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## **Transmission of Learning in Modern Ilorin: A History of Islamic Education 1897-2012**

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## Chapter Three

### Muslim Missionaries and Educationists and Reforms in the Colonial Period

#### Introduction

During the nineteenth century while the political and military exploits of Ilorin took the centre stage, her intellectual history was evolving underneath, protected and enabled by the political, military and economic strength of the town. The end of the nineteenth century saw the flowering of intellectual endeavors of the scholars of Ilorin. Scholars born and bred in Ilorin began to emerge, increasing the number of scholars and schools where the knowledge of Islam could be acquired. The hierarchical nature of Muslim learning, missionary instincts of the scholars and the ensuing peace after colonial conquest made some of these new scholars to venture out of Ilorin in search of fertile grounds where their intellectual and missionary competence could be put to practice. This was to have a profound influence on the development of Islamic learning in Ilorin in the subsequent decades. Contacts with westernization and the outside world, especially the Arab Muslim world, greatly influenced the reforms made around Islamic education by Ilorin scholars, mostly initiated from outside Ilorin in the course of missionary endeavors, before they were introduced and entrenched in Ilorin.<sup>1</sup>

The advent of colonialism was a disruption of every facet of life of the African directly and indirectly. The social, economic and political world view and praxes were remodeled into new forms, adapting some here, reforming others there and others completely changed. In Muslim societies, where colonialism met some of its fiercest resistance; this resistance was based on the intellectual foundation of the Muslims in their educational system and championed by the guardians of this institution.<sup>2</sup> With the failure of military resistance, Muslims continued their resistance in the intellectual field. But the Muslims not only resisted colonialism and its adjunct, western education; the scholars of Islam in Ilorin and the Yoruba region where Ilorin scholars were the leading scholars, also adapted and appropriated aspects of the colonial educational legacy into their own system as a means of not only protecting their vocation, threatened by the new regime, but they

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<sup>1</sup> As noted by Brenner in his work on Mali, during the course of the twentieth century, Muslims have encountered and struggled through in various ways with the question of how to deal with the question of how to reinterpret the tenets of the religion, as they have understood them, to conform with the rapidly changing conditions that they have experienced: subjugation by imperial powers, economic effects of world capitalism, the political transformation to putative states and the many social dislocations associated with these processes. Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Umar, *Islam and Colonialism*.

also used these means to promote Islamic learning.<sup>3</sup> This led to reforms in the Islamic educational system in Ilorin. The encounter of the Islamic educational system with the colonial education system led to a divergence of responses. The new system led to the emergence of three main pedagogical schools of thought in championing Islamic education in Ilorin.

In this chapter, we would also be looking at the careers of some prominent Islamic scholars and their modernization reforms and contribution to the development of Islamic education in the colonial period, both as missionaries and educationists. These were the foundations that Islamic education in Ilorin would be built upon in the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries.

### **Modernization Praxes: Missionaries, Educationalists and Response to the Colonial Encounter**

The encounter of Muslim society of Ilorin with western civilization through the twin phenomena of colonialism and western education had a most profound influence on the developments in the Islamic education system in Ilorin. As Islam and its educational system was taking a bold and effective step into the Yoruba region through the missionary endeavors of Ilorin scholars, the imperial power of the British colonial enterprise was also taking decisive and far reaching encroachment, starting from coast, in the Yoruba region and eventually into the whole of Nigeria. The forces of Islam from the north and that of colonialism from the coast were to have a profound effect on the history of Ilorin people. Thus, Ilorin emerged into the twentieth century as a strong Muslim city thrust into the powerful conquering western civilization. Her scholars had to negotiate their way between a strong Islamic tradition and a powerful western dominion once conquered by the British in 1897.

The period of effective British rule in Ilorin engendered greater peace and stability than had been allowed for in most of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> This new peaceful ambience had some positive effects on Muslim scholarship while at the same time posing new challenges and problems. With the inter-Yoruba wars over, there was greater freedom of movement of persons and goods.<sup>5</sup> New roads were built and the railway was also under construction. This relative peace had the

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<sup>3</sup> Nasiru, 'Islamic Learning among the Yoruba,' 176.

<sup>4</sup> As Gbadamosi noted, despite the inter-Yoruba wars, which Ilorin was actively involved, Ilorin scholars were making inroads into the Yoruba region consolidating Islam in these territories. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam*, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Though the nineteenth century was turbulent, the scholars of Ilorin nevertheless were active among the Yoruba spreading religion and knowledge. See Danmole, 'The Frontier Emirate,' 146 and Reichmuth, 'A Regional Centre,' 239.

unintended effect of helping the spread of Islam from a major centre of Islam like Ilorin to surrounding areas such as Igbomina land and other areas under the domain of Ilorin as well as other areas in south western Nigeria among the Yoruba and around the confluence of Niger and Benue rivers.<sup>6</sup> By the first decade of the twentieth century, decades of promotion of Islam through the encouragement of settlement of scholars from Hausa, Borno and Yoruba regions had resulted in a generation of home grown scholars in Ilorin.<sup>7</sup> Apart from the Okesuna scholars who had been around before the advent of Fulani rule, most of the first and second generation scholars in Ilorin had migrated into the town from Hausa region or Borno and other parts of Yoruba region through the encouragement of the emirs.<sup>8</sup> Through the patronage of the emirs many scholars were settled into the different parts of the city.<sup>9</sup>

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the status of Ilorin as a Muslim city had been well entrenched. The period of late nineteenth to early twentieth century saw the final major settlement of scholars from outside Ilorin.<sup>10</sup> By this period, home grown scholars had come of age and the inception of colonialism also saw the emirs working for colonial interests which many of the scholars were against. While the emirs continued to patronize the scholars, the need for encouragement of scholars to settle in the town was no longer as necessary as in the preceding century. The bulwark of the colonial regime freed the emirs from the constraints of wars and the pervasive influence of the military aristocracy who more or less had the emir under their control. The peace and stability enforced by the colonial regime enabled the scholars to move into other towns without the constraints of war and they were able

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<sup>6</sup> For the impact of Ilorin scholars on the development of Islam in Yoruba region, see Gbadamosi, *The Growth of* and in Ebiraland, see Ahmed Rufai Mohammed, 'History of the Spread of Islam in the Niger Benue Confluence Area, Igalaland, Ebiraland and Lokoja 1900-1960' ( Ph.D Thesis: Department of History, Bayero University, Kano, 1986 ). See also Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 194-203.

<sup>7</sup> Al Iluri, *Lamahat al Ballur*, 46; Reichmuth, 'A Regional Centre,' 237-245.

<sup>8</sup> Al Iluri, *Lamahat al Ballur*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Examples include, the first scholar of Ile Gbagba who came from Borno during the time of emir Shitta in the 1860s and Sheikh Abdullahi Badende during the reign of Emir Zubair. Al Iluri, *Lamahat al Ballur*, 47; Discussions with Alhaji Muhammad Shafii, 17-5-2012; Imam Muhammad Lawal, 6-5-2012 and Imam Ahmad Yahaya Maisolati.16-6-2012.

<sup>10</sup> Up till the present the settlement of scholars from outside Ilorin continues but not as pronounced as in the nineteenth century when the emirs needed the scholars to strengthen the Islamic identity of the town. Today some scholars still settle down after studying and are practicing in Ilorin. The most important requirement in settling down and becoming an Ilorin man is being a Muslim and secondly adopting the ways of Ilorin. With these two criteria a Muslim can claim to be an Ilorin man. This way many who came as students have indigenized into Ilorin society.

to carry out missionary works.<sup>11</sup> This would later have direct and indirect impacts in the development of Islamic education in Ilorin as well as in south western Nigeria and parts of the river Niger-Benue confluence.

The opening of Ilorin to the wider world under colonial regime was to have a lasting impact on Islamic education. The greatest challenge to Islamic education was and remains western education and the westernization it engenders. Its challenge to Islamic education was not only its secular (or even religious ethos in the early days) but also the social, economic and political power it came with and imbued in those who imbibed it. At the early stage, Muslims detested western education because its early vanguards were Christians whose aim at conversion was not hidden.<sup>12</sup> Even when the colonial masters introduced secular education in the northern region to allay the fears of Muslims, many were still distrustful of the system.<sup>13</sup> A number of people from Ilorin who travelled to western Nigeria and became Christians were taken as evidence that western education and its affiliates would only lead the Muslims astray. As a result some of the Ilorins who became Christians lost their property and their identity as Ilorins became so weak as to be almost unrecognizable.<sup>14</sup>

Not only were the colonial officers foreigners in pursuit of imperial secular quests, but they were also Christians, many of whom believed that Christianity would civilize the Africans<sup>15</sup> and were all part of the colonial force that had subjugated all Muslim authorities under its wing and largely determined what Muslims may or may not do. Therefore, Muslims resisted the system of education that relegated the Islamic education system to the background, as an extension of the general disagreement with colonialism. Because of the new order, western education suddenly became the most important route to access power; social, economic and political power. Muslims would not readily accept the system even as it continued to put them into disadvantaged positions.

Leading the Muslims in rising to the challenges that the new dispensation had brought upon Muslims were the ulama and traders to the south (some of whom were also of ulama class). Through their missionary endeavors they were able to

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<sup>11</sup> Danmole, 'The Frontier Emirate,' 169.

<sup>12</sup> See article By K, Education as a Mission Agency –in- Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record, January, 1884. Vol. IX No.97. The author explicitly bears out the missionaries' intention of using education, even of a secular nature to win over people into the religion.

<sup>13</sup> Sonia F. Graham, *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919* (Ibadan: Ibadan University press, 1966), 80.

<sup>14</sup> Discussions with Alhaji Safi Jimba. (Shamaki of Ilorin). 11-7-2012.

<sup>15</sup> Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 4-5.

garner experience and contacts with the rest of the world.<sup>16</sup> These were utilized in the reformations that they laid the foundation during the colonial period. Muslim missionaries have always played a very important role in the spread of the religion and for the most part had been responsible for the spread of Islam especially in Yoruba areas.<sup>17</sup> These missionaries were sometimes traders who combined trading with scholarship, either learning or passing on the knowledge wherever their trade took them. Some were purely on missionary endeavor; preaching and teaching, surviving as spiritual consultants to the people. Accelerated communication with the rest of the world opened up by the colonial regime helped in venting out the scholarship of Ilorin scholars.<sup>18</sup> By the turn of the century and early twentieth century, Ilorin had been saturated with scholars who needed avenues to express scholarship developed for close to a century when the scholars had lesser need or opportunities to move out of the town. The nineteenth century was the period of inpouring of scholars needed to bolster the new Muslim city; the twentieth century opened the gate for the outpouring of the scholarship garnered over the decades.

This does not mean that the scholars remained exclusively concerned with Ilorin and had no relationship with the outside world in the nineteenth century. Despite the turbulence of the nineteenth century, when Ilorin was at war with many Yoruba towns,<sup>19</sup> her scholars were also carrying out their missions in those places when the Christian missions were also making inroads from the coast.<sup>20</sup> The concern and attempt of the Lagos Muslims to mediate between the government of Lagos and Ilorin before it was eventually colonized indicates that the Muslims of Lagos were well aware of the deep preoccupations of the Ilorins with religion and were seen as mentors.<sup>21</sup> They tried to mediate between the British at the coast and Ilorin over disagreement on boundary, peace and trading issues. The Ilorins were the models for the Yoruba Muslims and were highly cherished when such missionaries choose

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<sup>16</sup> Colonial economy while posing a danger for Muslim identity also provided new contexts for opportunities for new religious movements with influences from beyond the local contexts. Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 23-24.

<sup>17</sup> The following works have dealt extensively on the role of Ilorin scholars in the spread of Islam among the Yoruba- Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam*; Nasiru, 'Islamic Learning' ; Reichmuth, 'A Regional Centre.'

