

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

## ABSTRACT

Qur'anic Education has been deeply entrenched for many centuries in the territories of Kanem Borno and Sokoto Caliphates, which form the present day Northern Nigeria. This system of education impacted greatly on the thoughts, values and way of life of the peoples of these territories. Colonialism brought along with it new issues and challenges in the process of acquiring and disseminating Qur'anic Education. Identifying these issues and challenges form the central goals of this paper. The paper spells out advent of Islam and Qur'anic Education into Nigeria. The paper defines Qur'anic Education, its significance and the evolution of Qur'anic schools in Northern Nigeria. The most significant challenge of integration of Qur'anic schools into Western Education is discussed and analysed. The paper also discusses the development of *tafsir* and the emergence of new trends of *tafsir* in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria. It then identifies and briefly analyses some books of *tafsir* (*tarjamah*) and academic researches. The paper gives a significant contribution to the understanding of contemporary developments within the Muslim Community in Northern Nigeria with specific reference to Qur'anic Education. Finally, it gives recommendations for the general development of Qur'anic Education with a view to making it more relevant to the needs and realities of modern times.

## QUR'ANIC EDUCATION

Qur'an is the miraculous word of Allah which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the intermediary of angel Jibril. This word of Allah is recited and memorized for guidance of mankind in prayer and all the times. Qur'anic Education could therefore be defined as a systematic process of studying, examining and extracting the divine messages of the Qur'an with the aim of its proper application in order to guide mankind and get the pleasure of Allah (*Mardat Allah*) in this world life and indeed, in the hereafter. (al-Zurqani, 1942: 12-13)

From this definition, we understand that Qur'anic Education encompasses all aspects of life. This is so because the Qur'an as the divine word of Allah deals with all facets of life. Hence, one must also expect its teachings to be very comprehensive.

Islam, encompasses all aspects of human endeavour such as the social, educational, economic and political. Allah revealed the Qur'an in order to guide the mankind. The Qur'an is an embodiment which regulates and provides solutions to man's problems. For instance, politically, the Qur'an calls for justice (al-Ma'idah:8, al-Nahl:90, al-An'am:152) sympathy (Al-Imran:159) sincerity (al-Zumr:2,11,14, al-A'araf:29, al-Bayyinah:5) and other virtues (al-An'am: 162-163).

Economically, the Qur'an allows acquisition of wealth through the legal means. (al-Baqarah:275) The Qur'an also provides numerous thorough teachings and guidelines on trade and investments. It then strongly prohibits usury because of its side effects to the individual and the society (al-Baqarah:275). The Qur'an also commands giving out of Zakat ((al-Baqarah:42, al-Nisa:77, al-A'araf:156, al-Taubah:60, 103) Sadaqat (al-Nisa: 114, (al-Baqarah:271, 276, al-Mujadalah:13, al-Layl:6) Infaq (al-Furqan:67, Saba'i: 39) and various forms of Musa'adah (assistance). (al-Ma'idah:2)

Socially, the Qur'an encourages good neighbourliness (al-Nisa:36) patience (al-Kahf:69,78, al-Ma'arij: 5,) hardworking, sympathy (al-Imran:159) kindness (al-Fath:29) and many more. The Qur'an also regulates Muslim's relationship with his immediate family members, with his relatives, with his neighbours, guests and humanity at large. (al-An'am:162-163)

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF QUR'ANIC EDUCATION**

The Qur'an teaches the complete life. It holds a pride of place at the very centre of Muslim religious life and practice.

A Muslim who has, thus, memorized the complete Qur'an is known as a *Hafiz*, one who keeps the Qur'an in his or her heart. Parts of the Qur'an are recited on many different occasions. A Muslim who observes the five daily prayers will recite several short chapters from the Qur'an each day. Passages are recited at birth to the newborn and at death to the dying. All the great events of life and the rites of passage in the Muslims world are marked by recitation of the Qur'an. (Extracted From Video Cassette Programme. This is the truth, July, 2002 ).

Parts of the glorious Qur'an are incorporated into the rites of marriages and funeral. A new venture of any kind whether in public or private life, is inaugurated by the recitation of blessings from the Qur'an. In many Muslims countries, every public meeting starts with the recitation of the Qur'anic verses. It is a special mark of devotion to recite the whole of the Qur'an at least once during the month of Ramadan.

Oral recitation of the Qur'an is believed by Muslims to be the believer's most direct contact with the word of Allah. The act of recitation known as *tajwid*, is consequently highly valued among Muslims. One hears day and night, on the streets, in mosques, in homes, in taxis, and in shops, the sound of the Qur'an being recited in the Islamic community. Recitation of the Qur'an is the core of religious devotion. The sound of voices reciting the glorious book inspires much of Muslims religious and social life. Participation in recitation, whether as reciter or listener, is itself an act of worship, for both acts are basic to a Muslims life. (This is the Truth, July, 2002).

Indeed, there is not a single worship but the Qur'an mentions how it is carried out, and there is not a single discipline of education but the Qur'an states it and how it should be studied, examined, analyzed and applied to guide man worship Allah property, and to have excellent life on earth as Allah's Vicegerent (*Khalifat Allah*) and get His (Allah's) pleasure and reward of the paradise at the hereafter

In this regard, Allah says:

For We have revealed to you (Muhammad SAW) the Book as an exposition of everything, and as guidance and grace and happy tidings for those who submit. (al-Nahl:89)

The Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said:

“Indeed, after you (the *Sahabah*) a lot of calamities will occur like the darkness of the night”. Then the *Sahabah* said: “what is the solution Oh Prophet of Allah”? The Prophet replied: “The book of Allah. In it, is the story of those before you and those after you, and legal verdicts between yourselves It is what will clear things for you and not chaos. Anyone who neglects it because of pride and arrogance Allah will destroy him. Whoever seeks guidance other than it Allah will misguide him. It is the strong rope of Allah. It is the word of wisdom. It is the straight path- It is that which the heart does not stray, tongues don't blend with other than it. The *ulama* don't get bored with it. It does not age due to continue memorization of it. Its wonders never end. Whoever utters it, speaks the truth. Whoever makes a legal verdict with it, has indeed emphasized justice. Whoever abides by it, will be rewarded and guided unto the right path. (al-Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 2096)

It is very important to note that Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the divine book of guidance and mercy for humanity. Its message is

addressed to different peoples living in different parts of the world and that message is valid for all times to come. In fact, the greatest divine favour to man is that he has been taught the Qur'an. It is an instrument of instructions which has been issued to man in his capacity as Allah's Vicegerent on earth. The Qur'an enables man to conduct his life in such a way that he is able to obtain success in this world and be favourably rewarded in the hereafter. To Muslims generally, the Qur'an should be read, memorized, understood, and be applied to regulate their transactions for all times. (Abdalati, 1985:193-194)

## **HOW ISLAM AND QUR'ANIC EDUCATION CAME TO NIGERIA**

Islām was practised in Egypt and other parts of North Africa since seventh century CE. It was from these areas that the Islamization of the peoples of Africa south of the Sahara started. As early as the seventh century, Muslims from North Africa used the famous and well established trade routes as a means of the propagation of Islām.

Most historians are of the view that Islām reached Africa South of the Sahara through the trans-Saharan trade routes. Fage, for example, stated that the trans-Saharan trade route provided immediate means for the penetration of Islām into Kanem-Borno, while 'Abdullāh Smith asserted that the trans-Saharan trade routes provided a gateway through which Islām penetrated into Kanem-Borno throughout the period of the Sayfawa dynasty. This route was also transmitter of culture and ideas, and has been described as the ancient, shortest and easiest of all routes. However, Lavers believed that Islām made its first appearance in Kanem-Borno in the eleventh century, but Mustaphā has a contrary view, indicating that Islām came to Borno much earlier than eleventh century. (Mustapha, 1987:16)

Balogun held the view that there was Islāmic influence in Kanem-Borno prior to the reign of Mai Hume Jilmi ibn 'Abduljalīl ibn Arki and that there were Muslim Mais like Mai Arki (the grandfather of Mai Hume Jilmi), and Mai 'AbdulJalīl (Mai Hume's father), prior to his reign. Balogun stated further that there was not only the influence of Islām in Kanem-Borno prior to the eleventh century but also there were Muslims in greater numbers living there. In fact, it could only be said that the reign of Mai Hume Jilmi witnessed the establishment of an Islāmic *umamah* headed by the most learned of them. During his reign and afterwards, the propagation and spread of Islām was undertaken by the fiat of the royal might with a high degree of concern. (Mustapha, 1987:32-33).

According to Palmer the first country in the Sūdān which Islām entered was the land of Borno. It came through a scholar Muhammad ibn Mani who lived in Borno for five years in the time of king Bulu, six years in the time of king Arki, four years in the time of king Kadai Hawami, fourteen years in the time of king Hume (Palmer, 1928:14).

Palmer stated further that:

King Bulu read with Muhammad ibn Mani from *Tabārah alladhī bi yadihil mulk* down to *min aljinnati wal nās*. Bulu gave his teacher fifty camels. King Arki read from *yāsīn* to *walnās* and gave him sixty camels. King Kade ibn Arju read from *K.H. 'A.S* to *walnās* and gave him seventy camels. 'AbdulJalīl read from "A.L.M.S" (*Sūrah al-A'rāf*) onwards and gave him eighty camels. Mai Hume read secretly from *Sūrah al-Baqarah* to "wal nās". Then he read the Risālah twice and gave his teacher Mani one hundred camels, one hundred pieces of gold, one hundred pieces of silver and one hundred slaves, all because of the reading and instruction he derived from him. (Palmer, 1928:16)

It is noteworthy that the various gifts given to the scholar Muhammad ibn Mani by Mai Hume Jilmi for teaching him the Qur'ān and *fiqh* are clear evidence to prove Mai Hume's concern for Qur'anic Education and *fiqh* as well as for his great motivation to the Islāmic scholars. It is also very interesting to note that Mai Dunama Humani the son and successor of Mai Hume Jilmi built a mosque (*madrasah*) in Cairo for the education of the people of Kanem Borno. To demonstrate his willingness and desire, he settled his "slaves" to be taught there in Egypt. Mai Dunama Dibbalemi (1221-2159) built hostel in Cairo. Up to now, this hotel is in existence, and it is referred to as *Riwāq al-Barnāwī* (Borno Students' Hotel). (Trimingham, 1962:107-108)

Al-Maqrizi writing in 1364 submits that :

This *madrasah* was popular with the tukrūr and most years they sent money for its maintenance. (Mustapha, 1987:45)

As Islam appeared into Nigeria, the position of the Qur'an became known. This is because, as the divine word of Allah, the Qur'an is the manual with which Islam as a comprehensive way of life should be well practices. One cannot understand Islam without the Qur'an, nor should Islam appear into any area without the Qur'an. In essence, this, simply means that Islam and the Qur'an are inseparable.

## **EVOLUTION OF QUR'ANIC SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

The history of Qur'anic schools in Northern Nigeria or elsewhere is the same as the history of Islam itself. This is because Islam goes to any place or territory along with the Qur'an and Qur'anic form of education. As stated earlier, Islam appeared into Kanem Borno in the eleventh century earlier. History indicated Mai Hume Jilmi (1085-1097) established Qur'anic school in his palace.

