

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

ISLAMIC REFORM IN GHANA: THE ROLES OF SELECTED
ISLAMIC SCHOLARS AND MOVEMENTS

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF MPhil FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS
DEGREE.**

OCTOBER, 2018

DECLARATION

I, Amin Bamba Muzzammil, declare that this thesis is the result of an original research I have conducted under the supervision of the lecturers of the Department for the Study of Religions mentioned below. It contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of another degree elsewhere, except for references to other works which have been duly acknowledged. I hold myself responsible for any errors, omissions, mistakes and misinterpretations which may be found in this study.

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DEDICATION

This work is first and foremost dedicated to the Almighty Allah for His countless Favors and abundant Mercies. Secondly, I dedicate it to my parents, Hajia Sa-ādah Tāhir and Shaykh Amin Bamba whose continued sacrifice, love and care led me to the path of success. I shall forever be grateful to them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my enormous gratitude goes to the Almighty Allah who granted me protection, guidance, knowledge, good health and insight throughout my life and this course in particular.

I also express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my supervisors, Hajj Mumuni Sulemana and Dr. Hussein Ibrahim both of the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, under whose incisive academic guidance and fruitful suggestions coupled with unremitting patience with my flaws brought this work to its successful completion. To my supervisors I say: You have prepared and modelled me well for future research and may the Almighty Allah bless you. I will forever benefit from the lessons of scholarship that you taught me. As my supervisors, you were a source of friendship and intellectual stimulation. You provided invaluable suggestions, positive criticisms, comments and guidance that have helped greatly in the production of this work.

I also acknowledge with gratitude, my indebtedness to my parents, Hajia Sa-ādah Tāhir and Shaykh Amin Bamba whose prayers and support meant more to me than words can ever express. May Allah grant them long life and have mercy on both of them. My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my dear wife, Sayyidā Mariam Ahmad Saeed, for her support, companionship, patience and encouragement. *Jazākīllāhu Khairan.*

Special thanks also go to my Uncle, Alhaji Tanko Abdullah whose encouragement and motivation inspired me to further my studies in this field. He supported me financially and gave me the needed advice. May the Almighty Allah bless and give back all that he has spent on me.

I am also grateful to my respondents most especially Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu for their co-operation and granting me permission to interview them. I really appreciate the time that they sacrificed for me.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my entire family for their love, support and care. To all my friends who have offered their encouragement and support in diverse ways, I appreciate all of you. Fellow students, administrative staff and all the lecturers of the Department for the Study of Religions from whom, I have learnt a great deal, I say am grateful for your contributions to my academic endeavors. May Allah bless you all.

ABSTRACT

This thesis, *Islamic Reform in Ghana: The roles of selected Islamic scholars and movements*, explored the concept of Islamic reform in Ghana through the analysis of the religious roles of Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu that aimed at curbing the challenges facing the Muslim *Ummah*. Specifically, the study examined the measures put in place by these selected *Ulamāh* (Islamic scholars) to help combat the underlining factors influencing the degeneration of the *Ummah* in order to meet the demands of time without compromising the fundamental values of Islam.

In order to achieve the set objectives of the thesis, the study adopted multi-faceted approaches to data collection through in-depth personal interviews with the selected *Ulamāh* and other Muslim individuals. Participant observation was also employed in studying some of the religious activities of the selected *Ulamāh*. The descriptive, analytical and interpreting methods were applied in describing, analyzing and interpreting the data collected.

The research also adopted the phenomenological, theological and historical approaches together with the theory of the millennial theology of reform as the methodologies and the theoretical framework for the study respectively. These approaches helped in investigating the teachings, practices, theological views on certain practices and the biographies of the selected *Ulamāh*.

At the end of the work, the findings revealed that, the concept of Islamic reform is not limited to only theological issues but instead all religious activities that help in the development of Islam and Muslims without compromising the core teachings of Islam. It was also revealed that reforms, in most cases, were characterized by violence such as the 1804 Sokoto Jihad in Nigeria. However, in the Ghanaian context the reforms were peaceful in nature though there were some confrontations and verbal polemics in some exceptional cases. Another finding is that, part of the *Ulamāhs*' religious activities in combating the contemporary challenges of the Muslim *Ummah* include counselling, scholarly engagements and also the promotion and establishment of institutions such as Arabic-English schools, library and counselling center.

The research, among other things, recommends that, the *Ulamāh* should carry out their reforms through intellectual means and not by imposition. They should derive their impetus from early peaceful reformers such as Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi. Also, the *Ulamāh* should pay more attention to the progress of Islam and not their respective leaning. They should identify themselves as Muslims and not by their respective doctrinal affiliation. Finally, the *Ulamāh* should accommodate divergent views in their reform process. They should not consider their views as authoritative and the only truth, but rather be democratic.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASWAJ:	Ahlus-Sunnah Wal- Jama'ah.
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer.
COMOG:	Coalition of Muslim Organizations, Ghana.
FFSS:	Firdaus Foundation for Social Services.
GES:	Ghana Education Service.
GIL:	Ghana Institute of Languages.
GMM:	Ghana Muslim Mission.
GMSA:	Ghana Muslim Students Association.
I.E.U	Islamic Education Unit.
<i>ICODEHS:</i>	Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services
IPRC:	Islamic Propagation and Research Centre.
IRRC:	Islamic Research and Reformation Centre
NGO:	Non- Governmental Organization.
O.P.D:	Out Patients Department.
S.A.W:	<i>Sallal-lāhu Alaihi Wasallam</i> (Peace and Blessings of Allah be Upon Him).
SCICR:	Supreme Council for Islamic Call and Research.

GLOSSARY OF FOREIGN WORDS USED IN THE WORK WITH THEIR MEANINGS

ARABIC WORDS

<i>Adab:</i>	Arabic literature.
<i>Adhān:</i>	The Islamic call to prayer
<i>Ahlul-Bayt:</i>	Members of the household (of the Prophet).
<i>Ahlul-Qur'ān:</i>	The people of the Qur'ān/Qur'ānsts.
<i>Ahlus-Sunnah:</i>	The embodiment/ Practitioners of the traditions of the Prophet.
<i>Aimah:</i>	Imāms.
<i>Ālim plur. Ulamāh:</i>	An Islamic scholar.
<i>Amānah:</i>	Trust.
<i>Aqīdah:</i>	Creed/doctrine.
<i>Arūd:</i>	Prosody.
<i>Ashābus- Suffa:</i>	People of the bench.
<i>Asr:</i>	Late afternoon prayers.
<i>Bid'a:</i>	Innovation/heresy/novelty.
<i>Dā'ee plur. Duāt:</i>	Preacher/ Muslim missionary.
<i>Da'wah:</i>	Missionary work.

<i>Daff:</i>	Simple hand drum.
<i>Dīn:</i>	Religion.
<i>Fajr:</i>	Dawn Prayers.
<i>Fāthiha:</i>	The Opener (first chapter of the Qur'ān).
<i>Faydah:</i>	Spiritual flood/an overflow of spiritual grace.
<i>Fiqh:</i>	Islamic jurisprudence.
<i>Ghār Hira:</i>	The Cave of Hira.
<i>Ghazwatul- Fikrey</i>	Ideological attack
<i>Hadāyah:</i>	Gifts.
<i>Hadhara:</i>	Civilization
<i>Hadith plur. Ahādith:</i>	The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).
<i>Hajj:</i>	Pilgrimage to Makkah.
<i>Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha:</i>	Minor and Major <i>Id</i> (Islamic festivals).
<i>Ilmul Hisāb:</i>	Mathematics.
<i>In Shaa Allah:</i>	If Allah wills.
<i>Isha:</i>	Evening Prayer.
<i>Islāh:</i>	Islamic Reform.

<i>Jamā'ah:</i>	Congregation.
<i>Jumu'ah:</i>	Friday congregational prayers.
<i>Kashf:</i>	Mystical unveiling.
<i>Khutbah:</i>	Sermon.
<i>Kuffār:</i>	Infidels/ Disbelievers.
<i>Laylatul Qadr:</i>	The night of power or decree.
<i>Lughah:</i>	Arabic language.
<i>Maghrib:</i>	Sunset Prayer.
<i>Mahalliyyah:</i>	Structured classroom method.
<i>Mahram:</i>	Unmarriageable Kin
<i>Majlis plur. Majālis:</i>	Study center or circle.
<i>Maslaha:</i>	Public Interests.
<i>Maulid:</i>	Celebration of the Prophet's birthday.
<i>Murids:</i>	Disciples/ Seekers.
<i>Muwahidūn:</i>	Unitarians.
<i>Nahwu:</i>	Arabic grammar.
<i>Niqāb:</i>	Face veil.

<i>Qadiriyyah:</i>	A Sufi path founded by Shaykh Abdul-Qādir Jilāni.
<i>Qur'ān:</i>	Holy book for Muslims.
<i>Quraysh:</i>	The dominant tribe in Makkah which the Prophet belongs.
<i>Ramadan:</i>	The ninth month of the Islamic Calendar.
<i>Sadaqah:</i>	Charity.
<i>Sahābah:</i>	Companions of the Prophet.
<i>Salafi:</i>	Followers of the path of the pious predecessors.
<i>Salat:</i>	Muslims prayers.
<i>Salātul Fātih:</i>	A salutation to the Prophet popularized by the Tijāniyyah adherents.
<i>Salātul Ibrahimiyah:</i>	A salutation to the Prophet given to the companions by the Prophet himself.
<i>Sālihūn:</i>	Righteous servants of Allah
<i>Sarf:</i>	Morphology.
<i>Shahādah:</i>	Testimony.
<i>Shari'ah:</i>	Islamic law.
<i>Shaykh</i> plur. <i>Shuyūkh:</i>	Muslim scholar/ learned person.
<i>Shirk:</i>	Associating partners with Allah.
<i>Shurafa/Sharīf:</i>	Descendants of the Prophet.

<i>Shūrah:</i>	Mutual Consultation.
<i>Sufi:</i>	Muslim Mystic.
<i>Sunnah:</i>	Traditions of the Prophet regarding his sayings, actions or tacit approval.
<i>Ta'alim:</i>	Teaching and Learning.
<i>Tafsīr:</i>	Commentary or the Exegeses of the Qur'ān.
<i>Tahajjud:</i>	Optional late night prayers.
<i>Tarbiyah:</i>	Holistic moral and ethical formation.
<i>Tarīqah plur. Turūq:</i>	Mystic path/ Spiritual path in Islam.
<i>Tasawwuf:</i>	Sufism.
<i>Tawassul:</i>	Intercessory prayer/ seeking closeness.
<i>Tawhīd:</i>	Belief in the Oneness of Allah.
<i>Tibbu:</i>	Spiritual healing.
<i>Tijāniyyah:</i>	Sufi path founded by Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni.
<i>Ummah:</i>	Community.
<i>Usūl:</i>	Fundamentals.
<i>Wazifa:</i>	Daily recitation of the Tijāniyyah litanies.

<i>Wilāyah:</i>	Sainthood.
<i>Zāhid:</i>	An ascetic.
<i>Zakāt:</i>	Obligatory Alms in Islam.
<i>Zikr:</i>	Remembrance of Allah/ Praises.
<i>Zuhr:</i>	Noon Prayers.

HAUSA WORDS

<i>Ad-Du'a:</i>	Funeral prayers organized for dead persons.
<i>Sakawa:</i>	Internet Fraud.
<i>Makaranta:</i>	Qur'ānic school.
<i>Akwashi Rawa:</i>	Let's dance.
<i>Mallam:</i>	Teacher/ scholar.
<i>Zongo:</i>	Segregated Muslim quarters/ Strangers quarters.
<i>Makarantan allo:</i>	School of tabloid or slate.
<i>Makarantan Ilmi:</i>	School of books/ law school.
<i>Yan Faila (Fayda):</i>	Members of grace or flood
<i>Munkeri Faila:</i>	Those who combine some views or theological orientation of the Sufi and the Salafis.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

5.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is about the roles of the *Ulamāh* (Islamic scholars) in Islamic reform in Ghana. The concept of *Islāh* (Islamic reform) has gone through scholarly and religious discourses with different interpretations from diverse individuals depending on the context in which it is used. Muzaffar Chandra, for instance, opines that, Islamic reform deals with the sort of determined or assiduous efforts towards re-establishing good Islamic values, and practices, as well as imparting the totality of Islamic ethos and social order based on the Qur’ān and the Sunnah,¹ into the lives of Muslims regardless of their geographical location or ideological differences.² Cheryl Benard on the other hand is of the view that, the current endeavor to reform Islam chiefly depends on orthodox practices that the non-Muslims criticise and see them to be of no relevance in modern times.³

Convincingly, the term *Islāh* (Islamic Reform) is used largely in Islamic discourse to mean restoring the original form by making changes for the better. In other words, to bring into a better state or improvements through changes or by removing faults or abuse.⁴ Islamic reform, in the context of this thesis, refers to promoting an ideal Islamic orientation and

¹ The word Sunnah in Arabic means a way or path be it good or bad. The scholars of Hadith view Sunnah as a general name that entails the totality of what has been related from the Prophet ranging from his speech/sayings, actions, approvals and his moral attributes.

² Chandra Muzaffar, "Malaysia: Islamic Resurgence and the Question of Development," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 1, no. 1 (1986): 57-75.

³ Cheryl Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam, Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2003), 49.

⁴ Mohamed Abubakr Al-Musleh, "Al-Ghazālī as an Islamic Reformer (*Muslih*): An Evaluative Study of the Attempts of the Imam Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī at Islamic Reform (*Islāh*)." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Theology & Religion, School of Historical Studies, The University of Birmingham, 2007. 31.

the upsurge of Islamic consciousness within the Muslim society through the roles or activities of the *Ulamāh* (scholars) in the form of *Da'wah* (missionary work).

The attempt to create an ideal Islamic environment through peaceful means is the core principle upon which the Muslim *Ummah* (Community) is built. The Qur'ān (3:110) depicts the Muslim *Ummah* as the best community ever raised on the surface of the earth, because it enjoins what is right and forbids what is wrong.

Ibrahim Abu-Rabi asserts that, the present era is one of intellectual and religious creativity in Islamic history.⁵ This claim is not different from the Ghanaian context. This is because there has been significant changes for some time now in the Ghanaian Muslim experiences through Muslim movements such as the Tijāniyyah and the Salafi movements.⁶

The Qur'ān (12:108) enjoins upon its adherents to convey the message of Islam across the length and breadth of the world. It is in light of this that Muslim intellectuals shoulder this responsibility of conveying the message through intellectual discourses given in seminars, symposia, public lectures, and publications. The aim is to revive and rejuvenate the Islamic ethos. The manifestation of this revitalization can be seen in Muslims especially those within the secular spheres. They are influenced by these Islamic reforms based on the grounds of imitating the Prophet in every aspect of their lives. This is because the Qur'ān (33:21) encourages all those who believe in Allah and the Last Day to live lives that are in conformity with the conduct of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). Buttressing this claim, Chandra argues that Muslims, who are influenced by this Islamic principles, demonstrate

⁵ Abu-Rabi' Ibrahim M., "Islamic resurgence and the 'problematic of tradition' in the modern Arab world: The contemporary academic debate," *Islamic Studies* 34, no. 1 (1995): 43-66.

⁶ Yunus Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Ghana* (Stockholm: Sodertorn University, 2013), 8.

some traits such as growing of beards, segregating of the sexes, the use of Qur'ānic phrase or terminologies like *Inshaa Allaah* (if Allah wills) in their daily conversations, among others as emulating the exemplary conduct of the Prophet and his predecessors.⁷ Despite this progress, Muslims in Ghana are still faced with challenges.

It is against this background that this research is conducted to investigate among many others the reforms put in place by the *Ulamāh* (Islamic scholars) to address the challenges facing the Muslim *Ummah* which hinder the progress of ideal Islamic society in Ghana.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Islam is the second largest religion in Ghana with a population of 4,345,723 representing 17.6 percent of Ghana's population.⁸

Within the last two decades, the Muslim community has experienced tremendous progress in all spheres of life including a paradigm shift from the conservative traditionalists' way of reform⁹ to a reformist traditionalists orientation.¹⁰ The roles played by the *Ulamāh* (Islamic scholars) in this direction cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately,

⁷ Chandra Muzaffar, "Malaysia: Islamic Resurgence and the Question of Development," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 1, no. 1 (1986): 57-75.

⁸ Ghana Statistical Service- 2010 Population & Housing Census: Summary Report of final Results. May, 2012, 40.

⁹ Conservative traditionalists according to Cheryl Benard (2003:4) are of the view that, Islamic law and traditions should be strictly followed without any reservations, even if they are incompatible with modern day's values. Hence, they fully detest change or reform. They again see the need for those in authority to help in facilitating and implementing these principles. Even so, they do not use or advocate violence.

¹⁰ Reformist traditionalists according to Cheryl Benard (2003:5-6) are of the view that, for Islam to continue to remain enticing and pleasing to people of all ages, it has to be ready to admit "some concessions in the literal application of orthodoxy" that are perceived dubious. They deliberate on reforms, but are very cautious in effecting change since they do not want to lose the Islamic values and principles, but instead, to conserve these Islamic principles. Nonetheless, both conservative traditionalist and reformist traditionalist as argued by Bernard derive their guidance from the Islamic sources namely, the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, Islamic laws, *Fatwas* (A legal ruling or a formal pronouncement on a doctrinal or legal matter by an Islamic scholar or a group of scholars), and the religious opinions of highly recognized scholars. The point of divergence is that, the reformist traditionalist seeks to be creative by critically reexamining the established principles in order to develop a new and systematic alternative interpretations.

notwithstanding this reformist traditionalist's way of reform, the Muslim *Ummah* is still confronted with a lot of challenges. However, the Qur'ān (11:17) informed us that, no nation will be destroyed if its people carry out reform activities. These reform activities are carried by the *Ulamāh* as the Prophet is reported to have said that, Allah will raise at the end of every Century a person who will renew this religion of Islam.¹¹ This is primarily what stimulated the researcher's ardent desire to critically investigate and document the religious activities of these selected *Ulamāh*, and the roles played by them in the process of Islamic reform through the promotion of Islamic principles. Their successes in addressing the challenges confronting the Muslim *Ummah* in order to reshape the mentality of the youth is also worth investigating. This will enhance the peaceful atmosphere Ghanaians are currently enjoying.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central research question to guide this study is:

What are the contemporary challenges confronting the Muslim *Ummah* in Ghana?

The following are sub-questions to help answer the question above.

- a. What roles do the selected *Ulamāh* play in addressing contemporary challenges of the Muslim *Ummah*?
- b. How do the selected *Ulamāh* (scholars) perceive the dynamics of reform among the different religious groups?
- c. To what extent is the reform of the selected *Ulamāh* contributing to peaceful co-existence in the development of Islam in Ghana?

¹¹ Sunan Abu Dawood Vol. 4, Book of Trials and Fierce Battles, Hadith 4278.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and the objectives of the study are to:

- a. Gather and analyse the views of the selected *Ulamāh* on the subject matter under discussion.
- b. Analyse the concept of Islamic reform in Ghana
- c. Give a biographical data of the selected *Ulamāh*.
- d. Highlight the religious activities of these *Ulamāh* in the development of Islam in Ghana.
- e. Outline their responses to extremism in Islamic reform.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The scope of this study is limited to the religious activities and reform roles played by Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, and Shaykh Amin Bonsu, in addressing the challenges confronting the Muslim *Ummah* in Ghana. These *Ulamāh* (Islamic scholars) have been chosen based on their demonstration of high academic achievement or merit and outstanding scholarship. Unlike other Islamic scholars, the style of these scholars is very unique in that they portray exemplary characters and exemplary leadership devoid of insults and castigation of other Islamic orientations as well as other religious groups in the course of their religious activities. In addition, these scholars are chosen because of their religious activities within the Muslim community and beyond. As a result, the researcher provides elaborative biographies of these selected *Ulamāh* and their religious activities that are aimed at promoting Islam and Muslims as well.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Methodology primarily has to do with the approaches that are used in a research to attain outcomes or results. This study made use of the phenomenological, theological and historical approaches to the study of religion.

1.5.1 PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

According to Richard Boateng, “Phenomenology describes the meaning of one or several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon.” He further asserts that, “Phenomenologists seek to answer the question, what are the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experiences of this phenomenon by an individual or by many individuals.”¹² Within the academic study of Religions, James L. Cox opines that, it is only the phenomenology that provides a distinguished methodology by justifying its claim of being a field of study that stands on its own or being independent.¹³ Clive Erricker supports this assertion of James with the view that, phenomenology is completely unique from other disciplines. As a result, it “originated as an attempt to construct a coherent methodology for the study of religion.”¹⁴ For Cox, phenomenology provides us with a method through which we get to know or investigate the way we acquaint ourselves with reality.¹⁵ The phenomenological approach is adopted through its related primary concepts, *Epoche* and *Eidetic*. *Epoche* is what Erricker refers to as “bracketing out”¹⁶ whereas Cox refers to it as

¹² Richard Boateng, *Research made Easy*, (Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 155.

¹³ James L. Cox, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion Key Figures, Formative Influences and Subsequent Debates*, (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), 4.

¹⁴ Clive Erricker, *Phenomenological Approaches* in Peter Connolly, *Approaches to the study of Religions*, (London: New York House Typography, 2004), 75.

¹⁵ James L. Cox, *Expressing the Sacred, An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1996), 15.

¹⁶ Erricker, *Phenomenological Approaches*, 77.

“disconnecting” “Bracketing”¹⁷ or observing “restraint”¹⁸ means that, any presuppositions, assumptions, and judgments should be suspended in the course of the study. Thus, objectivity should be the guiding principle.

Epoche was used by the researcher in this study. It made the researcher do away all the previous notions about the activities of the selected *Ulamāh* in order to have an objective and true manifestation of what was studied. Also, the use of *Epoche* aided in getting the views of the interviewees.

Eidetic on the other hand, deals with a situation by which the researcher observes only the essential structure or meaning of the phenomenon.¹⁹ These two concepts are used because, they help the researcher report the real state of the affairs as uncovered by the phenomenon of the world.²⁰ As a result, the researcher did away with any preconceived ideas or notions about the selected *Ulamāh*. In furtherance, this method is used because as stated by Cox, it begins from the researcher, the subject and then shift from the person into an unbiased description which nothing can be predicted.²¹

The research under the phenomenological approach employed the concept of *Eidetic*. Therefore the researcher observed certain activities such as the open forum session of Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and what transpired in the counselling and Islamic library in order to have a first-hand information from objective perspectives.

¹⁷ Cox, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion*, 20.

¹⁸ Cox, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion*, 121.

¹⁹ Cox, *Expressing the Sacred*, 19.

²⁰ Cox, *Expressing the Sacred*, 15.

²¹ Cox, *Expressing the Sacred*, 18.

1.5.2 THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

The theological approach has to do with matters pertaining to God or deity. This can be in the form of a myth, a philosophy, or even a dogma. The central focus of theology largely has to do with doctrines and other activities that arise from faith and how they are interpreted.²² This approach was useful because it helped the researcher analyse Islamic reform and other theological issues using the two primary sources of Islam, Qur'ān and Hadith literature. The approach was also used in chapter four to analyze the religious activities of the *Ulamāh*.

1.5.3 HISTORICAL APPROACH

This approach helped the researcher to link the present to the past. This approach is used especially in Chapters two and three where the researcher traced briefly the origins of Islam in Ghana and also the biographies of the selected *Ulamāh* (scholars) respectively.

1.6 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection refers to obtaining relevant information regarding the major issues of the hypothesis or hypotheses of the study for purposes of demonstrating whether or not they are true.²³ The study employed qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Consequently, data from both the primary and the secondary sources are used for this research. Primary data was generated by the researcher who is accountable for the study. Therefore, the collection of data, its analysis or interpretations and reporting of results are

²² Frank Whaling, *Theological Approaches* in Peter Connolly, *Approaches to the Study of Religion*, (London: York House Typographic Ltd, 2004), 228- 229.

²³ Obiola C. Nwana, *Introduction to Educational Research*, (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Plc, 2005), 79.

done by the researcher.²⁴ Primary sources in this study include Interviews and participant observation. According to Osuala,²⁵ the main advantage of primary data is that, it helps the researcher to get the exact information needed.

1.6.1 INTERVIEWS

Interview schemes were conducted to seek information for the research since it is one of the effective methods of data collection. Conducting of interviews is what formed the core for the primary source of data collection in the study. As a result, an interview guide was structured to guide the researcher fall within the context of the information needed for the purpose of the study. However, the interview guide was semi-structured because it helped the researcher explore further into the phenomenon under study. The researcher had in-depth interviews with the selected *Ulamāh* and through that, the researcher gathered the information needed especially information regarding their lives, family, education and their religious engagements.

The researcher also interviewed some Muslim individuals; Shaykh Abdul-Mumin Dalwu was for instance interviewed to ascertain whether indeed it was based on theological reasons that Shaykh Abubakar left Fathhul-Mubeen. Idriss Abdul- Karim, a Clinical Psychologist was also interviewed to ascertain the Islamic ethics and measures introduced by Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital to curtail the challenges faced by Muslims in health care delivery. Abdul-Hamid Umar, Secretary of Islamic Propagation and Research Centre. (IPRC) was interviewed to know the impact and the role played by

²⁴ Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research*, (UK: Polity Press, 2000), 183.

²⁵ Esogwa C. Osuala, *Introduction to Research Methodology*, 3rd Ed, (Onitsha: Africana-First Publishers Limited, 2001), 137-138.

the Islamic library and the counselling centre. This helped in getting data from many sources.

1.6.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation was also used to gather the data. In this method of data collection, the researcher participated in the religious activities of the *Ulamāh* such as the preaching sessions of Shaykh Amin Bonsu both in Cape Coast University and his Mosque at Dome, Accra. Equally, the researcher observed and participated in the open forum sessions of Shaykh Nuhu Jihad at Kejetia (Kumasi Central Market) where he uses both the Qur'ān and Bible to persuade and convince people. The challenge of this open forum was that, there was no strict segregation of the sexes.

The researcher played the role of a participant observer at the same time taking relevant notes to enable him gather the needed information from the field. This helped the researcher to have first-hand information of the activities of the selected *Ulamāh* in order to describe the phenomenon under study without prejudice.

Secondary data according to Norman Blaikie “are raw data that have already been collected by someone else”²⁶ Regarding the secondary sources, I depended on published and unpublished materials, textbooks, and journal articles on the subject area under study.

1.7 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Sarantakos,²⁷ the theoretical framework provides guidelines upon which the actual research is built, which in essence makes the research rich and pluralistic. Blaikie

²⁶ Blaikie, *Designing Social Research*, 183.

²⁷ Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 2nd Ed, (New York: Palgrave Publishers Ltd, 1993), 47

also asserts that, theory “provides explanations by establishing connections between the subject of interest and other phenomena.”²⁸ In the light of the above, this study is hinged on two theories: the Millennial Theology of Reform/ Theory of Mahdism and Theory of Common Sense.

1.7.1 THE MILLENNIAL THEOLOGY OF REFORM/THEORY OF MAHDISM

This theory, according to Ahmed Mohammed Kani, indicates that there will be the appearance of a reformer in every century to revive the Islamic faith after a period of moral decadence, social disorder, heresy or unorthodox opinions and innovations in the Islamic religion.²⁹ This is in accordance with the Prophetic tradition as reported by Abu Hurayrah which says, “Verily Allah will send for this *Ummah* (community) at the end of every century one who will renew the *Dīn* (religion) for Him.”³⁰ In spite of the fact that it cannot authoritatively be said that the selected *Ulamāh* are the promised reformers, since there is no clear cut qualities of these “Century” reformers, nevertheless, this theory serves as a guiding principle to help establish basically two main points. Firstly, the irrefutable degeneration of the Muslim *Ummah*, and secondly, most Muslim reformers emerged under this millennial theory.

1.7.2 THEORY OF COMMON SENSE

The Theory of Common Sense posits that taking into account the ability of human beings to think, reflect, reason and analyze issues logically and coherently, it is required of them to have leaders whose authority and orders are highly upheld and obeyed. These orders,

²⁸ Blaikie, *Designing Social Research*, 141.

²⁹ Ahmed Mohammed Kani, *The Intellectual Origin of Islamic Jihad in Nigeria*, (London: Al-Hoda, 1988), 79.

³⁰ Sunan Abū Dawūd Vol.4, Book of Battles (Kitab Al- Malahim), Hadith 4291.

among others, include promoting what is right, avoiding what is wrong and establishing peaceful coexistence among members.³¹ In other words, there should be the principle of leadership and fellowship in any well-organised generation. This theory is affirmed in Qur'ān (4:59) which exhorts believers to believe in Allah, the Messenger and those in authority among them. The theory, in essence, fits the selected *Ulamāh* and their religious activities because, in most cases, they serve as religious leaders within the communities they find themselves and beyond. Their orders are widely respected and accepted especially when members of the community happen to share the same doctrinal line or persuasion as the *Ālim* (Islamic scholar).

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is “a synthesis of available resources and materials with a strong relation to the topic in question, accompanied by a description and a critical evaluation and comparative analysis of each work.”³² According to Blaikie,³³ literature review shows the link between the current study and existing relevant knowledge, so as to help find possible answers to the research questions or hypotheses. Nwana³⁴ is also of the view that, literature review empowers the researcher to clearly demarcate the problem so that it can be described to others without any difficulties. Various studies and works have been done on Islamic reform taking into consideration the activities carried out by some Muslim individuals in diverse ways. The works that are reviewed by the researcher have been

³¹ Osman B. Bari, *A comprehensive History of Muslims and Religion in Ghana* Vol 1, (Accra: Dezine Focus Printing and Publications co, 2009), 5-6.

³² Boateng, *Research made Easy*, 39.

³³ Blaikie, *Designing Social Research*, 23-24

³⁴ Nwana, *Introduction to Educational Research*, 31.

categorized into two thematic areas; namely, works on the development of Islam in Ghana, and works on Islamic reform in the development of Islam.

1.8.1 MATERIALS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN GHANA:

One of the works on the development of Islam is that of Peter B. Clarke.³⁵ He highlighted the historical development of Islam with particular reference to some West African states. He traced Islam's first contacts to West Africa to the 8th Century,³⁶ even though he further asserted that most historical accounts dated it to the 7th Century through the expeditions of the Arab conqueror- Uqbah b. Nafi, who led his forces from Qayrawayn into southern Morocco, and eventually into the Western Sahara and the Western Sudan.³⁷ The subsequent Islamization was made through the Trans Saharan trade³⁸ and also by the activities of Muslim Merchants largely of Berber stock.³⁹ The author further highlighted some reform movements such as the Almoravids, which under the leadership of Abdullah b. Yasin in the 11th century, took up the task of purifying Islam.⁴⁰ The reform carried out by Abdullah b. Yasin provided the grounds for the peaceful process of Islamic reform in contemporary times. He further elaborated on the peaceful Islamization process in the 19th century through the activities of some renowned and influential scholars such as Sidi Abdallah, Shaykh Sidiyya al-Kabir, Muhammad al-Hafiz and Shaykh Ma' al-Aynayn who made Islam in that period a "stronger intellectual, political, economic, social and religious force in the south-western Sahara and beyond."⁴¹ He further traced the development of

³⁵ Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1982)

³⁶ Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 1.

³⁷ Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 8.

³⁸ Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 8.

³⁹ Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 10.

⁴⁰ Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 13.

⁴¹ Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 153-154.

Islam in ancient Ghana, Mali, Songhay and modern West African states. The author's accounts on the development of Islam in the Hausa States (Kano, Katsina, Zaria and Gobir) enhances the current study tremendously since Hausa brand of Islam contributed significantly to the development of Islam in Ghana. Taking Ghana into perspective, he posits that Ghana (specifically the Asantes) was among the first and foremost people in the forest zone to have contacts with Islam. He further asserts that these early Muslims first arrived in Kumasi as migrants who came from the Gonja, Mamprusi, Dagbon, Niger region, Hausa land and from North Africa for the purposes of trade and evangelism.⁴² These Muslim migrants later served as advisers to the chiefs and carried out literate work which helped in shaping the Asante Kingdom. This literature is of immense relevance because it has helped the researcher to have a fair idea of the development of Islam in Ghana and the transitional stages that it underwent. In addition, it has helped the researcher to understand the militant reform processes carried out by the early Muslim reformers like Abdullah ibn Yasin, Sulayman Bal, Alfa Karamoko, Malik Sey, Shaykh Uthman Dan Fodio, al- Hajj Umar b. Said Tall, among others.

