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CHAPTER 14

The Roles of Sheikhs and Imams in the Promotion of Islam in Edeland

Tosin Akinjobi

This chapter specifically examines the Imamate question in Ede since the inception of Islam in the town. Although it is evident that *Ile Imole* has produced an overwhelming number of Chief Imams for Edeland, other Muslim compounds with autochthonous claim to the Imamate have also emerged as Chief Imams as evidenced in the appointment of Chief Imams from *Talafia, Akaje, Jagun Alaro* and *Lakonu* compounds. This chapter is thus divided into two sections. The first section examines the contributions of *Ile Imole* to the leadership of the Muslim community in Ede while the second section examines the contributions of other autochthonous Muslim families to the growth of Islam in Ede.

Ile Imole (Muslim Compound)

Ile Imole is today situated in the Ede North Local Government. Ile Imole means the household of Islam and

Muslims. It is a protected area of the town for the then growing Muslim community. Originally, the place that is referred to today as Ile Imole was known as Ile Owonlarogo. The compound had existed prior to the outbreak of the Owu war of 1821-1825 and the sack of Oyo Atiba in 1835/1836. Between the period 1817 when new Ede was established and the Batedo war of 1844, Muslims faced strong opposition from the adherents of the traditional faith. They saw the new converts to Islam as a threat to the old order and as enemies of the state. They were held squarely accountable for the misfortune that befell the Oyo Yorubas. Thus, Muslims and their friends were hounded from pillar to post. It was a sin then to be a Muslim.

It was against this back drop that all converts to Islam, itinerant Muslim scholars and visitors were banished from the main town and exiled to *Ile Imole*, a new haven for Muslims. Within the passage of time, Ile Imole grew in leaps and bounds. The Muslim population swelled astronomically and soon acquired solid reputation for learning and advancement of Islamic culture. However, it was the emergence of Habibu Lagunju, a strong Muslim faithful and promoter of Islam, as the Timi of Ede around 1847 that boosted the confidence of the nascent Muslim community and enhanced their prestige.

Ile Imole later became known as the epi-centre of Islamic knowledge, culture and civilisation with the arrival of an itinerant Islamic scholar, Sheikh Nuhu and his brother, Musa, in Ede around 1848 on the invitation of Timi Habibu Lagunju. At the time of the invitation, Sheikh Nuhu was then resident at Ogbaagbaa, a neighbouring settlement to Iwo. In other words, Ogbaagbaa remains a veritable centre for the dispersal of Islam and Islamic culture to Ede and other parts of Osun region. Indeed, Ile Imole became a sort of local Islamic university where Muslims from within and outside Ede came to acquire knowledge of Islam. *Ile Imole* served as an Islamic and Arabic training institution for most compounds in Ede.

Sheikh Nuhu Adekilekun (1850-1903): The First Chief Imam of Edeland

Sheikh Nuhu Adekilekun (1850–1903) was the first Chief Imam of Ede and was a friend and classmate of Habibu Olagunju at Bida when they were studying Arabic and Islamic Studies. During their studies at Bida, Nuhu predicted that Habibu would ascend the throne of his ancestors by becoming the Timi of Ede and would consequently make Islam to thrive in Ede. In order to ensure that the prophesy becomes a reality, Nuhu and Habibu both visited Imam Gambari at Ilorin for prayers and

they enlisted his prayers in their quest to ensure the fulfilment of the prophesy. The logical reason that if Habibu Olagunju ascends to the throne of Timi of Ede, Islam would grow and be consolidated in that part of Yorubaland made Imam Gambari to specifically pray for Prince Habibu Olagunju to become the Timi so that Islam would be promoted in the land. Tradition has it that due to the effort and support of Nuhu, Habibu Olagunju promised to further enlist his help regarding Islamic learning and practice in Ede if he succeeds in becoming the Timi of Ede. It is thus believed that it is in appreciation of the contribution of Nuhu to his ascension to the throne that Habibu Olagunju invited and appointed him the Chief Imam of Ede.

Sheikh Nuhu Adekilekun was an itinerant preacher and Islamic scholar before his invitation to Ede. The hometown and tribe of Nuhu could not be established but traditions have it that he was of Nupe origin and emigrated from Bida. He was a nomadic preacher and scholar who moved from one location to the other to preach and teach Islam. That was his mission when he settled temporarily at Ogbaagbaa. However, according to Abbas, Sheikh Nuhu was a Muallim by origin and an itinerant preacher in the Northern part of Nigeria. It has become difficult to prove where Nuhu originated from, but the fact remain that he was a Muslim cleric.

When Habibu Olagunju became the Timi, it became challenging to combine the demands of his office with spiritual leadership functions. He therefore invited his friend, Nuhu, who was vast in Islamic education to assist him spiritually. Another version of the Imamate tradition in Ede suggests that when Habibu ascended the throne, those he initially appointed as Chief Imams of Ede began to die prematurely. Therefore, the Timi invited Nuhu to stay permanently in his domain as his spiritual consultant and to oversee his spiritual functions so that he could have a peaceful reign over his subjects. On the arrival of Sheikh Nuhu and his team, which included his brother, Musa, the Timi accommodated them in *Owonlarogo* compound and appointed him the Chief Imam. Sheikh Nuhu therefore became the first person to be appointed to the position in Ede town.

