

**59<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture**  
**Dynamics of Islam in Post-Colonial Lagos**  
**by**  
**Professor Lateef Adetona**

**Protocols:**

The Vice-Chancellor Sir,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic),  
Registrar,  
Bursar,  
University Librarian,  
Provost, Ag. Dean of the PG School, Deans of Faculties and Ag. Dean, Students` Affairs Division,  
Professors, Heads of Departments, Colleagues, Members of the Alumni Association, Ladies and  
gentle men and the greatest LASUITES!!!

In the Name of Allah, the Munificent, the Merciful.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen, I stand before you today as the first alumnus to be appointed a Professor in the Faculty of Arts and the second in the entire Lagos State University and to present the fourth inaugural lecture from the Islamic Studies Unit, the seventh in the department of Religions and Peace Studies and the fifty ninth in the University. My presentation is titled; ‘Dynamics of Islam in Post- Colonial Lagos’. This covers aspects of my researches on the interaction of the Muslims with votaries of other faiths, particularly, the Christians on matters affecting Islam in the ever cosmopolitan Lagos in the post-colonial era. Issues in focus include reactions to formal (western oriented) education, Pentecostalism as a converting instrument of Muslims from Islam and the politics of shari‘ah in Lagos.

**1:1 Islam in Lagos:**

Lagos State, which is located on four principal islands and adjacent parts of the Nigerian mainland, covers a 3,345 sq. km. parcel of land, most of which is cosmopolitan. Lagos has a very diverse and fast-growing population, resulting from heavy and ongoing migration to the city from all parts of Nigeria as well as neighbouring countries. Until a few years after independence, it was only the Lagos Island known as Eko by its inhabitants that constituted Lagos but with its creation in 1967, it now covers the five divisions of Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos and Epe (IBILE). The divisions had further been divided into 20 and lately 53 Local Governments and Local Government Development Areas in order to enhance easy administration.' In 1992, Lagos had an estimated population of about 1,347,000, which grew to about 10.9 million in 1996 and arguably Muslims constitute over fifty percent of the population. Considering the United Nations' prediction on the city's metropolitan area, which had only about 290,000 inhabitants in 1950, the number was predicted to exceed 25 million by 2015, making Lagos the third of the world's largest cities, coming after New York and Tokyo. (Reichmuth: 1993, Durosinmi-Etti: 1998)

Prior to the annexation of Lagos in 1861 as a British colony, some of its inhabitants had taken Islam as a way of life, using it as the standard of life and thus, they did not hide even under the colonial rule, their flair for Islamic tenets. At this time and beyond, the majority of the Lagos Muslims see the colonial system of government as having over-run all local values of lives including the areas of education and administration of justice. For example, it is on record that the Colonial administration in Lagos did not fashion any programme, acceptable or not, to cater for the educational needs of Muslims in Lagos and the entire Yoruba land especially between 1861 and 1896 (Adetona: 2007). This was the time the available Missionary Schools such as the CMS, Methodist and Anglican denied the Muslims access to Western education. When eventually the colonial authorities founded schools to cater for the needs of the Muslims, the schools did not last beyond the late 1920s but they provided an early model for the co-existence of Western education and Islam. Alien courts hitherto unknown were introduced and these courts gradually became incorporated into our legal system. The colonial court system did not agree with the dispute settlement mechanism known to both the Muslims and non-Muslims especially in civil matters. The role of Baale (compound chief) and leaders of thoughts in the mosque in dispute settlements became threatened but was sustained through the assistance of a maxim that became widespread beyond Lagos but in the entire Yoruba land that *aiti kootu de sore*, meaning: 'there can exist no

friendship between those who have been to court for dispute resolution.’ The Lagos Muslims in particular still found something missing in the colonial courts, as they did not find justice in matter concerning their religious precepts on issues affecting their socio-personal status such as marriage, divorce and inheritance. In the history of Lagos, twice during the colonial era, in 1894 and 1923, the Muslims petitioned the colonial authority to institute for them a court whose adjudication will be based on shari‘ah on matters concerning their personal status. The 1894 demand signed by a number of politicians and prominent members of the community made reference to India where Muslims constituted only one-sixth of the entire population and their request for *shari‘ah* was granted and thus prayed the British to grant the demand of Lagos Muslims as they constituted about half of the Lagos population. Moreover, this was the year Islam gained additional fame for itself in Lagos having attracted the representative of the Ottoman Sultan to the formal opening of the Shitta-Bey Mosque. The president of the Liverpool Muslims Association in London, Mr. Quallam, represented the Sultan (Gbadamosi: 1978). Again in 1923, the Muslims also petitioned the colonial authority demanding for the introduction of shari‘ah court to adjudicate on personal matters of the Lagos Muslims arising from a judgment in a divorce case involving a certain Awawu Thomas, which they regarded as against the spirit of the divine law of the Muslims. (Gbadamosi: 1978). In both cases, the petitions failed.

This was a time the Colonial rulers and their allies had recognised the fame, power and size of the Muslims, yet they were treated as non-existent. For instance, Richard Boston observed when he visited Lagos in 1860 that "a few Muslims have already risen to political importance" (Adetona: 2010). Thus, it can be submitted that the British Colonial rulers deliberately retarded the development of the Muslims for reasons that may not be easily given in spite of their political and economic contributions to the state at this time, such little right as holidays for *juma‘at* (a few minutes) and ‘*id* prayers were not easily granted to them.

Thus the Muslims at this period could perceive nothing but an alliance between Colonialism and Christianity not simply because those who brought colonial rule as well as those who brought Christianity were perceived as white men, but the programmes of the two sets of ‘white people’ were in concurrence. The Muslims generally thus had a very negative impression of the Colonial rulers, though out of occasional necessity, the Muslims had to collaborate with the officials of the Colonial regime in the interest of the citizens. The overall views of the Muslims are in agreement

with opinions expressed by Africanists on the aims of the colonial rulers. Such include the opinions of W. E. B. *DuBois* who referred to Colonialism as the natural and human exploitation of Africa when she asserts that “it is the Rape of Africa”. Aime Césaire, one of the founders of the Negritude movement, also referred to it in a similar manner. (Rashad: 2001)

Both DuBois and Césaire thus establish that Colonialism is similar to total suppression of the Africans by the Europeans, and that this system of suppression permeates their entire network. As a follow up to this, Usman Bugaje is of the opinion that colonialists suppressed the Africans by:

the creation of artificial borders... the introduction of the territorially based nation state, fashioned along European lines with European type nationalism and the supplanting of Islamic educational system and its replacement with secular and therefore amoral Western type of education, have combined to destroy the Muslim sense of community, subvert Muslim solidarity and largely extricate Muslims from the main currents of social, economic and political force. (Bugaje: 1999)

It was the arrival of Colonialism that changed the status of Islam, which hitherto was the religion of civilization in Lagos and the entire Yoruba land and by this impact; it was retarded to become a religion of the weaklings and the downtrodden in the society during this period. A O K Noah(1986) tacitly supports this assertion by his affirmation of what the status of education was at this time that: “Western education was a handmaid of Christianity in Nigeria and that evangelism used the school significantly” It is in fact on record that as at 1922, after some Muslims had been patronising the Christian Missionary schools, an Anglican Synod held where it was decided that the mission should discontinue the admittance of Muslims into their schools, as the Muslim children constituted bad influence on their children. W.O.A Nasiru has carried out a detailed study on the effect of this (Nasiru: 1995).

## **2:0 Education of Muslims in Post-Colonial Lagos**

From the above background, the treatment of the Muslims in the Colonial era and the responses of the Muslims including founding of schools by Muslim missionary groups, which emerged from the early Juvenile groups- the Juvenile Muslim Society and the Muslim Literary Society, the Ahmadiyyah Missionary groups (later, Anwar-ul-Islam) and off springs from it including the Jamat-ul-Islamiyyah, Ansar-ud-Deen, Zumrat-ul-Islamiyyah, the Muslim Mission group and other

evolving missionary groups rose to provide education for the teeming Muslim population in varied dimensions. The education of Muslims in post-independence Lagos has been extensively discussed in recent times, especially the kind sponsored by the missionary groups (See Fasinro: 1994, Adetona: 2017). Here, we shall discuss both traditional Arabic schools and the *`ilmiyyah* Arabic Schools in post-independence Lagos.