In his contributing to the development of Islam in West Africa, Mervyn Hiskett⁴³ in his work *The Development of Islam in West Africa* discussed various ways through which some leaders of ancient empires such as Mali and Songhay contributed to the spread of Islam. He did extensive studies of the activities of the *Shurafa*⁴⁴ and the *Toronkawa*⁴⁵ to the

⁴² Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 175.

⁴³ Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1984)

⁴⁴ The descendant of the Prophet and his family members.

⁴⁵ The Toronkawa/Torodbe according to Hiskett (1984) were originally slaves and cattle rearing Fulani who distinguished themselves by becoming Muslims. They were also those responsible for the Islamic reform movements that took place in 12th century in Senegambia. Most importantly they live by the profession of Islamic scholarship. Page 52-53.

development of Islamic scholarship in sub-Saharan Africa. He stressed the reform efforts carried out by these individuals, citing the example of the famous North African scholar, al-Maghili who is said to have come from the *Shurafa*.⁴⁶ He further explained that, the *Shurafa* were naturally venerated throughout the Islamic world. This clerical group gained recognition and veneration through scholarship. The *Shurafa* were also gifted with powers of healing, divination, interpreting dreams and also providing medicine, charms and amulets.⁴⁷ Despite the fact that these activities did not correlate with the modern *Ulamāh*, nonetheless, they give an overview to comprehend and appreciate the generational intellectual changes within the Muslim *Ummah* (Community). He further elaborated on the educational system adopted by the *Toronkawa* and the *Shurafa*. This was the traditional Islamic system of education of which the foundation was the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. He asserted that the basic educational system began with what is known in Hausa as *Makarantan allo* (school of tabloid or slate). Here, the students are made to learn the Arabic alphabets after which, they are taught the recitation of the Qur'ān. The advanced level which is also known in Hausa as *Makarantan ilmi* (school of books/ jurisprudence) served the purpose of students who wanted to become real Islamic scholars in diverse fields. As a result, they studied subjects such as *Tafsīr* (commentary of the Qur'ān) *Hadith* (Prophetic sayings or traditions), and *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence).⁴⁸ The author also dedicated a chapter to a discussion on how Islam spread to the Volta Basin states such as Gonja, Dagbon, Mamprugu (modern Ghana) and northern Mossi (Burkina Faso). He further discussed how Islam got to the Ashanti Kingdom, attributing it to trade and the services

⁴⁶ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 54.

⁴⁷ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 55.

⁴⁸ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 55.

rendered to the kingdom by the Muslim clerics. This information is very relevant to the researcher in addressing issues of Islamic reform in Ghana. The aim of this work of Hiskett is not geared towards the activities of reformers and that's what this study intends to do.

Adu Boahen's work, *Topics in West African History*⁴⁹ is very relevant for this study. The author discussed some Muslim chiefs who during their reign brought Muslim clerics to reform Islam. These chiefs include Mohammed Askia the Great of Songhay, and Mansa Musa of Mali. Adu Boahen outlined the achievements made by these personalities to the development of Islam. He in furtherance presented the qualities exhibited by these early reformers. These qualities among others included, the administration of justice impartially, being friendly and generous in nature.⁵⁰ In spite of the fact that this work of Adu Boahen served as a reference material for this study, nonetheless, the *Ulamāh* in Ghana vary from that of Mali and Songhay. The approaches used by these early reformers in their reform activities also varied from that of Ghanaian scholars. The author further elaborated on the general history of some states and kingdoms of northern Ghana and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso). He asserted that the Mole-Dagbani states such as the Mamprusi, Mossi and Dagbon were among the first established kingdoms in Ghana.⁵¹ Though this does not directly reflect on the current study, it yet serves as a good resource material in assisting to understand the origins of Islam in Ghana.

Closely related to the work above, is that of Nehemia Levtzion's⁵² *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*. The author explained how Islam got to Northern States/kingdoms such as

⁴⁹ Adu Boahen, *Topics in West African History*, (London: Longman Group Limited, 1966)

⁵⁰ Boahen, *Topics in West African History*, 17.

⁵¹ Boahen, *Topics in West African History*, 53.

⁵² Nehemia Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968)

Gonja, Dagbon, and Mamprusi. He examined the roles played by some Muslim chiefs in the spread of Islam. For instance, He argued that, Naa Atabia was the first chief in Mamprugu to appoint an *Imām*⁵³ in his kingdom in the late 17th Century. It was also in his reign that the Muslims got settled in Gambaga.⁵⁴ This facilitated the spread of Islam within Gambaga, Nalerigu and surrounding communities in Mamprugu. He further explained how some chiefs served as obstacles to the development of Islam. He cited for example the *Nayiri* (the Mamprusi paramount chief) who left Gambaga because he could not withstand the interference of the *Imām* in the performance of some of the traditional practices that he (the *Imām*) saw to be in conflict with Islam. The *Nayiri* (the Mamprusi paramount chief) of Gambaga and many other chiefs who were in opposition to Islam, as asserted by Levtzion, preferred to live separately from the Muslims.⁵⁵

In the same vein, Osman B. Bari's⁵⁶ work, *A Comprehensive History of Muslims and Religion in Ghana* espouses on the historical antecedents in the development of Islam with particular reference to Ghana. In his insightful exposition, he elaborated on various contributions of the Muslim *Ummah* towards the foundation and development of the Ghanaian society. He further expounded on the concept of Islamic leadership with particular reference to the conception of leadership by the major doctrinal groups in Ghana namely, Sunni, Ahmadiyyah and the Shi'ah. In relation to the advent and development of Islam in Ghana, he attributed the Islamization of Ghanaians particularly Dagbon into two channels or waves. The first was the introduction of Islam from the northwest regions by

⁵³ The one that leads the Muslims in their ritual prayers and other Islamically related activities.

⁵⁴ Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 129.

⁵⁵ Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 129.

⁵⁶ Osman B. Bari, *A comprehensive History of Muslims and Religion in Ghana* Vol 1, (Accra: Dezine Focus Printing and Publications co, 2009)

the Wangara Muslims who were of Mande in origin and the second wave was by the Hausa speaking people through the northeast. These two groups, he recounted, promoted the spread of Islam and its consolidation among the indigenous people.⁵⁷ Elucidating on Islam among the northern ethnic groups, Bari buttresses the point that, Islam had indeed transformed the various societies in the Northern Ghana. He made references to the early stages when these Muslims migrant scholars acted as teachers, secretaries to the chiefs, and as pioneer traders. They also brought along with them artistic architectural skills and the science of Arabic calligraphy.⁵⁸ This assertion is very important to this research as it tried to identify the activities of the *Ulamāh* in modern times, even though he considered them general in their activities. This study carefully selected some of these *Ulamāh* and highlights their activities in the propagation of Islam in Ghana.

Nathan Samwini⁵⁹ highlighted the historical overview of Islam and its impact on Ghana. He outlined the educational influences of Islam in the 19th Century Ghana to include literacy in Arabic, Islamic sciences and Qur'ān. He further emphasized the presence of about ten (10) Qur'ānic and Arabic schools in Greater Accra Region by 1950.⁶⁰ The author also outlined the development and impact of *Sufi*⁶¹ Brotherhoods such as the Tijāniyyah and the Qadiriyyah on the Muslims in Ghana. This part of his work has to some extent similarities with this study. Nonetheless, this study is different in the sense that his work generally analysed the impact of the Brotherhoods and the other doctrinal groups. This

⁵⁷ Bari, *A comprehensive History of Muslims*, 123.

⁵⁸ Bari, *A comprehensive History of Muslims*, 152.

⁵⁹ Nathan Samwini I, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana since 1950 :Its Effects upon Muslims and Muslim-Christian Relations*, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006)

⁶⁰ Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana*, 59.

⁶¹ Sufism is a mystical dimension of Islam which deals with the purification of the soul and refinement of the hearts.

current study looked at the activities of the *Ulamāh* within these doctrinal groups. According to Samwini, the Sufi Brotherhoods laid a very good foundation for both spiritual and political development. This was made feasible through the establishment of Muslim sections known as *Zongos*. These Brotherhoods and the established Muslim quarters, afforded the participation of the Muslim *Ummah* through nurturing them to shoulder both spiritual and political responsibilities. He alluded to the formation of the Muslim Association Party in the 1940s to be the result of the earlier religious associations which were characterized by the Brotherhoods and the established Muslim communities.⁶² He further gave a vivid picture of the theological and ideological principles of the three dominant doctrinal orientations in Ghana namely, Ahlus Sunnah Wal-Jamā'ah (ASWAJ), Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission and the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood. He brought to light the negative aspects of the socio-religious activities of these doctrinal groups on their fellow Muslims and non-Muslims as well. These include physical attacks and verbal attacks, and condemnation through public preaching, among others. The efforts made by individuals, leaders, and organizations in curtailing these inter and intra religious tension were also highlighted. This work served as useful material as the researcher attempts to examine the ideological and theological orientations that influenced the activities of the *Ulamāh* in their reform process.

⁶² Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana*, 74.

1.8.2 MATERIALS ON ISLAMIC REFORM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM:

As far as this aspect of review is concerned, Montgomery Watt⁶³ makes relevant contributions as he examined the political, intellectual and religious background of the great reformer, theologian, mystic thinker, philosopher and a legal scholar in the Muslim world by name Abu Hamid al- Ghazali. Watt described him as a young passionate man who was associated with the movement of religious revival.⁶⁴ He states that al- Ghazali was unique in his reforms because since his youthful age, he attempted to learn and understand all the doctrinal groups and religious movements that he had contacts with. He finally came to the conclusion that adherence to one particular religion or the other is dependent on environmental factors. He wondered whether they could be “a natural religion prior to these environmental influences.”⁶⁵ He noted that al- Ghazali’s reform was in line with the needs of the time. For instance, in his book, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences (Ihyāu Ulūm al-Dīn)*, he suggested that there was some kind of decadence in the Islamic religious sciences such as the wide spread of heretic innovations and *Taqīd* (accepting an opinion without proof) that needed to be reformed.⁶⁶ This literature is relevant to this study in the sense that, it serves as a reference material in trying to analyse the theological activities of the *Ulamāh*.

On his part, Ahmed Mohammed Kani⁶⁷ examined the reforms of the 19th Century scholar Shaykh Usman Dan Fodio who established a government guided by the Qur’ān and the

⁶³ Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali*, (Chicago: ABC International Group, 2002)

⁶⁴ Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali*, 56.

⁶⁵ Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali*, 47-48.

⁶⁶ Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali*, 56-57.

⁶⁷ Ahmed Mohammed Kani, *The Intellectual Origin of Islamic Jihad in Nigeria*, (London: Al-Hoda, 1988)

Sunnah. The Shaykh, he noted, spent about thirty years of his life peacefully reforming Islam through teaching, preaching and writing.⁶⁸ However, his later life was characterised by military campaigns which led to the establishment of the Sokoto *Caliphate* in 1809. He also recounted the educational background of the Shaykh which influenced his reforms. Kani made a critical analysis of the literary work of the Shaykh of which he noted were about one hundred and covered economics, politics and social issues.⁶⁹ Concerning the issue of the Mahdi, he made well-substantiated assertions by indicating that, there are two main doctrinal views. For the Shi'ah, Mahdism is central to their faith, whereas with the Sunnis, it is considered peripheral. In Sunni Islam, the Mahdi is a reformer who is expected at the end of every century to revive the religion of Islam.⁷⁰ The review of this work of Kani is very significant to this study since it provides the researcher with valuable insights in analysing the literary works of of the selected *Ulamāh*.

Idriss Abdul-Razak's work on *Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi: A Muslim leader, a teacher, a poet and a social commentator of his time*⁷¹ is a good reference material for this study. He researched extensively into the activities of Alhaj Umar, a central figure of Islamic reform in Ghana. He historically presented the life of Alhaj Umar both in Nigeria and Ghana respectively, by tracing his ancestral home and his educational background which shaped the process of his reformation. Among other things, he focused greatly on the religious activities of Alhaj Umar with emphasis on his process of reform through his teaching and educational tours. Despite the religious engagements of Alhaj Umar, Idriss argued that, he

⁶⁸ Kani, *The Intellectual Origin of Islamic Jihad*, 9-10.

⁶⁹ Kani, *The Intellectual Origin of Islamic Jihad*, 47.

⁷⁰ Kani, *The Intellectual Origin of Islamic Jihad*, 78.

⁷¹ Idriss Abdul-Razak, "Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi: A Muslim Leader, a Teacher, a Poet and a Social Commentator of his time", Unpublished Thesis Submitted to the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon, 1996.

was not left out when it came to national issues. This is because his write-ups were mainly “on the social and political events which took place during his time.”⁷² Again, he discussed some of the literary works of Alhaj Umar by analysing the content, and the messages he disseminated to his followers and the general Muslim *Ummah*. In any case, the work of Idriss is of great relevance to this study when it illustrates the kind of reforms used by early Muslim scholars, even though he presented us with general information as against investigating the activities of the *Ulamāh*.

Hussein Iddris Ibrahim⁷³ makes well substantiated assertions to the difficulty in determining who the *Ulamāh* are. Hence, it is contextual or subjective. He maintained that, a person may be called an *Ālim*⁷⁴ because the person perhaps is an Islamic instructor, leading Muslims in their daily prayers, or even be a diviner who makes charm and amulets for people through the manipulation of the spirit forces.⁷⁵ He further elaborated on how the *Ulamāh* acquire their knowledge and how they render their services to the Muslims. Hussein narrowed the definition of an *Ālim* to the context of his research to mean any cleric who possess spiritual gifts through which he is able to heal and influence human affairs either positively or negatively. This type of scholars, as he asserted, are both revered and feared.⁷⁶ He dedicated chapter four of the thesis to analysing the Islamic theological basis of the practices of these types of Islamic clerics, because some of them as he stated, use traditional tools like cowry shells, beaks of birds while others use the services of *Jinn* in

⁷² Abdul-Razak, “Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi”, 130

⁷³ Hussein Iddris Ibrahim, “The Afa in Dagbon”, Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, 1999.

⁷⁴ Singular form of the Arabic term *Ulamāh* which means an Islamic scholar, a cleric or a learned person.

⁷⁵ Ibrahim, “The Afa in Dagbon”, 21.

⁷⁶ Ibrahim, “The Afa in Dagbon”, 21.

providing spiritual assistance.⁷⁷ The review of this work is very significant to the study in the sense that, it provides the needed information in understanding the different types of *Ulamāh* and the varied transformational roles played by each category of *Ulamāh* within the Muslim community. This study is slightly different because the researcher is considering *Ulamāh* based on those who are revivalist or *Du'at* (Muslim missionaries) and possess the Islamic Knowledge based on the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, without having any influence when it comes to spirituality.

Another work relevant to this study is, *Preaching in Muslim Communities in Ghana: Mandate, Challenges and Prospects* by Hussein Idriss Ibrahim.⁷⁸ This work is a masterpiece on issues relating to preaching in Ghana. He carefully discussed some of the principles and guidelines stipulated by the Islamic religion in carrying out reforms through preaching which among others include the respect for the views of other people.⁷⁹ He identified the types and modes of preaching as an activity of the *Ulamāh* to include preaching in electronic media, Qur'ān- Bible preaching, and outreach preaching. On occasional basis, he identified preaching during the two major festivals of the Muslims (*Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha*), during marriages, funerals and also during the month of Ramadan.⁸⁰ He also highlighted how the various doctrinal groups in Ghana carry out their reform work by analysing the content and the methodology used by these *Ulamāh*. He argued that, by this method, they also restrict the Islamic principles based on their doctrinal

⁷⁷ Hussein Iddris Ibrahim, "The Afa in Dagbon", 135.

⁷⁸ Hussein Iddris Ibrahim, "Preaching in Muslim Communities in Ghana: Mandate, Challenges and Prospects." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, 2013.

⁷⁹ Ibrahim, "Preaching in Muslim Communities in Ghana", 70.

⁸⁰ Ibrahim, "Preaching in Muslim Communities in Ghana", 101-102.

orientations.⁸¹ This work of Hussein presents some of the activities carried out by the *Ulamāh* even though there is no direct relationship with this current study. This study will therefore fill the gap of the *Ulamāh* in their activities as missionaries and reformers.

Yunus Dumbe's⁸² *Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Ghana* is a very valuable reference literature to this study. It highlights modern trends of reform. He noted that modern Islamic reform (Wahhabism)⁸³ was started by Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab.⁸⁴ Dumbe further maintained that Islamic revivalism in Ghana was made possible as a result of the diplomatic relations existing between Ghana and the Islamic and Arab countries. This was facilitated through Arabic literacy and higher Islamic learning.⁸⁵ Particular attention of Dumbe's work is based on reform or revivalism that took place within the doctrinal groups in Ghana and the transnational governmental religious and political institutions like the Libyan World Islamic Call Society.

All things considered, the above mentioned authors presented us with some insightful and valuable information on the historical development of Islam and the attempt made by the *Ulamāh* to reform Islam. These works, despite the fact that some of them do not directly relate to this study, provide this study with useful references. It needs to be stated that the indirect references to the activities of the *Ulamāh* in the reviewed literatures create the need for this study in order to fill in the gaps.

⁸¹ Ibrahim, "Preaching in Muslim Communities in Ghana", 135.

⁸² Yunus Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Ghana*, (Stockholm: Sodertorn University, 2013).

⁸³ It is an 18th century puritanical brand of Islam and religious ideology that was championed by the revolution of Shaykh Muhammad bn Abdul Wahhab.

⁸⁴ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 14.

⁸⁵ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 17.

1.9 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Notwithstanding the fact that the study did not take into account the religious activities of the female scholars in Islamic reform in Ghana, the researcher encountered many limitations in carrying out this study. Some respondents were reluctant to respond to the interview of the researcher whereas others were unwilling to disclose certain vital information needed for the research. In one case, a member refused to be interviewed after he came for a counselling session. However, the research put much effort in explaining and convincing them to understand that it was purely for academic purposes. These hindrances did not affect the study however.

Another challenge was that due to the busy nature of the selected *Ulamāh*, the researcher encountered some difficulties before meeting them for interviews. In some cases, scheduled appointments with the *Ulamāh* prove unsuccessful. This therefore made it difficult in some cases for the researcher to get the needed information on time.

1.10 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is of diverse importance because academically, it adds to the existing sources of information on Islamic reform. It also provides additional information for further research on related subjects. Furthermore, the study contributes to the on-going discussion on reforms, because there are constant calls on reformers to be very logical, persuasive and peaceful in their reform strategies, especially with those who have different orientations as theirs. Finally, the study helps to appreciate the activities and contributions of the selected *Ulamāh* in the development of Islam and Muslims in Ghana.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

The study is structured into five chapters. The first chapter discussed the general introduction of the research which consists of the background, statement of the problem, aims and objectives, research questions, theoretical framework, methodology, scope of the study, literature review, limitations of the study, and the relevance of the study.

Chapter two looks at the concept of Islamic reform in Ghana. This chapter gives a description of Ghana, its location and religious composition. It briefly looks at the origins of Islam in Ghana. The chapter also helps in identifying the conditions that necessitated Islamic reform in Ghana as well as some pioneer reformers.

Chapter three focused on the biographies of the selected *Ulamāh*; Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu. The theological approach was employed in this chapter to analyse the views of Shaykh Abubakar on certain practices of the Tijāniyyah in Ghana.

Chapter four dwells on the analysis of the data collected from the field. The discussion was centered largely on the analysis of the contemporary challenges confronting the Muslim *Ummah* and the interventions put in place by the selected *Ulamāh* in addressing these challenges.

Chapter five is the conclusion and it deals with the summary of the work, major findings, recommendations and suggestions for further studies based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

ISLAMIC REFORM IN GHANA

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a brief description of the area of study: its location, people, and religious composition. The chapter also addresses the origins of Islam in Ghana. Other issues outlined in the chapter include the contribution of the two dominant religious groups (Tijāniyyah and Ahlus-Sunnah) towards reform in Ghana through *Da'wah* (missionary work). The chapter also looks at the contributions of some pioneer scholars on Islamic reform in Ghana with reference to Alhaji Umar of Kete-Krachi, and Afa Yusuf Ajura of Tamale.

2.1 LOCATION OF GHANA AND ITS PEOPLE

Ghana is located in the West African sub-region. It is the 8th largest country among the 16 nations in the sub- region. That notwithstanding, it is also the second most populated country in West Africa after Nigeria. Ghana has an area of 238,540 square kilometers with a population of approximately 20.99 million as estimated in 2004⁸⁶ and 24,658,823 as of 26th September 2010.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Roger S. Gocking, *The history of Ghana*, (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 1.

⁸⁷ Ghana Statistical Service- 2010 Population & Housing Census: Summary Report of final Results. May, 2012, 21.

2.2 RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION

With regards to religious affiliation, about 71.2%, of the Ghanaian population are Christians representing 17,546,837.⁸⁸ Muslims on the other hand, constitute 17.6 % of Ghana's population, representing 4,345,723. Northern region is home to the largest number of Muslims, numbering 1,486,937. Ashanti region being the second populated Muslim Region with a Muslim population of 728,741. Greater Accra region follows with a Muslim population of 475,497.⁸⁹ Adherents of African Indigenous Practitioners represent 5.2% of Ghana's population which equates to 1,270,272. Other religions such as Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism represent 0.8% which equates to 193,914.⁹⁰

There is a controversy regarding the Muslim population in Ghana. This started way back in 2002 when the report of the 2000 Housing and Population Census was released. The Coalition of Muslim Organizations, Ghana (COMOG) was one of the groups that contested the credibility of the report. They (COMOG) and many other concerned Muslims thought that the report did not truly reflect the number of Muslims in the country. For them, the results were deliberately manipulated to the disadvantage of Muslims.⁹¹ This seemingly biased recurrent nature of the population Census report was sympathetically echoed by

⁸⁸ The breakdowns are: 13.1% (3,230,996) are Catholics, 18.4% (4,534,178) are Protestants, Pentecostal/Charismatic represent 28.3% (6,980,792), and other Christians make up 11.4 % (2,800,871). (Ghana Statistical Service)

⁸⁹ The remaining regions are Brong Ahafo with a Muslim population of 393,908, followed by Upper East and Upper West region with a Muslim Population of 283,188 and 267,741 respectively. Next to them is Western region and Central region with a Muslim population of 222,351 and 190,719 respectively. The rest are Eastern region and Volta region with a Muslim population of 175,579 and 121,062 respectively. (Ghana Statistical Service).

⁹⁰ Ghana Statistical Service- 2010 Population & Housing Census: Summary Report of final Results. May, 2012, 40.

⁹¹ Mohammad Saani Ibrahim, "The Decline of Sufism in West Africa: Some factors contributing to the Political and Social Ascendancy of Wahhābist Islam in Northern Ghana." Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 2011, 14. (See also Bari, 2009:721)

Holger Weiss regarding previous Censuses conducted during the colonial period. Reference can be made to the 1931 Population Census where the colonial administrators reported that they only counted the ‘true’ Muslims. However, in real Islamic sense, there is nothing like “true” Muslim or “untrue” Muslim. Either one is a Muslim or not. In addition to that, the contradiction and disproportionateness in the figures of the 1911 and 1921 Censuses revealed that, the figures were fabricated.⁹²

The argument put forth by these Muslim advocates was that, majority of Muslims in Ghana are found in the northern parts of the country. Other Muslims are dispersed in various parts of the country, mostly in communities known as *Zangos*⁹³ (Segregated Muslim quarters).⁹⁴ So notwithstanding the fact that, Islam accepts limited polygyny as an exception and not a rule (Qur’ān 4: 3), majority if not all northern Muslims succumb to plural marriages. In addition to that, the northern sector is known for its fervent commitment to agriculture. As a result, there is constant demand for labour, and one of the easiest and accessible ways of labour considering the communalistic nature of the north is through procreation. In effect, all these factors helped in the increment of the Muslim population.⁹⁵ From a broader perspective, however, we can say that whether the Muslim population has been underestimated or not, they form the second largest-religious group in Ghana.

⁹² Holger Weiss, *Between Accommodation and Revivalism: Muslims, the State, and Society in Ghana from the Precolonial to the Postcolonial Era*, (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 2008), 221.

⁹³ *Zango* basically means a temporal settlement or camp that were established by traders particularly, the Hausa traders on their trade routes. Currently, the word *Zango* is used to mean an isolated Muslim settlement within or outside a city, a town, or even a village. In the Ghanaian context, the word *Zango* is used to mean Muslim dominated community or people that are influenced by Islam regardless of their ethnic background. (Holger 2008, 247-248). See also Levtzion, 1968:23.

⁹⁴ Gocking, *The history of Ghana*, 11.

⁹⁵ Ibrahim, “The Decline of Sufism,” 15-16.

2.3 ORIGINS OF ISLAM

Islam began in Arabia as a reform movement in a sense that prior to the advent of Islam in Arabia, the condition of the Arabs was characterised with anarchy and ignorance in terms of their religious, political, and social life. As a result, ideal morality had fallen to a low ebb. There was the practice of polytheism, unrestrained social vices such as gambling, usury, drunkenness, adultery and fornication, plurality of husbands and wives, women considered as sex objects, among others. On the other hand, the good cultural conditions of the pre-Islamic Arabs such as hospitality to their guests and eloquence of the tongue in poetry among others cannot be erased in the annals of history.

Theologically, Islam is as ancient as mankind on earth. However, historically, it started in the 7th Century in the year 610CE after Muhammad's (S.A.W) first encounter with Jibril (Archangel Gabriel). According to Adil Salahi,⁹⁶ since childhood, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) disliked the worship of idols which was the main spirituality or religious orientation of the time. As a result, there was a wide gap between him and the Quraysh. Nonetheless, this did not serve as an obstacle from obtaining respect and praises from the people of Makkah as a result of the good character he exhibited. This rift as stated by Salahi, was perhaps the reason behind his total seclusion from the people of Makkah. But Philip Hitti is of the view that, it was rather the economic independence he gained through his engagement with Khadijah that afforded him leisure for mediation and reflection in a cave outside Makkah called *Ghār Hirā* (the cave of Hira).⁹⁷ Muhammad (S.A.W) stayed in this cave for several days and nights. He only came home when his provisions were

⁹⁶ Adil Salahi, *Muhammad: Man and Prophet*, (Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation, 2010), 64.

⁹⁷ Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, (Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1970), 112.

exhausted.⁹⁸ It was during this stay which was characterised by worship, contemplation and reflection that Jibril appeared commanding him to read. This marked the beginning of his revelation and the genesis of Islam. This night of encounter is known as *laylat-ul-Qadr* (the Night of Power) which happened in the year 610 CE.⁹⁹

After this encounter with Jibril (Archangel Gabriel), he began to spread the message of Islam secretly to his close relations and friends for a period of three years before he openly reached to the people of Arabia for a period of thirteen (13) years in Makkah and ten (10) years in Madinah.¹⁰⁰ Following his demise in 632 CE, the Rightly Guided Caliphs¹⁰¹ took up the responsibility of disseminating the message of Islam to many parts of the world. During the reign of Abu Bakr (632-634 CE), he was able to expand Islam from the Arabian peninsula to Palestine. Islam impressively continued to expand under the leadership of Umar (634 – 644CE) to include places such as Damascus in Syria, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Asia Minor, Persia (Iran), Egypt and finally to some parts of North Africa.¹⁰²

2.4 ORIGINS OF ISLAM IN GHANA

Islam had its contacts with modern day Ghana (then Gold Coast) in the 11th and 12th Centuries, largely through socio-economic activities of Muslim traders, or more specifically through the trans-Saharan trade. The interactions between these Muslim traders tremendously helped in the spread of the Islamic faith not only to Ghana but also

⁹⁸ Salahi, *Muhammad: Man and Prophet*, 64.

⁹⁹ Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 112.

¹⁰⁰ Salem Foad, *Life of the Prophet Muhammad*, (Nizamuddin: Goodword Books, 2010), 17.

¹⁰¹ They are the first four companions of the Prophet who succeeded him after his demise. However, they are not considered within the Muslim world as Prophets or fulfilling the Prophetic mission since Qur'an 33:40 considers Muhammad to be the last and the seal of the Prophets. They are; Abu Bakar (632 - 661), Umar Ibn Khattab (634 - 644), Uthman Ibn Affan (644 - 656), and Ali Ibn Abu Talib (656 - 661). Their period of rulership is considered as the golden age of Islam. (Clarke, 1984)

¹⁰² Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 7-8.

to other West African states and even beyond. However, the presence of the Muslims was felt in the latter part of the 14th Century and the beginning of the 15th Century. Accordingly, by the 16th Century to the 18th Centuries,¹⁰³ Muslims had moved to the southern and coastal regions such as the Ashanti territories and the Gold Coast colony where they rendered valuable services such as providing magico- religious services as well as being teachers and secretaries to the chiefs.¹⁰⁴

The expansion and the spread of the Islamic faith to the people of Ghana (then Gold Coast) was made possible through several channels which included trade and commerce, conquests or expeditions of Mande speaking Muslims (Wangara), recruitment of Muslim security personnel from the neighbouring West African countries by the colonial masters, and also migration of Muslims from the West African sub-region. It was subsequently intensified through the revival activities of the scholars and the contacts of Ghanaian Muslims with other Muslims during Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah).¹⁰⁵

Islam in Ghana during its early phase was restricted to only Muslim communities mostly known as *Zongo*. Muslims at this early phase lived separately from the indigenes. They did not have contacts with the indigenes except on trade or rendering some valuable socio-spiritual services.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Islam was deep rooted among the people of Gonja by the end of the 16th Century. By the 17th Century, the expansion and the spread of Islam has reached other northern tribes such as the Dagbamba and the Wala. By the 18th Century, Islam has again spread to some Southern tribes specifically the Asantes. (Hiskett, 1984: 120-133).

¹⁰⁴ Osman B. Bari, *A comprehensive History of Muslims and Religion in Ghana* Vol 2, (Accra: Dezine Focus Printing and Publications co, 2009), 609.

¹⁰⁵ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 24-25.

¹⁰⁶ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 305.

The Dyula/Wangara Muslim traders also adopted the accommodative approach in dealing with the indigenes. They neither objected to the authority of the chiefs nor did they preach the message of Islam to them. This contributed to their religious independence and also enabled them to protect and safeguard their identity as Muslims.¹⁰⁷ Similar was the case in Kete- Krachi prior to the coming of Alhaj Umar of Kete- Krachi. As recounted by Idriss,¹⁰⁸ Kete- Krachi was dominated by adherents of Indigenous Traditions and the Muslims lived cordially and harmoniously with them. The Muslims made no effort to convert the indigenes to Islam. They had come purposefully to trade and not to proselytise. Citing Accra as an example, Sulemana Mumuni asserted that, it took the first Muslim settlers in Accra about five decades to convert just one person. This, he believes, was the general approach of the early Muslims in the spread of Islam in the West African sub-region.¹⁰⁹

In the 16th Century for instance, according to Levtzion, the region of Techiman, specifically Bono-Mansu was occupied by Muslims of Mande origin through trade. These Mande Muslim traders lived in noticeably different communities with their unique code of laws. However, they were submissive subjects of the local chiefs. As a result of Muslims segregating themselves, Islam left little impact on the customs and traditions of the people of Bono. Moreover, there was no indication regarding the contributions of the Bono Muslims towards the development of Islam within the Volta Basin.¹¹⁰ Weiss also expressed the same view regarding the early Hausa traders. He noted that, the early Hausa Muslim traders did not come with the aim of propagating Islam in the Volta Basin. Instead, their

¹⁰⁷ Weiss, *Between Accommodation and Revivalism*, 57.

