

**SHAYKH ABDULATEEF MAIKABARA OF ILORIN EMIRATE:  
A CRITICAL STUDY OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
ISLAMIC EDUCATION FROM 1987 TO 2007**

**M.A. GAMBARI & M.A. HADI**

***Abstract***

*As a highly focused, determined, diligent and tireless scholar, Ustādh Abdulateef Maikabara (1987-2007) wrote on grammar literature, history, philosophy, mysticism, rhetoric, logic, Islamic exhortation etc. His target audience included his Arabic and Islamic School Itakudima, Ilorin, his close associates who established similar Arabic schools and the up-coming Arabic and Islamic Scholars in Yoruba land. The present paper however, is an attempt to appraise his intellectual contributions. Similarly, effort was made to relate the relevance of his intellectual ideology to the present era in the field of Da'wah. It was discovered after the study that Ustādh Abdulateef Maikabara was a prolific writer who made a huge contributions to the development of Arabic language and Sufism. It was also discovered that he was a Qudiriyyah sufi order but he does not discriminate among the two popular tariqah in Nigeria. It is in conclusion that, having studied the major classical work on Arabic, the Ustadh was able to extract the essential contents suitable for Arabic students in non Arab Áreas.*

***Keyword: Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara, Ilorin Emirate, Islamic Education,***

**Introduction**

The virtue of knowledge acquisition in Islām cannot be overemphasized. More than any other religion of the world, Islām places high premium on seeking knowledge. According to Malik (2002), the importance, which Islām attaches to education can be explained from three sources: the Qur'ān, prophetic traditions and the saying of the wise men. The Quranic injunction centres on the virtue of knowledge and the prophet regarded its acquisition as a great form of Jihād. Tbn Anas was reported in one of his wise sayings to have said "Every

glory unsupported by learning will soon vanish and be replaced by humiliation" (Malik, 2000 P. 88-89). Base on this fact, the house of Arqam in Makkah and the prophetic mosque in Madinah served as centres of learning for the first generation of the Muslims. Later, various schools and mosques emerged in post-prophetic era to promote the culture of learning. It is remarkable to note the influence of Baytul-Hikmah (House of wisdom) established by Caliph Ma'mun and those of the Nizamiyyah Academic in Bagdad and Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Lateef (1996) asserts that the consciousness of the Muslim generations on knowledge has helped to produce men like Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Al-Ghazali, Al-Auzai a and host of others, whose contributions to the world of Religion, International Relations, socio- economic sciences among others are of immense impact to the world as a legacy or Islam (P.2).

In the Nigerian environment however, numerous scholars have made enormous ac promoting the cultural heritage of Islam and Islamic education. Some of them are Shaykin Usman bn Faduye (d. 1817), Abdullahi bn Foduye. Muhammad Nasir Kabara of Kano, Shaykh Kamaldeen Al-Adaby (d. 2005). Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilori (d. 1992) Shaykh Muhammad Muqaddam Al-Maimasa (d. 1984) to mention but a view. Gambari M A (2004), cited that Ilorin town has produced venerable scholars of Islām who had contributed immensely to Islamic education, among whom are, Shaykh Alimi bn Janta. Shaykh Muhammad Yambu and others. Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara, one of the prominent scholars of Ilorin emirate of his time and his personality is the focus of this paper. We hope that this paper will serve as guide and inspiration for young Muslim scholars who aspire to disseminate Islamic message. Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara is believed to have made certain contributions to the development of Islamic education during his lifetime. It was reported that he had written some works in the fields of Arabic language and Islamic sciences. In addition, a great number of students and disciples are ascribed to him. All these summed together, accounted for the reasons for conducting this research on the personality of Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara with the aims of examining his contributions to the certain contributions to the development of development of Arabic and