Buremo *Owonlarogo* whose compound served as the domain of the Adekilekuns was a Muslim and an Islamic spiritualist invited from Nupe land to help defend Ede against Ibadan forces during the reign of Timi Bamgbaye Ajeniju (1816-1841). A version of the origin of Islam in Ede has it that although the formal awareness and introduction of Islam in Ede was during the reign of Habibu Olagunju, Islam was fortuitously diffused through *Owonlarogo* during the reign of Timi Bamgbaye. Legend has it that *Owonlarogo*

utilised Islamic spiritual means to defeat Ibadan forces without firing a shot. Due to his achievement, Timi Bamgbaye made him settle permanently in Ede and continue to pray for Ede's forces in its subsequent expeditions.

It could be inferred from the foregoing that there were pockets of Islamic practices at *Owonlarogo* compound before the arrival of Sheikh Nuhu. When the Sheikh and his entourage arrived, they inquired for the compound where Muslims inhabit so they could be readily accepted and were consequently directed to *Owonlarogo* compound, where they were received with open arms. It was believed that though *Owonlarogo* compound had few Muslim inhabitants, they were however not vast in Islamic practices and Arabic education. Sheikh and his team were absorbed in the compound and the compound was known to be occupied by Muslims that the name, *Owonlarogo*, with which the compound was known initially went into extinction and became known as *Ile Imole*, meaning the 'home of faith from Mali'. This is because Islam is believed to have spread to the Northern Nigeria.

Sheikh Nuhu was not the only Islamic scholar who arrived Ede on the invitation of Habibu Olagunju in his bid to spread and consolidate Islam in his domain. Habibu

Olagunju also invited Alfa Jumada Tsado to serve as *Mufassir* of Ede town. *Mufassir* means the Qur'anic Exegete, who is imbued with the knowledge to study and interpret the Quran. Alfa Tsado was of Nupe origin. Alfa Tsado was vast in Islamic studies and interpretation of the Qur'an. His Qur'anic interpretations and commentaries usually pulled crowd from within and outside Ede township especially during the Ramadan fasting.

Immediately they settled at the former *Owonlarogo* compound, Sheikh and his team started to preach, teach and convert people to Islam. Several traditional religion worshippers embraced Islam at their instance. Meanwhile, Islam was regarded as a foreign religion and people were antagonistic towards it to the extent that converts were rejected in their homes. Most converts were sent out of their compounds, sometimes with their property. These converts, who had no other place to go, had to flee to Sheikh Nuhu at *Owonlarogo* compound, who received them and accommodated them. In no time, the compound became filled with converts. Thus, the Sheikh was nick-named Adekilekun, which literally means 'he whose coming brought a full house'. This name has become the last name with which the family members are known till date.

While he was the Chief Imam of Ede, Sheikh Nuhu contributed immensely to the growth and spread of Islam. His arrival facilitated further the practice of Islam in the town. Many people were converted to Islam and Islam became a pride to the majority of the indigene, including the traditional chiefs who were initially traditional worshippers. Sheikh Nuhu achieved this feat because he commanded the respect and cooperation of both the palace authority and scholars to promote the course of Islam in Ede. He proposed for the establishment of many mosques and Qur'anic schools for Islamic and Arabic scholarship. The Sheikh also facilitated the movement of the central mosque from Sooro to Oja Timi, where it is at present. Alfa Tsado also established a Qur'anic school. Notable among his students were Dhul-Qarnayn Adekilekun, the son of Sheikh Nuhu and Aminullah Talafia, who later became the second Chief Imam of Ede. It is reported that it was through the effort and contributions of Sheikh Nuhu that Ede became a predominantly Muslim town. Although Sheikh Nuhu died in 1903 after 53 years as the Chief Imam of Ede, his reign witnessed monumental developments and laudable achievements in the history of Islam and Islamic scholarship in Ede.

Sheikh Abdul – Qadir Adekilekun (1936–1947): The Third Chief Imam

After the death of Sheikh Nuhu Adekilekun, Alfa Aminullah from *Talafia* compound was appointed the second Chief Imam of Ede in 1903. When the seat was vacant consequent to the death of Sheikh Nuhu, the post of the Chief Imam was contested between his son, Sheikh Dhul-Qarnayn and Alfa Aminullah Talafia, who eventually won the seat. The appointment of Alfa Aminullah was characterized by seeming disagreement between the *Imole* and *Talafia* compounds. The Adekilekuns believed that the institution of the Imamate of Ede emanated from and should be consolidated in the family. While the Adekilekuns were aggrieved with the appointment of Alfa Aminullah from *Talafia* compound as the second Chief Imam, the people of *Talafia* compound claimed the family was also entitled to the post, arguing that the appointment of Sheikh Nuhu Adekilekun as the first Chief Imam by Oba Habibu Olagunju was to compensate him for predicting his ascension to the throne of Timi. Unfortunately, both of them were not looking at the issue from the point of view of the Sharia of Islam.

Consequent to the death of Alfa Aminullah who was Chief Imam for 33 years, Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Adekilekun

from *Imole* compound was turbaned the third Chief Imam of Ede in 1936. Before his appointment, Sheikh Abdul-Qadir was already the *Alfa Agba*. Traditionally, the next in rank to the Chief Imam is usually the *Alfa Agba*, thus, his appointment was circumstantial. According to Abbas, Sheikh Qadir Adekilekun, Dhul-Qarnayn's son was appointed as the third Chief Imam of Ede in compensation for not choosing Dhul-Qarnayn as the second Chief Imam. Dhul-Qarnayn, son of Sheikh Nuhu, spent years travelling to many places in Northern Nigerian in search of Qur'anic knowledge for which he was respected. Dhul-Qarnayn returned to join others in Islamic propagation and engaged in the jihad against persecution of Muslims by traditional worshippers. He turned *Imole* compound into a sort of Local Islamic university where all the refugees as well as other Muslims in the town received their Qur'anic instructions. When such refugees returned to their various compounds, they were well equipped with Qur'anic knowledge that they converted people in the neighbourhood to Islam.

