediately became the Chief Imam of the newly found society succeeded in taking away more than half of the congregation of the town's Central Mosque.

#### 4.1.12 Idere

The first Imam in Idere was Alfa Sanusi from Ilorin who brought Islam into the town. He was succeeded by an indigene, Muhammad Jum'at Afolabi who was a student of the first Imam<sup>79</sup>. Imam Afolabi improved on the performance of the first Imam by introducing some other posts of the council. They were *Naib* (deputy) Imam, Olorin Omokewu (Head of the Scholars), Mufasssir (Exegete) Balogun and Ajanasi. After the death of Imam Afolabi, however, there was confusion caused by a candidate who desperately wanted to succeed the former Imam. He was Alhaji Ahmad who knew that he could not be nominated because there were other better candidates.

Alfa Jum'ah Oluokun was to be selected as the new Imam because he was a colleague of the former and he came from a different side of the town. However, the council refused to select him because he did not cooperate with the former Imam as he was always at logger-heads<sup>80</sup> with him. To allow the council some time to look for another candidate, it decided to appoint Alfa Nasiru-substantive one. The acting Imam served for some time, he led many Jumat services and the year's *Eid al-Fitr*.

As the council members were searching for a good candidate to be appointed, Alfa Ahmad approached the *Naib Imam* to support him, he was even

alleged to have even bribed him with a set of furniture<sup>81</sup>. The Naib Imam nominated Alfa Ahmad and the latter was appointed. The development angered many members of the congregation who considered the council as insensitive to the wish of the congregation. This was because the new Imam came from the same section of the town with the deceased Imam.

The people of the other side of the town appointed and installed<sup>87</sup> their own Imam the following week and this generated more tension and confusion in the community. The two factional Imams were however barred from using the Central Mosque. Meanwhile, Imam Ahmad was using the Ratibi Mosque in Oke Ola area of the town. The two succeeded in polarizing the community.

During the *Eid-al-Kabir* of the year, each faction was preparing to use established *Eid* group for the prayers. On the *Eid* day, it happened that Imam Ahmad's group arrived at the venue first and the group observed the *Eid* Salat. No sooner the Imam started the sermon than the other group arrived. Some hefty members of the group went straight to the *minbar* and pushed the Imam down. There was pandemonium and the congregation ran out of the eid ground for their dear lives. The other group settled down for its own salat, which was observed without any disruption<sup>83</sup>.

The youths under the auspices of *Zumratul Shuhadah* did not attend the eid having envisaged what would happen. Instead, they organized an open air service in the town. After the festivities some days later, they started to lobby



important people in the town to effect an amicable settlement. Series of meetings were held and in the process, Alfa Ahmad, one of the factional Imams died. That generated more confusion and at the end, a decision was taken to jettison the other Imam and appoint the Head of scholars (*Olori Omo kewu*) to act as Imam pending the selection of the substantive<sup>84</sup> one.

While the acting Imam performed his duties, a search for the new Imam began and at the end, Alfa Asifa Onire from Koso area was appointed. His appointment satisfied the majority of the congregation who saw it as an end to rebellion and ill feelings in the community. Under the terms of the agreed resolution, the dead Imam was recognized as the third Chief Imam of the town, while the present one would be the fourth; 85 members of the Council would henceforth be selected from the four main quarters of the town to ensure even representation such that the *Naib* would automatically be promoted from his faction.

#### 4.1.13. Igangan

There was no laid down policy for the appoint of the Chief Imam in the town. The first one, Alfa Sanni was a native who had settled down in Iseyin He was came round for a festival and was found to be suitable for Imamship. He was therefore persuaded to take up the post, which he did. He served as the first Imam for a fairly longtime<sup>87</sup>. When he became very sick, he nominated one Alfa Badru-deen an indigene of Imeko, (in Ogun State) to act for him. Unfortunately, Imam Sanni did not survive the sickness. When he died, Alfa

Badru-deen's appointment as the second Imam was confirmed. When he too died, the son of the first Imam, Mustafa Sanni was appointed the third Imam.

It came to a time when Sann's family because the Imam's family such that any aspirant from other compound would not be allowed. That was why the fifth Imam was the son of the third Imam. When the sixth Imam was to be appointed, there was a problem. The Imam in council became annoyed that members of the council were longer regarded by the family and then resolved to change the system. They therefore chose Alfa Abdul Wahab from Olokuta family<sup>88</sup>. Members of the Imam compound protected but lost.

When the council members could not get the kind of loyalty expected from the Chief Imam, they reconsidered their earlier decision and installed Abdul Ganiy Abdul Azeez from Imam's family as the new Imam. They did this without disposing the incumbent. The matter was reported to the police who arrested the Parakoyi, Alhaji Muhibbud-Din Parakoyi who was considered the ring leader. The matter was settled in such a way that the two Imam retained their posts with the old one using the old Mosque while the new Imam used the newly constructed Central Mosque. The community of the Muslims in the small town was thus polarized and divided into two factions.

## OSUN STATE

### 4.1.14. Osogbo

4.1.15. The system of Imamship in Osogbo was at the inception based on the level of knowledge and the practice of the religion by the contestants. We can however not set aside the manner through which the religion got into city because it had great impact on the institution of Imamship.

As mentioned earlier in chapter three, the first Imam of Osogbo was Mallam Ibrahim Uthman who, after Ataoja's persuasion, agreed<sup>89</sup> to stay back and introduce the faith to the predominantly idolatrous society. His son Ashir<sup>90</sup> became the second Imam after his death. Thereafter, hereditary succession to the post became a vogue with descendants of the past Imams (*Olomo Imams*)<sup>91</sup> claiming to be the only qualified people to be appointed as the Chief Imam.

Another route to get to the exalted position was to lobby the Oba (the Ataoja) of the town who has a lot of influence in the appointment. After all he would give his consent to the candidate selected and also turban him. That was the situation until about the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when some members of the Muslim community resolved to introduce knowledge rather than heredity as the only qualification to the post of the Chief Imam.

At the initial stage of the struggle for change, Shaykh Muhammad Bello Arikalamu, a prominent scholar was the first to contest for Imamship purely on the basis of Islamic knowledge. He was denied by a combined team of the descendants of the past Imams and the Ataoja, reason being that his father was never an Imam of Osogbo. He never had the opportunity till he died.

The proponents of the new Change led by Alhaji A.S. Kolapo<sup>92</sup> however continued the struggle. At a time when they felt that their aim might not be realized through the system adopted they changed their tactics and decided to sponsor candidates for the post of *Mufassir*, which if realized, could ease his becoming the Chief Imam. In 1960, the group sponsored Shaykh Shittu Onilewura, a renowned scholar, preacher and a student of Bello Arikalamu for the post of *Mufassir*. His candidature was opposed by a section of the people, particularly some members of the Imam in council. However, his supports managed to have their way and he was turbaned at Ataoja's palace in 1961.

Onilewura's appointment as *Mufassir* caused pandemonium and confusion so serious that it threatened to break up the Muslim community into factions. Oba Ataoja himself became confused and worried but could not resolve the problem. The crisis was however resolved by the reigning Olubadan of Ibadan, *Oba Salawu Aminu*<sup>94</sup> who, on hearing the crisis, invited the two factions to his palace and settled the matter amicably. To demonstrate their resolve to work together, the two groups together re-turned Shaykh Shittu Onilewura as the *Mufassir* at the Central Mosque. The council then reorganized



the contestable positions and streamlined them. Therefore the posts of *Mufassir*, *Naib* Imam and the Chief Imam were recognized.

When the then Imam died, and the Naib, Alhaji Tijani Ajiferuke Anisere became the Imam, the Mufassir, Alhaji Shittu Onilewura was to move to assume the post of *Naib* Imam. He declined in spite of all persuasions of his supporters to take the post. He was said to prefer *Mufassir* position to the *Naib*, which he considered redundant. By remaining the *Mufassir*, he thought he would be able to contribute more of his knowledge to serve the people through improved quality of sermons, Quranic exegesis (*Tafasir*) and open-air services. He was however said to have hinted members of council that should there be vacancy for the post of Imam, he would have to jump Naib and assume it.

Alfa Salahudeen Ogodu, who was to be promoted to Mufassir therefore had to jump to Naib position. When the post of Imam became vacant as a result of the death of Imam Tijani Anisere, the Mufassir, Alhaji Onilewura had assumed that the road to Imamship would be very easy for him, but that was not to be. At the Funeral Service (Janazah) of the departed Imam, Alhaji Onilewura wanted to lead the Salat but was prevented by the supporters of the Naib. They thought that allowing him as the Imam. The Naib, Alhaji Salahudeen Ogodu led the prayers and was later installed as the Chief Imam, Alhaji Onilewura had to move from *Mufassir* to *Naib* and Alhaji Jimoh Atanda Sanusi became the Mufassir<sup>95</sup>.

The Imam in council then met to emphasise strict adherence to the arrangement of the principal officers of the council. It also ruled that henceforth, nobody would be allowed to enjoy double promotion and anybody who declined promotion automatically forfeited it. It made the position of *Mufassir* as the stage where academic competence and power of delivery of candidate would be assessed. Therefore, the contest for Imamship which is the focus of members of council actually shifted to *Mufassir* position. Anybody appointed as *Mufassir* would be turbaned first, as the Imam would do.

The death of Imam Ogodu brought in Alhaji Shittu Onilewura as the Chief Imam. Alhaji Sanusi, the Mufassir moved to *Naib* and Alhaji Ashir Uthman (a.k.a Alhaji Eko), a notable Islamic scholar was undisputedly made the Mufassir. Unfortunately he did not spend much time on the position, as he died not long after his appointment. He was succeeded by Alhaji Mustafa Ajisafe, an equally sound Islamic scholar. Surprisingly, his candidature was opposed on the ground the immediate past holder of the post was his uncle<sup>96</sup>. According to his opponents, the post would be reduced to a family one should Ajisafe be allowed to hold it. It was then resolved that a test be conducted for contestants while scholars from the University of Ibadan were contacted to conduct it. With this arrangement, other contestants withdrew<sup>97</sup> before the scheduled date, leaving Alhaji Ajisafe unopposed. Thus, he became the *Mufassir*.

The arrangement of only three principal officers of the council agreed upon was disrupted by Imam Onilewura himself. Oba Oyewale Matanmi the



Ataoja of Osogbo wanted one Alhaji Ghazali Akorede to be in the council without being tested, he therefore lobbied<sup>98</sup> the Imam to create a post for him. The Chief Imam, not wanting to offend the Oba, created the post of Ekerin Imam for Alhaji Akorede and installed him. This unilateral decision taken by the Imam angered the youths who, under the auspices of National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations (NACOMYO) saw the action as a ploy to unnecessarily increase the principal officers to four and to ensure that incompetent people were smuggled into the council. They therefore called on the Imam to reverse the action. The Imam pleaded with the youths stating that it was only honorary.

When in 1994, Imam Onilewura died, the *Naib* Imam, Alhaji Sanusi became the Chief Imam and the *Mufassir*, Alhaji Ajisafe moved up to the position of *Naib*. The Ekerin Imam aspired to become the *Mufassir* but was disqualified on the basis of knowledge. In desperation to assert his presence in the council at all costs, he lobbied the Ataoja again to use his powerful office to see him through. The new Imam could not reject Ataoja's request, he therefore created<sup>99</sup> another office, *Otun Naib (Assistant Naib)* for him.

Sensing the extent of Ataoja's influence in the council and coming from the same zone with the Ataoja, Alhaji Musa Animasaun who was afraid of undergoing test for the post of *Mufassir* lobbied Ataoja to ensure his appointment as *Mufassir* so that the zone could be represented in the council.

The agreed arrangement notwithstanding, Ataoja directed<sup>100</sup> the Chief Imam to appoint his candidate to the post and that was done.

The zonal sentiment employed by Ataoja in bringing in the *Mufassir* was also used by the Imam to create another post-Otun *Mufassir*- for Alhaji Harun Adediran who was from the same zone with the Imam. The youths again kicked against the post and the holder. They argued that the holder, who might become the *Mufassir* later was incompetent and that the development was against the earlier agreement reached on the number of the principal officers on the council. They had consulted lawyer and a notice of injunction was about to be served when some Muslim leaders intervened and appealed to the youths to suspend their action for peaceful resolution in the interest of Islam.

Another problem surfaced again in 1997, when the Chief Imam, Alhaji Sanusi Atanda died. It was normal and automatic that the principal officers of the council move up to the next rank. There was disagreement on what would become of the post of *Otun Mufassir* whether to scrap it or not. There was series of meetings held on the matter between the scholars, the Muslim title holders and the youths of which the following were the resolutions:

- i. That the post of *Otun Mufassir* be filled for the period, after which it would be scrapped
- ii. That the position be given to a young but competent Islamic scholar with sound western education.



- iii. That for equal representation, the holder be taken from the zone of the present Imam and
- iv. That all arrangements agreed upon be documented and signed by the representatives of each section of the meeting immediately after the installation.

One Alhaji Mas'ud Abdul Rasheem was finally selected and installed along with other principal officers. Thus, the number of the principal officers rose from the original three to five. It is however noteworthy that the three years after the installation of officers, the agreement has not been documented and signed<sup>101</sup>.

#### 4.1.15 Iwo

Appointment of the Chief Imam in the town was at the inception, based on the choice of Oluwo<sup>102</sup>. Up till now his candidate is always made the Chief Imam. This is so because, as explained in the last chapter, it was through the *Oba* that Islam arrived the down.

The first Imam, Muhammad Hadeetha was appointed by Oba Oderinlo Alahusa. Later, other qualifications like knowledge of Islam and good character were added. The candidate must of course, be acceptable to the Oba. When there was significant improvement in people's knowledge of Islam and the town could boast of many Islamic scholars, the system was streamlined by the Mallams in such a way that a member of the Imam in council (which

membership comprised only the learned men) could aspire to the position of Imam<sup>103</sup>. A person whose father had been a Chief Imam of the town is also qualified to be a member of the council. Infact his membership is automatic. Though he is required to have knowledge of Islam to a reasonable level.

The available positions contestable are the *Balogun Adini*, *Ajanasi*, *Ekerin*, *Eketa*, *Otun* and finally the Chief Imam. Holders get promoted from one position to another at the existence of vacancy. The hierarchical structure notwithstanding, one may be made to jump one or two positions as long as he enjoys the support of the reigning Oba.