<sup>18</sup> Brenner alluded to this in his study of Islamic knowledge system in Mali. Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> The following works have treated Ilorin war and diplomacy in the nineteenth century. H. O. Danmole, 'Crises, Warfare and Diplomacy in nineteenth century Ilorin' in Toyin Falola and Robin Law (eds.), *Warfare, and Diplomacy in Pre-colonial Nigeria* (Madison: University of Wisconsin); Safi Jimba, *Iwe Itan Ilorin*; Johnson, *History of the Yoruba*.

<sup>20</sup> Reichmuth, 'A Regional Centre,' 239.

<sup>21</sup> Danmole, 'The Abortive Peace.'

their town or city for missionary stations. Some of the scholars had also travelled north to Hausa region to acquire knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

The missionary educationists of Ilorin could be classified into two main categories. In the first category were those whose missionary activities were itinerant in nature. They resided permanently in Ilorin but often traveled to other towns on preaching tours. Some were also engaged in the prayer economy,<sup>23</sup> serving as spiritual consultants to people. They may have personal houses where they stayed when they visited particular towns (especially after long association with the town), while some stayed with friends or the people who had invited them. This class of missionaries was always shuttling between Ilorin and other towns. In this category we can class Sheikh Abubakr Ikokoro and Sheikh Kamalud-deen al Adabiyy and many others like them.

In the second category are those who left Ilorin to live permanently and established their schools in the other towns, returning to Ilorin only occasionally. However, they kept contact with Ilorin and occasionally returned to Ilorin on visits. In this category are scholars like Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al Iluri who began his reformist educational career in Abeokuta, before making Agege in Lagos his base, Sheikh Khidr Apaokagi<sup>24</sup> based in Owo, and Sheikh Yahaya Adafila<sup>25</sup> based at Okene

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<sup>22</sup> Al Iluri, *Lamahat al Ballur*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin F. Soares, *Islam and the Prayer Economy –History and authority in a Malian town* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 153-180. He used this term to qualify income derived from religious praxis of the Sufi clerics of Senegal. Lagos (Eko), then the capital of Nigeria and the major commercial city of the country, and up to the present forms an important city in the life of Ilorin scholars who are highly revered and honored there. Sheikh Kamalud-deen and Sheikh Adam both found support in this city for their reform movements. It is a major center for the prayer economy where scholars exercise their intercessory role for the people. Unlike Ilorin where almost every household has its own scholars and financial reward for such activity is limited, Lagos is more profitable for the use of intercessory prayers as a means of income for the scholars.

<sup>24</sup> A student of Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen al Adabiyy: after years of tutelage and experience in missionary activities under guidance of his teacher, he eventually made Owo in the then Ondo province his base in 1945. This came about as a result of the request of the Owo people to Sheikh Kamalud-deen to send them a reliable teacher. In 1955 Sheikh Apaokagi established Mahad Adabiyya in Owo. Like his teacher, he too would send many of his students as missionaries to many part of the country as far as old Bendel State and Port Harcourt in the Niger delta area of Nigeria. He was appointed as the Mufti of Ilorin towards the end of his life when he retired to Ilorin. His teacher had been the mufti before him. He passed away on 22 February, 2013. See the following works for mention of his career. Bamigboye, 'The Contribution of Sheikh,' 39; Adisa-Onikoko, *The Legacy of*, 93; Sheikh Khidru Salahudeen Apaokagi, *The Development of Islam In Rivers State* (Ilorin: Alabi Printing Production, 2001), 1; Discussions with Alfa Mumeen Ayara. 10-9-2012; and Imam Shehu Ahmad Warah. 4-9-2012.

<sup>25</sup> For his activities, see Mohammed, 'History of the Spread.'

where he won many converts in the first half of the twentieth century and helped to spread Islam among the Ebira.<sup>26</sup>

Sheikh Yahaya (Tajudeen) was a student of Sheikh Tajul Adab who worked for the Native Authority as a treasurer, an example of the scholars employed by the colonial authority on account of their literacy in Arabic.<sup>27</sup> He had followed on the heels of other Ilorin scholars who carried out missionary work among the Ebira, such as alfa Abdulsalam credited with establishing the first Qur'anic School among the Ebira in 1903. When Sheikh Yahaya left colonial service, he was encouraged to settle in Okene by alfa Abdulsalam as a missionary among the Ebira. He was close to the court and was appointed the Chief Imam of Okene.<sup>28</sup> When he first arrived in Okene, he had written to his teacher in Ilorin on the status of Islam among the Ebira, which he noted was weak.<sup>29</sup>

When these scholars moved out of Ilorin, their encounter with modern western mode of doing things influenced their thinking as they tried to adjust their Islamic education system to the new phenomenon of colonial regime. Lagos in particular but also some other Yoruba towns were influential on the reforms in the pedagogy of Islamic education that took place in the colonial period. In response to the challenge of colonial regime and western education, there emerged one after the other a trifurcate response from the scholars of Ilorin. All of the three streams of educational reform in Ilorin began outside of Ilorin, when the reformist scholars were outside Ilorin on missionary endeavors. These reforms they later introduced into Ilorin.

Lagos as the commercial and administrative capital of the country was particularly attractive to Ilorin scholars. It has been mentioned earlier the influence of commercial activities in the spread of Islam and its education. Most citizens of

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<sup>26</sup> Abdul-Lateef Adekilekun, *Atharul-Shaikh Al-Labeeb Sheikh Tajul- Adab Sh'iran Wanathran*, (Ilorin, Ibrahim Kewulere Press, 2007), 9. He is reputed as always praying for masquerades thus; 'May Allah guide you,' anytime he meets them on the way. The children of these masquerades later became Muslims. This is seen as the answer to his prayers.

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad, 'History of the Spread,' 228; Al Iluri, *Lamahat al Ballur fi*, 16., has mentioned how the colonial authority little had choice but to recourse to these scholars until western literate scholars were trained and these replaced them.

<sup>28</sup> Aremu Abdulganiy, 'The Contribution of Ilorin Scholars to the Development of Islam in Kabba 1915-2000' (B.A. Long Essay: Islamic Studies-Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 2007), 13.

<sup>29</sup> See his letter in the Appendix I, for the Arabic and English translation in -Muhammad, 'History of the Spread,' 416-417. See also Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 231. He addressed his teacher as Shaikh al Islam and Mahdi. This represents the widespread of expectation of the Mahdi among West African Muslims at this period. See Seesemann, *The Divine Flood*, 24.

Lagos by then had become Muslims. Ilorin scholars thus found opportunities to serve as clerics and teachers of religion among them. They in turn respected the Ilorins as the leading light of Islam among the Yoruba speaking people. Unlike Ilorin, which had just come under the influence of colonialism, Lagos has had decades of experience under colonial rule and had been exposed to western ways for long. Even though Lagos Muslims had problems with western education at the initial stage, they had acquiesced early enough and had begun to run their own schools for Muslims in conjunction with the colonial authority.<sup>30</sup>

Religion was not a state religion in Lagos and thus religion was more of a private affair for Muslims unlike in Ilorin where religion is infused to every facet of life. Muslims and Christians were also living harmoniously together. Lagos Muslims had made contact with the wider Muslim world as shown with the opening of Shitta Bey Mosque in Lagos with a representative of the Sultan of Turkey in attendance.<sup>31</sup> Syrian traders were also at the coast, exposing Muslims to Arab Muslims like never before. This cosmopolitan ambience influenced two of the three pedagogical schools that later emerged in Ilorin.

While in the late twentieth century, western educated Muslims, especially the intellectuals in western institutions of higher learning articulated the Islamization of knowledge theory, drawing on the experience of the wider Muslim world,<sup>32</sup> some of the reformist scholars of Ilorin active in the colonial period could be said to have engaged in modernization praxes without much theorization as the later western institution based scholars would do. The advocates of Islamization of knowledge aim at bringing all knowledge, especially those dominated by the West, into an Islamic episteme.<sup>33</sup> They also legitimized its form and content to a large extent and can be seen as part of the globalization of the western school pattern of frontal classroom teaching, organized in different classes of ascending age, which is adapted in the *madaris*.

The traditional Islamic scholars, on their own, not grounded in western epistemology, simply responded to changing times, realigning Islamic education to contemporary situations as a safeguard against the domineering western education

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<sup>30</sup> Gbadamosi, *The Growth of*, 176.

<sup>31</sup> Gbadamosi, *The Growth of*, 168.

<sup>32</sup> See Rafiu Ibrahim Adebayo, *Islamization of Knowledge, global developments, individual efforts and institutional contributions* (Kaduna: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008) for Islamization efforts in Nigeria.

<sup>33</sup> See the following works for the discourse on Islamization of knowledge, Al Attas, *Aims and Objective*; Galadanci (ed.), *Islamisation of Knowledge*; Al Attas Muhammad Naquib, *Islam and Secularism* (kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993); Siddiqi, 'Islamization of Knowledge.'

system. These praxes were pragmatic and proactive strategies these scholars deployed without much theorization (at least in the western academic sense of it)<sup>34</sup> except by rooting their actions in the Qur'an and the Sunnah according to their understanding. Through these strategies, they defended their vocation; at the same time promoting it through some of the modern western methods as well as models from the Arab world.

As Ilorin scholars moved out of Ilorin on missionary activities, their exposure to external influences had some effects on the reformations they were to introduce to Islamic education with far reaching impacts. These influences include modern western ways of living, including its educational and religious system in private and public spheres. Greater communication with the wider world, including parts of the hitherto farther Muslim world, was also an influence. Starting with Sheikh Tajul Adab, his innovative ways began after he had sojourned around the coast and later returned to Ilorin. It was here that he probably came across illustrated Arabic textbooks that he introduced to his students in Ilorin.<sup>35</sup> He foresaw the impacts the new phenomena of modernism would have on Muslims. Even though he was wary of some of the new phenomena like the colonial inspired alkali courts, he informed his students of the benefits that would come with the new realities, though only Sheikh Kamalud-deen seemed to have been fully aware of the import of this teaching.<sup>36</sup>

### **Adabiyya**

The first stream in the educational reforms that emerged in Ilorin was that of the Adabiyya School of pedagogy, rooted in the career of Sheikh Muhammad Jamiu Labib known as Sheikh Tajul Adab,<sup>37</sup> as espoused by his illustrious student, Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-Deen Al Adaby. One of the most illustrious scholars to emerge at that definitive junction of colonial encounter in Ilorin: Sheikh Sheikh Tajul Adab was born in 1877 into a scholarly family of Malian ancestry, the earliest

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<sup>34</sup> Sheikh Adam engaged with these in his writings. See for example, Al Iluri, *Al Islam fi Nijeriya*, 152-154.

<sup>35</sup> Reichmuth, 'Literary Culture and Arabic,'; Shafii, 'Thaqafatul Arabiya fi,' 68.

<sup>36</sup> Discussions with Alhaji Waliy Aliy-Kamal. June 2012.

