



## The Introduction of Islamic Scholarship and its impact in South-West Nigeria

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.11430123

Submission Date: 26 April 2024 | Published Date: 02 June 2024

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### Abstract

This paper provides a brief introduction of Islamic scholarship in South-West Nigeria. It highlights the historical background of the introduction of Islam and its tradition of scholarship; its dynamics as well as the impacts of the scholarly endeavours undertaken by the Muslim scholars of the earliest generation and their impacts on the present. This is traced from the ancient period to colonial period and post-independence era, during which the South-West region witnessed a distinct tradition of Islamic scholarship since the advent of Islam in the region. The paper stressed the role played by Muslim scholars as well as the established Centres of Learning such as mosques and *madaris* in major cities like Ibadan, Ede and Abeokuta towards the development of Islamic Scholarship. Considering the nature of the topic, the researcher utilises theoretical method in data gathering. Some of the findings of the paper are that Islamic scholarship in South-West has a rich history; dating back centuries and mainly influenced by interactions with scholars from the North. That the arrival of Islam led to the establishment of learning centers and emergence of prominent scholars and that the 19th century Sokoto Caliphate further solidified Islamic scholarship in the region.

**Keywords:** Islam, Scholarship, South-West, Nigeria, Development.

### Introduction

The South-West Nigeria is one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, created during the regime of the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha. It consists of six states, namely Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states. The zone is majorly a Yoruba speaking area, although there are different dialects even within the same state. Islam entered the area before Christianity but it suffered stiff opposition from the pagans due to human nature of resisting change. This affected the growth of Islamic Scholarship in many negative ways. When Christianity eventually arrived, it managed to be on the same footing with Islam as regard the number of converts within a short period, despite the latter's early arrival in the area. However, the *Jihad* of Sokoto led by *Shaykh* 'Uthman bn Fodiyo and its effects in making Ilorin the first centre of learning in Yorubaland helped a great deal to activate Islamic scholarship and accelerate its growth in the South-West. Thereafter, South-West became the largest Muslim area within the Southern Nigeria where Islam and Islamic scholarship flourish and able to compete favourably with other centres of Islam in the world.

### Introduction of Islam in the South-West

The precise time of entry of Islam in the South-West Nigeria has been a contentious topic among the scholars. Historians defer as regards the actual period when the Yoruba people of the South-West Nigeria had contact with Islam. This was partly because events were not properly documented at the early period probably because the people did not see reasons for doing so. This, therefore, led to the emergence of many accounts on the subject matter which are majorly based on conjectures. According to an historian and erudite scholar of Islam, *Shaykh* Adam 'Abdullahi al-Ilori, the Yoruba People of South Western Nigeria might have come into contact with Islam in the twelfth and thirteenth century<sup>1</sup>. This was predicated on two facts. First was the history of an unknown Malian scholar who came to Ile-Ife in Osun State to preach

<sup>1</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Al-Islam Fi Naijiriyyah wa Shaykh Uthman bn Fodiyo al-Fulani*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (NP), 1978, p.33

Islam. The man who was referred to by his hosts (Ile-Ife people) as Hausa man because they neither understood his language nor did he understand theirs was later believed, through further findings, to be a Malian whose name was not known.<sup>2</sup> He was said to be preaching to the people by repeatedly saying:

*Let us worship Allah who created the mountains, the hills and valleys. He created everything<sup>3</sup>*

Thomas Harold was quoted to have said that the man could not convert anyone into Islam as he died few months after his arrival to Ile-Ife and a copy of Qur'an was retrieved from his lodge after his death.<sup>4</sup> This is why Balogun suggests that if *Idi* (the wrapped Qur'an) found in Ile-Ife is untied and made available to archaeologists, the date of arrival of Islam to Ile-Ife will give the clue as to when it actually got to Yorubaland<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, it is an undeniable fact that the religion of Islam used to be called *Esin Imale* meaning, the religion of Mali or the religion whose knowledge is difficult to comprehend, by the people of the South-West. This nomenclature (religion of Mali) was believed to have been given to Islam because it was introduced to them by the Malians during the period of the Mali's famous ruler, Alhaji Mansa Musa (d. 1337) whose reign was known for rapid expansion of Islam in many parts of West Africa. He was said to have performed *Haji* with about sixty (60) thousand people in his entourage.<sup>6</sup>