Islamic education in Ilorin emirate from 1987 to 2007. Personality Profile of Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara was born on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1967 C.E/22 of Shawal 1386. A year after the death of Sir Ahmad Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, some months after the death of a great Sufi leader in Ilorin and the entire Yoruba land, Shaykh Ahmad Rofi'ullah Nda Salati; it was during the reign of the 9 Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji ZuluQarnain Gambari (AbdulQadir Oganija 2007). Abdulateef hailed from Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State in the family of Alhaji Imam Ahmad Hambali Salih Maikabara and Alhaja Hafsat Bint Thambo Agarau Alore, Ilorin respectively. His grandfather, Shaykh (Sultan) Ahmad Mae-Maikabara al-Barnawi al-Hameeriy al-Ilorin who was born in 1755 C.E. in a town known as Ngazargamu, an old Capital city of Borno (Alhaji Yusuf Maikabara 2012). The family is said to be a royal member of Borno and the descendant of great Kanuri scholar, Ahmad Mai of Kanem Borno. Abdullateef Maikabara started his early education from Shaykh Salahudeen Bada (d. 1974) who died before he completed the learning of the Qur'ān. Abdulateef then, completed the study of Al-Qur'an at the age of seven (7) from Shaykh Salahudeen (Abdul-Rasheed 2012). He attended Shuban Primary School at Ita-Kudimoh, Ilorin between 1972-1976, then proceeded to Ilorin Grammar School (IGS) and finished in 1983. Shaykh Abdullateef, a young boy who cherished pursuit of knowledge, enrolled in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin but was unable to complete his course (Oganija, 2007). That did not deter Ustadh Abdullateef Maikabara, a man that cherished knowledge. He studied several branches of Islamic knowledge, such as Arabic grammar (*Nahw*), Morphology (*Sarf*), Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), Literature among others. He acquired all these branches of knowledge from Shaykh Sulaiman Thambo Olokonla from 1976 to 1977.

In later years, he traveled out of the country to Mali where he met Shaykh Shuwa from whom he learnt science of the Qurān (Tajwid). Immediately after his return home, he registered himself under Shaykh Muhammad Hadi bn Shaykh Ahmad Tijāni Isale Aluko where he received *Tabaraka Dhul-ula* and the beginning of *Tafsīr* (Jalalayn around 1978 (Al-Kabari, 2012)). It has become the good habit of the students in Ilorin town to study

under numerous Scholars for acquisition of different knowledge of education, moral, customs and tradition of the environment. In addition, it seems the more the Mallams (Teachers) one has the more knowledgeable he is. Finally, Shaykh Abdulateef learnt Maqamatul-Hariry and Tantawiy from Shaykh Muhammad Jamiu Omoleyin at Olobi Compound Okelele. Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara got married to Sister Madinah Taiye in 1989 and was blessed children after eleven years. He in addition married Sister Amamah and blessed with children as well (AbdulRasheed, 2012). Among his many children are Mustapha, Abdulqadir, Aishat, Adnan, Rihanat, Salihu, AbdulJelil and Halimatu-Saadiyyah. Ten children survived but Ibrahim died in 1992 (AbdulRasheed, 2012). Throughout his lifetime, he was known to be high sense of humility, dedication and commitment to the service of Allah as well the cause of humanity. He was kind to the indigent and destitute members of the Muslim populace in Ilorin and its environs and above all, consciousness to the worship of Allah (Harry, 2010) Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara was a renowned scholar of Islam who contributed tremendously to the development of Islam and Islamic Education in general in Ilorin.

His career as a teacher started in line with the prophetic teaching and tradition, which says "Best of you is he who learnt Qur'an and teaches others" Sahih Bukhari.

Abdulateef Maikabara began a free of charge teaching as a part-timer at the Mahd Isohatsl.nWa-shtaq founded by one of his teachers Shaykh Idrees Abdus-Salam Mafiagba bose (d 2009), from there he moved to Markaz Dirsatul-Arabiyyah wal-Islmmin Se (a.founded by Shavkh Salihu Abdul-Azeez, Ilorin. At this free and part time School, a, Okekere he taught numerous students among who are Ustadh Jamiu Abdul-Qadir (Mudir, late Mudir Abdul Fatai Ahmad Hambali (Yasin) and others (Abdur-Rashid, 2012). After a year of service in the above school, his well dedication and commitment to Arabic and Islamic education energized him to teach at Markaz Ialimul-Araby wal-Islamiyyah, Oke-Agodi, Ilorin founded by Shaykh Yahaya Muritala (d. 1995) (Harir, 2012). He also serves as classroom teacher, lecturer and leader (Imam) during Friday Jumma'ah prayer in the Darul-Kitab as-Sunnah owned by Dr. Abdul-Qadir Salman Sholageru.