A case like that happened during the reign of Oba Samuel Abimbola when the 13<sup>th</sup> Imam of the town, Alhaji Salawu Motokese was in office. The present Chief Imam, Alhaji Imran Umoru was the *Otun* (deputy) Imam and Alhaji Hadiyatullah Alaye was *Eketa* (third) Imam. Because the *Eketa* Imam enjoyed the support of Oba Abimbola, the Oba wanted him to become the Chief Imam after the incumbent. He therefore demoted the deputy and promoted the *Otun*<sup>104</sup>. His favourite, to the post of deputy. The demoted deputy and his loyalists in the council protested but the Oba refused to change his decision. The action of the Oluwo caused divisions in the rank of the council members with the result that there were camps and faction.

The situation became an open confrontation between the two personalities involved. During the crisis, Oba Abimbola died and shortly after,

the Chief Imam too died. The council met and resolved that since there was no Oba to appoint and install the next Imam, an acting person be nominated but not among the two contending rivals. They therefore unanimously agreed to appoint Alhaji Muhalli Amin<sup>105</sup>, a neutral person. After sometime the Acting Imam, died with his two sons in a motor accident.

Later, Alhaji Alaye, who was obviously being prepared for Imamship by Oba Abimbola was selected to act as Imam. He acted for some time and died. Later that year, Oba Tadese was installed as the new Oluwo after a ten year interregnum. Not long after his ascension, Oba Tadese installed Alhaji Umoru, the demoted candidate, as the 14<sup>th</sup> Chief Imam of Iwo.

#### 4.1.16 Ile-Ife

In Ile-Ife, there was no formalized system in the appointment of the Chief Imam at the inception of Islam. The most knowledgeable scholar of Islam would be made the Imam. What could have been problem was a possible contest to the position by the only two known Mallams in the city. The problem was however averted by the action of Alfa Adeosun who voluntarily stepped down for Alfa Danialu on age consideration.

Alfa Danialu thus became the first Chief Imam in 1903<sup>106</sup> while Alfa Kasumu Adeosun served as his deputy until 1922 when Danialu died. Kasumu then became the popular choice for the post of Imam. During this time, one Mallam Raji was identified to possess adequate knowledge of Islam next only to

the Imam. He was therefore made the deputy Imam. That was how the positions of both the Imam and Deputy were established as the principal officers of the council.

Later, when Imam Adeosun died, Raji was installed as his successor and Mallam Oseni Odukuru was made the deputy. In 1949 when Imam Raji died, Yusuf Adeosun, considered to be the most learned, was installed as the Imam against the general expectation that the deputy should be promoted, as was the practice. Serious tension surfaced and the community had to break into two factions, which led to a prolonged dispute<sup>107</sup>. The protracted disputes led to a series of court cases up to the Supreme Court of Nigeria. The judgment of the Supreme Court given in 1978 was in favour of Yusuf Adeosun's factions<sup>108</sup>.

After the judgement, the Muslim community came round and resolved to work together as a group. The Imam of the other faction, Yusuf Balogun was made the deputy Imam to Adeosun. In September 1978, the same year of the reorganization, Yusuf Adeosun died and was succeeded by Yusuf Balogun. In 1983, Balogun too died and since then up till the present Imam, Shaykh Idris Opeloye, matters of succession have been very peaceful.

#### 4.1.17 Ede

In Ede, two important qualifications have since the beginning been used to appoint the Imam. They are sound knowledge of Islam and good character.



However, Imamsip rotated among only two families for a long time. This happened as a result of some circumstances that will be discussed later.

The first Imam, as discussed in chapter three, was Shaykh Nuh Adekilekun, an itinerant preacher. He was invited to Ede from Ogbagba<sup>109</sup> by then the Timi of Ede, Oba Abibu Olagunju<sup>100</sup>. Oba Olagunju had invited him to his domain to permanently stay with him as his spiritual consultant so that he could have a peaceful reign over his subjects. On the arrival of Shaykh Nuh and his team, the Timi appointed him the Chief Imam, Shaykh Nuh therefore became the first person to hold the post in the town. He reigned for 53 years between 1850 and 1903<sup>111</sup>.

Shayk Muibi Talafia became the second chief imam. He succeeded imam Nuh adekilekun, his teacher. The selection of Talafia had political undertone as he was not the most qualified scholar around. Obviously, Shaykh Dhul quarnayn, the son of the first Imam was more qualified but he was not considered by the Timi who feared that his fame could overshadow his tenure. The Oba might have also tried to avoid heredity<sup>112</sup> in the appointment of Imams.

Imam Talafia served between 1903 and 1936. Before his death, it had become obvious that an injustice had been done to Shaykh Dhul Qarnayn Adekilekun in the selection of the Imam. So when Imam Talafia died, Shyakh Abdul Qadir Adekilekun, Dhul Qarnayn's son was selected the Imam as compensation. He occupied the position till 1947.

To select the fourth Imam, a structure was drawn and agreed upon by the council of Ulama'. According to the agreement, to qualify for the post, a candidate must have held the post of Ajanasi (interpreters) and Mufassir (Exegete). Since Shaykh Muhammad Alimi had held the two, he was found qualified for Imamship and was so made. He served for 22 years between 1947<sup>113</sup>. That structure has since been followed up till present. The current Chief Imam, Shaykh Idris Ejalonibu, who was appointed in the year 2000, is the 11<sup>th</sup> on the list since inception

Before his appointment, the entire people of Ede, particularly the youths, had wanted Dr. Daud Tijani Adekilekun to be the Chief Imam of the town because of his vast knowledge in both Islamic and western Education and his wealth of experience as the Chief Imam of the University of Ibadan for several years<sup>114</sup>. The Timi, Oba Oyedokun was not favourably disposed to his selection probably for fear that he might not be easily controlled.

#### 4.1.18 Ilesa

In Ilesa, the manner in which Islam got there dictated the kind of leadership of the Muslim community at the time. The early Muslims were not versed in Islamic knowledge and therefore could not have a learned person to lead them.

Some committed and enthusiastic Muslims decided to carry the banner of the religion to all nooks and crannies of Ijesa. One of them had to practically

lead others in prayers (Salawat) in spite of their obvious lack of the required competence. One Alfa Shuaibu was thus selected to do the job as the interim Imam<sup>115</sup>. A temporary Mosque was erected where prayers were offered and meetings held. However, with the arrival of one Alfa Parakoyi from Ilorin, the interim Imam voluntarily handed over the Imamship to him. This was because it was clear that Parakoyi was learned in Islam. Yet he was not made a permanent Imam, he was rather made an acting one with the hope that a more learned person could emerge since they desired the best for the community.

True to their expectation, around the year 1896<sup>116</sup>, one Mallam Disu, an Hausa man came down from Lagos at the invitation of a member of the community, Abubakr Orimogunje. The two had been more learned than Parakoyi, he was made to take over the position of Imam from him, this time as substantive one not minding the tribal difference. Parakoyi, however, cooperated fully with him. Thus, the official Imamship commenced with Mallam Disu Kannike.

There were three recognized posts in the council of Imam. They were the Mufassir, the *Naib* and the Chief Imam. When Kannike died, his deputy, Alfa Pari Lawal took over as the second Chief Imam. He later went on pilgrimage to Makkah but did not return. For twenty years thereafter, the community could not appoint another person to succeed him since they were not sure of what really happened. His deputy, Abdullah Akorede had to act for him for the period<sup>117</sup>.

When after twenty years, the community could no longer wait, it decided to install the acting Imam, but some people opposed the move on the premise that he was not actually an Ijesa man. The matter was referred to Oba Aromolaran I for settlement. The Oba thought it was unfair to drop a person who had acted for twenty years on the ground that he was a non-indigene. He therefore ratified his nomination and installed him as the third Chief Imam. He served till 1945 when he died.

Ali Amokeoja succeeded him as the fourth Imam. His nomination was unique in that his consideration for the post was not based on knowledge of Islam, but as compensation for his father's roles in the care and protection of the Central Mosque. Time was when the Central Mosque had no door due to lack of fund. The domestic animals around exploited the situation to mess the whole place every time. Amokeoja, who normally cleaned the place was angered that the place of worship should be in that position. The only solution he found to the situation was to remove his house's entrance door and fixed it to the Mosque. In appreciation of this rare sacrifice, the community unanimously chose his child as the Chief Imam<sup>118</sup>. He reigned for forty years between 1945 and 1985.

Before the tenure of Imam Amokeoja came to end, one Alfa Yahya Oso Oyenikan had lobbied his way to become the *Naib imam*. The manner of his appointment angered other Alfas who threatened that should there be vacancy for the position of Imam, the new *Naib* would not be considered. When



eventually there was vacancy, the *Naib* contested against the *Mufassir*, Alfa Abdul Rahman Akorede in defiance to the earlier threat. The community preferred Abdul Rahman because of his vast Islamic knowledge, which was incomparable to that of the *Naib*. Abdul Rahman also had practical experience having represented the former Imam on many occasions. The community therefore found Abdul Rahman more qualified and installed him as the fifth Chief Imam in 1985<sup>119</sup>.

#### 4.1.18 Modakeke

Modakeke as a town is unique in the appointment of the Chief Imam. This is because; it is about the only town in our area of coverage that has recorded no single disputes whenever it was time to appoint the Chief Imam. Apart from Imam Bukhari, who had nobody to contest against him because he introduced the faith into the town and was the only qualified person to hold the post, others after him were selected through unanimous decisions of all the *Alfas*<sup>120</sup>.

There were usually six principal officers in the council of Imam of Modakeke. Ekefa Imam (the least) is usually appointed from among the scholars who possess the required knowledge and who have been active in the congregation. As vacancy falls, the officer moves up the ladder until becomes the Chief Imam<sup>121</sup>. The system as enumerated above is however not rigid, for sometimes when the council realizes that a lower officer in rank performs

betters than his senior, he is moved over his senior whenever there is a vacancy. For instance, after the appointment of the present Imam, the *Mufassir*, Alhaji Uzamat Animasaun, who was not on the line of the principal officers, was brought in as *Ekerin* Imam in place of Sanusi Adeleke, the *Ekarun* and no one grudged him. The new *Ekerin* still performs his normal duty as the *Mufassir*.

At the inception of Imamship in Modakeke, the Ooni of Ile-Ife used to turban the appointed candidates in his Ile-Ife palace<sup>122</sup>. This tradition was changed when Shaykh Sanusi Ogunwumi, the sixth imam came on board. He felt that it was wrong for the Ooni, an idolater, to turban the Imam. Instead, he was turbaned by the Muslim community in the Central Mosque of the town. The action annoyed the Ooni who reported the matter to the then District Officer. (D.O.) of Ife division. The District Officer ruled that the Ooni had no right to turban the chief Imam of Modakeke since the Imam did not receive salaries from him.

However, the Chief Imam of Oshogbo has since the creation of Osun state, been performing the function of turbaning the Imam in his capacity as the Chairman of league of Imams and *Alfas* of the State.

#### 4.1.20. Ikire

At Ikire, there was no formal system in the appointment of Imam when the institution began. The first Chief Imam Mallam Ahmad a native of Oyo came

round to rescue<sup>124</sup> the inhabitants from the wars through prayers and other forms of spiritual means. The community therefore unanimously offered him the post since there was nobody who could compete with him. During his tenure, he structured the council of Imam on the basis of their level of Islamic knowledge.

When Mallam Ahmad died, it happened that the next to him, Mallam Sanusi, was away on a journey, so he could not lead the Janazah<sup>125</sup> prayers. Mallam Badamosi who was next to him in rank was therefore charged with the responsibility and was thereafter asked to act as the Chief Imam. When Mallam Sanusi returned and learnt about the situation, he contested Badamosi's selection as the substantive Imam and lost. His loss was on the ground that he did not perform Janazah prayer on the dead Imam, an action generally believed by most congregations to be part of the qualification for the post of Imam.

At this period, the council of scholars and the Oba met and agreed on having four principal officers in the council. They were *Mufassir*, *Mufti*, Otun Imam and the Chief Imam. The town itself was divided into two zones, the other would produce the Otup (Naib)<sup>126</sup>. This arrangement was agreed upon to ensure equal representation of the two major sections of the towns as well to ensure even spread in administrative position.

Though the arrangement appears representative and satisfying enough, members of the council always flouted it themselves. For example, when the

immediate past Imam, Abdul Kareem Badrudeen was indisposed and could not attend the Mosque, he delegated one Mallam S.O. Raji to act for him. Mallam Raji who happened to be the Imam's son-in-law acted in that capacity for three Fridays. When later the Imam became ill again, he sent for his own son, Mutallib Abdul Kareem, to act for him as Imam. The son performed the duty for close to two years.

The young man performed better as the Acting Chief Imam. He made some innovations into the system like using English, Arabic and Yoruba languages simultaneously in a sermon and taking a single topic for a sermon as against the earlier practice where the Imam would read a very old sermon, which might not be relevant to current happening<sup>127</sup>. The system got the acceptability of most members of the community particularly the youths who, because of the changes in the sermon, flocked the mosque on Fridays.

Seeing the new practice as a good development, Alhaji Ibrahim Inaolaji<sup>128</sup>, the Baba Adini of Irewole Local Government planned to improve on it. He therefore, after the death of the Imam, initiated a move that would ensure the appointment of a youth who would be an indigene of the town and would equally be literate in both Islamic and western systems of education. Since the late Imam was from Isale Popo section of the town, he identified two young University graduates of Islamic Studies from Oke Ada section and subjected the two to rigorous interview<sup>129</sup>. The better of the two, Alhaji Mansur Babmus was



penciled down for the post. Surprisingly, he was not supported by members of the council who saw this move as a ploy to oust them from the race.

The counter move was led by Mallam Hadiyatullah Solagbade<sup>130</sup> from *Isale Popo*. He had all along been planning to become the next Imam but did not know how to go about it, having come from the section of the late Imam. When the Baba Adini felt that he could not cope with the politics involved, he withdrew and a compromise candidate was agreed upon. Thus, Alhaji Sabukiyy Raji, the former *Mufti* was installed as the Chief Imam. The desire to inject new ideas that could further attract the youths into the fold was thus frustrated.

#### 4.1.21. Ikirun

The first Imam of Ikirun was Mallam Jibiril Oyeteju. He was converted to Islam by an Hausa Mallam called Ahmad, who also taught him Arabic language and the rudiments of Islam<sup>131</sup>. Mallam Ahmad did not have any child, but loved to have children around him. He therefore adopted Jibril Oyeteju among some of his compares that were close to him.

Oyeteju's son, Mustafa became the second Imam after the death of his father. Oba Oyewole's son, Musa, succeeded Mustafa to become the third Imam of the town and was himself succeeded by Abdu Rahman Mukhtar, who died in 1952 after spending 41 years as the Chief Imam<sup>132</sup>.