Whatever the case that surrounded the appointment of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Adekilekun as the third Chief Imam of Ede in 1936, he was satisfactory because he was qualified and competent to hold the position. It is reported that Sheikh Abdul Qadir was regarded as the most brilliant

and luckiest of the Chief Imams among his peers in Ede because he encouraged Arabic and Islamic Studies. This was exemplified in his own children as he ensured that they were well educated in Arabic and Islamic studies and extended the knowledge to other Muslims within and outside Ede.

Dhul-Qarnayn's father was the first Muslim indigene to embrace and welcome Tijjaniyyah Tariqah society to Ede. When Sheikh Abdul Qadir became the Chief Imam, he improved upon the activities of the society. It was during his reign that the Tajudeen schools were established. A total of eleven Tajudeen schools were established for Ede and its environs. The schools were not indigenous to Ede because it was founded by a non-indigene. It is reported that an indigene of Ede from Olubi compound, Ori-oke, invited the founder to come and establish the schools in Ede. The schools later produced eminent Islamic scholars, prominent among whom were Late Dr. Dawood Tijani Adekilekun, who was vast in Arabic and Islamic scholarship; Dr. Abdul Lateef Adekilekun, the present Mogaji Imam of Ede and Alhaji Ibraheem Dende Adekilekun, the present Imam of Ede Ansar-ud-deen Muslim Society.

Sheikh Abdul-Qadir's first son, Alfa Ahmed Tijani later became the Chief Imam of Ede. One of Abdul-Qadir's daughters was also the mother of the present Timi of Ede – Habibat. His other prominent sons were the Khalifat at-Tijjaniyyah, Ede, Shayk Jamiu Adekilekun – Arabic tutor to late Dr. Dawood Tijani Adekilekun and Mallam Ailara. Chief Imam Abdul Qadir Adekilekun died in 1947 after spending 11 years as the Chief Imam of Ede.

**Sheikh Ahmad Tijani Alabi Adekilekun (1969–1971):
The Fifth Chief Imam**

In order to avoid the seeming crisis, which generated after the death of Sheikh Nuhu Adekilekun as regards the family with which the Imamate dynasty of Ede should be honoured, the hierarchy of Imamship succession was drawn and agreed upon by the Council of Ulama, that is, Islamic scholars in Ede. With the accord, it became a custom that the candidate for the post of Chief Imam in Ede must have held the post of Ajanasi, interpreter and *Mufassir* or *Alfa Agba*. After the death of Alfa Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Adekilekun, Sheikh Muhammad Alimi Sadiku from *Talafia* compound was appointed the fourth Chief Imam in 1947 and he spent 22 years as the Chief Imam of Ede. When he died in 1969, Alfa Ahmad Tijani Alabi Adekilekun from *Imole* compound became the fifth Chief Imam of Ede.

Sheikh Tijani Adekilekun was the Ajanasi while Sheikh Muhammad, his predecessor was the Chief Imam. Although qualified and capable to hold the post, tradition has it that he was not initially interested in the post and declined taking responsibilities as the Chief Imam. It was his brother, Abbas, who persuaded him to take up the post in order to protect the lineage of Sheikh Abdul Qadir, his father, not to be cut off as regards Imamate succession in Ede land. When he took up the appointment, it was reported that Sheikh Ahmed Tijani Alabi Adekilekun was very hard working in both his chosen profession, which was weaving, and his spiritual responsibilities. Also, that his belief in hard work made him to be prosperous. He was described as a brave cleric, rich Islamic scholar and a generous man whose generosity was well acknowledged in Ede.

As reports have it, Sheikh Tijani Alabi used to gather all the eligible young male children for circumcision and pay the cost of circumcision to assist the parents financially because of the high rate of poverty. The period of his reign as the Chief Imam, produced some graduates of Qur'anic school, many of whom became great Mallams. He died after spending four years in active service to Islam as the Chief Imam of Ede in 1971.

Sheikh Sa'id Adekilekun (1981 –1987): The Eight Chief Imam

After the reign of Sheikh Tijani Alabi Adekilekun as the fifth Chief Imam, Chief Imam Kuranga Yinus from *Akaje* Compound (1971-1974) and Chief Imam Zakariya Muhammad Thani from *Lakonu* Compound (1974-1981) were installed in succession. Adekilekun Dynasty was again honoured with Imamate in 1981 when Imam Said Adekilekun from *Imole* compound was appointed the eighth Chief Imam of Ede. Sheikh Sa'id Adekilekun was the first Chief Imam to have been turbaned as Mogaji Imam by the Timi John Toyese Akanji.

Like his predecessors, his appointment as the Chief Imam among other contestants from other compounds was characterized by strife. In contrary to the accord on the hierarchy of candidates to be appointed Chief Imams in Ede by the Ulamas, Sheikh Sa'id never held the post of *Alfa Agba* before his appointment as the Chief Imam. Whereas, Abdul-Hamid Bukhari Sekoni from Jagun Alaro's compound held the position of *Alfa Agba* and was alive before the Imamship bypassed him to Sheikh Sa'id. The circumvent action of appointing Sheikh Sa'id as the Chief Imam caused controversy among the family of Jagun

Alaro's compound because they regarded the appointment as deposition.