However, according to a renowned scholar of history, Gbadamosi, Islam came into the area which is populated mainly by the Yoruba during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Gbadamosi's submission might have indicated the time and the period when Islam was actually embraced by the indigenous people of the South-West because of his usage of word such as "alien" to describe some of the scholars who contributed to the development of Islam in the area<sup>8</sup>

Another fact that indicates that what later became South-Western part of Nigeria was known to the Muslims early is seen in a statement attributed to Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu who was quoted to have referred to the Yorubaland as a country where unbelief was prevalent and belief was rarely found. Al-Ilori deduced that since Ahmad Baba died in 1627, one can safely assume that the area under study was known to the Muslims since the seventeenth century or earlier. His statement that 'belief was rarely found' is a clear testimony that Islam was present at that early period but its presence was insignificant.

More so, al-Ilori quoted Michael Ajayi Crowder that the Muslim missionaries from Nupe origin were the first to build a mosque in *Oyo-Ile* during the reign of Alafin Ajiboyede around 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> This indicates that Islam must have been well rooted in the area before the time of the building of the mosque. This is because it is usually not possible for strangers to enter a new area and begin to build mosque.

However, it is incontestable fact that Islam had been well rooted in many parts of South-West by 18<sup>th</sup> century before the *Jihad* of *Shaykh* Uthman bn Fodiyo. This has been attested to by many writers of history. For example, Samuel Johnson was quoted to have said in his book, 'History of the Yoruba' that Islam came to Yorubaland towards the close of the eighteenth century<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, Islam could be said to have reached South-Western Nigeria early but its arrival was not documented.

### **The introduction of Islamic Scholarship in the South-West**

The establishment of Islamic scholarship in the South-West was as old as the introduction of Islam in the area. This is because it was the same itinerant scholars who introduced Islam to the area that laid the foundation of Islamic scholarship bearing in mind the fact that the religion of Islam cannot be practiced properly without at least some rudiments of knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith. Travelling at their expense from one town to another, these migrant Muslims preached and taught Islam.<sup>11</sup> A few of them were foreigners, such as the white Arabs and the *Wangarawa* scholars from North Africa and majority came from Ilorin which had become an Islamic Centre of Learning after the *Jihad* of 'Abdul-

<sup>2</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba' Fi Akhbar al-Islam Wa Ulama' Bilad Yoruba, Maktabah Al-Adab*, Cairo, 1987, p.13

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.13

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.32.

<sup>5</sup> S.U. Balogun, "Islam in Yoruland" A Seminar Paper, Presented at Ojoku Grammar School, Kwara State, 1994, p.3

<sup>6</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba' Fi Akhbar al-Islam wa Ulama' Bilad Yoruba*, op. cit., p.11

<sup>7</sup> T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba*, Great Britain, Western Printing Services Limited, Bristol London, 1978, p.4

<sup>8</sup> See T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam Among the Yoruba*, op. cit., p.63

<sup>9</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba' Fi Akhbar al-Islam wa Ulama' Bilad Yoruba*, op.cit. p.11

<sup>10</sup> A.B. Fafunwa, (1995, *History of Education in Nigeria*, NPS Educational Publishers Limited, p.52

<sup>11</sup> T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam Among the Yoruba*, op. cit., p.34

Salam, a son of *Shaykh* Salih (‘Alim). What should have been the earliest record of scholarship in the South-West could be seen from *Infaq al-Maysur* of Sultan Muhammad Bello ibn ‘Uthman ibn Fodiyo, stating that Danmasani wrote a work on ‘*Ulama* of Yoruba land. Unfortunately, the work of Danmasani did not see the light of the day as none of its transcript could be accessed.<sup>12</sup>

### Challenges that affect the Development of Islamic Scholarship in the South-West

For many decades after the coming of Islam to the South-West, Islamic scholarship was exclusively monopolised by the itinerant scholars. This led to a situation whereby the leadership of the Muslims in many places such as Ibadan and Abeokuta was virtually in the hands of the visitors.<sup>13</sup> It was this situation that prompted al-Ilori to assert that nobody was deserved to be addressed as a scholar in the South-West and entire Yorubaland before the establishment of Islamic government in Ilorin.<sup>14</sup> There were certain factors which were responsible for the delay of Islamic scholarship in the South-West until the establishment of the Islamic government in Ilorin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century despite the presence of Islam for several decades in the area before this time. Among those factors three are most important for this research and they are as follow:

The first factor was the nature of the itinerant scholars who brought Islam to the area. Almost all foreign itinerant scholars, majority of who were Arabs, who came to the South-West, were passers-by not staying long. Many of the locals themselves were traders who the necessities of trade and profit making compelled to trade from one big market town in the South-West to another. Even then, some of them tarried too little in town to make any deep impact. Some of the teachers and preachers themselves also stayed only for a while which largely accounts for the scanty facts and dim recollection about many of them. But there were cases where scholars of reputes remained and lived with the people, preaching and teaching about Islam until they died. For instance, there were *Alfa* Ahmad Qifu and a certain Alfa Fulani in Ibadan and Abeokuta respectively. Also, in Epe there lived a white Arab to mention but a few, were reported to have stayed until death.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, the volatile nature of the South-West particularly the Oyo Empire, together with the persecution of the early Muslims by the pagans was another factor which made the area inhabitable for the itinerant scholars. There are numerous instances to illustrate this but two examples will be cited here. The first was an Arab, Muhammad b. Haja Gumsu, who stayed in the palace of the Alafin. The second scholar had a more crucial significance. His name is al-Salih but was popularly known as ‘Alimi. For his religious activities and popularity, he was seen as a potential threat to the authority and was therefore said to have been driven out of Oyo by the then Alafin<sup>16</sup>. Ibn Gumsu was also said to have narrowly escaped to Sokoto when Alafin Aole massacred the Muslims who used to gather around him at the palace as a result of the threat message sent to the Alafin by the pagans that he would lose his stool if he persists in tolerating the religious principles preached by the Muslim scholars<sup>17</sup>.

Thirdly and most important factor which slowed down the Islamic scholarship in the area was the language of instruction as well as the method and the process of teaching and learning. The process of educating the people was long and tedious as a result of paucity of capable teachers. Al-Ilori observed that the few teachers around at the time were mainly those who could only read and write the Qur’an and some other books of basic education<sup>18</sup>. According to Bidmus, the only book the itinerant traders cum scholars carried about was the Qur’an with no evidence that they knew how to translate it correctly<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, the students who needed further and deep knowledge of Islam had to move from one teacher to another. More so, the itinerant scholars were non-Yoruba speakers. They were Arab, Nupe, Fulani or Hausa. This constituted a big challenge for both the teachers and the students and ultimately led to the slowdown of scholarship.

In addition to this, most of the students were adults and elderly who could not devote full time to learning while the teachers were also non-professionals.<sup>20</sup> However, with the successful Jihad and establishment of Islamic government led by Emir Abd-al-Salam in Ilorin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Islamic scholarship whose foundation had been laid down by the itinerant scholars was fully activated. Many eminent scholars from Hausa, Nupe, Borno, and Borgulands as well as from

<sup>12</sup> M.B. Ibn Fodiyo, *Infaq al-Maysur fi Tarikh Bilad al-Takrur*, (NP), (ND), p.48

<sup>13</sup> T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam Among the Yoruba*, op. cit., p.63

<sup>14</sup> A.A. Al-Ilori, *al-Islam fi Naijiriyyah*, op.cit. p.67

<sup>15</sup> T.G.O. Gbdsmsosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba* op. cit. p34

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp.7-8.

See also A.A. al-Ilori, *al-Islam fi Naijiriyya* as well as *al-Nasim al-Saba fi akhbar alIslam wa Ulama’ Bilad Yoruba*

<sup>17</sup> T.G.O., Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba*, op.cit., p.8

<sup>18</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba’ Fi Akhbar al-Islam wa Ulama’ Bilad Yoruba*, po.cit. p.34

<sup>19</sup> H. K. Bidmus, “A Literary Appraisal of the Arabic Writings of the Yoruba *Ulama’*”, M.A. Dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1972, p.6

<sup>20</sup> W.O.A. Naisru, *Islamic Learning among the Yoruba*, PhD thesis, University of Ibadan, 1977, p.38

other existing centres of Islamic learning at the time who might have been nursing ambitions of proceeding to the South-West for the purpose of Islamisation and *Da'wah* and who might have been discouraged either by the high level of pagans antagonism in the area or by unfavourable circumstances occasioned by the incessant wars taking place in the area at the time among different Empires, were eventually motivated by the new development in Ilorin; the gateway to the South-Western states from the North<sup>21</sup>.