Thereafter, the community approved four posts of principal officers of the Mosque. They were the *Ajanasi*, the *Mufassir*, the *Naib Imam* and the Chief Imam in that order of hierarchy. In 1977, there was vacancy for the post of *Mufassir*, while the congregation led by the principal officers agreed to elevate Alfa Sanni Ojomu, having been the *Ajanasi* for some times and based on the hierarchical order, Oba Lawani Adeyemi<sup>133</sup> rejected their nominee and supported Alhaji Tijani Salahudeen instead. The two factions however failed to agree in spite of series of meetings on the issue. Each faction then went ahead to turban its candidate and the turbaning came up same day.

While the Oba's candidate was turbaned in the palace, the other was done in the Mosque. After the turbaning, the *Mufassir* was expected to show up in the Mosque to start his duty since the turbaning was fixed for Friday. The other candidate arrived at the Mosque earlier and had already taken up his job when the other person came in with the Oba much later. The Oba, seeing the other candidate already performing the functions of the *Mufassir*, was angry and left the Mosque immediately. He took the congregation to court for what he considered an affront on the royal authority but lost out<sup>134</sup>. Thus, Sanni Ojomu became the *Mufassir* and was later on recognized by the Oba.

#### 4.1.22. Ara

Ara is a small town in the Egbedore Local Government of Osun State. It is situated between Ejigbo and Ede towns. The first Imam there was one Alfa

Emilotoju, an indigene of Ejigbo who introduced Islam to Ara about 1920<sup>135</sup>. Succession to the position of the Chief Imam since inception was peaceful and had generated no problem until around 1965<sup>136</sup>. In this year, two members of the community sought to be appointed the Chief Imam of the town. They were Alfa Ibrahim Oyeyemi and Salahudeen Adefemi.

Because of his higher level of Islamic knowledge, Ibrahim Oyeyemi was favoured by the community for the post and was therefore appointed the Chief Imam but slated his turbaning for a later date at the Oba's palace. However, the *Alara*<sup>137</sup>, Oba Ilufoye, preferred Adefemi to the appointed person. He urged the council to ensure that his candidate was endorsed and presented to him. The confused council reported the matter to the Imams and other scholars of some neighbouring towns like Ejigbo, Ogbomoso, Osogbo and Ede.

These scholars decided to resolve the matter through a text to select the better candidate. They used a popular book called *Risala* to test the two contestants to determine the better candidate. While Alfa Ibrahim was able to read and explain the meanings of the book, Adefemi was unable to read it at all. Ibrahim was therefore, unanimously selected for the Imamship. Adefemi rejected the verdict and vowed to go ahead with the royal backing of the Oba, he was sure of being turbanned<sup>138</sup>.

A ballot was organized by the invited scholars, but Adefemi was unlucky and not picked. Yet he and the Oba refused to accept the verdict, despite the

Oba's conviction of the results of the tests. The Muslim community went ahead to turban Ibrahim as the Chief Imam in the Oba's palace. The Oba who filled the palace at the time of the ceremony, came back later to turban Adefemi, his candidate, as the second Chief Imam in the same Mosque<sup>139</sup>.

The action of the Oba was challenged in a court at Osogbo. While the court ruled in favour of Imam Ibrahim, it banned<sup>140</sup> Adefemi from parading himself as the Chief Imam of Ara. It however recognized his right to worship in the Mosque as a member of the community.

Instead of accepting the court's verdict in the spirit of Islam and brotherhood, Adefemi's groups were bent on making their man a Chief Imam. They therefore sought refuge with the Ahmadiyyah *Jama'ah* in Ibadan and were warmly accepted into the fold. The *Jama'ah* later established a branch at Ara and made Adefemi its Imam.

Imam Ibrahim thereafter settled down and reorganized the council of Imam. Under the arrangement, there was the *Naib Imam*, the *Mufassir* and the *Ajanasi*. The four including the Chief Imam, were made the principal officers and succession would henceforth be in the order of that arrangement.

In 1994, however, there was another problem in the council. The *Mufassir*, Alhaji Abdul Rahman Akorede alleged that there was fraud in the Mosque. He accused the Chief Imam of diverting the Mosque funds to his personal use. He also accused him of refusing, to allow renovation of the



Mosque so that he could enjoy the Mosque's money. The problem further polarized the community into two factions. When the problem deepened, Abdul Rahman's faction left the community in protest to join the Ansar-ud-Deen society in Osogbo. The society accepted the group and established a branch for it at Ara where their leader, Alhaji Abdul Rahman was made the Chief Imam.

The officials at NACOMYO<sup>141</sup> in Osun State saw this as an ugly development in the town and therefore ventured to settle it. All their efforts however proved abortive. The small town of Ara now has three different Jumat Mosques.

#### 4.1.23. Appointment of Imams Among the Islamic Religious Societies

The system of appointing Imams among the Islamic societies and organizations differs from the traditional ones. This is so because societies were established by their founders to further the cause of Islam by injecting new ideas that could match the complexity of the contemporary society.

These societies, right from the inception, made constitutions, which spell out their operations including the appointment of Imams. In the Ansar-ud-Deen<sup>142</sup> Society of Nigeria for example, it is for the purpose of convenience, divided into two departments of religion and administration. As there is the National President as the Chief Executive, so also there is the National missionary who, though is subordinate to the National President, has his own area of operation to a large extent.

The Society's constitution guides all its activities, the appointment of the missionary (*al-Imam*) not an exception. There is Committee in consultation with the National Council of missionary. The council comprises all the state missionaries, two representatives from each of the state council of missionary and a member recommended by the council of missionary and ratified by the National Executive Council serving as the Chairman<sup>143</sup>.

When a vacancy for the position of missionary falls, the council meets and selects someone from among them, based on the provisions of Islamic law<sup>144</sup>. Thereafter, the candidate is presented to the National Executive Committee for ratification. The appointed missionary would function in acting capacity for at least a year before he is confirmed.

A State missionary is selected by the zonal missionaries in that state and two branch missionaries from each zone. Thereafter, the name of the person so selected is sent to the state council of missionaries for ratification and subsequent presentation to the National Executive council through the National missionary. The same process is applicable in the appointment of missionaries for divisions and branches.

The system of appointing Imam in Nawair-ud-Deen society is, in some respects, similar to that of Ansar-ud-Deen. Like Ansar-ud-Deen, the society has both administrative and spiritual arms. Selection of candidates for the position

of Chief Imams at all levels is vested in the council of Imams and to be ratified by the Executive<sup>145</sup>.

There is however, no serious rules guiding the appointment of Imam. When a person is identified as being capable of leading the community in terms of knowledge, ability to deliver and his character is not in doubt, he is selected as the Imam<sup>146</sup>.

For example, when in 1963, the Ibadan branch was to appoint its Chief Imam, a member of the mission board, Alhaji Shaykh Oloriaje suggested trial sermons for all the members to facilitate the selection. Through that, Alhaji Abdul Rahman, the oldest among them emerged as the first Chief Imam. His deputy, Alhaji Oloriaje succeeded him as the Chief Imam when he died in 1965.

In *Zumratul Mumin* society, <sup>147</sup> the founder, Shakyh Bamidele Abdul Salam was the first Imam and the leader. Nobody could contest Imamship with him since the society was his baby and other members only came to join him. He also had knowledge of Arabic and Islam more than the others. He however had a deputy who, in his absence, led members in *Salat* and in other activities of the office of the Imam.

The first deputy was Shaykh Hamzat Ipamurin, an Ijebu man who had settled in Ibadan. When in 1954, Shaykh Ipamurin finally left for his home town, Shaykh Hamzat Akilapa became the deputy. He served as the deputy

until the demise of the founder in 1969. He was installed as the second Chief Imam of the Society in the same year and led it for six years <sup>148</sup>.

In 1975, Shaykh Ahmad Bamidele, the founder's son, who had been a student in a Qur'anic school in Ilorin returned home after his graduation. A faction of the movement thought it proper that he should succeed his father as the *Khalifah*, while the other faction opposed the move on the ground that since there was already an appointed Imam, it would be improper to remove him for no offence committed. There was confusion and eventually the faction loyal to the founder's son, succeeded in removing the Imam and installed their candidate. This led to the break of the movement into two. While the main group retained the original name, Akilapa's group named its new group *Anwarul-Mumin* and continues as its Chief Imam till now<sup>149</sup>.

It should be noted that Bamidele's movement has, since inception, got no Central Mosque of its own. The Imam operates on a local mosque (*Ratibi*) basis. All members join the Hausa Mosque at Sabo quarters every Friday for *Jummat* service. On the contrary, the *Anwarul-Mumin*, after its formation, established a Central Mosque at its Idikan headquarters in Ibadan.

The disagreement between the two fractions was so tense that women married to members of the other faction before the division was divorced. A directive was made by one of the two factions that its members must avoid discussions with members of the other faction as it might amount to (*Kufr*)



disbelief and that whoever was found guilty of it, would have to mandatorily perform ritual bath to re-enter Islam. It was said that the police was used to embarrass one another during the feuding years<sup>150</sup>.

In 1990, however, Shaykh Ahmad, the leader of Zumratul Mumin initiated a move for settlement. Representatives of each faction met at Ilorin where the matter was amicably resolved. While the two movements were allowed to function independently, they were urged to invite each other to programmes and inter personal relationship was restored<sup>151</sup>.

In *Asalatu Irorun Oluwaloni* of Nigeria, a society founded in 1984, the first Imam, Alhaji Abdul Ganiy Abubakri was a foundation member. He therefore served as the pioneer Imam. About two years later, when the society became well grounded, six highly rates Islamic scholars were invited to join as Imams one of them, Alhaji Abdul<sup>152</sup> Ganiy Salahuddeen was made the Chief Imam The seven Imams thus began to lead the Jumat services at the Headquarters of the society on rotational basis. When later a branch of the Mosque was established at Owode Estate, Estate, Apata, Ibadan, two of the seven were again rostered to lead the services there, also on rotation<sup>153</sup>.

There were other scholars appointed as *Ratibi* Imams in the same Mosque. They take care of daily obligatory Salawat and of course ad-Dhikr. Among them were Imams Abdul Wahab Raji, Ismail Oloyede and Sulaiman Adebayo when a branch of the mosque was put up at New Gbagi Area of

Ibadan, both Raji and Oloyede were upgraded to Jami' Imams and were posted to operate there.

The society has no policy for strict paper qualification for the appointment of the Imam. It appoints sound scholars with at least minimum qualification and good character that could lift the image of the society spiritually. That is why we have among those appointed graduates of traditional Qu'aranic Schools like the pioneer Imam of the Soccity and the Chief Imam of the Ejigbo Branch of the society. Others are graduated of foreign and home based Universities.

At Nasrudeen society of Nigeria, the first Chief Imam was one Alhaji Opeloyeru. He was an Arabic teacher in one of the primary schools in Ibadan. He was actually not a member of the society, he was looked for by one Alhaji Omotoso, a very active member when the society needed one<sup>154</sup>.

The Imam was, in 1995, accused of some wrongdoings for which he was suspended. To replace him, one Alhaji Hamid Abdullah Basunu, a graduate of Islamic theology was appointed. The suspension of the first Imam and the appointment of the successor however caused ill-feelings among members, which degenerated into a crisis. The matter got to the hearing of the chief Imam of Ibadan who had to intervene. He invited the two Imams and resolved the matter. He set aside the suspension and ordered<sup>155</sup> that the two perform the jumat service on rotation. Peace brokered by the Chief Imam of Ibadan could

not endure as there were intermittent fracas in the Mosque. With the involvement of the police, it appeared both feuding parties have accepted the appointment of Hamid Basunu, since the suspended Imam has ceased to attend the Mosque<sup>156</sup>.

#### 4.1.24. Appointment of Imams in Private Mosques

There are two categories of Mosques. There are those built outside. Some are even farther away from the residence of their owners. Among them are *Ratibi* and *Jum'ah* Mosques. Imams of such *Ratibi* Mosques are usually the Mallams appointed by wealthy people to teach their children the Qur'an.

A typical example of a *Ratibi* Mosque is one situated at Iwo Road, built by one Alhaji Bashir Akinola and named: *Thaqaful Islamiyyah* Mosque. The Mosque was built in 1982<sup>157</sup> on one of the three plots of land belonging to Alhaji Akinola. It was fenced out of the other plots of land apparently to hide its owner's identity. Before its construction, there was need for a place of worship in the area and in order to create a sense of joint ownership, other people around were encouraged to contribute to its construction. Some people contributed cement blocks while others joined in its supervision.

The only Imam appointed so far is Alhaji Arasi<sup>158</sup>. He has little knowledge of Islam but has the charisma to move the congregation around for Islamic propagation. He is also a landlord in the area and he played a major role in the

establishment of the Mosque there. Because of his inability to improve on his knowledge of Islam, some two younger men who are fairly knowledgeable were selected to assist the Imam. They are made to deliver lectures at some intervals and teach the children of the congregation of the entry rudimentary aspects of Islam at weekends. They are unlike the Imam literate in Western education.

Some privately owned Jum'at Mosques are going to be examined, among them is Abdul Azeez Arisekola Central Mosque, located in Ibadan – Iwo Road and occupying a large parcel of land. The Mosque was completed in 1998 and was commissioned for use in the same year<sup>159</sup>.

Three graduates of Arabic and Islamic studies were appointed as Imams out of the twelve candidates that had applied for the mosque's job. To recruit the Imams, a paid advertisement was placed in a national daily to which candidates responded. The twelve short-listed candidates were subjected to trial sermons for about nine months; three of them were thereafter finally selected for oral interview and were finally appointed.

The three comprise one Chief Imam and the other two are Imams. The Chief Imam, Alhaji Zakariya Abdul Qadri has as qualification, a Bachelor of Arts as well a Master of Arts. The other two are holders of Bachelor of Arts from reputable Arab universities<sup>160</sup>.

The three do rotate among themselves the leading of congregation in Salat, both for the five daily obligatory ones and the Jumat. The three also



teach Adult Arabic students in the evenings. There are other Mallams appointed to assist the Imams in the Mosque. They are all appointed on a permanent basis and are placed on salaries<sup>161</sup> by the owner of the Mosque Alhaji Arisekola Alao.

In his own case, Alhaji Rasheed Adesokan<sup>162</sup> caused about ten mosques to be built. These mosques serve the congregation in both daily obligatory and Jum'at Salawat. The intention of the owner is to meet the need of the people in particular environment and they are mostly located in government institutions<sup>163</sup>. Appointment of Imams into these Mosques are, as a policy, left to the discretion of the congregation. With the exception of one of the mosques, where he employed the services of a person as the mosque worker, administration of the others are left in the hands of those for whom the mosque are built.

There is an example of a Central Mosque built by a Mallam himself. It is *Ajisebiyawo* Central Mosque on the Osogbo – Ilobu road<sup>164</sup>. the mosque was built in 1989, and was being maintained by him until he died in 1997.