<sup>37</sup> For more on the career of this scholar see, Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 228-250; Abubakre and Reichmuth, 'Ilorin and Nupe,' 466 and Yusuf Adebola Bamigboye, 'The Contribution of Sheikh Sheikh Tajul Adab to Arabic and Islamic Learning in Yorubaland' (B.A. Arabic and Islamic Studies Department, University of Ibadan, 1987).

missionaries of Islam among the Yoruba. The father was the fifth Imam Imale<sup>38</sup> (1900-1918) Abdulqadir.<sup>39</sup> He was a most remarkable missionary and is highly referred and honoured among the scholars of Ilorin of the twentieth century. A number of myths and anecdotes were connected to him.<sup>40</sup>

As a teacher he taught many students who later became prominent scholars not only in Ilorin but also in other parts of Yoruba region and beyond. He graduated his first set of students in 1910 and a second set ten years later in 1920 in Ilorin.<sup>41</sup> He is credited with a number of innovative practices such as the use of illustrated Arabic texts, which was controversial then<sup>42</sup> and conferment of titles on his students upon graduation.<sup>43</sup> Among his prominent students is Imam Muhammad-Lawal Basil Augusto, one of the Brazilian returnee Muslims in Lagos. He was the first Muslim lawyer in Nigeria and actively promoted the acquisition of western education among Muslims. Bamigboye holds that Sheikh Tajul Adab might have learnt some English from him.<sup>44</sup> This might be the earliest influence of western education among the Adabiyya scholars.

His pedagogy: Before the innovation for which he is much known and which his student Sheikh Kamalud-deen popularized, he was teaching in the old traditional way. He never had a purpose-built school nor taught using blackboard and his students sat on the ground. These aspects of him are what the followers of Sheikh

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<sup>38</sup> Sheikh Adisa-Onikoko, *The Legacy of Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen al Adaby* (Ilorin: Sat Adis Press, 2008), 21. Imam Imale is the second ranked imam in Ilorin and deputizes for the Chief Imam.

<sup>39</sup> Bamigboye, 'The Contribution of Sheikh, 48; Musa Ali Ajetunmobi, 'Contribution of Ilorin Scholars to the Development of Islam and Islamic Scholarship in Yorubaland' –in- S.A. Jimoh, *Ilorin: Centre of Learning* (Ilorin: Jimson Publishers, 2006), 80.

<sup>40</sup> Such as his having no teacher, collapsing time and space, praying on levitated mat, having an ability to understand any book and his unknown whereabouts for a decade. There were eschatological expectations regarding him as depicted in the letter written by Shaikh Yahaya Adafila mentioned earlier. See Abubakre and Reichmuth, 'Ilorin and Nupe,' 466; Al Iluri, *Lamahat Al Ballur fi*, 55-58; Bamigboye, 'The Contribution of Sheikh,' 8.

<sup>41</sup> Adisa-Onikoko, *The Legacy of Sheikh*, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Such as Durus Arabiyya and Al Tamrin Abbasi. He got these from Lagos. Hitherto the only forms of illustrated works found among scholars were the geometric illustrations on Qur'an and religious texts. Shafii, 'Thaqafatul Arabiya fi,' 68. For samples of such geometric illustrations, see Reichmuth, 'Literary Culture and Arabic'.

<sup>43</sup> Among his conferees were Sheikh Zakariya Bakini d.1935 (Alfa Omoda) with the title of Tajul Mumeen (Crown of believers); Sheikh Yahaya Adafila d.1956 (Alfa Okene) as Tajudeen (Crown of religion) and Sheikh Muhammad Habeebullah, the youngest of the lot as Kamalud-deen d.2005 (Perfector of religion) among others. Adisa-Onikoko, *The Legacy*, 22

<sup>44</sup> Lawal Augusto was among the Muslim youths who formed the Literary Society of Nigeria in Lagos, to encourage Muslims to embrace western education in 1915. In 1924, he founded the society, Jamaatul Islamiya of Nigeria. Bamigboye, 'The Contribution of Sheikh,' 67.

Yusuf Agbaji <sup>45</sup> hold onto; that the teacher of their teacher (Tajul Mu'meen) said this was how Sheikh Tajul Adab taught. <sup>46</sup> It is possible that some of his methods changed in the last one and half decade of his life, corresponding with the time Sheikh Kamalud-Deen spent with him and when he had returned from the unaccounted-for journey, if we take into account the difference in the two pedagogical schools connected to him, namely Zumratul Adabiyya and Zumratul Mu'meen. Most probably, his travels were along the coast where he might have come across new ideas from around the Muslim world. It is possible he had plans along lines Sheikh Kamalud-deen later adopted but he did not live long enough to actualize his plan.

He is said to have taught from memory and duration of study was introduced for his students. He made use of Arabic dictionary, taught Arabic literature and science of Arabic grammar to his students to simplify comprehension of Arabic to his students. <sup>47</sup> His travels on the coast may have thus influenced his innovative ways, as it later did in the career of his student, Sheikh Kamalud-deen al Adabiy. Though Bamigboye said he had no set of standard examination for selection and graduation of his students, one presumes he meant written test (like Sheikh Kamalud-deen would later introduce), for he is said to have conferred the title Kamalud-deen <sup>48</sup> on Sheikh Kamalud-deen on his passing the test of the study of *Risala*. <sup>49</sup>

This innovative teaching was no doubt some of the reasons some scholars rejected him. <sup>50</sup> His illustrious protégé Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen al Adaby would later experience even stiffer opposition in his own career. He was able to attract and train young people who later became prominent scholars and pioneers of pedagogical schools of thought in their own right. He simplified the teaching of Arabic language so as to make it easier for his student to be able to understand any religious text. Hitherto for the most part, students learn the meaning of works as

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<sup>45</sup> To him is credited the founding of one of the three main pedagogical school in Ilorin, the Zumratul Mu'meenina (makondoro). Their approach to Islamic education would be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>46</sup> Discussions with Sheikh Abdulkareem Adaara. 21-7-2012.

<sup>47</sup> Bamigboye, 'The Contribution of Sheikh,' 19. We can assume this is the root of the simplification of learning and promotion of Arabic as a spoken language that Sheikh Kamalud-deen was later known for.

<sup>48</sup> This name is often misconstrued as Qamar-deen (moon of religion) and he is popularly called 'Kamaru' in Ilorin. This is due to phonetic similarity of K and Q (not in available Yoruba phonetics) and Yoruba tendency of changing of L for R in speech.

<sup>49</sup> Bamigboye, 'The Contribution,' 30. *Risala* is a popular Maliki book on jurisprudence.

<sup>50</sup> Among accusations leveled against him was that no one knew his teacher, so his authority is questionable.

dictated by their teachers in a rote manner<sup>51</sup> and less attention is given to Arabic as a language on its own merit. Studies could last as long as twenty years or more. He was innovative by introducing some form of curriculum and specific texts for his students.

One characteristic of his teaching method was his emphasis on the correct pronunciation of the Arabic words that devolved down to the Adabiyya group to the present time through Sheikh Kamalud-deen al Adabiy. Hence, often Sheikh Kamalud-deen al Adaby would tell his *ajanasi*<sup>52</sup> (repeater) ‘*a-i’-di-l qiraa,*’ meaning ‘repeat the reading’. To him is also credited the Adabiyya motto *al-adab fawqal ilmi* (etiquette is superior to knowledge).<sup>53</sup> Among his innovations is the organizing of a special *wolimat* (feast) for his graduating students where he would bless them and guide the students in choosing places where they might anchor their missionary and scholastic career.<sup>54</sup> Though this practice could not have started with him, the uniqueness of his style was that since he had a number of young students with him, their *wolimat* would not correspond with their wedding feast as was common practice in Ilorin at that time.

He spent his last years travelling; the route of his missionary endeavor include Offa, Ikirun, Oshogbo, Ede, Iwo, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Ilaro, Otta, Lagos and Badary and as far as Cotonou, mostly on foot. Motor transport was not yet well developed in Nigeria at that time.<sup>55</sup> In his movements, he did not focus on preaching at the palaces of the kings alone but often engaged in open air preaching, choosing different spots in any town he visited. This method was later adopted by his illustrious pupil Sheikh Kamalud-deen Al Adaby, especially in Ilorin.

In the repertoire of Sheikh Tajul Adab were also his writings. In addition to his career as a teacher, he also authored a number of treatises bothering on grammar, elements of mathematics and poetry. These works includes *Sublah Najah, Ala ya*

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<sup>51</sup> This was the assumption of the colonial officials for all higher Islamic learning. NAK ‘Arabic and Religious Instructions in Schools’ Iloprof file No.3196/3/1936.

<sup>52</sup> *Ajanasi* is derived from two words; *ja* from Hausa meaning ‘to draw out long’ and ‘*nassi*’ from Arabic meaning text. ‘A’ prefixed the two words to indicate the subject. *Ajanasi* thus means ‘the one who draws out the text long’. The *Ajanasi* reads out the verses of the Qur’an in a long and drawn out tone preparatory to a scholar exegetical explanation in a sermon of the read verses.

<sup>53</sup> He is not known to be hot tempered and took his students’ welfare with utmost concern. His slaughtering two goats on an occasion to feed his students is often cited as an example of his generosity. Bamigboye, ‘The Contribution,’ 65.

<sup>54</sup> Bamigboye, ‘The Contribution,’ 32; Al Iluri, *Lamahat Al Ballur*, 72.

<sup>55</sup> Bamigboye, ‘The Contribution,’ 48; Ajetunmobi, ‘Contribution of Ilorin,’ 86.

*Murida*,<sup>56</sup> and *'aadid* etc. Sheikh Tajul Adab<sup>57</sup> came at that important period of Ilorin's encounter with colonialism, westernization and the many changes they brought on the people's consciousness and ways of life. He was eclectic in his approach to these phenomena; hence we can see variety in the approaches of his students and grand students to these phenomena. He is said to have foretold of the power and influence that western education is going to have on the people, to his student Kamalud-deen.<sup>58</sup> This must have been a major factor in the toleration of western education that Kamalud-deen would later adopt in his career. Despite this realization, Sheikh Tajul Adab had misgivings about the colonial order and was wary of it. This ambiguity is further attested by the fact that his student Sheikh Yahaya Adafila accepted to work with the NA and he does not appear to have objected or dissuaded him from doing so.<sup>59</sup>

Much of what is known of Sheikh Tajul Adab came down through his pupils especially through the educational activities of his remarkable pupil, Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen al Adabiyy, who sojourned with him in his last years. Sheikh Tajul Adab passed away in 1923 at the remarkably young age of thirty-eight in Abeokuta, where he had gone to stay and Sheikh Kamalud-deen was with him when he passed away.<sup>60</sup> It is noteworthy that this renowned scholar is the precursor of the innovative scholars of the twentieth century in Ilorin. The leaders of the three major schools of thought in Islamic education in Ilorin were connected to him,

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<sup>56</sup> Sheikh Ahmad Tijani Adisa-Onikoko, *The Legacy*, 26. This book was edited and commented upon by Sheikh Khidru Salahudeen Apaokagi and was published as *Al-Manzumatu Nahwiyyatul Adabiyyah*, dated 1993.

<sup>57</sup> He comes across as a very confident scholar in the manner of Sufi scholars (of which he was one) as can be seen in the eschatological position attributed to him by his students or as discernible in his poems such as "Sun of religion" or in *'aadid*'. See Al Iluri, *Lamahat Al Ballur*, 116; Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 233 and Bamigboye, 'The Contribution,' 60.

<sup>58</sup> Discussions with Alhaji A.K.W. Aliy-Kamal, June 2012.

<sup>59</sup> He appears to have avoided the colonial authority in all his endeavors. An example was when his brother was appointed a qadi in the new colonial sharia court. He was averse to it, saying it would draw anyone into worldly things and corruption. He changed his living quarters to avoid meeting his brother. His fears were not unfounded as the colonial authority itself had to disband the initial courts on allegation of prevalent corruption. This attitude we can assume was the aspect of his character that flowed down to Zumratul Mu'meenina through his khalifa, Sheikh Zakariya Bakini (alfa Omoda). The scholars would all be aware of the circumstances in which Sheikh Abubakar Ikororo was relieved of his appointment in 1911 by the colonial authority. This would have further alienated the scholar class from colonial institution as a corrupt or corrupting institution. Rhodes House, Dwyer's Report 958 'Extract from Letter to the Private Secretary, To His Excellency, The High Commissioner, Jebba. Dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 1902'; Danmole, 'The Frontier Emirate,' 179; Abubakre and Reichmuth, 'Ilorin and Nupe,' 445-446; Discussions with Alhaji Aliyu Bayo Sallah. November, 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Bamigboye, 'The Contribution,' 1.

directly or indirectly. When Sheikh Tajul Adab passed away, Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen carried on his educational legacy.

Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen al Adabiy was born in 1907,<sup>61</sup> and had his Qur'anic education at Babaita Qur'anic School under Alfa Salahudeen Ahmad Tijjani. He studied Qur'an also with his father and also learned weaving under him.<sup>62</sup> His next teacher, Sheikh Tajul Adab, took note of him and requested for him to be released to him from his parents. The father was initially reluctant but Sheikh Tajul Adab persisted and young Kamalud-deen was released to him. He is said to have finished his Qur'an studies in 1919 at twelve years of age and began his studies the same year with Sheikh Tajul Adab. He followed his teacher around Yoruba towns that he visited and was with him in Abeokuta when Sheikh Tajul Adab passed away in 1923.<sup>63</sup> Thereafter he moved to Lagos where two years later he established a school named *Az-Zumratu Adabiyah li Taalim lughatul Arabiyya wa Thaqafiya* and was also conducting open air preaching.<sup>64</sup> When he started out, he was teaching sitting on the ground in the traditional way, both in his school in Lagos and that of Ilorin that he started later around 1928/1930, just like his teacher.<sup>65</sup> Not much is known of this early period.<sup>66</sup>

When he began his innovation in 1938 we began to have some more information about his activities.<sup>67</sup> The school was located at No.15, Ojo Giwa Street, in Lagos Island. It was here that he began his reformations that would have a lasting impact on Islamic education throughout southwestern Nigerian and beyond. The use of benches and table for his student and the use of black board for instructing his students began here as well. A year earlier, he had gone on the pilgrimage to Mecca,

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<sup>61</sup> Abubakre and Reichmuth, 'Ilorin and Nupe,' 469.

<sup>62</sup> Muhammad Yakubu Aliagan, (Arabic) *Shaykh Muhammad Kamalud-deen Al Adabiyy* (Ilorin: NNI Publishers, 2001), 21.

<sup>63</sup> Sheikh Ahmad Tijani Adisa-Onikoko, *The Cradle Rocker* (Ilorin: Sat Adis Press, 1997), 15; Aliagan, *Shaykh Muhammad Kamalud-deen*, 27. For Sheikh Tajul Adab's stay in Abeokuta see Bamigboye, 'The Contribution,' 52-58.

<sup>64</sup> Sheikh Kamalud-deen like his teacher Sheikh Tajul Adab began his career as a preacher. He first had the experience as a public preacher at Ohunbo, a town between Nigeria and Porto Novo in 1920 on the prompting of his teacher Sheikh Sheikh Tajul Adab. He was still a teenager at this time. Adisa-Onikoko, *The Cradle Rocker*, 15-16; Aliagan, *Shaykh Muhammad Kamalud-deen*, 26.

<sup>65</sup> Aliagan, *Shaykh Muhammad Kamalud-deen*, 26.

<sup>66</sup> Apparently it took him over ten years from the time he started his career in Lagos to begin with his reform experiments, during which time he must have observed the Ansar-ud-deen Society and their schools as well as government schools.

<sup>67</sup> He had begun his school in Lagos as early as 1926 but the use of benches and blackboard which signaled the adoption of elements of western school model began in 1938. Discussion with Khalifa Adabiyya, Sheikh Sofiyullah al Adabiyy. 1-9-2012; Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 237.

taking along with him one of his students, Aliyu Olukade. He spent six months on the journey, though at the time, it could take people as much as a year for the journey. This journey, among other experiences influenced his new methods.<sup>68</sup>

The people of Lagos, mostly Muslims, already well exposed to the modern phenomena accepted his innovations without apprehension. He started with twenty two pupils in Lagos and with six benches. When the school started, he had his students march from the school in Ojo Giwa Street to Onala, through Idumagbo and Jankara and then returned to Ojo Giwa Street where they had started out. This parade resulted in increased enrolment in the school which rose to over seventy pupils by the end of the month and the venue and furniture could no longer be enough for the population. Many prominent Muslim families in Lagos Island brought their children to the school.<sup>69</sup> The early Christian missionaries had similarly used parades round towns to attract people to their mission.<sup>70</sup> Sheikh Kamaluddeen would have seen this in Lagos in the twenties and the effect it was having on Muslim youths who were attracted by such parades, especially from such organizations as the Boys Scout and Boys Brigade (in smart uniforms) to be found in public schools and churches. From Ojo Giwa Street the school moved to several places to accommodate the students' growing population.

In Lagos, the school lessons were taking place in the evenings from Mondays through to Fridays to allow for the students to attend public schools but on Saturdays and Sundays, the lessons were held in the morning. When the school had grown, wearing of uniform dress was introduced.

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<sup>68</sup> Abubakre and Reichmuth, 'Ilorin and Nupe,' 469.

<sup>69</sup> Discussion with Khalifa Adabiyya, Sheikh Sofiyullah al Adabiyy. 1-9-2012.

<sup>70</sup> Nasiru, 'Islamic Learning Among,' 92.



Fig. 7. Sheikh Tajul Adab. Picture from the cover of his hagiography by Sheikh Ahmed Abdullahi Onikijipa.



Fig. 8. Sheikh Muhammad Habibullah Kamalud-deen Al-Adaby. Source: Brochure commemorating the opening of the New Ilorin Central Mosque in 1981.

Thereafter, he returned to Ilorin where he reformed the Ilorin school and named it Ma'had al-ulum al-'arabiyya li-l-Jama'a al-Adabiyya and had his first set of student for the reformed school in 1943.<sup>71</sup> When he started the experiment in Ilorin, the students began with wearing a uniform of white dress, taking after the Lagos school. Unlike Lagos, his innovation of using chairs and tables, blackboard and uniform was not wholly welcome in Ilorin.<sup>72</sup> He was accused of introducing unwholesome innovations. His teaching was labeled '*kewu shaitan*' (devil's learning).<sup>73</sup> The method was strange to the scholars and he was stoutly opposed. While some openly opposed him, some supported him even if they did not follow his example. More than the facilities of learning that he introduced, his methods were opposed as contradicting the tradition of learning. For example, he reduced the number of years it took then to finish the study of the Qur'an. What in the old traditional system could take between a few years and up to ten years or even more

<sup>71</sup> Adisa-Onikoko, *The Cradle Rocker*, 16. See also Adisa-Onikoko, *The Legacy*, 34; Discussion with Khalifah Adabiyya, Sheikh Sofiyullah Kamalud-deen al Adabiyy. 1-9-2012.

<sup>72</sup> Western education itself was still struggling for acceptance in Ilorin at this period.

<sup>73</sup> Discussion with Alhaji Saadu Kuranga. 3-9-12 and Discussions with Alfa Ibrahim Alfa.5-6-2012.

was reduced to between six months to less than two years in his school through structured teaching.<sup>74</sup>

This had economic and social status implications for scholars using the traditional system. For the scholars against his reforms, depending largely on the stipends and gifts they get from parents; reduction in the number of years of study is tantamount to reducing the availability of such gifts. Taken together with the new monetized economic order (they also had to pay tax), the position of the scholars was vulnerable. Moreover, most of these scholars had learned in the old hard way and were reluctant or unwilling to suddenly make such knowledge available easily. To do so, they believed it would reduce the value of the knowledge and the prestige that goes with it.<sup>75</sup>

Students in his school had study duration and were examined at the end of a course of study. The para-military parade he had used successfully in Lagos was also introduced to the school in Ilorin. Arabic words were used for marching commands such as *yasar* (left) and *yamin* (right).<sup>76</sup> Other schools later took after the use of the parade especially during celebrations such as the annual *maulud nabi* (the Prophet's birthday).<sup>77</sup> The students would march round the streets before rounding up in front of the emir's palace, during public celebrations of the *maulud nabi*. The open air celebrations of the *maulud nabi* had been pioneered by Sheikh Kamaluddeen as well.<sup>78</sup> It became a communal celebration in front of the emir's palace with various scholars and their students participating.

He was using the book, *Muftahu Lughatul Arabiya* to teach his pupils to read in Arabic and had them memorize it. The students were taught in such a way they

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<sup>74</sup> Aliagan, *Shaykh Muhammad Kamalud-deen*, 27; Discussions with Alfa Mumeen Ayara. 11-9-2012.

<sup>75</sup> These reforms were met with stiff resistance as something alien to the people and their religion by other scholars. The reformer faced many obstacles such as stoning, cursing and being chased away from preaching grounds around the city. He and his students would then retreat to the front of the emir's palace. In the last forty years of his life, he became the most revered scholar and was made the *mufti* of Ilorin. The ideals for which he was vilified had since become the norm in the city. Interviews with Sheikh Ahmad Adisa-Onikoko, 21 June 2012 and Prince Salman Abdulkadir, December, 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Discussions with Alhaji Saadu Kuranga 3-9-12 and Alfa M umeen Ayara 6-4-2013.

<sup>77</sup> The Gbagba Qur'anic School, for example, took after this practice even though the school did not integrate western and Islamic education. Discussions with Imam Ahmad Yahaya Maisolati, 16-6-2012 and Imam Ajia, Muhammad Bello. 9-6-12.

<sup>78</sup> Discussions with Khalifa Adabiyah- Sheikh Sofiyullah Kamalud-deen AlAdabiyi. 1-9-2012.

could read any Arabic text <sup>79</sup> and the book also contained some lessons on *adab*. The meanings of the shorter verses of the Qur'an were taught to his students, especially the last 1/30<sup>th</sup> of the Qur'an. Memorization of the passages from the Qur'an was included in the training of his students. These were new methods: in the old traditional method, it took a longer time before students were exposed to the meaning of words, usually after the recitational study of the Qur'an. A love of Arabic language and literature was cultivated in his students. They could therefore communicate in Arabic in spoken and written forms. *Nahw* (syntax) was taught using the four volumes *Durusul Awwaliya*.<sup>80</sup>

The reforms of Sheikh Kamalud-deen included the grouping of his students into classes of students on the same educational level as in the government schools. He had a syllabus drawn up and there was continuous assessment and a final examination. Students were promoted based on their performance. He introduced the use of registers for record purpose. Specific textbooks were being used for specific levels of the students. Subjects like geography, history, logic and arithmetic that are only ancillary to the religious subjects were introduced. Elementary English was also included. Certificates were awarded to his students at the end of their studies.<sup>81</sup> His students were paying tuition fees from which he paid his teachers.<sup>82</sup> He dispensed with the traditional one teacher school.<sup>83</sup> When the population of this school increased, he rented a building not far from the school until he was able to complete another building in 1969.<sup>84</sup> He also latched onto Yoruba penchant for drama; he used this to dramatize the roles of Muslim heroes and to display Arabic speaking skills of his students. These were usually performed during Muslim festivals such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, during graduations of his students and in public places like Glover Hall in Lagos.<sup>85</sup>

He mentored his students by employing them to work for him and also sending them on missionary works to other areas.<sup>86</sup> In this way, he kept his graduates

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<sup>79</sup> One of the criticism of the colonial officials of the Islamic education system is that lessons are 'parrot wise' even for the advanced studies. Sheikh Kamalud-deen was already working away from this system but it does not appear that his effort was known to the colonial authority.

<sup>80</sup> Discussions with Imam Shehu Ahmad Warah. 4-9-2012.

<sup>81</sup> Lukman Hassan Muhammad, 'The Life and Works of Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen al Adaby and his Contribution to the Development of Islamic Education' ( Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University (2012), 28-29.