In the fifteenth century, the Kanuri tradition had it that Mai 'Alī Ghāji Dunama (1460–1500) the first *Khalīfah* of the Sayfawa dynasty who founded the city of Ngazargamo in 1467 and laid its intellectual foundation had written, in his own handwriting, the Qur'ān with its *tarjumō* and *mahūm* versions. (Dahiru, 1995:140)

The *tafsīr* of Borno of Mai 'Alī Ghāji is a classic example of the *salaf* with emphasis and reliance upon the explanation or interpretation of a verse by another verse, accompanied by the detailed explanation given by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) and full of extensive quotations from the works of earlier *mufasssīrūn* like *Jāmi' al-Bāyan Fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* of ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī (d.310 AH/922), *Bahr al-'Ulūm* of Abū al-Laīth al-Samarqandī (d.373 AH), *Kashf Wa al-Bayān 'an Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* of Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Tha'labī al-Nisābūrī (d.383 AH/993), *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* of Isma'īl ibn Amr ibn Khathīr al-Dimashqī (d.774 AH/1372) and *Jāmi' Ahkām al-Qur'ān* of Abū Abdullāh Muhammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Farh al-Qurtubī (d.671 AH/1294). (Mustapha: 1987:178-179)

The *tafsīr* in Arabic is accompanied by the notes of explanation written between the lines in vernacular in the Arabic script expressing either the meanings of the text or only the meanings of some difficult words in *Kanembu*. The use of the Arabic language and *Kanembu* simultaneously has, to a great extent, reduced the fear that the *tarjamah* as a means of *tafsīr* could not adequately give all the shades of meaning attached to some Arabic words and phrases. The reduction of this fear was, according

to Mustafā, the greatest contribution of the Sayfawa ‘*ulamā*’ to the studies of *tafsīr*. (Mustapha, 1987:140)

In the seventeenth century, there was evidence of the translation of the completed Qur’ān in Kanembu written by a scholar Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Masfarma. A copy of this Qur’ān was said to have been discovered by A.D.H Bivar in 1959 at Gwandu in the present Kebbi State, and two similar copies were found by him in Maiduguri. These copies are now available with some prominent Borno scholars such as Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Miskīn. (Dahiru, 1995:141)

Apart from the *Kanembu* translation of the Qur’ān many other *tafsīr* books were translated to the people especially during the month of *Ramadān*. Few among such books include the famous *tafsīr al-Jalālaīn*, *al-Durr al-Manthūr Fī Tafsīr Bi al-Ma’thūr* of Imām al-Suyūtī *Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl* of Imām al-Baghawī, *Madārik al-Tanzīl Wa Haqā’iq al-Ta’wīl* of Imām al-Nasafī and *Anwār al-Tanzīl Wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl* of Imām al-Baīdāwī. (Mustapha, 1987:179)

The contribution of Goni Bukar Gana in the field of *tafsīr* in Kanem-Borno in the 1900’s was very tremendous. He was said to be an authority in the recitation of the Qur’ān. He had travelled very widely in West Africa in the search for knowledge and had visited Timbuktu In the present Mali Republic and other cities of the Western Sudan. No sooner had he returned to Borno, he realised that the caliphate was in need of more *mufassirūn*. Hence, he devoted his time to the teaching of *tafsīr*. He travelled from one village to another conducting *tafsīr*. (Dahiru, 1995:141)

The exact time during which Islam came to Hausaland could not be ascertained. However, Kurawa suggested that the first Muslim ruler of Kano was perhaps Bagauda (999-1063 CE). Thus, making of Kano Islam one of the oldest in the Central Sudan. He went on the state that there were many Muslim rulers in Kano before the reign of Ali Yaji Dantsamiya (1349-1385 CE). It could be assumed that Islam was revived and made the official religion of Kano Kingdom during the reign of Ali Yaji by the Wangarawa scholars from Mali. (Kurawa, 2000:215). Kano, was in fact, the first area where Islam was introduced in the whole of Hausaland. This suggested that from Kano Islam to other parts of Hausaland including Sokoto, Katsina and Zaria. (Palmer, 1928: 94 and 104)

There were some good scholars of *tafsīr* in Hausaland prior to the jihād of Shaykh ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī (1754-1817). One of them was Malam Hāshim from Zamfara who taught Shaykh ‘Uthmān the *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān. Shaykh ‘Uthmān also studied *tafsīr* under his cousin Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Amin. The Shaykh's brother ‘Abdullah ibn Fūdī (1766-1839), studied *tafsīr* under his brother ‘Uthmān. Likewise Muhammad Bello (d. 1837) the son of Shaykh ‘Uthmān also studied under his father such works as *tafsīr al-Jalālāin* and the *tafsīr* works of al-Baīdāwī, al-Khāzin, al-Baghawī, al-Nasafī and many other similar books. (Abdulhamid, 1980:25)

Among the subjects which Shaykh ‘Uthmān taught, *tafsīr* had a prominent place. He used to address the common people in the night and meet the students in the afternoon. His public lectures focused on verses of the Qur’ān which he explained to his audience. When preaching, he supported his explanation with relevant extracts from the Qur’ān which he translated into the language of the people Fulfulde and Hausa. His lectures to the students on the other hand were formal and scholarly. He taught them *taūhīd tafsīr*, *hadīth* and *fiqh*. His contemporary scholars admitted his superiority in knowledge and attended his lectures on *tafsīr*. Shaykh ‘Uthmān did not write any book about *tafsīr*, and instead devoted himself to teaching and preaching. His aim was to train some people to work with him. (Abdulhamid, 1980:25)

Shaykh ‘Abdullāh devoted much of his time to studying the Qur’ān as a consequence of which he produced his *Diyā’ al-Ta’wīl Fī Ma’ān al-Tanzīl* and other valuable works. In fact, the credit of changing the attitude of fear of innovation (*bid’ah*) by students and scholars towards the study of the Qur’ān in Hausaland goes to Shaykh ‘Abdullāh. He produced six books, three on *tafsīr* and the remaining three on the sciences of the Qur’ān. *Al-Miftāh Li al-Tafsīr* (written in 1794) *Sulālat al-Miftāh* (written in 1795 ) and *al-Farā’id al-Jalīlah* (written in 1796) are his books on Qur’ānic sciences. His *tafsīr* books are *Naīl al-Su’l Min Tafsīr al-Rasūl* (written in 1796), *Diyā’ al-Ta’wīl Fī Ma’ān al-Tanzīl* (written in 1816) and *Kifāyah Du’afā’ al-Sūdān Fī Bayān Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* (written in 1822). (Abdulhamid, 1980:25)

In *Diyā’ al-Ta’wīl*, Shaykh ‘Abdullah consulted a number of significant works on *tafsīr*. Among these sources were *Tafsīr al-Jalālāin*, *Anwār al-Tanzīl Wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl* of al-Baīdāwī, *Lubāb al-Ta’wīl Fī Ma’ān al-Tanzīl* of al-Khāzin, *Ghāyah al-Amānī* of al-Kurānī, *Ahkām al-Qur’ān* of ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Jawāhir al-Ihsān Fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* of al-Tha’labī and *al-Jāmi’ al-Muharrar al-Wajīz Fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz* of ibn



‘Atiyyah. Beside these, Shaykh ‘Abdullah consulted *Mafātih al-Ghaīb* of al-Rāzī, *Madārik al-Tanzīl Wa Haqā’iq al-Ta’wīl* of al-Nasafī, *Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl Wa Haqā’iq al-Ta’wīl* of al-Nasafī, *Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl* of al-Baghawī and many other *tafsīr* books. (Abdulhamid, 1980:26)

In *Diyā’ al-Ta’wīl*, Shaykh ‘Abdullah provided *tafsīr* for the people in solving their immediate problems. He treated almost all those important issues which he considered very useful to his community. For example, while interpreting *Sūrah* al-Baqarah 185:

... So whoever of you is present (at his home) should fast the month and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. Allah intends for you ease and He does not want to make things difficult for you...

Here, Shaykh ‘Abdullah opined that if the farm produce of a farmer became ripe for harvest in the month of *Ramadān* and it was certain that it would perish if it was not quickly harvested, it was not only lawful but obligatory on such a farmer to break his fast, harvest it and then compensate the missing days of *Ramadān* later. Failing this, Shaykh ‘Abdullah warned the farmer would be guilty of wilful destruction of natural resources, which is a grave sin in Islām. He reasoned further that sight should not be lost of the fact that the farm produce was not wholly owned by the farmer. The poor had a lawful share in it. Therefore, if part of the farm produce or all of it perished that would inadvertently affect the share realisable for *zakāt* which was not the farmer’s right but that of the poor. However, it may be difficult if not an impossibility in such a situation, to offer the poor any compensation, while in the case of fast, compensation of the equal number of days to be missed under excuse or necessity is possible. (Ibn Fudi, 1961, Vol. I:70)

In fact, Shaykh ‘Abdullah produced *Diyā’ al-Ta’wīl* on the persistent demand of students who were desperately looking for a book of *tafsīr* that could help them in understanding the Qur’ān. They indicated their wish to have a book that was based on the exposition of the most acceptable views, pronouncement of the *i’rāb* where it was required, and an indication of the well known *qirā’āt* with particular emphasis on the *qirā’ah* of Warsh. He also elucidated in *Diyā’ al-Ta’wīl* some legal rulings with special reference to the Mālikī school of law. He illustrated some points on rhetoric (*balāghah*). However, when Shaykh ‘Abdullah produced *Diyā’ al-Ta’wīl* many students considered it too advanced for

them. As such, he abridged it and wrote *Kifāyah Du'afā' al-Sūdān* in 1822 as a separate book of *tafsīr* for the less advanced students, hence, the title, *Kifāyah Du'afā'* i.e, (something) sufficient for the weak.(Ibn Fudi, 1961 Vol. I: 71)

In *Diyā' al-Ta'wīl*, Shaykh 'Abdullah sparingly interpreted some verses of the Qur'ān with the Qur'ān. For instance, he interpreted *Sūrah Qasas* :88 with *Sūrah al-Rahmān* :26-27. He also applied *ta'wīl* in his *tafsīr*. For example, he interpreted the word *wajhuhu* as in *Sūrah Qasas* :88 to mean *dhātuhu*. Shaykh 'Abdullah also applied his personal *ijtihād (ra'y)* while interpreting some verses such as *Sūrah al-Baqarah*:185 as submitted earlier. (Ibn Fudi, Vol. III: 198)

Furthermore, in *Diyā' al-Ta'wīl*, Shaykh 'Abdullah used the term *ta'wīl* different from *tafsīr*. For instance, in volume I of *Diyā'*, he submitted that, the fact that Allah says in *Sūrah Yūsuf* :2 “Verily! We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān in order that you may understand”, this, according to Shaykh 'Abdullah suggests the need for *ta'wīl (ijtihād)* when the need arises; and he restricted *ta'wīl* to the *mutashābihāt* verse of the Qur'ān. (Ibn Fudi, Vol. IV:163)

## **INTEGRATION OF QUR'ANIC EDUCATION INTO WESTERN EDUCATION**

The Qur'anic and Western Education are representative of the two most widely spread civilizations the world has so far produced. The two systems also, are clear manifestations of two different and in many ways quite opposing cultures. Therefore, right from the beginning of British occupation of the Northern Nigeria, Western Education was not welcomed and was given lukewarm treatment by the people. (Ibrahim, 2001:30-31)

The first formal Western school established in Northern Nigeria was in Kano in 1909 by Mr. Hanns Vischer popularly referred to as Dan Hausa. Vischer became the first Director of Education in Northern Nigeria. It was he who laid down the policies for education that were followed by successive British administrations. Western Education, is, therefore, a product of British Colonial policy which was formulated by a former missionary in which the teaching and propagation of Western values and skills were given prominent positions. From it, Zahradeen quoted Paden to have said, the spread of Western values to Muslims children whose parents had been the custodians of Danfodiyo Islamic heritage and all that it entailed. In the Vischer Education system or the Western Education

system, no concerted efforts were made to teach the students those norms and values enshrined in the Qur'an apart from elementary teaching of some rudiments of Islamic rituals. No further efforts were also made to ignite into the system, and consequently, the students the spiritual awareness of Islam as a Universal culture. (Zahradeen, 2001:6-7).