Perhaps, this action was taken because the *Alfa Agba* was not, as such, popular. It was reported that he was not an Islamic Scholar but a servant to the Islamic Scholars at *Imole* Compound. Nevertheless, the family of Jagun Alaro argued that so far Abdul-Hamid Bukhari Sekoni had stayed with Islamic scholars at *Imole* Compound, he had become part of them. On the contrary, Sheikh Sa'id Adekilekun was an Islamic Scholar. He was educated in western education, and was at the same time, popular. Reportedly, Sheikh Sa'id was respected by the king and the people of Ede. He was brave, endowed with oratory, outspoken and led an exemplary life. His reign was said to be peaceful and progressive. He reigned as Chief Imam for six years before his death in 1987.

Sheikh Idris Atiq Ejalonibu (2000–2004): The Eleventh Chief Imam

Alfa Abdul-Hamid Bukhari Sekoni from Jagun Alaro Compound (1987-1997), who was the *Alfa Agba* when Sheikh Sa'id Adekilekun reigned as the Chief Imam and Alfa Dhul-Qarnayn Uthman from *Lakonu* Compound (1997-2000) were both turbaned as the ninth and tenth Chief Imams of Ede respectively after the death of Sheikh Said

Adekilekun in 1987. Sheikh Idris Atiq Ejalonibu from *Imole* compound was appointed the eleventh Chief Imam in 2004.

Sheikh Atiq Ejalonibu was a descendant of the famous Alfa Ibraheem *Owonlarogo*, who was reported to have helped Ede to defeat Ibadan forces with Islamic charms and amulet. When the seat of Balogun Imam of Ede was vacant, the reigning Timi, Tijani Oyewusi Agbonran II recommended that the Muslims of *Imole* Compound should send for Ejalonibu, one of the Islamic scholars of the family who settled at Akure, to represent the compound as Balogun Imam in the hierarchy of Imamate succession of Ede. He grew within the rank of Imamship and was turbaned the Chief Imam of Ede on March 10, 2000. It is worthy of remark that *Owonlaarogo* was the initial name of the compound which is now known as *Ile Imole*. The compound housed the Muslims migrant from Ogbaagbaa in company of Sheikh Nuhu.

The reign of Sheikh Ejalonibu was reported to be eventful. The area of his specialization was Qur'anic exegesis (Tafsir al-Qur'an). He used to pull crowd that the central Ede mosque was usually full to the brim during Ramadan Fasting Tafsir and Khutbah sessions. Sheikh Ejalonibu served for a period of four years as the Chief Imam of Ede before he died in November 2004. After his

death, Chief Imam Mas'ud Husayn *Akajewole* from *Akaje* Compound was appointed the twelfth Chief Imam of Ede in December 2004. He has since been the Chief Imam of Ede.

Dr. Dawood Ahmad Tijani Adekilekun

Dr. Dawood Ahmad Tijani Adekilekun was a descendant of the first Chief Imam of Ede, Sheikh Nuhu Adekilekun. He was born at *Ile Imole* in the early 1940s and was initiated into the Tijaniyya Sufi order, where he remained an active Tijaniyat until his death in 2006. As Ibraheem Dende Adekilekun said, there was no record of his birthday but he perceived based on chronological history during his birth that he was born in the early 1940s. When it was pertinent for him to have a date of birth, he adopted March 1 1942 as his date of birth. Dr. Dawood started studies in the Qur'an and Arabic under the tutorship of his uncle, Khaleefat Jamiu Adbdul Kadri Adekilekun, at a tender age. He attended local Arabic school, *Ile Imole*, Ede and completed the recitation of the Holy Qur'an in 1955. He was a great admirer and student of Sheikh Ibraheem Niass al Kawlakh, through whose eminent disciples he received further training in Tasawwuf.

Due to the perceived fear that Christian missionary schools were established to convert Muslim children to Christianity and give them Christian names, Dr

Adekilekun's parents initially objected to his wish to have western education. He and the other children in the family were meant to undergo Arabic lessons and carry out tailoring activities. It was in July 1954 that family friends visited the family to persuade his parents to allow his children to attend school as a result of the influence of civilisation. Besides, that year coincided with the year when Chief Obafemi Awolowo proposed the establishment of primary schools in order to facilitate primary education for all children in the south west, as a result of which parents started registering their wards. Dr Adekilekun and his cousin, Alhaji Ibraheem Adekilekun enrolled and was admitted in 1955 at Young Tajudeen School when it was a week to second term examination.

Initially, the brothers were not admitted because their ages were above the required age for primary school enrolment, but were eventually admitted to class II instead of Standard I. Meanwhile, while they were undergoing Arabic lessons, Mr Amusan, their private teacher was also training them in arithmetic and English language. This made them excel in the second term examination, which they only had two weeks to prepare for. Both Dr Adekilekun and Alhaji Ibraheem took the first and second positions respectively. As a result of the brilliance, the school authority decided that pupils who took between

positions one and four should be promoted to Standard I. By November 1954, Dr Adekilekun had finished Standard I with his usual first position. When it was time to be promoted to Standard II, the system of education in Nigeria changed. The primary school system was introduced and he was promoted to Primary 4 instead of Standard II. He spent 3 more years in the Primary school before he sat for Primary School Leaving Certificate examination. By 1957, within 3 years and 4 months, Dr Adekilekun had finished his primary education and out of 31 pupils in the class, only 11 passed, while 3, including Dr Adekilekun and Alhaji Ibraheem had distinction.