In addition to that, the passion and love of Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara in spreading teaching and learning of Islamic Education enabled him establish a school of his own where Muslim children were given the opportunity to acquire sound Islamic Education. He established in his house a centre for learning Arabic and Islamic Studies from dawn to dusk. He displayed untiring efforts in disseminating knowledge; people trooped to him with different Islamic books. Al-Kabari School of Arabic and Islamic studies was established in 1970 by Shaykh Maikabara; the proprietor (Mudir). The school took its appellation after the fore fathers and family name of the founder. Furthermore, the school has three levels of education apart from Makaranta allo that has its permanent site at Maikabara compound. The three include; Ibtidaiyyah, Idadiyyah and Thanawiyyah with full time operation respectively (Ustadah Qadim, 2016). The research reveals that, Al-Kabari School of Arabic and Islamic learning had since inception-produced students who later became the scholars in different fields such as PhD, Master Degree, First Degree, National Certificate in Education (ND and Diploma in various disciplines.

Based on thus, he produced many students that are famous in the Muslim community. The notable among them are: Tajudeen Owolabi, Abdul-Fatah Ibrahim (M.A. D Issa, Musa Sa'adallah, Umar Abdus-Salam, Chief Imam Bukhari Adam., Chief Imam Adewole, Imam Abdur-Razaq Bukhari, Imam Baba Olobi Mosque, Chief Imam Ogbondoroko land in Asa L.G.A. and host of others to mention. (M.A. Oganja, 2007).

Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara as student researcher and preacher traveled widely both internationally and locally. Most of his trips to the northern part of Nigeria were in the company of former recite (Ajanasi) of Ilorin Shaykh Yusuf Bature (d. 1994). It was through him that Shaykh Abdullateef met Shaykh Abul-Fathi in Maiduguri and Shaykh Shuwa n Mali. He also met Dr. Abdulhameed Shuaib Agaka in Kano (now the present Imam of Agaka Mosque). He in addition met Late Prof. Nahibi Ali Suwaid in Kano through Prof. Abdu Baqi Shuaib Agaka. All these contacts boost the morale of Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara in authoring Islamic book (AbdulRasheed 2012, P. 29)

Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara is not only a teacher, but also a leader (Imam). He inherited the ability of directing and leading from his ancestors as well as from his biological father who was also an Imam. He led the congregational Jumu'ah prayer at Darul-Kitab was-Sunnah, Gaa-Akanbi, Ilorin since the inception of the school in 1998, Shaykh AbdulQadir Jumu'ah Mosque at Taiwo Road, Ilorin from 1998 to 2002, this added to his credit by being the Imam of his own mosque at his school premises at Ita-Kudimoh, Ilorin (Ismail Ibrahim2012).

Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara contributed greatly to the development of Islamic mysticism (Tasawwuf). As a Qadiriyyah Sufist, he initiated numerous people into the Qadiriyyah Sufi order, and a considerable number of them later became Khalifah, Muqaddam and Murid respectively. His disciples established schools, together with Zawayah in their respective localities for spiritual training of the Muslims. Summarily, Shaykh Abdullateef started preaching during Ramadan evening in 1990; he televised on NTA Ilorin in 1991 at a public lecture he delivered at a function in Oke-Apomu, Ilorin. Subsequently, he had been recorded on both Radio and Television Islamic programmes (Abdul-Rasheed 2012).

### **Relevance of Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara Intellectual Ideology to Contemporary *Da'wah***

Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara was one of the great scholars of Islam in Ilorin that attempt reconciliation between Shari'ah and Sufism. His great erudition is seen in his acquisition of profound knowledge in several branches of the Islamic education. This virtue, as we observe has helped him a lot in carrying out his *Da'wah* work successfully. Closely related to this is his good manner and attitude that made him acceptable to the generality of the society.

Moreover, Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara was able to strike a balance between the application of knowledge and practice. He was neither an extremist nor a negligent. He showed concerted effort in rendering Islam comprehensively to every Muslims. He made

the Muslims of his age realize that condemnation of scholars, Muslim brothers cannot bring great achievement in the propagation of Islam. This ideology of Shaykh Maikaraba was also expressed by Al-Ilori, that the *Salafis* need to create mutual understanding with the Sufi community since their population cannot be ignored among the Muslim Ummah (Al-Ilori 2006; P. 135). In the same vein, he states that for achievement of successful da'wah, individuals need to work in unison with one another with a clear plan and a sense of direction. It is only through this, that tremendous energy they expend could yield positive result (Talib, 1991; p. 37).