From the above, therefore, the difficulty of integrating the two systems of education could be seen. Muslims had been reluctant to send their children to the Western schools out of fear that they might be converted into Christianity. This is why also the teachers of the Qur'anic and *Ilm* schools do not readily accept their schools' integration with the Western oriented schools. For many years, therefore, government and educational administrators found it easier to let each system alone without forcing any integration among them. However, there are few cases where integration has been sought. Such as in the case of the Kano Law School which was renamed School for Arabic Studies as we shall see later. (Zahradeen, 2001: 7-8).

After the British came to Nigeria, churches turned their attention to educational work. They established schools and colleges, and the method of teaching was largely based in English models. Those who received such British training could easily get jobs under the government, while the graduates of the Qur'anic Education (Qur'an and *Ilm* schools) had no future. Some Muslim intellectuals began to propose reforms in the existing system of Qur'anic Education.(Fafunwa, 1974:64-65).

When the then Emir of Kano, Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero (d.1953), returned from pilgrimage to Makkah in 1934, he came along with him new ideas on what he had seen in the Middle East and Arabia. Thus, he established a school at Kano, to be maintained jointly by all Native Authorities, for the training of *Alkalis* (Islamic Judges). The school was named Northern Provinces Law School. In this way, the *Shari'ah* system, which in earlier times had been prevalent in the North, once again became acceptable. In 1947, the Law School was changed into the School for Arabic Studies (SAS) and came under government control. The Main task of this school was to train teachers in Arabic and Islamic subjects to acquire Western subjects like English and Arithmetic (Fafunwa, 1974:65)

In 1954, the government introduced a scheme through which "untrained" junior primary school teachers attended courses at the School for Arabic Studies, and between 1954 and 1961, more than two-thirds of all primary

school teachers had received this training, thus, enabling them to improve their standard of education by integrating their Qur'anic education into Western education (Fafunwa, 1974:65)

In 1960, SAS organized a post-secondary courses in Arabic and Islamic Studies as a preliminary to the establishment of Abdullahi Bayero College. In this way, a channel was provided to connect and integrate some of the students from Qur'an and *Ilm* schools and Muslim higher institutions towards university and post-secondary Western Education. The then Northern Region Ministry of Education and the then Abdullahi Bayero College, Kano (now Bayero University, Kano) worked out a plan whereby the traditional system of imparting Arabic and Qur'anic education was channeled towards Western education. The School for Arabic Studies at Sokoto followed suit. (Fafunwa, 1974: 65-66).

### **QUR'ANIC EDUCATION IN SOME NORTHERN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

In 1963, Islamic Studies (which of course is part of Qur'anic Education) was introduced by Abdullahi Bayero College in Kano (then a College under Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) before it later became an autonomous university by the name Bayero University, Kano in 1975. This was followed by other Northern Universities such as University of Sokoto (now Usmanu Danfodiyo University), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Maiduguri, and University of Ilorin. (Adegoke, 203:5 in NATAIS, 2013).

In some Nigerian universities, some scholars have conducted and others are currently conducting researches on different aspects of Qur'anic Education. Let me cite a typical instance with Bayero University, Kano. In 1980, Abdul Ali Abdulhamid presented and defended his Ph.D thesis "Abdullah Ibn Fudi as an Exegetist". In 1995, Umaru Dahiru, a Senior Lecturer with the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Maiduguri, defended his Ph.D thesis "Qur'anic Studies" in Borno: Developments in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century", and in 2002, one of the erudite scholars of Qur'anic Education in Nigeria, Muhammad Kabir Yunus published his book on *Usul al-Tafsir* with the title *Dirasat fi Usul al-Tafsir*. This book is one of the recognized material on Qur'anic Education. In 2005, U.S Abbas, presented and defended his Ph.D thesis "Trends of *Tafsir* Among Selected Ulama in Northern Nigeria".

There are also other academics who have carried out various researches in the field of Qur'anic Education. Among them are Dr. Muhammad B.Muhammad, Dr. Aminullah Adamu El-Gambari, Dr. Rabiuh Yahya to

mention a few. Not only that, a lot of Ph.D, MA and B.A researches were conducted on Qur'anic Education in Bayero University, Kano, and indeed in other universities. A lot of conferences papers were also presented by many distinguished scholars and academicians on different aspects of Qur'anic Education.

In the recent past, with the evolution of state universities in Northern Nigeria, most of the Northern States, have established their states universities. These include: Umaru Musa Yar'adua University (UMYU), Katsina, Gombe State University, Yobe State University, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Sokoto State University, Kaduna State University, Kwara State University Malete, Bauchi State University, Gadau and Northwest University, Kano. Moreover, there are some private universities in Northern Nigeria which offer courses on Qur'anic Education. These include: Katsina University (now al-Qalam University) and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin.

(Fieldnotes personal observation from the Presenter)

In all these universities, Qur'anic Education taught and very scholarly researches are carried out. This is so because, the greatest divine favour to man is that he has been taught the Qur'an. It is a divine manual which has been issued to mankind for the general transactions, so that they could be able to obtain success in this world and be rewarded in the hereafter. Indeed, this is one of the wisdom behind the recent establishment of the Centre for Qur'anic Studies and International Institute for Islamic Banking and Finance (IIIBF) by the Vice Chancellor of Bayero University, Kano, Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed.

(Fieldnotes, personal observation from the Presenter).

It is interesting to note that Bayero University, Kano University of Maiduguri and Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto have, in recent times introduced some contemporary Islamic/Qur'anic courses, such as Islam and Non-Muslims World, Islamic Economics, Economics of Production and Consumption in Islam, Islamic Economic Analysis, Economics of Zakat, Islamic Banking and Finance, Islamic Business Ethics, Sociology of Islamic Society and Islamic Social Thought. Other similar courses include: Islamic Political Thought, Islamic Political Institutions, the Concept of State and Society in Islam, Education in Islam, Islamic Education, and Introduction to Islamic Psychology. (Adegoke, 203:8 in NATAIS 2013).

## **DEVELOPMENT OF QUR'ANIC EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

From colonial Nigeria to date, Northern Nigeria witnessed a great number of excellent Qur'anic reciters. Few among them include: Goni Adamu Dan Kyallori of Maiduguri, Mahiru Sharif Bala, Goni Salihu Danzarga, Goni Nadudu Koki, Goni Daudu Gwale, Malam Abbas Maiturare Sudawa, Shaikh Isyaku Rabi, Goni Abubakar Maitakara Zage, Goni Ibrahim Abubakar Maitakara, Goni Shehu Barnoma, and Goni Aminu Zaina. Others are: Goni Ali Dankoki, Goni Tijjani Rabi, Goni Abubakar Danfallomi and Goni Sa'idu Goto Dogon nama. There are also Goni Sani Mai Darasu Harunawa of Gaya, Shaikh Ibrahim Abubakar Ramadan, Goni Dan Kwandari and Goni Dan Birni. (Fieldnotes, interview with Goni Ibrahim Maitakara, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2014)

The Qur'anic schools of most of the mentioned Gonis had been in existence for over a century; and some of their disciples and children have in the modern times studied different aspects of Qur'anic Education in various parts of Muslim world, such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Libya and Morocco. In fact, this, play an important role in reorganizing the Qur'anic schools of those elderly Gonis to suit the modern times. It is this which paved way for the emergence of very young academics who are also Gonis. Some of them are now fully engaged in teaching and research in some universities and tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria. Few among them are: Dr. Nuraddeen Musa, Dr. Auwal Shawish, Dr. Rabi Yahya, Dr. Aliyu Harun Muhammad, Dr. Sani Musa Ayagi, Dr. Abdulqadir Umar Abbas, Dr. Abdulmu'in Ali Gedi, Dr. Yahya Yahuza Danzarga, Dr. Warshu Tijjani Rabi, and Dr. Shu'aib Mukhtar Shu'aib. (Personal observation from the Presenter)

The credit of changing the attitude of fear of innovation (*bid'ah*) by students and scholars towards the study of the Qur'an in Hausaland goes to Shaykh Abdullahi (Usman, 1979:183). Initially, some scholars with all their qualifications, do not like to conduct *tafsir*. However, in the modern times, some *mufassirun* thought that since the essence of the Qur'an is to disseminate its divine message, there is the dire need to carryout such onerous task. Hence, the emergence of numerous *mufassirun* and *mutarjimun* in all parts of Northern Nigeria. (Fieldnotes, Shaykh Ahmad lemu, 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2003)

Some decades ago, *tafsir* was mainly conducted during the month of Ramadan. However, today, *tafsir* and tarjamah of the Qur'an are conducted almost all the times. In yester years, *tafsir* was mostly offered in zauruka of the scholars, while in the modern times, it is offered in mosques. Thus, mosques offer their multi functions. Not that alone, the audience of *tafsir* in yester years were mostly old and middle age people,

but today's audience of *tafsir* comprises of all segments of people in the society. Moreover, in some *tafsir* circles, special sections are reserved to female audience, and some *tafsir* lessons are conducted for female only. (Fieldnotes, Shaykh Ahmad Lemu, Minna, 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2003)

Some decades ago, some *tafsir* circles do not relate their *tafsir* lessons with the problems of their immediate environments. Some *mufasssirun* interpreted the Qur'an giving less emphasizes to the contemporary situation. However, in the modern times, most *mufasssirun* relate their interpretations to the daily life situations, such as social, economic, political and educational aspects of Muslims. It is important to note that in the present time, some *tafsir* circles provide provisions for questions and answers sessions. In this way, some vital issues affecting Muslims life are asked and answers provided accordingly. (Fieldnotes, Shaykh Ahmad Lemu, 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2003)