<sup>82</sup> NAK 'Al Adabiyya Moslem School' Iloprof file No. 4659. See Appendix VI.

<sup>83</sup> Nasiru, 'Islamic Learning,' 153.

<sup>84</sup> Nasiru, 'Islamic Learning,' 153.

<sup>85</sup> Discussion with Sheikh Salman Olarongbe Abdulkadir. November 2012.

<sup>86</sup> Muhammad, 'The Life and Works,' 29

employed and curtailed unemployment that a surplus of scholars that his shortened duration of study would have caused and would have given his detractors further opportunity to criticize him. An example would suffice here. The Igbomina<sup>87</sup> people in Lagos complained to him that their children at home in Ijomu Oro were being exposed to Christianity and wanted him to start a combined school like the one in Ilorin at Ijomu Oro. He therefore sent one of his students, Shehu Ahmad Warah to go and start a Qur'anic school in Ijomu Oro. He told the parents to exercise patient; that the Qur'anic School would be established first and later western education would be introduced into the Qur'anic School.<sup>88</sup> His experience of running the school in Ilorin and perhaps financial constraints would have informed this gradualist approach.

By the mid-forties, western education had become popular among the people in Ilorin. People could see that the graduates of western education were becoming new elites in the society and this was affecting Islamic education, even for a reformed school as Sheikh Kamalud-Deen's school. As one of the colonial officials noted of that period, learning to read and write in English was becoming popular in town and many had acquired these skills on their own from traders and clerks from the south. Some of these found their way into his reformed school, especially after he established the western primary school in 1946 and they could blend with his innovations.<sup>89</sup> The physical layout of the western schools, availability of sports, voluntary organizations such as Boy Scouts and Boys Brigade<sup>90</sup> and the economic implications of having western education were attracting students away from Qur'anic schools. Some of his students were leaving for the western schools and he began to think of a way to arrest this drift.

Though some clerics blamed him for introducing western education into the Islamic education system in Ilorin, it is discernible he was reluctant to introduce it and had to do so when students began to drift away. He saw that Muslims would lose their children to western education completely if nothing was done to arrest the drift. His argument was that if Muslims were trained in western education, it is these Muslims that would later replace the Christian teachers that were giving the Muslims concern. During one of his graduation ceremonies, one of his guests, after seeing the display of Arabic speaking skills of his students advised him concerning his

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<sup>87</sup> The Igbominas are neighbours to the Ilorins to the south and many of them were based in Lagos as businessmen, sending their children home to study away from the corrupting influence of Lagos and for the children to be familiar with their roots.

<sup>88</sup> Discussions with Imam Shehu Ahmad Warah. 4-9-2012.

<sup>89</sup> NAK 'Proposed Classes for Koran Teachers' Iloprof file No. 2276; Discussions with Alfa Ibrahim Alfa. 5-6-2012 and Mr Emmanuel Afolabi. 8-9-2012.

<sup>90</sup> Nasiru, 'Islamic Learning,' 143.

school. While commending his efforts and noble intention: his students could speak Arabic, but that all these alone would hardly get them anywhere in the modern system unless they have some western education with it.<sup>91</sup> It means the social mobility of his students would be limited despite all their efforts and knowledge.

This observation, the foresight of his teacher, his own experience of what obtained in Lagos and the drifting away of his students must have finally convinced him of the need to introduce western education subjects into his school. His experience in Lagos convinced him of the benefit in Muslims having some western learning. The influence of Ansar-ud-deen Society on his reform is instructive here, as can also be seen in the name of the organization he would later establish, the Ansarul Islam Society.<sup>92</sup> Ansarud-deen Society have made remarkable progress among the Yoruba in the south and this greatly influenced his own decisions.

The opposition he had experienced reforming his Qur'anic and Arabic School was likely to have held him down from introducing the western education into his school before then. In 1946, he made the important decision to have a western primary school of his own. He applied to the colonial authority to start his school as the manager of the school. He named it Al Adabiyya Moslem School, Ilorin. In the application dated 11-7-1946, the school would be managed by a committee of four people, Alhaji Kamalud-deen, Alfa Salmanu, Alhaji Jamiu Arowolo and Alhadj Salmanu. It was proposed to be an elementary school, taking mixed students and no boarder. Funding of the school will come from school fees, contributions and subscriptions from members of Adabiyya and Ansarul Islam Society.<sup>93</sup> The medium of instruction would be in vernacular at first, and then English would be introduced later.<sup>94</sup>

Sheikh Kamalud-Deen requested the land of the new school from the owners who gave it to him and the emir was a witness to this transfer and recommended the school for approval, describing him as 'a good man.'<sup>95</sup> He thus became the first individual to formally start a formal private school in Ilorin both in the Islamic and

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<sup>91</sup> Discussions with Sheikh Abdulkareem Adaara. 21-7-2012.

<sup>92</sup> The two organizations collaborated with Ansarul Islam supplying Arabic teachers to Ansar-ud-deen and Ansar-ud-deen supplying teachers of western schools to Ansarul Islam. . Discussions with Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani Adisa-Onikoko. 21-6-2012.and Muqadam Yahaya Adabata. 21-7-2014.

<sup>93</sup> Like the Ansar-ud-deen Society, Sheikh Kamalud-deen had established Ansarul Islam Society as a missionary organization in 1943.

<sup>94</sup> NAK 'Adabiyya Moslem School.' Iloprof file No. 4659. See Appendix V.

<sup>95</sup> NAK 'Adabiyya Moslem School.' Iloprof file No. 4659; Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 240 and Discussions with Khalifa Adabiyyah Sheikh Sofiyullah Kamalud-deen Al Adabiy.1-9-2012.

western sense of it. Three years earlier, a group of Ilorin indigenes and some Christian breakaway group from a church had started the first community western school in Ilorin.<sup>96</sup> Now adding the much impugned western education, his new project further angered the people who were against his earlier reforms. The school was derisively referred to as '*ile-iwe abe petesi*'<sup>97</sup> ('under the storey building' school). He had started his school under his one-storey building. A year later Ansarul Islam Society built a block of three classrooms roofed with thatch for the school.<sup>98</sup>

When he started the elementary school, not many parents of his students were aware of the new development and thought the school was still the reformed Qur'anic School.<sup>99</sup> He employed three teachers headed by Mr Kazeem Oyekole. He was assisted by Mr Omishade who is a Christian and another English language teacher. He balanced these with three Islamic/Arabic teachers, who had been his students. He employed Christian teachers and admitted Christian students.<sup>100</sup> His school unlike the conventional government and Christian mission schools had a different study regime. Its focus was to get Muslims to be learned in the western subjects but with a strong background in Islamic education. He structured the lessons such that in the morning between 7:00 o'clock and 8:00 o'clock, religious education in Arabic and vernacular is given to the students. Then the morning assembly is held. On the assembly ground the school band would play and the students would sing in Arabic such songs as '*halan wa saalan wa marhaba bikum.*'<sup>101</sup> At the beginning of each day the students were made to recite the ninety-nine names of Allah in a

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<sup>96</sup> Established by Ilorin United School Society, it was Named United School. Elias Yahaya, 'The Establishment and Development of Western Education in Ilorin Township 1900-1960' ( MA History Dissertation, University of Ilorin,1998), 51-53; Adisa-Onikoko, *Cradle Rocker*, 92; Jimoh, *Ilorin the Journey*, 261.

<sup>97</sup> The NA workers under whom all western education school had been until then mocked his effort. Discussions with Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani Adisa-Onikoko. 21-6-2012.

<sup>98</sup> Aliy-Kamal, 'Islamic Education in,' 84.

<sup>99</sup> His fear was that many parents would be scared into taking their children away. So that at the initial stage the school operated covertly by not announcing its new status. Discussions with Imam Shehu Ahmad Warah. 4-9-2012.

<sup>100</sup> Mr Emmanuel Afolabi was one of the few Christian students who joined his school. His parents were also apprehensive that he may convert to Islam and warned him against it or he would forfeit his education. He was considered too old to go school in the first place but his personal efforts at learning and through the encouragement of one of the teachers in the school led him to enroll in the school. Discussions. 8-9-2012.

<sup>101</sup> It means 'You are most welcome.' Discussions with Mr Emmanuel Afolabi. Ogbomoshu. 8-9-2012.

merry-go-round, each student pronouncing just a name. This way all students were able to memorize the ninety-nine names of Allah.<sup>102</sup>

From 8:00 am till 1:00 pm, the lessons in western education are held. Between 1:00 p.m and 2:00 p.m, the *mualimuna* (sing. *mualim* (teachers) took the students again in religious subjects. The school thus began and closed with religious study every day. Subjects in the western section included English language, arithmetic, reading and writing, geography, history, hygiene and nature studies. In the Arabic/Islamic section, the subjects included Al-Qur'an (Qur'an recitation) *tajwid* (the science of Qur'an recitation), *tafsir* (Qur'an exegesis), *al-Diyanah* (Islamic doctrines), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) *al-Arabiyya* (Arabic literature), *nahw* (syntax), *sarf* (morphology), *sirah* (biography of the prophet and the early companions) and hadith (traditions of the prophet).<sup>103</sup> The students were trained to memorize 1/30<sup>th</sup> of the Qur'an and some special chapters such as Suratul Yasin.<sup>104</sup>

This system lasted between 1947 when the school opened and 1976, by which time the Federal Government of Nigeria had introduced the Universal Primary Education and the State Government took over the school, a period of about twenty-nine years. This school had its own band, Boy Scouts and sports and games,<sup>105</sup> the very facilities attracting Muslim youths away from Qur'anic schools in the colonial period.<sup>106</sup> This integrated school produced many Muslims who were well grounded in Islamic education and western education in Ilorin.

The students were taught to be able to communicate in Arabic through writing (*khatt*) and dictation (*imla'*) lessons. While the western section was elementary, many aspects of the Arabic and Islamic section were not elementary as would be revealed in the next chapter. For example, jurisprudence can hardly be called elementary, though there are elementary aspects of it. The graduates of the school would form the nucleus of western educated Ilorin people in post- independence Nigeria and who held key positions in both government and in the private sectors within Ilorin as a state capital and at the national level. Despite these laudable efforts of the school, the certificate of the school was not recognized by the

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<sup>102</sup> Aliy-Kamal, 'Islamic Education,' 93; Discussions with Engr. Kola Ibrahim. 5-10-2012; Discussions with Mr Emmanuel Afolabi. 8-9-2012.

<sup>103</sup> Aliy-Kamal, 'Islamic Education,' 86.

<sup>104</sup> Qur'an. Chapter 36. Discussions with Engr. Kola Ibrahim. 5-10-2012.

<sup>105</sup> One of the *mualims*, Sheikh Abdulraheem Aminullah was the game master for the students. Popularly known as Oniwasi Agabaye (worldwide preacher). He would become a prominent scholar establishing his own school in the early 1970s. He passed away in 2012.

<sup>106</sup> Discussions with Engr. Kola Ibrahim. 5-10-2012 and Alfa Ibrahim Alfa. 5-6-2012.

authority until 1957.<sup>107</sup> For the graduates of the school to proceed to higher levels of western education they had to sit for the School Leaving Certificate examination in government schools.<sup>108</sup> This Adabiyya system would continue into the early years of independence when additional progress was made. This would be treated in the next chapter.