After his primary education, Dr Adekilekun's father again declined his support for him to attend secondary school probably due to the same fear that he might be converted to Christianity by the missionaries. More importantly, an incident, which occurred when Dr Adekilekun was in Primary 5 discouraged his father to allow him further his education. He was caught with his cousin exchanging letters. As Alhaji Ibraheem reported, almost all the school teachers came to plead with their parents, emphasising that they should be permitted to manifest their intelligence. Having no option, Dr Adekilekun succumbed to the will of his father until 1959 when Chief Obafemi Awolowo agitated for the Muslims and proposed

that Arabic teachers should be employed in schools in the southwest region. Dr Adekilekun and Alhaji Ibraheem both went to write the qualifying examination at Ibadan and passed. They both took the 19thA and 19thB positions. They were employed as Mualims to teach Arabic and Islamic studies in primary schools.

Dr. Adekilekun taught as Mualim in many schools for over fifteen years. In fact, Dr Tijani had teaching experience as a Mualim at Young Tajudeen Primary School, Ede, between 1960 and 1975. He taught Arabic and Islamic studies at Ede Muslim Grammar School, Ede between 1976 and 1977. He had remarkable contributions to the field of Islamic and Arabic studies. He composed a welcome song and delivered a welcome address both in Arabic and English language in honour of the first Arabic Lecturer, Abdur-Riddho, a Lebanese from the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, who visited Ede in 1963. In 1977, Dr Adekilekun was admitted into the University of Ibadan where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Arabic Language and Literature with First Class Honours in 1980. At the same university, Dr Adekilekun obtained his Master of Arts Degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies between 1982 and 1983 and Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies between 1986 and 1991. He also obtained London Diploma in Journalism. He was a lecturer in the

Department of Religions at the University of Ilorin, between 1980 and 1981, a lecturer at Baptist Teacher College, Ede between 1981 and 1984. Dr Adekillekun joined the teaching staff of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies of the University of Ibadan in December 1984 where he was appointed the Chief Imam of the University Central Mosque in 1991.

While he was the Chief Imam of the University of Ibadan Mosque, Dr. Adekilekun contributed enormously to Islamic scholarship. He was a counsellor to several families and through his effort, many were able to learn and understand the Qur'an. Students of Arabic Language benefited from his poems. He wrote a considerable number of poems on his sick bed. His poems were mainly related to Sufism, to other Muslim scholars and to the activities of his department at the University of Ibadan. Dr. Adekilekun was an inspiration to a lot of Ede youths; he was helpful to the educational pursuit and spiritual development of Ede youths.

Sufism may be described as a mystical practice that emphasizes certain unique rituals for guiding spiritual seekers into a direct encounter with God. Sufism is considered to be a mystical brand of Islam. Its adherents are known as the Sufis. Sufis believe that God is

responsible for everything they do, every act that they, as His servants perform. If not, then they would be equal to God, doing whatever they wanted. Thus, God is responsible for every thought and deed. God can do with His servants whatever He wills, whether it is to the servant's advantage or not. One of the important rituals in Sufism is the zikr. During a zikr session in the Sufi Order, one remembers God through meditation, chant, and movement; certain attributes of God are repeated until the seekers become "saturated" with God. This ritual supposedly shatters and transforms them. As they spin and whirl around for hours, they reach a state of ecstasy and purity where the heart is only conscious of God. The seeker surrenders his or herself to total abandonment, a total emptying of self.

In a paper, 'Sufism: What is it all about', Dr Adekilekun asserted as a member of a "Tareeqat", (Sufi School of Thought), he believes that so far he is a "Murid" (Someone who has set his feet on the part.), his intention was to look at Sufism as an attempt by some people to return to pure Islam. He focused the presentation on the story of the Prophet, story of the followers (Sahabah), the followers of the followers (Tabiu-tabieen) and what happened later when there was deviation from God and from the truth and when people focused their attention wholly on worldly affairs. He referred to this period as a

period of stagnation in the history of Islam, the period that can be said to be one of the darkest ages in the history of Islam. The presentation started with comments on the holy prophet Muhammad (SAW) whom the Qur'an describes as having the most beautiful pattern of conduct to be emulated by all that have fervent believe, whose hope is in God and the final day and for all those who engage themselves in the remembrance of God.

In his paper, Dr Adekilekun defined Sufism as the purity and cleanliness of the heart. This means Sufis are the people whose hearts are pure. The Sufis are those whose conducts towards God are sincere. They pay more attention to matters relating to cleanliness of the heart and inner purity. They attached a great importance to the tradition of the Prophet, which says that there exists a lump of flesh in man, which indicates the goodness of entire man's system. And if this particular flesh is bad, then the entire body system is faulty. This lump of flesh is the human heart. According to the Qur'an, if the Almighty Allah wishes to lead a servant to the path of virtue, the first thing he does is to clean his heart chest. We would remember that when Prophet Musa (AS) was called upon for Allah's message the first thing he requested for was that Allah should open his mind. Dr Adekilekun cited the concentration of one's desire to God and abandon mundane

world as one of the doctrines of Sufism. Sufis are taught to live in this world like those that have already departed. Some Scholars are of the opinion that Sufis are regarded as the people of the first roll while others opined that the Sufis are so called because they used to put on the coarse wool clothing.