¹⁰⁸ Abdul-Razak, "Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi", 37.

¹⁰⁹ Sulemana Mumuni, "Islamic Organisations in Accra: Their Structure, Role and Impact in the Proselytization of Islam." Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, 1994, 147.

¹¹⁰ Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 7-8.

topmost concern was trade. As a result, any act of religious involvement or interpretation that hindered the progress of their trade was left untouched. The greatest measure they could take was to loosely criticise their Muslim colleagues who were negligent of their religious responsibilities. Nothing more than that. In effect, all indigenous traditions that were in conflict with Islam were left untouched by the Hausa Muslim traders who settled in the Volta Basin in the 19th century.¹¹¹ However, it is worth mentioning that, the Hausa traders were not all that syncretic especially after the Sokoto Jihad of 1804.

One could argue that this approach of the early Muslim traders was at variance with the core missionary appeal of Islam which exhorts its members to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong regardless of their level of knowledge or geographical location.¹¹²

In an attempt to take Islam to the larger population by the early Muslims, they adopted a system by which they allowed the converted indigenous people to practise Islam alongside their traditional beliefs. Consequently, many chiefs who accepted Islam also practised their traditional religions as well as customs and practises. Thus, they combined Islam with the local traditions.¹¹³

It is worthy to note that the efficacy of the religion did matter to some of these early indigenous people of Ghana and not the religion itself. For instance in modern times, Muhsin Adekunle asserts that, it is not ignorance of Islam that makes people to use black magic and amulets in Africa. He notes that the educational level of individuals, technological advancement, and the economic development of the people, to an extent,

¹¹¹ Weiss, *Between Accommodation and Revivalism*, 107.

¹¹² Qur'ān 3: 110 and also Qur'ān 12:108.

¹¹³ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 305.

have not contributed to the total eradication of the traditional practises of resorting to charms, talismans, superstition and black magic. Professionals such as lawyers, politicians, doctors, lectures, police officers, among others still patronise the services of Muslim clerics.¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, this assertion of Muhsin may be specific and not general since he did not consider the other side of the argument. This is because, there is scholarly difference concerning hanging up amulets which contain portions of the Qur'ān or Names and Attributes of Allah. This difference is as a result of lack of clear cut and unambiguous scriptural evidences to support or disprove it.

2.5 REFORMS WITHIN THE GHANAIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

After the spread of Islam in Ghana (then Gold Coast) through the several channels we have enumerated earlier, there was a dissention from the original orthodox practices of Islam by many Muslims who were still receptive and influenced by their traditional beliefs and practices.

This called for the need for Muslims, specifically the scholars, to acquaint themselves with the pristine Islamic doctrine by returning to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. This was achieved through scholarly contacts with other Muslims (especially the Hausa) within West Africa and beyond, and also through Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah). As a result, the scholars advocated for total adherence to Islamic practices devoid of syncretism. The reform, in most cases, was characterized by confrontations and militant struggles such as the Uthman Dan Fodio Sokoto Jihad of 1804. However, there were other instances where the reforms

¹¹⁴ Muhsin Adekunle Balogun, "Syncretic Beliefs and Practices amongst Muslims in Lagos State Nigeria; With Special Reference to the Yoruba Speaking People of Epe." Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham, 2011, 214-215.

were peaceful in nature. The aim behind this reform, in most cases, was to clean and do away with indigenous traditions and ideas in order to ensure total conformity to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Nonetheless, it is not in all cases that the reformers were able to achieve their goals which persist till this day.¹¹⁵

It is worth noting that, not all the *Ulamāh* were involved in militant reforms. There were those who were non-militant and advocated for peaceful reform.¹¹⁶ For instance, in the Ghanaian context, the reformers and reform movements were devoid of violence. However, there were some few intra-religious confrontations and clashes¹¹⁷ by the two dominant religious groups (Tijāniyyah and Ahlus-Sunnah) sometime back in some parts of the country¹¹⁸ such as Wenchi, Kumasi and Techiman.¹¹⁹ The sage Hajj Umar of Kete-Krachi is one of the greatest pioneers of reform in the annals of Islam in Ghana who used peaceful scholarly means in his reforms. He helped in shaping many subsequent reformers.

2.5 CONDITIONS WHICH NECESSITATED ISLAMIC REFORM

Generally, the condition that necessitated Islamic reform had to do with deviation from the orthodox practices of an orientation within Islam or Islam itself. In some cases, it was influenced by theological differences and doctrinal superiority.

However, the conditions that necessitated Islamic reform within the Muslim community in Ghana can be looked at from two perspectives: Internal reform (that which is necessitated

¹¹⁵ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 305.

¹¹⁶ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 83.

¹¹⁷ For instance in Tamale, there was a clash between the Tijāniyyah (*Nāwun-Nyeriba*) and the Ahlus-Sunnah (*Munchires*) in the mid-1966. In 1975, it resulted in the loss of life and properties. There was also a clash in early 1976, October 1976, and latest one in 1998 in Gumani.

¹¹⁸ Mohammad Saani Ibrahim, "The Tijaniyya Order in Tamale, Ghana: Its Foundation, Organization and Role." Unpublished M.A Dissertation, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 2002, 102.

¹¹⁹ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 85.

as a result of dissention within the same orientation) and External reform (that which is necessitated as a result of dissention within different orientations).

With the internal reform, the reform activities is carried out within Sunni Muslims¹²⁰ with similar doctrine and orientation. An example of a condition that necessitated internal reform in Ghana was the controversy surrounding certain practices and utterances of some members of Māliki oriented Tijānis. These included claims by some adherents that Allah can be seen in this world, drumming, singing and dancing during *Maulid* (Celebration of the Prophet's birthday), the use of talismans, the mixing of men and women during social gatherings, the claim that *Salātul Fātih* (A salutation to the Prophet)¹²¹ is better than *Salātul Ibrāhimiyyah* (A salutation to the Prophet)¹²² in terms of reward.¹²³

These issues and practices mentioned above were seen by some Tijāniyyah members such as Shyakh Abubakar Musah Baribari,¹²⁴ and Mallam Aminu Bamba of Ejura as contradictory to the tenets of the Islamic faith as well as the Tijāniyyah Order. Hence, the need for them to rectify these lapses and dissention from their *Tariqah* (Sufi Path). This is

¹²⁰ Sunni- Islam is used to refer to Muslims who adhere to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic traditions. In addition to that, they subscribe to one of the major orthodox Schools of Thought known in Islamic Jurisprudence as *Madhāhib*. These schools which were named after their founders are; the Hanafi School, the Māliki School, the Shāfi'ee School and the Hanbali School. Adherents of these Schools are considered as part of the *Ahlu-Sunnah Wal-Jamā'ah* (the people of the tradition of the Prophet and the Community). Therefore the name *Ahlu-Sunnah* is not restricted to the Salafī movement as it is use in Ghana. Hence, Tijāniyyah is part of the Sunni branch of Islam since predominantly, they subscribe to the Māliki School of Thought. Adherents of Sufism or better still Tijāniyyah (in the Ghanaian context) are not considered as sect or doctrinal group as perceived by some Ghanaians both Muslims and non-Muslims.

¹²¹ It is a special prayer believed by the Tijānis that, it was given to Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni by the Prophet in an awakened state. Others are of the view that it was given to Shaykh Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Bakri Siddiq while he was in *Khalwa* (Spiritual retreat). This prayer forms part of the Tijāniyyah litany to be recited daily.

¹²² It is a prayer that was given to the companions by the Prophet when they inquired from him on how they should send blessings on him and his family. It is said by everyday Muslim during prayers at the last station before they terminate their prayers.

¹²³ Abdul-Razak, "Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi", 58.

¹²⁴ His arguments and theological stance on these perceived syncretic practices will be examined in chapter three of this study.

because according to their understanding, the Tijāniyyah Sufi Path is built on the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) based on the premise of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. They therefore preached and called for reforms in these practices and utterances that are at variance with the Tijāniyyah Sufi Path and the Shari'ah as well. For instance Mallam Aminu Bamba wrote a manuscript underlining the Shari'ah rulings regarding some Tijāniyyah practices which he perceived to be un-Islamic. In this manuscript titled *Al-Kaulul-Haqq Al-fāsīlu Baynal Haqq Wal-Bātil* (The Truthful Speech that separates Truth from Falsehood). According to him the rationale behind the piece was to counter the arguments of the populists regarding certain practices (such as drumming and singing, seeking assistance from *Jinn*, indiscriminate mixing of the sexes during social and religious gatherings, among others) alleged to be part and parcel of the Tijāniyyah Order. Hence his reform activities was driven by public preaching and writing. Even though his revolutionary approach was met with strong resistance and condemnation, nonetheless, he had, to some extent, made much impact by attaining good results since a number of adherents of the Tijāniyyah ascribed to this supposed correct stance of the Tijāniyyah when it comes to issues of theology. However, the populist perspective of Tijāniyyah still stood tall among most of the Tijāniyyah adherents in Ghana today.

Significantly, these scholars later reshaped the conception of the Tijāniyyah Sufi Path to the generality of Muslims. This move of theirs led to the populist faction known as *Yan Faila* (Fayda members) to give them the appellation *Munkeri Faila* (those who combine some views or theological orientation of the Tijānis and the Salafis).¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 58-59.

This condition of reform was the same as that of Uthmān Dan Fodio. He was a Qādiriyyah, but noticed that there were some unacceptable practices of the Path that were largely influenced by non-Islamic customs such as the use of talismans, fortune telling, and seeking assistance from *Jinn*. This, among others, made Shaykh Uthmān to preoccupy himself with how to combat these syncretic tendencies. This is because the distorted Islamic rites and rituals were viewed by many as Islamic practices and this was as a result of mixing Islamic practices with indigenous customs and tradition.

Presenting the condition and the internal reform that existed between Shaykh Uthmān Dan Fodio and the *Ulamāh* of the Qādiriyyah which he was a member, Ahmad Tahir noted that, some Islamic scholars in the Qādiriyyah Sufi Order were only swindlers who posed as *Shuyūkh* (Shaykhs). They claimed to have both mystical experiences and the power of *Kashf* (mystical unveiling) thereby deceiving the masses. These pseudo scholars depended on, as a means of livelihood, making of talismans, fortune telling and assuming to communicate to *Jinn* all in the name of Sufism. As a result, they were able to gain popularity and influence from the superstitious populace and the ignorant members of the Sufi Order.

However, Shaykh Uthmān Dan Fodio who was also a Sufi belonging to the Qādiriyyah Order, regarded the aforementioned practices and claims as intolerable and at conflict with Islamic principles. He went further to debunk the claims by some section of his adherents that such powers emanate from him as he indicated in his work titled *Tahdhīr al-Ikhwān*.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Ahmad Tahir, “The Social Writings of Shaykh Uthmān b. Fūdi: A Critical and Analytical Study.” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1989, 77-79.

Again as observed by Ahmed Kani, the Shaykh's greatest concern was to expose the real nature of Islam as is embedded in the Qur'an and explained by the Prophet. As a result he presented his views in achieving these reforms either through preaching or writing. The titles of some of his works alone suggest the subject matter or the content of the work. For example, *Bayān al-bid'a al-shaytāniyya allatī ahdathahā al-nass fi abwāb al-milla al-muhammadiyyah* (Exposition of Evil Innovations Introduced by some People in the Affairs of the Muhammadan Community), *Ihyāus- Sunnah wa ikhmād al-bid'a* (Revival of the Sunnah of the Prophet and quelling of innovations), *Wathīqat al-ikhwān li tabyīn dalīlat wujūb ittiba' al kitāb wa al-Sunnah wa-al-ijmā wa dalīl ijtināb al-bida li man yadīnu bi din al-Islam* (A Document for the Brothers on the Exposition of Reasons for following the Book, Sunnah and the Consensus and Avoidance of Innovation...).¹²⁷

External reform, on the other hand, is necessitated when the reform is geared towards rectifying some practices of a Muslim group with different orientation (though within the same Sunni line) as the reformers. In this case, the reformers describe such practices as heretic or innovation in Islam. In Ghana, most of the cases is between the Tijāniyyah Muslims who are largely Māliki as against the "Ahlus-Sunnah" who are largely Hanbali.

Notable among this type of reform in the history of Islam in Ghana is the reform of Afa Yusuf Ajura¹²⁸ of Tamale. He preached and advocated for the practices of Islam in a similar manner as was presented by Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) devoid of any

¹²⁷ Kani, *The Intellectual Origin of Islamic Jihad*, 64-65.

¹²⁸ Afa Yusuf Ajura returned from studies in the late 1950s from Ejura to Tamale. He first broke away from the central mosque due to a conflict bordering on whether God can be seen with the naked eyes or not. As a result he defected and started spreading the Hanbali doctrine in the Northern Region. Consequently, as the Hanbali doctrine was propagated by Afa Ajura in Tamale, similar was the case later in Accra. By 1968, Umar Ibrahim Imām has also returned from studies in Saudi Arabia. Hence, through the assistance of Shaykh Hamza and Shaykh Abdus-Salaam they also propagated the Hanbali doctrine within the Southern zone with special reference to Accra. (Samwini, 2006:173-174).

“innovation” or syncretic practices.¹²⁹ This led to scholars like Nathan Samwini to refer to Afa Ajura and his team as “the Reformers or the Puritan group”.¹³⁰

It is seen from the above example that Afa Yusuf Ajura belongs to the doctrine of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal which characterised the orientation of the Ahlus-Sunnah, trying to reform the practices of the Tijāniyyah who ascribe largely to the doctrine of Imām Mālik. This, to some extent, is what led to the clashes between the adherents of these orientations in some parts of the country. This does not suggest that the practices of the Māliki doctrine are in conflict with the tenets of Islam or better still are not in agreement with the Hanbali School of Thought. In some cases, adherents of a particular doctrine do associate their traditional customs with their religious practices which makes it difficult to disintegrate. It is worth noting again that, the differences between these schools of thought in Islam are not based on the fundamentals of the religion. Rather they are based on minor jurisprudential issues based on different levels of understanding of the theology of Islam.

So unlike the internal reform which is meant to rectify and reform similar orientations, the external reform is directed at rectifying the practices of a different orientation.

¹²⁹ See Saani Ibrahim, *The Tijāniyyah Order in Tamale, Ghana*, 97-100 for detailed discussions of these practises and “innovations”

¹³⁰ Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana*, 173.

2.6 PIONEER MUSLIM REFORMERS IN GHANA

2.6.1 ALHAJ UMAR OF KETE- KRACHI

Alhaj Umar ibn Abī Bakr ibn Uthmān al-Kabbawī al-Kanawī al-Ṣalghawī (1856– 1934) commonly referred to as Imām Umaru Krachi (Karki)¹³¹ was an illustrious and reputable Ghanaian Muslim scholar in the 19th century.¹³²

2.6.1.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL *MAKARANTA* SCHOOL

Alhaj Umar, a leading intellectual of his time, preached on the need for Muslims to acquire Knowledge. The first thing he did after his arrival in Salaga was to establish an Arabic School to help transform the people and propagate the religion of Islam. This, as noted by Idriss, marked the beginning of a new era in the acquisition of Islamic Knowledge in the Volta Basin.¹³³ Despite the fact that Islam was in existence in Salaga before the coming of Alhaj Umar, he was the first to introduce a *Makaranta* (Qur’ānic school) with the Arabic language through the teaching of advanced subjects such as *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Hadith* (the sayings of the Prophet), and *Lughah* (Arabic grammar).¹³⁴ His living room

¹³¹ Alhaj Umar was born and raised in Kano, in northern Nigeria. He had his basic and advance education in Kano, but subsequently moved to Sokoto in the extreme northwest of Nigeria after the demise of his father for further studies. His studentship came to an end in the early part of the 19th century after he was awarded a certificate (*Shahādah/ ijaaza*) by his teacher Shaykh Uthmān. Alhaj Umar got to the shores of Ghana particularly Salaga in 1874 through the Salaga- Kano trade route with the sole aim of imparting the Islamic knowledge. Due to the civil war that erupted in Salaga 1892, Alhaj Umar was compelled to migrate and settled in Kete-Krachi in 1896 where he became an Imām and died in 1934. (Idriss 1996: 23-26). See further Gabid, 2006.

¹³²Jibril Abubakr Gabid, “Imitation and Originality in Four Poems by al-Hajj Umar ibn Abī Bakr ibn Uthmān Krachi (ca 1856–1934),” 2.

¹³³ Abdul-Razak, “Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi”, 28.

¹³⁴ Abdul-Razak, “Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi”, 29-30.

served as the class room. This is in conformity with what Saani described as “conservative” stage¹³⁵ in the development of Islamic education in northern Ghana.¹³⁶

This first step taken by Alhaj Umar in establishing teaching and learning center is similar to what early Muslim reformers did after they settle at a new place, taking the Prophet as an example. The first thing he did after his arrival in Madinah was to build a mosque which was multi-purpose; serving as a place for teaching and learning, for worship, for *Shūra* (mutual consultation). It also served as a place for studying the activities of the Prophet by the *Ashābus-Suffa*¹³⁷ (People of the Bench).¹³⁸

The second effective activity which Alhaj Umar of Kete- Krachi used to reform Islam in Ghana was through his literary works. His writing covers almost all aspects of life and happenings during his time. He wrote on politics, religion, history, medicine and pedagogy. He used both Hausa and Arabic in his writing.¹³⁹ His writings served the needs of the *Ummah* at that particular time.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ The conservative stage is a stage where classes were held at the reception room (*Zong* in Dagbani or *Zaure* in Hausa) or mosque of the Mallam (teacher). As a result, educational pursuit in this condition was termed in Dagbani as *Karim- Zong* or Karaatun Zaure in Hausa. At this stage of Islamic education, there was a repugnance of Western education. Saani, 2011:115.

¹³⁶ Ibrahim, “The Decline of Sufism,” 31.

¹³⁷This was a general name given to the group of poor companions of the Prophet who reside in a chamber that is annexed to the Prophet mosque in Madinah. However, they were very instrumental when it comes to the memorization of the Qur’ān and the sayings of the Prophet (Hadith). They virtually spend their entire time in learning and teaching Islam. The famous Abu Hurayrah who is said to have narrated the highest number of Hadith is from them. Mus’ab ibn Umayr is also included, among others. Qur’ān 2: 273 made reference to them.

¹³⁸ Foad, *Life of the Prophet Muhammad*, 64.

¹³⁹ Jibril Abubakr Gabid, “Imitation and Originality in Four Poems by al-Hajj Umar ibn Abī Bakr ibn Uthmān Krachi (ca 1856–1934),” 7.

¹⁴⁰ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 262.

2.6.1.2 PROSELYTISING AND TEACHING TOURS.

Having in mind the responsibility and the need to disseminate the message of Islam, Alhaj Umar visited Muslim communities during the month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar) teaching and preaching. This assisted many students in search of knowledge who could not travel to Kete- Krachi because of distance to tap from his vast knowledge. He was able to expand the Māliki School of Thought with Sufi influences including his commentary of the Qur’ān in many parts of the country such as Kumasi, Tamale, and Yendi.¹⁴¹ As a result of these journeys, there is no region in Ghana that does not pride itself with the teachings and the Tijāniyyah influence of Alhaji Umar or his students.¹⁴²

2.6.2 HAJJ YUSUF SUALIHU (AFA AJURA)

Afa Yusuf Sualihu Ajura¹⁴³ was one of the most influential Muslim reformers based in Tamale. He was responsible for the establishment of the Ahlus-Sunnah doctrine (adherence to the Qur’ān and Sunnah) in the northern part of the country.¹⁴⁴ He was celebrated because of his contributions to both internal and external reform, particularly, combating *Bid’a*¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Abdul-Razak, “Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi,” 40.

¹⁴² Abdul-Razak, “Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi,” 43.

¹⁴³ He was born and had his early life and education in Savelugu. After completing the Qur’ān under the supervision of Imam Ibrahim of Savelugu, he proceeded to Ejura in the Ahanti region for further studies. He returned to Savelugu after ten years stay in Ejura. Subsequently, he finally moved and settled in Tamale till his demise in 2005. He was privileged to continue his studies in Tamale under the tutelage of Shayk Al-Hassan Turzun. Fortunately, all the scholars that taught Afa Ajura were Sufi inclined since that was the predominant practice of the early Muslim traders and scholars. He himself was a Sufi but Consequently, he abandoned it (because he accused them of heresy and lacking authenticity in their practices) in favor of the ASWAJ practices.(Saani, 2011:74-75)

¹⁴⁴ Ibrahim, “The Decline of Sufism,” 73.

¹⁴⁵ *Bid’a* is a concept that connote practices that are alien to Islamic principles and can be subjected to objection and condemnation. Therefore, any religious act that contradicts the Qur’ān, the Sunnah and in some cases *Ijmā* (consensus of Islamic Scholars) is considered as *Bid’a*. *Bid’a* (lawful *Bid’a*) can also be looked at as an innovation that is not clearly stated in the Qur’ān, the Sunnah and the *Ijmā*, but it is of immense importance to the lives of humanity in modern times. This does not relate to act of worship. However, some scholars contend that, every innovation or actions that can lead to innovation whether in the form of customs

(innovation/novelties) in the practices of Islam. The Tijāniyyah Sufi Path was considered by Afa Ajura as syncretic or mixing Islam with non-Islamic practices. He considered himself as ‘anti-traditionalist’ and ‘reformists’.¹⁴⁶ Afa Yusuf Ajura was very “extreme” in his reforms. He considered the adherents of Tijāniyyah as *Kuffār* (disbelievers) because of some of their practices he alleged not to be in conformity with Islam. As a result of this view of his, he instructed his followers to disassociate themselves from the Tijānis. This led to parents disowning their children and children forsaking their parents. Husbands divorced their wives, and family members severed ties with each other. Daily prayers were not to be observed behind a Tijāni Imām since according to him they were not qualified to be called Muslims.¹⁴⁷

2.6.2.1 CRITIQUE ON *BID’A* (INNOVATION)

One of the greatest achievements of Afa Ajura as far as his reform is concerned was his ability to make clear distinctions between what he perceived to be Islam and what he considered not to be Islam (innovation). Various practices were considered as tradition and mixing by Afa Ajura which he thought were popularised by the Tijāniyyah scholars. He considered bowing to greet the elderly as *Shirk* (associating partners with Allah) and a form of worship which took its basis from Dagbon culture. Other practices he considered as innovations included the use of the rosary, a counting device which facilitated praises after

or religious acts should not be condoned by Muslims but instead reject it. An example of such scholar is Ibn Taymiyyah and his associates. He objected those who classified *Bid’a* into two. That is, *Bid’atul Hassana* (lawful innovation) and *Bid’atus sayyiah* (unlawful innovation). He further contends that, classifying *Bid’a* into two is an open violation of the Prophetic saying which states that, “...all forms of *Bid’a* are error”. As a result, introducing something new for the purpose of the public interest (*Maslaha*), to them is not accepted. He defended his staunchly held stance by saying that, the word “*Kullu*” (universal or all) used in the prophetic saying connotes universality or totality. Hence, it does not leave any room for exceptions or particularity (*takhsis*). (Jahar, 1999: 41- 46).

¹⁴⁶ Weiss, *Between Accommodation and Revivalism*, 385-386.

¹⁴⁷ Ibrahim, “The Tijaniyya Order in Tamale”, 99.

prayer, the commentary of the Qur'ān and *Tahajjud* (late night prayer during the month of Ramadan). He also condemned the celebration of the birth day of the Prophet (*Maulid*), singing, drumming and dancing, wearing of talisman, spiritual healing provided by the scholars through the use of some Qur'ānic verses, funeral celebrations on the third day, seventh day, and fortieth day after the demise of a Muslim. Most of these practices that were considered innovations by Afa Ajura were later reviewed and incorporated into the activities of the Ambariyyah by his students after their return from studies in the Gulf States. Examples included *Tafsīr* (interpretation/ commentary of the Qur'ān) and *Tahajjud* in Ramadan.¹⁴⁸

Arising from the above, one is tempted to speculate that perhaps, Afa Ajura had no theological basis for some of his views on certain religious practices, or better still, it was due to lack of information at that particular time. It could also be that it was a clear enmity he had towards the other religious group who did not share the same orientation as his.

Adducing a few common details regarding this contrast, Hussein Ibrahim asserted in this regard that the distinction made between Islamic practices and the Dagbon culture were so stressed to the extent that, even the good culture or the traditions of the Dagomba were considered by these reformers (Afa Ajura and his disciples) as evil and incompatible with Islam.¹⁴⁹ This perhaps might be the reason behind his total rejection of the tradition of the people regardless of its religious sanctions. Nonetheless, Afa Ajura is considered and regarded in the north in particular, and Ghana in general to be one of the greatest reformers who helped in disconnecting Islam from inappropriate beliefs and practices.

¹⁴⁸ Ibrahim, "The Tijaniyya Order in Tamale," 100 - 101.

¹⁴⁹ Ibrahim, "The Afa in Dagbon", 155.

This scholar and his followers, as noted by Bari, often quote the traditions of the Prophet and the pious Caliphs to support their position on innovation. For example, as quoted by Bari, the saying of the Prophet that whoever innovates anything in Islam that does not conform to the teachings of Islam should be rejected. Likewise the saying of the Prophet that the worst affairs in the religion is innovation and every innovation will automatically lead to destruction. In the same line is the saying of Imām Mālik¹⁵⁰ that, anybody who introduces anything in the religion means that, he/she does not have the conviction that the Prophet has completed his Prophetic mission. Hence, the need for such person to fulfill it through his innovative practices.¹⁵¹

2.6.2.2 TAWHĪD (UNITY AND ONENESS OF ALLAH)

Prior to the 1960s, most practices of the Muslim clerics particularly in Northern Ghana were generally considered as Islamic until the emergence of the reform movement under the leadership of Afa Yusuf Ajura.¹⁵² As a result, Afa Yusuf Ajura and his movement took it upon themselves to re-enforce the cardinal principles upon which the Islamic religion is built. The practice of *Tibbu* (spiritual healing) was considered by Afa Ajura and his group to be a violation of sincere faith in Allah. This is because it negates total trust that a servant is required to have concerning his Creator. Commenting on this type of practice, Bilal Philips states that using the Qur’ān for charms or amulets as a means of protection is not different from the traditional Arab practices; that such practices have not been sanctioned

¹⁵⁰ He is the founder of one of the four orthodox schools of thought in Sunni Islam. His school of thought is widely followed by Muslims in North Africa, West Africa, and part of Egypt, Sudan, among others. Majority of the Sufis ascribe to his school of thought, while majority of the Wahhabists ascribe to the school of thought of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. His famous hadith collection book known as Muwatta is the first hadith book in Islamic history.

¹⁵¹ Bari, *A comprehensive History of Muslims*, 558-559.

¹⁵² Ibrahim, “The Afa in Dagbon”, 154.

by the Prophet or his Rightly Guided Successors. He further buttressed his view by quoting a Prophetic Tradition which states that, a group of ten people came to pay allegiance to the Prophet. He accepted the allegiance of nine leaving out one person. Upon enquiry by the companions present, the Prophet replied by saying that the last person was wearing an amulet and that was why. The man quickly threw the amulet away, and then the Prophet accepted his allegiance. The Prophet then remarked that, whoever wears an amulet has automatically committed *Shirk* (associating partners with Allah).¹⁵³

Moreover, seeking knowledge of the unseen and the future was also considered by the Ambariyyah Community¹⁵⁴ as *Shirk* which goes against absolute *Tawhīd*. Therefore, there is the need for them to call people to totally rely on Allah. Buttressing this claim, Afa Ajura and his followers (Ambariyyah Community) quoted many scriptural supports to counter these practices.¹⁵⁵ Among these are Qur’ān (27:65) which states that, there is none of the creatures of Allah, be it in the heavens, or on earth that knows the future except Allah. It is also stated in verse 59 of chapter 6 that, it is only to Allah belongs the treasures of the unseen, and none is acquainted with such knowledge but Him alone. This was the reason why the Prophet, through revelation in Qur’ān (7:188), declared that he has no power to bring good either to himself or to his followers. If he had such powers, he would have constantly manipulated the decree of Allah to receive only good instead of evil in his life. Taking this verse a step further, Ambariyyah members believe that, not even the Prophet can offer spiritual help to his adherents.¹⁵⁶ Afa Seidu Zakariyyah’s (a leading member and

¹⁵³ Bilal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed* (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2011), 9.

¹⁵⁴ Ambariyyah is the general term for the ‘Ahlus-Sunnah’ community in Tamale just like *Yan Izala* is used for the ‘Ahlus-Sunnah’ community in Nigeria. They are sometimes refer to as *Munchire* mening rejectors.

¹⁵⁵ Ibrahim, “The Afa in Dagbon”, 158.

¹⁵⁶ Ibrahim, “The Afa in Dagbon”, 161.

the current successor to Afa Ajura) verdict regarding these practices is that, no faithful Muslim who is concerned about his faith and knows with certainty what he recites in his daily prayers will seek spiritual help from any other than Allah. His reason being that, verse four of chapter one (*Fāthiha*) of the Qur'ān negates the existence of help except from Allah alone. He further affirmed that, verse 186 of chapter 2 is a clear indication that, no intermediary should be placed between Allah and His servant since He Allah is very closer to the supplicant, and He is ready to answer his supplications if and only if he fulfils his obligations of worshipping Him alone and avoid associating partners with Him.¹⁵⁷

However, the assertion of the Ambariyyah on exclusive reliance on Allah without human assistance and that none has the knowledge of the unseen to a large extent is defeated when we closely analyse Qur'ān 4:64 and Qur'ān 72:26. This is because in Qur'ān 4:64 Allah states that if the hypocrites had come to the Messenger of Allah for him to ask forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah oft-returning and merciful. This implies that seeking assistance from Allah in some exceptional cases call for support of the *Sālihūn* (righteous servants of Allah) such as the messenger of Allah as evidenced in the above verse.

Again in Qur'ān (72:26) Allah states that He is the knower of the unseen and He does not reveal His secrets to any except to him whom He chooses among His apostles. This also implies that there are exceptions to the verse (27:65) quoted by the Ambariyyah to buttress their stance that none knows the unseen except Allah and does not manifest the knowledge to any of His creation.

¹⁵⁷ Ibrahim, "The Afa in Dagbon", 158-189.

2.6.2.3 AFA AJURA'S CALL FOR TOTAL ADHERENCE TO THE QUR'ĀN AND SUNNAH

The Qur'ān and the Sunnah are the primary sources for deriving Islamic laws and principles. Afa Ajura contended that the legislative system of Islam should be sourced solely from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Thus, Islamic rulings should come exclusively and conform to the dictates of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and not from views or opinions of people. He advocated for the literal reading of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah which must be implemented unflinchingly. However, contrary to his stance, some scholars consider *Qiyās* (analogical deduction) and *Ijmā* (Consensus of Islamic scholars) as vital secondary sources of the legislative codes in Islam.

Generally, Muslims consider acceptance to the Qur'ān and Sunnah as obligatory acts for all believers. However, the bone of contention mostly has to do with their interpretations and applicability. In some cases, the contention lies with verdicts given by scholars. For the Salafis (those who adhere strictly to the Qur'ān and apply its meaning literally), they consider and limit the Qur'ān and the Sunnah as enough guides for Muslims. They strongly advocate total adherence to the Sunnah in its purest form devoid of the “*Bid'a*” of following *Shuyūkh* (Shaykhs) and their verdicts. In justifying their stance, they depend on verses of the Qur'ān which advice believers to adhere to the Sunnah, and verses relating to the greatness of the Prophet above all other creation, as a result, the need to obey and follow his Sunnah above everything else. These verses on which they base their arguments include the following:

Qur'ān (4: 115) in which Allah states categorically that hell will be the abode of anyone who challenges the Messenger after a clear guidance (Qur'ān and Sunnah) has come to

him. In addition to that, whoever follows any path other than that of the believers will not be accepted of Him. By implication, the verse, according to the Salafis, is cautioning all Muslims to hold firm or adhere strictly to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah since they constitute the principal sources of the religion. Any path other than that may lead to eternal destruction.