It is interesting to assert that *tafsir* in Northern Nigeria today is conducted not only in Hausa, but in so many languages. These include: Fulfulde, Yoruba, Nupe, Igbo. One of the recent developments on *tafsir* in northern Nigeria is proper media coverage of the interpretations in both audio and video cassettes and CDs. In this way, the divine messages of the Qur'an are disseminated to all and sundry. (Fieldnotes, interview Husain Isa Bello, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2014)

Another significant aspect witnessed very recently on the development of *tafsir* in Northern Nigeria is that, there are now numerous *tafsir* circles mainly for female audience which offers *tafsir* lessons during and after the month of Ramadan. Few of such female *tafsir* specialists include: the late Malama Hasana Sufi, the late Malama Mariya Mai *tafsir* Sani Mainagge, Malama Halima Shitu Dorayi, Malama Tasalla Nabulusi and Malama Maryam Aliyu Harun. There are also Malama Zahra'u Umar of Kano State Hisbah Board, Sharada, and Malama Atika Uba Kamfa. (Fieldnotes, interview Husain Isa Bello, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2014)

In addition to above, some decades ago, one hardly notices the use of computer and other Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities among Northern Nigeria *mufasssirun*. Dr Bashir Aliyu Umar, the Imam of Al-Furqan Mosque, Dr. Sani Rijiyar Lemo, (Kano) Dr. Muhammad Alhaji Abubakar (Maiduguri), Ustaz Babagana Kyari (Damaturu), Dr. Muhammad Tukur (Adamawa), Dr. Ibrahim Jalo (Taraba), Shaikh Isa Ali Fantami (Bauchi), Shaikh Aminu Umar Findiga (Gombe), Dr. Zakariya Abdullahi, Dr. Bashir Tahir, Dr. Ahmad Abubakar Gumi (Kaduna), Dr. Khalid Aliyu, Dr. Muhammad Nazif

Yunus, Dr. Uba Ahmad (Jos), Dr. Shuaibu Rabi'u (Makurdi), and many others are making frequent use of computer (laptop) and other ICT facilities to facilitate their *tafsir*. This new innovation is what some observers refer to as digital *tafsir*. (Fieldnotes, interview Husain Isa Bello 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2014)

## **EMERGENCE OF NEW TRENDS OF *TAFSIR* IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

The glorious Qur'an is meant to be the source for all Islamic teachings and ideologies. It is not meant to be approached with ready-made ideas and thought to be justified. However, philosophical, political and other sectarian differences influence some Muslim scholars to interpret the Qur'an on the basis of their different inclination, and employ the transmission of oral *tafsir* through popular media to spread their ideologies to a much wider audience than their usual circles. Illustrated with examples from everyday life situations, the scholars use their *tafsir*, to influence their audience religiously and politically, and attack on "opponents" create deep division within the Muslim community of Northern Nigeria. Efforts towards agreement between the varying factions have failed, a real conciliation seems unlikely and interaction is impaired because each faction always challenge the other.

## **THE *QĀDIRIYYAH* –*TIJĀNIYYAH* DIFFERENCES AND THEIR TRENDS OF *TAFSĪR***

The *Qādiriyyah* was founded by Shaykh ‘Abdul Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561 A.H) in ‘Irāq. This *tarīqah* appeared to have found its way into West Africa from the time of Shaykh Ahmad al-Bakkā’i (d. 1515). As far as Hausaland is concerned, the *Qādiriyyah* was said to have been introduced with the arrival of Shaykh ‘Abdulkarīm al-Maghīlī (d. 1505) of Tilmisān in the fifteenth century. But the wide spread of this *tarīqah* did not happen until after the emergence of the Sokoto *jihād* movement, and the subsequent establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in the nineteenth century. The *Qādiriyyah*, therefore, became the dominant *tarīqah* of the *jihād* leaders and their numerous adherents. (Ahmad, 1986:165).

On the other hand, the *Tijāniyyah* was founded at the end of the eighteenth century by Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī (d. 1815) at ‘Aīn Mādī, a village in the South of Algeria. The doctrines and beliefs of its followers are contained in its major book of reference the *Jawāhir al-Ma‘ānī* which was written by Shaykh ‘Alī Harāzīmī, one of the leading disciples of Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī. (Loimeier, 1997:20). The actual time of the



penetration of the *Tijāniyyah* into what is now known as Nigeria is not certain. It has been claimed that the *Tijāniyyah* reached Nigeria as early as during the life time of its founder Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī. This claim seems to be supported by some oral traditions. In Kano, for example, it is believed that some Madabo ‘*ulamā*’ were *Tijāniyyah* followers before the arrival of Shaykh ‘Umar al-Fūtī (1794-1864). (Loimeier, 1997:20). It is said that one Malam ‘Abdurrahmān al-Suyūtī of Madabo quarters was initiated by one Malam Shārih, who came to Kano from Futa. However, in 1830 ‘Umar al-Fūtī performed the pilgrimage. On his return, he visited Borno and passed through a number of places like Bauchi, Kano, Zaria, Katsina and then proceeded to Sokoto. It has been said that he initiated some people into the movement in all these places. (Quadri, 1981:23).

It is very important to note that from the death of *Sultān* Muhammad Bello in 1837 to the appearance of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Nyās (1900-1974) in 1937 a number of developments took place within the circles of the two dominant *Sūfī* orders in Hausaland. By the time *Sultān* Muhammad Bello died, the *Qādiriyyah* was at its peak. It was the only *tarīqah* that had the total control and monopoly of almost all the *Imāms*, judges and scholars in Hausaland. By the time the *Tijāniyyah* was introduced it was accepted and became very popular in Hausaland as well as in Kanem Borno. In Kano, for instance, a great number of its ‘*ulamā*’ and their disciples came to be identified with it. (Ali, 1972:9). However, the consolidation of the *Tijāniyyah* became very apparent in Kano with the conversion of the ruling dynasty during the reign of Emir Muhammad ‘Abbās (r.1903-1919). Since then, its strength and influence have always been increasing considerably, not only in Kano, but in Nigeria as a whole. (Anwar, 1989:22).

The strained relationship between the followers of the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* started from Sokoto, from where it spread to other places in different forms. The *Sultān* of Sokoto felt that it was his responsibility to protect the interest of the *Qādiriyyah* by preventing the *Tijāniyyah* from gaining ground. While this was the case in Sokoto, it was not like that in other places. In some other places, the traditional rulers have joined the *Tijāniyyah*. Prominent among them were the emirs of Kano (Muhammad ‘Abbās), Zaria (Aliyu Dan Sidi) and Katsina (Muhammad Dikko). (Quadri, 1981:374).

The mass conversion of people from the *Qādiriyyah* to the *Tijāniyyah* in the defunct Sokoto Caliphate has created some problems for the followers of the two orders. Even prior to the death of Muhammad Bello, the rivalry between the members of the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* had

taken a definite character. This was inspite of the respect and cordial relationship existing between Muhammad Bello and ‘Umar al-Fūtī which even led the former to give the latter his daughter in marriage. In fact, the rate of conversion from the *Qādiriyyah* to the *Tijāniyyah* was very alarming to the extent that it even made some people to speculate that Muhammad Bello himself had converted to the *Tijāniyyah* before his death. (Ali, 1972:9).

The *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* have always been rivals with each trying to dominate and supersede the other. The *Tijāniyyah* followers regard themselves as comprising a superior class of Muslims since Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī, the founder of the order, was regarded by them as the chief and superior of all saints – the founder of the *Qādiriyyah* Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir al-Jīlānī being no exception. The followers of the *Qādiriyyah* naturally would not concede to this contention. They claimed that Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir was the chief of all saints and that Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī had revolted against the *Qādiriyyah*. As a result, some misunderstanding with regards to their *Sūfī* practices developed among the followers of both orders. (Ali, 1972:24). Moreover, when the *Qādiriyyah* reached West Africa it appeared to be the *tarīqah* of the ruling class, whose power and privilege the Hausa peasants resented. When later the *Tijāniyyah* made its appearance it was welcomed by the masses and Hausa peasants. (Ali, 1972:25).

The period from 1930’s to early 1970’s was marked as an important period in the intellectual history of Northern Nigeria. It was the period during which the leaders of the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* seemed to have lost their track as a result of the rising challenges. In view of this, the leaders appeared to have concentrated all their attention and activities on issues not central to the main objectives of their *Sūfī* orders. (Ahmad, 1986:293-295). Considerable attention was devoted to the conduct of the rituals relating to *salāt* and other social behaviour of the Muslim community. With regards to *salāt*, for instance, there emerged some major differences on issues like *qabd* (praying with arms folded) and *sadl* (praying with arms outstretched). This crisis led to the break up of the *Tijāniyyah* into two groups in the 1930’s under the Madabo and the Salga ‘*ulamā*’ in Kano. (Anwar, 1989:26). The Madabo ‘*ulamā*’ in alliance with the *Qādiriyyah* ‘*ulamā*’ opposed the Salga ‘*ulama*’ for their rejection of funeral alms (*sadakokin mutuwa*) and other related rituals. The Salga ‘*ulamā*’ were also attacked for showing their preference and the subsequent adoption of the practice of *qabd* instead of the more familiar *sadl*. Muhammad Salga attacked a number of rituals practiced by the

Madabo ‘*ulamā*’. He even wrote a treatise concerning this question *Risalāt al-Su’āl* (*The Book of Questions*). The *Babban Malami* of Madabo answered his former disciple in another booklet *Hujāj al-‘Ulamā’ al-Madabawiyīn* (*The Argument of the Madabo Scholars*). (Anwar, 1989:26).

When Shaykh Ibrahim Nyās made his first public appearance in Nigeria in 1951 he practised *qabd*. Shaykh Nāsir Kabara, who had until then been one of the few scholars in Kano who was identified with the practice of *qabd* prior to Shaykh Nyās responded by reverting to the practice of *sadl* in order to dissociate himself from the *Tijāniyyah*-Ibrahimiyyah. The conflict surrounding the problem of *qabd* and *sadl* was intensified by the fact that the followers of each *tarīqah* refused to pray behind an *Imām* who practised a position of arms different from their own. (Anwar, 1989:27). In Sokoto and Adamawa provinces, the period between 1948 and 1965 witnessed a number of violent incidents between the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* communities. This was sequel to the first major conversion tour of Northern Nigeria between 1948 and 1949 undertaken by Sidi ibn ‘Umar, a direct descendant of Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī, who later became the Chief *Imām* of the *Zāwiyah* at ‘Aīn Mādī. (Loimeir, 1997:40).

Within the stipulated period, the ‘*ulamā*’ resorted to portraying the superiority of their *Sūfī* orders over the others. In his book, *al-Nafahāt al-Nāsiriyyah Fī al-Tarīqah al-Qādiriyyah* (*The Nasirine Fragrances Within the Qādiriyyah Sūfī Order*) Shaykh Nāsir Kabara expressed his displeasure over the attitude of some *Tijānī muqaddams* for encouraging the *Qādiris* to change their *tarīqah*. (Loimeir, 1997:14). Shaykh Abū Bakr ‘Atīq replied Shaykh Nāsir Kabara immediately *al-Nafahāt* was published. Shaykh ‘Atīq wrote two books. In the first book, *Risālah Fī Tahdhīr al-‘Isābah* (*Treatise of Caution In Respect of Factionalism*) he disproved Shaykh Nāsir Kabara’s claims and attacked him in return. In the other book, *al-Sārim al-Mushrafi* he challenged the *Qādiris* to prove that the drumming (*bandīr*) which accompanies the *Qādiriyyah* rites, especially where the rites are done congregationally, was established by Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir al-Jīlānī. (Ahmad, 1986:293-295).