He stressed that those who are serious, mentally upright, and spiritually conscious Muslims, who adore God decided to separate themselves from the rest of the world. They made up their minds to devote themselves to the recollection and remembrance of God, and they made that the object of their lives. These men because of their yearn for pure Islam, decided to separate themselves from the mundane world for the sake of God. They decided to clean themselves of all forms of impurities. They believe that the moral and spiritual impurities are the source of social and spiritual maladies of the society. These men bent on living a life full of meditation, avoid the love for mundane and material things. Through this practice, they have acquired some of the qualities of the earliest Companions of the Prophet.

To achieve the goal of purity, Dr Adekilekun emphasized that the Sufis accord importance to learning. As a result, their followers are encouraged to attach more

importance to the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh and Sunnah. Their followers are encouraged to put their learning into practice and engage in travelling so as to see that wonders of Allah, as well as do their obligatory aspect of religion regularly and some optional act of worship (Ibadah). Dr Adekilekun mentioned a few of the Sufis the Muslim world has produced. They include Abu Hamid Al-Gazali, Ibraheem bn Adham, Muhyiddeen bn Al Arabi, Imam Junaid and Al-Hasan Al-Basri.

As part of his remarkable contributions to Islamic studies, Dr Adekilekun had to his credit Islamic Studies Series Books I-VI, written in Yoruba language for Muslim pupils in the Primary Schools. Also is another Islamic Studies Series Books 1-111 in English for Muslim students in the Secondary Schools. Dr Adekilekun had a number of original Arabic Poems, collected in a number of Diwans. He had an adaptation of Mukhtasar al Akhdari in the form of questions and answers, which were used for his personal teaching and it is translated into both English and Yoruba languages. He also had to his credit an introduction to the Tijaniyyah in Yoruba. He translated a considerable number of books on Islamic Studies to both Yoruba and English Languages some of which are *Al- Mawarith fi Shari* and *I-Islamiyyah* of Prof. Muhammad Ali AsSabuni, among others. Due to his interest in Arabic and Islamic studies,

Dr. Tijani had a total number of 26 publications of Books and articles in National and International refereed journals.

Dr Adekilekun was a member of the Nigerian Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS), member of the Nigerian Association for the study of Religious (NASR), member of the Joint Examination Board for Arabic and Islamic Schools (JEBAIS), member of the International Muslim Consultation Forum on HIV/AIDS with headquarters at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He was the Chief Examiner for the West African Examinations Council, (Arabic) from March 2002 till his death. He served as the Chairman of the Joint Examinations Council, Arabic and Islamic Schools in Oyo State, with head office at the College of Education (special) Oyo from 1996 till his death. He was also the Chief Imam of the University of Ibadan Central Mosque from 1991 till death. He served as the Acting Head of Department, Arabic and Islamic Studies University of Ibadan between December 2002 and December 2004. Dr Adekilekun died in Ibadan on November 2, 2006. He is survived by wives, children and grand children. He was a loving father, a caring husband, analyst and a mystic.

Abdul-Lateef Ahmed Adekilekun

Abdul-Lateef Adekilekun is another prominent descendant of Adekilekun Dynasty. He was born in 1945 at

Ile Imole, Ede. He attended Qur'anic School at a tender age. Concurrently, Abdul-Lateef attended Tajudeen School, Ede. He studied at Azhar Institute, Ilorin for six years before he was admitted in 1965 to al-Azhar University in Cairo where he bagged a Bachelor of Arts degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies in 1972. On his graduation from al-Azhar University, Cairo, Abdul-Lateef Adekilekun became the first indigene of Ede who graduated in Arabic and Islamic studies from Egypt. He later obtained postgraduate diploma in Education in 1980 from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Abdul-Lateef also obtained his Master of Art degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Ibadan in 1984. He is an author, orator, a teacher and a historian.

Abdul-Lateef Adekilekun has contributed enormously to Islamic scholarship. On his return from Egypt, Abdul-Lateef got employed as an Arabic teacher in two secondary schools under the Kwara State Schools Board between 1973 and 1976. In 1976, he joined the services of the Kwara State College of Education as lecturer II. He became the first Chief lecturer in Arabic in 1986. Abdul-Lateef served as the head of Department of Arabic Studies at the College of Education between 1985 and 1987. Between 1990 and 1993, he was a part time lecturer of Arabic Studies at the University of Ilorin. He was a visiting summer Arabic lecturer, Institute of Education, Ahmadu

Bello University Zaria. He served as an External Examiner at the University of Ado Ekiti from 1998. He was a visiting Director, Akhbarud-deen College, Ogbomosho between 1998 and 1999. He was also a visiting Director, Zakariyyau Islamic campus, Offa in 2000. Zakariyyau campus is affiliated to the Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Abdul-Lateef was the co-coordinator for Diploma course in Arabic and Islamic education and the Dean of Languages at the State College of Education, Ilorin between 1976 and 2006. Abdul-Lateef founded the Islamic cultural centre at Ede in 1991. It is reported that the centre has a mosque, while a proposed school and a clinic are under construction.