The second argument is built on Qur'ān (33:36) and Qur'ān (4:65) which describe the real believing men and women as those who submit their will totally to the decisions and judgments of the Prophet without having any reservations or objections in their hearts. Therefore, whoever acts contrary to these, is in manifest error. With these two verses, the Salafis are of the view that any Muslim who seeks any reference in relation to religious matters other than from the Prophet or clearly goes against the rulings of the Messenger or have any reservation regarding the rulings of the Prophet is not a believer. Hence, the reliance on some optional acts of worship that emanate from some *Shuyūkh*s especially of the Sufi Path to the Salafis is against the Shari'ah.

The third evidence is based on Qur'ān (8:24) and Qur'ān (59:7) which calls on Muslims to accept the good recommendations of the Prophet and do away with all acts that he has forbidden. For indeed Allah shall gather humanity to render account. But whoever is guilty of disobedience should know that Allah is severe in His punishment.

Therefore the general view of the Salafis is that, since Allah and His Prophet are the best determinants of what is right and wrong, there is no need to take any subjective view of a scholar regarding religious acts that do not have any direct link with the Qur'ān or the Sunnah. Muslims should rather rely totally on the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, based on the

understanding and the interpretation of the pious predecessors of the early generation of Muslims.

However, the assertion of the Salafis on exclusive adherence to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah to a large extent is defeated when a critical look is made to Qur'ān (4:59). This is because the verse (4:59) encourages believers to obey Allah and His Messenger and those in authority among them. In cases of any difference, such a difference should be referred to Allah and His Prophet, since they are the main sources for the believers. This therefore implies that, obedience goes beyond the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and extends to include those in authority (Muslim leaders) of which Muslim scholars are part of. Based on this verse, the Tijāniyyah adhere to the teachings and verdicts of their scholars in certain optional self-imposed routine acts of worship that do not contradict the Shari'ah.

That notwithstanding, the evidences above may seem not convincing to some groups of Muslims. Just like the way Salafis restrict the sources of Islamic law to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, by counteracting the Tijānis who adhere to the verdicts of their *Shuyukh* (Shaykhs), and other practices that they think were indirectly culled from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, so was a Movement known as *Ahlul- Qur'ān*¹⁵⁸ (the people of the Qur'ān or the Qur'ānists) who also argued that Islamic legislative system should only be derived from the Qur'ān and nothing else. As noted by Mustafa as- Sibā'ee,¹⁵⁹ there is a group of Muslims in modern times who restricted the Islamic source to the Qur'ān and questioned

¹⁵⁸ It is a movement that was founded by Ahmed Subhy Mansour in Egypt. Their core principle is that, only the Qur'an should be followed, since the Qur'an is complete and can be understood without resorting to any Hadith. To them, they doubt the authenticity of the Hadith since most of the Hadith were documented many years after the demise of the Prophet.

¹⁵⁹ Mustafa as- Sibā'ee, *The Sunnah and its role in Islamic Legislation*. Trans by Faisal ibn Muhammad Shafeeq, (Riyadh: International Islamic Publication House, 2008), 215.

the integrity of the Sunnah. They affirm their conviction by raising arguments from the following verses:

The first is Qur'ān (6:38) where Allah emphatically states that He has not left out anything in the Qur'ān. This verse to the Qur'ānists means that Allah, in essence, has revealed and completed all that is needed regarding the Islamic faith. The second argument is based on Qur'ān (16:89) where Allah states that the Qur'ān has been revealed to the Prophet and clearly explains everything.

Their understanding of the two verses above is that, the Qur'ān has extensively dealt with all matters that are religiously sanctioned by detailing the rulings, guidelines, core mandates among others. This therefore means that, there is no need to rely on any other source. If there is any recognition for other sources, it will mean that the Qur'ān is incomplete which is impossible.¹⁶⁰

Their next argument is based on Qur'ān (15:9) in which Allah affirmed the revelation and the preservation of the Qur'ān from any alteration or discrepancies as His exclusive duty. The above verse to them indicates that the preservation of the Qur'ān is assured by Allah. On the contrary, if the Hadith was to be from Allah, he would have equally taken the responsibility to preserve and guard it from discrepancies. To them, the Qur'ān warns Muslims to stay away from that which they have no knowledge of, and that which they are in doubt. Hence it is only through the Qur'ān that certain knowledge is derived. To buttress this claim, they quote a Hadith as cited by Mustafa where the Prophet is reported to have

¹⁶⁰ Mustafā as- Sibā'ee, *The Sunnah and its role in Islamic Legislation*. Trans by Faisal ibn Muhammad Shafeeq, (Riyadh: International Islamic Publication House, 2008), 216.

cautioned his companions not to write down anything from his Hadith. This instruction was also followed by Abubakar, Zayd ibn Thabit, Umar and Ali.¹⁶¹

However, despite these arguments by the Qur'ānists, almost all the Sunnis debunk the claim that the Islamic legislative system is limited only to the Qur'ān. This is because it is the responsibility of the Prophet to explain that which was revealed to the people as stated in Qur'ān 16:44. The explanation is what is embedded in the *Ahādith*. Nevertheless, we can't dispute the fact that some of the *Ahādith* have been fabricated over time for various reasons which include both religious and political.

2.7 TIJĀNIYYAH AND AHLUS-SUNNAH AND REFORM IN GHANA.

2.7.1 THE TIJĀNIYYAH BROTHERHOOD IN GHANA

The Tijāniyyah Brotherhood which is named after its founder, Abul Abbass Ahmad Tijāni (1737/8-1815) was established in the year 1782.¹⁶² This Brotherhood started in North Africa and then spread to the Western Sahara through the activities of Mauritanian Muslim Missionaries. Subsequently, the Brotherhood spread across the West African sub-region and beyond. The Brotherhood contributed tremendously to the development of Islam in West Africa.¹⁶³ For instance, as observed by Samwini, the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood helped in the strengthening of Islam and its development in West African sub-region through additional form of devotions and practices.

¹⁶¹ As- Sibā'ee, *The Sunnah and its role*, 217.

¹⁶² The exact date in which the Tijāniyyah brotherhood was founded is contentious. Sources vary from one another. But it is generally accepted to be in the 1780s with special emphasis between 1781 and 1784.

¹⁶³ Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 156.

The introduction of the Brotherhood in Ghana took place in the latter part of the 19th century by Hausa traders who came to settle in Gold Coast (modern day Ghana). However, the rapid spread of the Brotherhood in its early stages was made possible through the engagement of a contingent of Hausa Police from Nigeria by the British administration in the then Gold Coast. Some of these Hausa were enlisted in the West Africa Constabulary Force. Upon their retirement, they settled in the *Zango*. Taking their Tijāniyyah background into account, they were able to inspire and strengthen the efforts of the existing Tijāniyyah Hausa they came to meet.¹⁶⁴ But key among the characteristics of these early traders and security personnel was that they did not actively involve themselves in the spread of either the Islamic faith or the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood.

According to Hiskett, the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood was introduced into the country, particularly Kumasi in 1899 as a result of the dispersion of Hausa clerics who came to settle in the northern part of Ashanti after the fall of Ahmadu Segu's empire of Umariya. On the contrary, the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood was introduced into the coastal parts of the country at the end of the 19th Century by Hausa traders and security personnel who came to the country under the demand and supervision of the British.¹⁶⁵ In the Greater Accra Region, the Brotherhood was championed through the proselytising activities of Imām Abbass who was then the Principal Imām of the Central Mosque, Imām Atta (commonly known as Mallam Atta) and Mallam Haruna Rashid.¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the consolidation and the popularisation of the Brotherhood as presented by Dumbe, was done through education by the early Tijāni scholars, interactions with other

¹⁶⁴ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 256.

¹⁶⁵ Hiskett, *The Development of Islam*, 256.

¹⁶⁶ Abdul-Razak, "Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi," 56.

members of the Brotherhood during Hajj, and visits of some prominent scholars across the West African sub-region.¹⁶⁷

Sulemana Mumuni, on the other hand, has a different historical account of the spread of the Brotherhood and its introduction to the people of Ghana. According to him, the spread of the Brotherhood was largely made possible in Hausa land and subsequently West Africa in general through the active role played by Umar b. Sa'id al-Futi. He was initiated into the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood under the spiritual guidance of Muhammad al-Ghāli. Their contact became feasible as a result of Umar al Futi's pilgrimage to Makkah within the period of 1826-1828. He attributed the introduction of the Brotherhood in Ghana to Alfa Hashim and Moro Futi, both of whom are related to Umar al-Futi. Subsequently, the Brotherhood was presented widely to the masses by Hausa clerics. This, was made possible after the decline of the Salaga Market which served as a commercial center for West African traders. As a result, it caused the Hausa traders to scatter across the country.¹⁶⁸

There appears to be no authoritative historical account that clearly identifies those responsible for the introduction of the Brotherhood to Ghana. Moreover, the exact date of its penetration in Ghana remains unclear. What is worth noting is that since the inception of the Brotherhood, it has influenced West African Muslims with respect to their spiritual transformation, and has the largest members (as compared to other religious groups like the Salafis and the Shi'ah) across most West African states including Ghana. Consequently, most of the leadership positions within the Muslim fraternity are spearheaded by the

¹⁶⁷ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 39.

¹⁶⁸ Mumuni, "Islamic Organisations in Accra." 38-39.

adherents of this Brotherhood. However, it is currently facing persistent rivalry from the Salafi fraternity.

Taking the reforms of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood into perspective, Khuzaimah Osman¹⁶⁹ noted that through their *Da'wah* programmes, they are able to create awareness in most people especially within the Tijāniyyah fraternity that the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood is not just about singing praises to the Prophet and dancing among others. The core tenets of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood is knowledge of Allah and soul-purification. This, in essence, guides the adherents, morning and evening, and throughout their lives. That was why the Brotherhood launched a *Da'wah* programme prior to the 2016 elections which is so different from their conventional ways of doing *Da'wah* which was limited to *Maulid* (celebration of the Prophet's birth day) grounds or when somebody is dead. In this new *Da'wah* programme, they (the Tijāniyyah young scholars) visit places such as Fadamah, Shukurah, and other Muslim communities where the youth groups meet at known places called *Bases* to preach to these youth about Islam and in some exceptional cases the core values of the Tijāniyyah depending on the youth group in question. This has really impacted positively by changing the lifestyles of many Muslim youth. This program as he stated, is done across the entire country with the exception of a few places.

The transformation of the youth who gather at the *Bases* as a result of *Da'wah* is reaffirmed by Ali Baba Mohammed. He argues that members of the youth groups in some years back cannot be compared to those of today. This is because, in the past, the youth groups were characterised with conflicts, violence, and all sorts of unacceptable social acts

¹⁶⁹ He is the Personal Assistant to the National Chief Imam and the Executive Secretary of the Tijāniyyah Muslims Movement of Ghana (TMMG).

all in the name of exhibiting bravery. However, the scenario has taken a different dimension as they are now mostly educated and morally conscious. As a result they have now transformed by incorporating both religious and social activities. For instance, sporting competitions among the youth groups with the aim of fostering peace and unity, organisation of clean up exercises, organisation of lectures and *Maulid*, acting as community security men, co-operation and assistance of one another in times of need and during social functions such as marriages or naming ceremonies.¹⁷⁰

These claims of Khuzaimah and Ali Baba are contentious. However, we cannot totally overrule the fact that there is some transformation in some of the youth groups at the *Bases*. This is because a critical look at the larger picture of the Muslim youth, will make one realize that some if not most of the youth engage in acts like *Sakawa* (Internet fraud), claims of powers to deal with spiritual problems, among others; identify themselves with the Tijāniyyah fraternity. The numerical strength of this youth (through observation) keeps on increasing. This does seem to suggest that, these youth in reality subscribe to the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood in theory and not perhaps in practice. This is because, the role of these Brotherhoods is to liberate its adherents from their base desires and bad conducts through the purification and refinement of their souls. Most importantly, the adherents of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood in practice believe that, anything that is at variance with the Shari'ah (Islamic law) is not part of the Tijāniyyah. The reason is that the Brotherhood is built on the principles of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

¹⁷⁰ Ali Baba Mohammed, "The Phenomenon of *Bases* in Ghanaian Muslim Communities in Accra." Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, 2015, 96.

Again, one may be tempted to believe that, the subscription to this Brotherhood by these youth is as a result of the stance of the populist-inclined *Ulamāh* who believe that certain acts and practices should be allowed in order to attract the youth and women to the activities of the Tijāniyyah such as the celebration of *Maulid* (Celebration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W)). Nonetheless, this stance was widely criticised and condemned by the majority of the *Ulamāh* (Such as Shaykh Nuhu Uthman Sharubutu, Shaykh Alhaj Baba Dua of Tamale, Khalīfa Ustāz Ali of Kumasi, among others) within the Tijāniyyah fraternity.¹⁷¹

Khuzaimah further explained that the changes in the nature of their *Da'wah* (introduction of outreach programmes to the various youth groups, leafleting and seminars) has led to the unification of other religious groups (such as the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Shi'ah community) in the activities of the Tijāniyyah. This is because, for some decades now, the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood under the leadership of the National Chief Imām, Shaykh Uthman Nuhu Sharubutu has moved away from being inclusive to include other leading members from diverse religious groups such as the National Chief Imām of Ahlus- Sunnah, Hajj Umar Ibrahim Imām and the National Chief Imām of Shi'ah Community in Ghana, Ustāz Abubakar Ahmed Kamāluddīn who is the son of the Deputy National Chief Imam of Ghana, Shaykh Alhaj Kamāluddīn Abubakar. This initiative as stated by Khuzaimah was fully achieved across the ten regions of Ghana as a result of the restructuring of the Brotherhood which was undertaken in 2015. This has now made the various Regional *Aimah* (Imāms) accessible to all Muslims regardless of their doctrinal leanings. This, in effect, has made the Brotherhood so strong to the extent that, it is now acquiring lands for

¹⁷¹ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 61.

infrastructural development to cater for the needs of the generality of the Muslim *Ummah*.¹⁷²

The researcher, however, disagrees with the assertion that there is a strong rapport among the generality of the Muslim *Ummah* in Ghana as alleged by Khuzaimah. The theological differences and the struggle for doctrinal superiority continue to exist. But then, just like any group of individuals, there are points of agreements as well as points of differences. So is the case of Ghanaian Muslims. Therefore, when Muslims with minor different beliefs and practices agree on a common denominator, it does not mean that they have completely accepted each other and are therefore considered as one united body. For instance, if an Ahlus-Sunnah (Salafi) member participates in three days or one week *Ad-Du'a* (funeral prayers), it does not mean that the person is a member of the Tijāniyyah fraternity. A clear example is the case of Hajj Umar Ibrahim Imām (the National Chief Imām of Ahlus-Sunnah) accompanying Shaykh Uthman Nuhu Sharubutu (the National Chief Imam of Ghana) to national events. In some cases, some of these social events are at variance with his teachings. This, to a larger extent, is done in order to foster unity and promote nation building among members with different doctrinal orientations.

Granted that there is unity among the Ghanaian Muslims. Can it be assumed that it was made possible as a result of the reforms made in their *Da'wah* activities that resulted in this rapport? The answer is absolutely no. This is because two years of restructuring is too short to determine such a nationwide success.

¹⁷² Alhaji Khuzaima M. Osman, Executive Secretary of the Tijāniyyah Muslims Movement of Ghana (TMMG), interviewed on 1st December, 2017 in his office at the residence of the National Chief Imam-Fadama, Accra.

2.7.2 AHLUS-SUNNAH WAL-JAMĀ'AH (ASWAJ)

Wahhabiyyah is generally used by some Muslims to refer to the group founded by Muhammad ibn Abdul- Wahhab. Muslims of this group refers to themselves as *Muwahidūn* (Unitarians) because they advocate the practice of Islam in its purest form through the observance of absolute monotheism, and strict literal teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. In Ghana, members of this religious group refer to themselves as *Ahlus-Sunnah* (the embodiment/ practitioners of the traditions of the Prophet). The widespread acceptance of this orientation of Islam was made possible through the political recognition that was granted Shaykh Abdul- Wahhab by Muhammad ibn Saud of the Saudi kingdom at his time. This created a solid foundation for the movement to continue to flourish till this present day.¹⁷³

The introduction of the ASWAJ in Ghana is underpinned by two narrations: one by Dumbe and the other by Samwini.

According to Dumbe, this doctrinal group had its contacts with Ghanaians through the establishment of the Saudi Mission in Ghana in 1961. Consequently, the teaching of this orientation at the Accra Central Mosque by one Kamali Halid who worked in the embassy marked the commencement of the doctrine in Ghana. However, its real impact was felt by Ghanaians after the return of Shaykh Umar Ibrahim Imām from Islamic University in Madinah in the year 1968.¹⁷⁴ It was however in 1972 that Shaykh Umar Ibrahim Imām began the propagation of the teachings of the *Muwahidūn* (Unitarians) or better still *Ahlus-*

¹⁷³ Yunus Dumbe, "Transnational Contacts and Muslim Religious Orientation in Ghana." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, 2009, 205-206.

¹⁷⁴ Dumbe, "Transnational Contacts and Muslim Religious Orientation," 209-210.

Sunnah. This was made possible largely through his organisation known as Islamic Research and Reformation Centre (IRRC) located in Nima, Accra.¹⁷⁵

Samwini, on the other hand, took a different account as regards the emergence of this orientation of Islam in Ghana. Though, he shares the same view with Dumbe that contacts of Ghanaian Muslims with the Arab world led to the infiltration and the spread of the doctrine in Ghana. However, he differs with him in the exact date that marked the beginning of the orientation in Ghana. To Samwini, it started in the late 1950s after the illustrious Afa Ajura had returned from studies in Ejura in the Ashanti region. Even though, Afa Ajura had no contacts with the Arab/Muslim world, Samwini is of the view that, it might be probably due to his extensive knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah that afforded him that great insight to absolutely rely on the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Or perhaps he had the opportunity of reading books of leading scholars of this orientation such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab who were pioneers of this doctrinal group.¹⁷⁶ The narration of Samwini seems to be more plausible taking into consideration the date of its contact with the Ghanaian Muslims.

In addressing ASWAJ perspectives of *Da'wah* methodology that is geared towards reform in Ghana, Shaykh Muhammad Zakaria (Addo)¹⁷⁷ indicated that, there was nothing new they could bring in their *Da'wah* method except to stick to the methodology of the Prophet. This methodology is found in Qur'ān (16:125) where Allah instructs all *Duāt*

¹⁷⁵ Mumuni, "Islamic Organisations in Accra," 42.

¹⁷⁶ Samwini, *The Muslim Resurgence in Ghana*, 173.

¹⁷⁷ He is the current National Da'wah Committee Chairman and member of the National Da'wah Council for ASWAJ. Also, he is an Islamic instructor at the Institute of Islamic Research, and an Imām at the Khulafāur Rashideen mosque at Nima, and the Zurak mosque at Mamobi.

(Preachers/Missionaries) to call to His way with wisdom and beautiful admonition devoid of insults. Hence, A *Dā'ee* (preacher) should not scare people but give them good tidings. For the ASWAJ therefore, they cannot reform the basis of Islam but they can reform their *Da'wah* strategy to achieve the desired results. So if one strategy fails, they resort to a different strategy or approach.¹⁷⁸

The ASWAJ is able to widen the scope of their *Da'wah* which they consider as a form of reform. To the national chairman of the *Da'wah* committee, *Da'wah*, under normal circumstances, should be in the mosque as was the case in the early stages of Islam. However, with changes in time, almost everyplace is considered appropriate for *Da'wah* taking into consideration the spiritual needs of the *Ummah*. These include *Makaranta* (Qur'ānic school), during marriage ceremonies, during funerals, and organising *Da'wah* in various communities. In view of this, the ASWAJ organises regional *Da'wah* sessions once every three months in order to achieve the reform they desire to see in the Muslim *Ummah*.¹⁷⁹

Another reform achieved by the ASWAJ through their *Da'wah* has to do with the use of modern technology and mass communication. As asserted by Shaykh Zakaria Addo, they currently preach at different radio and television stations. According to him, to enhance their *Da'wah* activities, the ASWAJ established an Accra based television station called Guidance TV even though they are currently facing some financial challenges and that has

¹⁷⁸ Shaykh Muhammad Zakaria Suleman (Addo), An Islamic theologian and National *Da'wah* Committee Chairman for ASWAJ, interviewed on 23rd November, 2017 at Islamic Research and Reformation Centre - Nima, Accra.

¹⁷⁹ Shaykh Muhammad Zakaria Suleman (Addo), An Islamic theologian and National *Da'wah* Committee Chairman for ASWAJ, interviewed on 23rd November, 2017 at Islamic Research and Reformation Centre - Nima, Accra.

led to the temporal closure of the station. Their preaching in modern times, as he asserted, is geared towards the explanation of the core tenets of Islam devoid of condemnations. They do go to the extent of disciplining scholars who go against their principles of doing *Da'wah*. A clear example as cited by Shaykh Zakaria is Mallam Muhammad Aqeedah who was warned against his unguided statements and finally exempted from preaching and delivering *Khutbah* (Sermons) till he subjected himself to the principles of the group. They consider themselves as servants of Allah who are guided by the Mercy of Allah and not by their intellect or family background, hence the need to respect humanity at large regardless of their deeds or beliefs. For this reason, they do not have the authority to declare some group of people as doomed or destined for hell. They only preach what the Prophet said in relation to the end results of each individual's deeds. This to him is a great reform in their mode of *Da'wah*.

He further stated that they are of the conviction that their *Da'wah* has and continue to influence and reform its members in diverse ways. This is as a result of the reforms in their *Da'wah* methodology. Asked how they are able to measure that, he indicated that occasionally, members of their congregations do call to give them feedback after their preaching, while others do that through confession.¹⁸⁰

On Social grounds, the reform of ASWAJ through *Da'wah* activities is seen in the mode of the dressing of Muslim women. Muslim women now extend their veil by putting on *Niqāb* (face veil).¹⁸¹ This is as a result of *Da'wah* on how women ought to dress. Qur'ān

¹⁸⁰ Shaykh Muhammad Zakaria Suleman (Addo), An Islamic theologian and National *Da'wah* Committee Chairman for ASWAJ, interviewed on 23rd November, 2017 at Islamic Research and Reformation Centre - Nima, Accra.

¹⁸¹ It is a type of veil or a garment of cloth worn by Muslim women that covers their entire face with the exception of the eyes.

(33:59) instructs the Prophet to urge his wives, his daughters and the wives of the believers to let down upon them their outer garments when they are outside of their home. In addition, Muslim professionals such as lawyers, the military, among others are not left out in their *Da'wah* activities. They are taught how to demonstrate their Islamic consciousness in their respective fields or professions. This has, over the years, helped these Muslim professionals to demonstrate Islamic consciousness in their respective fields. This was necessary because Islam is a complete way of life.

He further explained that politically, they encourage the youth to get involved in politics which was considered devilish by some of their scholars in the past. However, they are not preaching politics of cheating and deception. Politics is regarded as an *Amānah* (trust) and should be accorded all that is expected of the individuals. This means that, the Muslim politician should be seen as an embodiment of justice and uprightness. But priority should always be given to knowing the Creator before politics.¹⁸²

2.8 CONCLUSION.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to establish the understanding of reform within the Ghanaian context and the conditions that necessitated it: internal and external reform. In general, reforms aim at changing the unorthodox practices that go against the tenets of Islam and the realisation of human rectification. Again it has also been established that, most of the violent confrontations and verbal polemics among the religious groups are as a result of using different orientations in rectifying the practices of other orientations and theological differences.

¹⁸² Shaykh Muhammad Zakaria Suleman (Addo), An Islamic theologian and National Da'wah Committee Chairman for ASWAJ, interviewed on 30th November, 2017 through a Phone call.

Arising from the above, there has been, since the inception of Islam, constant checks on the practices of the generality of the Muslim *Ummah* both by *Ulamāh* within same orientation or from other orientations. Examples of such pioneer *Ulamāh* in the history of Islam in Ghana are Alhaji Umar of Kete- Krachi and AFa Ajura of Tamale respectively. These struggles continued till date.

Committed to the vision of the classical *Ulamāh*, Modern *Ulamāh* also took this responsibility of propagating and promoting pristine Islamic practices devoid of any foreign infiltration. The next chapter is devoted to the biographies of some of these *Ulamāh*.

CHAPTER THREE

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SELECTED *ULAMĀH*

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Even though the study seeks to investigate the activities of selected *Ulamāh* (Islamic scholars) in the reform process in Ghana, nonetheless, it will be useful to look at the biographies of these *Ulamāh*. For this reason, the researcher begins with a biographical sketch of some selected *Ulamāh*, highlighting their early life, family, their quest for knowledge, their literary works and their daily routine as far as their religious activities are concerned. The selected *Ulamāh* for this study are: Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu.

3.1 LIFE HISTORY OF SHAYKH ABUBAKAR MUSAH BARIBARI

Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari¹⁸³ was born in Walewale¹⁸⁴ in the Northern Region of Ghana in the year 1970. His parents are Mallam Musah Abubakar¹⁸⁵, the son of Imām Abdul- Karim

¹⁸³ Baribari is a title linked to the family he came from. They trace their ancestral lineage to the Hausa people of Borno in North Eastern Nigeria. These (Baribari) migrants temporarily stayed in Tamale and subsequently moved to settle in Walewale. The origins of Islamic scholarship of Shaykh Abubakar's family is traced to these three migrants, Mallam Labaran, Mallam Bawa and Mallam Muhammad (Tamale) who were Hausa traders and scholars as well. Mallam Labran who first proceeded to settle in Walewale was made the Imam by the Chief of Wungu- a suburb of Walewale. Upon his demise, Mallam Bawa who only came to Walewale for the funeral of his brother was convinced and made to succeed his brother by the Chief of Wungu. Next to assume the position was Imam Abdul-Karim, the son of Mallam Muhammad (Tamale) who left for Nigeria after a short stay in Tamale but left his son (Imam Abdul-Karim) under the custody of his brother, Imam Mallam Bawa. It is Imam Abdul-karim who gave birth to Imam Abubakar who is the grandfather of Shaykh Abubakar. Unfortunately, the name of Imam Abdul-karim has dominated and overshadowed the names of his predecessors who double as his father. The family is currently identified in Walewale as the family of Imam Abdul-Karim and they continue to serve as Scholars and *Aimah* (Imams) in Walewale. (Interview with Shaykh Abubakar on 22nd March, 2018 through a Phone call)

¹⁸⁴Walewale is the capital of *West Mamprusi District* in the *Northern Region* of Ghana. It is located in the West Mamprusi District on the Tamale/ Bolga main road.

¹⁸⁵ Shaykh Abubakar Baribari was named after his grandfather who was once the Imāms of Walewale *Jāmi' u* (Central Mosque) for a period of more than forty (40) years. (Interview with Shaykh Abubakar on 22nd March, 2018 through a Phone call).

and Aisha Issah nicknamed Malka. Shaykh Abubakar is married to Hajia Hamdalah and they are blessed with two children –Aishatu Malka and Jibreel who are named after his mother and *Mallam*¹⁸⁶ (teacher) respectively. Asked why Shaykh Abubakar is married to only one wife and with only two children despite the polygynous nature of the northern Muslims especially the Muslim scholars, he indicated that, Islam permits a Muslim to marry more than one wife if he (the man) is capable of providing for all her needs (both social and financial) according to his means. However, he revealed to me that, he is in the process of marrying a second wife and almost all the necessary arrangements needed for a valid marriage has been made.

It can therefore be concluded based on this assertion that financial constraints are the reasons why Shaykh Abubakar is currently a monogamist and not his dislike for polygyny, even though Islam considers polygamy as an exception and not a rule.

3.1.1 HIS EDUCATIONAL PURSUIT

Shaykh Abubakar started his education in Nūrul Islam, an English/Arabic school in Walewale that offered both secular and Islamic education. Nūrul Islam was established by his paternal uncle Abdul-Karim Mai-Gida Adam. Hence, Shaykh Abubakar grew up in a family of Islamic scholars and spirituality. This afforded him the opportunities for extra Qur’ānic lessons at home. Consequently, he completed learning/recitation of the entire Qur’ān before the age of nine. After he completed his class six academic year in Nūrul Islam, he moved to English-Arabic Middle School in Walewale in order to further his secular education. In his Form One second term, that was around 1981, his devout father

¹⁸⁶ Mallam is a Hausa corruption of the Arabic word Muallim which means an instructor or a teacher.

who was by then residing in Bawku took him to his erudite Islamic teacher, Shaykh Ustāzul-Akbar Jibreel who is most commonly known as Mallam Sofo.¹⁸⁷ This marked the end of Shaykh Abubakar’s secular education.

It is said that, Shaykh Abubakar was made to end his secular education because of the general assumption among most early Ghanaian Muslims that secular education is tantamount to disbelief. They based their argument on the premise that some aspects of secular education’s structure and syllabus are at variance with the Islamic education. Hence, their total reliance on the Islamic literary tradition.

The Islamic literary tradition as pointed out by Owusu Ansah,¹⁸⁸ existed in Ghana since the 15th Century. He notes further that this system of learning provided for the Ghanaian Muslim youth both intellectual and spiritual services. Such services made many Muslims to feel content with what they already had and therefore the need to withhold their children from acquiring the secular education. For them secular education belongs to non-Muslims. In addition to that they considered it to be foreign and incompatible with the local Islamic tradition. For this reason, it could lead their children to be Christianised. This thinking contributed to the delay in adopting secular education in Ghana until 1928 when the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission initiated it.

¹⁸⁷ He was a pioneer and an astute scholar who lived most of his life in Bawku in the Upper East Region of Ghana. He is noted for his quest for Knowledge and its dissemination. His primary contribution to the development of Islam was through teaching and literary production. As a result, he established a school where he taught subjects such as Hadith, Islamic Jurisprudence, Arabic language, Arabic grammar, among others. He has authored many books in diverse field of Islam. Some of these literature include: *Tuhufatul Mudarris* which deals with Arabic language, *Umdatul-Islam wa-bustānul Ulamāh wal-ārifin* which centered on Sufism, *Al- Qur’ān Huwal-Imam lil Aalami Ajma* paid attention on the importance of the Qur’ān, *Khulāsatul al-Fiqhul al-Asri* focused on the Qur’ān and science, among others.

¹⁸⁸ Kwame Ansah Owusu, “The Development of Islamic Education in Ghana: Perspectives of Reformers on the Transformation of Integrated Public Islamic Schools.” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Education Administration, Ohio University, 2017. 11,31.

Shaykh Abubakar, after he had settled in Bawku, started his advance studies of the Islamic sciences from Mallam Sofu. These included *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Lughah* (Arabic language), *Nahwu* (Arabic grammar), *Hadith* (Prophetic traditions), *al-Adab* (Arabic literature), *Sarf* (Morphology), *Tasawwuf* (Sufism), *Tawhīd* (Theology), *Ilmul Hisāb* (Mathematics), among others.

Under *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), Shaykh Abubakar studied books that were largely related to the Māliki School of Thought which coincidentally was and still is the dominant School of Thought in West Africa. Some of these books he studied under Mallam Sofu included *Akhdari*, *Iziyyah*, *Ashmāwi*, *Risāla*, *Bidāyatul-Tālibīn*, *Misbahus Sālik*, *Askari*, *Mukhtasar Khalil*, among others.

These books of Jurisprudence are based on the rudiments of Māliki School of Thought. They focused largely on the introductory aspects of the Islamic jurisprudence with special reference to purification and the five pillars of Islam (Shahādah, Salāt, Zakāt, Sawm and Hajj). In some instances, some of the books, such as *Risāla*, dealt with jurisprudential issues concerning business transactions, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and ethics in general. These books were studied by virtually all students that enrolled at the *Majlis/Majālis* (study centre/centres) pattern of studies.¹⁸⁹ They studied this system of Islamic education, especially under scholars of the Māliki School of law.