### **Al-His Intellectual Works**

Apart from being a good teacher, Abdullateef Maikabara was also a prolific writer who has employed his talent beneficial to Arabic and Islamic Education and the entire Muslim Ummah in Ilorin emirate and beyond. He authored many books in different fields. These books have contributed immensely to the development and teaching of Islamic education. Some of these works also served, as books of reading in different Arabic and Islamic schools in Ilorin.

Abdul-Rasheed (2012, p. 32) listed about twenty (20) of the books but research indicates that there are other unpublished works unknown to the public.

Here are the lists of some of works written by Abdullateef Maikabara:

1. At-Tarbiyah Qasidatu Ash-Shaykh Ulbman bn foduye Al-Masirat Nahwa Taybat Masura't li azinat Qabril-Hashmiyyah Muhammad; written in 1994.
2. Durusun Mukhtasrah Min Qowaid at-lafsir al-Kulluyyat Wal-Juziyyah: It was written in 2003.
3. Hukmu Takrarul-Jama'a fi Masjid Waid Baina al-Manur al-fiqh wal-waqih an-Naigri, 2004.
4. Muninyatul-Mumin as-Sai'd fi ma'rifatul Hameed al-majeed fiilmi at-Tawhid, 2005.
5. Labaidul-Hikam fi sharhi Nawa biqulli-I-kalim, writing in the year 2007
6. Muqaddimat fi-Turuk ad-Dawah al-Islamiyyah

7. Maogee ful al-Islamiy Mina-Niqab.
8. Shubuhat Haola Sunnah Limadha?
9. At-TaleeqAla Roddu adh-Dhikril Jimahi li-Khamis
10. Mudhakirat Tarikah al-Islamiyyah.
11. A-Janab al-fasila fi Teshteer Maqsuratul Madih al-Mashur bi Maqamulada written in the year, 1987.
12. Al-Mutaliat al-Mayassarat fi lugatul-Arabiyyah wal-Inshai wat-Tabiri, 2001.

A few among the works of Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara can be found at Al-Kabary's School, some of the Islamic books sellers and at-Al-Azhar Library Cairo, Egypt (Abdul-Rasheed, 2012).

### **Here is a summary of some his works**

1. *Al-Juhdul-Waniy Fi Madhi al-Baniy*: The book was published in 1987, and being the first book of Shaykh Abdulateef al-Kabari, whose discussion centered on the praises and eulogy of prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and his family race. The book is of eleven pages containing about 170 lines of poems.
2. *Al-Mahfusat al-hikamiyyah min Oosoid al-Kabari*: This book with about 36 pages was published in 1994. It contains different topics of current issues. Among the 2 topics are; Desist from worldly materials, Love of Allah, Passion to attain high degree, the patience, the braveness, the politics, the religious, the repent and lastly westerners and Islam. These issues are analyzed critically for easy assimilation of students and scholars.
3. *Al-Hayatus-Saidahfi Tawheed Wal-Aqeedah* published in 2000 C.E. with 24 pages. The book has a brief introduction about the author and it is of theology (Tawheed) which laid emphasis on the components of Islamic Religion. The present book contains three chapters; the first chapter talks about Islam, Iman and al-Ihsan, the second deals with Articles of faith and the last discusses Shirk (Associating partners with Allah).

4. *.Durusun Mukhtasar Min Qawaid at-Tafsir al-Kuliyyat Wal-Juziyyah*. Shaykh Al-Kabari brilliantly discussed rules guiding Tafsirul-Qur'an (Quranic exegesis); it comprises of 44 pages. The book was dedicated to the forefather of the author, Shaykh Solihu, the grandson of Shaykh Shuqabah and Iliyas Maikabara respectively.