## **2:1 Traditional Arabic Schools:**

In the pre-independence Lagos, Arabic schools were mainly traditional, privately owned, not guided by any syllabus and that the volume of knowledge possessed by the proprietor was what could only be imparted to the students. The vocation for which (the teacher was most proficient would be the area of specialization of all his disciples). By traditional Arabic School, we mean, a school where the recitation of the Qur'an is being taught in the traditional manner. Examples abound all over the places but the foremost example of this era was the Ojogiwa school of Shavkh Ahmad Tijani Awelenje (d. 1968). (Adetona: 2007)

It is worthy of note that even today, the importance of the traditional Arabic schools, cannot be over emphasised as it serves as the place where Muslims are taught, in addition to Qur'an, the rudimentary aspects of their religion. The *`Ilmiyyah* schools in Lagos today are more favourably disposed to admitting those with rudimentary knowledge of Islam in addition to ability to recite the Qur'an in to their *Ibtidahiyyah* (primary) or *F'dadiyyah*-(junior secondary) classes.

Our investigation reveals that over 90% of the working class Muslims in post-colonial Lagos attended the traditional *Madrasah* at one time or the other. Further findings reveal that:

- ❖ the majority of the Muslims in Lagos, educated or not, had a taste of Qur'anic education right from their childhood.
- ❖ most of the Muslims in Lagos recognise the need for Islamic education through the Qur'anic School as a prerequisite to ensuring their spiritual well being.
- ❖ those who had attended secondary schools before 1979 had better opportunity of attending traditional Arabic schools before or after returning from schools and thus more of them completed the learning of Qur'anic recitation than those who attended secondary schools after 1979, when the civilian administration of Alhaji Lateef Jakande changed the school system to an all morning regime with the attendant private coaching system that accompanied it.

- ❖ majority of those who attended the Qur'anic Schools still recognise its importance.
- ❖ patronage of the traditional Arabic schools dwindled as a result of the corporeal punishment regime contained therein.
- ❖ in most cases, students are given no inkling of what they are being taught as a result of which, the learning becomes monotonous.
- ❖ the traditional Arabic Schools impact positively to a reasonable extent on both the literate and artisan groups in Lagos.

Without prejudice to the above, the traditional method of learning the Qur'an and the basic tenets of Islam are still flourishing in contemporary Lagos. All the Muslim missionary groups including the new prayer groups have traditional Arabic schools where members are taught the art of Qur'an recitation with ease. It must be added, however, that the traditional Arabic school remains a vehicle through which Islam grows steadily in Lagos. Recently, Abdul Lateef Centre for Quranic Memorization & Arabic Studies is a positive addition to this class. The Institute admits graduates of Junior Secondary schools and they memorize the entire Qur'an with *tajwid* during this period and also learn classical. The first set of 78 memorizers-male and female graduated from this school in January 2017. The proud proprietor of the school is Dr. Abdul Hakeem Mobolaji Abdul Lateef, Hon. Commissioner for Home Affairs in Lagos. The school is currently located on the premises of 5 Irepodun Street, Oko-Oba, Lagos. The specs of experts in Islamic Thoughts and Contemporary Studies will begin to x-ray the school after its 3<sup>rd</sup> graduation. It is however gladdening that experts in the recitation of the Qur'an for the purpose of leading canonical prayers, *taraawih* prayer in Ramadan and for competitions will never cease in Lagos as the school appear highly promising.

## **2:2 `Ilmiyyah Schools in Post-Independence Lagos**

The modern Arabic schools owned by private individuals (and in few instances by groups) are referred to as *`Ilmiyyah* schools in Lagos. Abubakre, (2004) has a slightly different classification. The love of the Lagos Muslims for Quranic studies had been established earlier. That love has culminated in their patronage of Quranic schools whatever their professions, which in turn has assisted the high number of Quranic schools in Lagos as earlier mentioned in the above section. This kind of institutions has also been promoted at this time in contrast to the kind established by the missionary groups in deference to the adopted British style which, in the opinion of the

founders had no good to offer. It is necessary to state that the missionary schools fashioned along the British style produced the highest number of conscientious Muslim professionals who remain till date, the pride of Islam in Lagos. It must however be said that those schools are now shadows of themselves in performance in external examinations especially after the return of schools by the Tinubu administration. This, we have recently established elsewhere (See Adetona: 2017).

The *ilmiyyah* schools have same traits, *modus operandi* in the administration, certification of teachers and so also do their products have identified behaviours.

Prior to independence, there were four *ilmiyyah* schools in Lagos; there were only four of such schools (Adetona: 2011). In the post independence, three (3) of them were founded between 1960 and 1969; eight (8) in the 1970s; twenty four (24) in the 1980s, additional fifteen (15) between 1990 and 2000 and 35 between 2000 and 2016. Barring any oversight, as at the year 2016, Lagos could boast of 89 modern Arabic schools, all of which run the *‘idadiyyah* (primary) and *thanawiyyah* (secondary) programmes (compare with Hashimi *etal*:2011). This number of the *‘ilmiyyah* schools is a major development in educational advancement in Lagos especially in the area of Muslim contributions to private ownership of schools but it is apposite that we state our findings of the contributions these schools have made to the well being of Muslims who patronise it individually and collectively.

### **Traits of the Schools**

- (a) **Modern Facilities:** Most of these schools are situated in premises befitting schools of modern age. There are also institutions in rented premises which are also befitting premises for learning thus each of these schools has structures befitting a modern school.
- (b) **Administration of the Schools:** In most cases the proprietors determine how the schools are run, employment of staff and design of curriculum for the schools. It is pertinent to start with the administration of the schools. In all of these schools, the actual administration is in the hand of the proprietor, although some assistants may be appointed for specific functions. Each of them has administrative unit where both the *mudir*—director/founder and the *mudaris-ul-awwal* principal stay with all administrative staff. They all also claim to have Secretaries/Registrars and Bursars. One fascinating thing about the set up is that each of these officers is also a teacher in the school. It is a clear indication that special knowledge required by the offices held is never considered before the officer is appointed to the office.

© Qualifications of the Proprietors and the Teachers: This is the most incommensurable aspect of our findings on these *‘ilmiyyah* schools. The highest qualification of most of the directors and principals is *thanawiyyah* – (Senior Secondary School Certificate) and most of these schools also operate up to the senior secondary level. Once, I had been challenged by a ‘fairly enlightened’ *Mudir*, who was a post-graduate student “that if Ph.D theses were supervised by Ph.D holders, what then is wrong in a *thanawiyyah* certificate holder in teaching a *thanawiyyah* class?”. I simply answered: “so many things” and enjoined him to visit a curriculum expert in the Faculty of Education but he has not returned from that assignment till today

In a series of interactions with the staff of these schools, our findings can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ that appointment is usually without terms of agreement but as a grace from the proprietor.
- ❖ that no salary scale is followed, increment and promotion, which are not automatic are based on the goodwill a staff enjoys from the director/proprietor.
- ❖ that being given a teaching appointment is seen as a privilege as hundreds of colleagues are thrown into the labour market to search for jobs.
- ❖ that the master-servant relationship between the proprietor and the teachers cannot give room for agitation for improvement in condition of service and welfare of staff; any of the teachers noticed to have the tendency to oppose this relationship will easily be eased out in order not to pollute others.
- ❖ that assistance from overseas and well-wishers at home is usually administered by the director, with neither input from the staff nor benefits getting to them.
- ❖ that these schools do not put any welfare programme in place, instead it is the staff that organise assistance for any member in need.
- ❖ that when foreign educational aids such as scholarships come, it is only in a very rare case that a teacher would benefit from it, instead, the proprietor dispenses them away as he desires
- ❖ That in virtually all the schools, teachers who force themselves to go for further studies do not return to the school.