¹⁸⁹ It is a method of teaching in which the student reads while the teacher interprets/ translate for the student. In some cases when the topic under discussion requires further explanation, the teacher does that without looking into any literature. This method of teaching is one of the oldest if not the oldest method of impacting Islamic Knowledge. One of the importance of this system is that, students are privileged to benefit from the readings of different books by their colleagues. Memorization of meanings are made easier due to the repetition of books by new students. Books thought or lessons learnt are not examinable. It takes personal initiative and self-determination for one to assess his/her understanding.

Regarding *Lughah* (Arabic language), he studied books such as *Miftāwu Mabādid-durūs lughatul Arabia*, *Hidāyatul Islāmiyyah* and some books authored by Mallam Sofo himself. These included *Ajaibu Ayatil-lāhi Fii Sairi Shamsi Wal-qamari* which discusses the stars (Astrology). He also started *Nahwu* (Arabic grammar) and it was in the course of this that Mallam Sofo passed on. Mallam Sofo's mode of teaching was based on the individual reading while the teacher translates. In most cases, they read different books. He also learnt *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis) from Mallam Sofo. But before that, he used to learn the *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis) from Mallam Sofo's son and nephew namely Mallam Awal Ustazul-Akbar Mallam Sofo and Mallam Musah (Oluman) Alhaji Umar respectively. He was able to learn from *Juz Amma* to *Nās* (Last section of the Qur'ān from Chapter 78 to Chapter 114) from them.

In general, it was from Mallam Sofo that he laid a strong foundation for Arabic literature. This is because it was from him that he learnt *Arūd* (Prosody) and started writing poetry and small pamphlets which characterise most of his writings.¹⁹⁰ Hence it was under the tutelage of Mallam Sofo that he intensified his studies of Islam. His involvement with Mallam Sofo greatly influenced him and had impact on his Islamic scholarship.

According to Mallam Muhammad Akilu,¹⁹¹ a contemporary of Shaykh Abubakar Musah during his studentship in Bawku, Shaykh Abubakar was known for his determination, truthfulness, unique retentive memory and hard work during his studies in Bawku. He

¹⁹⁰ Shaykh Abubakar, an Islamic Scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 23rd December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale.

¹⁹¹ Mallam Muhammad Akilu Ibrahim (Karami), current acting Deputy Chief Imam of Bawku and a close friend to Shaykh Abubakar, interviewed on 1st April, 2018 through a Phone call.

attributed his extensive knowledge in various Islamic disciplines to the sincere servitude his father rendered to Shaykh Jibreel (Mallam Sofu).

There is general belief among most Muslims especially those of the Tijāniyyah fraternity that a person may attain high status in life as a result of goodness done by his parents especially when such goodness is directed towards the scholars. This claim in my view is related to a story recorded in (Qur’ān 18: 77, 82) where Allah instructed, through inspiration, two of His servants Musah and Khidr to strengthen a wall that was on the verge of collapsing. This wall belonged to two orphans. Beneath it was treasure belonging to them that was buried by their father. The father, according to the Qur’ān, was a righteous man. This incident of fortifying the wall by the two great personalities is believed to be based on the goodness done by that man (the father of the orphans) when he was alive.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali in his commentary of the verse indicated that, “the treasure had been collected and buried by a righteous man. It was not in any sense of the word, ill-gotten gains...it was also expected that they would be righteous men like their father, to use the treasure in good works and in advancing righteousness among an otherwise wicked community”¹⁹²

This assertion by Mallam Akilu may be taken lightly in the sense that, there is no evidence to support such a claim. We may say that Mallam Abubakar was given some kind of consideration as a result of the father being a close associate and student of Shaykh Mallam Jibreel. Though knowledge is believed by many to be a gift from God, nevertheless, hard work and determination play key roles in its acquisition.

¹⁹² Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’ān*, (Maryland: Amana corporation, 1993), 730.

After the demise of Mallam Sofo in 1987, Shaykh Abubakar moved to Tamale to continue his pursuit of knowledge. Shaykh Abubakar perhaps left Bawku to Tamale as a result of the seemingly limited scholars in Bawku to satisfy his thirst for learning and academic development.

3.1.2 HIS MIGRATION TO TAMALE

Shaykh Abubakar left Bawku for Tamale in the year 1988. After he settled in Tamale, his first scholarly contact was with Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk who was then considered a seasoned scholar with sound scholarship in the Tijāniyyah fraternity in Tamale. In an interview with Shaykh Abubakar,¹⁹³ he indicated that he selected Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk in preference over other scholars in Tamale because of the good testimony he received concerning him. He stated that, he first heard of him when he saw a picture of Ansārul Islam scholars in Bawku surrounding one particular scholar who was totally unknown to him in Bawku. One Mallam Uthmān from Tamale told Shaykh Abubakar that the scholar was Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk from whom he learnt the Qur’ān. Shaykh Abubakar may have developed love for him from there. After the death of Mallam Sofo, Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk came for his funeral and that was where Shaykh Abubakar first had contacts with him. He then indicated to Alhaji Yakubu his willingness to join him in Tamale in order to further his studies.

Shaykh Abubakar further noted that, it was Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk who officially gave him the training of the Tijāniyyah Sufi Path even though he was initiated into it by the Shaykh Mallam Sofo in Bawku. He also studied many books under the tutorship and guidance of Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk especially books relating to *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and *Lughah*

¹⁹³ Shaykh Abubakar Musah, an Islamic Scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 23rd December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale.

(Arabic grammar). In some cases, he was ordered by Alhaji Yakubu Ishāq to repeat some of the books he already studied under his former teacher- Mallam Sofo- like *Iziyyah*, *Hamziyyah* and *Tafsīr*.¹⁹⁴

According to Mallam Haruna Yakubu,¹⁹⁵ at the time Shaykh Abubakar came to study under Alhaji Yakubu, Alhaji Yakubu was not well. At a point in time he stopped teaching. Despite that, Shaykh Abubakar, due to his eagerness for knowledge, used to visit him in the morning and only leave in the afternoon for his house. He then came back after *Asr* (afternoon prayer) till *Maghrib* (sunset prayer) before he left for the house again. After *Isha* (evening prayer) he came back to be with him till night when the Shaykh-Alhaji Yakubu was about to sleep before he left. Within this time period, he asked Alhaji Yakubu questions regarding his specialisation.

Besides Mallam Sofo and Alhaj Yakubu Ishāq who made great impact on Shaykh Abubakar's Islamic scholarship, he earlier had the opportunity of studying under scholars such as Shaykh Mallam Abdul-Karim Mai-Gida Adam who was his paternal uncle in Walewale, Mallam Awal Ustazul- Akbar Mallam Sofo and Mallam Musah (Oluman) Alhaji Umar respectively.

Shaykh Abubakar's intimate colleagues in Tamale are the late Alhaji Abdur-Rahim Abubakar, the late Ustāz Jābir Abdullah, Shaykh Alhaji Baba Dua, and Shaykh Alhaji Baba Repairer.

¹⁹⁴ Shaykh Abubakar, an Islamic scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 23rd December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale.

¹⁹⁵ Mallam Haruna Yakubu, a student of knowledge and a son to Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk, interviewed on 24rd December, 2017 at his residence in Ward 'k', Tamale.

3.1.3 HIS CONTACTS WITH THE SHI'AH COMMUNITY IN TAMALE

In 1995, after the establishment of an institution in Tamale called Fathhul Mubeen Islamic School, Shaykh Abubakar was appointed as an Islamic teacher in the school. In Fathhul Mubeen, he taught subjects such as *Lugah* (Arabic language), *Sarf* (Morphology), *Nahwu* (Arabic grammar). He worked with the school until 1999, when he abruptly departed due to some misunderstanding between him and Āli-Katheer, the then Manager of the school. This misunderstanding, according to Shaykh Abubakar,¹⁹⁶ was on theological grounds. The school was built and managed by the Shi'ah (Ahlul Bayt) community and therefore advocated for the practice of Islam on the basis of the Shi'ah doctrine. Hence, both the students and the teachers were encouraged to conform to their teachings, directly or indirectly. Upon their constant persistence, Shaykh Abubakar had no option than to leave the school. In addition to that, he was accused of not encouraging the students to follow the Shi'ah doctrine.

Shaykh Abubakar appeared to have demonstrated high sense of tolerance by accepting to teach in that school since his doctrinal position was at variance with the school. It is worth noting that, lack of gainful employment by the Shaykh made him overlook the doctrinal differences between him and Fathhul Mubeen and not perhaps that he was tolerant.

However, when contacted on the matter in a separate interview with Shaykh Abdul-Mumin Dalwu¹⁹⁷ who is currently the head of the Shi'ah community in the three Northern Regions, he debunked the allegations leveled against the school and its system of operation. He

¹⁹⁶ Shaykh Abubakar, an Islamic scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 24th December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale.

¹⁹⁷ Shaykh Abdul-Mumin Dalwu, Shi'ah Imam and the *Sarkin* (chief) Zongo of Tamale, interviewed on 19th of May, 2018 through a Phone Call.

explained that they only teach Islam to the students without any indoctrination or brainwashing. However, they expose students to the teachings of the Shi'ah (Ahlul-Bayt) doctrine without compelling them to accept those teachings but rather based on the students own discretion. He indicated that just like the way there is no Ahlus-Sunah (Salafi) School that will accept to teach the *Aqīdah* (creed) of the Shi'ah, so is their case too. He further added that, the first two among the four leaders of school of law in Islam, thus, Imām Abu Hanifah and Imām Mālik, studied under the tutelage of Imam Ja'afar As-Sādik, the sixth Imam of the Shi'ah (Ahlul-Bayt). Hence, he considers that as a good model for those who take those *Aimah* (Imāms) as their mentors to follow suit. For him, he saw nothing wrong learning from the Shi'ah and adopting their ideology. He however confirmed the fact that Shaykh Abubakar left the school based on some problems he had with the management of the school which he (Shaykh Abdul Mumin) did not want to disclose to the researcher.

There seemed to be a contradiction in Shaykh Abdul Mumin's account. This is because he indicated earlier that they do not indoctrinate the students with the teachings of the Shi'ah (Ahlul-Bayt). He later however asked a rhetoric question as to whether there can be a religiously established school that will accept to compromise its core teachings for the others.

I am of the view that belonging to a religion or doctrinal group should be based on a person's natural inclination and not by compulsion.

Notwithstanding the fact that Shaykh Abubakar had his entire studies from the traditional centres of Islamic school known as the *Majālis* (study centers/circles), yet he was able to teach in Fathhul Mubeen Islamic School, which is a *Mahalliyyah* (structured class room

method) with Arabic as a medium of instruction. This shows the determined nature and the intellectual capacity of the Shaykh.

Before his contact with the School in question, he was already teaching both children and adults in the *Majālis* (study circles) pattern. Therefore, he returned and intensified it which continues to flourish till date.

3.1.4 HIS RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

In an interview with Shaykh Abubakar,¹⁹⁸ he pointed out that he is a Muslim who subscribes to the Māliki School of Thought. He is also a member of the Tijāniyyah *Tariqah* (Sufi path). However, he does not affiliate himself with any of the two factions of Tijāniyyah in Ghana today. Hence, he is not in the camp of Ciessey nor the camp of Jallo. He further maintained that there is nothing like division in Tijāniyyah since the founder and the teachings of Tijāniyyah is one. Therefore, he is with all the Tijāniyyah scholars in Ghana in as much as their actions are in conformity with the Shari’ah. Conversely, he departs from them when they deviate from the Shari’ah or the pristine teachings of Tijāniyyah. Every Shari’ah oriented Tijāniyyah scholar, according to him, should be respected regardless of who the person is or his background.

Shaykh Abubakar appeared to have followed the mainstream religious traditions and views that were available to him, or perhaps he was influenced by majority of the people who adhere to the Islamic doctrine and the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood. This is because his religious affiliation, and School of Thought, are all part of the dominant religious group within Northern Ghana specifically and West Africa in general. In addition to that, his

¹⁹⁸ Shaykh Abubakar, an Islamic Scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 23rd December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale.

engagements with only the Tijāniyyah scholars might have been a factor that shaped his jurisprudential background and his Islamic doctrine. The trend of following the religion and doctrine of one's parent can be another motivating factor. In this regard, Shaykh Abdullah Yahyah Musha whose parents are Muslim and subscribe to Tijāniyyah *Tarīqah* automatically subscribes to that which his parents believe. However, in recent times there has been a gradual shift from such trend. Hence you will find for example one whose father subscribes to Māliki School of law opting for Hanbali School of law and vice versa. A practical example can be cited of Afa Nūrid-deen Yusuf Ajura, the current elder son of one of the pioneers of Salafism under the banner of the Ambariyyah Muslim Community in Tamale, Afa Yusuf Ajura. In an interview with him, he disclosed to me that he joined the Tijāniyyah fraternity which is largely Māliki in orientation since 1967 contrary to the orientation championed by his father in the Northern Region. He further added that the father never reprimanded him nor complained about him joining the Tijāniyyah fraternity which is linked to the Maliki School of law.¹⁹⁹

Albeit, the availability of perhaps only Māliki and Ahmadi doctrines before the emergence of Hanbali doctrine through the proselytizing efforts of scholars such as Afa Yusuf Ajura and Hajj Umar Ibrahim Imam might also be a contributing factor that shaped his jurisprudential background and his Islamic doctrine.

3.1.5 HIS OUTREACH PROGRAMS

In 1996, when Radio Savannah was inaugurated in Tamale, Shaykh Abubakar was among the few selected scholars chosen by the elders of the Tamale central Mosque such as the

¹⁹⁹ Afa Nūrid-deen Yusuf Ajura, a retired Teacher, interviewed on 18th May, 2018 through a Phone Call.

late Mallam Abdul-Sami'u Abubakar to preach and answer questions for the Muslim *Ummah* within the Northern Region. He preached continuously on Radio Savannah for a period of five years. It was in 2001 that he stopped preaching on Radio Savannah. Asked why he stopped, Shaykh Abubakar answered that it was as a result of the silence by some *Ulamāh* of the Tijāniyyah fraternity on comments made by Shaykh Salawatia (Imam Rashid) which were demeaning to the *Sahābas* (companions of the Prophet). He first drew their attention by writing a letter to the elders drawing attention to consequences of such pronouncements. Unfortunately, he did not receive the expected feedback and no action was taken against Imam Rashid. This made him to stop preaching on Radio Savannah.²⁰⁰ It thus shows the level of impatience of Shaykh Abubakar when it comes to issues on Islamic principles that contradict his views. In any case, Shaykh Abubakar could have used the Radio Station as a medium to clarify matters that he deemed contrary to Imam Rashid's attestations. However, he still occasionally visit places to preach during funerals, marriages, among others.

3.1.6 HIS CAREER

Shaykh Abubakar's profession has been teaching and writing of Islamic books purely in Arabic. He also wrote a book²⁰¹ in praise of some dignified leaders of the Tijāniyyah fraternity. Some of these leaders include; Shaykh Aliyyu Ciessey, Shaykh Hassan Ciessey, Shaykh Tahiru Bauchi, Shaykh Babal Waiz, and Shaykh Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk. According to him, the work has received wide acceptance by the adherents of the Tijāniyyah fraternity.

²⁰⁰ Shaykh Abubakar, an Islamic Scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 23rd December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale.

²⁰¹ *Mirātul Mureedul Fānee fii Ruyatul Khulafa'ut-Tijāni* (Mirror of an Annihilated Seeker for Viewing the Successors (Sheikhul) Tijāni)

This and many other works²⁰² written by him, serve as his source of income. Hence, the Shaykh made his living through his personal works. This economic independence of the Shaykh afforded him the freedom to speak his mind without fear or favor. This is contrary to scholars who depend totally on the Muslim *Ummah* or the wealthy for their sustenance. However, in some instances, the Shaykh receives *Sadaqah* and *Hadāyah* (charity and gifts) from some Muslims either seeking Allah's pleasure or seeking prayers from him since this is a general trend within the Muslim communities in Ghana.

3.1.7 HIS LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Shaykh Abubakar can be described as a prolific author taking into consideration his works. Apart from his treatise, sermons, pamphlets, and yet to be published works, Shaykh Abubakar currently has ten (10) manuscripts to his credit. He is quite instrumental in presenting pristine Sufism in his writings. One unique characteristic of his literary work is that all his works are written in Arabic. This shows how intelligent he is and the command he has over the Arabic language. Some of his widespread works are:

1. *Tanbihul Uqalaahu Ilā Maksidil Awliyah* (Awakening the Wise towards the Goal of Saints): According to him,²⁰³ he wrote this manuscript following the misunderstanding that took place within the Tijāniyyah fraternity due to differences of opinion on certain theological issues (such as singing, drumming and dancing,

²⁰² These include: Awakening the wise towards the goal of saints, Mirror of an annihilated seeker for viewing the successors (Sheikhul) Tijāni), The joy of the beloved writer in praising the noble Prophet, Cherries/Rubies of Sufism, Obtaining the answer in supplicating through the names of the companions, Swords of the saints in severing the ignorant and the fools, Lifting the controversy from what the latter generations differ, and Historical memories around thirty years from the death of the great professor, Mallam Sofo. These titles of the work were loosely translated into English by the researcher since they are written in Arabic.

²⁰³ Shaykh Abubakar Musah, an Islamic Scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 24th December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale.

seeking assistance from *Jinn*) among the scholars. These differences became worsen to the extent that it nearly led to break in communication between scholars of the Tijāniyyah fraternity. This made some *Murids* (disciples/ seekers)²⁰⁴ to be at logger heads with each other which necessitated the writing of this manuscript. In it, the Shaykh drew the attention of the adherents of Tijāniyyah to the consequences of division, and hence the need for them to come together under one banner. He emphasised on how the Tijāniyyah *Tarīqah* promotes love for others and dislike for division. At the latter part of the manuscript, he called on the Tijāniyyah scholars to be up and doing by teaching the *Murids* (disciples/ seekers) the *Usūl* (fundamentals) of the religion. According to him, there were new deviating groups penetrating slowly into the country and if care was not taken, these would cause destruction by convincing the youth to accept these foreign doctrines. He was of the view that unity can only be achieved if the Tijāniyyah established their own *Makarantas* (Qur'ānic schools) to propagate untainted doctrines of the Tijāniyyah.

2. *Mirātul Mureedul Fānee fī Ruyatul Khulafa'ut-Tijāni* (Mirror of an Annihilated Seeker for Viewing the Successors (Sheikhul) Tijāni): This is a collection of praises of some Tijāniyyah scholars. In this manuscript, he praised the highly recognized Tijāniyyah *Shuyukh* (Shaykhs) from Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. He highlighted on their good manners, and their contributions to the development of Islam and the Tijāniyyah *Tarīqah* (Sufi Path). This manuscript is written in a poetic form.

²⁰⁴ Murid is a Sufi term which means a seeker, disciple or an aspirant. In general it refers to a person who seeks spiritual realization by pledging allegiance to the spiritual directive, authorities and guidance of his Sufi master.

3. *Masarratul Ārifeen fii Madhi Sayyidul Mursaleen* (Gratification of the people of Divine Knowledge in Eulogizing the Master of Messengers): It is a comprehensive work on the praises of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).
4. *Ka'asul Faydah Lirijālil Hadrah* (Trophy of Divine Flood for the Men (of divine Presence): It is an extensive work on what *Tasawwuf* (mystical inner dimension of Islam) stands for. In this work, he called on the *Murids* (disciples/ seekers) and the entire adherents of Tijāniyyah to stand firm on the principles of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. He also made clear distinction between Allah's *Waliiyyu* (friends) and Shaytan's *Waliiyyu* (friends). He ended the book by reechoing clearly the advice of Shaykh Ibrahim Nyass in which he cautioned the adherents of the Tijāniyyah to be steadfast in Islam.
5. *Farhul habeebul Adeeb fii madhin-najeebul Areeb* (The joy of the beloved writer in praising the noble): He dedicated this work to the praises of his teacher-Mallam Jibreel Sofo. He praised his good character and how he championed the cause of Islam through his *Da'wah* activities and literary works. He also listed some students of knowledge who have tremendously benefited from Mallam Sofo's scholarship.
6. *Mawāqitūs-Sūfiyyah* (Cherries/ Rubies of Sufism): It is an exposition on Sufism. In this work, he points out what *Tassawuf* seeks to achieve which he identified as drawing a servant closer to his Creator and refinement of the soul through voluntary acts of worship. He further elaborated on who true servants of Allah are and the attributes of Allah that are manifestly clear to each and every individual to know about His existence.

7. *Naylul-Ejābah fit-tawassul bi-asmāussahābah* (Obtaining the answer in supplicating through the names of the Companions): This manuscript explains the concept of *Tawassul* (seeking closeness/ intercession)²⁰⁵ through the Prophet and his Companions. He encouraged Tijānis to capitalize on *Tawassul* to obtain their needs from Allah.
8. *Suyūful Awliyah fii Kat-el Juhalā'e wal Agbiyā'u* (Swords of the Saints in severing the ignorant and the fools): He explains in this work the two types of *Wilāyah* (Sainthood)²⁰⁶ and who constitute a true *Murid* (disciple/ seeker). In addition to that he elucidates on how a true *Murid* should humble himself to the servitude and command of his spiritual master. He includes in great details the issue of *Jinn* and why every Muslim should distance his/her self from them, especially when it comes to seeking help from them. He clarifies the distinction that exist between *Jinn* and humans and the superiority Allah gave to human beings over the *Jinn*.

²⁰⁵ The word *Tawassul* literally means ways through which a person draws closer to something. Islamically, it means through which a person attained his objective of drawing closer to Almighty Allah. Qur'an 5:35 and Qur'an 17:57 make reference to that. There is a contention as to the fourth means (using the righteous who are dead) through which a person can make *Tawassul*. According to the Salafis, it is limited to only three means; through the means of Allah's beautiful names and attributes (Qur'an 7:180), by means of one's faith in Allah and righteous deeds such as fasting, recitation of the Qur'an, among others (Qur'an 3:53), and lastly by means of a supplication made by a righteous person to another. To some Sufis, the fourth one is through the righteous people who are dead. They argued that, since *Tawassul* is allowed through righteous people when they are alive, hence, it is equally accepted even after their demise. Shaykh Abubakar accept this fourth means of *Tawassul* but added that, *Tawassul* in this regard should be directed towards only the pious servants who have proven, beyond reasonable doubts, their righteousness and good qualities based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah when they were alive. He strongly condemned what is currently happening in Prang at the grave yard of Shaykh Abdullah Maikano in the name of *Tawassul*. For him that does not constitute *Tawassul* but rather "Shirk". In his assessment Mallam Maikano does not qualify to fall under the category of a Shaykh that one can use in his *Tawassul* because his actions and pronouncements when he was alive totally contradict the Shari'ah.

²⁰⁶ Linguistically, *Wilāyah* connotes two meaning, Sovereign power or authority and mutual solidarity or friendship and protector of the other. For instance Qur'an 2:257, Qur'an 7:196, and Qur'an 3:122 made reference to this meaning. For the Sufis and for that matter in this context, it means a man close to Allah or better still a Saint.

9. *Raful Khilāf fiimakhtalaf fiihil Akhlāf* (Lifting the controversy from what the latter generations differ): In this work, he talked about *Tasawwuf* and how *Sufis* conduct themselves, arguing that, *Tasawwuf* is part of the Sunnah of the Prophet and the Pious Successors. For him, *Tasawwuf* is not an innovation. It constitutes the core component of Islam. As a result, members strictly follow the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, calling people to Allah, knowing Allah and His attributes and trying to draw closer to Him and being ascetic. He debunked the assertion that *Sufis* and the Shi'ah (Ahlul-Bayt) Muslims are the same. For him, *Sufis* are part of the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah.
10. *Azzikrayātīt-tārikhiyyah bimunāsabati hulūlu Salāseenah sanah min Wafātil Ustāzul Akbar- Mallam Sofo*. (Historical memories around thirty years from the death of the great Professor, Mallam Sofo): This an explanation of his general observation on the success achieved by Shaykh Jibreel (Mallam Sofo) even after thirty years of his demise.

Analysing the existing literary works of Shaykh Abubakar reveals that his works are limited to *Sufism* (the mystical inward dimension of Islam) and their *Turūq* (Sufi paths), and how they contribute to the cleansing of the inner self (soul) through *Zikr* (remembrance of Allah). Asked why Shaykh Abubakar limited his writing to *Sufism* and not Islam in general, Mallam Akilu Ibrahim (Karami) who is an intimate friend and contemporary of Shaykh Abubakar indicated that *Tasawwuf* (Sufism) is an integral part of the Islamic faith which deals with the most crucial organ of the human being. *Sufism* aims at purifying the heart from lowly bestial qualities such as envy, jealousy, hatred, greed, among others. He further noted that, Shaykh Abubakar concentrated on *Sufism* in order to educate especially

the young *Murids* (disciples/ seekers) what *Sufism* is all about and not to assume that, because they are *Murids* (disciples/ seekers) they can do whatever they want even if those actions go against the tenets of Islam. The *Murid* should not act contrary to the Shari'ah. Instead he should abstain from base desires that will lead to that. He quoted the founder of the Tijāniyyah fraternity- Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni as saying “If you hear anything attributed to me, weigh it on the scale of the Shari'ah. If it conforms, accept it, otherwise reject it”²⁰⁷ This is in conformity with another saying attributed to him “Know that Sufism is compliance with Allah’s command and avoidance of His prohibitions, externally and internally, with regard to what pleases Him, not what pleases you.”²⁰⁸ Hence, *Sufis* operate within the Shari'ah. Any action contrary to the Shari'ah is not part of the Tijāniyyah. For Mallam Akilu, the insults levelled against some Tijāniyyah *Shuyūkh* (Shaykhs) today is as a result of the actions of some *Murids* that are contrary to the *Tarīqah*. Hence, there is the need for the likes of Shaykh Abubakar to clear those misconceptions in his works.²⁰⁹ In his works Shaykh Abubakar calls for total adherence to the pristine path of the Tijāniyyah.

However, according to Shaykh Abubakar Musah,²¹⁰ he focused his works on *Sufism* for two reasons. The first reason is based on the contemporary needs of the Tijāniyyah adherents. He argued that, currently, most adherents of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood are ignorant of what they practice, the goals and objectives of Tijāniyyah, and why they adhere to the Tijāniyyah Sufi Path. This, to some extent, has made some of them to perform certain

²⁰⁷ Shaykh Hassan Cisse, *Translation and Commentary of the Spirit of Good Morals by Shaykh of Islam Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse* (Michigan, 1998: 12-13).

²⁰⁸ Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni, cited in Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse, *Kashf al-Ilbas*; in *Pearls from the Divine Flood: Selected Discourses of Shaykh al-Islam Ibrahim Niasse* (Atlanta, 2006: 48).

²⁰⁹ Mallam Muhammad Akilu Ibrahim (Karami), current acting Deputy Chief Imam of Bawku, interviewed on 1st April, 2018 through a Phone call.

²¹⁰ Shaykh Abubakar, an Islamic Scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 1st April, 2018 through a Phone call.

acts such as seeking help from *Jinn* and mixing indigenous customs in their Islamic practice. There is therefore, the need to explain to them the real teachings of the Path.

The second reason as he argued is that, every scholar has his own area of interest and speciality when it comes to writing. Though some scholars write virtually in all fields of Islamic knowledge, nonetheless, they still have their areas of specialization and interest. For this reason, his interest is on *Tasawwuf*.

3.1.8 HIS VIEWS ON CERTAIN PRACTICES OF TIJĀNIYYAH

There has been much debates on certain practices of the Tijāniyyah in Ghana and their theological foundations in Islam. These practices are largely practised by the populist-inclined Tijāniyyah. As a result, it makes it difficult for those who are accustomed to those ideas in the Tijāniyyah fraternity to consider them anti Islam or Tijāniyyah. In the intellectual development of Shaykh Abubakar especially in his writings, he proved to be a staunch defender of the Shari'ah. However, there are also some theological denominations that have also written papers to refute and condemn those practices without looking at the other side of the argument. These differences have become so worsened and have led to divisions of both the *Ulamāh* and their fellowship. The views of Shaykh Abubakar on Some of these practices that largely relates to theological issues are presented below:

3.1.8.1 THE MINGLING OF THE SEXES IN THE MAULID CELEBRATION

Shaykh Abubakar Musah, when asked of his view regarding the indiscriminate mingling of sexes noted that, generally, a person's Islam will not be perfect except when his *Aqīdah* (creed) is strong and perfect. Similarly, no *Tarīqah* (Sufi path) will be perfect except when it is built on a strong perfect *Aqīdah*. He developed his point by condemning the commonly

shared notion that the adherents of the Tijāniyyah Sufi Path disregard the Shari'ah in their practices. He conclusively states that all the pioneers of the *Turūq* (Spiritual Paths) perfected their *Aqīdah* (the *Aqīdah* of Ahlus-Sunnah) before even their establishment of these spiritual Paths which is an optional obligation in attaining the pleasure of Allah. He further maintained that, the general principle of Tijāniyyah which he strongly adheres to is that, if anything is considered lawful in Islam then it is equally lawful in Tijāniyyah. In the same way if anything is considered forbidden in Islam, it is equally considered forbidden in Tijāniyyah.

The indiscriminate mingling of sexes, according to Shaykh Abubakar Musah, is highly detested in Tijāniyyah. To buttress his claim, he cited a Tijāniyyah book titled *Yāqūtatul Farīdah* in which women were prohibited from mingling with men even during *Wazīfa* (the daily recitation of the Tijāniyyah litanies). It continues that, women should not make apparent any acts of worship especially *Zikr* since their voices may arouse men's desire. He further cited Shaykh Ibrahim Nyass in his book titled *Naylul- Mafāz* in which he exhorted women to compete with men in seeking spiritual growth but cautioned them against mingling with men. For him therefore, women must not even sit together with men in the course of the *Wazīfa* (the daily recitation of the Tijāniyyah litanies). Most preferably, they should sit out of the sight of men and should not raise their voices in the course of the *Wazīfa*. The only concession given by the Shari'ah which men can mingle with women is during Hajj.

The proponents and sympathisers of this practice (mingling of the sexes) however argue that intermingling of both sexes has made the religion of Islam liberal thereby taking into account the needs of the younger generation and the masses. Again as presented by

Dumbe, this practice was tolerated and incorporated by the leadership because they were of the view that, it attracted and took into consideration the interest of the youth and women who, by nature, are very inclined to entertainment.²¹¹

This argument is flawed in the sense that in Islam, right and wrong are determined based on the dictates of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. This does not suggest that Islam relegates or does not take into account the *Maslaha* (the interests) of the *Ummah*. It only does that if such interests are to promote either the spiritual or the physical yearnings of the people and done under the guidance of the Shari'ah.

It is undoubtedly this seemingly fervent attitude towards this practice with the aim of pleasing the masses that made scholars like Shaykh Abubakar Musah to consider the act as conflicting with the Shari'ah since the argument was not grounded on any scriptural evidence.

3.1.8.2 SINGING AND DANCING

Singing and dancing, according to Shaykh Abubakar, is not part of the Tijāniyyah. It is an innovation and later development which dates back to the period 1982-1983. In his assertion, singing and dancing was introduced into the Tijāniyyah fraternity specifically in Ghana by the late Shaykh Abdullahi Maikano Jallo (d.2005)²¹² in Prang in the Brong Ahafo

²¹¹ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 61.