## Conclusion

It has been discussed in this paper the personality profile, the contributions and dedication of Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara to the development of Islam. It was attempted to define the roles played by great scholars in making Islam understood by the Muslims populace. The intellectual achievements of the scholars most especially in the aspect of Sufism have been thoroughly discussed. The contribution of Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara to educational enlightenment, most especially in the aspect Da'wah practices was highly appreciated. It could have been more meaningful as observed, if the great Shaykh could appeal to the opponent of Tasawwuf inform of healthy dialogue. Not only that, the approach would mitigate the tension between youth and the sufi scholars, but also enhance the spirit of Islamic scholarship. It is hoped that Islamic *da'wah* activities will grow steadily if many of the present 'Dua't could emulate the attitude of Shaykh Al-Kabari in knowledge application and *da'wah* methodology of constructive approach to Islamic propagation.

## Recommendations

With regard to the personality of Shaykh Abdullateef Maikabara under study, the community of Ilorin town and its neighboring cities need to put much premium on Islamic Education. It is the invaluable legacy of Islam, which every Muslim community ought to cherish dearly. Every members of the community should maintain concerted effort to ensure that the cultural values of Islam are uplifted. This could only be properly ascertained when respect and honour are given to Muslim scholars. The present day students need a lot to emulate from the great Shaykh. Most importantly, the wisdom of *da'wah* methodology should be adopted from his lifestyle. The students of today, who are potential scholars

should be zealous in acquisition of knowledge with utmost interest and goal to effect positive changes in their mediate environment. Similarly, the government should encourage religious education. It is hoped that this would improve the moral standard of Nigerian citizenry and pave way for Socio-political and economic progress of the Nation. The government should give adequate Support to religious bodies in their diligent efforts to eschew religious bigotry, fanaticism and violence, which could invariably destabilized peace and tranquility.

The present day Mallams are to establish institution and enhance Islamic scholarship with a better approach to promote Islamic interest. They need to build on the disparagement of the efforts and commitment of some Muslim scholars, particularly the local or traditional Mallams who do more havoc to Islamic work than it would repair, acknowledgement of other contributions is indeed at hallmark of great erudition, and this was observed in the personality trait of Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara.

Furthermore, students and researchers should be encouraged to embark on research of this nature where findings be made on notable Muslim scholars so that their contributions would be brought to limelight. In addition, a foundation should be established in the name of Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara where students and interested researchers will be sponsored. Efforts should be made to see that the works of Shaykh Abdulateef Maikabara are kept and made available for further research.

## **References**

Abdul-Razaq Y.A. (2002), *Sufism in Nigeria*, Yusuf Ventures, 24, Olusanya Street, Agege Lagos, Nigeria.

Abdur-Rasheed Y. (2012), *The Contributions of Ustadh Abdulateef Maikabara to the teaching and learning of Islamic Educaiton in Ilorin Emirate; A research project submitted to the Faulty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, PP. 30-34*

Al-Ilori A.A. (2006), *Tawjihuh da'wah Wad-Dua't in Nigeria*, Maktabatu Darul-Nur 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

Al-Ilori A.A. (ND), *Falsafatul-Wilayyah*, Agege, Maktabatul-Thaqofatil-Islamiyyah, P33

Al-Kabari A.H. (2003), *Durusum Mukhtasarah Min-Qowaid at-Tafsirul-Kuliyiyatu-Wal-juziyyah*, Anifowose Printer, Ilorin, P. 45.

Al-Kabari A.H. (2010), *Tadhkiratul-Adhkiyahi fi shari al Ulamahi Wal-A'abai*, KewudamilolaPrinting Press and Computer, Graphics, Ilorin, P. 20

Gambari M.A. (2004), *Mallam Muhammad Muqaddam Al-Maimasa of Ilorin emirate: A critical study of His contributions to Islamic Education between 1968-1982*. A B.A project submitted to Department of Islamic Studies, Usman Dan-Fodio University, Sokoto P.33.

Ibid, P. 35

Ibid, P. 36

Ibid, P. 40

Ibid, P. 42

KalliA.G. (2005), *The Kanuri in Diaspora*, CSS Bookshop, Lagos, Nigeria, P. 161.

Latif S.A (1996), *The Role of Muslim Scholars*, Lagos Centre for Islamic Publication Education (CIPE) and Al-Hilal Foundation, P. 30.

Onikijipa A.A. (2007), *The Origin and Ilorin Scholars*, Al-Adabi Printing Press, Okekere, Ilorin P. 112.