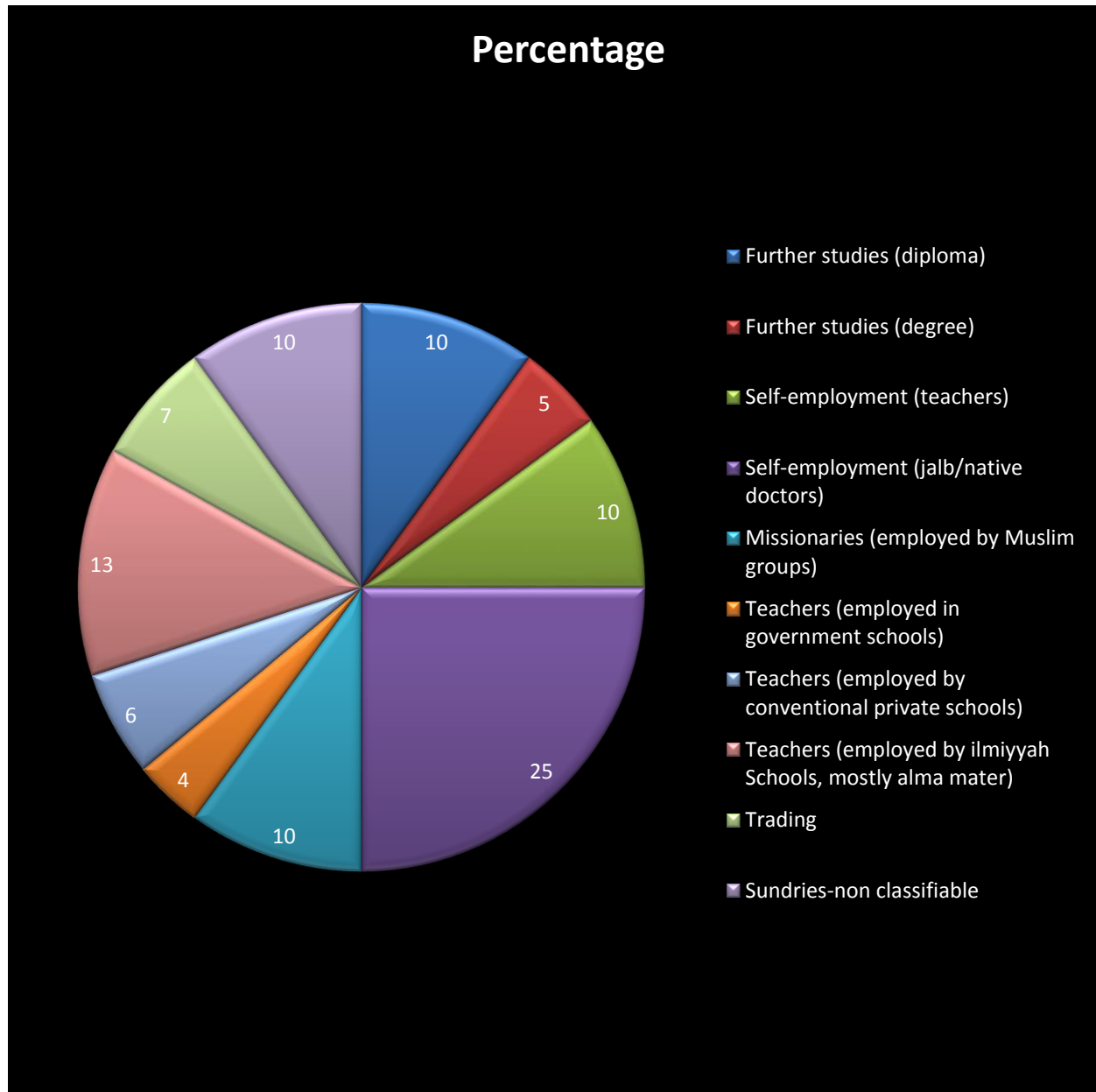


- ❖ that cases of fund mismanagement, insubordination and disloyalty are sometimes leveled against a few staff. Whenever such allegations are made against a staff, it has been discovered that the staff has either been cheated in the past or being owed by the management. Except in an exceptional few number of schools, all the schools have recorded differences between the proprietors and some teachers who expressed the need for improved welfare programmes for staff.
- ❖ that as a result of the above, contending personalities do not meet face-to-face and may even fight it out "spiritually".
- ❖ that fear of being spiritually suppressed has-been responsible for some of the teachers staying back until they receive the blessings of their mentors and directors to do other things.
- ❖ that the members of staff only make ends meet by involving in other activities such as *jalb* (spiritual consultancy) and serving as local Imams and Missionaries to some groups.

What is our business in all the above? Our business is mainly the special effects of some of the conditions highlighted on the level of performance of the teachers and their moral implications. Not long ago, a parent of a student of an *`ilmiyyah* school voluntarily informed me while an examination was going on in his son`s school that it was required that every student pays directly to the subject teacher for *tabaruk* (blessing) so as not to be endangered in his/her *natijah* (results). I encouraged him to report to the *Mudir* who was his teacher while at the *`ilmiyyah* school. I am certain that he took the sincere advice as perfidious, paid to the teacher of every subject and his son graduated with *mumtaz* (distinction). This may happen in any institution in the corrupt state of our nation but there is no formal institution where this can be perpetrated in the open. This is also not peculiar as our research assistants, some of them pupils/students of the schools confirmed that it is everywhere.

- (d) **Curriculum:** Though, there is no uniform curriculum for all these schools, the subjects taken are in most cases the same; almost comparable with the curriculum of the Senior Secondary Certificate in the Arab worlds. (See Adedeji: 1995)
- (e) **Products:** Most of the products of these schools are neither gainfully employed nor able to proceed for a post secondary education. Our findings reveal that over four thousand students are graduated annually from these institutions and also on annual basis they are

constantly distributed to the following post graduation engagements represented below in percentages: :



From the above, two opportunities for further studies are noticed, the first is diploma, including the diploma of the Lagos State University in Arabic and Islamic Studies and others are the diploma from the Northern Universities, where certificates of a few of the *ilmiyyah* institutions in Lagos are recognised, as well as institutions in the Arab world. In the second category, the degrees are

mainly from the Arab world, except in very rare cases when the candidates sat for school certificates and JAMB before gaining entrance into the Universities in Nigeria

Those included in the self-employment are the group of those who either have gone to establish their own schools along the line of those they have graduated from or those who start Quranic schools in their localities. The third category includes those involved in spiritual/traditional healing. Majority of these have deviated fully from their learning as they acquire additional skills from traditional healers who sometimes are votaries of indigenous traditional religion. These people also join societies of herbalists in order to survive. (Adetona: 2012). Those who operate as Muslim missionaries are usually better off, though they do not, in our opinion, occupy the esteemed positions of their counterparts in other religions especially in Lagos. Unfortunately, only a few of the graduates of these schools find positions in missionary groups.

Teachers employed in government schools are very few. The percentage of four (4) was boosted by the accommodating nature of the civilian administration of Alhaji Lateef Jakande that employed graduates of *ilmiyyah* schools as teachers of Islamic Religious Knowledge in primary schools. This small percentage is not only being currently threatened by the new requirement of National Certificate in Education for teaching in primary schools but the fact that over 85% of teachers in the category have retired from service. The category of those employed by private conventional schools are seriously exploited and used for other menial jobs after teaching Arabic/Islamic Religious Knowledge. They run errands for Heads of schools, serve as game teachers, bursars or even drivers in certain cases. Those employed by *ilmiyyah* schools need no further elucidation as the table above speaks clearly for them. They are those employed in an unpalatable working environment of their *alma mater* — where they cannot sincerely aspire to lay a befitting foundation for a salutary livelihood as the job is not usually promising. In an event that a proprietor dies, all staff may lose their jobs without benefit or become staff of one of the children and more embarrassing, they will have to accept the new proprietor's rules and regulation or face the music.

Those that have equal percentages of ten, further show the areas these people go in post graduation era of their studies. About 7% of these graduates also return to learn trade when eventually they cannot find a place in the society. The most disturbing however are those with no fixed profession which covers 10%. These include those who call themselves businessmen and women without fixed addresses, those involved in advance fee fraud in the name of being Muslim scholars *and*

those engaged in hard drugs. This is baffling as ten percent of a group of people is significant enough for planners to evolve workable plans to cater for them. The system of education bequeathed to Lagos and the entire Nigeria favoured the Christians fully, then it favours those who attend the schools founded by the Muslims but fashioned along the line of the western schools, while it distracts the society from recognising the products of the *`ilmiyyah* schools. In point of fact, these schools especially those founded before independence and those founded in the early independent period were meant to do *da'wah* (proselytisation) through education but with time, the impact of these schools were no longer positively felt neither in *da'wah* nor in the educational circle in Lagos.

Though, the efforts of the Lagos Muslims cannot be over emphasized towards educational emancipation of the *Ummah* from the pre-independence era. How much success has been achieved so far, especially with the realities on ground as well as the achievements of similar efforts by Muslims in other parts of the world? It is a known fact that colonialists impeded the advancement of Muslim Education all over the world and the Muslims world over resented the colonial form of education and they decided for a long time to remain traditional. However, based on the need of time, the change made by Saudi Arabia and its conservative wahhabi approach to education is apposite here as a lesson.