At the Adejo Central Mosque Ibadan the first Imam appointed after its completion in 1998 was Alhaji Abdul Wahid Rufai. He resigned after conducting two Jum'at services. The owner employed Alhaji Rufai because of his vast knowledge in both Islam and western education. He was succeeded by his deputy, Alhaji Salahdeen Busari who holds a Masters degree in Islamic studies.

In his case, Alhaji Adejo looked for those that fit his aspiration in terms of knowledge and character<sup>166</sup>.

There are two Central Mosques built by Alhaji W.O. Lawal <sup>166</sup>. One is located at Oke-Ado and another at Ring Road, Ibadan. The two mosques have all the required conveniences including the Imam's quarters.

In selecting Imams for the two mosques, the founder usually contacted the proprietor of the Arabic Institute of Nigeria, Elekuro, Ibadan, Shaykh Murtada Abdus-Salam. The Shaykh used to send him one of the teachers of the school and the Imam of the school. The two are given some token as remuneration in addition to their normal salaries in their place of work at Arabic Institute. While both Arisekola and Adejo's mosques took western education into consideration in their appointment of the Imams, W.O. Lawal only concentrates on sound knowledge of Arabic as the qualification.

#### 4.1.25. Imams of Institutions

Here, we are going to examine the modalities adopted by each of the institutions covered in appointing or selecting its Chief Imam. Also considered along with this are research centres and other corporate bodies that have Mosques.

In the institution of learning, appointment of Imam is determined by the community where it exists. In some cases, Muslim students do select the most

learned among them to lead as Imam. At the University of Ibadan, the need to have Imam was not felt until 1962 when a Mosque was built for the Muslims by the authority<sup>167</sup>. Hitherto, the few Muslims, mostly the low-level workers are performing *Salawat* individual. There were very few Muslim staffers and students<sup>168</sup>.

The first Imam was Alhaji Jimoh who worked as a steward at the Mellanby Hall of the university. He held the position up till 1966/67 when the Muslim Students chose their own Imam. To avoid friction, there was an agreement that while the student Imam would lead during the session; the workers' Imam would take over during the holidays. In 1967/68 academic session, however, there was a clash between the workers and the students on who should lead. The matter was referred to the Department of Arabic and Islamic studies of the institution for expert advice. The result was the establishment of the Muslim Community and appointment of a staff of the department as the Chief Imam<sup>169</sup>.

Dr. Ismail Balogun (later Professor) emerged as both the Chairman and the Chief Imam of the Community and was assisted by the then Imam of Abadina Mosque, while Alhaji Adegbite, a non academic staff served as the vice Chairman. A student representative was made to interpret the sermons (which were conducted in English) to Yoruba language.

In 1974, when the need to extend the Mosque became inevitable, a message was sent to Saudi Arabian Government for financial help. In response, a delegation was dispatched to visit the Community and assess the situation. The delegation with dismay discovered, on their arrival, that the Chief Imam was a member of Ahmadiyyah movement. They took exception to it and even passed a *fatwah*<sup>170</sup> that the congregation had no value for all the *Salawat* offered behind him. This case was discussed at the committee level of the community and Dr. Balogun had to resign as the Chief Imam. Other members of Ahmadiyyah movement in the congregation like Dr. F.B.A. Giwa (later Professor of Physics) and the then University deputy Librarian, Mr. Mahmud ceased to attend the mosque any longer<sup>171</sup>.

This development led the community to select another Chairman/Chief Imam in person of Dr. (later Professor) Musa Abdul of the same department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Musa Abdul organized the community such that a second year student of Arabic and Islamic Studies who possessed qualities of an Imam would be selected as the Chief Imam. Such Imam would only serve for one academic session when another one would take over<sup>172</sup>.

This arrangement was in operation until sometime in 1986 when the sermons delivered by these students' Imams seemed to lack the required qualities. It was then decided that staff of the department to henceforth made the Chief Imam<sup>173</sup>.



The first Imam in the reorganized system was Dr. (later Professor) D.O.S. Noibi. He had as his deputies, Dr. (later professor) W.O.A. Nasiru and Dr. D.A.A. Tijani of the same department. In 1990, Professor Noibi left for London on sabbatical leave. Nasiru acted as the Imam for some time before he handed the Imamship over to the second deputy. Dr. Tijani acted till 1996 when he was made the substantive Chief Imam after Noibi had retired voluntarily from the services of the University<sup>174</sup>. Tijani has since been the Chief Imam.

At the Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, the community had, for a long time, been operating without a Chief Imam. The absence of a mosque structure and experts to direct its affairs were responsible for delay in the proper take off of the Muslim community at the Obafemi Awolowo University.

In about 1980, the Muslim Students' Society of the University appointed one Mr. Aliu Badmus, an economic student who had a fairly good grounding of Arabic and Islamic studies as its *ratibi* Imam. Aliu was thus serving as the Imam at Fajuyi Hall of residence where there was a fairly large space being used as the mosque<sup>175</sup>. When later the community began the construction of its Mosque, Aliu Badmus was up graded as the Chief Imam of the University even though he was still a student. After the graduation of Aliu Badmus in 1981 Mr. Sanusi Abubakr, a medical student was discovered and was appointed to succeed Badmus as the University Imam. Because the community enjoyed his services, he was retained after graduation and got employed with the University<sup>176</sup>. He is still the Chief Imam.

At the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, (IITA) Ibadan, a site was created for the building of mosque for the Muslim staff. The organization, though multinational, had to build the mosque for its Muslim community<sup>177</sup>. After the completion, the authority left its administration into the hands of the community. Initially when they started, Mr. Hamzat was selected as the Imam while Mr. Ademola Waheed, another staffer of the institute conducted the sermon. When in 1990, the Imam retired, Mr. Abdul Waheed became the Chief Imam.

At the Cocoa research Institute of Nigeria, the Muslim community was not formed there until 1999 since its inception in 1964<sup>178</sup>. Its formation was facilitated by some eight newly employed staffers who were very active member of the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria in their university days.

The authorities of the institute approved the use of an abandoned structure temporarily for mosque and that place has since accommodated the community weekly Jumat service. Alhaji Abdul Wahab, an agric field Assistant was chosen as the Chief Imam and he is being assisted by a principal health officer, Alhaji Buhari.

At the university College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, the need to have an Imam arose in 1968 after the few members of the Muslim community had been granted permission to offer *Salawat* by the then Governor of the hospital, Chief S.A. Ladehinde. The place allocated to them was an open space near the

Governor's residence. The spokesman of the Muslim delegation to the Government, Alhaji Akib Alarape, the then Chief Tailor was appointed the Chief Imam.

Imam Alarape is still the Chief Imam of the hospital. In the year 2001 however, he felt that he was becoming too old to continue with the Imamship, he therefore charged the executive members of the community to search for his successor. The executive, under the Chairmanship of Alhaji Ishaq Omotoso, a medical lab practitioner, beamed its search light among the staff or the institution. All the six nominated staffer were discovered not qualified. The committee then looked outside the Hospital and selected, Alfa Ma'mum Lawal a post graduate student, of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan. He has since been conducting the Friday Khutbah while the ageing Imam only leads the Salat<sup>179</sup>.

#### **4.1.26 Appointment of the Imams of Foreign-based Organization**

There are, in the coverage area, some foreign based Islamic organization whose main objective it is, to build mosque and appoint Imams to man them. They are *Al-Haramain* Islamic foundation and *Jamiyyatud-Da'watil-Islamiyyah fi Nigeriaya*.

Al- Haramain is an international organization based in Saudi Arabia. It is owned by some individuals who have decided to use their wealth among other things, to establish mosques where needed. The organization has its Nigeria's

headquarters in Ibadan, Oyo State. It has built about twenty three Mosques since 1995 when it was established in Nigeria<sup>180</sup>.

To determine where to build a Mosque, the needy community would approach the organization after which an inspection would be made by its staff (both foreign and local). When the project is approved, money is made available for its construction. Part of the agreement with the community is the provision of Imam by the foundation. Such Imams are usually the graduates of *Al-Haramain* Higher Institute for Da'wah, Bashorun, Ibadan. The Imams so appointed are to lead all Salawat there, including the two eids where possible. They are permanent workers of the foundation and enjoy salaries<sup>181</sup>.

The foundation encounters problems with two of its host communities. One at Ogbomoso and the other at Eleta Academy in Ibadan<sup>182</sup>. The two communities are not happy that the foundation sets their Imams aside and takes over their congregation.

The other one, *Jamiyyatud-Da'wah* also has its root in Saudi Arabia. Like *Haramain*, it is owned by individual wealthy Saudis and has almost the same objectives with *Haramain*. Unlike *Al haramain*, which is headed by a native of Iwo in Osun State by name Ibrahim Abdul Baki. That may have accounted for making Osogbo, Osun State capital its headquarters. 95 Mosques have been built by the body since its inception seven years ago<sup>183</sup>. In the appointment of Imams, the organization does not impose anybody as Imam on the host



community. Where there is an existing Imam, he is allowed to continue his duties. But where there has not been any, the organization provides and pays for his services. There are however training programmes for Imams of mosques built by these organizations. Such programmes like seminars are organized at some intervals of six to twelve months.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Abdul. M.O. A., *The Classical Caliphate*, (Lagos, I.P.B. 1988), P. 137.
2. What is meant by community here, is the general community of the Muslims being headed by the local Mallams. They are those whose forefathers accepted Islam from those who brought it.
3. El-Masri, F.H. "Islam in Ibadan" in P.C. Lloyd et al (eds). *The city of Ibadan*, (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 257.
4. *Ibid* for example, the 7<sup>th</sup> Imam was the son of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Imam, Muhammad Lawal Qifu was son of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Imam, Ali b. Muhammad was grandson of the 4<sup>th</sup> Imam.
5. *Ibid*. p. 252
6. *Ibid*. p. 251
7. M.O. Abdur Rahmon "A Thematic and stylistic study of Arabic Poetry in Ibadan (1876-1976)". An unpublished Ph.D. Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, p. 30.
8. *Ibid* p. 31
9. Mogajis are sons of the departed Imams. They are members of the Imam in council. As vacancy exists, they move up the ladder till they reach (Mogaji Agba) Chief Mogaji and then becomes the Chief Imam.
10. El-Masr, op.cit.

11. Ibid.
12. Imam Sadiq Folorunso (Baba Popo) was the 13<sup>th</sup> Chief Imam of Ibadan. He served between 1982 and 1988.
13. Oral Interview with the current Chief Imam of Ibadan, Shaykh Baosari Suara Haruna 77 on 30/05/2000. He is a grandson of the 4<sup>th</sup> Imam.
14. Alfa Mudaththir was the acting Mufti at the time. The real Mufti was Alfa Sanusi Alaka who the had eye problem.
15. When Alfa Abdul Salam was nominated he was challenged by Alfa Abdul Hadi Inakoju, the Mogaji Agba and who, by the arrangement was the next person. The committee comprising among others, the Aare Musulumi opined that since he was handed over to by the former Imam, and had performed creditably, he had to be appointed.
16. Oral Interview with Alhaji Baosari Suara Haruna op.cit.
17. Interview with the Acting Mufti of Ibadan, and the secretary to the Imam in council, Alfa Yushau Motala 28/07/2000, on
18. Ibid
19. Alhaji Murtadha Abdul Salam is the founder of Ma'had al-Arabi, Ibadan. He is respected by the 'Ulama' of Ibadan. He was invited to guide the meeting on the position of Islam on the issue.

20. The three contending candidates had banked on lobbying, but when they were all said to be found not qualified, their hopes were dashed.
21. The Aare Musulumi of Yorubaland, Alhaji Arisekola Aalo is by virtue of being the president of all the Muslim Yoruba title holders, the head of them all. He is living up to that responsibility and his opinion is usually respected among all the Yoruba.
22. H.A. Mawandi, Al-Ahkamu-al 0 Sultaniyyah; (Bairut, Darul-Kutubul-'ilmiyyah 450H) p.7.
23. Oral interview with Alhaji Ishaq Kunle Sanni (46), at his Orogun residence on 24/6/2002.
24. The installation ceremony took place on 22/09/1995 at Mapo Hall, Ibadan. See programme of the Turbaning Ceremony by the Ibadan Muslim Community.
25. The three Muslim leaders joined are, by virtue of their position, the signatories to the appointment of Chief Imam of Ibadan.
26. Oral Interview with Alhaji Sheu Mogaji (74), on 01/06/2000, at Oyo. Alhaji Mogaji is the deputy Chief Imam of Oyo He is of Parakoyi's Compound
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.



29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid. Alhaji Mogaji's father was the then Assistant Imam
32. The then Parakoyi Adini did not want to be seen as belonging to any of the two groups. His position caused him loss of seven Jum'at service.
33. This practice is common in most Yoruba towns. It does not matter whether the Oba is a Muslim or not. The reason may have been the royal influence in the emergence of Islam in the region.
34. Oral Interview with Chief Imam of Ogbomoso, Alhaji Hamzah Ahmad Alawiye, (110), on 27/07/2000.
35. Ibid.
36. There was no Jum'at Mosque before his arrival. The community was performing only the five daily *Salawat* in congregation. On Fridays, they were observing dhuhr prayers.
37. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Ogbomoso op.cit,
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.

41. Oral interview with Shaykh Abdur-RAsheem Hamzah, Proprietor of Arabic and Islamic Training Centre, Iseyin on 24/9/2001.
42. A.A. Al, Iluri, *Nasimus-Saba fi akharil-Islam Wa'Ulama' Yaruba*, p. 132.
43. Interview with Abdur- Raheem Hamzah op. cit.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Oral Interview with the current Mufasir of Okeho, Alhaji Amusat Mobolaji Suraqat (46), the Mufassir (Exeget) of Igbanna on 25/02/2001.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Oral Interview with the current Mufassir of Okeho, Alhaji Amusat Ariyo, (84), on 19/4/2002.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.

54. Oral interview with the Acting Imam of a faction of Igboho Muslim Community Igboho, Alhaji Aliu Bello (80), on 26/07/2000.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Oral interview with the Chairman of the Muslim Community of Igboho, Alhaji Adebayo Azeez (65), on 26/7/2000.
58. Oral Interview with Alfa Yushau Motala op.cit.
59. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Igbeti, Alhaji Abubakr Yusuf, (62), on 26/7/2000.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid. He however could not locate the judgement. He thought it might be taken away by one of his children.
64. Ibid.
65. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Igbo-Ora, Alhaji Ibrahim Abbas (46), on 2/3/2002.
66. Ibid.