²¹² He was born at Aborso on 13th September, 1928. He started the study of the Qur'ān and the Islamic Sciences under the tutelage of his grandfather- Imam Abdul Mumin and Mallam Abdul-Lāhi Makāfu respectively in Aborso before proceeding to Kumasi to study under the tutelage of Shaykh Harūn Rashid. He was among the early Ghanaians to have studied at Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. (Mohammad Saani, 2001:154). The hallmark and the role played by Shaykh Abdullahi Maikano Jallo in the development of Tijāniyyah in Ghana cannot be underscored. He was able to accomplish a great task by combating some Wahhabi leaders both in Tamale and Kumasi such as Afa Yusuf Ajura and Mallam Abdul-Samad who later became his arch-rivals in the scholarly engagements. However, in the latter part of his life, some of his activities and religious pronouncements (despite the refutation by section of the Tijāniyyah scholars) such as the permissibility of mingling of sexes, dancing and drumming among others generated an intra-Tijāniyyah

Region in the year 1982-3. He further condemned the disseminating of such practices by the populist-inclined Tijāniyyah who adhere to the ideology of Shaykh Abdullahi Maikano. He maintains that, the founder of the Tijāniyyah, Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni and his disciple, Shaykh Ibrahim Nyass who championed the development of the Tijāniyyah in Africa and beyond never practised nor endorsed singing and drumming. He argued that if these practice were good and proper they would have been the first to practise or promote them.

Rejecting the idea of singing and dancing, he cited (Qur'ān 31: 6)²¹³ and (Qur'ān 17:64)²¹⁴ as scriptural evidence for the prohibition of singing and drumming.

On the other hand, scholars who advocate for singing and drumming rely on the Hadith which was reported by Aisha that it was the days of Mina, (11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) Abu Bakr came to her while two young girls were beating the tambourine and the Prophet was lying covered with his clothes. Abu Bakr scolded them and the Prophet uncovered his face and said to Abu Bakr, “Leave them, for these days are the days of *Eid* and the days of Mina.” Aisha further said, “Once the Prophet was screening me and I was watching the display of black slaves in the Mosque and (Umar) scolded them. The Prophet said, ‘Leave them. O Bani Arfida! (carry on) you are safe (protected)’.”²¹⁵

To further support their position, they rely on the hadith again narrated by Aisha. She said, Abu Bakr came to my house while two small Ansāri girls were singing beside me the stories

disputes which continue to exist till date. He therefore served as the leader and championed the course of the Populist position of the masses as far as these theological issues are concerned.

²¹³ Which reads “And of mankind is he who purchases idle talks (music, singing, etc) to mislead (men) from the path of Allaah...” According to Ibn Abbaas, this verse is making reference to singing. Mujāhid also said, the above verse means playing the drum. (Tafsīr al-Tabari, 21/40).

²¹⁴ Which reads “(Allaah said to Iblīs), And beguile them gradually those whom you can among them with your voice (i.e. songs, music, and any other call for Allah’s disobedience...)”

²¹⁵ Sahih al-Bukhāri Vol. 2, Book of The Two Festivals (Eids), Hadith 103.

of the Ansār concerning the Day of Buath. And they were not singers. Abu Bakr said protestingly, “Musical instruments of Satan in the house of Allah's Apostle!” It happened on the Eid day and Allah's Apostle said, “O Abu Bakr! There is an *Eid* for every nation and this is our *Eid*.”²¹⁶

Two indisputable facts can be deduced from the two authentic Hadith narrations above. Firstly, the Prophet did not prevent them nor did he allow Abu Bakr nor Umar to prevent them even though he (the Prophet) covered himself. A conclusion can therefore be drawn that it was his tacit approval. Secondly, it is permissible to drum and sing (though with diverse scholarly interpretations) by young girls on occasions such as *Eid* and marriage.

However, a critical look at the Hadith defeats the argument of those scholars who relates the permissibility of drumming and singing based on the above *Ahādith* because of the following analysis. The first analysis is the saying of Aisha that it was the occasion of *Eid*. This clearly indicates that it was not usual of them nor the companions both male and female to listen to singing and drumming and that is why Abu Bakr referred to it as “Musical instruments of Satan” even though it was only done on *Eid* day. Hence, the Hadith only approved the singing of only women on the occasion of *Eid* as it is clearly stated in the above hadith and that is the view of most scholars. In all, we can say that the occasion and the manner in which it was done are very important.

²¹⁶ Sahih al-Bukhāri Vol. 2, Book of The Two Festivals (Eids), Hadith 72

The second analysis is that, there is no direct or indirect indication that really attests to the fact that Prophet was listening nor sitting in their midst as it is done today by the advocates at virtually every social gathering especially during *Maulid*. However, we cannot dispute the fact that he was hearing what they were saying. Again, we cannot over-rule the fact that, Aisha at this point was young contrary to those who engage in this practice today.

3.1.8.3 MARRIAGE BEYOND FOUR WIVES.

According to Shaykh Abubakar, there is clear evidence from the Jurisprudence books and the Shari'ah on the number of wives a Muslim can have at a time. Citing Qur'ān 4:3 which clearly permits up to four wives, he further argued that a man cannot go beyond four wives except when he divorces one of the four wives.

Asserting his argument, Shaykh Abubakar argues that, the marriage of the Prophet beyond four was an exception and a privilege granted him by Allah which does not apply to the generality of the Muslim *Ummah* as it is clearly stated in Qur'ān 33:50. To further buttress the claim that this was exclusive preserve for the Prophet, he cited a Hadith narrated by Al-Harith ibn Qays al-Asadi who said: I embraced Islam while I had eight wives. So I mentioned it to the Prophet (Peace be upon him). The Prophet said: Select four of them.²¹⁷ This therefore means that, not even the companions were excused to marry beyond the stipulated limit of Allah.

The proponents of this view however argue that, the *Tafsīr* (commentary) of the above cited verse (Qur'ān 5:3) may also mean a person can marry double, triple, or quadruple. In

²¹⁷ Sunan Abu Dawood Vol. 3, Book of Divorce (Kitab Al-Talaq), Hadith 2233.

addition to that as noted by Dumbe, the proponents of this perceived un-Islamic stance argue that the limit of four wives placed by the Shari'ah is a general rule which can be overruled due to exceptional situations such as to cater for the extra needs of a scholar in order to effectively carry out his religious duties.²¹⁸

Taking their argument into account, it can be realized that, Qur'ān 16:44 emphatically makes it clear that the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet to make it clear to men what was revealed to them. Hence, his commentary or practicality over-rules the commentary of any Scholar. In practical terms, there are many *Ahādith* in which the Prophet ordered the companions to divorce and leave only four wives after they became Muslims. For instance the case of Ibn Shihāb who had ten wives²¹⁹ and the case of Qais bin Hārith who had eight wives.²²⁰

The ruling of Shaykh Abubakr as un-Islamic the practice of marrying beyond four wives seems to be more plausible taking into consideration the dictates of Shari'ah. This among others is why the practice was criticized and has met with opposition from a great number of Muslim Scholars since its inception in Ghana.

3.1.9 DAILY ROUTINE OF SHAYKH ABUBAKAR

Shaykh Abubakar routine schedule for his daily activities revolves on acts of worship and teaching. After *Fajr* (dawn prayers), he occupies himself with Qur'ānic recitation and other

²¹⁸ Dumbe, *Islamic Revivalism*, 63.

²¹⁹ Muwatta Malik Book of Divorce, Hadith 76.

²²⁰ Sunan Ibn Majah Vol. 3, Book of Chapters on Marriage, Hadith 1952.

optional supplications reflecting on Qur'ān (7:205) which calls on believers not to be heedless but instead remember their lord within themselves with humility and fear and not in loud voice both in the morning and the evening. Thereafter, he would teach students of different levels till around 10:30 am just in front of his house. After that, he rests before *Zuhr* (noon prayer). Thereafter, he engages himself in revision of his Islamic books till *Asr* (afternoon prayer) time. After *Asr* prayers, he engages himself in the mandatory *Zikr* (remembrance of Allah) as a member of the Tijāniyyah Brotherhood. Shortly after the *Zikr*, he would again engage the students who come to learn from him in various fields of Islamic Science till *Maghrib* (sunset prayer). This is his routine daily religious activities with the exception of Fridays.

3.1.10 CONCLUSION

Shaykh Abubakar is a Tijāniyyah scholar who has contributed through his writings in shaping the Tijāniyyah discourse in Ghana. His role in the eradication of the excesses people associate with Tijāniyyah is worth commending. As observed from the discussions, Shaykh Abubakar has proven beyond any doubt to be the number one Tijāniyyah scholar in the three Northern Regions with a number of works relating to Tijāniyyah. Similarly, his manuscripts reveal that he is an expert when it comes to Poetry. That notwithstanding, he is among the odd scholars who has devoted virtually all his time to impacting Knowledge to students.

3.2 THE LIFE HISTORY OF SHAYKH NUHU JIHAD

Shaykh Nuhu Abubakar Siddik Jihad,²²¹ better known as Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, was born in the year 1970 at Ampabame in Kumasi, Ashante Region of Ghana. He had his early life in Ampabame until 1988 when he moved to Bochen, a suburb of Kumasi. His Parents are Alhaji Abubakar Siddik Gambo and Hajia Halimah Mahmud both of whom were farmers from Bawku in the Upper East Region of Ghana. He is married to four wives who are all currently living with him. The marriage to his first wife took place in 1989.²²²

The marriage of four wives by the Shaykh is an indication of his strict adherence to Qur’ān 4:3 which makes it lawful for Muslim men to marry up to four wives if they are capable of sustaining them and dealing with them equitably.

²²¹ According to Shaykh Nuhu, the name “*Jihad*” originally was for an organization which has its center in Tarkwa Makro near Suame-magazine, Kumasi. This organization intended to establish *Jumu’ah* (the Friday prayers) and therefore were looking for an Imām who could preach in Asante-Twi since the Muslims in that vicinity were largely Asante speaking Muslims. Coincidentally, he has also been doing *Tafsir* (commentary of the Qur’an) in Bochen Central Mosque after *Maghrib* (sunset) prayers. It was there that a member of this Jihad organization by name Abubakar Tabārakallah of blessed memory chance his *Tafsir* and told his members about him. He later consulted him about their decision to take him as their Imām but he declined with the excuse that, he is not qualified to lead the Friday prayers. So Tabārakallah went and informed his members, but subsequently, Tabārakallah came back to inform him again that they had an Arab Man who will be leading the prayers, and hence what they needed is for him to have a pre-sermon with them before the Arab man comes to lead. Not knowing it was just a means adopted to trap him. On that faithful day for the commissioning of the Mosque, he met many scholars including the likes of Shaykh Sualah who was his former teacher at Bantama Islamic Quarter to one, he was told by the members of this Jihad organization that he should forgo the pre-sermon and lead them to pray the *Jumu’ah* (Friday prayers). Startled as he was, he quickly approached Shaykh Sualah to lead the prayers but he also insisted that he (Shaykh Nuhu) lead. He then moved to one Mallam Faruk who was then the Moshie Chief Imām for Suame, he also affirmed and encouraged him to lead. So he was left with no option than to lead them for the prayer which he actually did. This marked the genesis of him being named “Jihad” in reference to the organization. Currently the organization has been renamed as Islamic Propagation and Research Centre (IPRC) due to the wrong connotation attached to the word. This incidence happened in the 80s, as a result, he became famous. This is because at that time, it was only few mosques that observe the *Jumu’ah* prayers, thus, the Central Mosque, Soldier line, and Tafo under the auspices of Adam Baba. The entire of Suame and its environs has no *Jumu’ah* Mosque. (Interview with Shaykh Nuhu on 14th December, 2017 in his office at Roman Hill, Kumasi.).

²²² Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, an Islamic scholar and Director of Islamic Library and Recording Centre, interviewed on 14th December, 2017 in his office at Roman Hill, Kumasi.

Shaykh Nuhu Jihad currently has thirteen children. Four sons²²³ and nine daughters.²²⁴

3.2.1 HIS EDUCATIONAL PURSUIT

Shaykh Nuhu Jihad started his Islamic education from the old traditional method of learning known as *Majlis* (study centre) from a Moshie cleric by name Mallam Adam Abdul-Mumin who lived in Bochen-an area not far from Bantama-Kumasi. Regarding his secular education, he started it at Bantama Islamic school, Kumasi. As he recounted, during his early school days, it became apparent to him and his teachers that his background in secular education was not encouraging. However, he was very good in Arabic. As a result, he was employed as an Arabic instructor in that school. Considering the financial constraints of his family, he had no option than to accept the offer so that he could make a living. Shaykh Muhammad Sualah Ahmad, who schooled in Saudi Arabia, used to teach virtually all the Arabic teachers in Bantama Islamic school during their break time. Shaykh Nuhu Jihad was part of these teachers who benefitted from this lessons. He later enrolled at *Mahdul Ālee* (Higher Institute of Islamic Studies) in Kumasi for his Secondary Islamic education.

Shaykh Nuhu Jihad had ambition for both Islamic and secular education. Therefore he joined the Ghana Institute of Languages (GIL) for the English section. This was after he completed *Mahdul Ālee*. When he was done with his teaching at Bantama Islamic School, he moved to Ghana Institute of Languages for the English classes. In addition to that, he used to teach at *Nūriyyah Makaranta* (Qur'ānic school) that was handed to him by his

²²³ They are; Tamim, Abubakar Siddiq (named after his father), Ahmad (named after his teacher), and Abdus-Samad.

²²⁴ They are; Halimah, Khadijah, Sumayyah, Emān, Ummul-Kulthum, Aminah, Hawawu, Salmah, and Aishah.

former teacher, Mallam Adam Abdul-Mumin. Hence, he combined both learning and teaching at the same time. With increasing numbers of the students, he divided the *Makaranta* (Qur'ānic school) into morning and evening sessions. After teaching his students in the morning, he left for his English classes and returned to teach the evening students. These were largely students who went for school in the morning. Finally, in the evening, he left to do *Tafsīr* (commentary of the Qur'ān). This was his daily routine activities till he left for further studies in Saudi Arabia in 1994.

In the midst of learning, teaching and propagating the Islamic faith that one Shaykh Dr. Ahmad Umar Abdullah returned from Saudi Arabia and was residing at his community-Bochen. Shaykh Nuhu took advantage of Dr. Ahmad Umar Abdullah's presence and started learning from him. Due to his passion for knowledge and *Da'wah* (Islamic propagation), whenever the Ahlus-Sunnah were to embark on *Da'wah* programs, he join them and went in the company of Shaykh Muhammad Zakaria a Qatar trained Scholar, Shaykh Ahmad Badawi and Shaykh Zakaria Musah who currently resides in America.

In 1994, he left Ghana for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to further his Islamic education in the field of Shari'ah (Islamic law).²²⁵

²²⁵ Shaykh Nuhu, an Islamic scholar and Director of Islamic Library and Recording Centre, interviewed on 14th December, 2017 in his office at Roman Hill, Kumasi.

3.2.2 SHAYKH NUHU JIHAD IN SAUDI ARABIA

Shaykh Nuhu Jihad left for Saudi Arabia in 1994 on a scholarship to study in Islamic University, Madinah. He studied *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) and some courses in *Da'wah*. He completed his course within the period of five years.

In Saudi Arabia, he studied under prominent scholars such as Shaykh Attiyah Sālim who delivered lectures in the Mosque of the Prophet (S.A.W). Other teachers of Shaykh Nuhu were Shaykh Muhammad Ayyub- the Imām of Quba Mosque,²²⁶ Shaykh Khālid Addausari, Dr. Ali Zahrāni, Dr. Ayyub, Dr. Jābir Asiry, Dr. Muhammad Al-awāki, Dr. Muhammad At-Tawasi, among others.

During his stay in Saudi Arabia, he was honored to work with *Dāwatul-Jāliyaat* (Islamic propagation centre) which focuses on educating new converts and providing educational and material support to them. This, he thinks, was as a result of the good testimony conferred on him by some Ghanaian scholars. As a result of his association with this Organization, he used to record for them Sermons concerning the wonders of Allah, Judgment day, *Tawhid* (oneness of Allah), *Zakāt* (Obligatory alms in Islam), *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Makkah), among others. In all, he had about fifteen cassettes on different topics in his possession. He also distributed cassettes concerning Hajj to the Ghanaian pilgrims who visited Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage.

Committed to his vision of establishing an Islamic Library and Recording Center in Ghana, he used to buy cassettes and books in Saudi Arabia. It was on one of such occasions that

²²⁶ Quba is located at the outskirt of Madinah. It was the first Mosque that was built by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). In addition to this historical fact, it was the mosque that the Prophet and his companion (Abū Bakr) rested for fourteen days during their *Hijra* (migration from Makkah to Madinah). Qur'ān 9:108 made reference to this mosque.

one of the vendors by name Shaykh Sualah Sharif from Yemen inquired from him why he is spending such huge sums of money on such materials. He informed him of his intention to establish a similar center in Ghana. Consequently, Shaykh Sualah Sharif contacted one Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called Mustauda al-Khayr to come to his aid. In the subsequent month when he was paid his allowance, he went to buy the books and cassettes as usual. Shaykh Sualah Sharif told him that, due to the good intention he (Shaykh Nuhu) had, he (Shaykh Sualah) has contacted Mustauda al-Khayr to assist him and they have accepted to pay for all that he needed including the cost of the building he is going to rent for the center in Ghana. This led to the establishment of the Islamic Library and Recording Center in Kumasi which happens to be the first community based Islamic Library in Kumasi.²²⁷

3.2.3 HIS PREACHING SESSIONS

According to Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, he started preaching when he was a student in the Ghana Institute of Languages. He was motivated to do so when he realised that, preaching in Twi was not common in the Ashanti Region, especially Kumasi. It was only done by a few Muslim clerics such as the late Shaykh Adam Mohammed Appiedu (d.2007).²²⁸ He was quick to add that, during that time, the likes of Shaykh Ibrahim Ishāk Nuamah and Shaykh Harūn Apau were still in Saudi Arabia studying. He therefore derived the impetus of preaching in Twi from Shaykh Adam Appiedu as he used to attend his *Tafsīr* (commentary

²²⁷ Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, an Islamic Scholar and Director of Islamic Library and Recording Centre, interviewed on 14th December, 2017 in his office at Roman Hill, Kumasi.

²²⁸ He is a Nigerian trained scholar, thinker, reformer and an educationist. That notwithstanding, he is one of the pioneers who modernized Islamic education in Ghana by incorporating Islamic learning to secular curricular. Coupled with that, he was the first Headmaster of Islamic Secondary School, Kumasi in 1962. (Owusu, 2017: 33,60-61)

of the Qur'ān) in the month of Ramadan before proceeding to the *Majlis* (study circle) of his teacher, Shaykh Ilyās Ishāq, currently residing in America.²²⁹

Shaykh Nuhu currently, undertakes open preaching sessions every Sunday evening at Kejetia Central Market using both the Qur'ān and the Bible to convince and convert people to Islam. This open preaching, according to him, started way back in 1990. He also engages in debates with some Christian pastors as part of his preaching. He has also extended his preaching to localities and Muslim areas by moving from one community to another.

3.2.4 HIS CAREER

He is currently a teacher at Ibn Taymiyyah Islamic School in Bochen since he graduated from Islamic University, Madinah in 1998. The Ibn Taymiyyah Islamic School is under the Ghana Education Service (GES) and was formally known as Nūriyyah. After his return from Saudi- Arabia, he incorporated secular disciplines into the curriculum and then renamed it Ibn Taymiyyah Islamic School.

He also teaches at *Mahdul Ālee* (Higher Institute of Islamic Studies) in Kumasi at the Secondary level for almost 20years now. This Arabic school is under the Supreme Council for Islamic Call and Research (SCICR).²³⁰ They run the Arabic program after the normal school hours, in the late afternoon. He is also an Arabic instructor at both the Secondary and the Diploma levels of Nūriyyah Islamiyyah. He also works with Firdaus Foundation

²²⁹ Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, an Islamic Scholar and Director of Islamic Library and Recording Centre interviewed on 14th December, 2017 at his office in Roman Hill, Kumasi.

²³⁰ The SCICR, according to Dumbe, was founded in 1985 to serve as a platform for the common interest of Ghanaian graduates trained in Saudi Arabia. These graduates were sponsored by different religious movements in Saudi Arabia to engage in the propagation of the Hanbali (Salafi) doctrine in Ghana. (Dumbe, 2011: 77).

for Social Services (FFSS)²³¹ as a representative and a counselor. At his Islamic Library and Recording Centre, they record and sell cassettes and books. He is also a strong influential person who provides both religious guidance through Islamic education and material assistance, doing *Tafsīr*, reconciling and providing counselling to couples and parents. He is also involved in the distribution of inheritance. In an interview with Abdul-Hamid Umar,²³² Secretary of Islamic Propagation and Research Centre (IPRC), he pointed out that, Shaykh Nuhu had also been the spiritual leader (Imām) of Islamic Propagation and Research Centre (IPRC) in Kumasi for over thirty years now.

3.2.5 DAILY ROUTINE OF SHAYKH NUHU JIHAD

The daily routine of Shaykh Nuhu is all in the services of Allah and humanity, more importantly, students of Knowledge. On Mondays after *Fajr* (dawn prayers), the Shaykh goes to preach on Zuria Fm 88.7 located at Roman Hill, Kumasi from 6:30am- 7:00am. After which, he proceeds to Ibn Taymiyyah Islamic School where he doubles as a proprietor and a teacher. When it is time for *Zuhr* (noon prayer), he leads the students to pray before dismissing them by 2:00pm. After 2:00pm, he proceeds to his office at Islamic Library, located at Roman Hill where he serves as a counsellor, counselling people on diverse concerns such as marital related problems, reconciling parents and children, sharing inheritance, among others. On Mondays, he spends only some few hours in the office and then moves to teach at the Secondary level at Mahdul Āli from 3:00pm - 6:00pm. The

²³¹ The FFSS is a Non-Governmental Organization that was established in 2006 to provide social services and charitable aids such as free medical care, building boreholes, Schools, Mosques, home for the homeless among others to the needy and destitute across the length and breadth of Ghana. Its head office is located in Nima-Accra.

²³² Abdul-Hamid Umar, Secretary of Islamic Propagation and Research Centre (IPRC), interviewed on 18th March, 2018 after their open forum preaching at Kumasi Central Market (Kejetia).

program on Zuria Fm and teaching in Mahdul Āli are done exclusively on Mondays. This is how he rotates his activities throughout the week, with the exception of Wednesdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, in addition to his usual daily activities he teaches at Nūriyyah both at the Diploma and the Secondary levels from 4:00pm-6:00pm. On Fridays too, after *Fajr* (dawn prayers), from 5:00am-6:00am he preaches on Kapital Radio 97.1 FM located at Nhyiaeso-Kumasi. Also on Fridays, he leads the Friday congregational prayer either at 4BN, Uaddara Barracks- Kumasi, Bochen Cenral Mosque or his personal mosque at Suame. On the same Friday, he has a Radio program on Alpha Radio 104.9 located at Pankrono – Adabraka, Kumasi from 8:00pm-8:30pm. After which he then moves to the Suame Central Mosque for a special *Tafsīr* (commentary of the Qur’ān) training for the youth. Sometimes he goes to the prison to lead the Friday prayers and also to counsel them.

On Saturdays from morning to 2:00pm, Shaykh Nuhu teaches Arabic at Ibn Taymiyyah Islamic School at Bochen-Kumasi. After the classes with the students, Shaykh Nuhu gathers the teachers to teach them till *Asr* (afternoon prayer). After the prayers, he begins his *Tafsīr* (Commentary of the Qur’ān) session in Ibn Taymiyyah Mosque- Bochen.

On Sundays, after teaching at the Ibn Taymiyyah Arabic School, he moves to Kejetia from 3:00pm -6:00pm where there is open air preaching by either using the Bible to preach, debate, *Tafsīr*, lecture or even give seminars.

3.2.6 CONCLUSION

Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, as discussed so far, has a uniquely scholarly background thereby serving as a source of inspiration to many Muslim intellectuals and students. His zeal for Islamic knowledge and its dissemination through the establishment of an integrated school

and community based library is commendable. One principle underlining Shaykh Nuhu's activities is his attempt to reassert and spread the message of Islam to the non-Muslims. In order to achieve this, he engages in debates with the non-Muslim preachers using the Bible and through open air preaching sessions. His expertise in counselling and providing concrete solutions to social problems is remarkable. However, he does not occupy himself with the production of literature.

3.3 THE LIFE HISTORY OF SHAYKH DR. AMIN BONSU

Shaykh Dr. Amin²³³ Bonsu was born in Accra, the capital of Republic of Ghana in the year 1959. He was raised in Beposu where he began his early education (secular and Islamic) before he moved to Kumasi. His father is Muhammad Bonsu who is a royal, a timber contractor and a renowned herbalist from Tanobuasi located in the Techiman municipality of the Brong Ahafo Region. His mother, Salamatu Manu is from Asante Mampong Beposu in the Ashanti Region. Dr. Amin is married to Hajia Fati Ibrahim and they are blessed with four children,²³⁴ two sons and two daughters.²³⁵

²³³ In an interview with Shaykh Amin, he pointed out that the name Amin meaning trustworthy was given to him by his teachers due to the exceptional manner in which he conducted and carried himself towards his colleague students and teachers as well. He was calm, truthful, and honest. Consequently, the name Amin overshadowed his original name given to him by his parents which is Alhassan. (Interview with Shaykh Amin on 29th March, 2018 in his office at Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, Dome- Accra).

²³⁴ They are; Maryam (Ameerah), who is currently the director of Amen Professional College, Kumasi. Salāmat, who is the Financial Administrator for Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital. Muhammad who is currently in China studying to become a Surgeon, and Ibrahim who is at Amen Professional College, Tanoso- Kumasi.

²³⁵ Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu, an Islamic Scholar and CEO of Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, interviewed on 29th March, 2018 in his office at Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, Dome- Accra.

3.3.1 HIS EDUCATIONAL PURSUIT

He started his basic education in the Ghana Muslim Mission Basic School at Beposu. After class Six (6), he proceeded to Islamic International School at Suame- Kumasi where he completed in 1980. Thereafter, he proceeded to Techiman Senior High School for his O' level. After completion, he furthered his education through distance learning courses with the Institute of Drugless Therapy in Scotland for his first, second and third degrees respectively. Subsequently, he was in Japan between 1990 and 1996 where he studied alternative medicine. On his return, he settled in Kumasi in 1996. In 1997 he travelled to India for a short course where he received training in homeopathic medicine.

Regarding Islamic education, he had the opportunity of studying the rudiments and the entire Qur'ān as a result of the Islamic schools he attended, and also from scholars such as Shaykh Muhammad Abdul Jaleel, Shaykh Zakariyyah Musah, Shaykh Abubakar Sefah Boateng, and Shaykh Al-Hassan Oting Amin.

In 1984, he gained a scholarship to Libya where he pursued Islamic studies from 1984-1986. He later went back to Libya from 1987-1990 for Theological studies in Islamic Call University, Libya where he had his Diploma in Arabic.

3.3.2 HIS OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Taking (Qur'ān 51: 55) as his source of inspiration, Shaykh Amin does daily *Ta'alim* (teaching and learning) in his mosque after *Fajr* (dawn prayer). This daily preaching is done regularly regardless of where he finds himself. In addition to the above, he undertakes

daily preaching to his workers after *Asr* (afternoon prayer).²³⁶ Being the National Chairman of the Board of Patrons of Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA), Shaykh Amin visits various tertiary campuses for lectures on various contemporary and Islamic related topics. For instance on Friday, 16th March, 2018 Shaykh Amin led *Jumu'ah* (Friday congregational prayer) at University of Cape Coast. The title of the sermon was: Passion and love for Islam. Later in the evening he delivered a lecture at the Islamic session of Valco Hall Week Celebration on the topic, Islam: The Misunderstood Religion.²³⁷ He organises workshops for district *Aimah* (Imāms) and workers where he serves as a principal speaker. He also undertakes *Tafsīr* (commentary of the Qur'an) in the month of Ramadan in his mosque located at Dome. He occasionally gives moral talks and counseling when the need arises at any point in time.²³⁸ However, he does not have any well-structured system for counselling. Generally, most of his preaching activities are carried out in the form of tours during which he delivers lectures on various topics on Islam.

3.3.3 HIS CAREER

Shaykh Amin Bonsu has been a teacher since his early days both in Ghana and abroad. For example, he was a teacher at Islamic Secondary School in Kumasi from 1982-1984. He also taught at Islamic Centre in Tokyo- Japan. That notwithstanding, he is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical

²³⁶ The researcher coincidentally was made to lead the discussion during his visit to the Dome branch on 29th March to observe Shaykh's activities and to conduct an interview.

²³⁷ The researcher attended this program himself on the University of Cape Coast campus on Friday 16th March, 2018.

²³⁸ Shaykh Amin, an Islamic Scholar and CEO of Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital interviewed on 11th April, 2018 in his Mosque at the premises of Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, Dome- Accra.

Hospital.²³⁹ He is the owner of the Amen Professional College at Kumasi. In addition, he serves as the National Chairman of Ghana Muslim Mission (GMM) and a member of the Ghana Hajj Board.

3.3.4 HIS LITERARY WORKS

Despite the numerous administrative responsibilities and social engagements of Shaykh Amin, he has designated himself with the daunting task of writing Islamic books in order to uplift the religious and intellectual needs of the *Ummah*. Writing and production of books is very important because it communicates and transmits ideas more effectively than any other type of communication. This serves as another form of teaching and spreading the ideas of Islam for both Muslims and non-Muslims. In an interview with Shaykh Amin,²⁴⁰ he indicated that, besides his leaflets on various topics, he currently has four works to his credit. These are:

Isa (Jesus A.S) and Muhammad (S.A.W) are brothers in Islam. In this manuscript, he writes on the similarities between Muhammad (S.A.W) and Jesus (A.S). He indicates in the manuscript that the main message they brought centres on the core principles of monotheism. As a result, Muslims should revere Jesus as one of the greatest Prophets of God with extraordinary divine qualities.

Revering and believing in all the true Messengers sent by Allah is cardinal to the Muslim faith. In the same way, Muhammad (S.A.W) is considered as a Messenger of Allah and an

²³⁹ This hospital was established in 1996 when Shaykh Amin Bonsu returned from abroad with PhD in Alternative medicine. He is currently having 16 branches across the country with its headquarters in Kumasi.

²⁴⁰ Shaykh Amin, an Islamic Scholar and CEO of Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital interviewed on 29th March, 2018 in his office at Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, Dome- Accra.

embodiment of perfection for his nation, so were the earlier Messengers. Even though there may be some differences in the laws and interpretations taking into consideration social and even cultural differences. However, in essence the message they brought was the same. In this direction, the Qur'ān (2:136) and Qur'ān (2:285) mandate Muslims to believe and make no distinction between the Messengers and Prophets of Allah.

Ta'alim Salāt (How to perform prayers): It is the second work of Shaykh Amin. In this book he sheds light on how a Muslim performs his daily prayers which is the most important pillar of Islam after the *Shahādah* (testimony or bearing witness to the oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (S.A.W)). All the supplications and recitations in the various postures in prayer are well presented in the book.

The next work is titled *Khutbah* (Sermon/lectures). In this work, he carefully compiled some sermons on various topics for the Friday weekly congregational prayer. He included the translations of these sermons in English and Twi. This book is very resourceful for educating and guiding the young promising *Aimah* (Imāms), and those who are *Aimah* (Imāms) but not endowed with the proficiency of translating Arabic into Ghanaian languages.

Juz Mulk (the 29th part of the Qur'ān) is the next work of Shaykh Amin. This book discusses the meaning of the glorious Qur'ān from chapter 67 to chapter 114 of the Qur'ān. In this book he gives the transliteration as well as the translation of the selected chapters. It serves as a reference text for all Muslims who intend to learn the meaning of the Qur'ān especially in English or Twi.

One distinguishing feature of the literary works of Shaykh Amin is that, they are presented in three languages: Arabic, English and Twi. The reason for this style is to enable him reach out to majority of the Muslim *Ummah* with different linguistic backgrounds.

3.3.5 DAILY ROUTINE OF SHAYKH AMIN BONSU

Besides formal educational and medical activities, Shaykh Amin engages himself in daily religious activities. In the morning, he engages members of his congregation by explaining to them some Islamic concepts and principles. This is contrary to some scholars who either choose books for their students according to their level of needs or allow the students to choose books for themselves. For Shaykh Amin, he taught what he deemed necessary for the *Ummah*. This may not meet the requirements of the students. Aside that, a topic may be repeated several times due to lack of documentation on what is to be taught. On the other side, this system is very useful in meeting the demands of time especially acts of worship that are intermittently done. In this regard, when it is Ramadan, he can easily direct his teachings to topics related to Ramadan contrary to those who strictly go according to the content of their chosen books. In the evening, Shaykh again engages members of his congregation and his workers in another session on Islamic discourse.