In 1972, Abdul-Lateef was invited to participate in the project to translate the Qur'an into Yoruba undertaken by a group of Nigerian Muslim scholars under the auspices of the World Muslim League. He was the most senior Mogaji Imam of Ede before he was later promoted to *Otun Alfa Agba* of Ede. He represented his compound, *Ile Imole* in the cabinet of Imam in Ede. He is currently the Desk Officer of the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) in charge of the Southwest, Niger and Abuja. Some of the notable works where he featured as either author or editor include *Al-Shakhsiyya-tul-Islamiyyat*, Cairo 1971; *Arabic*

and Islamic Songs for Nigerian Schools and Colleges, Ede, 1975; *Model Questions and Answers on Islamic Religion Knowledge for West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), General Council Examination (GCE) and Teachers' College*, 1976; *Muslim names: their Meanings and Significance*, 1987; and *A Short Islamic History of Ede*. The renowned scholar is a member, Board of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; member, Board of Management, proposed Al-Hijrah University, Ede; member, Muhammad Kamal-ud-deen Education Foundation, Ilorin; member, Islamic Literature Association of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin and Cultural Adviser, Fountain University, Osogbo, which was founded by NASFAT.

Abdul-Lateef Adekilekun has attended notable international conferences and seminars, which include the Muslim World League in Mecca, in 1970 and 1981. A conference of Islamic Academy of Al-Azhar Cairo, 1971 and 1972, League of Islamic Universities in Constantine in Algeria, March and September 1989, International Conference on Hijra, University of Ilorin in 1980 and International Conference on Islam in Africa, Abuja in Nigeria He won a certificate in oratory as a public speaker in Cairo in 1971. He attended several seminars on politics and local government administration in Abuja, Ibadan, Ile Ife, Badagry and Osogbo between 1994 and 1996. He is also

a resource person to the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), Nigerian Educational Research Council, National Commission for Colleges of Education in Nigeria and League of Imams and Alfas in the south-western states of Nigeria. Abdul-Lateef was appointed Vice Chairman and Supervisor for Education, Ede Local Government between 1994 and 1995. He was the Supervisor for Health in the same Local Government Council in 1995 and Local Government Area Chairman and Supervisor for finance in 1996.

Alhaji Imam Ibraheem Dende Tijani Adekilekun

Alhaji Ibraheem Dende Tijani Adekilekun is another descendant of the Adekilekun Dynasty in Ede. His father, Alfa Tijani Alabi Adekilekun was a renowned Islamic Scholar and Chief Imam of Ede between 1969 and 1971 and his mother was Madam Adikatu Awero Tijani Adekilekun. He was born into the famous Adekilekun family of *Ile Imole* in the early 1940s. Like his cousin, Dr Tijani Adekilekun, his birthday was not recorded, but he adopted 31 March 1943 as his date of birth. According to him, he was born in the mosque at *Imole* compound. It was said that his mother had him during prayer session in the mosque. He started his Qur'anic education at a very tender age under an eminent Islamic Scholar, Alhaji Khalifah

Jamiu Abdul-Qudir Adekilekun, who was his uncle and a student of his father. His parents had apathy towards western education dominated by the Christian missionaries who utilised the opportunity to convert young children to Christianity. As a result, he was not permitted to have a formal education until July 1954, when family friends persuaded his father to allow him and his cousin, Dr Adekilekun to attend school.

Aside the fact that Alfa Tijani Alabi Adekilekun was persuaded to allow his children attend school, the period coincided with the time when Chief Obafemi Awolowo proposed and established primary schools for all children in the southwest. He enrolled and was admitted in 1954 at Young Tajudeen School, Ojoro, Ede. Alhaji Dende Adekilekun shared background with Dr Dawud Adekilekun. They both displayed intelligence in the course of their education at Young Tajudeen School that they only spent three and four months in the primary school. This was however as a result of private and personal training they enjoyed from Mr Amusan, their private tutor.

After his primary education, his father once again objected to the idea of furthering his education at the Secondary school level, probably due to the fear that the missionaries might convert him to Christianity. Almost all

the teachers came to plead with his father, emphasising that he should be permitted to exercise his intelligence. Being an obedient child, Alhaji Adekilekun totally submitted to the will of his father who objected to his wish to further his education. He then continued his Arabic/Islamic Studies under the tutorship of the Khalifa until he sat and passed Arabic/Islamic Teachers' test in 1959. When Obafemi Awolowo agitated for the Muslims and proposed that Arabic teachers should be employed in schools in the southwest region, he was employed as a Muallim to teach Arabic and Islamic education at Young Tajudeen School, Gbamuye, Ede in 1960 with a salary of 19 pounds per month.

As a Muallim, one was expected to teach Arabic and Islamic Studies in schools where pupils' population is above 180. Fondly called Muallim Dende, Alhaji Adekilekun started his teaching career in 1960 and taught in various Primary Schools for 31 years before his voluntarily retirement from government services in December 1990. Apart from the Young Tajudeen School, Ede where Alhaji Adekilekun thought, he also had experience of teaching the same subject at Young Tajudeen school, Ido Osun. Other non-Muslim schools where he taught Arabic were Local Authority Schools at Adogbe, Obada and Alusekere. Initially there were no Christian pupils attending Muslim schools.

Muslim schools then were called makaranta, an Hausa name for school. This is however unlike now when there are Christian children attending Muslim schools and Muslim children attending mission schools.

He shared his experience as a Mualim in non-Muslim schools where he served. According to him, the only subject he taught was Islamic education and Arabic Studies, which was usually taken four times in a week per class. He taught the classes and gave the pupils especially the fanatic Christian pupil the freewill to either attend or leave the class. His class was liberal where everyone knew religious study was optional and had to exercise their freedom to choose their religion. He noted that in recent times, Christians are making efforts to know about Islam, so when such need arises, both Christian and Muslim students are thought together.