### Scholars who contributed to the Development of Islamic Scholarship

There can't be Islamic scholarship without Islamic scholars. It is the by-product of their intellectual activities that is referred to as Islamic scholarship. The contribution of some scholars of South-West at this early stage of Islam as recorded by history is highly commendable. One particular scholar who contributed greatly to the development of Islamic scholarship in the area under study was *Shaykh* Abubakar b. al-Qasim who studied at Ilorin. When the Muslims of Ibadan heard about his erudition, they clamored for his return to his hometown, Ibadan, to come and spearhead the teaching activities<sup>22</sup>. Without hesitation, *Shaykh* Abubakar succumbed to their demand and answered their clarion call. On his way to Ibadan, he had to pass by Iseyin, which had also become an Islamic centre at the time. The Muslims of Iseyin also requested for his service to teach them for some time before proceeding on his journey, the request which he granted. When a messenger of his people from Ibadan came to call him, he composed a send-forth song for the people of Iseyin as follows:

لِلْعِلْمِ حَرَجْنَا = نَطْلُبُهُ حَيْثُ سِرْنَا  
وَمَنْ يُرِدْهُ لَدَيْنَا = فَلْيَأْتِنَا حَيْثُ كُنَّا  
الزَّادُ لَا بُدَّ مِنْهُ = كَيْ لَا يَجُوعَ لَدَيْنَا<sup>23</sup>

Meaning;

*It is for the purpose of knowledge that we have come out#  
We search for it wherever we go,  
And if anyone wants to learn from us#  
Let him come to us wherever we are,  
The provision (for it), no doubt, must be made#  
So that he would not be hungry while he is with us*

On his arrival in Ibadan, *Shaykh* Abubakar established a big *madrasah*, named *Shaykh* Abubakar's College which is located at Oke Aremo in Ibadan. The school was attended by many enthusiastic students from within and beyond Ibadan. A number of his students became highly learned in Arabic and Islamic sciences and even reached the position of *mufti* (Islamic verdict issuer). They included *Shaykh* Hasan Abata, *Shaykh* Malik ibn Husain *Shaykh* Abubakar and his son Amin, al-Imam Sulayman Alagunfon, *Shaykh* Abdullah ibn Basunu, *Shaykh* Abdussalam Gata and his brother Abubakar Gata. The most senior and most outstanding of them was Haruna ibn Matanmi, the king of Oshogbo. They were so motivated by their scholar to the extent that they planned to travel to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage and learning as well as visiting the famous libraries there.<sup>24</sup> Even though their objectives was not achieved and the move was unsuccessful due to attack on their way by the pagans which forced them to return home, they remained the first set of scholars to have embarked on such expedition in the whole of South-West.

More so, the most outstanding student of *Shaykh* Abubakar to whom the baton of leadership in scholarship was passed, *Shaykh* Harun the son of Matanmi, soon became an erudite scholar after the death of their teacher<sup>25</sup>. Under him, Ibadan became so popular as a Centre of Islamic learning in the South-West that there was no town in the entire Yorubaland where student did not come to him for learning. He also translated all the works of his teacher into Yoruba language.<sup>26</sup> It is said that *Shaykh* Harun's scholarship became so famous that scholars came from as far as Sudan and Sokoto and were often maintained financially by him.<sup>27</sup> For his erudition in Islamic scholarship, he was named *Shaykh* *Shuyukh Bilad Yoruba 'alal-italaq* (scholar of the scholars of the entire Yorubaland). This was as a result of his accomplishment as the pioneer scholar in the entire Yorubaland to have produced up to three hundred (300) qualified

<sup>21</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba' Fi Akhbar al-Islam wa Ulama' Bilad Yoruba*. ... p.28

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.38

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.38

<sup>24</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba' Fi Akhbar al-Islam wa Ulama' Bilad Yoruba*, ... p.39

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.41

<sup>26</sup> A.B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, ... p.53

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.54

scholars. To confirm this title for him as the scholar of scholars of Yorubaland, it was used by one of his contemporaries, *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn Abubakar al-Ilori in a poem he composed to eulogise him when he died in 1935 C.E. as follow:

أَلْهَبِي عَلَيَّ مَا الْقَلْبُ مِنْهُ تَفَجَّعًا # وَمَا عَارَضَ الْأَكْبَادَ حَتَّى تَصَدَّعًا  
 لِمَوْتِ فَقِيهِ عَالِمٍ مُتَوَرِّعٍ # صَبُورٍ صَدُوقٍ مُسْتَجَابٍ إِذَا دَعَا  
 وَأَعْنِي شَيْخُ الشُّيُوخِ وَمُقْتَدَى # لَدَيَّ كُلُّ مُسْتَهْدِي إِذَا الْأَمْرُ أَفْرَعَا  
 قَضَى مُخِي هَذَا الدِّينَ فِي أَرْضٍ يَعْزَبَا # وَمَجَلِّي ظِلَامِ الشَّكِّ إِنْ كَانَ مَوْقَعَا  
 قَضَى مَنْ يُرَدُّ مُشْكِلَاتُ الْمَسَائِلِ # إِلَيْهِ فَيُجَلِّي مَا عَلَيْهِ تَطَبَّعَا  
 مَجْدٍ قَضَى نَحْبًا وَقَدْ كَانَ فِي الْوَرَى # مِنَ الْعَيْثِ أَرْوَى أَوْ مِنَ اللَّيْثِ أَرْوَعَا  
 لَقَدْ زَلَزَلَتْ أَرْضُ إِبَادَنْ بِأَهْلِهَا # وَبَيْتُ الْعُلَمَاءِ مِمَّا أَلَمَّ تَرْعَزَعَا<sup>28</sup>

Meaning:

Is there a reliever who relieves me of sadness of my mind  
 And that which enters my hearth and breaks it  
 As a result of death of a just, scholar and ascetic  
 Patient, truthful whose prayer is answered whenever he supplicates,  
 By this I mean *Shaykh al-Shuyukh* who is being emulated  
 By every seeker of guide whenever things confuse him  
 The reformer of this religion in Yorubaland has died  
 And he is the remover of doubt whenever it occurs  
 And he to whom difficult religious matters are referred has died  
 And it was he who exposes what has been hidden  
 The noble one has passed on in the midst of his people  
 Like rainfall whose water was used or like lion that was feared by (the enemies)  
 The land of Ibadan was convulsed with its people  
 And the bereaved house of honour was shakened

The students of *Shaykh* Harun cut across the entire states of South-West and many of them contributed immensely to scholarship in their various stations. They included *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Salam ibn al-Hasan popularly known as Oke-koto. One of the scholarly works of *Shaykh* Harun was a book called *Tariq al-Jannah* which he wrote in 1338 A.H. The book deals with topics relating to *Tawhid* (monotheism), *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) and *al-Tasawwuf* (Ascetism). He was regarded in Ede (Osun State) as an authority in religion and its sciences. There was also *Shaykh* Muhammad Thani who was nicknamed as Daniya ibn al-Yamin. He was an eminent *Faqih* (jurist) who memorized *al-Mukhtasar al-Khalil fi al-Madh-hab al-Maliki* and *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Muhalli ibn Abdullahi ibn ‘Uthman Basunu.<sup>29</sup> These scholars laid a solid foundation for Islamic scholarship in the South-West Nigeria and Yorubaland in general. Their students later became the torch-bearers of teaching, preaching and development of Islam in the area.

Though, the written scholarship was not common at that early period in the area under study, there is evidence that some of the scholars wrote poems and some composed Yoruba poems which they called *waka* through which they taught *Tawhid*, *Salat* and righteous deeds to their people.<sup>30</sup> However, the events in early 20<sup>th</sup> century showed that the combined efforts of the scholars from Hausaland, North Africa, Nupe land and Ilorin in the areas of Islamic education and the development of Islam, began to yield positive result. The period saw the establishment of traditional Islamic schools and writing of books by many scholars. The first set of these scholars includes *Shaykh* Ahmad Rufa’I, Oke-Are, Ibadan, *Shaykh* Ya’kub of Ikirun, Osun state and Ahmad Tijjani al-Zakawi, Lagos<sup>31</sup>. They were followed by many other scholars, prominent among them were *Shaykh* Adam ‘Abdullah al-Ilori who established *Markaz al-Ta’lim al-Arabi*, Agege Lagos in 1952, *Shaykh*, Khidir Salahuddin Apaokagi, who established *al-Adabiyyah* school for Arabic and Islamic studies in Owo, Ondo State, in 1955 and *Shaykh* Murtadha ‘Abd-al-Salam who established the Arabic institute of Nigeria, Elekuro,