### **Zumratul Mu'meenina (Makondoro)**

One of the consequences Sheikh Tajul Adab's mentoring of scholars as well as the general missionary endeavors of Ilorin scholars was the emergence of the Zumratul Mu'meenina as a distinct group of Muslim scholars. They formed a second stream of pedagogical school that emerged in Ilorin in the colonial period. Like the Adabiyya School, it is also connected to the work of Sheikh Tajul Adab, although indirectly, and had resulted from missionary endeavor to outside of Ilorin. In all, the origin of the group has been linked to four individuals but in a non-controversial way. Kankawi in his thesis explicates on these four views. The first view tagged the origin to Sheikh Sheikh Tajul Adab, because he was the grand teacher of the Zumratul Mu'meenina and at the initial stage, the group had been referring to themselves as Zumratul Sheikh Tajul Adab.<sup>109</sup>

The second view, linked to Adekilekun,<sup>110</sup> stated that the origin of the group lies with Sheikh Zakariya Bakini (Tajul Mumeen).<sup>111</sup> The argument being that Sheikh Tajul Mumeen was the teacher of Sheikh Yusuf and it was his name the group

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<sup>107</sup> Aliy-Kamal, 'Islamic Education,' 88. It is situations like this that some Muslim political activists have in mind when they argued that political authority should precede Islamization of knowledge. We see political authority not favorable to an Islamization project in this instance. Galadanci (ed.), *Islamisation of Knowledge*, 15.

<sup>108</sup> Adisa-Onikoko, *The Cradle Rocker*, 55-58; Adisa-Onikoko, *The Legacy of*, especially Chapter five; Discussions with Sheikh Salman Olarongbe Abdulkadir (Daudu Ballah). November 2012.

<sup>109</sup> Uthman Idrees Kankawi, 'Intajat l Arabiyyah Ladiy Zumratul Muminu fi Nijeriyya: Dirastu Tahliliyyah' (An Analytical Study of Arabic Literary Products of the Zumratul-Mu'minin of Nigeria (Makondoro), (PhD Thesis: Department of Arabic, University of Ilorin, 2012), 69-72.

<sup>110</sup> Adekilekun, *Atharul-Shaikh Al-labeeb*, 10.

<sup>111</sup> Sheikh Zakariya Bakini Tajul Mu'meen (Crown of Believers) (d.1935) also referred to as Alfa Omoda was one of the leading students of Sheikh Sheikh Tajul Adab as well as his friend. When the later died, he took on some of his students. Alfa Omoda would go on to train and inspire many of the notable scholars of Ilorin. Like his teacher and other scholars, he too went on missionary endeavor to Abeokuta. While in Abeokuta, the people of Ibadan requested of him to send them a teacher. Alfa Omoda then sent a telegraph to two of his students, Alhaji Yahaya of Ile Okoh in Lagos and Sheikh Yusuf Agbaji al Hamdaniyu in Ilorin to answer the call of Ibadan people. Sheikh Yusuf Agbaji got to Ibadan before Alhaji Yahaya and took on the role. This was in the 1930s. Discussions with Sheikh Abdulkareem Adaara, Agbaji, 22-7-2012.

finally adopted for their organization. The third view linked the origin of the group to Sheikh Yusuf Al Hamdaniyu bn Adaara Agbaji.<sup>112</sup> This is the view of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al Iluri<sup>113</sup> and the group also pinned their origin to him, though they acknowledged his teacher, Sheikh Zakariya Bakini as well as Sheikh Tajul Adab. The fourth view credited the founding of the group to Alfa Bamidele, who it is widely acknowledged as having galvanized the group and popularized their activities and characteristics.<sup>114</sup>

The first two views based their argument on the *silsila* (chain of authority) of the group- Sheikh Tajul Adab- Sheikh Zakariya Tajul Mumeen- Yusuf Al Hamdani- Alfa Bamidele. The last two based their argument on the active involvement of the scholars Sheikh Yusuf Al Hamdani and Alfa Bamidele in the group formation and activities. The non-controversial nature of the classification is based on the validity of their various arguments. The hierarchical nature of Muslim learning presupposes a deep respect for one's teachers, hence the validity of the first two views. While Sheikh Yusuf may not have intended to form any group let alone give it any name, his missionary and intellectual activity inspired his disciples to form the group, considering themselves distinct from others. While Alfa Bamidele never laid claim to having founded the group, his vigorous propagation of the group's doctrine greatly contributed to the spread of the group all over Yoruba region.<sup>115</sup>

The group members are generally referred to as *makondoro* by the people.<sup>116</sup> Although members of the group do not refer to themselves as *makondoro* but they also never took offence being called so. They see it as society's way of identifying them which is also a signifier of their uniqueness. Many interpretations have been given to the meaning of this word. Yoruba, being a tonal language gives room for

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<sup>112</sup> While in Ibadan Sheikh Yusuf (student to Sheikh Tajul Mu'meen) trained many scholars from all over Yoruba region. These students then suggested that their group ought to have a name like the other Muslim groups such as Nawairud-deen, Ansarud-deen that had been in existence for some time by then. The name and organization of the group came through the promptings of the students. They suggested naming their group Zumratul Yusuf Al Hamdaniyu. However, Sheikh Yusuf told the group to name it after his teacher, Sheikh Zakariya Bakini-Sheikh Tajul Mu'meen- hence the name of the group Zumratul Mu'meenina. Sheikh Yusuf never intended starting a group and from development of the group, it is discernible he was merely the inspiration as the teacher of the group. Sheikh Yusuf later returned to Ilorin where he continued to teach till he passed away in 1979.

<sup>113</sup> Al Iluri, *Lamahat al Ballur fi*, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Kankawi, 'Intajat l Arabiyyah Ladiy,' 69-72.

<sup>115</sup> Rasheed A. Raji, 'The Makondoro Muslims of Nigeria: Continuity Through Learning Strategies,' *Journal of Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Volume 11:1 (1990).

<sup>116</sup> On the group, see also Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 242-250.

the various interpretations. Some say it a derivative of ‘*imo kodoro*’<sup>117</sup> (pure knowledge), others say it is from ‘*mo kodoro*’ (clean shaven)<sup>118</sup> because the scholars tend to keep their head clean shaven. However, the name *makondoro*, according to one of their leaders, was derived from an innocuous act by one of the disciples of Sheikh Yusuf during the wedding ceremony in 1960 (he had retired to live Ilorin in 1957) of his daughter.<sup>119</sup>



Fig. 9. Members of the Zumratul Mu'meenina (*Makondoro*) in their typical dressing at an occasion. Picture courtesy Alfa AbdulSalam Alalukurani, 2013.

<sup>117</sup> Daud Olayinka Abubakr, ‘Zumratul Mu'minina (makondoro)’ (B.A. Long Essay: Islamic Studies-Department of Religion, University of Ilorin, 1986), 13; A popular singer, Alhaji Labaika popularized this through one of his songs.

<sup>118</sup> Raji, ‘The Makondoro Muslims,’ 153.

<sup>119</sup> To add colour to his humble gift of a carved wooden calabash called *makongoro*, the disciple chanted ‘*makongoro, makongoro, makongoro...*’ *Makondoro* was thereafter derived from this and as the meanings of the new derivative word ‘pure knowledge’ and ‘clean shaven’ aptly fits the characteristics of the group, the name stuck and people have little or no doubt as to the authenticity of the meaning though they do not know the origin of the name. The indifference of the group to the name also contributed to perpetuation of the connotation. They are well known for the use of *waka* or song in their teaching and preaching. Kankawi, ‘Intajat I Arabiyyah,’ 88; Aliy-Kamal, ‘Islamic Education,’ 62; Discussions with Sheikh Abdulkareem Adaara, Agbaji, 22-7-2012. See M.M. Jimba, *Ilorin-Waka A Literary, Islamic and Popular Art* (Ilorin: Taofiqullahi Publishing Houses, 1997), 15-16, for samples of their *waka* (songs).

While in Ibadan Sheikh Yusuf had many students come to him from Ilorin but also from all over Yoruba region. These students, when they returned back to their places established their own schools and spread the doctrine of the group among their disciples. These disciples were to spread the groups' teaching all over Yoruba region.<sup>120</sup> In Ilorin, though they can be found in most locations, Agbaji quarters where Sheikh Yusuf lived and Pakata are locations where they can be found with some concentration.

The missionary activities of the *Zumratul mu'meenina* centered essentially in knowledge reproduction. Their educational philosophy can be traced to three main sources. Like everything Islamic, the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the prophet forms the core. This, as expounded by their teachers; from Sheikh Tajul Adab, through Sheikh Zakariya to Sheikh Yusuf Agbaji, form the second source of their philosophy. A third corroborating source is the educational philosophy of Al-Zarnuji as expounded in his book.<sup>121</sup> Basically their philosophy of education is rooted in the religion like every other Muslims; it is an extension of the religious praxis and is aimed at positive hereafter. In this they are no different from other Muslims.

It is in their methods that they differ from other Muslims in Ilorin. Coming into prominence at the height of colonial rule, the reality of the time influenced their attitude toward education. Their method formed a second stream of response to colonial inspired western education. Knowing fully well that colonialism came at the expense of Muslim rule, now subject to its authority and the agents of this new order (Christian colonial officers); the group rejected western education. Western education, in their view, is only about deception. According to them, it is concerned with the multiplication of material values; 'how to turn ten to a hundred, a hundred to a thousand.'<sup>122</sup> In their view, the disciple of western education learns how to deceive and is not concerned with the hereafter. It is in essence a *nasara* (Christian)

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<sup>120</sup> This resulted in a variety of names for the group according to the locality in which they are based. In Ibadan where the formation of the group began, they are referred to as *Bandele* (after their leader Alfa Bamidele) or *Sangiliti* (purely or solely), a splinter group. In Offa they are known as *Ambee* or *Aiyegbami*, at Ado Ekiti, they became known as *Dandawi*. In Ikirun, they are known as *faya* ('tear it' - derived from their constant fights against traditional religionists). Raji, 'The Makondoro Muslims' 154; Abubakr, 'Zumratul Mu'mininina (makondoro),' 4.

<sup>121</sup> Burhan al Din Al-Zarnuji 602AH/1223CE, is the author of the celebrated pedagogical treatise *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim-Tarīq at-Ta'allum (Instruction of the Student: The Method of Learning)*. Especially his sartorial recommendations. See Kankawi, 'Intajat l Arabiyyah Ladiy,' 79.

<sup>122</sup> Discussions with Sheikh Muhammad Hashimiyu Alfaanla Okutagidi. 14-7-2012, and Sheikh Abdulkareem Adaara. Agbaji, 22-7-2012.

and *yehudi* (Jewish) doctrine and as such could only mislead the Muslims. The propagation of the religious education is therefore paramount to the group. Hence, all their praxes revolve around religious education.

They not only rejected western education, especially in the early period, but also rejected appropriating aspects of the organization of the system which other Muslim groups such as Ansarud-deen and Ansarul Islam Societies had appropriated.<sup>123</sup> The Prophet, they argue, never taught using the chair, table, blackboard or exercise book; therefore, to do so is to deviate from the Sunnah. They also argued that their teacher informed them, that Sheikh Tajul Adab never taught using table, chair or chalk but rather through the traditional siting *halqa* (circle ) around the teacher. Following these precedents therefore, they rejected any reform of Islamic educational method. Those who have done so have only deviated from the right path, they argued.

Their method and lifestyle is Spartan, in which the teacher takes responsibility for his students, most of whom would be living with him, the teacher taking no payment for the training except what may be willingly given. Payment is only to be expected in the hereafter as a reward for their efforts. They also placed little emphasis on the mastery of Arabic as a language as the modernist reformers have done. Their argument is that piety is more important than mastery of Arabic.<sup>124</sup> They imbibe in their students a great reverence for their teachers that remains with them beyond their student days. This discipline and respect for one's teachers, the group argues is not in the western system. This is akin to what Al Attas referred to as a leveling of authority in the western system.<sup>125</sup>

Their students are trained to live without luxury and the teachers themselves serve as frugal examples. The students can sometimes be seen begging for assistance to meet up the short comings in the provisions from their master which more often than not were not adequate, since they rely on charity and proceeds from their social religious services such as officiating in naming, wedding ceremonies and magical-therapeutic services. This austere living among the *makondoro*, however, has never degenerated into street begging as can be found among *almajirai*<sup>126</sup> of Hausa region especially in the post-independence period.