In 1745, Muhammad b. Abdul-Wahab - imposed his doctrines on the entire area now known as Saudi Arabia, in an alliance with Ibn Sa'ud, having been allied as a state through conquest by Ibn Sa'ud, the prince of Dariyyah, to whom Abdul Wahab had conceded political leadership.<sup>12</sup> From this period until as late as 1925, the leaders of this country had played down the need for involvement in some modern reforms, including major educational reforms, all on the pretence that they wanted to remain unpolluted and different from the colonialists in style and in contents. In 1925 however, under the auspices of a newly created directorate for education, a formal schooling system was introduced in Saudi Arabia, and secular subjects became part of the curriculum, replacing a curriculum that had consistently being based on purely religious motives. Though, there was still an element of conservatism at this time, the project was initially met with vehement opposition. It was not until 1959 that girls had access to public schools. Today, it is a known fact that the Saudi Arabian government, with the same Wahabbi posture, not only adopts

modern technology, but also accommodates people they hitherto would have nothing to do with. Yet, it now has a system of education that can withstand any one in the world and it is purely an Islamized form of education. How did they achieve this?

As late as the 1970s, the Muslim thinkers have started to realise that aping the West fully removes the values of the religion of Islam from all forms of Muslim education. They opine that sciences should be taught to the Muslims and that they should seek proofs and correlation for what is being learnt from the sources of Islamic information. In order to sensitize the Muslim world, that European form of education was a necessary evil. A Conference sponsored by the King Abdul Azeez University was held in Saudi Arabia between 31 March and 8 April 1977 with the theme "Basis for an Islamic Educational System". The communiqué of the conference attended by over three hundred and fifty scholars in varied disciplines all over the world goes *inter alia*:

The existing conditions in present day educational institutions in most Muslim countries do not truly reflect the Islamic ideal, and these institutions do not play their rightful role in the education of the younger generation in Islamic faith, thought and conduct, and there exists at present a regrettable dichotomy in education in the Muslim world; one system namely, religious education being completely divorced from the secular sciences, and secular education being equally divorced from religion, although such compartmentalization was contrary to the true Islamic concept of education and made it impossible for the products of either system to represent Islam as a comprehensive and integrated vision of life. (Adebayo: 2008).

A follow-up conference was jointly organised by Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan and King Abdul-Aziz University, Saudi Arabia. It was held at Islamabad, Pakistan between 15 and 20 March 1980 (in fact there were five in the series of the conferences). These conferences served as catalysts for change in Muslim education all over the world yet the chunk of the Muslim schools referred to here as *‘ilmiyyah* in Lagos and major Southwestern states of Nigeria have not changed.

The Muslim Organisations and private owners of schools in Lagos should have changed the focus of schools (both the western oriented and *‘ilmiyyah* schools) created by them towards the implementation of the resolutions of these conferences as done by numerous traditional and

*‘ilmiyyah* school owners all over the Muslim World (See Rosnani *et al*:2011). The *‘ilmiyyah* Schools' proprietors had advantages of utilizing their schools as models in this direction because they could easily read the resolutions of these conferences which the Saudi Arabian embassy as well as Embassies of other Arab countries made available to them. Instead, for egotistic reasons, they adopted the compartmentalization of religious education being completely divorced from the secular sciences, while the schools founded by the Muslim groups on the model of the western schools adopted the 'compartmentalization of secular education being equally divorced from religion' though they sometimes teach religion using secular methods. (Compare Bidmos: 2003)

While inexperience and probably egocentricity had inhibited the Muslims in Lagos from taking the advantage of the useful resolutions of the Muslim World Conferences on education, Muslims in other secular states and a few Nigerian states in the North, maximize the opportunity provided by the resolutions of the conferences on Muslim education. Two examples will be given here, one from the United Kingdom and the other from Nasarawa State. In the United Kingdom, at Retford, North Nottinghamshire, a model Muslim Boys College named Jamia al-Karam was established like the Lagos *‘Ilmiyyah* School with the model arising from the conferences earlier mentioned by a Muslim community in Retford. It has till date, the best facilities for sciences and laboratories that can compete with all first class equipments and above all, a conducive environment to live a complete way of life as a Muslim. The aim of the school is to develop the pupil's morality and spirituality so that he can achieve the best of his academic potential in a caring Islamic environment. It is a boarding school, which allows the students to live a communal Islamic life while studying. Every day, the morning assembly begins with the recitation of the Qur'an, recitation of *salawat* on the prophet and a short lecture. Canonical prayers are said in congregation, five times daily. The day also terminates with the recitation of the Qur'an after *Isha`* prayer. Students of the college take at the final year 8 GSCE (the UK equivalent of GCE/NECO) from the following subjects that are taught in the school: English Language, Arabic, Islamic Studies, Urdu, Mathematics, Information Technology, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English Literature and History. Since it had started presenting students for the unified examinations, no candidate had scored lesser than 87% in three core courses (of English, Mathematics and Information Technology) and all of them had passed all subjects above the average. The comment of Her Majesty, the Queen's OFSTED Inspectors as recorded

in the school records reads as follows: "You have come a long way in a short time." (Adetona:2011, compare with Adetona:2006)

It must be added that all over the world, especially in Europe and America where secular education prevails; there are a good number of Muslim schools. The Al- Iman school, Lafia, Nasarawa state is also fashioned after the above model and its products compete favourably with peers from all other schools-private or public in all Science courses. In Al Iman School, the *lingua franca* is Arabic except for English Language, where English is used as the means of learning the subject as it is the language of writing external examinations. Products of this college do not request for waivers and special consideration before being admitted into any higher Institution of learning (Aliyu:2009). Both Jamia al –Karam, Retford and Al-Iman, Lafia have their students graduating with conventional certificates, special Arabic Studies certificate for Jamia al Karam (and Higher Islamic Certificate for Al-Iman) and Certificates as *Huffaz* (memorisers of the Qur`an). While in Retford, all trained students are boys, Al-Iman trains both Boys and Girls. Arguably, the Al-Iman school, Lafia school is the leading producers of female Quranic memorisers in Nigeria, a skill they acquire concomitantly with formal Secondary school Education.

From the fore going, the *‘ilmiyyah* school system as it is currently constituted has no subsisting significant contributions to the educational development of Muslims in Lagos. It has to be refashioned in tune with the resolutions of the Muslim World Conferences earlier discussed. The annual output from this school system is momentous enough for the government of the state to be concerned about the future of the products and to avoid being alleged of neglecting this percentage of people, mainly Muslims especially that the system of Education they have opted for does not assure the products relevance in the mega city of Lagos. If Muslims in other parts of the world can adopt the resolutions made by leading Muslim scholars to effect meaningful results of their efforts in amending their educational curricula, there is nothing stopping Muslims in Lagos from changing their educational orientation in regard to the *‘ilmiyyah* School system towards achieving consequential goals.

### **3:0 Reactions of Muslims to Pentecostalism**

#### **3:1 Reactions through Songs and Music:**

Prior to fully blown activities of Pentecostalism in Christianity, evangelical songs had been used by mainly the indigenous churches to convert the Muslims, which in turn led to the Muslim groups also patronizing music as a tool of gauging conversion from Islam to Christianity.

In the seventies, churches in Lagos and the entire Yoruba land, upgraded the services of their choral groups beyond singing during services both in the church and on special occasions, to waxing of records as further means of evangelisation. The effects of this on the Lagos Muslims cannot be over emphasised as they were always participating in these lyrics consciously or otherwise. A good example of this, is the record waxed by the good women choir group of the C.A.C, Ibadan (Adetona:2009). For over two decades, the record still sells, bought by people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, in Lagos and the entire south-western Nigeria.

While the Lagos elites who mainly patronise the Night clubs, Hotels and Joints picked interest in the Juju and highlife music that usually propagate the Christian faith through Music, the market women, commercial drivers, garage boys and even the touts are the one who usually patronise the *sakara*, *Apala* and *Fuji* music. These musicians also popularise their music in open places, public playing grounds and community development centres. In fact it is on good record that all these forms of music more often than not metamorphosed to their present stage from *Were ajisari* music for waking up the fasting Muslims to participate in the early morning meal. (Abubakre:2004).

What really constituted the fact at this time was that the Muslims were at a great disadvantage from two fronts- the front of common musicians and that of the faith based musicians (those who really had gone beyond being choir groups at the church and really sang like conventional musicians). This continued until in the late 1970s when the Muslim Students' Society decided to respond to this by starting the "Sing-song" group of the MSS. The Lagos Area Unit named this group, the enlightenment group and because it also fetched money for the society through its activities, the Chairman Business Committee used to oversee its activities. In Lagos Area Unit, the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria, Teachers' Training College branch, Ikorodu Area Council started with the response by waxing a record led by its Islamic Studies teacher, Mr. Wahab Falowo. In the record, the Falowo team explained the meaning of Islam, the importance of Education and how Muslims are not to be seen as second-class citizens.