<sup>28</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba’ Fi Akhbar al-Islam wa ‘Ulama’ Bilad Yoruba*. ... p.41

<sup>29</sup> A.A. al-Ilori, *Nasim al-Saba’ Fi Akhbar al-Islam wa ‘Ulama’ Bilad Yoruba*. ... p.39

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.40

<sup>31</sup> M.T. Adam, *Muallafat al-‘Allamah al-Ilori Mama Yuqal ‘Aniha ma Laha Mama ‘Alayha, Markaz al-‘Ulum al-‘Arabiyyah wa al-Islamiyyah*, Lagos, 2008, p.142



Ibadan. These scholars were famous for their scholarship as their efforts eventually led to the spread of Arabic and Islamic education in almost all villages and towns of the South Western states of Nigeria.<sup>32</sup> Among them, *Shaykh* Adam al-Ilori had proved to be outstanding in the Islamic scholarship. He was a teacher, a preacher and a great author of many books. His writings cut across many disciplines and no scholar in the entire Yorubaland, past or present has been able to reach his height in the area of written scholarship. His works, which run into hundred can be categorised into different fields. For example, in the area of language and linguistics, he wrote *Asrar al-Balaghah* (the secrets of Rhetoric), *Ta'rif Shi'r al-Arabi* (Introduction to Arabic poetry) *Miftah al-I'rab wa Tasreef* (The key to I'rab and Etymology), *Taqrib Nawh* (Grammar made easy), *Lubab al-Adab* (The core of literature), etc. In the field of Islamic Studies, he authored books such as *Dalil Qira'at Mus-haf* (Guide to reading the Qur'an), *Durus Tawheed wa al-'Aqidah* (Studies of monotheism and belief), *Falsafah Nubuwwah* (the philosophy of Prophethood), *Qawa'id al-Islam* (the pillars of Islam), *Qawa'id al-Salat* (the pillars of Salat), etc. Similarly, in the areas of social and cultural fields, *Shaykh* Adam wrote books like *al-Islam fi Najjiriyyah*, (the history of Islam in Nigeria), *al-Islam Deen wa al-Dawlah* (Islam; A religion and a way of governance), *al-Tathqif al-Siyasi* (political civilisation), *al-Jagrafiyyah wa al-Ta'rikh* (Geography and History), *al-Islam wa al-Taqalid al-Jahiliyyah* (Islam and imitation of the jahiliyyah)<sup>33</sup> and so on.

### The Impact of Contribution of the Scholars on Islamic Scholarship

Consequent upon the efforts of *Shaykh* Adam and the scholars earlier mentioned as well as the scholars of Ilorin such as *Shaykh* Kamaluddin al-Adabi, *Shaykh* Jibril Imam Sahaban and others, the horizon of Islamic scholarship has been widened in the South-West. The number of Islamic Centres has increased, many academics have been produced and a lot of works have also been written. Some of the beaming intellectuals of these institutes include the former vice chancellor, University of Ilorin and current Registrar of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Professor Is-haq Oloyede, Professor R.D. Abubakr, Professor S.O. Rabi, Professor Abdul-Baqi Agaka, both from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and Professor Misbahuddin Rahimson. Most of these products are able to successfully combine western education with their Islamic education despite their competencies in their chosen field.

The modernised Qur'anic education in the South-West has equally produced many young scholars who are vast in the field. One of the most outstanding in this category is Ahmad Yusuf Ajegunle who is popularly known among Ibadan scholars as *Raik al-Asfiya'* (saliva of the choicest) as his title, the title which he rhetorically coined to connote that he is a product of the scholars. He is the founder of *Manbau al-Huda li al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyyah wa al-Islamiyyah* (the Source of guide for Arabic and Islamic Studies). Despite his young age at his twenties, he has produced many scholarly works which run into thirties in 'Ulum al-Qur'an and other related fields. Some of his works are *Sirr al-Bayan fi I'jaz al-Qur'an* (The Secret of Explanation on the Miracle of the Qur'an), *al-'Uyun al-Dami'ah wa al-Zawajir al-Qami'ah* (The eyes which shed tears and suppressing reprimands), and *Fann al-Taushih fi Abda'u al-Madh*. Others include *Tilka al-Ayyam* (Those were the Days), the title is coined from a verse of the Qur'an in *Surah al-'Imran*, verse 67 to illustrate the life of a man who is pompous and does not fear eventualities of his actions. This goes a long way to show the author's prowess in the science of the Qur'an. *Hibbah al-Mannan* (The Gift of the Generous), *Takhmis al-Lamiyah Ibn al-Wardi al-Musammah bi Nasihah al-Ikhwan wa Murshidah al-Khallan* (Quintupling the poem of Ibn al-Ward known as the admonition for the Brothers and a guide to the Uncles), *Ya Rasul Allah* (Oh you Messenger of Allah) which contains the poem that praises the Prophet (SAW) and *Kanz al-Adab; Rafiq al-Tullab* (the Treasure of Literature; Students' Companion), which contains etiquettes for the students of Islamic studies<sup>34</sup>.