During his career as an Islamic and Arabic instructor, Alhaji Adekilekun attended a course in Arabic Studies in Ilorin under the popular Islamic Preacher and Teacher - Sheik Mohammed Kamal- Deen AI-Adabby for six months. He later proceeded to the University of Ibadan for a Certificate course in Arabic and Islamic Studies between 1965 and 1966 academic session. He was appointed the

Student Imam of University of Ibadan while he was at the University of Ibadan.

Apart from his teaching and missionary activities, Alhaji Ibraheem Adekilekun has served in various political capacities. He was a member of Ede Local Government Management Committee between 1973 and 1975. Being a patriotic indigene, he respected the fact that he and other members were not paid salary but were only given sitting allowance, the first of which was even dedicated to the council. Having served in various Committees, he was appointed the Chairman Mother Care Committee for Ede Zone of Osun State. He was also a member Ede Local Government Education Authority. He has been a member of the National Council of Missioners of Ansar-ud-Deen Society since 1978 and Secretary, Oyo State Council of Missioners, the post he held until Osun State was created in August 1991. Alhaji Adekilekm served as the General Secretary, Ede Muslim Council for 27 years after his appointment in 1970. Dr Adekilekun's father, Alfa Alabi Tijani, proposed the establishment of the Muslim Council and a mosque when he was the Chief Imam of Ede, unfortunately, the council was not established until shortly after his death in 1970. In acknowledgement of Alfa Tijani's commitment to the growth of Islam in Ede, his son, Alhaji Adekilekun was consequently made the chairman until the

council was dissolved due to division of Ede into North and South Local Government Area Councils. Alhaji Adekilekun performed his pilgrimage in 1972.

Alhaji Ibraheem Adekilekun is one of the footholds of Ansa-ud-deen Society in Ede. On its establishment in 1976, Alhaji Adekilekun was appointed the Imam of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Ede Branch on August 13, 1976. As an Imam, Alhaji Adekilekun thinks there is diversion in the practice and teaching of Islam but that Islam is one. The Muslim societies are thereby established to contribute some fundamental elements to Islamic communities, and this is one of the reasons why Ansar-ud-deen was established in Ede in 1976. The establishment of Ansar-ud-deen Society in Ede is credited to Jumoda Quadri, Dr Tijani Adekilekun and Alhaji Adekilekun. On the establishment of the society, Alhaji Adekilekun was honoured with responsibility of the Imam, a position which he has held ever since.

The significant contributions of the Ansar-ud-deen Society to Islamic practice and teaching, which makes the society different from others is the combination of western education with Islamic and Arabic education in Ede. In fact, Ansar-ud-deen became popular in Ede as a result of the attempts of the society to correct the impression of the

people of Ede about western education. As a result, western education was seen beyond Christian missionaries' domination but as a necessity. Ansar-ud-deen schools were established with western system of education and Arabic and Islamic studies. The initial fear entertained by parents as regards their children being converted to Christianity was therefore relieved. The establishment of these Muslim schools succeeded in bridging the gap and restoring the hope of the parents that the practice of Islam by the children would be guaranteed. Alhaji Adekilekun emphasised that the merging of western education with Islamic teachings is about seeking for knowledge. He believes education in Arabic or Islamic Studies should not be limited by religious belief. One can be a Christian and might be interested in Arabic and Islamic studies. The holy Quran says it is in fact necessary for a Muslim to go out of his environment to seek for more knowledge in places like the Arab world. It is believed that when one has the knowledge about other people, and understands their language, it would be very difficult to cheat one.

Another significance of the society is the approach it introduced to the reading of the Quran and preaching from the Quran. Initially, reading and preaching was made in Arabic language as a result of which the people of Ede found it difficult to understand the teachings. To correct

this, Ansar-ud-deen introduced the interpretation and teaching of the Quran in local language. Another significance is the fact that unlike in other societies where proceeds realised at gatherings are distributed among the top functionaries, in Ansar-ud-deen society and as it is in Ede, proceeds are gathered for developmental purpose of the society. Part of the development was the construction of a mosque for its Muslim community.

As the Imam of the Ansar-ud-deen Muslim Society Ede Branch, Alhaji Adekilekun is responsible for the management of all the affairs of the society except finance. The essence of the Muslim council was to bring the Muslim communities in Ede under a single umbrella. The council established the Ede Muslim Group of Schools, which has the largest population of students in Ede. The school is divided into four sections; school 1, school 2, junior school and senior school with a principal for each school.

Ile Imole is reputable for its remarkable contributions to the growth and propagation of Islam in Ede. The compound is renowned for learning, teaching, preaching, writing and piety in Edeland. It is regarded as the centre of Western and Islamic Learning. It is also an Islamic indigenous home known as a local Islamic University. The compound has produced a great number of graduates in all

walks of life ranging from Islamic Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Science, Industry to Modern Administration in and outside Edeland. It produced one of the earliest professors of Computer Science in Nigeria, Prof. Majeed Olayide Abass. Dr Dawood Tijani Adekilekun was the head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the University of Ibadan before his death in 2006. Dr. Mojeed Olayede Abass, Abdul-Lateef's senior brother, served as the Deputy and Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Lagos. Alhaji Ibraheem Dende Tijani Adekilekun taught Arabic and Islamic studies in primary and secondary schools for 30 years. He became the Imam of Ansar-ud-deen Muslim Society, Ede in 1996.

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