67. Oral interview with the Chief Imam of Eruwa, Alhaji Ya'qub Adesina (68), on 18/09/2001.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Oral interview with the Chief Imam of Lanlate, Alhaji Miftah Ajao Shittu (87), on 17/9/2001.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Oral interview with the Chief Imam of Nurudeen society, Alhaji Yunus Babatunde (90), on 17/9/2000. He was Olori Omo Kewu of the Central Mosque of the town. He later decamped to become Nurudeen Society's Imam when he could no longer cope with the Central Mosque Imam.
78. Ibid.
79. Oral Interview with Alhaji Hasan Bolaji Abdul-Salam (45), he is the principal of the Institution of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Idere. He



is one of the leaders of the Muslims youths of the town who brokered peace among the elders.

80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Oral Interview with Shaykh Muhihud-Din (85), the Parakoyi Adimi of Igangan on 20/9/2001.
88. Ibid.
89. A.F.K. Makinde, "A Study of the life and Arabic Works of Alhaji Ashiru Ireowole Uthman of Osogbo", an Unpublished Long Essay submitted to the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan.
90. Ibid.
91. Oral Interview with Aare Musulumi of Osogbo, Alhaji A.S. Kolapo, (94), on 24/8/2001.

92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Oba Salawu Aminu was the Olubadan who reigned between 1965 and 1971. He was a devout Muslim and the second Olubadan so far who did not use the traditional beaded crown. He instead, used the Mekkah cap for official outings.
95. Oral interview with Alhaji A.S. Kolapo op.cit.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Oral interview with Alhaji A.F.K. Makinde, Secretary to the National Council of Muslim Youths Organizations in Osun State on 25/08/2001.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Iwo, Shaykh Murana Imoru (99), on 28/07/2000.
103. Ibid.
104. T.K. Hamzat, "Imamship Institution in Iwo Central Mosque", A Long Essay, University of Ilorin, p. 32.

105. Oral Interview with Imam Murana Imoru Op. cit. Alhaji Muhalli Amin Arabic Institution, Iwo, second in rank only to Markaz Shabbabul Islam, Iwo.
106. A. Adetokunbo, "Thirty Years of Imamship Dispute in Ile-Ife", A Long Essay in the Oyo State College of Education, Ila Orangun, 1982 p. 19.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Oral interview with Dr. D.A.A. Tijani (58), a native of Ede and the Chief Imam of the University of Ibadan Mosque. He is a grandson of the first Imam of Ede.
110. G.S. Adejumo, "Influence of Islam in Ede", M.A. Project, University of Ibadan, 1995, p. 11
111. Interview with Dr. D.A.A. Tijani op.cit
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. M.O. Adeleye, "The spread of Islam in Ijesaland (1860-1968)", an unpublished ph.D. These, university of Ibadan, 1988. P. 50.
116. Ibid.

117. Oral interview with Makinde op.cit.
118. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Ilesa, Alhaji Abdul Rahman Akorede (72), on 30/07/2000.
119. Ibid.
120. Oral interview with the Chief Imam of Modakeke, Alhaji Abdul Kareem Oladipupo (82), on 10/03/2002.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. S.K.A Oyesomi, *Iwe Itan bii Islam se de Ikire*, (Salla Printing Works, Ibadan, 1963), p.6.
125. Ibid.
126. Interview with one Alhaji Badmus Mansur (35), one of the University graduates of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the town.
127. Hitherto, Successive Imams had been using an old fashioned Khutbah which was passed from one Imam to his successor. It was written in Arabic Language, read in Arabic Language without its meaning explained. So, large percentage of the congregation would not get any message.
128. Interview with Alhaji Badmus Mansur op. cit.



129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Oral Interview with Alhaji A.G.A Salahudeen, on 16/11/2000. A native of Ikirun and of the first set of students of Shaykh Adam Al-Iluri. Infact the Markaz was handed over to him when the Shaykh was about to die.
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Interview with Alhaji Abdul Rahman Akorede (67), on 29/7/2000. He was the *Mufassir* of the town before he left for Ansarud-Deen Society and became its Chief Imam.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Ara, Alhaji Najimudeen Abdul Salam Akewula-(90), on29/7/2000.
139. Interview with Akorede op.cit
140. Ibid.
141. Oral Interview with Makinde op.cit

142. 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1923 as the date of the establishment of Ansarudeen is put on the society's logo and it always appears on the cover page of all the society's publications e.g. the constitution of the society and the book on the order of service.
143. AsSarud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Constitution, Rules and Regulations. Article 13.
144. Among the qualities they usually look for are level of knowledge of Islam, rendition level, character, ability to carry the congregation along and of course age.
145. Oral interview with Chief Missioner of Nawairud-Deen in Oyo State, Shaykh Shayau Oloriaje (75), on 24/8/2001.
146. Ibid.
147. Zumratul Mumin Soceity is generally known as Bamidele Society nicknamed after its founder who died in 1969.
148. Oral Interview with Alhaji Abdul Hadi Akilapa (58), on 23/11/2000. Alhaji Akilapa is currently the Chief Imam of Bodija Market Central Mosque
149. His father, Shaykh Hamzat Akilapa is the head and the Chief Imam.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid.

152. Oral interview with Dr. K.K. Oloso (46), on 13/09/2000. Oloso has since the inception of the society, been one of the guest Imams of the society.
153. The Two rostered to lead as Imams there are Dr. K.K. Oloso and Alhaji Abdul Wahid Rufai, both academic staff of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan. However, A permanent Imam has recently been appointed and turbaned for the mosque. He is Alhaji Aliu Ibraheem.
154. Oral Interview with the current Chief Imam of Nasru-Deen society Popoyemoja, Ibadan, Alhaji Hamid Abdullah Basunu (36), on 28/8/2000. He is a grandson of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam of Ibadan and a member of the Muslims' pilgrim's Board of Oyo State.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
157. Oral Interview with Alhaji Bashir Akinola (55), owner of the Mosque on 18/01/2000. Alhaji Akinola is a permanent secretary in the Oyo State Civil Service.
158. Ibid.
159. See programme of events for official commissioning of Abdul Azeez Arisekola Central Mosque on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1998.
160. Interview with Oloso op. cit. Oloso is the Coordinator of the Mosque.

61. Ibid.
62. Alhaji Rasheed Adesokan is the Balogun Mumini of Yorubaland and the Baale of Bodija Estate in Ibadan. Interview with Alhaji Abdul Wahab Alwajud, a staff on 30/12/2001.
63. Ibid. He gave examples of such mosques as been located at command secondary school, Bode Igbo, Apata, Ibadan, Oyo State College of Education, Oyo The polytechnic Ibadan College of Education, Oyo, The polytechnic Ibadan among the mosque.
64. The mosque was established in 1989 by Alhaji Haroon Abdul Rasheem Ajisebiyawo. Oral Interview with Makinde op.cit.
65. Oral interview with the Chief imam of Adejo Central Mosque, Alhaji Salahudeen Busair (52) on 21/8/2000.
66. Oral interview with Alhaji W.O. Lawal the owner of the Mosques, on 25/8/2000.
67. Oral Interview with Alhaji Soliu Adenijo (70), on 26/9/2000. Alhaji Adenijo was a Staff of the University since 1950s. He worked in the Works and Maintenance Department and therefore had the privilege of having information about the mosque.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.



170. Fatwa is in Islam, a formal legal opinion given by a Mufti. See Cowan, J.M. Arabic-English Dictionary. The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic.
171. Interview with Adanijo Op.cit
172. Ibid.
173. Ibid.
174. Interview with Tijani op.cit.
175. Interview with the Chief Imam of the Obafemi Awolowo University Dr. Abubakr Sanusi (45), on 7/3/2002.
176. Ibid.
177. Interview with Alfa Ademola Waheed (38), on 1/3/2001.
178. Interview with Mr. Abideen Olaiya (33), on 28/5/2001. Olaiya was of Nigeria while in the university and even while he was out of it.
179. Interview with the Chairman of the University College Hospital's (UCH) Muslim Community, Alhaji Ishaq Omotoso (45), on 1/4/2002.
180. Interview with the supervisor of Al-Haramain projects in Nigeria, Mr. Abu-Waali Imran (38), on 3/6/2002. Abu Waali is an Algerian.
181. Ibid.
182. Interview with Al-Haramain Imam of the Society's Mosque, Eleta, Ibadan, Taofiq Abdul Ganiy (33), on 21/4/2000.

83. Alhaji Ibrahim Abdul Baki (38), when interviewed on 23/1/2002 admitted that this being a native Osun largely informed largely the choice of Osogbo as the headquarters.
84. Interview with Alfa Idris Adisa, 30, on 18/9/2000. Idris Adisa was one of the Qur'anic teachers in the organization for some years.
85. Ibid.
86. The council of Imams in each town or city do always retain just one Central Mosque. In case of need for more space as a result of increase in population, they prefer to extend the existing Mosque. That is not is a common feature in such mosque that worshippers out side the Mosque are more than those inside. Most times roads around the mosque is often closed for the period Jum'at Service because people would have stayed right on the road.
87. Interview with Alhaji Yushau Motala op.cit.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 AN APPRAISAL OF THE PRACTICE OF THE APPOINTMENT OF IMAMS IN OYO AND OSUN STATES VIZ A VIZ THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT

In this chapter, we intent to bring to fore the theological requirements for eligibility to the post of Imam. We also examine the level of compliance with the laid down rules by the appointing authorities in our coverage area.

#### 5.1 Categories of Imam Approved In Islam

There are, in Islam three categories of Imam approved to lead *salat* there is Imam for daily *salawat* (prayers). There is Imam for Jum'at<sup>1</sup> (Friday) *salat* and Imam for special *salawat*.

In mosques where only five daily *salawat* are observed, the congregation or the owner has the right to appoint whosoever he likes as Imam. However, an Imam appointed by the Sultan (ruler) is superior to others even if they are more versed and more popular. In case the Imam is away and there is no appointed person to

deputize for him, the owner of the congregation shall appoint somebody to act as the Imam for the period of his absence<sup>2</sup>.

In a situation where more than one Imam are appointed in a mosque, each of them should be given his schedule of operation to which he must stick. But where no roster is prepared for them, the first among them to come to mosque is more qualified to lead the congregation in *Salat* and others should not lead the congregation for the same *Salat* in the mosque. If however there is disagreement among the Imams on who to lead, the most knowledgeable among them, should be chosen or the congregation may choose for them<sup>3</sup>.

#### 5.2 The practice of Appointment in our Coverage Areas.

At the arrival of Islam into Yorubaland, it was the practice of the people to allow a person learned in the religion to lead as the Imam. Even where that was not variable, effort would be made to look for one from outside the locality. This, to a very reasonable level, helped to put the congregation on a very solid foundation and development. When however, these communities were to consolidate, various other developments and circumstances came



up to influence appointments or selections into the office of the Imam in these areas.

### 5.2.1 Struggle for Imamship by the Scholars

Against a popular saying in Islamic circle that one should be an Imam only if appointed, and one should struggle to be *mu'adhdhin* (Caller to prayer) even if prevented, Muslim scholars do struggle and even sometimes fight among themselves for the post of Imam. They even go to a ridiculous extent of using all available means to accomplish their mission.

At the early period of Islam in Yorubaland, most leaders refused to be made Imam, having realized the implication of the responsibilities attached to the office. They would rather look elsewhere for better candidates, regardless of his colour or tribal affiliation. Those already made Imam would even step aside on the availability of a more learned person. All they desired was honesty of purpose, unity of the community and its development.

However, from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it seemed the post of Imam became more attractive and more focused. It then

became a point of serious struggle by members of the council of Imams in particular perhaps due to the attached benefits<sup>4</sup>. In some towns, the laid down structure is always jettisoned and where no structure has been made, anybody can come up to claim entitlement to the post. In some instances, contestants even go to enlist the support of rich and influential people in the society to help actualize their ambition even where such people are non-Muslims<sup>5</sup>.

Many a contestant, it seems, does believe that it is a disgrace to him and his family if he dies without becoming the Imam of his area. This attitude of our scholars, to say the least, is very shameful and is abhorred by the religion itself. If anything, the position of Imam is the least one should struggle for. People should be persuaded to take up the post; after all, it is not part of the Islamic provision that being an Imam is a license to paradise.

### 5.2.2 Imamshp by Heredity

In some communities, the position of the Imam has become hereditary in just one family. Where this is practised, the reason

adduced has always been hinged on the the *Shariah's* provision which allows the nomination of a successor by the incumbent as a result of ill-health or other reasons of indisposition. The incumbent would just nominate a member of his family to succeed him. At Oyo for example, it is one family that has been presenting the successive Imams. The compound, Ajokidero, has recently just split into two, perhaps due to its large size. It is from these two that the chief Imam of Oyo emerges<sup>6</sup>.

In some towns, the system of having the chief Imam appointed from the same family is well established and solidified, so much that the compound has come to be addressed by the post. That is why we have Imam's compound in a place like Igbo Ora in the Ibarapa Division of Oyo State. This practice runs fowl of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The implication is that the best candidate for the post can only emerge from the particular family. Where this is not available, the community is forced to accept the mediocre in preference to a well-qualified person. This certainly is one of the causes of disaffection among members of Imam-in-council in many of our towns and cities.

In some areas like Ibadan, the post of Chief Imam of the city has been arranged between two officially recognized lines. These are Alfa and Mogaji lines. The Alfa line of the council is comprised of Islamic scholars of Ibadan descent who through their erudition and fame, are admitted into the council. Each would move up on seniority basis, to the topmost level of Alfa Agba (Mufti) before he can become the Chief Imam Wherever it is the turn of this line.

The Mogaji line comprises sons of the past Imams who, by right, could in future contest the Imamship. They may not be learned in Islam, but could move up the ladder till they reach Mogaji Agba (head of the Mogajis), when they can be appointed the Chief Imam whenever it is the turn of their line.

The arrangement is such that Imamship is rotated between *Alfa Agba and Mogaji Agba*<sup>7</sup>. This arrangement is also unIslamic and therefore wrong. It promotes mediocrity and thereby projects Islam and the Muslims in bad light. That is why some of the Imams lack focus and progressive ideas. The community is always at the receiving end, lacking purposeful leadership.



### 5.2.3 Influence of Traditional Rulers on the Appointment of Imam

The roles played by the palace in introducing and nurturing Islam in many of our coverage areas are notable. Based on these important and unique roles, most traditional rulers often assert their authorities and unduly constitute themselves into the custodians of the religion. Specifically, Islam got to places like Osogbo, Ede, Iwo and Ogbomoso through the influence of their Obas. In other places where it did not arrive there directly through them, it certainly enjoyed their full cooperation and support. Places like Ibadan, Ile-Ife, Ilesa, Modakeke, Saki, Igboho, Eruwa, Kisi and Igbeti fall into this category.