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<sup>123</sup> Abubakr, 'Zumratul Mu'minina (makondoro),' 4.

<sup>124</sup> This does not mean they do not use or have some mastery of Arabic, piety is only privileged over mastery of Arabic. Some of them have also authored books in Arabic.

<sup>125</sup> Al Attas, *Aims and Objectives*, 3. See Ware, *The Walking Qur'an*, 42-45, for similar practice in Mali.

<sup>126</sup> (Sing. *Almajiri*) - are boarding students of Qur'anic schools who usually have come from rural areas. They survive by begging for food and money. For more on this phenomenon see

From their educational theory also emerged three distinguishing praxes that stand out the group in any gathering. These are the wearing of large turbans, the keeping of beard and the practice of purdah for their females.<sup>127</sup> Taking to the advice of Al-Zarnuji who advised scholars to always dress in recognizable gowns as to distinguish them from non-scholars and the use of turban;<sup>128</sup> the Zumratu Mu'meenina are easily recognized by their flowing *agbada* (gown), large turban and beard.<sup>129</sup> This, they believe gives honour and recognition to the wearer wherever he may be.<sup>130</sup> In addition to this, their women are kept in purdah, hence their name, *eleha* (one who is in purdah (veiled)). Black cloth is the norm for the *jalbab* which covers the women from head to toes (in black socks) with a net over the face covering for seeing. This practice of purdah is often inculcated in the girls as soon as they have menstruated at least three times.<sup>131</sup>

Although the Zumratul Mu'meenina are a minority, they are nevertheless well respected, sometimes dreaded, because of a belief that they have powerful magical powers with which they can harm whoever offends them. They are also known not to be politically active or partisan and have an attitude of 'live and let live' toward not only the political class but also the society generally. In the early days of the group in Ibadan, they had anathema-ized other Muslims not subscribing to their ideologies. In Ilorin as well, they had argued against the reforms of Qur'anic schools into *madaris* like Sheikh Kamalud-deen and others had done.<sup>132</sup> They also clashed with practitioners of traditional religion in Alore, Oloje, Abemi and Banni communities in Ilorin. The clash led to court actions in which they were fined in

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Aliyu S. Alabi, 'Food Crisis and the Problem of Itinerant Islamic Pupils in Northern Nigeria' *African Note*, Vol. 35 No.1 & 2 (2011).

<sup>127</sup> This practice is said to have been influenced by the visit of an Arab Sheikh in 1945, whose wife dressed in the black *jalbab*. Sheikh Yusuf inquired about the practice and when told it is practiced so in Saudi Arabia, the group adopted this mode of dressing for their females. Abubakr, 'Zumratul Mu'minina (makondoro),' 27.

<sup>128</sup> Az Zarnuji, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*.

<sup>129</sup> Abubakr, 'Zumratul Mu'minina (makondoro),' 5.

<sup>130</sup> In post- independence Nigeria where the cases of unlawful police raids and arrest of innocent persons were rampant, the *makondoro* claimed their members were safe from such injustice in so far as they kept to the dressing code of the group. They have preference for lace materials which is a vogue material among the Yoruba. Discussions with Sheikh Muhammad Hashimiyu Alfanla Okutagidi. 14-7-2012; In Mamluk Egypt this sartorial concern is noted as well. See Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo-A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 182-184.

<sup>131</sup> Abubakr, 'Zumratul Mu'minina (makondoro),' 27; Discussions with Sheikh Muhammad Hashimiyu Alfanla Okutagidi. 14-7-2012.

<sup>132</sup> Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 248.

three of the cases, with one ruled in their favor.<sup>133</sup> Their reverence for their teachers as well as dedication to purely religious studies has earned them respect among other scholars. Al Iluri referred to them as *jundul Islam*<sup>134</sup> (the soldiers of Islam), especially for their zeal in fighting the followers of traditional religions among the Yoruba.<sup>135</sup> However, in the post-independence years, as the movement grew in experience, their rigidity began to yield, especially in those of the second and third generations.<sup>136</sup>

### **Markaziyya**

The third pedagogical school that would impact on Islamic education in Ilorin, is the Markazi School founded by Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al Iluri. Unlike the Adabiyya and the Zumratul mu'meenina Schools that were in existence in Ilorin during the colonial period, the Markazi stream would not come to Ilorin until after independence.<sup>137</sup> Even then, it would come as an extension of the original Markazi School in Lagos. Although the earlier two pedagogical schools had their beginning outside Ilorin like the Markazi stream too, they were able to have a firm footing in Ilorin because their founders established schools in Ilorin. While Sheikh Kamaluddeen shuttled between Ilorin and Lagos where he both had schools and Sheikh Yusuf eventually returned and settled in Ilorin, on the one hand, Sheikh Adam never returned to live in Ilorin on the other hand. However, he kept in touch with developments in Ilorin and was often involved in communal development initiatives as it pertained to Islam and its educational activities in Ilorin.

Born into a scholarly family (1917), he studied under his father and a number of other scholars, in Ilorin but mostly outside of Ilorin. His scholarly career was

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<sup>133</sup> They have been known to clash with pagans and Christians especially in the early days of the group. See Abubakr, 'Zumratul Mu'minina (makondoro),' 4, 37.

<sup>134</sup> Al Iluri, *Lamahat al Ballur*, 66.

<sup>135</sup> Alhaji Abdulkareem Saka narrated how their scholars would encourage their students whose parents still practiced the traditional African religion to bring their parents' idols and the scholars would set them ablaze in public to demonstrate the superiority of their faith. Discussions. 31-10- 2012.

<sup>136</sup> They began to tolerate western education on condition of the person been steeped in Islamic education before embarking on western education. Abubakr, 'Zumratul Mu'minina (makondoro),' 33; Adekilekun, *Atharul-Shaikh Al-Labeeb*, 36; Discussions with Sheikh Abdulkareem Adaara. Agbaji, 22-7-2012.

<sup>137</sup> Adabiyya from the late 1920s, Zumratul Mu'mineenina from 1955 when sheikh Yusuf returned to Ilorin. Markaziyya came into Ilorin in 1963 through Darul Ulum. All of the movements started from without Ilorin, with Adabiyya having longer head start than the remaining two in Ilorin.

cosmopolitan in experience. He spent his teenage years in Ilorin<sup>138</sup> and was influenced by the careers of scholars such as Wazir Bida<sup>139</sup> and Sheikh Kamalud-deen. He had the intention of studying under Sheikh Zakariya Bakini but the latter died before the tutelage could begin.<sup>140</sup> He thereafter relocated to Lagos and studied under Sheikh Umar Agbaji.<sup>141</sup> He studied also under a relative in Ibadan, a student of Sheikh Yusuf Agbaji, Sheikh Salih Esiniobiwa. Here, his scholarship remotely linked to the Adabiyya of Sheikh Sheikh Tajul Adab.<sup>142</sup> In Lagos, he met Shaykh Adamu Nama'aji, a Kano scholar. Nama'aji introduced him to rhetoric, logic, *usul al fiqh* (science of jurisprudence), philosophy, astronomy and history. This influence would resonate in the career of Shaykh Adam as an educationist, missionary and as an author. It was also through this scholar that he became connected to the Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood.<sup>143</sup>

Greater contact between the Muslim world and West Africa also pulled him into travelling in pursuit of knowledge to the Arab world, which he undertook in 1946 and 1951 respectively.<sup>144</sup> The British were against young Muslim scholars connecting to Arab world for fear of the consequences such exposure would have for resistance to the colonial order and nationalism already gathering momentum in the country and discouraged this as much as possible.<sup>145</sup> Against such policy he struggled against to get into Egypt.<sup>146</sup>

In Sudan, Egypt and Hejaz, his experience and contacts with prominent Muslim scholars laid the foundation in his mind of the reforms and activities he would carry out later in life as an educationalist and as a pan-Islamic activist. In Egypt, he presented himself for examination to the scholars of Al Azhar University, which was unusual and considered to be the first to do so from his part of the world. He

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<sup>138</sup> For more on him, see Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 251—256; 'Exploring the Achievements of Sheikh Adam Abdullah al Ilory', accessed from <http://marcazsalaam-ojokoro-Lagos.blogspot.com/exploring-achievement.17-3-2013>.

<sup>139</sup> Abubakre and Reichmuth, 'Ilorin and Nupe,' 488-489.

<sup>140</sup> Reichmuth, 'Sheikh Adam.'

<sup>141</sup> Rafiu Ibrahim Adebayo and Ahmad Tijani Sirajudeen, 'An Appraisal of Sheikh Adam Abdullah al Ilory's Educational Philosophy: A Way of Reclaiming the Islamic Identity in Nigeria,' *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization*, 2 (3) (2012), 188-195.

<sup>142</sup> Reichmuth, 'Sheikh Adam.'

<sup>143</sup> Reichmuth, 'Sheikh Adam.'; Adebayo and Sirajudeen, 'An Appraisal of Sheikh Adam.'

<sup>144</sup> See his travelogue in verse in- Hamzat I. Abdulraheem, 'Ilorin Travel Literature in Arabic: a study of travelogue by Sheikh Adam Abdullahi al Ilory' *FAIS Journal of Humanities*, (2014), 105-120.

<sup>145</sup> Mustapha, 'Sabotage in Patronage'; Reichmuth, 'Sheikh Adam.'

<sup>146</sup> Abdulraheem, 'Ilorin Travel Literature.'; for the colonial policy around this See Alexander Thurston, 'The Era of Overseas Scholarships: Islam, Modernization, and Decolonization in Northern Nigeria, c. 1954-1966' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 44 (2014),62-91.

passed the seventeen subjects for which he was examined and was awarded the *Thanawiyya* certificate.<sup>147</sup> He remained in Egypt for six months understudying their system.<sup>148</sup> He met Hassan al Banna,<sup>149</sup> the leader of the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt during one of his visits. This had a great influence on his pedagogy<sup>150</sup> as well as his pan-Islamic missionary efforts both in Nigeria and the Muslim world.

When he returned from his first journey, he worked for the Ansarud-deen Society in Lagos and began to publish some of his writings at this period. In 1948 he published the treatise *Addinu al Nasiha*, outlining his visions for reforms of religious education as well as administration of welfare of the Muslim ummah.<sup>151</sup> However, he felt that the kind of reforms he wished for cannot be achieved within the ambience of Ansarud-deen School which was heavily tilted towards western education. He left the work and established his own school called Markaz al-Ta'alim al-'Arabi al-Islami, at Abeokuta in 1952.<sup>152</sup>

Some members of Ansarud-deen Society came to his assistance and helped with the payment of salaries of his teachers for the first six months.<sup>153</sup> Despite this good start and the wish of his father for him to stay in Ibadan, Sheikh Adam had his eyes on Lagos as the appropriate place to locate his reforms and eventually relocated his school to Lagos. His target was to tap into the opportunities that the Arab embassies would offer upon Nigeria's approaching independence. Events later proved his vision correct, seen in the synergy he was able to work out between the Arab traders and embassy officials in Lagos and his Markaz.<sup>154</sup>

Another reason for not staying in Ibadan was that he was wary of the controversies and petty jealousies his reforms might generate in the city already full with many

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<sup>147</sup> This is the equivalent of senior secondary of the western educational system.

<sup>148</sup> Abdulsalam, 'Shaykh Adam: A Public,' 129.