The schools (modernised Islamic Schools) have equally developed to the levels of producing quality academic journals and magazines. The practice which was started by *Shaykh* Adam al-Ilori's school, *Markaz Ta'lim al-'Arabi*, Agege, Lagos has been emulated by many Arabic and Islamic schools in the South-West. Some of them are:

- Mujallah al-Markaz*: (*Markaz* magazine); it is a biannual magazine which debuted in 1958 from *Markaz al-Ta'lim al-'Arabi*, Agege, Lagos. Another magazine produced by the school that was started in 1970 is titled *Sawt al-Islam* (voice of Islam)
- Mujallah al-Afkar*: it is a yearly academic magazine produced by *Dar al-Irshad, Orile Iganmu*, Lagos.
- Mujallah al-Tibyan* (*al-Tibyan* Magazine). It belongs to *Ma'had al-Ta'lim al-'Arabi al-Islami*, Ijebu-Ode, Lagos Nigeria
- Mujallah al-Nur* (*al-Nur* Magazine), produced by *al-Markaz Nur al-Islam li Ta'lim al-'Arabi al-Islami*, Agege, Lagos.
- Mujallah al-Aqlam*, produced by *Madrasah Baqa'u al-Islam wa al-Ta'lim al-'Arabi*, Itire, Lagos.

<sup>32</sup> A.B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, op. cit., p.53

<sup>33</sup> M.T. Adam, *Muallafat al-'Allamah al-Ilori; Wama Yuqal anha, ma Laha Wama 'Alayha*, *Markaz al-'Ulum al-'Arabiyyah wa al-Islamiyyah*, Lagos, P.20. See also M.T. Adam, *Taqrib al-Falsafah, Markaz al-'Ulum al-'Arabiyyah wa al-Islamiyyah*, Lagos, 2013, pp.95-96

<sup>34</sup> *Shaykh* Abbas Zakariyya' al-Ibadani, (65 years), Islamic Scholar, Interviewed at his Residence Behind Airport Quarters, on 06-09-2017

- f. *Mujallah al-'Ulum* (science Magazine) which is produced by *Markaz al-'Ulum*, Alagbado, Lagos.
- g. *Mujallah Hasad al-Raudhah*: it is a magazine of *Raudhah al-Ta'lim al-'Arabi al-Islami*, Ikirun<sup>35</sup>, Osun state etc.

## Conclusion

It has been established in this paper that Islam has a long history in the South-West. It arrived in the area earlier before the 1804 *Jihad* of *Shaykh* Uthman bn Fodiyo. The connection between the *Jihad* and Islamic scholarship in the area has also been established in this paper. This connection shows that for the Islamic scholarship to grow there is the need to always create an enabling environment and peaceful atmosphere where scholars are free to operate. The scholars and other stakeholders in the area need to collaborate to ensure the continuation of Islamic scholarship and its speedy transfer to the incoming generation, particularly through the use of new technologies such as the use social media as well as electronic media to disseminate and spread the knowledge of Islam among the Muslims in the South-West. The social media, particularly, the Facebook, the Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. have become the avenue through which millions of users send and receive information within the shortest time possible. Therefore, it becomes indispensable for anyone who intends to pass important message like that of Islamic sciences to utilise them for optimum benefit and to be able reach the widest possible audience.

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### CITATION

Husain A.W. (2024). The Introduction of Islamic Scholarship and its impact in South-West Nigeria. In *Global Journal of Research in Humanities & Cultural Studies* (Vol. 4, Number 3, pp. 31–37). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11430123>

<sup>35</sup> M.T. Adam, *Muallafat al-'Allamah al-Ilori; Wama Yuqal anha, ma Laha Wama 'Alayha*, Op. cit, p.234