Because of the above stated facts, the Obas decided to select Imams for their communities notwithstanding their own religious affiliation. Most of them were (and still are) idol worshippers; yet, they believe that the selection of the Chief Imam falls in their jurisdiction. At Oyo town for example, the Alaafin does not only appoint the Chief Imam whenever there is a vacancy, he does so

when it pleases him<sup>8</sup>. There is always an acting Chief Imam for the period of vacancy who can never be made a substantive Imam no matter the level of his Islamic knowledge<sup>9</sup>.

In some towns, absence of the traditional ruler automatically prevents the appointment of the Imam whenever the post is vacant. At Iwo, for instance, for the period between 1985 when then 13<sup>th</sup> Imam died and 1991, when the 14<sup>th</sup> Imam was appointed, nobody could be appointed, simply because the Oluwo stool was vacant as a result of a protracted litigation by the contestants<sup>10</sup>.

The period saw the Muslim community of the town very disorganized and unprogressive because of the absence of the Imam whose authority it is, to lead and give direction to the *jama'ah*. The fault lies with the scholars who constitute the council of Imam for leaving their job undone. It is not in any Islamic provision or law that affairs of Islamic be determined or legislated upon by a non-Muslim no matter his status in the community. The leadership of the Muslim community is vested in the hands of Islamic scholars of the area.

Another area in which traditional rulers often usurp the role of Islamic scholars is the disruption of the hierarchy of the Imam-in-council. In 1995 for instance, the Ataoja of Osogbo effected the creation of two additional posts in the council against the wish of the scholars. The problem created by this action has, up till the present, not been solved. It is discovered that the two officers smuggled into the council i.e. (Ekerin Imam and Otun Naibi) could not pass the required test<sup>11</sup> to qualify them for membership of the council, hence, their resort to lobbying the Oba.

Around 1983, the then Oluwo of Iwo caused disaffection between two leading members of the Imam-in-council. He demoted the Otun (Deputy) Imam to Eketa (Assistant deputy Imam) and elevated the Eketa to Otun<sup>12</sup>. He did this to favour his candidate and to prepare him for Imamship at the next available appointment.

At Ikirun and Ara, attempts to install unqualified candidates as Imams of the two communities failed as the Muslims rose against the two Obas. At Ikirun, Oba Lawani Adeyemi, who could

not believe that the Muslim subjects could defy his order, when he wanted to impose Alhaji Tijani Salawudeen as the Chief Imam of the town, headed for a law court to challenge his opponents. He lost shamefully but later complied with the court ruling and accepted the leadership. Had the community allowed him to do his wish, he would have caused more damage to the community. The action of the council has proved that no one, however highly placed, should have overriding opinion above that of the *jama'ah* (congregation).

The case of Ara was a bit different in that, it was the community that took the Oba to court for unilaterally turbaning his own candidate against the wish of the community. The Muslim community won the case. Instead of setting down with the community, the Oba's candidate withdrew his membership of the mosque and joined another religious sect as their Imam.

#### **5.2.4 Tribalism and Nepotism in the appointment of Imam**

Some of the time, Imams and their councils do set aside the provisions governing the appointment of Imam and introduce



sentiments of tribal and family affiliation into the selection. A dispute at Araromi Central Mosque, Odo Ona, Ibadan over who would become the Imam between Alhaji Karimu Adekunle and Alhaji Sikiru Adegoke is a good example. Karimu Adekunle is a native of Ilorin and was supported by most Ilorin indigenes living in the area<sup>13</sup> even up to the law court. On the other hand, the Chief Imam of Ibadan and his council supported Alhaji Sikiru Adegoke apparently because of his Ibadan root even though the court's judgement favoured Adegoke.

At Arisekola central mosque, tribal setiment also reared its head in the final selection of the Imams. The quarrel was on the non-indigene applicant. The situation was saved by the owner of the mosque who, rather than drop the non-indigene as clamoured for, he increased the number of the Imams from two to three<sup>14</sup>. The situation was worse at the Oyo State Government House Mosque,, Ibadan. The mosque was inaugurated there in 1991 during the Military Regime. The then military Governor, Colonel (later Major General) Abdul Kareem Adisa, requested for a competent scholar to serve as the Imam. A lecturer of Arabic and Islamic studies was

nominated for the purpose. He thus became the pioneer Chief Imam of the Mosque. That was before the creation of Osun State.

When in 1992, the civilian Government of Kolapo Isola, an Ibadan man, came on board, a brother of the serving Deputy Chief Imam of Ibadan was lobbied to replace the incumbent Imam at the Government House Mosque on the premise that he was non-native<sup>15</sup>. The crude manner adopted in carrying out the exercise was most annoying and offensive. The Imam was informed of the change only when he was about to mount the pulpit for the jum'at sermon.

This attitude does not only portray the leadership of the Muslim community as being ignorant of the provisions of Islamic law on the appointment and removal of an Imam, it ridiculed the Muslims as lacking the required organizational expertise particularly when the Governor, the official resident of the Government House, where the mosque is situated, is a non-Muslim. House, where the mosque is situated, is a non-Muslim. The action was also capable of causing

disaffection among the Islamic scholars, which would adversely affect the future of Islam in the society.

#### **5.2.6 Leading the Janazah prayers on the dead Chief Imam as a qualification for Imamship**

One of the systems adopted by some Yoruba Muslim scholars to be qualified as the next Chief Imam is the struggle to lead *Janazah* prayer of the late holder of the office. The practice has become so rampant among Yoruba Islamic scholars that the Naib (deputy) or whoever is next to the Chief Imam would prefer to be around always. It is to ensure that he is around always. It is to ensure that he is around at the death of the Imam so that he can lead the funeral salat.

An example of this practice was at Ikire, where the first Imam, Shaykh Ahamd died and was to be buried, His Naib, (deputy) Sanusi, who was to succeed him, had traveled outside the town. His immediate junior in rank, Mallam Badamosi, had to take up the responsibility. He led their *janazah* and was consequently made the next Imam<sup>16</sup>. When the *naib* eventually came round, his plea to

be made Imam was rejected on the basis that he was not around to lead the *janazah* service.

A similar incident happened at Osogbo when shaykh onilewura and Shykh Salahudeen Ogodu struggled with each other to lead the *Salat Al-janazah* of the dead chief Imam, Alhaji Tijani Anisere. Shaykh ogodu succeeded in leading the service because he was the *naib* and was therefore made the next Imam.

The practice is not only unislamic, it also portrays the council of Imam of such communities as unserious and ignorant people. It creates discord and suspicion among members such that most Imams never trust their co-contestant. It may explain why many of them always refuse to leave their stations in order to prevent other people from leading the service in their absence. Where the journey is inevitable or the Imam is indisposed, he may nominate his son or his pupil to hold fort for him for the period, instead of his deputy. This is always done to avert a possible plot or game plan for his exit.



This practice is certainly unislamic as no Imam is allowed to nominate his son or relative to take over or at least act for him. Islam is a detribalized religion and should be taken as such. Muhammed (SAW) when once stick, did not delegate Imamship to Ali, his cousin, inspite of his high level of scholarship and administrative capability. He rather delegated the job to Abubakr<sup>17</sup> and he eventually became the first caliph after the death of the prophet.

### 5.3 Functions of Imams in our Coverage Areas

Typical of Yoruba Muslim, there is usually one central mosque in a town, headed by the chief Imam and supported by other office holders like the *Naib*, the *Mufassir*, the *Mogaji*, and the *Ajanasi*. These Officials, together with the Imam, form the council that runs the affairs of any mosque and administer the spiritual well-being of the Muslim commodity in a particular locality.

In an ideal Islamic situation, the duties of Imam-in-council should include activities like trading, marriage, divorce, inheritance

and paternity. We shall now examine the adequacy or otherwise of the Imams' activities in their areas of operation.

#### 5.3.1 Leading Salat Sessions

The primary job of the Imam and in fact the most valued one is leading the congregation in *salat*. While the *ratibi* Imam leads all the five daily compulsory *salawat*, the *jami'* Imam leads only jum'at services. Other duties of *jami'* Imam are leading the Salat al-Idayn – of al-Fitri and al Adha. He also leads salat al-janazah (funeral service), Nikah (marriage) service and Aqiqah (naming) service. Other ones are special prayers at occasion of house warming and commissioning of new mosques.

An assessment of sermons delivered at Jam'at and eid services shows that most Imams present sermons that are of low quality which do not reflect contemporary issues. Most of them deliver their sermons in Arabic language alone and such sermons are most of the time irrelevant to the community. The very common sermons used to by our Imams are those compiled several decades or even centuries ago and sub divided into fifty two weeks that

make a year<sup>18</sup>. These sermons when read, would not be translated into the language of the audience. Thus, the congregation is denied the required improvement in morality and spiritually.

However, the agitation by the congregation, mostly the youths, calling for the translation of the sermons into Yoruba language for some past years has yielded some dividends. The council of Imams in major towns of our coverage area has since adjusted their programme by allowing the *mufassir* (Exegete) to give some minutes' talks in the local language<sup>19</sup> before the sermon. This system has, to some extent, given relief to the congregation.

Meanwhile, the rigidity of our Imams on delivering sermon in Arabic and the low quality of the talk by the *Mufassir*, has led many Muslims, particularly the youth to abandon the traditional Mosque of the town to the so called "modern" one established by the Muslim organizations like Ansar-ud-deen, Ahmadyyah, Jamaatul-Islamiyyah and Yusrul Islam or University Central Mosque (where there is one). The sermons there delivered in English language and translated into Yoruba language to allow the entire audience

benefit from them. Where English language is not used, the sermon is conducted in Yoruba and punctuated with relevant Quranic references and quotations. Topics are chosen and well researched into before delivery.

On *Janazah* service, the job of performing funeral prayers of dead Muslims is generally a service owed by a Muslim to another<sup>20</sup>. The service can be led by anybody who has the knowledge. Our Imams and Alfas have unfortunately taken it as their major exclusive duty, which nobody else would perform. In some areas, whoever performs it without their express permission could be severely dealt with. Ironically, many members of the Muslim community have taken it as a pride and prestige to have the Chief Imam of his town perform *Salatal-al-Janazah* of his dead relation. In fact some people do give a will to the effect that the Chief Imam of his town or organization be invited to lead his funeral service whenever he dies<sup>21</sup>.

Until recently, the Imam used to collect donations at funeral prayers irrespective of age of the deceased. But when the peoples'



outcry became more frequent, the practice was put on hold. Instead, the family of the deceased is charged some amount as deposit before the service is conducted<sup>22</sup>. That does, not however, disturb the collection of money as *Sadaqah* on the 8<sup>th</sup> day Fidau prayers.

While it is not good enough to levy the family of the deceased for funeral service having lost a member, one sympathizes with our Mallams for not being catered for by the community to which they render service. On other social ceremonies like *aqiqah* (child naming) *nikah* (marriage) and house warning, it is observed that our Mallams concentrate more on supplication than sermon, which the people really need.

This being so since these Mallams do not have any wage, salary or allowance to depend upon. They consider such occasion as an opportunity to collect as much as possible and this can only be done through supplication.

In their days when people loved to listen to sermons and had time for it, the system was meaningful and was of immense benefit.

The Mallams would then tell a lot of tales and stories to support their points and sometimes interject it with *waka*<sup>23</sup> to entertain and arrest boredom. Now, the same style has no meaning in this modern day life when people are occupied with the blue or white-collar job and the attractions of radio and television programmes satisfy their relaxation.

The Islamic commitment prevalent in the olden days has also dwindled. People prefer the entertainment aspect of the programme to the spiritual ones. Our Mallams therefore, have to be realistic to the dynamic of the society and adjust appropriately.

### 5.3.2 Da'wah work

*Da'wah*, which means call to the way of Allah, formed the core of the duties of Yoruba Islamic scholars in the early Islam. There were two types of *da'wah* as understood and conducted by the scholars. First is propagation of Islam through open-air service (*wa'z*). They conducted this in the night after *Salat al-Ishai* till late in the night or (sometimes) early the following morning. The itinerant Alfas would move from town to village for weeks and even

months using the open air services to educate Muslims about their religion. Through this, a good percentage of Muslims understood Islam and became committed to it.

Many mosques in Yorubaland were built through funds raised at such open air services. There were some Islamic scholars who specialized in this method of propagation. Shaykh Najimudeen of Ibadan, Shaykh Shittu Onilewura of Osogbo and Shaykh Usamah of Kuta- near Iwo, were some of the famous ones in the profession<sup>24</sup>. They were often invited to places for wa'z because of their sound knowledge of Islam and their brilliant delivery. Their source of living during the trips was the little amount contributed by their hosts at their programmes and they were satisfied with it.

The service was always made up of sermons on the pillars of Islam, which are the fundamentals of the faith, especially *tawhid* aspect of the pillars. Other areas often touched were good neighborliness, duties of husband and wife and even duties of parents to their children and vice-versa. The service was always

punctuated by *waka*, which made the programme very interesting and often removed boredom.

The programme is nowadays very unpopular and has therefore, become very uncommon. The reason for this is traceable to the complexity of the society and the advancement of electric technology, which has shifted the focus to the use of electronic media. While Christian priests have adjusted to this new reality and different churches and denominations keenly complete the sponsorship of religious programmes on the media, the Muslim Ulama are yet to appreciate this reality.

However, as unpopular as open air service may be in towns and cities currently, it is still very useful in villages and hamlets. This is so because of the very low level of development existing there. Incidentally, the Muslim scholars do not focus on the area. Many Islamic youth organizations too do concentrate their activities in towns and cities. Realizing this deficiency, the National Council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO), Oyo State chapter began what it called 'Rural Da'wah' (Islamic propagation) in



1997.ats mode of operation is such that members would go from house to house in the village they visit. Thereafter an open air service would be organized where all the people would be addressed together after which questions and answer session would come up and would end and programme<sup>25</sup>.

In some villages visited, the group discovered the danger for the future of Islam in refusing to take *Da'wah* to the door steps of these villagers. For instance, the Muslim of Onipe Village in Oyo State, informed the NACOMYO' *Da'wah* group that they last had *da'wah* programme in 1958<sup>26</sup> and that since then, nobody has ever mounted any programme of this nature. This is with the result that many of their children had left Islam for Christianity.

In 1998, while at Ejioku in the Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State, the *Da'wah* group discovered that the Jum'at mosque built by the late Alhaji Busari Adalakun (a former commissioners) which had been in use since 1984 was closed down as a result of misunderstanding between two factions of the community. The *Da'wah* group however succeeded in reconciling the feuding

community and the mosque was reopened<sup>27</sup> for use. The group, on its visit to Osegere in the Egbeda Local government Area in the year 2000 also discovered that the only mosque there had been closed down since 1990 because of a minor disagreement within the community<sup>28</sup>. It was however reopened at the intervention of the group.