In view of the foregoing, some *Qādiris* and some *Tijānis* interpreted some verses of the Qur’ān to portray the basis of their *Sūfī* orders. For example, they interpreted verse 35 of *Sūrah* al-Mā’idah “O you who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach to Him...” to emphasize the teachings of their respective *Sūfī* orders. Some *Qādiris* interpreted the verse extensively denoting that *Qādiriyyah* was established in the context

of the verse. They asserted that the founder of the *tarīqah* Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir al-Jīlānī was the *Qutb al-Aqtāb* (chief of all saints) and considered him as their means of approach (*wasīlah*) to Allah. (Anwar, 1989:27-28). On this, Shaykh Nāsir Kabara maintained that:

*Ma'anar wannan aya ku nemi tsani zuwa ga Allah ta hanyar da'a, son Annabawa da son waliyyai da karbar wuridinsu. Kada a kula da masu kafirta Musulmai saboda ziyarar waliyyai. (Fieldnotes, tafsir cassette, Nasir Kabara, Surah Al-Ma'idah).*

Meaning:

The meaning of this verse is that you should seek the means of approach to Allah through obedience, love for the prophets and the saints as well as litanies (*awrād*)... Do not mind those people who considered visiting saints as *kufr*.

On the contrary, while some *Qādiris* considered Shaykh ‘Abdulqādir al-Jīlānī as their *wasīlah* to Allah, some *Tijānis* considered Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijānī as superior to all other saints. Thus, they regarded him as their *wasīlah* to Allah. The extent to which some of these ‘*ulamā*’ interpreted this verse in conformity with their *sūfi* orders more especially some decades prior to the emergence of the *Izālah* was very serious. (Fieldnotes, interview with Hussain Isa Bello 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2003).

On the interpretation of verse 10 of *Sūrah al-Jumu'ah* where Allah states:

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ.

Then when the prayer is finished, you may disperse through the land and seek the bounty of Allah (by working e.t.c) and remember Allah much that you may be successful

Shaykh Nāsir Kabara interpreted the verse as:

*izan (idan) an gama sallah sai ku daidaita a bayan kasa ku nema daga falalar Ubangiji,*

*ku ambaci Allah ambato mai yawa domin ku rabauta.*

He went on to state that the phrase "وذكر الله كثيرًا" "and remember Allah much" (*ku ambaci Allah ambato mai yawa*) is the basis for the Friday *dhikr* and *mī'ād* in the *Qādiriyyah sūfi* order. Shaykh Tāhir Bauchi also considered this phrase as one of the basis of the *Tijāniyyah* in the Qur'ān. However, according to Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi, *dhikr\_Allah* in this context, as it appears in many verses of the Qur'ān, is never restricted to verbal *dhikr*. He maintained that it covers all what Allah enjoins Muslims to practice in relation to 'ibādāt and mu'āmalāt. (Fieldnotes, *tafsir Cassettes of Kabara, Bauchi and Gumi on Surah Al-Jumu'ati*).

On the interpretation of verse 41 of *Sūrah al-Ahzāb*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا...

O you who believe! Remember  
Allah with much Remembrance.

In this verse, the word *dhikr* implies *salāt*, *sawm* and all other obligations and general transactions (*mu'āmalāt*) in so far as they are in line with the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*.

Here, Shaykh Nāsir Kabara interpreted it as:

*Ya ku wadanda su ka yi  
imani, ku ambaci Allah  
ambato mai yawa.*

Just like in the preceding verse, Shaykh Nāsir Kabara interpreted the phrase "اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا" as the basis for the *Qādiriyyah dhikr*. He went further to state that the concept of the *tarīqah* had been clearly stated in the Qur'ān. He cited verse 16 of *Sūrah al-Jinn* where Allah says :

وَالْوَسْطَقُمْ عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا.

If they (non-Muslims) had believed in Allah and went on the (right) way, we should surely have bestowed on them rain in abundance.

Shaykh Nāsir Kabara interpreted the verse as:

*Da sun yi daidai su wadannan kafirai  
a kan darika ta Musulunci, da mun  
shayar da su ruwa mai yawa.*

It is worthy of note here that the verse was revealed drawing the attention of the non-Muslims to embrace Islām as a religion and a complete way of life so that Allah could bestow on them His bounties like the rain and many other things. But in the process of his interpretation, Shaykh Nāsir Kabara maintained that this verse is one of the basis of the *Qādiriyyah Sūfi* order in the Qur’ān. In his *tafsīr* book, *Ihsān al-Mannān*, he chapterised this verse under the title “*darikar Junaidu a cikin al-Qur’āni*” that is Junaīd’s *Sūfi* order in the Qur’ān. (Kabara, 1988, Vol.IV, 1776).

While interpreting *Sūrah al-Kahf*, Shaykh Nāsir Kabara emphasised much on the mystical interpretation, especially in relation to those verses where Allah talks about the people of the cave (*ashab al-Kahf*). On the episode between Prophet Moses (Mūsā) and Khidr, he interpreted it to mean that the episode was meant to show Moses his “shortcoming” as a result of his statement that he knew no one who was more knowledgeable than him (Moses). Moses was supposed to have said that Allah is the Most knowledgeable. It was as a result of that, that Allah joined Moses with Khidr. Consequently, Moses who is one of the five most senior messengers of Allah, “studied” and learnt many things from Khidr who was not a Prophet but a sincere servant of Allah. (Kabara, 1988, Vol.I;:17)

Muslims are generally taught from the context of this *Sūrah* to consider knowledge as a property of Allah. He is the most knowledgeable. All people including messengers and prophets of Allah, were only given some portion of knowledge from the treasury of Allah. But according to Shaykh Nāsir Kabara, the teachings of *Sūrah al-Kahf* are far more than that. He stated that the basic teaching of the *Sūrah* is to show Muslims that there are *Sharī’ah* provisions on one hand, and *haqīqah* provisions on the other. The encounter between Moses and Khidr, according to Shaykh Nāsir Kabara was a clear testimony to this assertion. He went on to state that Moses viewed all the actions of Khidr in the context of the *Sharī’ah*; that was why he regarded Khidr's actions as not on the right cause. On the contrary, Khidr acted the way he did for he was guided by the provisions of the *haqīqah* (refer to *Sūrah al-Kahf*: 65-70). Shaykh Nāsir Kabara also maintained that the fact that Khidr explained to Moses the basis for all his actions was a clear testimony that Khidr did not

commit his actions baselessly. (Fieldnotes, Kabara, *tafsir* Cassette on Al-Kahf). Allah says:

...ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

"...That is the interpretation of those (things) over which you were unable to hold patience".

Coming to our contemporary time, Shaykh Nāsir Kabara urged the Muslims who are not proficient in *Sufism* not to comment on it simply because they thought they are learned in some aspects of Islām. According to him, such people should at least endeavour to study the basic aspect of *Sufism* so that they could be just in weighing its status in Islām.

On the interpretation of verse 28 of the same *Sūrah* where Allah says:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ  
وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ...

And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord (i.e remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers and other righteous deeds etc) morning and evening seeking His face..."

Shaykh Nāsir Kabara interpreted the verse as follows:

*Ka daurar da kawukanka ka tsare ta da wadanda suke rokon Ubangijinka safiya da yammaci suna nufi da ibadarsu yardar zatin Ubangiji ba wani garari daga gararin duniya ba, su ne ashabul suffati. (Fieldnotes, Kabara tafsir Cassette on Al-Kahf).*

He opined that this verse is the basis upon which the *Qādiriyyah* followers relied for doing *dhikr* inside the mosques. He went on to state that:

*Wato wannan ayar ita ta tabbatar da cewa lallai sahabban Annabi suna*

*zikrullahi a tattare a masallacinsa a gabansa safiya da yammaci. Mai cewa zikrullahi a cikin masallaci bid'ah ne to bai san al-Qur'ān ba, ga abin da Allah yake fada kuru kuru. Idan kuma an duba tafsirin Ibn Kathir wanda su wadannan malamai suka yarda da shi za su ga haka ya fassara wannan waje(Fieldnotes, Kabara tafsir Cassette on Al-Kahf).*

**Meaning:**

This verse is a justification that the *sahābah* of the Prophet (SAW) conducted *dhikr* in unison inside the Prophet's mosque and in his presence in the mornings and evenings. Therefore, whoever said that doing *dhikr* inside the mosque is innovative, such person does not know the Qur'ān. If one refers to the *tafsīr* book of ibn Kathir, the book that is mostly referred to by such '*ulamā*', one will see that he interpreted this verse in the same way we did.

On the contrary, Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi maintained that the verse is directing believers towards strict adherence to the teachings of the *Sharī'ah*. He went further to state that anyone who tries to relate *Sūrah* al-Kahf with *Sufism* does not understand the basic teaching of the *Sūrah*. (Fieldnotes, Gumi Cassette on *Surah* Al-Kahf).

**THE IZĀLAH (SALAFIYYAH) TREND OF TAFSĪR**

*Izālah al-Bid'ah Wa Iqāmah al-Sunnah*, henceforth, referred to as *Izālah*, is an Islāmic organisation that was established with the aim of eradicating what they considered as *bid'ah* (innovation), and establishing the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW). ('Yandaki, 1992:7). The term *Salafiyyah* which literally, means something of the past, is, however, technically used to denote the views of *sahābah* of the Prophet (SAW), the *tābi'ūn* and their followers. Hence, *Salafiyyah*, here, is referred to the views of the past generations of Muslims. ('Yandaki, 1992:7).



By the time the leaders of the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* were busy fighting among themselves, Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi (1924-1992) had already begun his open struggle and attack against the *Sūfi* orders, particularly the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah*, as early as 1971. In 1972, he published his treatise *al-'Aqīdah al-Sahīhah Bi Muwāfaqah al-Sharī'ah* (*The Right Belief According To The Sharī'ah*). (Loimeier, 1997:209). In this book, Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi rejected some practises and ideas of the *Sūfi* orders, such as the belief that the Prophet (SAW) continues to be active in a mystical way even after his death, by transmitting new instructions or recommendations to mankind through the dreams and visions of the *Sūfis*, which means the *Sūfis* would extend his *Sunnah* in an inadmissible way. ('Yandaki, 1992:11). He emphasized that the degree of personal faith (*īmān*) is determined by the intensity of a person's practice of his religious obligations. Thus, the faithfuls who support their confession of faith by deeds show that their faith is greater than the faith of those who are faithful only in their heart (*ma'rifah bi al-qalb*). (Loimeier, 1997:188-189).