<sup>149</sup> His mission, it would appear, was more of learning the praxis of religious education in Egypt than just knowledge seeking. The ten point counsel of Hassan al Banna to Muslims could be found on the walls of Markazi institutions wherever they are sited. See Appendix X.

<sup>150</sup> Adebayo, *Islamization of Knowledge*, 44. Al Banna argued for religious education at all levels but was against attachment to old canonical views. This he held as holding Muslims from interacting and utilizing modern scientific knowledge. In addition to religious education, he advocated for Muslims to have representatives in all the scientific fields. His organization Iqwan ul-Muslimun (Muslim Brotherhood) put into practice its ideal by establishing many schools in Egypt. Sheikh Adam shared with al Banna a strong emphasis on religious education. He differs only in tolerating western education outside the precinct of Islamic education.

<sup>151</sup> Reichmuth, 'Shaykh Adam as.'

<sup>152</sup> Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 255.

<sup>153</sup> Explanations given by Dr Y. A. Jumuah at the International Conference on the Life and Times of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al Ilory, University of Ilorin, August, 2012.

<sup>154</sup> Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung*, 255-256; Reichmuth, 'Shaykh Adam as.'

established scholars. He envisaged his reforms would bring him into collision with the scholars because many of their young students would come to him. The hierarchical nature of Muslim learning earlier mentioned and the knowledge of the opposition reformist scholars such as Sheikh Tajul Adab and Sheikh Kamalud-deen had faced may have informed his decision and he was wise to avoid that. Even in Lagos, he still moved away from the center where the scholars were well established and opted for relatively remote Agege, hoping to tap into the large population of the Hausa Muslims (this did not materialize to his disappointment). This reason probably explains his not choosing Ilorin as well for his reforms, with even a higher concentration of scholars.<sup>155</sup> In 1955, he moved his Markaz from Abeokuta to Agege in Lagos, taking his students along with him.<sup>156</sup>

What distinguished the Markazi reform from the Adabiyya and Zumratul Mu'meenina is the privileging of Arabic as the language of the school and non-tolerance of English language as medium of instruction within his school. As in the Adabiyya reform, he had purpose-built school, curriculum and organization of the western schools but his inspiration was more of the Arab model he had seen in Egypt and Sudan. Although Sheikh Adam would not tolerate a mixture of western and Islamic education within his school, he nevertheless believed in the importance of having of western education.<sup>157</sup> He privately acquired western learning and encouraged students coming to his Markaz to have acquired the first Primary School Leaving Certificate. Then, the students would be well grounded in Islamic and Arabic education at Markaz, from where they could proceed to higher education either in the Arab world or the western higher education system in Nigeria, specializing in Arabic or Islamic studies but some also moved on to non-religious fields like in the humanities and sciences.

Sheikh Adam saw the power inherent in the western system and how it had disfavored Islam and was therefore wary of it being taught alongside Islamic

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<sup>155</sup> Explanations given by Sheikh Habeebullah Adam Abdullah ( son of Sheikh Adam and Proprietor of Markaz Taalim li Araby, Agege ) at the International Conference on the Life and Times of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al Ilori, University of Ilorin, August, 2012.

<sup>156</sup> In 1956, he graduated the first set of his students. He got some support of the Syrian traders in Lagos Arab to supervise the examination. This breakthrough and his emphasis on Arabic as the only language of learning in the school earned him reputation especially among Muslim scholars throughout Yoruba region who began to send their children to the school. Reichmuth, 'Shaykh Adam as.'

<sup>157</sup> Al Ilori, *Al Islam fi Nijeriya*, 170. He argues that the standard bearers of both systems of education undervalue the significance of each other. Here, comes out as concerned over the weakened state of the Islamic education system, hence his privileging of the Arabic medium of instruction. He bears out the importance of both systems of education and for Muslims to strive to attain both.

education at the same location. Seeing the Islamic system as the weaker of the two systems, he envisaged a destruction of the Muslim heritage if the two were left to compete on the same ground.<sup>158</sup> The countermeasure is to strengthen the weakened system and acquire the strength of the other from without the Islamic education system.<sup>159</sup> This idea can be seen in the sermon he delivered on the occasion of the annual *Maulud* celebration in front of the emir's palace around 1962, warning of the danger facing Muslims if their educational system is allowed to be overrun by the western system, especially with the old scholars passing away. It was this sermon that triggered the establishment of Darul Ulum, the first Markazi madrasah in Ilorin in 1963.<sup>160</sup> The establishment of this communal school would be discussed in the next chapter.

Unlike the Zumratul mu'meenina (*makondoro*) who in their early days totally rejected western education, Sheikh Adam differed in a cautious acceptance of the necessity of western education. His midway position between the rejectionist Zumratul mu'meenina and Adabiyya modes of learning earned him the respect of many Muslim scholars throughout the Yoruba region. They felt safe sending their children to his school without the fear of a corrupting influence of the western system. His approach to Islamization is similar to Jamal-ad-Din Afghani (1838-1897) who was against foreign domination and blind imitation of the west. Like al Banna, he was also against pure traditionalism for its uncritical defense of inherited Islam.<sup>161</sup> Although his reforms took place outside Ilorin, scholars in Ilorin were fully aware of his reforms, many went to study with him or sent their sons to his school and after independence the Markazi pedagogical stream would come into Ilorin through his efforts in collaboration with the emir and later through his students who returned home to establish their own schools.

These three main pedagogical schools of thought set the foundation upon which all future reforms of Islamic education system in Ilorin would be built upon. In all the three systems, we can tease out modernization of Islamic education in their praxes. Challenged by the dominance of the western education system, they sought in their different approaches to privilege Islamic education. In the Adabiyya system, adaptability and modernization is discernible in their tolerance of western education

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<sup>158</sup> Al Iluri, *Al Islam fi Nijeriya*, 154; Badmus Olanrewaju Yusuf, 'The Views of Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al Ilori on the Interaction Between Religion and Culture' (M.A Thesis: Islamic Studies-Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 1985), 11-12.

<sup>159</sup> Razaq 'Deremi Abubakre, 'Marcaz at 60, the Challenge of Modern Islamic Education' Paper Presented at the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Arabic and Islamic Training Centre-Agege. 31, August 2012.

<sup>160</sup> Jawondo, 'The Place of Mosque,' 114.

<sup>161</sup> Adebayo, *Islamization of Knowledge*, 30-32.

for the purpose of empowering Muslims through the adaptation of some of the means and methods of the rival western educational system. The Adabiyya stream first appropriated aspects of organization of the western system into the Islamic system in imitation of Ansar-ud-deen in Iagos. This, we see in the classification of students by their level of learning, setting specific duration of learning and purpose-built school among other things we can see in the western system. When this was not enough as protection of the Islamic education system, the Adabiyya group went further by establishing their own western school, modifying it to suit their modernization agenda.

While in the colonial period and well into the post-independence, they worked with an integrated system, having both systems of education in one school, later in the post-independence period, they changed into operating the two systems separately, tolerating some western subjects in the Islamic arms of their schools. Many of such schools were established not only in Ilorin but all over the Yoruba region.<sup>162</sup> The *Zumratul mu'meenina*, while having nothing to do with western education, their emergence is not unconnected to the privileging of the western education system by the government and increasing westernization of the society starting from the colonial period into the post-independence period. Islamization with them was the erection of a wall of defiance against the western education system and its values, by stricter entrenchment of what they considered as original Islamic educational praxes. However, their rigidity would loosen in the post-colonial period to a critical engagement with western education.<sup>163</sup>

Modernization praxes in the Markazi stream follow almost the same pattern with the Adabiyya, the difference being the Markazi stream privileging of Arabic and Islamic education in its system to the exclusion of English language, the language of the western system. Some 'secular' subjects of the western system such as history, geography and arithmetic were also in the curriculum of these reforming schools, taught in Arabic. Islamic sciences and Arabic language and its sciences were given prominent attention in these schools. What they could not do during the colonial period was to include the pure science subjects in their curriculum. In the

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<sup>162</sup> See <http://www.mukeyf.org.ng>. Accessed 2-3-2014.

<sup>163</sup> In their philosophy we see some similarity with the views of Maulana Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) who faults the absence of the recognition of Allah as the source of all true knowledge. He therefore favors Islamization of education in all ramifications before it can be useful to the Muslim, similar to the later critical toleration of western education exhibited by the *makondoro*. See Mahmoud Hamid al Migdad, 'Issues in Islamization of knowledge, Man and Education', *Revue Academique des Sciences et Sociales*, No.7, 2011; Adebayo, *Islamization of Knowledge*, 41.

post-colonial period they would be able to do this with varying degrees of success as would be shown in the next chapter.

The scholars examined in terms of numbers represent a very small number of Ilorin scholars; rather their choice for examination was informed by the tremendous achievements and impacts they have had on Islamic education during the colonial period and beyond. Too numerous a number of these scholars carry out their educational activities all over Yoruba regions, not as popular as these scholars. Every scholarly family has members who have moved out of the town into other regions of the country in pursuit of their vocation. Some concentrated on the provision of therapeutic spiritual services, though virtually all of them were engaged in this to a greater or lesser extent. By the nature of their vocation they combine many things; they teach, lead prayers, act as counselors to the ruler and the ruled, officiate religious rituals such as naming, wedding and funeral rites as well as engaged in commercial ventures.

The first half of the twentieth century can be referred to as the period of the Adabiyya revolution, both of the Zumratul Adabiyya of Sheikh Kamalud-deen and that Zumratul Mu'meenina strands, being the dominant reform streams in Ilorin. In the post-independence Nigeria, the Markazi stream would join them and together they would expand the horizon of Islamic education. These responses were about the only possible ways to respond to the challenge that western system of education posed to the scholars.<sup>164</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have examined the missionary endeavors of the scholars which took them all over the Yoruba region and around the river Niger/Benue confluence as merchants or civil servants, teaching, preaching and serving as counselors to both rulers and the ruled were examined. Through this, they contributed immensely to the spread of the religion and its educational system to new places among the Yoruba and the Epira and strengthening the religion where it had been nominal. We see how adaptation and appropriation of aspects of organization of the western system of education were used by these scholars to reform Islamic education. Communication and contacts with the wider Muslim world also inspired some on the reforms that we see in Islamic education during this period. The impact of their travels left a strong influence on the reforms that they introduced to Islamic learning within and outside Ilorin.

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<sup>164</sup> It is either for or against western education, the third alternative being varying degrees of synthesis of the 'for or against' western education approaches.

Also examined are the careers of prominent Islamic scholars, missionaries and educationists; how they responded to the challenge of western hegemony, especially in the educational field. Three main schools of pedagogy emerged in response to the challenge of western education and ideas on Islamic education, namely: the Adabiyya school having root in the works of Sheikh Tajul Adab but mostly undertaken by his pupil Sheikh Muhammad Kamalud-deen al Adabiyy. It started out with formalization of Islamic education and later accommodation of western education within its system. The second group Zumratul Mu'meenina, also having root in Sheikh Tajul Adab, was non-conformist with regard to western education. They championed learning in the traditional form only and became important voice of traditional system and contributed to the spread of Islam among the Yoruba.

The third group, Markazi; starts out in Abeokuta and later Lagos, the remarkable work of Sheikh Adam Abdullahi Al Iluri, reformed Islamic education along Arabic model. However, its non-tolerance of western education was only within its school where Arabic is privileged. Students are encouraged to seek western education outside the system. Through the prosopography of some key scholars of the period, developments in the Islamic education were teased out. More than resisting the new system these scholars also, adapted and appropriated aspects of the new system for their own system as both a defense against the powerful western system and as a means of promoting and developing their own system in response to the modern world. Significantly they also contributed to the development of western education in their own ways through critical toleration and accommodation as well as promotion of western education.