The Imam-in-council of the Ibadan Central Mosque, which supervises all towns and villages around Ibadan should have prevented all these ugly situations should its members understand their job and effectively perform it. Ironically people of other area of Oyo State look up to Ibadan for leadership. At Tede, for example, the quarrel for leadership in the Muslim Community which had divided them for about eight years was in the year 2001 settled by the Imam in council of Ibadan. When the information got to the council, it quickly sent for representatives of the factions and the matter was amicably resolved. This means that people are ready to obey their leaders if these leaders honestly stand up to their responsibility.

The second system is through education. They believed and rightly too that knowledge of Islam is an essential tool for the understanding and spread of the religion. They, therefore, began to establish Qur'an schools which later graduated to *Madaris* and *Marakiz*. In almost all major towns of Yorubaland with particular attention to Oyo and Osun States, such schools were established. At these schools students are taught various subjects like history (*sirah*) geography (*jugrafiyyah*) mathematics (*hisab*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*) literature (*adab*), and grammar (*nahau*); many of them are up to secondary school level. Some graduates of these schools are made to teach in the newly established ones, some take to *da'wah* (propagation) work while a few lucky ones get admitted into Universities<sup>29</sup>.

In the recent past, however, there abound many leavers of these schools and many graduates from the Arab lands who are without jobs. Their futures are bleak since they cannot easily fit into the government structure because of language barrier. Worst still is that no structure is created for them by the Imams and Alfas back home. Some of these graduates, in order to serve, established

similar schools and very few lucky ones join some foreign Arab organization as staffers.

The Muslim community under the leadership of Imams and Alfas would have done better if they could restructure the mosques such that they would be made to be registered and given license of operation. Guidelines would also be given for the recruitment of Imam and other mosque workers. This, if done would go a long way in creating jobs for the teeming graduates of the Arabic schools as well as university graduates.

Another way is by introducing western education into the curricula of these schools so that the students would, on completion, be qualified to seek for admission into any university of their choice so that whenever they complete their courses, there would not be much problem of employment.

It is used, however, to note that the population of students in these Arabic schools has drastically reduced from what obtained between the early 1960s and mid 1970s because of the above stated facts. Many committed Muslim parents have, because of lack



of structure for their future, opted for purely western schools that guarantee a good future for them. Some of our chief Imams do not even encourage their children to pursue Arabic and Islamic studies at higher levels of education because of the above stated reasons.

Sensing the danger of unemployment and frustration such Arabic schools graduates may face in future, the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University of Ibadan, designed a one year programme of study in the early 1960's for such students. The main objective of the programme was to expose them to and generate their interest in western education so that they would, after completion, work hard to obtain the Ordinary and advance level certificates of the West African Examination Council. With such certificates, they would qualify for admission into the degree programme<sup>30</sup>.

Through this arrangement, a lot of people have become Professors and senior lecturers in Nigerian and other West African universities, leading administrators in government and other corporate services. Some have become diplomats while some others

have risen to positions of manager in banking and insurance industries. The department, having recorded high degree of success in that regard, further thought of another way to strengthen the Muslims academically.

The Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University of Ibadan went further to assist holders of grade two teachers' certificate. A two year diploma programme was designed for such candidates to aid their admission as well to encourage their interest for the two subjects<sup>31</sup>. Through this programme too, many people have become graduates of Arabic and Islamic Studies and are now occupying position both in teaching and government administrative services. However, when in early 1980s, the university authority were among those affected and were thus cancelled.

In 1992, when the department saw the effect which the stoppage of the two programmes had on holders of certificates of Arabic schools and the unconcerned attitudes of the proprietors of these schools towards the future of their students, it floated a

programme to arrest the situation. It was a three year diploma in Arabic and Islamic Studies in some approved Arabic Schools owned by some individuals and by some of the existing *madaris*, affiliated to the University and supervised by the department. The programme was approved by the university Senate and various bodies and individuals were encouraged to sponsor it. Out of the lot that signified interest, four were able to obtain affiliation with the university.

The programme allowed that holders of thanawi (secondary) certificate of selected Arabic schools were given admission into these colleges. Like the result of the previous programme already discussed, many of these students have sat, passed ordinary level examinations and have been admitted into various Nigerian universities for degree courses. Some have even completed their master's degree programme<sup>32</sup>.

Recently, however, the University of Ibadan reviewed its admission policy on the affiliated colleges to the effect that only holders of ordinary level certificates would henceforth be admitted.

The implication of this on the affiliated colleges being supervised by department could be grave in that very few candidates would continue to be qualified for admission and that may be the beginning of the end of the programme. But characteristic of our Imams and Alfas, they seem not to be aware of the problem and its implications on the community. The few who realized it do not show enough concern.

The various councils of Imams and Alfas should rise up and give education of the Muslim youths the priority it deserves. They should realize that doing it can only guarantee the future of Islam and the Muslims in the society. They should be re-orientated to move with the time and adopt the right system of education, which would in the immediate future attract more people into the fold.

### 5.3.3. Finance of the Community

Among the job of the Imam in council is to design a way through which the Mosque and other Islamic institutions under him could be adequately funded to enable them run well. The Holy Qur'an provides a way through which the Muslims could secure



their major income. This is the payment of Zakat which is the third pillar of Islam and made compulsory on all those Muslims, that are qualified to do so "(Q.9.103)".

The Qur'an has also enumerated the areas of disbursement of such funds and this has been found to be comprehensive enough to have catered for all the areas of human need. It is the duty of our Imams to ensure adequate information and enlightenment to the congregation about this very important and useful institution to humanity. It is unbelievable that many Imams and Alfas do not comprehend the implication of *Zakat* payment on the Community. This perhaps is why they have neglected its side. They sometimes down play the rate payable (nisab) or leave it totally to the payer so as not to scare him away. In effect, only very few Muslims do pay *Zakat* and what they pay cannot be said to be *Zakat*, but *Sadaqat* since it falls short of the prescribed rate<sup>33</sup>.

Many of those qualified to pay and who really want to pay Zakat get scared on knowing the amount payable from their wealth. When the rate runs into millions of naira, they, instead think of

reinvesting it on other profitable ventures, which can bring more dividends than give it to the Imams and Alfas who they think, may not disburse it properly. This kind of people often resort to distributing beverages like milk, sugar and tea to people, particularly during the month of Ramadan as substitute for Zakat. This situation is a result of lack of proper education about the institution of Zakat by those in authority. It is observed that if Zakat is properly and adequately disbursed to the qualified people, the amount of money and other property to accrue therefore would certainly be enough for the finances of all Islamic projects, and at the same time Imams and Alfas who fall under the categories of recipients would have enough to take care of their needs. If done, it could reduce to the barest minimum, their dependence on the rich people in the society and provide the needed confidence to do their job for the community.

Another area of fund generation for the use of the community is by engaging in commercial activities. The community can engage in school business from pre-primary to tertiary level of education. Apart from the fund it will generate, it will even provide the right

Islamic education to members. The community can engage in banking services, which could serve dual advantages of generating funds for the community and as well provide the Islamic prescribed banking system to the society. Various commercial activities abound like bookshop, textile industry and even farming. These among others will create jobs for the Muslims.

To achieve the above suggested normal duties of the Imams, people at the helm of affairs of the Muslim community need to understand the nature of the society they live in. The lack of such understanding by our Imams is the major problem confronting the community. It is observed that the kind of orientation of our Imams is such that cannot cope with the competition posed by other religions.

#### **5.3.4 Shar'ah Implementation**

The law governing the practice of Islam and its adherents is called the Shari'ah. It is a divine law whose sources are contained in both the Qur'an and the Sunnah (tradition) of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Its other sources as the consensus of the

opinion of the jurists (Ijma') and the analogical deduction (Qiyas). Its scope covers the entire life of a Muslim and that is why Islamic is said to be a way of life. Allah commands that His laws be abided with and be practised fully<sup>43</sup>.

It is, therefore, the duty of the Imam as the leader of the Muslim Community and other scholars assisting him to impact knowledge of this law into the congregation so as to understand the religion and be able to practise it well.

Shari'ah as a law was in practice in some parts of Yorubaland before the arrival of the colonialists who brought along with them Christianity as a religion. Prominent among the places which Shari'ah was practised are Ede, Ikirun, Iwo and Epe. Unfortunately on their arrival, the foreign Christian's magistrate and high courts were established and maintained by government to cater for Christianity and customary courts created for the practitioners of traditional religion, none was made for the Muslims. Therefore, whenever there arise a disagreement among a Muslims couple who had married under the Islamic tradition, the couple is made to have



no option than to resort to a customary court for adjudication.

In such cases, many Muslim marriages have suffered undue dissolution from the hands of unqualified 'judges' who know nothing about Islam and who oftentimes are non-Muslims. In fact marriages conducted in the mosque have no government approval and the certificates emanating there from are worthless and of no effects. The only two recognized place of marriage by the government are the church and the registry<sup>35</sup>. It is, however, very sad and shameful that our Imams and Alfas are not aware of this development and therefore cannot address it.

When recently some state in the northern Nigeria introduced the criminal aspect of *Shari'ah* for application in addition to the civil and domestic ones already in use there,, the Muslims of the south west, particularly the youths, had hoped for the opportunity of reintroducing *Shar'ah* even if only the aspects of personal status. An attempt by the Muslim youths of Oyo state under the auspices of National Council of Muslim Youths Organization (NACOMYO) to send a private bill on *Shar'ah* to the State Assembly failed even though Muslims form a majority<sup>36</sup> of members of the house. In

addition, both the Speaker of the house and the state Governor are Muslims. Yet not much help could they render.

The Chief Imam of Ibadan and his council did not support the attempt believing that the motive for introducing *Shar'ah* by various states of the north is politically induced<sup>37</sup>. The Muslim youths later came to realize the reasons for the refusal of the Imam-in-council to support the adoption of *Shar'ah*. One, they examined the position of the ruling party in the whole south west and assumed that it (Alliance for Democracy) is totally opposed to the introduction of the law in the region Two, they assumed also that members of the council of Imam did not want to offend the Governor who though a Muslim, cannot oppose his party position.

The youths did not give up the pursuance of *Shari'ah* adoption in the state in spite of seeming opposition of the Imams. They commenced serious planning towards its realization. As part of the plan, selected members were made to join National Council of *Shar'ah* in the north in the year 2001<sup>38</sup>. Through the meetings with them, they were able to understand both the administrative

and the technical operations of the law. By 1<sup>st</sup> may, 2002, they introduced an independent Shari'ah implementation committee which was launched at Oja'ba Central Mosque, Ibadan. Immediately after the launching, members of the panel tagged. Independent Shari'ah panel of Oyo State swung into action. They were initially having their sittings at Arisekola Central Mosque, Ibadan, but they later relocated to Oja'ba Central Mosque, where it holds till present. A total of nineteen civil cases have so far been resolved and disposed off, while one criminal case of Zinah (fornication) was handled<sup>39</sup>. The only criminal case was widely publicized by the media at the instance of the panel. One wonders why that had to be so at the exclusion of the civil ones, which if equally given adequate publicity, would have made much more impact on the society.

Our Imams should be made to know that Shari'ah implementation in their jurisdiction is one of their primary duties. They should thereafter rise up to and embrace it fully. It is their non-challant attitude towards it that has denied the Muslims the much desired law to guide their activities. While civil cases can

easily be handled by the panel set for it, proper planning should be made for criminal cases if at all they would be handled. Areas of qualified personnel and issues of enforcement of penalties also have to be critically looked into.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A. Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, Darul -Kutub al-Umiyyah, (Bayrut, 450 AH) p.127.
2. Ibid
3. Ibid. p. 128, where there is mutual understanding among the Imams, same *Salat* could be observed in congregation led by another Imam than the first, after all, one *salat* is usually observed congregationally several times in the Ka'bah, the first and the greatest mosque on earth.
4. Toward the close of last century, wealthy Muslims became more aware of their religious responsibilities. They then began to provide welfare package for their personal Imams.
5. Many Imams now enjoy the support of rich members of their communities and even government functionaries more than before. The support enjoyed by an Imam is due to his status in the society..

6. Oral interview with Alhaji Sheu Mogaji (74), the Naib Imam of Oyo town, on 01/06/2000.
7. Oral interview with Alhaji Yushau Tairu Matala (72), secretary to the Imam in Council, Ibadan on 08/05/2001.
8. For example, the present Chief Imam of Oyo was appointed more than a year after the death of the immediate past Imam. The community had to appeal to Alaafin several times before he could sanction the appointment.
9. Alhaji Sheu Mogaji, as the deputy Imam cannot be made Imam by the existing arrangement. He had been acting Imam for three times, each times there was a vacancy.
10. Iwo Central Mosque was without the Chief Imam for almost six years because it was the traditional that the Oluwo (the traditional ruler of the town) must turban the new Imam. The community had to wait till a new Oba was installed in 1991.

11. Oral interview with Alhaji A.F.K. Makinde (38), Secretary to the National Council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO) Osun State Chapter on 25/08/2001.
12. The Oluwo was abale to do it because he was regarded as the supreme authority of the Muslims even though he was a Christian. Had the council revolted, he could not have succeeded. Ironically, he as the Oba could not be that in the Church he belonged to.
13. Almost all Ilorin indigenes living in Ibadan were mobilized to supported their kinsman. They were said to have contributed some amounts to finance the case in court.
14. It was the primary intention of Alhaji Arisekola, the owner of the Mosque to employ only two Imams, he increased the number by one in order to accommodate two Ibadan, but of see him not as Aare Musulumi of Ibadan, but of the entire Yorubaland.
15. Many Ibadan scholars saw it as an insult for a non indigene to be an Imam of a government house. They believed that

Ibadan can afford to present many competent Islamic scholars.