Furthermore, the Lagos State Area Unit of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria waxed so many records in defence of Islam and to propagate Islam. Between 1979 and 1984, when the MSS voice of Lagos was very strong, the then Chairman, Business Committee, Alhaji Abdullah Akinbode led this team. The team waxed over ten records. Abdullah Akinbode left the MSS and founded the voice of Islamic Ummah through which he continued to wax records to defend Islamic integrity. Beside Falowo and Akinbode, individuals and groups including Abdul Lateef Fagbayi Oloto, the *Ansar-ud-Deen* Youth choral group, the *Nawair-ud-Deen* Youth, YOUMBAS choral group among others contributed their quotas. In contemporary Lagos, those who believe that Music can be a functional tool for propagation opine that Hajj Wahab Falowo and Hajj Abdullah Akinbode used it to propagate Islam more than all Islamic choral groups put together, as they both did not mince words at any time to expose the vicious gimmick of the non-Muslims in their songs. These include the proper definition of who a Muslim is and what Islam stands for, the importance of Education, avoidance of brackish but deceitful invitations of bringing all problems to a certain mountain and a certain personality being specially anointed to solve problems as well as debunking purported claims of reversion from Islam (of Falowo) by his detractors. Lately, in early 1990s, the duo of Wasiu and Hafsat Sadiq among others also contributed. A critique of the latter group only reveals them primarily as entertainers with bias for Islam as the tool for entertainment. That notwithstanding, they occasionally send vital messages on Islam. The Islamic musical groups were recording stable success until a few radicalized Muslim groups who spoke aggressively against songs as anti-Islam emerged in Lagos (Adetona:2009) .

### **3:2 Emergence and growth of Pentecostalism**

The barrier created by the Muslim musical groups were finally broken by the radicalized Muslims described above, thus allowing the boosting of the propagation of Salvation by the fast growing Pentecostal Christian groups. The Pentecostal groups were recognized as waxing stronger for two reasons, namely:

- the Agenda of salvation for all and sundry including the elites by the prevailing Pentecostal Christian Group.
- the non-availability of Muslim groups that propounded the theory of salvation especially to the elites-such that could introduce break-time, breakfast and other short time fellowship.(Zeidan: 2003)

Frankly speaking, it must be noted that prior to this time, Prayer groups had been known in Lagos before colonialism and its consequent modernisation effect. Christianity became a famed religious tradition in Lagos, yet some Muslims and non-Muslims had on different occasions acknowledged the efficacy of Muslim prayers. Muslim and non-Muslim leaders alike had often employed the services of Muslim clerics to assist them in overcoming some difficulties using their spiritual powers but not proposing Islam to them (Solagberu: 2003). So also were many Alaslatu groups and some were actually well patronised. However, the sophistication of Christian evangelism by the fundamental Christian groups known as the Pentecostal and Charismatic groups in the early seventies with their characteristic claims to miraculous prowess reduced to the background, the various activities of these prayer groups, based on the two factors earlier mentioned as well as the continual weakling of the Muslim Choral group by the equally developing radical Muslim youth groups with no intention of receding the effects of the Pentecostal group on the generality of the Muslims. Various efforts were made to respond to the activities of the Pentecostal group but none yielded a noticeable effect until NASFAT emerged on Sunday, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 1995 when a group of young educated Muslims started a prayer meeting in the house of one of them, Abdul Lateef Olasupo, the number of those attending swell progressively over a short period. The group moved its prayer headquarters, first to the old secretariat mosque of the Lagos State government and later, due to the phenomenal increase in attendance, to the new secretariat mosque where it now meets every Sunday between 8am and 12 noon. The attendance here is usually in thousands and its nettings sometimes exceeded half a million Naira. Its annual Lailatul Qadr which is often held towards the end of the Muslim fasting period of Ramadan has been a remarkable spectacle to behold in the last couple of years. When the main bowl of the National Stadium could not contain the participants at the all-night event in the year 2000, the group moved to its open and undeveloped prayer land, NASFAT village, a wide expanse of land on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway. The nearly unmanageable number of participants in the 2001 edition with its attendant logistic and humanitarian fallout forced the society to decentralize the event in 2003 (Adetona: 2012). In addition to its regular and ceremonial prayer sessions, NASFAT also conducts monthly all-night supplications; Qur'anic lessons for business executives and others and provides formalized litanies which

are in printed form and on audio cassettes. Membership cuts across the social, economic and political strata of the society. We cannot talk of denominational affiliation here as it exists in Christianity, although attendees at the various prayer sessions may equally belong to other religious societies. The Missionaries are a collection of youthful and vastly educated individuals that are not necessarily graduates of Arabic and Islamic Studies. In fact the absence of curia hegemony in regard to the spiritual functionaries of the society ensures that any of the Missionaries could conduct the Sunday service in the absence of the Chief Missionary, who is frequently, if not regularly, invited by many of the other branches of the society. So, the leadership is not centred on an individual, but rather, one can talk of a "spiritual politburo" (Sanni:2004).

The Missionaries in NASFAT, as in other prayer movements, play the dual role of:

- teaching the congregation the general aspects of Islam through lectures and other information dissemination techniques and
- problem solving or healing through prayer ceremonies or devotional prescriptions which the members are required to carry out on their own.

In this regard, we can see that the possession of mysterious powers often considered an asset of the spiritual leaders can now be accessed by the common people when so intellectually or mentally conditioned. In other words, once a devotee can recite or perform the prescribed litanies, he becomes his own therapist. So we can talk of a spiritual rejuvenation in regard to NASFAT as a therapy through a guided leadership of a missionary authority as the legitimate procedure for the individual to access power and experiment with the truth. NASFAT, as well as other new Prayer groups are providing the Muslims response to the Pentecostal healing and evangelical technique of the Christian Missionary groups especially the new generational Pentecostal churches. The results of this in reversion of Muslims to Islam cannot be over emphasized. NASFAT is not alone in this veritable assignment, other groups in the same venture include: QUAREEB, NADWAT, IKHWAN, ISTIJABAH, ISMUF, HIZBULLAH among others. The entire Lagos Muslims recognise the efforts of these groups but a set of people are sincerely worried about the promotion of innovations, negligence of issues that are compulsory while giving prominence to controversial matters by the missionaries of some of these groups. I am of the high opinion that all these worries

can be overcome in no long time as such missionaries who have degrees in disciplines other than Islamic Studies and Arabic and are interested in Missionary works can enroll in the Lagos State University PGD in Islamic Studies programme, then proceed to MA and PhD in Islamic Studies programmes, as avenues to possessing the needed knowledge for non controversial information to members of their groups. The University will also partner with the Prayer groups in organising occasional courses whose effects will leave those worried with satisfaction on the competence of the missionaries. What however must be admitted is the fact that all the prayer groups are doing well but the NASFAT group has especially recorded many successes and is equally ready to face contemporary challenges

- ❖ We may also itemize the following as evidences of NASFAT's achievements:
- ❖ Weekly Asalat: Here recitation of a prayer book, which contains selected *dua* from the Holy Qur'an, prayers of the Prophet (pbh) and other forms of supplication.
- ❖ Economic Empowerment: the NASFAT secretariat by this programme seeks employment for unemployed Muslims from various companies using the connection of its members. Within this programme, it also gives soft loans to members who have been inducted on the floating of small scale industries. The Cooperative Society of the group also finances genuine Local Purchase Orders [LPOs] under this scheme.
- ❖ Fiqh session: The group also has a regular fiqh session where basic tenets of the Islamic faith are usually extensively discussed.
- ❖ Public Lectures: NASFAT organises public lectures at regular intervals. Members of its missionary group mostly handle this. It also invites guest lecturers from Institutions of learning from home and abroad in some cases.
- ❖ Quranic Tutorial Classes: This is organised mainly for professionals in the group with the task that they must learn the recitation of the Qur'an. It is on record that more than a thousand professionals had successfully learnt through this class, the correct recitation of the Qur'an with *tajwid* [science of correct recitation of the Qur'an].
- ❖ Children Classes: Various classes are usually organised for children in the recitation of the Qur'an, Hadith and inculcating the Islamic culture and value in them, especially during long vacations.
- ❖ Media Da'wah: NASFAT engages its Missionaries and other Imams on da'wah programmes in the media, especially on Radio and Television.

- ❖ Professional Group Meetings: NASFAT organises this to create meeting for members of the same profession and occupation to meet, network and collaborate on relevant professional issues for the progress of Islam.
- ❖ Zakat and Sadaqah Agency: NASFAT has a Zakat fund into which all eligible members pay. It is administered according to the Islamic injunctions on Zakat. A colleague and I are currently researching into this with the support of TETFUND Institutional Based Research Fund and our preliminary findings reveal that the Lagos based NASFAT AGENCY FOR ZAKAT AND SADAQAT (NAZAS) alone gathered and distributed 6, 635,700 in 2016 thus partnering with the government in poverty reduction and provision of affordable health care, scholarship and other forms of assistance to the poor. For being a beneficiary, membership of NASFAT is not a condition-precedent.