Moreover, he particularly criticised the *salāt al-fātih* and the book *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī Wa Bulūgh al-Amānī Fī Faīd Sīdi Ahmad Tijānī* (*The Jewels Of The Meaning And The Fulfilling Of The Wishes In The Grace Of Sidi Ahmad Tijānī*) which is a compilation of the sayings and deeds of Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī compiled by his disciple 'Alī Harāzimī. The *salāt al-fātih* according to the *Tijānīs* was revealed to Muhammad al-Bakrī by the Prophet himself. Ahmad Tijānī is said to have received a revelation from the Prophet (SAW) that a single recitation of that prayer equals in its blessing six complete recitations of the Qur'ān. (Loimeier, 1997:190-191). Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi also attacked the *Jaūharat al-kamāl*. According to the belief of the *Tijānīs*, this prayer is to be recited just like the five daily prayers only after a water ablution. (Loimeier, 1997:196). Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi went on to attack the popular *Qādiriyyah* book *al-Fuyūdāt al-Rabbāniyyah Fī al-Ma'āthir Wa al-Aūrād al-Qādiriyyah* (*The Streams Of Divine Grace In The Glorious Deeds And In The Litanies Of The Qādiriyyah*) written by Ismā'īl Sa'īd al-Qādirī. From that time onwards, Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi started openly questioning the justification for the existence of the *tarīqah* in Islām. He argued that *bandīr* was nothing more than a musical instrument meant only to entertain rather than for spiritual guidance, and that it were only those under the influence of *Satan* who could continue to preserve it. (Loimeier, 1997:196).

Already during this period Shaykh Ismā‘īl Idrīs Jos (1938-2000), who was a disciple of Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi, had been taking part in the disputes between Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi and the rest of the *Sūfī* scholars. (Loimeier, 1997:211). Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi and Ismā‘īl Idrīs noticed that the *Sūfī* scholars have dominated the *Jamā‘ah Nasr al-Islām*, especially after the assassination of Ahmadu Bello the Premier of the defunct Northern Nigeria on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1966. Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi failed to enlist the support of the *Jamā‘ah Nasr al-Islām* for his religious activities. (Loimeier, 1997:208). Shaykh Ismā‘īl Idrīs had already been busy delivering Islāmīc lectures in Jos, Bauchi, Gombe and some neighbouring settlements. His lectures against the *Sūfī* teachings were recorded on cassettes and disseminated in this way. During the course of his lectures in Jos, disputes with other *Sūfī* scholars broke out again and again. In these disputes, Ismā‘īl Idrīs elaborated his ideas through his rhetorical capabilities. (Loimeier, 1997:213).

Over time, Shaykh Ismā ‘īl Idrīs succeeded in building up a growing core group of followers in Jos. These followers were recruited predominantly from the *Tijāniyyah*, which can be explained simply by the fact that the *Tijāniyyah* was numerically much stronger than the *Qādiriyyah* in Plateau State. This group of followers supported the efforts of Ismā‘īl Idrīs to establish an Islāmīc organisation for the campaign against the *Sūfī* practices. Hence, the establishment of the *Jamā‘ah Izālah al-Bid‘ah Wa Iqāmah al-Sunnah* at Jos on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1978. (Loimeier, 1997:213).

The severe attack from Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi on the two *Sūfī* orders was never limited to his preaching, but could be noticed even while he was conducting his *Ramadān tafsīr*. This is the genesis of the emergence of another mode of *tafsīr* popularly referred to as the *Izālah (Salafiyyah)* mode of *tafsīr*. In his interpretation of *Sūrah* al-Ma’idah 35, Shaykh, Abū Bakr Gumi maintained that *wasīlah* should only be sought through obedience to Allah and Prophet Muhammad (SAW). (Fieldnotes, Gumi Cassette on *Surah* Al-Ma’idah). He viewed *wasīlah* in a quite different way from some *tarīqah ‘ulamā’*; and he defined it thus:

*Wasilah ita ce dukkan aikin ibadah  
wanda zai kusantar da Musulmi zuwa  
ga Allah, kamar yadda Allah ya yi  
umarni a bi shi ta hanyar Manzonsa  
(SAW) amma ba ta hanyar wani  
mutum ba ko mai matsayinsa.*

(Fieldnotes, Gumi Cassette on *Surah* Al-Ma'idah).

Meaning:

*Wasīlah* (a means of approach) stands for any act of '*ibādah*' which makes a Muslim very close to Allah. However, for the '*ibādah*' to be a means of approach to Allah, it must be in conformity with Allah's directives as pointed out by the Prophet (SAW); it should not be in conformity with someone's directives no matter how influential he may seem to be.

While some *Qādiris* and *Tijānis* viewed the content of *Sūrah* al-Kahf especially verse 28 as the basis of *Sufism* in the Qur'ān, Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi as pointed out earlier submitted that the *Sūrah* teaches strict adherence to the provisions of the *Sharī'ah* and it has nothing to do with *Sufism*. (Fieldnotes, Gumi Cassette on *Surah* Al- Kahf).

In sharp contrast with the interpretations of Shaykh Nasir Kabara and Shaykh Tahir Bauchi on the main teachings of *Surah* Al-Kahf, Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi argued that the essence of this *Surah* is:

*Surah* Al-Kahf tana karantar da ladubban ibada zuwa ga Allah, da yin aiki da zahirin Shari'ah da barin dukkan abin da ya sabawa Shari'ah. (Fieldnotes, Gumi tafsīr Cassette on *Surah* Al-Kahf)

Meaning:

*Surah* Al-Kahf teaches the etiquettes of worshipping Allah, to act in conformity with the teachings of the *Shari'ah* and to do away with anything which contradicts the *Shari'ah*.

The emergence of Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi's trend of *tafsīr* symbolized the extent to which the *Izālah* doctrines penetrated into the *Sūfi* area of the Muslim communities in Northern Nigeria. The *Izālah* trend of *tafsīr* contributed to the subsequent emergence of some new ideas and "radical" Islāmic organisations from 1970's onwards. (Loimeier, 1997:213-214)

## **THE *QĀDIRIYYAH* AND *TIJĀNIYYAH* COALITION AGAINST THE *IZĀLAH***

The criticisms of Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi against the doctrines and teachings of the *Sūfī* orders in Northern Nigeria served as a major unifying factor for the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* followers. (Quadri, 1981:386-387). Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi and later with some scholars like Shaykh Ismā‘īl Idrīs Jos directed all their efforts towards educating Muslims to understand what they referred to as “the existing contradiction between the teachings of the *Sharī‘ah* and the *tarīqah*”. (Quadri, 1981:219-220). Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi’s reason for the rejection of some *Sūfī* doctrines such as *Salāt al-Fātih* was because of the belief of the *Tijānis* about it that it was granted by Allah to one Shaykh Muhammad al-Bakrī after the death of the Prophet. He based his argument that since the Prophet (SAW) had accomplished his mission, no other person can receive a revelation nor is it possible for the Prophet to teach a new thing to his followers after his death. He contended that to do otherwise will be contrary to the Qur’ān (Quadri, 1981:386-388).

It was this attitude of Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi and his disciples which helped, to a large extent, in shifting the attention of the *Qādiriyyah* followers from their traditional rivalry with the *Tijāniyyah* followers over the issue of *qabd*, *sadl* and the controversies over the superiority complex of one *tarīqah* over the other. (Quadri, 1981:388) The attack between Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi and the leaders of the *Sūfī* orders reached its climax in 1972 when he published his book *al-‘Aqīdah al-Sahīhah Bi Muwafaqah al-Sharī‘ah*. In this book, he totally condemned *sūfī* doctrines. In the same year, Shaykhs Nāsir Kabara and Sani Kafinga (1909-1989), wrote a rejoinder to *al-‘Aqīdah al-Sahīhah* which they published *al-Nasīhah al-Sarīhah Fī al-Radd ‘Alā al-‘Aqīdah al-Sahīhah (Frank Advice In Response To al-‘Aqīdah al-Sahīhah)* and *al-Mināh al-Hamīdah Fī al-Radd ‘Alā Fāsīd al-‘Aqīdah (Praiseworthy Gifts In Response To The One Who Is Corrupted In His Faith)* respectively. (Fieldnotes, Tahir, 24/12/2002). A similar rejoinder on Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi’s book was also made in 1982 by Shaykh Sharīf Ibrāhīm Sālih of Maiduguri (b. 1939). (Quadri, 1981:393-394). He published a book *al-Takfīr Akhtar al-Bid‘ah Tuhaddid al-Salām (The Accusation Of Unbelief Constitutes A Blameworthy Innovation And Threatens Peace)*. The following year also, Shaykh Tāhir ‘Uthmān Bauchi (b. 1927), wrote a rejoinder on Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi’s book which he called *Gaskiya Ta Bayyana (The Truth Has Emerged)*. (Fieldnotes, Interview with Aji 28<sup>TH</sup> December, 2002).

However, the book *Raf' al-Shubhāt 'Ammā Fī al-Qādiriyyah Wa al-Tijāniyyah Min al-Shathāt (The Lifting Of Doubts About The Deviation Of The Qādiriyyah And The Tijāniyyah)* is the only book which was jointly published by the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* scholars against the *Izālah*. This book was published in 1978 by Malam 'Ali Abū Bakr Jabata (a *Tijānī*) and Malam Muhammad Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī (a *Qādirī*). The Emir of Ilorin, Sulu Gambari (b.1915), inspired the work and the late Shaykh Adam 'Abdullah Ilorin wrote the introduction. (Loimeier, 1997:267).

It is this coalition between the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Tijāniyyah* against the *Izālah* which later on appeared as a new mode of *tafsīr* in Northern Nigeria. With this coalition some *mufassirūn* belonging to the two *Sūfī* orders ignored their long existing differences in order to attack the common "opposition". In fact, Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi's book brought the members of the two *Sūfī* orders together. For instance, Shaykhs Sharīf Ibrāhīm Sālih, Sani Kafīnga and Tāhir 'Uthmān Bauchi did not only attempt to defend the *Tijāniyyah* but also the *Qādiriyyah*, while Shaykh Nāsir Kabara (1910-1996), spoke in defence of the *Qādiriyyah* in particular and *Sufism* in general. (Loimeier, 1997:267).

Unfortunately, this conflict between the *tarīqah* and *Izālah* has nowadays dominated the *tafsīr* scene in Northern Nigeria and has created an unhealthy atmosphere among the Muslim communities. The worse part of it is that the two camps tend to see nothing good from each other.