In all, Shaykh Amin's dissemination of his views through peaceful means such as preaching, writing, workshops for *Aimah* (Imams) and educational discourse is remarkable. As observed earlier, his activity focuses a great deal on advocating for upholding Islamic moral principles devoid of any doctrinal leaning in order to meet contemporary needs of the *Ummah*. One of the exceptional features of Shaykh Amin is his literary output which

he presents in different languages and breaking the odd as a Scholar to establish hospitals and health institutions that operate, to some extent, under Islamic principles.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Generally, this chapter discussed the biographical data of some selected *Ulamāh* (Scholars). Discussions centered on their birth, upbringing, education and religious engagements. One of such *Ulamāh* is Shaykh Abubakar Baribari who is a traditional²⁴¹ trained scholar. Currently, he resides in Tamale imparting Islamic knowledge to both young and old. He addresses their questions, and clarifies Islamic issues. He studied under two great celebrated scholars, Shaykh Jibreel (Mallam Sofo) of Bawku, and Alhaji Yakubu Ishāk of Tamale. The two shaped and influenced his religious outlook. He is a talented author when it comes to the field of *Tasawwuf*. This has made some critics to place very little importance on his works since he limited his works to *Tasawwuf*.

It has also been demonstrated in the chapter that, Shaykh Nuhu Abubakar Siddik Jihad, affectionately called Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, born in a family of farmers, was able due to his eagerness and determined nature for the Islamic knowledge to excel by becoming an Islamic Scholar. After graduating from Islamic University, Madinah, he returned to Ghana where he established a community based Islamic Library in Kumasi. He distinguished himself by combining the traditional method of seeking Islamic Knowledge with the understanding of contemporary issues. It is established in this chapter as well that,

²⁴¹ Traditional in this context refers to a person who had his entire Islamic studies from scholars through a system known as *Majlis* (study circle). Hence, the student in a study circle reads while the teachers explains the meaning. Therefore in this case, there is no contact with the *Mahalliyyah* (structured class room method).

knowledge is not an exclusive property of any individual or group of people. A clear example is the case of Shaykh Nuhu who rose from a poor farming family to be a celebrated and exceptionally talented scholar with many innovative ideas.

Finally, the chapter also outlined the biography of Shaykh Amin Bonsu who was born in Accra but grew up in Beposu. He later furthered his education in Libya, Japan and India. He occupies a distinguished position and he is highly revered. He is most recognized when it comes to the field of Islam and herbal medicine in Ghana. Besides his administrative responsibilities as CEO of Amen Herbal Hospital, he is most often invited by various Islamic religious groups such as GMSA to give lectures.

In view of the above biographies of these scholars, one can appreciate their intellectual contributions. The next chapter will attempt to explore that by further focusing on the analysis of the data regarding their reform activities towards the development of Islam in Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED FROM THE FIELD

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the analysis of the data collected from the field. The analysis is based on the challenges of the Muslim *Ummah* in Ghana and the reform activities of the selected *Ulamāh* (Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu) in addressing those challenges. This addresses one of the main objectives of the research which has to do with the religious activities of the selected *Ulamāh* in the development of Islam. However, before the analysis of the data, a brief description of the status of *Ulamāh* in general and knowledge in Islam is necessary in order to lay the foundation for current discussions.

The *Ulamāh* from a purely Islamic standpoint are considered as the successors of the Prophets. They occupy the highest status among believers (except the Prophets). Qur'ān (58: 11) does make a case for the *Ulamāh* since those who believe is equated to those who have knowledge.

In his commentary of the above verse, Abdallah Yusuf Ali²⁴² indicates that the basis for equality before Allah is faith. Nonetheless, leadership, degree and rank together with either less or greater responsibility also exist in Islam. This is based on knowledge coupled with insight. Therefore, since the *Ulamāh* has been given knowledge and insight, members have

²⁴² Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, 1436.

greater leadership role and responsibility as compared to the generality of the Muslim *Ummah*. Again (Qur'ān 39:9) affirmed this assertion by rhetorically questioning as to whether those who have knowledge can be equated with those who do not have knowledge. Apparently, comparison cannot be made between them. This is because, the former are those responsible for educating and clarifying the religious demands of the Muslim *Ummah*. Above that, Allah has made it obligatory for the Muslim *Ummah* to return to the *Ulamāh* if they have no knowledge (Qur'ān 16:43) since the *Ulamāh* are those with the highest level of God consciousness (Qur'ān 35:28). Hence, the *Ulamāh* serve as reference points for Muslims regarding their religious beliefs, worship, ethics and morality, social interactions, among others. In totality, the *Ulamāh* are in the helm of affairs of the Muslim *Ummah*. This is supported based on the Hadith of the Prophet as narrated by Uthmān ibn Affān in which the Prophet is reported to have said that the best or the most superior among the Muslim *Ummah* are those who learn the Qur'ān (that is the *Ulamāh*) and teach it.²⁴³ It is worth emphasizing that the Qur'ān is the guiding principle which entails the laws of Islam that regulates the entire affairs of Muslims and the *Ulamāh* in general are those responsible for teaching and interpreting its intended meaning.

It is for this virtue that when two men were mentioned before Prophet Muhammad (S. A.W), one of them being a scholar and the other being a devoted worshipper, the Prophet said that, the superiority of the scholar in relation to the worshipper is like his (the Prophet) superiority over the least of his followers. He added further that, indeed Allah, His Angels

²⁴³ Sahih al-Bukhari Vol. 6, Book of Virtues of the Qur'an, Hadith 546.

and the occupants of the heavens and earth, even the ant in his hole and the fish in the ocean supplicate for the scholar who teaches what is good in Islam.²⁴⁴

The Qur'ān also gives emphasis on pursuing knowledge. In addition to that, the Islamic faith has made arrangements for the pursuit of all forms of beneficial knowledge without limitation. It was based on this that the Prophet was encouraged by His Lord to make him knowledgeable (Qur'ān 20:114). If there was to be anything more valuable in the sight of Allah than Knowledge and the *Ulamāh*, Allah would have offered that for His Prophet. These issues in my view demonstrate the reverence and honour Allah has for knowledge and persons with knowledge (*Ulamāh*).

The analysis of the data is presented under the following research question(s) for easy discussion.

4.1 ANALYSIS ON THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE MUSLIM *UMMAH* TODAY? :

In my view it appears that the Muslim *Ummah* in Ghana is currently facing various challenges both internally and externally. At the same time, the selected *Ulamāh* who provide the guidelines needed by the Muslim *Ummah* are tirelessly trying to curb these challenges through their reform activities. Before dwelling on these reform activities, it is prudent to identify the challenges first. These are the challenges as put forward by the

²⁴⁴ Jami` at-Tirmidhi Vol. 5, Book of Knowledge, Hadith 2685.

selected *Ulamāh* before examining the solutions. Below are the detailed explanation of some of these contemporary challenges as gathered from the field.

4.1.1 CLASH OF *HADHARA* (CIVILIZATION)

One of the challenges confronting the Muslims according to Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, has to do with the clash of *Hadhara* (Civilization). He explained that, the clash between religions and civilizations has existed since time immemorial, and the case of Islam and the other civilizations is not different. However, Islam as a religion was established through the principle of struggle. This was exactly what the Prophet did when he was commanded by Allah to openly proclaim the message of Islam to the generality of the people at the time. This message invariably was different from the civilization which characterized the 7th Century Arabia. Hence, his major struggle was an intellectual struggle between the concepts of *Tawhīd* (belief) and the concepts of *Kufr* (disbelief).

According to Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, the clash of the Islamic civilization with the other civilizations, especially the Western Civilization is multifaceted and has reached its climax. He stated that the Islamic civilization is based on divine revelation and not on man-made laws. As a result, since from the inception of Islam, non- Muslims have continued to use diverse means including *Ghazwatul-Fikrey* (ideological attack) in order to inculcate in the Muslim *Ummah* cultures that are totally opposed to the Islamic philosophy and principles. One of the most effective channels used in propagating the Western Civilization in contemporary times is through the media. They are gaining grounds in this direction as it is manifested in the way and manner Muslims carry out both their religious and socio-economic activities. Giving examples on some of these cultural values that have gained

grounds among Ghanaian Muslims through the clash of civilizations, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, noted the following:

The influence of the dress code of the West in most cases, is devoid of modesty. On the other hand, Islam advocates for modesty and decency in clothing for both Men and women. Citing Qur'ān (24:30-31), he underscored the command of Allah on how men and women should abstain from any avenue that will divert them from maintaining their chastity and modesty. Key among these avenues is lustful gaze. As a result, the Qur'ān (24:30-31) exhorts the believers to lower their gaze from lustful eyeing at the attractive parts of the opposite sex except those who are their *Mahram* (unmarriageable Kin). This abstinence can be fully achieved if both sexes dress decently.

Explaining the condition of Muslim women's dress in Islam contrary to the Western culture, he enumerated the following conditions:

- The dress must cover her entire body with the exception of the hands and face
- It should be thick enough to conceal her body. In other words, it should not be transparent in a sense that she is only covered by name while in reality she is naked.
- It should be roomy or loose-fitting and not tight
- It should not be so attractive as to draw men's attention.
- It should not be a dress of fame and vanity (meaning, it should not be extravagant or excessively opulent)
- It should not resemble the dress of a man.
- Lastly, it should not resemble the dress of the non-Muslims.

Another cultural value adopted by a number of Ghanaian Muslims as noted by Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, a Kumasi based Muslim Scholar, is disrespect for parents and the love for Western music and dance. He states that, as a counsellor and a religious leader, there has been unceasing reports on the subject of confrontations between parents and their children. In some cases, reports are received from parents pertaining to the disrespectful nature of their children. The cause of this, in his view, is the result of the infiltration and the adoption of the Western values by some of the Muslim youth. This is because the only alternative cultural values readily accessible and reign supreme in the hearts of the youth today are those of the Western culture. It is in the West that a child claims to have such rights to the extent that he/ she can report parents to the authorities. On the contrary, honoring and being good to one's parents is one of the most important duties that has been enjoined by Allah.²⁴⁵ Again, one of the most traumatic situations a parent can encounter is the disrespectful behavior of a child despite the countless favors of the parents on him or her. To appreciate these favors, Islam enjoins on children to deal with their parents with tenderness and kindness.

Another Western attraction is the love for profane music and dance. This music promotes vanity and incite the listener to sexual acts through the seductive voice of musicians. From the Islamic point of view, such songs do not bring joy to life or removes depression. Nor do they bring solace to the heart. But rather the remembrance of Allah.²⁴⁶ According to the consensus of the selected *Ulamāh*, music accompanied with musical instruments is forbidden in Islam with the exception of poetry. But as for women, there is a concession

²⁴⁵ Qur'ān 17: 23 and Qur'ān 31:14-15.

²⁴⁶ Qur'ān 13:28.

that they can sing and beat the *daff* (simple hand drum) on specific occasions such as marriage ceremony and during the celebration of the two Islamic festivals (*Id al-Fitr* and *Id al-Adha*).

In sum, from the forgoing discussions it can be seen that, there is a clear cultural cleavage that separates the Western cultural values from their Islamic counterparts. The difference between the two largely opposing cultures is rapidly taking new dimensions predominantly as a result of technological revolutions such as the television, the Internet, and the Satellites. Rapid flow of people from one nation to another thus, transnational contacts as a result of globalization is also a factor. Consequently, migrants easily adjust and compromise their cultural values in order to opt to the predominant cultural values within the jurisdictions they find themselves. In that regard the Ghanaian Muslim is not an exception.

For that reason, some Ghanaian Muslim minds have been colonized and indoctrinated with Western cultural values, beliefs, ethics among others, which make them judge everything based on the West even if those values are not in sync with the Islamic ethical values. To these Muslims, in order for a person to be recognized and considered civilized, he or she must be Westernized in his mindset, in his dressing and above all, in his education.

4.1.2 ILLITERACY/ LACK OF QUALITY ISLAMIC EDUCATION

The next challenge facing the Muslim *Ummah* has to do with illiteracy or better still lack of quality Islamic education. This has resulted in poor child upbringing within the Ghanaian Muslim community. In his view, Shaykh Abubakar Musah, one of the selected *Ulamāh*, explained that, the issue of Islamic knowledge has been relegated to the

background compared to the efforts and zeal given to secular education. Analyzing the reasons behind Islamic education lagging behind, Shaykh Abubakar Musah noted that, this has to do with some erroneous notions among some Muslims. These Muslims believe that, becoming an educated person from the perspective of secular education affords a person the opportunity to be employed on the Job market. They ignore the fact that, it is the Islamic knowledge that instills values and morals in the younger generation based on divine commands. This is because the religion of Islam embodies all good conduct and good manners in its operation regarding the relationship between man and God and also between Man and the rest of humanity. This has therefore made some of these Muslim youth unconscious of the Islamic faith thereby practising acts that are contrary to the faith. The cause of this religious menace to a large extent is the result of poor child upbringing. The children of some Muslims today have lost direction because of lack of proper upbringing on the part of some parents and teachers. Seeing a child growing up today without any fear, respect, shyness is very common in the Ghanaian Muslim community. One can state that, there is no established Islamic social order that is value oriented in nature within the Muslim communities.

From the forgoing challenge, we can say that despite the importance attached to intellectualism and matters of scholarship by Islam and the early generations of Muslims, most Muslims today lack the fundamentals and the basic principles of the Islamic faith especially those who have attached more importance to secular education at the expense of Islamic education. Lack of commitment regarding Islamic education reigns high in the hearts of the Muslim youth today. It is worth noting that poor upbringing, coupled with false orientations on the part of some parents, contributes to this lack of engagements with

matters relating to scholarship and commitment to core Islamic values. This is because from the Islamic point of view, it is the responsibility of parents to feed their children according to their means, cloth them, and above all, provide them with religious guidance through Islamic education.

4.1.3 INTERNAL STRUGGLES/ DISUNITY OF THE MUSLIM *UMMAH*.

The biggest concern and challenge currently facing Muslims in Ghana is the problem of disunity among the Muslim *Ummah*. Islam has established a legal framework that embodies a code of ethics, designed to protect the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*. But despite these legal frameworks, the division keeps widening. Shaykh Abubakar Musah explained the general reason behind this seemingly continuous disunity. According to him, disunity or internal struggle within the Muslim *Ummah* is as a result of theological differences on jurisprudence and differences of interpretation. This means that diversity regarding secondary matters of jurisprudence is accepted. On the other hand, diversity on matters pertaining to *Aqīdah* (matters of faith/ creed) is totally unacceptable since that forms the foundation of the religion. He further explained that due to lack of understanding and excessiveness, some Muslims tend to be very extreme and severe to the extent that they refer to other Muslim doctrinal groups as non- Muslims. This to him, shows the retrogressive nature of some *Ulamāh* today and their lack of love, mercy and kindness for their colleague Muslims. He refuted the claim that, the allegedly heretical groups such as the Tijāniyyah are part of the deviating seventy-two groups that are destined to hell as stated in the Prophetic tradition.²⁴⁷ This narration refers to the groups that will differ with

²⁴⁷ This tradition is authentically attributed to the Prophet (S.A.W) as narrated by Abu Hurayrah in which the Prophet (S.A.W) said: The Jews were split up into seventy-one or seventy-two sects, and the Christians were split up into seventy-one or seventy-two sects, and my *Ummah* (community) will be split up into seventy-

others in matters of creed and not the branches of practice known as the legal schools in Islam. As a result, Tijāniyyah and other groups form part of the saved group known as the *Jamā'ah* (the congregation) or the Ahlus- Sunnah even though with inconsequential differences.

On matters concerning disunity in the Tijāniyyah fraternity, Shaykh Abubakar Musah cited ignorance on the part of some members and lack of countrywide unified and recognized leadership structure as the causes. This has therefore resulted in the constant struggle for supremacy and leadership between the two dominant factions. An example is the Shaykh Abdullai Maikano / Jallo faction sometimes referred to as *Akwashie Rawah* (those who drum, sing and dance) and Shaykh Abdul Wadud Haroun/ Ciessey faction also termed *Munchire-Faila* (those against drumming and dancing). In view of this struggle, there are currently two sets of leaders of Tijāniyyah in Ghana depending on which faction an adherent subscribes to. Shaykh Khalifah Ahmed Abul- Faidi Maikano is the supreme leader of Tijaniyyah Muslim Council of Ghana, and Shaykh Khalifah Abdul-Wadud Haroun Ciessey is the President of Tijāniyyah Muslims Movement of Ghana, under the auspices of the National Chief Imam of Ghana- Shaykh Dr. Uthman Nuhu Sharubutu. The followers of each of these two leaders do not recognize the leadership of the other. From the above, we can clearly see the deep-seated disunity even within the same doctrinal group that virtually subscribe to similar legal and doctrinal opinions. As further noted by Shaykh Abubakar, the distinction between *Faydah* (the spiritual flood/ an overflow of spiritual

three sects. All of which will be in hell apart from one, which is the *Jamā'ah* (the congregation). (Sunnan Ibn Majah 3993, Book 36, Hadith 68).

grace) and Tijāniyyah as postulated by some members of the Tijāniyyah fraternity in Ghana is a clear indication of their poor level of understanding of what Tijāniyyah stands for.

Shaykh Nuhu Jihad also expressed almost the same views as Shaykh Abubakar. He pointed out the love for leadership, individualism and lack of trust to be the major causes of disunity within the Muslim *Ummah* with specific reference to the Ahlus-Sunnah fraternity in Ghana. Virtually everybody wants to be heard and own the largest congregation. Every camp also claims to have the best teachings. This has consequently resulted in each group not recognizing other religious groups who have different theology and disposition as theirs. This has further resulted in many young upcoming scholars disassociating themselves from the broader umbrella so as to create their own camps. The leaders are of the view that, when they are united, most of them will lose their supporters since some of them will fall under the leadership of either their teachers or superiors which will invariably affect their status. Hence, the tactics of divide and rule.

Explaining the crux of disunity of the Muslim *Ummah*, Shaykh Amin Bonsu noted that, there is no doubt in the minds of every Muslim that the *Ummah* is not united and it can be safely said that this is not the golden age of the Muslims, nor it is the glory stage of the *Ummah*. This, among others, leads to the fragmentation of the Muslim *Ummah*. He is of the opinion that the fragmentation of the *Ummah* today negates one of the foundations upon which the Prophet was sent which was to unite Muslims under one umbrella as against the clashing groups of the Arabs notably the Aws and Khazraj²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁸ These were two dominating prodigious tribes believed to have migrated from Yemen and finally settled in Yathrib (Madinah). They were having a very strained relationship with each other. As a result, they continuously fought with each other even on minor disputes. Most importantly, they were among those who received and welcomed the Prophet and his companions after their migration from Makkah to Yathrib (later renamed as Madinah al-Munawwarah- a city privileged with spiritual light). After Prophet Muhammad had

He stated that verses from the Qur'ān and the Prophetic Sunnah are clear and emphatic on the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*. Shaykh Amin quoted the following verses to establish the fact that, Islam promotes trust based on Muslim *Ummah* through its members devoid of divisiveness.

Qur'ān 9: 71 says “The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil...”

Qur'ān 49:10 describes the believers as brothers to one another. As a result, they should make reconciliation among their brethren with God consciousness so that they may receive mercy.

Based on these, Muslims are encouraged to cleanse themselves from the diseases of the heart such as malice, hatred, envy, bitterness, greed, failing to acknowledge the rights of others, among others. The similitude of a faith- based community is that of one single body which is interconnected to each other. When part of it is in pain, automatically it affects the rest of the body. This is in accordance with the saying of the Prophet as reported by Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr “the parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.”²⁴⁹

Elaborating on the above assertion, Shaykh Amin Bonsu indicated that this does not mean Muslims should do away with the core ethical principle of Islam which is justice. He

settled in Madinah, he brought both battling tribes under the banner of Islam with common goal and purpose. Hence they were collectively renamed as *Ansārs* (helpers).

²⁴⁹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Hadith Number, 5665, and also in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Hadith Number, 2586.

claimed that a Muslim should not support his brother or sister when they are on the wrong side. Buttressing this view of Shaykh Amin Bonsu refer to Qur'ān 5:8 which says;

“ O ye who believe, Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealings, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from Justice. Be just: that is next to piety, and fear Allah. For Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do”.

Similar is the case in Qur'ān 4: 135 which states;

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: For Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well- acquainted with all that ye do”.

In his explanation of the above verse, Yusuf Ali noted that, Justice is part of Allah's attribute and for one to stand firm for justice is to be a witness to Allah even if it goes against one's own interest or the interest of those who are close and dear to such a person. Therefore, Muslims are encouraged to act as if they are in the presence of Allah who knows what is apparent and hidden. He further indicated that the specific mentioning of rich and poor in the verse is an indication that some people may be persuaded to favor the rich because they anticipate favors from them. Likewise, the poor may be favored because of being helpless. Hence, Muslims are to carry out their duties with justice devoid of partiality, fear or favor to either the rich or the poor since humanity's interest at large is under Allah's guidance and protection.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, 229.

4.2 ANALYSIS ON RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT REFORM ROLES DO THE SELECTED *ULAMĀH* PLAY IN ADDRESSING THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF THE *UMMAH*?

The *Ulamāh*, contrary to their engagements in scholarship and piety related activities such as preaching, have also observed the challenges and distortions that take place among the Muslim *Ummah*. As a result, they preoccupy themselves with reform that will help curtail if not totally eradicate these challenges.

In combating these challenges through reform, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, for instance, has integrated his Arabic School into English and Arabic School in the year 2000. This happens to be the first Arabic and English School within the Bochen community in Kumasi. The School, Ibn-Taymiyyah Islamic School, even though under the supervision of the Islamic Education Unit (I.E.U) of Ghana Education Service (GES), applies the Islamic laws and ethics in its operations. For example as observed by the researcher, males are segregated from females in the sitting arrangements of the class. Thus, all the boys of a class sit on one side of the class while the girls also sit on the other. This is done in order to maintain and enforce the Islamic values of segregating of gender in the children and to also help reduce if not do away with the rate at which the Muslim children mimic the Christian and Western ideologies and styles in their daily activities.

As observed by Owusu Ansah, Muslim reformers modernized or reformed the Islamic education in Ghana through the incorporation of secular courses into the curriculum, and also adopting the national curriculum. This is because they thought that, reforming the Islamic educational system was necessary for Muslims since it will provide them with the

educational empowerment that will help them contribute to the development of the nation without doing away with their core religious values and spirituality.²⁵¹

The establishment of the Islamic Library in the year 1999 by Shaykh Nuhu Jihad is another reform activity introduced in the Muslim community. The aim was to help address some of the challenges facing the Muslims and to broaden the students' knowledge. In an interview with Shaykh Nuhu Jihad,²⁵² he intimated that, the Islamic Library is the first and the only community based Islamic Library in Kumasi. It is worth noting that, virtually all the *Ulamāh* in Ghana personalize their Libraries or better still incorporate them into their respective Schools or Mosques. In other cases, some of these libraries are established by organizations such as the Islamic library established in Tamale in the 1980's by the Iranian cultural consulate and another one established by the Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services (ICODEHS) located in Kotobabi, Accra. In contrast, Shaykh Nuhu has changed the narrative by establishing a community based Library located at Roman Hill - opposite Zuria FM in Kumasi. This Library is opened to all categories of people. The Library, as observed by the researcher, is made up of various Islamic and non- Islamic books, Journals, newspapers among others. These literature and many other works are either in Arabic or English.

Embedded in the Islamic Library is the Islamic Recording Center which also provides cassettes of different scholars on topics largely related to Islam. Others are on comparative study of Islam and Christianity. In an interview with Mallam Abdul Hamid Umar,²⁵³ who

²⁵¹ Kwame Ansah Owusu, "The Development of Islamic Education." 11, 41.

²⁵² Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, an Islamic Scholar and director of Islamic Library and Recording Centre, interviewed on 17th March, 2017 in his office at Roman Hill, Kumasi.

²⁵³ Abdul-Hamid Umar, Secretary of Islamic Propagation and Research Centre (IPRC), interviewed on 18th March, 2018 after their open forum preaching at Kumasi Central Market (Kejetia).

has been with the Islamic Library and Recording Centre for almost 20 years now noted that the Library has been of great assistance to the Muslim *Ummah*. This can be attested to from the increasing rate at which the Muslim *Ummah* (the youth and the elderly) patronize the Library. This has helped in increasing the reading habits and broadening the students' scope of research and knowledge to become productive intellectuals to the Muslim community and Ghana at large.

Closely associated with the point above is the establishment and the formalized operation of a registered counselling centre. This is another reform activity of Shaykh Nuhu Jihad. As he disclosed, the counselling centre was initially met with resistance and condemnation from some Muslims since it was a new development within the Muslim community. He further added that, some even went to the extent of claiming that he was imitating the Christian and the Western culture. Committed to his vision, he remained firm and resolute in formalizing the counselling through a religious approach in order to meet the demands of both the personal wellbeing and the mental health of the Muslim *Ummah*. Hence, in this new paradigm of his, he captured the Islamic system of spirituality in achieving both the physical and the spiritual needs of the *Ummah* devoid of any content of influential culture. This has solved Muslim struggles and problems through personal transformation.

As noted by Kauthar Khamis, the ineffective nature of the traditional form of premarital counselling was what led to the establishment of a formalized premarital counselling in 2006 in Accra known as The Garden of Bliss Marriage Counselling Centre by Hajia Memuna Maliki who doubles as the founder of The Islamic Charity Centre for Women Orientation together with Hajia Aidah Jibril. In 2010, Mallam Zakaria Addo also established one in Accra, Nima/Mamobi to be precise. As further indicated by Kauthar,

these counsellors (Hajia Memuna Maliki and Mallam Zakaria Addo) based their counselling on only marital issues and to a large extent takes the form of mass premarital counselling.²⁵⁴ However, in the case of Shaykh Nuhu Jihad's system, he undertakes individual or private counselling and he also goes beyond just marital issues to include other social problems such as counselling leaders of feuding parties and also misunderstanding between parents and children.

Counselling from the Islamic perspective can be said to be premised on commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong in a holistic or religious manner. For that reason, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, in his reform activity, moved a step further from the general way of counselling by most Ghanaian Muslim scholars (which most often is limited to marital related concerns and also not formalized) to a more formalized system that takes the religiosity of the *Ummah* into account.

The life of the Muslim *Ummah* is highly exposed to different problems and trials more especially in modern times. These universal trials are based on prosperity and hardship.²⁵⁵ The essence of these trials, in most cases, are to separate and make known those who sincerely believe in the Islamic monotheism as against those who do not.²⁵⁶ This means that, being a Muslim does not exempt one from the trials of life. Some of these problems

²⁵⁴ Kauthar Khamis, "Premarital Counselling in the Nima/Mamobi Muslim Communities." Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, 2013, 77-79.

²⁵⁵ Qur'ān 21: 35 empathically stated that Allah will test the believers with both evil and good.

²⁵⁶ This based on Qur'ān 3:179 which states that "on no account will Allah leave the believers in the state they are in now, until He separates the evil from the good..." and also Qur'ān 29:2 which states "do men think that they will be left alone on saying that 'we believe' and that they will not be tested?". Elucidating on the verse, Yusuf Ali noted that, just a mere lip profession of the Islamic faith is not enough to guarantee a servant the stage of *Imān* (faith), but instead, it calls for trial and test in the real life situations. These trials can be in diverse form such as the individual's life and his environment. The essence of this trial is for Allah to make apparent whether the servant will stay firm and put Allah above all or not. This therefore may call for more pain, sorrow and self-sacrifice in order to purify him or herself just like the way a fire is applied to goldsmith's crucible in order to burn out the dross. (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1993:987).

which Muslims face include anxiety, marital problems, depression, emotional disturbances, intellectual handicaps, financial hardships, barrenness, seeking solutions to life changes, stress, how to personally develop one's self, among others. These and many other socio-economic problems necessitated the emergence of this religious counselling as a method which will help overcome these problems.

Additionally, under the stewardship of Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, the Islamic Propagation and Research Centre (IPRC)²⁵⁷ has systematized and applied the practical methodologies of modern times in order to complement and also strengthen *Da'wah*²⁵⁸ programs. Islam is a complete social system which encompasses all facets of human activities. Accordingly, *Da'wah* embraces and caters for all humanity regardless of one's religion, culture or social status. From this perspective, it means that, the operation of *Da'wah* is directed towards Muslims in order to continuously teach and remind them about the Islamic faith and Allah's instructions. To the non-Muslims in order to preach to give them the message of Islam so as to convince them to accept Islam. Unfortunately, the latter operation of *Da'wah* which is the invitation of the non-Muslim has been, to some extent, relegated to the background. This has considerably widened the gap between the Muslims and the non-Muslims.

To bridge this seemingly wide gap, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad has introduced an effective paradigm for preaching Islam to the non-Muslims through production of audio cassettes,

²⁵⁷ In an interview with Abdul-Hamid Umar, secretary of the association, he disclosed that, one of the reasons behind the formation of the IPRC is based on Qur'an 3:104 which encourage the believers *Du'at* (Islamic proselytizers) to work as a group in propagating the message of Islam. (Interviewed on 18th March, 2018 at Kumasi Central Market-Kejetia).

²⁵⁸ *Da'wah* within the Islamic context means inviting people to the path of Allah (Islam) or the proselytizing or preaching of Islam. Hence, *Da'wah* in its really application is geared towards calling the non-Muslims to Islam. On the contrary, preaching and reminding the Muslim of their basic responsibilities towards Allah is known as *Tazkirah* (remembrance). However, the popular usage of the term connotes both meanings and so is the case in this context.

videos and most importantly, the use of the Bible and the Qur'ān in preaching during the weekly open-preaching sessions at Kejetia (Kumasi Central Market). This open-preaching is principally targeting the non-Muslims. Consequently, the non-Muslims are given the chance to ask questions or seek clarifications if need be. It is worth noting that, Islamic preaching using the Bible is generally believed by most Ghanaian Muslims to be the work of the converted Muslims. As a result, it is very rare to find a scholar who had his studies from the traditional centres of Islamic school known as the *Majālis* or a Saudi trained scholar using the Bible to propagate the message of Islam. The general position by some Islamic scholars is that the Bible has lost its originality and hence no need to establish a proof or evidence from it. This commonly held notion is rendered flawed by the daring courage of the *Da'wah* work of Shaykh Nuhu Jihad who is a Saudi trained scholar and also a product of the traditional *Majlis* pattern of studies and more to that born and raised in a Muslim family without any record of conversion.

From the researcher's point of view, the open air preaching sessions as conducted by Shaykh Nuhu and the members of the IPRC, to some extent violate, the strict rule of Islam that promotes the segregation of sexes. Besides, Muslim women who are there as observers are exposed to the lustful glances of men in the market. As observed by the researcher, the open-preaching is done in broad daylight without any barricade between the men, the women and those passing by. Even though it may be argued that some people attend such programs with the aim of selling and buying or even came there by chance. However, since the program is organized strictly in the name of Islam, under no circumstance should the Islamic principle of segregating Muslim men from women be compromise.