Apart from the achievements listed above, the growth of NASFAT in Lagos attests to the rapid development of Islam in post-independence Lagos. From just one location in Lagos for all its activities in the first five years of establishment [1995-2000] to forty five branches in 2006 and over a hundred branches and groups in 2017. (See also Adetona: 2012)

#### **4; 0 Insistence of Lagos Muslims on Islamic Personal Law:**

It has been well said at the introduction how the Muslims in Lagos had insisted on having the Shariah Courts for adjudication on matters of personal Status from the colonial era through various constitutional conferences during the Military era and up to 1999 (Gbadamosi:2001), when in some states of the Federation it became a political manifesto and how in a jiffy after the commencement of the 1999 political dispensation, twelve Northern states in Nigeria adopted full shariah, though not without casualties (Adetona:2002). This aspect of our research is deliberately included in this Inaugural lecture to show case that the Shariah matter is purely a Muslim affair and it can operate in any heterogeneous society. I find it a necessity to inform this gathering that Islamic legislation on personal matters is recognised in many countries of the world including the State of Israel and the courts that adjudicate on matters of Islamic personal issues are owned by the State. In spite of the hostility of the State of Israel to Islam, it still finds it necessary to cater for the needs of its citizens who are Muslims. Its academic institutions also organise World class conferences and meetings on issues affecting these people and their personal legislations. In 2005 for example, I was a participant at the 11th Annual Workshop of the Department of the Middle Eastern Studies, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, State of Israel which had its theme as: “Muslim Courts and Panels in non-Islamic States” . There were in attendance scholars

from academic institutions and judges of Muslim Courts and Panels from the State of Israel and from all other continents of the World.

#### 4:1 **Background to Lagos Shariah Panel:**

the return to civil rule in 1999 brought about a change in the demand of Lagos Muslims, consequent to some Northern States proceeding beyond the civil shari'ah and adopting the system wholly including its penal code, the Lagos Muslims, following the footsteps of their Oyo State counterparts instituted independent shari'ah panel under the auspices of the Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN) in the year 2000. A **panel** and not a **Court** was constituted to reflect that it was voluntarily put in place by the Muslims in need of it. The council for Shari'ah had earlier been formed on the request of youth, mainly activists of the National Council of Muslim Youth Organisations (NACOMYO) with the support of some willing elders to assist the states of the Nigerian federation where shari'ah has not been instituted in advocacy for it and to monitor the proper implementation of the system in those states where they are in force.

The panel sits at two venues-the central mosque of the Abesan Housing Estate and the 1004 central mosque in Victoria Island-and to date they are well patronised by various sets of Muslims ranging from those lettered in western education to the conservative anti-western education elements who voluntarily take their cases especially on personal matters to this panel for adjudication with the conviction that justice will be given to them by the panel. It is however certain that though, those who patronise the panel cut across all sections of the society but they all have in common, the will to surrender themselves to the shari'ah law. The panel bases its decisions primarily on the codified Maliki law (*madhhab*) and essentially adopting the principle of *talfiq* and *takhayyur*' (Doi: 1984) by using the views of other schools of thoughts when found necessary and useful.

The panel came into existence without any formal authority from the Lagos State government, as those who instituted it were afraid of presenting a bill to the State House of Assembly out of fears of it being turned down. The fears were genuinely borne out of the fact that both Oyo and Osun states Muslims had made similar attempts between December 1999 and early part of the year 2000. In the case of the Oyo Muslims, they visited the then executive governor of the state, Alhaj Lam Adesina and requested him to support the introduction of Islamic Law on personal status in the state, which he declined with impunity. In Osun State, however, the Muslims submitted a memorandum on the same demand to the State House of Assembly that also refused to respond to

it up to date, having not acknowledged the letter nor ever listed it for discussion.( Adetona:2005)

The foregoing instances led to the Lagos panel coming into existence without seeking approval either through the executive or the legislative arms of government. The force behind its establishment opines that positive contribution of the panel to the dispensation of justice in the state as well as freedom of association entrenched in the Nigerian Constitution, which allows people to converge on a place with a view to mutually resolving crises, will accord it a legitimate position in the nearest future. The panel's inauguration was made public and it was well attended by many Muslims. It attracted attention in the news media, with a view insinuating that the silence of the government was an act of being an accomplice in its institution. This led to the government making a "political statement about its legitimacy only once after inauguration and exercised caution thereafter by making no further comments-positive or negative." The panel in its two venues has adjudicated in a number of cases including those involving notable Muslim leaders who had submitted themselves for judgment without questions.

#### **4:2 Composition of the Panel**

The Lagos State Independent Shari'ah Panel (that sits at both Abesan Estate central mosque and 1004 Estate mosque') adjudicates on cases voluntarily brought to it through formal application on issues such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, will, contract, endowment, trust, gift, custody and maintenance of children and other personal matters where parties concerned are Muslims. The decisions of the panel are autonomously implemented especially on the conviction that those who have voluntarily brought themselves should be willing to take to the right counsels of the *qudat* (judges). The learned members of the panel (judges) who were selectively appointed by the Executive Council of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Lagos are adjudged not only to have possessed the academic prerequisite but also of virtuous characters which, they have displayed as active members of various Islamic groups for over the time. The judges of the panel from inception till date are four. They include: Muhammad Iskil Lawal, Tirimidhi Adisa Dairo and Ahdur Raheem Ahrned Sayi, the three of whom possess first degree in law (LL.B. (Hons.) Civil and shari'ah combined, as well as having been respectively called to Bar as solicitors and advocates of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Imam Sulaiman Ibrahim, who graduated as a first degree holder in shari'ah (LLB. Islamic Law) from Ummul Qura University, Makkah, is the fourth member of the

panel. None of them has been designated the leader but the role to give lead judgments is rotational amongst them (Adetona: 20005).

#### **4:3 Modus Operandi of the Independent Shari'ah Panel**

The modes of operation of the panel are similar to those of the conventional courts and sometimes, the panelists are observed to display excessive patience in hearing the cases brought before them. They interrogate parties logically and after every question, more often than not, reasonable responses leading to finding solutions to the issues at hand were given. The panel's proceedings are mostly conducted in an atmosphere devoid of strictures of technicalities-a method that can be regarded as another way of giving fair hearings to parties' concerned.

The members of the panel record proceedings individually, a summary of which, is read out one after another while delivering judgments. Some of the cases are heard by two and others by three members of the panel. There has been no occasion when a panelist solely heard a case. At the end of proceedings, each of the members of the panel reads out his judgment, to which other so far have always at the end agreed but with varied details. Observers are always allowed in to the mosque premises where the panel sits, with instructions to be calm and God-fearing so as not to interfere with the proceedings of the panel.

The learned members of the panel are usually consciously guided by the limit of their jurisdictions as well as the fact that there is no authority to issue judgments on issues beyond personal status and thus stay clear from litigations involving such areas. In a particular case, observers could have been seen to be difficult, a man applied to the court to direct that a *hadd* (major) punishment be inflicted upon him, having committed fornication. He emphasized to the panel that he earlier had repented but was of the opinion that until the *hadd* punishment was inflicted on him, he would still remain apprehensive of the tormenting punishment of the hereafter. The panel admonished the culprit but declined jurisdiction. The panel explained this in its judgment, which reads, inter alia, that '... such offences are only punished by Islamic authority and in Lagos State, the authority is un-Islamic, hence, entertaining criminal matters will only be an exercise in futility.

The above decisions to my mind makes three cogent statements among other interpretations that can be deduced:



1. that the panel has always been and will remain a forum to adjudicate among Muslim parties who voluntarily present themselves to it, without the intention of claiming to have the power of enforcing its judgments;
- ii. that primarily, the panel is established to adjudicate on matters affecting Islamic personal laws (and among the Muslims);
- iii. that in Lagos State where it operates, the laws of the state do not recognize the particular matter of fornication and others similar to it as constituting a matter of litigation especially, where parties involved freely consent to the act.