### **THE SCHOLARLY (OBJECTIVE) TREND OF *TAFSĪR***

The serious conflict between the *tarīqah* and the *Izālah* has reached a stage where Muslims in Northern Nigeria became heavily divided and weak. The Muslims have kept aside the great challenge facing them and resorted to the internal conflict among themselves. It is this unhealthy situation which necessitated the emergence of some Muslim scholars with a new trend of thought. Some of these scholars are neither *tarīqah* nor *Izālah* adherents. However, in a situation whereby some of these scholars are members of the *tarīqah*, their affiliation with the *tarīqah* never influences them to be biased in their approach on issues relating to Islām. (Fieldnotes, interview with Abba Aji, Maiduguri, 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2002)

The main motive of the scholars belonging to the scholarly and objective of thought is not to find out who among the *tarīqah* and *Izālah* followers is on the right cause. They regard the followers of the two camps as Muslim brothers. The scholarly *mufassirun* are all after the truth

regardless of where it comes from. They intermingle freely with both the *tarīqah* and *Izālah* members devoid of portraying any sentimental behaviour. Their priority is for the Muslims to understand the teachings of Islām and this is only possible through the search for knowledge. It is through this that the Muslims could meet the challenges of the modern time. (Fieldnotes, interview with Aji)

This objective idea could be noticed in the *tafsīr* of some prominent *mufasssirūn* in Northern Nigeria. Among them is Shaykh Sharīf Ibrāhīm Sālih. He is a very refutable Islāmic scholar with a considerable number of adherents among the western educated and young *Tijānīs*. He has a lot of followership among students in the universities and some tertiary institutions in Nigeria and beyond. His views are respected by almost all the scholars from different trends of thought and inclinations. He is thus regarded by many intellectuals as neutral despite his affiliation with the *Tijāniyyah*. (Loimeier, 1997: 277)

According to Loimeier:

I thus observed that Salih was the only speaker during a rally of a council of ‘*ulamā*’ in Kano on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1988 who received the applause of the delegations of the Muslims Students’ Society (MSS) which were taking part. Other speakers,...were simply ignored by the mass of young Muslims. (Loimeier, 1997:276)

Other objective *mufasssirūn* in Northern Nigeria include Malam Abba Aji, the *Imām* of Mairi mosque in Maiduguri, Malam Mūsā Muhammad, the chief *Imām* of the national mosque, Abuja, Shaykh Ahmad Lemu, the national President of the Islāmic Education Trust (IET), Minna, Niger State, Shaykh Ibrāhīm ‘Umar Kabo, the late Malam Lawal Qālarāwī, Malam Ibrāhīm Abū Bakr Ramadan (Tudun Nufawa) and Malam Nasidi Abū Bakr Gwauron Dutse, Kano. (Fieldnotes, interview with Husain Isa Bello 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2003)

During my interview with him, Shaykh Ahmad Lemu (b.1929), expressed that one of the problems facing Muslims in Nigeria is that they need to comprehend the real message of the Qur’ān. He stated that:

...babban abin da ya addabi Musulmai a yau shi ne kamata ya yi su san me Allah ya aiko Annabi Muhammad (SAW) da shi na wannan al-Qur'ān. Ba sani kawai na ma'ana ba, a'a, me ma'anar ita kanta ta kunsu (implication), in an san ma'anar sai a ce to yaya za a aiwatar da abin da Allah ya yi mana horo ko ya yi mana gargadi (application). (Fieldnotes, interview with Shaikh Lemu)

Meaning:

The main problem confronting Muslims today is that they need to comprehend the message which Allah sent through the Prophet (SAW) as contained in the Qur'ān. Not only merely knowing the meaning but what the meaning itself contains, that is the implication. If the implication is clearly understood we should then try to apply what Allah commands or prohibits us to do, that is the application.

Some objective 'ulamā' interpreted "...Wabtaghū ilāhi al-wasīlah" as "approach Him (Allah) with obedience and work which pleases Him". This is also the interpretation given by 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Mujāhid, Qatādah as well Shaykh 'Abdullah' ibn Fūdī. These scholars interpreted the above verse to mean that what Allah requires from His Servants is to fear Him in all its ramifications, and to strive very hard in His cause as much as they can. This is the process of being successful in life both here and in the hereafter. (Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, 1966:69 and Ibn Fudī, Vol. I, 1961: 293)

In a nutshell, if the *mufassirūn* from the two opposing camps i.e., the *tarīqah* and the *Izālah* could be moderate while expressing their views, the level of the conflict and rivalry between the *tarīqah* and the *Izālah* could at least be minimized. Hence, paving the way for a peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding among the Muslims.

### **THE POLITICAL TREND OF TAFSĪR**

Some critics of the emirate system of Northern Nigeria who have based their proposed reforms on Islāmic grounds turned to the Qur'ān itself for

support. In the 1950's and 1960's some of the major reformers in Northern Nigeria such as Malams Sa'ād Zungur (1915-1958), Aminu Kano (1920-1983), 'Isā Wālī, Abba Mai Kwārū, and Ibrāhīm Imām of Maiduguri were *tafsīr* scholars. In fact, *tafsīr* was one of his area of specialisation. Malam Sa'ād Zungur made several attempts to translate the Qur'ān into Hausa. Malam 'Isa Wālī did not conduct the public *tafsīr* but he specialised in it at the School For Arabic Studies, Kano. (Paden 1973: 293)

Between 1950's and 1960's there was much political rivalry between the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC). The NPC was made up of most of the northern Emirs who have much control of their domains. On the other hand, the NEPU was on the opposition side and was made up of many progressive Northerners headed by Malam Aminu Kano. In fact, some of the leaders and followers of NEPU were people with sound Islāmic scholarship. These include people like Malams Sa'ād Zungur, Aminu Kano, 'Isā Wālī, Abba Mai Kwārū and 'Aliyu Akilu as mentioned earlier. The NEPU considered that the NPC government was not administered on the right direction, and therefore advocated a social justice reform and attacked the legality and dominance of the emirate system. (Paden, 1973: 294)

The verses that the politicians interpreted to codemn the emir's and chiefs as well as the emirate system include most of the verses in which Allah mentioned the word *mulk* (leadership) and *zulm* (oppression and injustice) in the Qur'ān. Few among such verse are: *Sūrah* al-Imrān :17 and 26, *Sūrah* al-Taubah: 116, *Sūrah* al-Isrā': 11 *Sūrah* al-Fātihah and *Sūrah* al-Nur: 42. (Fieldnotes, interview with Husaini Isa)

While interpreting *Sūrah* al-Nūr :42, where Allah says “And to Allah, belongs the dominion (*mulk*) of the heavens and the earth, and to Allah is the final return (of all)”.

The politicians oftenly maintained that the emirate system was not administered on the right direction. Hence, they advocated social justice reform and condemned the dominance of the emirate system stating that “to Allah alone and not to someone else belongs the total control of the heavens and earth. and the territories of the emirs and chiefs and all other places. (Fieldnotes, interview with Husain)

The politicians went on the state that :



...since Allah created heavens and earth, and what is between the two for the benefit of humanbeing, there is no justification whatsoever for the emirs and chiefs to oppress the *talakawa* under the guise of the *sarauta*. (Fieldnotes, interview with Husain)

Malam Aminu Kano, therefore, carried out his political campaign against the emirate system using his Islāmic background as a basis for the reform. This fact could be ascertained in the light of his interpretation of *Sūrah* al-Fātihah. While interpreting this *Sūrah*, he clearly pointed out the supremacy of Allah over the emirate system of administration. His main concern here was to enlighten his audience that the unlimited respect which people accorded to the emirs was uncalled for. The only absolute king is Allah, and all others are created by Him. (Paden, 1973: 252) He stated that:

We start with *bismillah* (in the name of Allah), then *Alhamdu lillāhi Rabb al-‘ālamīn* (praise be to Allah, Lord of Creation). This is praise. It is not the praise that praise singers recite to human beings, but a praise showing that you believe there is one greater than you, not because you are in chains but because of the honour and respect you feel. All of this praise belongs to Allah. Therefore, even if your king or your *malam* or a rich man or your father is praised, the final praise is reserved to Allah. Our final thanks is to Allah. Even during the time of slaves and even now at work, people may ask, “who is your master (*Ubangiji*)?” you may say a particular government official or a particular european (*bature*). Because *ubangiji* means both “master” and “God”. We should understand which *Ubangiji* is being referred to. That *Ubangiji* is He who is *Rabb al-‘Ālamīn* (Lord of Creation) or *Ubangijin ‘ālam* (Master of all things). ‘*Ālam* includes *tālikai* (ordinary people). In Hausaland, we understand *tālikai* to mean my self, you, women and everybody. Human beings are not the only creatures in the world. There are trees, mountains, insects, animals of the land and water. There are nonliving things like air, light, stars, moon, oil, the sky and a host of things that Allah

Has created. If you say that Allah is only a god of human beings, then who is the God of these other things?. Creation is all these things together: the World, the hereafter, the angels, the insects, the humanbeing. Allah, then, is the God of these things, which collectively we call ‘*ālam*. The God of creation is the One we are referring to, not any other *Ubangiji*. The king of your town (*sarkin garinku*) should not think we are speaking of him, since that king himself is a part of ‘*ālam*. (Paden, 1973:300)

In his interpretation of *al-Rahmān* as it appears in verse 2 of *Sūrah al-Fātihah*, Malam Aminu Kano went on to state that:

Yet what kind of god is the God of creation? God is *al-Rahmān* (the Beneficent). If your king is kind and is praised you may think his charity is beyond compare. Yet sometimes the king is angry with you and will pass you by in the distribution of gifts. Or he may not favour you in some other way. God gives you gifts, wealth and He gives you a throne (*Sarauta*), but not just because you follow Him. He is not like a king who honours you only when you honour him. If you cheat that king, he cheats you. If the common people don’t like the king, he tries to imprison them. God does not behave in that way. God is *al-Rahmān*. The Jews do not like to hear us refer to God as *al-Rahmān*. Whether you call Him God or *al-Rahmān* it is all the same, since *al-Rahmān* is His other name. (Paden, 1973: 300-301)

It is worthy of note that Malam Aminu Kano’s Islāmic background and education must have been responsible for most of his political activities and ideas and by extension NEPU’s ideology. He must have been influenced by the egalitarianism always embedded in the judicial principles of Islām. The argument and belief in some quarters that Malam Aminu Kano was Marxist oriented or that the opposition led by NEPU against the NPC was due to the former’s Marxist influence are not true. (Jami’u 1996: 308) Malam Aminu Kano said when resigning from NPC and government:

I resigned because I refuse to believe that this country is by necessity a prisoner of the Anglo-

Fulani autocracy or the unpopular indirect rule system. I resigned because there is no freedom to criticise this most unjust and anachronistic and unislāmic form of hollow institutions promulgated by Lugard. I resigned because I fanatically share the view that the N.A's as they stand today, coupled with all their too trumpeted "fine tradition" are woefully hopeless in solving our urgent educational, social, economic, political and even religious problems... I can not tolerate these institutions because of their smell. I can not tolerate them because they do not tolerate any one. They even go to the extent of dooming the future of their critics. I am prepared to be called by any name. Call me a dreamer or call me a revolutionary, call me a crusader or any thing you will. I have seen a light on far horizon and I intend to march into its full circle either alone or with any one who cares to go with me. (Jami'u, 1996:309)

According to Paden:

The strength of Aminu Kano both in his political role and on his influence on the younger generation of Northerners is related to his status as an Islāmic scholar of the highest order as being able to interpret the Qur'ān. (Paden, 1986: 302)

Feinstein described Malam Aminu Kano's political thought thus:

If we scrutinize Aminu's thinking closely over the years, it becomes evident that he conceived of the Qur'ān in non-fundamentalist term, attempting to give a modern frame to the moral thinking contained in the good Book. Hence, his emphasis on those portions of the Qur'ān that dwelt upon democratic precepts, women's rights, equality and freedom. (Feinstein, 1973:29)

Tahir quoted Malam Aminu Kano as saying during his 1973 *Ramadān tafsīr* that:

Every time the Muslim raises his arm in prayer and recites the *kabbara* he issues a challenge and a repudiation of all earthly power. He invites emperors, kings, despots and all of the powerful and everything in the universe to bear witness and to deny if they dare that nothing but Allah Has power and is to be worshipped and obeyed. The Islāmic faith and Islāmic prayer are a call to revolution. (Tahir, 1975: XI)

To sum it up, Malam Aminu Kano was indeed an Islāmic socio-political reformist. He viewed Islām and Politics as always interwoven. It is in view of the foregoing, therefore, that whenever Malam Aminu Kano was conducting his *tafsīr* he called for the political, social and economic opportunities for the common people so as to lay the foundation of a new society whose middle class is prosperous and whose peasantry is contented.