Regarding educational reforms to address the challenges facing the Muslim *Ummah* in Ghana, Shaykh Abubakar Musah has revolutionised knowledge acquisition by widening his scope of teaching to include the use of chalkboards (black board) in order to meet the current requirements of modern times, and by extension to provide an effective paradigm for character development through the teaching of holistic and ethical formation. Explaining this point, Shaykh Abubakar stated that, the chalkboards (black board) were not used by the traditionally trained scholars in the past. In addition to that, he has reformed the framework of the curriculum which was the traditional trend of reading only *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) related books such as *Akhdari*, *Iziyyah*, *Ashmāwi*, *Risāla* among others, before moving to books that are directly related to the Arabic language such as *Sarf* (morphology), *Balāghah* (rhetoric) and *Adab* (Arabic literature). In this new dimension of his, he simultaneously taught students *Fiqh* and *Lughah*. Hence, whereas *Fiqh* books are read individually to be explained by the teacher, the *Lughah* subjects are taught formally on the blackboard to all the students in the class. In addition to this new development, assignments are given to ascertain the understanding level of students contrary to the pure traditional trend where no examination is conducted but rather takes personal initiative to assess one's level of understanding. This among other reforms such as the use of tables and chairs instead of skins and mats are to entice the youth on knowledge acquisition in order to maintain the Islamic faith which has and continues to stand as a beacon for learning and knowledge acquisition. They are also to keep the youth busy so that they do not capitalize on their free time to commit social vices.

Analysis of the above reforms of Shaykh Abubakar, to some extent, also reveals that, despite these significant transformation in enhancing Islamic education and reducing the

illiteracy rate within the Muslim *Ummah*, much needs to be done. This is because, courses taught do not prepare students with adequate skills needed to be more critical and analytic when it comes to real life situations. Seen from this perspective, we can say that, the programs do not provide the educational needs of the society which go beyond just spirituality.

It needs to be stated here that, educational objectives can be broadly grouped into three domains, namely, the cognitive domain, the affective domain and the psychomotor domain. The cognitive domain can succinctly be described as a domain which is geared towards enhancing the knowledge and intellectual abilities of persons. In other words, the cognitive domain attempts to heighten the thinking ability and the logical analysis of human beings. The affective domain on the other hand is geared towards emotional, spiritual and moral development. Finally, the psychomotor domain deals largely with physical and manual training. Therefore, it provides the individual with the requisite skills to rely on for sustenance.

It is also worth mentioning that, the courses and the method used by Shaykh Abubakar are based on translation and memorization instead of imbuing in the students the talent to critically analyse matters and come out with practical solutions. Based on this, it could be said that he solely depends on the affective objective of education but lacks the Psychomotor and to some extent the cognitive objectives. This among others such as the failure to adopt new teaching methods such as the adoption of educational technology might be the cause for the poor patronage of the Islamic education and not because the Muslim *Ummah* of today place greater emphasis on secular knowledge at the expense of the Islamic education. This situation is of no difference when it comes to the Saudi or the

Gulf trained *Ulamāh*. The reason is that, almost all those who had scholarship to study in Saudi Arabia or any of the Gulf States are given courses related to *Shari'ah* (Islamic law), *Tafsīr* (Qur'ānic exegesis), *Hadith* (Prophetic traditions), *Lughah* (Arabic language), among others. In contrast, courses relating to critical thinking or science related courses are not given to Ghanaian students. This is despite the fact that, the Gulf region is among the countries that produces students who are well-endowed in all the aspects of engineering and science related courses. Arising from the above, the scholars only ground their teachings on the fields they were trained in. This needs to be reviewed and improved upon in order to reduce the constant disparity between Islamic education and the reality of the economic and the scientific world of today.

The most interesting and far reaching accomplishments of Shaykh Abubakar's reform activities is the introduction of *Tarbiyah* (holistic moral and ethical formation)²⁵⁹ as a way

²⁵⁹ *Tarbiyah* literally means education and good upbringing of people. But generally speaking it goes beyond that to include a holistic moral and ethical formation through training. *Tarbiyah* and *Tazkiyatun Nafs* (purification of one's self) are mostly used interchangeably by the Sufis. To the Sufis, *Tarbiyah* means the purification of the soul from all forms of carnal desires by undergoing spiritual educational training in the form of *Zikr* (remembrance of Allah through chanting His names) under the tutelage of a distinguished Sufi Shaykh. Hence, the principal purpose of *Tarbiyah* is the purification of the heart. This is because, to the Sufis, the heart will know Allah when it is purified from bad traits such as hatred, envy, arrogance, pride, etc. and then occupied by acts of wholesome ethical and moral virtues. In an interview with Shaykh ABubakar, he pointed out that, in *Tarbiyah*, the *Murid* (disciple/seeker) is given some words of remembrance of Allah to be chanted coupled with reflection and pondering on those words. He buttress the Islamic permissibility of this act by quoting a sacred hadith on the authority of Abu Hurayrah who narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: "Allah, the Exalted said, "Whoever takes a *Wali* (friend) of Mine an enemy, I will wage war on him; and My slave will not perform any act with which he draws closer to Me, more beloved to Me than when he fulfills what I have ordained on him; and My salve will keep drawing closer to Me by performing the *Nawāfil* (voluntary acts of worship) until I love him, and when I love him, I will be his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hands with which he strikes, and his legs with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him; and if he seeks refuge with Me, I will grant him refuge" (Reported by Bukhari, and also 40 Hadith of Imam Nawawi. Hadith Number, 38). Therefore for Shaykh Abubakar, a servant can achieve closeness to God when that servant engages him/herself in the voluntary acts of worship and *Tarbiyah* is not an exception. However, he does not have any formalize way of the *Tarbiyah* because he only give the procedure and training to people who come to him to be initiated. He therefore train people based on their request and not by compulsion. He further added that, before he accept to give *Tarbiyah*, he make sure that the person in question has at least some basic knowledge of Shari'ah first before embarking

of reforming the character of Muslims. But then again, he is of the view that, in order to effectively address the challenges of the Muslims, it is necessary that, scholars especially those who embark on *Tarbiyah* also perfect their character to be in conformity with the Prophetic teachings and then to be *Zāhid* (ascetic) in conduct. Therefore, since these *Ulamāh* serve as guides to others, their actions should fall within the Islamic perimeters by conducting themselves well.

Assessing the reason why despite these reform measures, and also considering the increasing number of scholars ostensibly, much is not achieved, Shaykh Abubakar explained that, the *Ulamāh* in the previous generation regardless of their level of knowledge were sincere in their dealings both on religious and social matters. They were God conscious, ascetic, and above all protecting their integrity by avoiding acts that could lead them to indignity and humiliation. He added that, the earlier generation of scholars strictly applied the laws of Islam without fear or favor. That is why they were able to establish a virtuous and sturdy generation. The opposite is practically the case today. Consequently, there is vast knowledge but God consciousness and good morals are lacking in most Scholars. As a result, you will discover today people with knowledge but their actions are true manifestation of ignorance as they only acquire the knowledge without any *Tarbiyah*. For this reason, such people cannot conduct themselves well because they have thrown away the core values that go hand in hand with beneficial knowledge. This has

on *Tarbiyah*. The *Tarbiyah* has no stipulated time but rather it depends on the individual efforts coupled with favors from Allah and faith. He further debunked the assertion of those *Murids* who claim to have undergone *Tarbiyah* but yet their actions and utterances undermines the fabrics of the Islamic spirituality. Since to him, the essence of *Tarbiyah* is to inspire and transform the individual *Murid* by building a trustworthy character in terms of his heart and mind. This attitude of some of these *Murids* has made some people to criticize this system of education. For Shayk Abubakar, any knowledge that will lead the seeker to divert from the straight path is not worth seeking. (Shaykh Abubakar Musah, an Islamic Scholar and Imam, interviewed on 24th December, 2017 at his residence in Sabon-Gida, Tamale)

greatly influenced the level of impact of such scholars on the younger generation and the Muslim *Ummah* at large. For this reason, they are able to teach and preach but do not make much impact on the Muslim *Ummah*.

Seen from this perspective, we can conclude that, despite the important steps and remarkable progress in the increasing number of scholars and educational strategies, there is no equal improvement in the growth of the numbers of students in modern times though with some exception in some cases.

The establishment of the Amen Professional College and the nature of its operation can be said to be a monumental reformative role played by Shaykh Amin in addressing some of the challenges faced by the Muslim *Ummah* especially students within the health sector. In an interview with Maryam Amin Bonsu,²⁶⁰ who is the director of the Amen Professional College, she disclosed that, the aim behind the establishment of the institution was to bring up qualified professionals who are Islamically oriented to the health sector. To achieve this, the school, apart from the nursing program which is done in every health institution, has introduced Islamic studies in general and Qur'ānic studies every morning after *Fajr* (down prayers) and then late in the evening. Again, aside those who lectured for the nursing courses, they also have an Imām who speaks to the students on general knowledge in Islam and its related matters. In order to achieve these dynamics of reform, they have again adjusted the time table for seminars on Wednesdays from 10:30am – 12:00pm where topics treated mostly relate to Islamic grooming so they could imbibe the spirit of Islam in the students, thereby curtailing the challenges faced by the youth. In addition to that, ladies are

²⁶⁰ Maryam Amin Bonsu, Director of Amen Professional College, Kumasi, interviewed on 25th April, 2018 through a telephone conversation.

allowed to veil their heads contrary to other nursing institutions in Ghana. This indeed is a reform move that promotes the religious freedom of Muslim students in Ghana. On the other side, no such provision has been made for the non-Muslims. This leaves room for one to question whether the management of the school are not biased against the religious freedom of the other students, or better still, are they only concerned with the Islamic faith which is the basis for the establishment of the school and also happens to have the largest number of student population.

Closely linked to the above reform activity of Shaykh Amin is the establishment of a hospital-Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital which currently has 16 branches nationwide. Explaining some of the reform activity of the hospital in combating the challenges of the Muslim *Ummah*, Idriss Abdul-Karim,²⁶¹ a clinical Psychologist at Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, stated that the hospital strictly adheres to the principle of Islamic ethics in its operations. For instance, female nurses and doctors veil in accordance with the Islamic tradition. On the other hand, the non-Muslim health workers within the hospital are encouraged to veil but it's not compulsory for them. This indeed is a reform within the health sector in Ghana as most if not all the health sectors do not take into consideration the ethical principles of the Muslim doctors or nurses especially women. Again, the strict segregation of the sexes in the hospital is another hall mark of its reform. A clear example can be made taking into account the Physiotherapy department. There are health workers that solely attend to men and equally same when it comes to women. It is worth noting that in critical conditions such consideration is not

²⁶¹ Idriss Abdul- Karim, Clinical Psychologist at the department of Reflex Physiotherapy-Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, interviewed on 29th March, 2018 at Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, Dome- Accra.

given to gender sensitivity. However, the permission or the presence of a relative is needed before the screening since the absence of a relative can even call for a legal action. Additionally, as observed by the researcher, the massage room is divided into four sections with male clients taking two sides of the partition while female clients also take the other two sides with male and female massage therapists respectively.

Emphasizing the great reforms of the hospital, is the nature in which the Muslim health workers attend to their religious duties of the daily prayers as compared to other hospitals. When the *Adhān* (call to prayer) is called, the Muslim health workers collectively break whatever they are doing to go and observe the prayers before coming to continue with what they were doing. No concession is given to any Muslim health worker to delay in joining the congregational prayer. In case of emergency or critical case, the non-Muslim health workers are made to attend to them. Significantly, they undertake *Da'wah* after every *Asr* (afternoon) prayer with the aim of imbuing in the workers the spirit of ideal goal and living up to the Islamic ethos.

Another unique dimension of their reform activity is the morning lectures on medical conditions. As observed by the researcher, a topic is chosen for example on diabetes. Then one of the doctors gives an extensive lecture on the topic ranging from the causes, symptoms and prevention. This lecture is carried out on a daily basis at the Out Patients Department (OPD) mostly in English alongside translations into Twi and Hausa. The lecture is made general for all patients who happen to be in the hospital in the morning. The disadvantage of this lecture on medical conditions is that, it does not in most cases serve the immediate needs of the patients. More over, it is time consuming in the sense that, a patient may come to the hospital anticipating to be attended to for a particular

sickness only to spend time listening to medical lectures on different sicknesses. In general, we can say that, the establishment of the hospital within the reach of the Muslim *Ummah* has led, to a large extent, in the reduction of the believe that everything has spiritual backing thereby helping to curtail the rate at which some Muslims contact the fortune tellers and soothsayers seeking interpretation of their sickness even if it is physical.

4.3 ANALYSIS ON RESEARCH QUESTION 2: HOW DO THE SELECTED *ULAMĀH* (SCHOLARS) PERCEIVE THE DYNAMICS OF REFORM AMONG DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS GROUPS?

Analysis of the interview data showed that there is general acceptance by the scholars that each and every religious group does undertake some sort of reform activity in its operation. This is in order to conform to the changing realities of time and also work within the tenets of the faith. For instance, Shaykh Abubakar Musah, who is from a purely Tijāniyyah background, commended the remarkable uniform pattern and organizational structure of the Ambariyyah Muslim Community. He added that, there has been considerable growth in the literacy rate of its members especially when it comes to secular education. This is because prior to the implementation in the practice of formal education by the Ambariyyah Muslim Community, it was highly condemned and ignored by their leaders such as Afa Yusuf Ajura. However, they have now conformed to the integration of the Arabic school with secular educational disciplines. Nonetheless, this positive remark of Shaykh Abubakar does not remove the fact that, there are points of differences as far as the methods used in achieving these reforms are concerned. Yet again, they sometimes grudgingly accept each other on minor differences.

On the other hand, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad, who is also a product of *Majlis* system of education in his early years of studies, commended the dynamics of reform of the Tijāniyyah scholars especially scholars who continue to increase their degree of professionalism in their methods of teaching. He further commended their religious establishments such as the formalized Arabic and English schools in order to respond to the needs of contemporary world and to address the challenges faced by the Muslims.

4.4 ANALYSIS ON RESEARCH QUESTION 3: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE REFORM OF THE SELECTED *ULAMĀH* CONTRIBUTING TO PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN GHANA?

Generally, the selected *Ulamāh* have all made significant efforts in their respective fields to addressing the challenges of the Muslim *Ummah* through their reforms which are felt either directly or indirectly. As gathered from the interviews and through observation, the *Ulamāh* are making efforts to educate both the younger generation and the elderly through the guidance of the Qur’ān which serves as a guide towards attaining internal and external peace. Their expansion of religious education and tolerance is enhancing peaceful co-existence of Ghanaians. For instance, as observed by the researcher, the schools and hospitals established by these *Ulamāh* are opened to all Ghanaians without any limitation based on one’s religious affiliation or denomination. Similarly is the case of the workers, appointments are given based on qualification. School gatherings in Amen Professional College, Kumasi are totally differentiated from religious gatherings. Students are not compelled to worship against their will. This obviously has enhanced and continue to promote the already existing peaceful atmosphere Ghanaians are enjoying. It is interesting to note that we cannot deny the fact that some Islamic ethical values could be adopted by

non-Muslims. Nonetheless this is not based on compulsion nor does it affect the religious rights of the non-Muslims in such Islamic institutions.

The reinforcement of the peaceful message of Islam by these scholars also helps in the promotion and understanding of the Islamic faith. Shaykh Amin Bonsu, for instance, in his lecture²⁶² condemned and denounced in the strongest terms possible the likes of *Boko Haram*.²⁶³ He is of the view that they are ignorantly and unjustifiably killing innocent souls in the name of Islam. Hence, the need for the teaming and upcoming Muslim youth to empty their minds from such false ideologies and acts of extremists.

Publications of books and manuscripts by the scholars is among the far reaching initiatives and interesting means in promoting and presenting Islam. They, through their writings, dispel the erroneous misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Islam to the general masses, thereby convincing them to accept Islam or have very positive manifestations of Islam.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Generally, the chapter has analysed the data collected from the field based on the research questions but chiefly exploring the contemporary challenges of the Muslim *Ummah* and the reform activities of the selected *Ulamāh* in addressing those challenges. As a result, in this chapter, I discussed from the analysis of the data the contemporary challenges that are thwarting the progress of Ghanaian Muslims and the development of Islam. This was

²⁶² The lecture was delivered on University of Cape Coast campus on Friday 16th March, 2018 during the Islamic session of Valco Hall Week Celebration on the topic, Islam: The Misunderstood Religion.

²⁶³ Boko Haram is a Hausa expression which means Western or Secular education is sinful or forbidden.

necessary because it gives the impetus to appreciate and not undermine the contributions of the scholars. These contemporary challenges, among others, include the clash of different civilizations which has disorient Muslims from the Islamic core ethical values, illiteracy which is a predicament that resulted from less emphasis and lack of commitment to Islamic education, disunity and internal struggles within the Muslim *Ummah* which is the result of love for leadership and individualism. This chapter has also examined the efforts of the *Ulamāh* in addressing these challenges through their reform. From the previous discussion, it has also been established that generally there is a form of reform going on among the different religious groups as attested to by Shaykh Abubakar Musah and Shaykh Nuhu Jihad. The contributions of the selected *Ulamāh* in this regard cannot be underestimated. Nonetheless we cannot overrule the fact that some of the scholars do not respond quickly enough and properly to the current challenges of the Muslim *Ummah*.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter gives a summary of the research. Also, in this chapter, the researcher outlines the major findings of the study. Suggestions or recommendations is drawn out of the analysis of the results of the data which is anticipated to contribute towards the development of Islam and peaceful co-existence among Muslims through the activities of these *Ulamāh* we have discussed.

5.1 SUMMARY

This research has explored the concept of Islamic reform in Ghana with reference to the reform activities of some selected *Ulamāh* such as Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu in the development of Islam.

In the Qur'ān (11:17) we are informed that no nation will be destroyed if its people carry out reform activities. From the verse above, it can be assumed that, deviating from the Islamic principles, to a large extent, is unavoidable. However, the most important concern is the rectification of these deviations through reform if we come to the realization. This is because the purpose of creation is to develop high level of spirituality through the guidance of Almighty Allah. The deviations are to be rectified by those who are gifted with the knowledge of interpreting the laws of Allah embedded in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. This is

in accordance with Qur'ān 13:11 which states that Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (through reform).

The feeling and believe among Muslims is that there will be a constant deterioration in the practice of Islam as captured in the saying of the Prophet that “Allah will raise for this community at the end of every hundred years one who will renew its religion.”²⁶⁴

It is against this background that the study set out some aims and objectives to guide it. These objectives include: firstly, to analyze the concept of Islamic reform in Ghana and secondly, to highlight the reform activities of the selected *Ulamāh* in the development of Islam. In an attempt to achieve the aims and objectives of the research, the research was organized in five chapters.

Chapter one basically provided a general introduction by stating the research problem and the rationale behind the study, the main and sub-research questions guiding the work, aims and objectives of the study, scope of the research and methodological approaches. Three methodological approaches were used. They are; the Phenomenological approach which helped the researcher in presenting the true reflection of the views and experiences of the respondents devoid of any biases. The Theological approach which aided the researcher in discussing the findings using the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and finally the Historical approach which helped the researcher to relate the present to the past. To achieve this, the methods of data collection which included in-depth interviews and personal observations were used. The chapter also dealt with the theoretical framework which is based on the Millennial Theology of Reform and the Theory of Common Sense. Relevant literature

²⁶⁴ Sunan Abu Dawood Vol. 4, Book of Trials and Fierce Battles, Hadith 4278.

relating to the study were reviewed. The chapter also looked at the limitation, organization and relevance of the research which is its contribution to scholarship.

In chapter two, the main issues discussed included the description of the study area; the location of Ghana and its people and also the religious composition. Other issues discussed in the chapter included the origins of Islam in Ghana which dates back to the latter part of 11th century though with little or no influence at this early stage. Islamic concept of reform in Ghana was also discussed. It was argued that Islamic reform within the Ghanaian Muslim community has to do with rectification and adherence to original orthodox practices of Islam devoid of syncretism. It was found out that conditions that necessitate reform in Ghana are both internal and external which basically dealt with either similar or different orientations. Again, the chapter looked at pioneer Muslim reformers like Alhaji Umar of Krachi who was a Nigerian trained scholar and Afa Yusuf Ajura who is a Ghanaian trained scholar and their contributions to Islam through their reform ideas. Lastly the chapter looked at the Tijāniyyah and Ahlus-Sunnah in relation to reform in Ghana.

Chapter three discussed one of the main objectives of the research which centred the biographical data of the selected *Ulamāh*. The chapter especially discussed the family, education, career, literary output and the daily routine religious activities of the selected *Ulamāh*. The selected *Ulamāh* preoccupied their lives with scholarship and religious activities such as learning, teaching and preaching. Subsequently, the chapter analyzed the religious views of Shaykh Abubakar concerning certain practices that relate to theology by

a section of the Tijāniyyah. Arguments and counter-arguments from both sides were analyzed. It was found out that these heresies or unorthodox practices by this section of Tijāniyyah was the underlying principle of Shaykh Abubakar's religious writing based on his insistence on adherence to pristine Sufism.

Chapter four dealt with the analysis of the data collected from the field. The analysis in this chapter, based on interviews, revealed that there are many challenges confronting the Muslim *Ummah* such as the clash of civilizations which is as a result of enormous flow of diverse influential cultures through transnational contacts and technological revolution, lack of quality Islamic education that will equip the students with practical skills and the ability to critically analyze issues, disunity among the *Ummah* which is the result of theological differences and the struggle for leadership and supremacy. Accordingly, the analysis revealed the reform drive and the religious activities of the selected *Ulamāh* in finding solutions to these challenges. These include but not limited to the integration of the Arabic schools and the introduction of the chalk board which contrasted with the age-old tradition of *Majlis* patterns of studies where everything was thought verbally without any form of writing or illustrations on the board.

In chapter five, the researcher summarized the study, outlined some major research findings, gave a general conclusion and some recommendations.

5.2 MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of this research include the following:

- The concept of Islamic reform does not necessarily limit itself to theological issues but rather any activity that is religiously motivated which will help in the development of Islam without compromising the core Islamic principles. An example can be cited on the integration of the Arabic school into Arabic and English School in order to meet the contemporary needs of the Muslim *Ummah*.

- The activities of the selected *Ulamāh* for the study clearly demonstrated that they carry out reforms in their reactions to the contemporary challenges of the Muslim *Ummah*. These activities have, to some extent, led to corrective changes. It may not be easy to measure the impact of the selected *Ulamāh*. However, based on the face value we can convincingly say they have impacted positively on reform through the expression of their theological position on certain practices in writing and also the establishment of institutions which appear to be reform in nature. Therefore, a critical look at the activities of the selected *Ulamāh*, considering them as reformers is justified. This is because they have contributed to the legacy of the reformers though in a different directions by looking at how to combine the Islamic needs and the contemporary needs of the *Ummah* without doing away with the Islamic values. That notwithstanding, their strength and impressive achievements outweigh their weakness in the reform process.

- Additionally, reforms, in most cases, were characterized by militant struggles such as the 1804 Shaykh Uthmān dan Fodio's *Sokoto Jihad* in Nigeria. However in the Ghanaian context, reformers such as Alhaji Umar of Kete- Krachi's reform activities were peaceful in nature. Even though we can't dispute the fact that, there were some verbal polemics and violent confrontations in certain parts of the country such as Tamale, Kumasi, Wench and Techiman between the Tijāniyyah and the Salafiyyah.

- The conditions which necessitated reform within the Ghanaian Muslim Community are two; Internal which deals with reform within the same doctrine and orientation. A clear example is the controversy surrounding certain alleged unorthodox practices of Tijāniyyah such as mingling of men and women by some members of the Tijāniyyah fraternity. The external, on the other hand, deals with reform within different orientations. This is, reforming some practices of a Muslim group that is considered innovation in Islam using different orientation. An example is using the doctrine of the Hanbali School of law to correct the practices of the Maliki School of law. The methodology of this external reform in Ghana has spawned a perpetual cycle of confrontations.

- There is the impression that some of the *Ulamāh* concentrate and pay more attention to the progress of their respective doctrinal groups than of Islam in general. As a result, they often pay more attention to how to spread and defend their doctrinal groups at the expense of Islam. In any case, the impact and influence of these

Ulamāh is worth commending. This is so because of their provision of valuable religious and social guidance and good character formation through diverse religious engagements such as seminars and lectures.

- Islam had its first contacts with modern Ghana in the late 11th and 12th Centuries largely through the trans-Saharan trade. However the presence of Muslims was felt in the latter part of the 14th Century and the beginning of the 15th Century. In this early phase of Islam in Ghana, Islam was restricted to only segregated Muslim communities. Due to lack of supervision of the new converts to Islam, the converts mixed the practice of Islam with some indigenous beliefs and practices rather than replacing Islam with the indigenous belief and practices.

- The study has also revealed that there is harmonious religious co-existence among the *Ulamāh* and other religious bodies even though with some minor disputes. It has also been found out that, the *Ulamāh* are staunch critics when it comes to extremist or radical ways of reforming Islam.

- Lastly, the selected *Ulamāh*, as part of their valuable roles, serve as scholars, teachers, preachers and counselors. That notwithstanding, they also promote both social and developmental projects such as schools, libraries and counselling centres as in the case of Shaykh Nuhu Jihad.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This thesis focused on Islamic reform in Ghana vis-à-vis the reform activities of Shaykh Abubakar Musah Baribari, Shaykh Nuhu Jihad and Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu. As a result, the overall objective has been to analyze the concept of Islamic reform in Ghana in relation to the activities of these selected *Ulamāh*. The Millennial Theology was used as the theoretical framework for the study.

In addition to the use of the research tools which include interviews with the *Ulamāh* and the Muslim individuals, participant observation and applying the phenomenological, theological and historical approaches as vividly explained in chapter one, some findings and recommendation were made.

The *Ulamāh* contributed in diverse ways in meeting the contemporary needs of the *Ummah*. Also, the *Ulamāh* helped through their reform activities in addressing the challenges faced by the Muslim *Ummah*. Therefore, the research concludes that, the *Ulamāh* in one way or the other fit in the category of contemporary Muslim reformers.

It is worth noting that, the current study does not present a conclusive research on Islamic reform in Ghana and the reform activities of the *Ulamāh* in providing solutions to the contemporary challenges of the *Ummah*. Therefore, to help fully address the contemporary challenges of the *Ummah* thereby promoting Islam and peaceful co-existence, some recommendations and suggestions are made for the *Ulamāh*, the generality of the Muslim *Ummah*, the government and for further studies.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made the following recommendations based on the findings to deepen the reform activities of the *Ulamāh* in order to help in the development of Islam and peaceful co-existence among Ghanaians;

- In order to enhance the development of Islam and Muslims, it is recommended that the *Ulamāh* concentrate and pay more attention to the progress of Islam in general and not their respective doctrinal affiliation. They should identify themselves as Muslims and not by their doctrinal groups. This will enhance the widespread and acceptance of their message by all group of Muslims.
- For the *Ulamāh* to effectively carry out reform activities, they should accommodate divergent views. Importance should be placed on the content and evidence available and not the doctrinal leaning of the person. The *Ulamāh* and their respective congregation should not consider their views as authoritative and the only truth, but rather be democratic most importantly if there are varied scholarly views regarding that issue.
- The study recommends that, the idea of reform and how the *Ulamāh* implement their ideas should be renewing, inspiring and effective so as to meet the demands of the Muslim *Ummah* in modern time. They should carry out their ideas through intellectual means. They should not impose their ideas on their religious groups

because they are influential and are highly recognized by them. They should derive their impetus from early peaceful reformers such as Alhaj Umar of Kete-Krachi.

- Additionally, the dynamics of education should be taken into consideration. There should be constant revision of the curriculum to include subjects that will enhance the critical thinking of the learners, instill in them the values of peace and tolerance, and equip them with practical skills to make them more effective and also enhance their prospects for work. Again, there should be common frame work that will guide the direction of the Islamic schools towards achieving its religious objectives.
- The *Ulamāh* should make more conscious efforts to increase their scope of operations in order to cater for the increasing demands of the Muslim *Ummah* across the length and breadth of the country. This can be achieved through the use of modern technology and communication or electronic media.
- There should be a recognized and accepted leadership structure (centralized leadership) in place that will coordinate the reform activities of the *Ulamāh*. This leadership should be decentralized to the Regional and District offices in order to forestall any conflict that may arise.
- Lastly, the research recommends that the government should be encouraged to occasionally organize programs and other engagements on inter-faith dialogue in order to cement the already existing peaceful co-existence and religious tolerance in Ghana. Topics such as tolerance in a pluralistic society, financial management,

conflict resolution mechanisms and the socio-cultural norms of the people can be included in this program.

5.6 SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- It is recommended that further research be carried out into the Shari'ah ruling regarding certain religious activities of the *Ulamāh* (such as formal counselling and the use of Bible to preach).
- Again further critical and analytical research need to be conducted on the literary works of the *Ulamāh*.
- Further research could be made into the reform activities of female scholars in the development of Islam in Ghana. It is an area that needs scholarly attention

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- Idriss Abdul- Karim, Clinical Psychologist at the department of Reflex Physiotherapy-Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital,

interviewed on 29th March, 2018 at Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, Dome- Accra.

- Mallam Haruna Yakubu, a student of Knowledge, interviewed on 24rd December, 2017 at his residence in Ward ‘k’, Tamale.
- Mallam Muhammad Akilu Ibrahim (Karami), current acting Deputy Chief Imam of Bawku, interviewed on 1st April, 2018 through a Phone Call.
- Maryam Amin Bonsu, Director of Amen Professional College, Kumasi, interviewed on 25th April, 2018 through a phone conversation.
- Shaykh Abdul-Mumin Dalwu, Shi’ah Imam and the *Sarkin* (chief) Zongo of Tamale, interviewed on 19th of May, 2018 through a Phone Call.
- Shaykh Abubakar Musah, an Islamic Scholar and an Imam, interviewed on 1st April, 2018 through a Phone call.
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- Shaykh Dr. Amin Bonsu, an Islamic Scholar and CEO of Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, interviewed on 11th April, 2018 in his Mosque at the premises of Amen Scientific Herbal and Alternative Medical Hospital, Dome- Accra.
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- Shaykh Muhammad Zakaria Suleman (Addo), An Islamic theologian and National Da'wah Committee Chairman for ASWAJ, interviewed on 23rd November, 2017 at Islamic Research and Reformation Centre - Nima, Accra.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE TO SEEK INFORMATION FROM SOME SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE TIJĀNIYYAH BROTHERHOOD AND AHLUS-SUNNAH WAL JAMĀ'AH (ASWAJ).

Introduction

My name is Amin Bamba Muzzammil. I am conducting a research on the topic: *Islamic Reform in Ghana: A study of the activities of some selected Ulamāh*. The research is part of the requirements towards an MPhil program in the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana. This interview therefore is meant to solicit for your information on the reforms achieved by your religious group through *Da'wah* within the past decade. Your views will be very much respected. All information given would be treated confidentially and is solely for academic purposes.

Your support is much appreciated.

1. What are the general reforms you have achieved through your *Da'wah*?
2. What's the nature of your *Da'wah*?
3. Do you consider your *Da'wah* as a way of reforming Muslims?
4. If yes, in what sense?
5. What's the cardinal teachings of your members?
6. Please explain to me what you do at your *Da'wah* programs?
7. Has your *Da'wah* activities impacted positively on the Muslim *Ummah*?
8. If yes, how do you measure that?
9. What will be the future of Islam and Muslims if these reforms doesn't impact positively?
10. What makes your *Da'wah* so unique from other religious groups?
11. Do you have any *Da'wah* session exclusively for women?
12. If no, what are the reasons?
13. Is the concepts of reform still relevant in modern times?
14. What are the challenges you face as a religious group and what is the way forward?

Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE TO SEEK INFORMATION FROM THE SELECTED *ULAMĀH*.

1. Please give a biography of yourself?
2. Please tell me about your marital status and the number and names of your children if any?
3. Please tell me about your educational background both Islamic and secular?
4. Please tell me about your daily routine religious activities and career?
5. Please tell me about your literary output if any?
6. What are your views on Islamic reform?
7. How do you perceive the dynamics of reform among the different religious groups?
8. What are the contemporary challenges confronting the Muslim *Ummah* in Ghana?
9. To what extent is your reform contributing to peaceful co-existence in the development of Islam in Ghana?
10. What are some of the issues you address in your reforms?
11. What is the community's attitude toward your reforms?
12. How do you respond to extremism in Islamic reform?
13. How are you fulfilling the objectives of your reform?
14. What are your religious activities that help in the development of Islam in Ghana?
15. What are some of the challenges you face in the dispensation of your reform works and the wayforward?