More significantly, the Lagos panel is well patronised by those who believe in it and its decisions (as earlier stated) are implemented without any need for force. It has so far recorded a very high level of compliance and an annual average of fifty cases since inception. (Selected Judgement, nd)

#### **4:4 An Assessment of the Role of the Independent Shari'ah Panel in the Dispensation of Justice in Lagos State**

It is an established fact that the shari'ah panel in Lagos State has been in existence for over a decade and a half and up to date, no litigation has been established against its existence in the state. This shows that tacitly, both the government and the people of the state have come to reckon with its existence. In assessing the panel, we investigated the comportment of the members sitting on the panel, views of those who should know and who are monitoring the activities of the panel as well as the duration taken in disposing cases brought before it.

So far, the members of the panel have displayed maturity; mastery and understanding of the tasks before them that there has been no time, when they have made pronouncement that can brew controversy. They have so far displayed sense of seriousness, diligence and dedication in the business of administration of justice. These, they display in their various judgments, a selection from which, a book has been published and presented to the public on February 5, 2005.

The demeanor of the panel is attested to in the foreword to the book dated January 7, 2005 by Auwalu Yadudu, a former Minister of justice and Professor of Law at the Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria in the following expression:

I must say that I have found these judgments to be soundly written by persons learned in Laws applicable in Nigeria and immensely qualified to adjudicate in disputes. The analyses of laws, consideration of social and political matters and the review of fact contained in these decisions and the personnel who have rendered them have, without doubt, portrayed a breadth and depth of knowledge of shari'ah principles, Nigerian law and procedure that can rival decisions of the higher bench in the Nigerian court system- both the shari'ah and the common law types. I can vouch that the judgments can stand judicial scrutiny at appellate levels. Although the decisions may have no legal standing within the Nigerian jurisprudence, not having been given by institutions, panels. or tribunals established by legal or constitutional means or and lacking in official patronage and recognition, I adjudge them to possess high persuasive and normative value. Surely, both students of law and practitioners will find them very instructive.(Selected Judgement:nd)

Also, in the preface by a then serving high court judge in Lagos State and now a Justice of the Court of Appeal (JCA), justice Habeeb A.O. Abiru, who emphasizes the fact that the desires of some Muslims in Lagos State is to have their cases adjudicated in the shari`ah court of law and that is why the panel has been voluntarily patronised. In his words:

It must be reiterated that the Independent Shari'ah Panel is a voluntary institution facilitated by the Lagos State Chapter of the Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria and the litigants come before it voluntarily and adhere to its judgments without the need for enforcement machineries. The activities of the panel some of which are being manifested by this publication underscore the fervent desire of Muslims in Lagos State to guide their activities according to the dictates of shari'ah. It is therefore imperative that the shari'ah panel be made part of the structures of the system for

the administration of justice in Lagos State to cater for this obvious need.(Selected Judgement:nd)

From the statements made by the two legal luminaries above, one discovers that in its past activities, the Lagos State Independent Shari'ah Panel has helped tremendously in the administration of justice in Lagos State in a way faster than any of the institutionalised courts in Lagos. It had spent at most, less than three months to dispose of the most difficult case before it, and the minimum of a day in adjudicating on matters. This affords those who presented themselves before it, the opportunity to have justice in good time in contrast to the prolonged period of time used in adjudicating on matters in conventional courts. The opinions also tacitly approve of the comportment of the members of the Panel.

The dynamics of the independent panel lies in the fact that so far, the judgment given by it, besides being adhered to, without any agent of enforcement, has neither attracted any opposition from known authorities of law-Islamic or civil-in Nigeria nor any litigation in any government court. These make apposite the observation of Auwalu Yadudu that the independent panel:

...has been able to run a judicial system which will, in my estimation, be the envy of both federal and state governments, judging by the efficiency of its work ethics and processes, the soundness of the decisions reached and the mediation roles it has employed to settle disputes that will, in other official courts, take ages and enormous state resources to resolve, if at all (Selected Judgement).

Another dynamic point in favour of the independent shari'ah panel is that despite the absence of official government support and formal recognition, indeed in the face of official negation through the ambivalent response of government to its existence and the lack of material resources such as library, offices and even panel rooms, the independent panel is still vibrant, this no doubt can only be attributed to the encouragement of the Muslim community in Lagos, the constituency that the panel is serving. In spite of the elusiveness of some influential Muslims, the majority of Muslims in Lagos hail the panel as well as its decisions on matters. Surprisingly, some of the *'ulama* (scholars of Islam) that were suspected to have been sponsored against the *shari'ah* panel at its inception, and who in their public lectures refer to those championing the panel as agents of some politicians with sinister motives, could not find any fault in the decisions of the panel. Instead as

confirmed by a few interviewed, they were able to learn the dynamics of the Islamic legal system in a multi-religious society through the activities of the panel. Also to the credit of the panel and a pointer to its credibility, which in turn will lead to its sustenance, is the fact that famous Islamic scholars and leaders of thought in Lagos had reasons to appear before the panel and had not, on the basis of their status rejected the decisions of the independent panels. These scholars included University professors, renowned Imams and public speakers. (Adetona:2005)

From uncertainty at the time of takeoff to confidence before the end of the third year of existence, the Independent Shari'ah Panel in Lagos has displayed that it can stand the test of time as an alternative means of justice in Lagos State as well as disposing cases with dispatch while counseling the parties on how to reconcile and it has up to date, after fifteen years of existence, not attracted controversy to itself as it is most unlikely to do at any time.

**Conclusion:** I bring this lecture to a close with a conviction that the extent to which colonialism retarded the progress of the Muslims in Lagos, which to my mind was only accidental as the means of educating the people by the colonial rulers was in contrast to the only means of education available then and common only among the Muslims. The Muslim efforts at closing the lacunae created by this to date have not been fully satisfactory. The efforts of the Muslims in standing up to halt conversion of Islamic votaries by all missionary efforts of none Muslim groups have started to yield positive effects for about three decades since the emergence of New Prayer Groups. It is left to the Muslims to make their faith easily understood to keep faithful undistracted by other groups. Proselytisation is like commerce which requires marketing strategies, so the Muslim groups should evolve attracting marketing skills to retain votaries of Islam within the mosque. The example of the operation of Independent Shariah Panel in Lagos showcases the fact that Muslims in Lagos are a peaceful set of people who strive to live their lives according to divine commands without breaking the laws of the land.

It is my candid opinion at this juncture, that the following recommendations will improve the conditions of the Muslims in Lagos and enhance harmonious co-existence between the Muslims and other citizens of the State:

- ❖ proprietors of Muslim conventional schools (such as Ansar-ud-Deen College and Anwar-ul-Islam College) and the *`ilmiyyah* schools should constitute a committee to study the reports of the two world conferences on Education as well as the operations of schools modeled after the reports that are already performing well to re evolve the curriculum, personnel and administration of their various schools for optimal results.
- ❖ the government of Lagos State should assist the schools especially the *`ilmiyyah* schools because of the number of students they graduate into the community annually. The government intervention in the re invention of the schools may be gradual and to no disadvantage of the proprietors
- ❖ the Muslim Prayer Groups should ensure the updating of the knowledge of their missionaries at intervals to be able to face the rivalry entailed in the field of evangelism.
- ❖ the Muslim groups should also ensure that trusted members are in charge of their welfare funds and encourage transparency.
- ❖ The other religious groups on the highway of Lagos-Ibadan express way should learn a lesson in feeling for others displayed by the NASFAT Prayer Group which decentralized the *laylat-ul-qadr* annual prayer meeting resulting from the nearly unmanageable number of participants in the 2001 edition with its attendant logistic and humanitarian fallout
- ❖ that the Lagos State government should objectively and consciously consider the Independent Shariah panel in Lagos as an alternative means to Justice dispensation in the class of arbitrators or in a class of its own as it has been proved that it accelerates the dispensation of justice in area covered by it in Lagos State for over fifteen years..
- ❖ that the non-Muslims in Lagos should see through the qualities of peaceful, non-confrontational, voluntary and for willing Muslims alone of the Independent Shariah Panel in Lagos, that all desires of Muslims in Mega cities like Lagos can never be for the negative impression of making every one, a Muslim (Islamization) but to satisfy the divine urge of the Muslims and the Muslims alone.