#### **THE ‘YAN QĀLA QĀTO (THE PEDESTRAINS) TREND OF TAFSĪR**

From 1950’s up to 1960’s there emerged in Kano some “Islāmic scholars” whose manner of preaching was very strange and not in conformity with the *Sunni* principles of Islām. Among these people were Malam Muhammad Banufe, Malam Mai Kaūlāsan and Malam Muhammad Marwa. Muhammad Banufe started his preaching in Kano central mosque by reading and translating the Qur’ān without the required pre-requisites. Some people, especially those who did not know the side effect of his type of preaching, referred to him as the *mai tsage gaskiya* (some one who told the truth). Malam Mai Kaulāsan’s preaching and style of *tafsīr* was in fact more dangerous than Malam Muhammad Banufe’s. He used to ascribe the term *kufr* to any Muslim whose way of perception differed with his. (Dahiru, 1995: 254)

However, of all the *’yan qāla qāto*, Malam Muhammad Marwa, was the most fanatic and notorious. Muhammad Marwa apart from ascribing *kufr* to many Muslims, also cursed them by saying *Allah ta tsine* (May Allah curse you). His use of the feminine Hausa pronoun “ta” to refer to Allah, instead of the masculine “ya” suggested his non-native background in Hausa. Muhammad Marwa was originally from the Republic of Cameroon. It was as a result of the provocative preaching and *tafsīr* of these three “scholars” and others sharing the same idea that the then Emir of Kano

Muhammad Sanūsī (b.1905) repatriated Malam Banufe to Bida and Malam Mai Kaūlāsan to Nguru while Muhammad Marwa was imprisoned and later on deported to the Cameroon, his home country. (Dahiru: 1995: 254)

That unacceptable type of preaching and trend of *tafsīr* gradually disseminated to some other parts of Northern Nigeria. These “scholars” earned the label *'yan qāla qāto*, because they based their preaching and “*tafsīr*” on unjustifiable grounds outside the fold of accepted Islāmic principles. They interpreted the Qur’ān according to their wishful interest. The Maitatsine followers, for instance, believed that the only authentic source from which Muslims could derive their knowledge and authority for all actions and judgment was the Qur’ān. (Anwar, 1989:258) While interpreting verse 18 of *Sūrah* al-Jinn where Allah says:

And the places of worship are for  
Allah alone, so invoke not any one  
along with Him

They stated that it is illegal to mention the name of any one other than Allah in a mosque. It was as a result of this that they refused to recite any *Sūrah* of the Qur’ān or to observe any practice in which they had to include the name of Prophet Muhammad while praying. They did not do the *iqāmah* and the *tahiyah* in their *Salāt* because of the appearance of Prophet Muhammad’s name in the *iqāmah* and the *tahiyah* respectively. (Anwar, 1989:261) Their rejection of the *hadīth*, *ijmā’*, *qiyās* and all other accepted sources of the *Sharī’ah* other than the actual text of the Qur’ān was according to them based on this Qur’ānic text. (Anwar, 1989: 261-262)

These are the verses of Allah which we  
recite to you (O Muhammad) with truth.  
Then in which speech after Allah and His  
signs will they believe? (Surah al-  
Jathiyah:6)

Moreover, there are some hawkers who parade themselves on the streets in Northern Nigeria, especially on market days and on Fridays, selling traditional medicine. In the process of advertising their products they try to conduct “*tafsīr*” in order to attract the attention of the people to patronise their products. This is very unfortunate especially in view of the fact that most of such hawkers lack the requirements for conducting

*tafsīr*. Besides, majority of them are only mere dupers, as such, they are also labelled as ‘*yan qāla qāto*. (Fieldnotes, interview with Bashir Tijjani Uthman, Kano: 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2002)

### **TRENDS OF *TAFSĪR* AND THE EMERGENCE OF SOME *TAFSĪR* (TARJAMAH) BOOKS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

The first *tafsīr* (*tarjamah*) book of the Qur’ān *Tafsīr Juz ‘Amma* in Hausa was published in the 1950’s by Shaykh Ahmad Lemu (Niger State) and Malam Nāsir Mustafā (Kano State). This book was published by Abū al-Sa‘ūd and ‘Uthmān al-Tayyib, Kano. In fact, the general preaching and *tafsīr* of these two scholars at least reflect a kind of objectivity. In 1974, Shaykh Abū Bakr Mahmūd Gumi published *Juz ‘Amma, Juz Tabārak* in Hausa, and later in 1979 published a complete *Al-Kur’ān Mai Girma Da Kuma Tarjamar Ma’anoninsa Zuwa Ga Harshen Hausa*. In the same year also he published his Arabic *tafsīr* book *Radd al-Adhhān Ilā Ma‘ān al-Qur’ān* which was published by the Dār al-‘Arabiyyah, Beirut. This is a one-volume book produced through consulting some recognised *tafsīr* books including *Tafsīr al-Jalālāin* and *Safwah al-Tafāsīr* of Muhammad ‘Alī al-Sābūnī. (Fieldnotes, interview with Lemu, Minna, 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2003)

In fact, the Hausa and Arabic *tafsīr* books of Shaykh Abū Bakr Mahmūd Gumī were seriously condemned by some *tarīqah* scholars for two reasons. The first is that the Hausa *tafsīr* book was written occasionally applying the Sokoto-Hausa dialect which is not widely used compared to the Kano-Hausa dialect, and that both *tafsīr* books were published to portray some anti *Sūfī* teachings. (Fieldnotes, interview with Bello Sa’id 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2004, and also with Lawal Abubakar 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2003 respectively). In 1983, *Alkāli* Muhammad Kabīr Alwali produced his unpublished *tafsīr* (*tarjamah*) book in Hausa *Inuwa Mai Sanyi: Fassarar al-Qur’ani Mai Girma Zuwa Ga Harshen Hausa*. (Fieldnotes, interview with Daihur Kabir, Kano 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2004) Likewise, Shaykh Adam ‘Abdullah Ilorin wrote a complete *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān (n.d) *Tarjamah Ma‘ān al-Qur’ān al-Karīm Ilā Lughah Yoruba*. This book was published by Dār al-‘Arabiyyah Beirut. Shaykh Abdussalām Bolājī also translated Qur’ān into Yoruba in 1973. The work was sponsored by the World Islāmic League Saudi Arabia. (Fieldnotes, interview with Imam Malli, Ilorin and Dr. Shu’aib Agaka on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2003 respectively) However, in response to some of the interpretations of Shaykh Abū Bakr Gumi, in 1988, Shaykh Nāsir Kabara published his *tafsīr* book in Hausa

*Ihsān al-Mannān Fī Ibrāz Khabāya al-Qur’ān Ilā Kulli Hawārī Min Fuqarā’ Hadhā al-Zamān*. It is a four-volume book with chapterisation on some chapters and verses. The book was published by *Jam’iyah al-Da’wah al-Islāmiyah al-‘Ālamiyyah*, Tripoli, Libya. (Fieldnotes, interview with Khalifah Qaribullah 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2002). In 1993, Bashīr Ahmad Muhy al-Dīn published his *tafsīr* book together with Malam Tijānī Yūsuf Sūdāwā. The book *al-Kur’ān Mai Girma (Fassara Da Bayanai) Zuwa Ga Harshen Hausa* was published by the Continental Book Centre, India. (Fieldnotes, interview with Tijjani Yusuf Sudawa, 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2002) In 1995, Malams Nāsir Mustafā, Tijānī Yūsuf Sūdāwā and Bello Sa’īd published *Tataccen Fassarar Ma’anonin al-Kur’ān* which was published by Mai Nasara Printing Press, Kano. (Fieldnotes, interview with Sudawa).

In 2010, some prominent Islamic Scholars in Adamawa State, these are: Grand Kadi, Ahmad Bobboi, Shaikh Sahabu Umar, Ustaz Ahmad and Madibbo Ahmad Dan Buran wrote the complete Fulfulde translation of the glorious Qur’an: *Tarjamah Ma’aniji Al-Qur’an Be Dengal Fulfulde*. (Fieldnotes, interview with Bello Batari Gombe on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2014)

## CONCLUSION

We have so far seen how Islam appeared into Nigeria and the role of Kanem Borno and Sokoto Caliphates, as far as the Qur’anic Education was concerned. We have seen the contribution of the Sayfawa ‘ulamā’ and *Mais* to the studies of *tafsīr*. The contribution of the Sayfawa ‘ulamā’ in this field was unique and very remarkable. They were the first non-Arabs to have introduced the *tarjamah* of the Qur’ān as a method of *tafsīr* suitable to non-Arab speakers who did not understand the language of the Qur’ān. We have also discussed that the *tafsīr* of Borno of *Mai ‘Alī Ghāji* is a classic example of the *salaf* with emphasis and reliance upon the explanation of a verse by another verse, accompanied by the detailed explanation given by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) and full of extensive quotations from the works of earlier *mufasssirūn*. The paper also discussed the contribution of Shaykh ‘Abdullah ibn Fūdī in the field of *tafsīr*. He wrote three books on the science of *tafsīr* and another three on *tafsīr* with *Diyā’ al-Tawīl* and *Kifāyah Du ‘afā al-Sūdān* as the most known of all the six books.

The paper pointed out the position of the Qur'an among Muslims. It then discussed the evolution of Qur'anic schools in Northern Nigeria and the integration of Qur'anic Education into Western Education. The paper then discussed and examined Qur'anic Education in some universities in Northern Nigeria, the development of *tafsir* in Northern Nigeria, the emergence of new trends of *tafsir* in Northern Nigeria, and the emergence of some *tafsir (tarjamah)* books in Northern Nigeria.

The paper, therefore, recommended that there is the need to revisit, reassess and reevaluate the curriculum of education as it is taught in the Nigerian educational system. The curriculum should clearly state the value and relevance of Qur'anic Education in the social, economic, political and educational development of Muslims personality. This could re-orient Muslims to be morally upright and face the challenges and realities of the modern times in the context of the Glorious Qur'an.

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