16. S.K.A Oyesomi, Iwe Itan bii Islam se de Ikire, (Saka printing Works, Ibadan, 1963), p.6.
17. Abdul, op.cit., p. 37
18. It is called al'-Khitabul-Mambariyyah in manuscript. It contains various topics on Islamic subject from which topical issues are discussed.
19. In Ibadan, for example, the setting Alfa Agba would deliver a sermon in Yoruba during the Jumat services after which the 'Khutbah proper by the Chief Imam will be rendered in Arabic language.
20. H.A.R Gibb (et al) Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, Leiden, E.J. Brill 1974.p.90.
21. Oral interview with one LuqmanAfodunribi (29), (a co-tenant with the writer at Iwo road, Ibadan) on 19/06/2002. He said that his father had before his death, informed his children



- that the Chief Imam of Ibadan should lead his janazah prayer. That was how the Chief Imam of Ibadan, Shyakh Baosari led the prayer on 13/02/2000.
22. For example in the case of Pa Afodunribi of Asukuna Compound, agreed to lead the prayers. Oral interview with Luqman Afoduribi.
23. D.A.A. Tijani, Olohun Duro timi nko lenikan, a mimeograph. P. VI.
24. These three scholars were among great itinerant preachers of Yorubaland in those days. It is to their credit that fund for many mosque in the land were raised at open air services they conducted.
25. Oral interview with Alhaji Taofiq Ayegbajeje (42), Deputy Da'wah coordinator of National Council of Muslim Youths Organization, Oyo State Chapter on 29/11/2002 at Oja Oba Central Mosque, Ibadan.
26. Ibid

27. Ibid
28. Ibid
29. Oral interview with Abdullah Olaniyan (24), a student of Madrasatul-Da'watil-Islamiyyah, Olorunsogo, Ibadan on 25/01/2002. He said that out of the 32 students that graduated from the school in 2001, only 2 got scholarship to study in Arab countries.
30. See commemorative brochure of the Faculty of Arts 50<sup>th</sup> year of Excellence, 1948-1988, p.6
31. Ibid. p.10
32. One Habibah Oladosu is a typical example of such student who has completed her Master's programme. She wrote her project on Educational Theories of Al-Ghazali.
33. The rate is generally 2 ½ percent (except on Animals) of the accumulated rate. See M.M. Ali, The Religion of Islam, The Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'atil-Islam, Lahore, 1973,p.387.
34. Qur'an 2:208

35. Customary Courts Law 1980 and Customary Courts (Amendment Edict No 7 of 1985) P.A41.
36. Interview with Alhaj Asimiyu Alarapa (33), on 25/02/2002 Speaker of the House of Assembly. He said that 18 out of 32 Honourable Members were Muslims
37. Oral Interview with the Chief Imam of Ibadanland, Shaykh Baosari Haruna (77), on 30/05/2000 at his Agbeni Residence, Ibadan.
38. Oral interview with Alhaj Abudul Razaq Abdu Raheem Akuru (56), on 14/06/2002. Alhaj Akuru is one of the three permanent Imams of Arisekola Central Mosque, Ibadan. He said that five members including himself represented Oyo State at the National Council on Shar'ah.
39. Oral interview with Mr. Saheed Oyeniran, (26), Secretary, Oyo State Independent Shari'ah Arbitration panel on 16/11/2002 at Oja'ba Central Mosque, Ibadan.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

The mosque is generally known to be a place where worship of Allah takes place. There are three types of mosques in Islam. They are Musalla- an open space designated for the purpose of observing salat. This may be found in front of a house, shop or compound. Masjid -a building containing facilities designed for congregational prayers. Masjid al-Jami'- this type in contrast to the Masjid is usually meant for Friday prayer alone and usually owned by a community or religious organization.

The mosque originated from Makkah where the first on earth is situated (Qur'an 3:96), its foundation was developed by both Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail (As) (Qur'an 2: 127). The other important mosques are al masjid an-Nabawi in Madinah and al-masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. Pilgrimage is ordained by Allah to the first and visit to the other two.

There are different categories of mosque allowed in Islam. Such are memorial mosque, family mosque, societal mosque and



tribal mosque. The important thing is that it should be built for the purpose of worship of Allah. The mosque is sacred and should be treated and used as such. While non-religious assembly may take place in the mosque, Unislamic practices, assembly and other vices are not permitted to hold in the mosque.

The primary function of the Imam lies in the mosque and that is where he operates. Apart from serving as a place of worship of Allah, the mosque serves as a counseling centre, a pilgrimage centre, a court of justice, a school, a hospital and can even be used for accommodation purposes.

In building a mosque, consideration should be given to those facilities mentioned above and others in order to function properly. Adequate space should be acquired so that all the required facilities could be provided and made use of when necessary.

Until recent times, many mosques in our coverage area were built without considered for development purposes. It is discovered that the sizes of mosque and their spaces were dictated by the prevailing circumstances of the time. Another shortcoming is lack

of facilities that could generate fund for the maintenance of the mosque. Unfortunately now that many communities could generate fund to expand, lack of space has been the cog in the wheel of their progress.

It has been discovered that, mosque, particularly the *ratibi* ones are indiscriminately established in our society. There are in some cities, no fewer than six mosques in less than one quarter of a kilometer, each occupying less than one third of a plot of land. This is understandable in view of the fact that the nearer a mosque is to the residential apartment, the easier it becomes for the inhabitant to observe daily *Salat*. Despite this however, we discovered that many of these *ratibi* mosques are not always filled to capacity at every daily prayer.

There are, as provided for in the Shari'ah ways by which an Imam can emerge in a given community. The Sunnis allow people who may aspire to become Imam to be tested on the knowledge of Islam and if there are many of such aspirants, consideration

should be given to piety etc. so that the better or the best candidate (as the case may be) would be chosen.

A *Sunni* Imam can be chosen by an electoral college or nomination by the ruling Imam which would just be ratified by members. He can however be deposed when found to have committed a grave offence or if he suffers from a serious disease like loss of mental faculty or a physical deformity that hinders effective performance.

The Shi'ite<sup>85</sup> practice in the appointment of an Imam is fundamentally different from the Sunni. In Shi'ism, Imamship is by divine appointment restricted to only the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). An Imam must be traced back to the lineage of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and must be infallible. Besides, he must be distinguished above all others in truth and piety. There are various groups into which the Shi'ites split on the issue of appointment of Imam, with each group holding tenaciously to its sect's belief and practices. With the spread of Islam to the nooks and crannies of the world, it remains to be seen how

descendants of the Prophet could be appointed in all the mosques of the world.

It is discovered that in most Yoruba areas, the scholars strictly complied with the Sunni provisions only at the early arrival of Islam in their communities. The system later changed to a situation where merit seemed to have been replaced with other considerations. From then onward, the position of Imam became more advanced and therefore began to attract high competition. Aspirants do use any available means to get there with little or no regard to legal requirements like knowledge of Islam which is the primary condition. The effect of this has been failure on the part of many Imams to move the community forward.

The struggle for appointment into the position of Imam in Yorubaland has become a common phenomenon as evident in our coverage area. Court litigation for several months and in some cases, years, abound in our communities. Such ugly situations have caused the split of various communities into fragments. The disunity caused by litigation has engendered enmity amongst



various Muslim communities, which has made progress of the religion difficult.

As already discussed in chapter three, the coming of Islam into the entire Yorubaland was not a design and therefore informal. For this reason, the selection or appointment of an Imam in each locality has been characterized by the local peculiarity and circumstances prevailing there.

The duties of the Imam whether *ratibi* (local) or *Jami'* (central) is primarily to lead others in Salawat (prayers) at their appointed times, including the *Jum'at* and the two *Eids* of al-*Fitri* and Al-*Adha*. He should in addition to this spiritual exercise, attend to the mundane affairs of his congregation. He should do this in consultation with members of his council.

In most towns and villages of our coverage area, the duties being performed by Imams, in addition to leading the congregation in Salawat are the conduct of *nikah* (marriage) *'aqiqah* (naming) housewarming, mosque commissioning and *janazah* (burial) rites of members of the community. It is discovered also that sermons

delivered on Fridays and on eid days do not have bearing on the society any longer. It is taken from a collection of sermons compiled in a book called: *khitabul-mambariyyah* (the pulpit sermons).

The sermons had been prepared on various topics numbering about 52 to cover the 52 Fridays in a year. These sermons are delivered in Arabic language to a largely Yoruba audience. The beauty of a sermon is to be delivered in the language understood by the audience for it to be meaningful. The Qur'an supports this when it says:

(وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ

Translation

And we sent not a messenger expect with language of his people (Q.14.4)

Also, the job of performing *salat al-janazah* on a dead Muslim is a service a Muslim owes another and which any scholar, be he an Imam or not, can conduct. Our Imams have unfortunately taken

that as their exclusive major duty, which nobody does on their behalf. In some areas, it has been established that whoever does it without their permission is frowned at. Ironically, many Muslims consider it pride and prestige that the Chief Imam of his town performs the Salat on his dead one. The Imams may be exploited this to levy various sums of money before the job can be done. For this action, the Imams involved could not justify their actions on Shari'ah or morality.

Other areas of concentration by our scholars are zawaj or nikah, aqiqah and house warming. Another major duty by our Imams is open-air sermon which they conduct in towns and villages and on radio and television. The use of the media in the propagation of Islam is a later development which has brought relief to the Islamic preachers, particularly the itinerant ones because it has lessened the hardship and difficulties they hitherto encountered when they had to trek for long journeys within their operation areas.

However, for these facilities to be used and enjoyed maximally, our preachers have to ensure that the quality of their sermons is such that could further retain the Muslims in the fold and as well attract non-Muslims into the religions.

A *ratibi* Imam has to be familiar with all members of his congregation so that he will readily identify who is absent at any *salat*. He should visit members and encourage them on their religious obligations.

It is very uncommon, in the coverage area that an Imam is disposed, even if found to have committed offences or suffers from diseases that makes it difficult for him to perform creditably. It has also been discovered that no matter how old an Imam is, he does not have to retire. He only needs to nominate his favourite, an unambitious person to take over and act for him for the period of his indisposition or absence. Some of them do nominate their sons or son in laws. This shows the level of distrust amongst the principal officers of our mosques. This is why an Imam cannot hand over to his deputy anytime he would not be around.



Typical of Yorubaland, Islam got introduced to towns and cities of Oyo and Osun States at different times and under different circumstances. The area under review is occupied by purely Yoruba people of different dialects.

It is uncertain when Islam was brought into the area. However, what is certain is that the religion was brought there through peaceful means. Its introduction was mainly by traders and mendicants who came through the Yoruba northern neighbours. Their served as first Imams in most of the towns and cities.

Efforts of traditional rulers in nurturing Islam cannot be overlooked. Apart from the initial hostilities by many traditional rulers. This may be the reason why they are so involved in the administration of the Mosque up till now. For example, no Imam or principal officer of the town's Central Mosque can be installed without the permission of the traditional ruler. The same argument explains why Central Mosques of Yorubaland are located beside the Oba's palaces.

Islam being a divine religion has been made perfect by the owner Himself (Qur'an 5:3). It therefore behoves its practitioners to abide absolutely by its set rules.

In the appointment of Imam, scholars and Muslim leaders should ensure that the qualifications set by the *Shari'ah* for the occupier of the post are not compromised. On their part, members of the community should par-take actively in the selection to ensure that the right person leader leads them.

In selecting the Chief Imam and other principal officers of the mosque, consideration should be given to the complex nature of our society which demands high competition with other religious faiths. Therefore, the Imam should have good knowledge of both Islam and western education to enable him performs creditably.

Efforts should be made by the community to register all *ratibi* and *jamiu* mosques with the relevant government organs. Other activities in the mosques too should be registered to allow for smooth administration, unity and good record.

All Imams and principal officers of mosques should be made to undergo periodical trainings or refresher courses to update their knowledge and practice of Islam. They should also be graded and given roles commensurate with their levels of education. If this is done, it will go a long way in standardizing sermons in mosques, open air services and in the media.

The administration and finances of the mosque should be the responsibility of the Muslim community. Full time officers, including the Imam, should be employed and should be well remunerated to enable them performing well.

To finance the mosque, the community should evolve a means of implementing maximally the zakat collection (Q.9:103) and its administration (Q.9:60) as directed by Allah Himself. This is because there is no workable alternative to it. Where zakat fund is well utilized, the problem of finances is reduced to its barest minimum if not completely eradicated.

The community should engage in profitable but lawful business ventures to save the teeming Muslims from financial embarrassment in which they always find themselves.

Wealthy individual Muslims too should cultivate the habit of engaging Muslims in their businesses. They should reflect the Islamic business ethics in their companies is that they, after that, would be attractive to the Muslims and non-Muslims alike.



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11. Alwajud, Alhaji Wahab (53), A Muslim youth leaders and a staff of Alhaji Rasheed Adesokan (Baale of Bodija).
12. Ariyo, Alhaji Amusat (84), The Mufassir of Okeho Central Mosque.
13. Ayegbajeje, Alhaji Taifoq Taifoq (42) Deputy Da'wah Coordinator of NACOMYO, Oyo State.
14. Babatunde, Alhaji Yunus (90), Chief Missioner of Ansarud-Deen Society, Igbo-Ofa Branch.
15. Basumu, Alhaji Hamid (36), Chief Imam of Nasrudeen Society Central Mosque, Ibadan
16. Bello, Alhaji Raji (92), Naib Imam of Igboho.
17. Bello, Alhaji Saliu (80), Acting Chief Imam of Igboho.

18. Busari, Alhaji Salehdeen (52), Chief Imam of Igboho.
19. Hamid, Alhaji Sami' (48), The Mufassir of Ile-Ife Central Mosque and a Senior Tutor of Islamic Studies, Federal Government Girls College, Ipetu Modu.
20. Haruna, Shaykh Baosari (77), Chief Imam of Ibadan.
21. Imoru, Shaykh Imran (99), Chief Imam of Iwo.
22. Imran, Ahmad (38), Supervisor of al-Haramain Projects in Nigeria
23. Kolapo, Alhaji Salam (90), Baba Adini of Osogbo Muslim Community
24. Makinde, Abdul Fattah (38), Secretary General, National Council of Muslim Youth Organization (NACOMYO) Osun State.
25. Mogaji, Alhaji Sulayman (74), Naib Imam of Oyo Town.
26. Motala, Alhaji Yushau (72), Grand Mufti of Ibadan.

27. Mosa, pa Tijani (80), Head of the Muslim Community, Saki
28. Muhibud-Din, Alhaji Sheu (85), Parakoyi Adini of Igangan.
29. Oladipupo, Alhaji Kareem (82), Chief Imam of Modakeke
30. Olaiya, Mr. Abideen (33), An Executive Members, Muslims Community, Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), Ibadan.
31. Oloso, Dr. Kamil (53), Coordinator of Arisekola Central Mosque, Ibadan.
32. Omotosho, Alhaji Ishaq (45), Chairman, University College Hospital (UCH) Muslim Community, Ibadan.
33. Oyeniran, Mr. Saheed (26), Secretary, Oyo State Independent Shar'ah Arbitration Panel.
34. Tijani, Dr. Daud (58), Chief Imam of the university of Ibadan Central Mosque and a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University.



35. Waheed, Alhaji Ademola (38), Chief Imam of International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (I.I.T.A), Ibadan.
36. Yusuf, Alhaji Abubakr (62), Chief Imam of Igbeti.

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