### **Appreciation:**

I start by appreciating my parents, the Late Hajj Mallam Hussain Akande Adetona and Hajia Sidiqah Aderoju Adunni Adetona for bringing me to life and for paying a special attention on me to excel. “And you both are (the) sources of my sparkling constellations like the stars in the sky#

so is love for you incumbent on me as well as my supplications for you after my canonical prayers” (Muhammad Higab). I also salute my siblings and their spouses- dead and alive for being worthy next of kins-Hajj Issa Alade, Mr. Ibrahim Alao, Mrs. Fausat Oluwatoyin Aworinde, (Late) Hajiya Sherifat Abike (well represented by her children), Hajiya Idayat Abeke and my younger brother, Abdul Ghanny Adisa Adetona. I thank all other relations, near and far especially, Mr. Sulayman Adetona “for keeping the chord strong”. I have benefitted a lot, from my teachers at LASU where I received my BA (Hons) and PhD (Islamic Thoughts). My MA was from the University of Ilorin because LASU, then in 1991, had not started post-Graduate programmes in Islamic Studies when I registered for MA. Interestingly, the University of Ilorin that now appeared as the ‘most peaceful and strike free’ public institution ran just one session of the MA class between 1991 and 1995 as a result of numerous disturbances leading to the closure of the University intermittently. It is my prayer that the Lagos State University will soon become the beloved of all eyes in the comity of universities as a result of its emerging conflict free strategies devoid of strikes and ill feelings where all operate as brethren and partners in progress. The most important personality in this regard is Professor Muhib Omolayo Opeloye who supervised both my BA long essay and PhD thesis. He also served as a real mentor to my colleagues and I, that any of us who fails to acknowledge his mentorship at an occasion like this is an ingrate. Next in this regard is the Professor at large of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies, Amidu Olalekan Sanni. Beside tutoring me to becoming an independent scholar, he also ensured that I participated in a number of International academic gatherings at no personal cost. It was my way of appreciating these two mentors that at the peak of my tutelage under them, I named my son in September 2003, Hamid Omolayo taking one name each from their official forenames. On no condition shall I forget your invaluable roles in the building of my academic career. I must also admit that the one session MA programme I undertook at Ilorin gave me the opportunity of relating with brilliant and leading scholars of Islamic Studies, whose contributions to the structure of my personality cannot be over emphasized. In this regard, the first mention must be made of Professor Yasir Anjola Quadri, who was not only my teacher, teachers’ teacher and supervisor but also a trainer and a counsellor par excellence. May Allah reward him abundantly for being a worthy father who condoned my excesses and instilled in me the needed quality to become an admirable academic. Others at Ilorin included the Late Professor Ade Dopamu and the very meticulous late Prof. Musa Ali Ajetunmbi (who was also the external examiner of my PhD thesis). I must not forget the Waziri and Imam of

Auchi, the revered Prof. Zakariyyah Idris-Oboh Oseni, who though I pupil to privately at Ilorin has encouraged me so much to remain in academic especially for the special tuition of the five agreeable days spent together at the Hayes Mansion in *San Jose*, California in January 2002. Also on this list is the Executive Secretary of JAMB, Professor Ishaq Olanrewaju Oloyede who was a prime example to me as his student at Ilorin. He gave me the opportunity of close academic interaction which served as measurement for my performance while still building my career. I learnt from him, the principle of honesty and contentment in all conditions as notable features of a scholar. At LASU, the outspokenness with which Prof.. Lakin Akintola taught me Islamic History in 1985 was the magic that retained me in Islamic Studies as my initial thought was just to spend the year in Islamic Studies before moving to 'a better course'. He would illustrate Islamic expansion with the aids of maps and dates with precision. Not his loud voice but his good command of the language of communication and the movement around the class that got me won over to stay with a new optimism that If a teacher of Islamic Studies can be as vocal as this, then I can struggle to be like him (*walillah al-hamd*). *Mutashakirin* Brother and don't give up the *aluta* in winning more discerning minds to the field with more attractions. Professor MO Raheemson has been my teacher from Ansar-ud-Deen High School, Surulere. A man who has influenced positively numerous students and I am certain, his every day joy includes the fact that he taught at Ansar-ud-Deen High School as his name, actions and reactions are always remembered at every forum of the Old Students Association. Prof. M A Muhibbu-Din, Late Prof. Olakunle Lawal, Prof. Siyan Oyeweso, Prof. A I Lawal, Prof. C.O Oshun and Prof. D F Aasju also left positive impressions on my academic life. Thank you all.

My first teacher in life, Al *marhum*, Shaykh Habeebullah Amoo Mahmoud was an embodiment of virtue. In the same vein, I salute my teacher, mentor and friend who taught me the Qur'an and all that I attained of traditional Islamic learning, Khalifah Hasbunnallah, Shaykh Muslim Babatunde Mahmoud(BA. Ed, MA Arabic), the Muqadam of Hasbunnallahu and his lieutanants are also as a matter of necessity appreciated, Imaam Dauda Lawal Alomimata, Shaykh Ahmad Orogbo and Imaam Noah Raji. The Baba Adinni of Lagos, Shaykh Abddul Hafiz Abou deserves a special mention here. Baba monitors my progress from the position of a Graduate Assistant in 1994 to becoming a Professor in 2013. He celebrated every elevation I had with gifts and prayers and counseled me to be patient when there were delays. Baba, you are a very rare mentor and I pray Allah rewards your kind gesture with a high grade abode in al-Jannat. In the same class with Baba

Adinni in my life are Baba, Prince Tajudeen Oluyole Olusi and Shaykh Mustapha Zughlul As-Sanusy (Hafizahumullahu jami<sup>‘</sup>an) for their love. My God-given friend and class-mate – Oyemachara, deserves a special place in this list. Avoiding the sentiment that made our eyes wet on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2017 when he gave the 57th Inaugural lecture as the first alumnus Inaugural lecturer of the University, I say, Prof. Danoye Oguntola-Laguda: you are a friend indeed. I also appreciate my long standing friends and allies: Sulayman Abiodun Kazeem, Ustadh Zikrullah Hassan, Prince Yahya Abiola Aileru, Prince Abdul Hakeem Kosoko, Mustapha Adebayo Bello, Ma<sup>‘</sup>ruf Tijani, Ma<sup>‘</sup>ruf Ajetunmobi, Sulayman Deji-Etiwe, Mallam Issa Bello, Muq. Zakariyyah Babakar, Hajj Sulayman Umar As-sudaany, Hajj Jami<sup>‘</sup> Kelani, Dr. Kudus Olayinka Amuni, Dr. Shaykh Luqman Jimoh (KWASU), Alhaj Abdul Lateef Abdul Azeez (Latson), Late Dr. Salih Ojo Sadiku Dr. Khayrat Sulayman, Hajia Sakinat Arimiya<sup>‘</sup>, Hajia Dhikrat Matesun-Oshodi, Dr. Salman Hakeem (Multiple Shaykh) and Dr. Ahmad Rufai Saheed (Ag. Dean of Education, Sokoto State University) among others. I appreciate all academics of the department of Religions and Peace Studies especially Dr. A O Johnson-Bashua (the only lady in the department) and also, the non-academic staff for their support. I recognize the zeal of my Ph.D students for bearing the rigour and thank Allah that today; three of them are already set for defence. Wherever you find yourself, I am certain you can individually raise up your head as a scholar in the academic world of Religions. These are Mallam Mubin Olatoye Raji (LASU) (who also made himself available to proof read the draft of this lecture), Fatimah Bunmi Adesope (FCE, Abeokuta) and Dhikrullah Adenigba (Al-Hikmah University). Sure, we all can see that “slow and steady win the race”. I also appreciate all members of the Faculty of Arts especially the *ar-Rashidun* brothers as well as everyone present in this hall. My ever subservient boys, Ismaila Agboola, Hakeem Badru (Ogbon) and my boy, Kazeem Kadiri (Kazo) are hereby openly acknowledged. May Allah pave your path to greatness and honour. I appreciate the efforts of Director, LASU Multimedia, Dr. Mrs. Abosede Amoo in making this presentation a pleasant one.

Back to the home front, the tripod that provides always, the background support not based on deceit, consists of three honourable ladies validly married with both <sup>‘</sup>*aqd* and *walimat-un-nikkah* without rancour but with the support of Allah and understanding of His injunctions, also find time to make this lecture just as they do to satisfy me in all endeavours. May Allah multiply His love for you-they are <sup>‘</sup>Asiyyah Iyabode, Wakilat Olamide and Ganiyat Aramide. These are ladies who do not belong only to my rooms and kitchens but also make efforts in life with assuring successes



that adding my names to theirs may make little difference wherever they find themselves. My kids, the gift of Allah from the above union- Mustapha Al-Mahbub, Rawdat-ul-Jannah, Hamidu Omolayo, Ridwanullah Ajao and Rayhannah Abebi (those absent are in school far from here) deserve my appreciation and special mention. I always cherish your companionship. In rounding up, I give praise to Allah in the end as I did when commencing, *Allahmdulillahi rabbil- calaamin*

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#### **DEDICATION**

**I dedicate this lecture to the memory of Abdullah-Sultan Omotoyosi Adetona  
(14 May, 1996- 1 July, 2013)**