

CHAPTER 9

PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AND ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP IN ILORIN

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INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the relevance of peace to sustainable development cannot be over emphasized because a peaceful atmosphere promotes territorial and human security, societal cohesion, and tourist attraction. Such peaceful environment equally allows for business activities to thrive. In spite of the centrality of peace to development globally, violent conflict which is a converse of peace, is an acute reality in many parts of Nigeria; especially in the Northern part of the country. Such perennial violence has continued to threaten the security of lives and properties and peaceful co-existence amongst the people. In fact, the threat to peace and security is so pronounced in the Northern part of Nigeria as to have led to the declaration of a state of emergency in three states located in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria; Borno, Yobe and Adamawa on 4th March, 2012. However, in Kwara state; Ilorin in particular, which is politically zoned as part of the North appears to have enjoyed relative peace as reflected in the low level security breach, relative harmonious and peaceful co-existence amongst the populace. As noted by Oladosu, et'al (2013), though many parts of Nigeria are bedeviled by claws of ethno-religious conflicts in recent past,

"Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara state has always maintained its

Status as true symbol of the state of Harmony. Like a

Rainbow resplendent in its diverse colours; Ilorin is strikingly

Spectacular in its cultural and linguistic efflorescence".

It is the contention of this paper that Islamic scholars within the metropolis have contributed to the relative peace and tolerance being

enjoyed in Ilorin currently, and that their scholarly contributions have not been sufficiently captured by researchers. This paper attempts to fill such gap by examining and evaluating the contributions of Islamic scholarship to peaceful co-existence in Ilorin metropolis. Before we discuss the subject matter, we need to briefly conceptualize the key words as used in this paper.

Islamic Scholarship: This is a focused training on the knowledge of Islam to enhance adequate understanding of the subject.

Peaceful Co-Existence: This term means a harmonious relationship between at least two people or more. It also means a pragmatic and united relationship amongst the people that is devoid of rancour.

Impact: The concept represents a positive or negative effect(s) on someone or something.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Peace and order are essential ingredients of promoting sustainable development in any society (David, 2006). Thus a condition of peaceful environment promotes growth of investment, attracts tourism and foreign investors to generate more financial income and employment opportunity for the people. As noted by the author, peace and development are the two major contemporary concerns of International Relations because a peaceful atmosphere encourages sustainable development while stable development in turn promotes durable peace. In this connection, it is assumed that when a country experiences sustainable development, peace is achievable because most people within the range of better economic ambient are less likely to initiate violent owing to the fact that they are more likely to be contented with better standard of living and would not want to promote any condition that will jeopardize such favourable socio-economic standard. Therefore, such people often feel they have more to lose from the territorial danger and economic disruption that violent conflict promotes. Ibrahim (2013) opined that sustainable development and peaceful co-existence is largely unattainable without first building the conditions for a peaceful environment. To build such environment, there is the need for a viable infrastructure or pillar on which to build enduring peace. Three types of this peace paradigm are distilled to include positive structural, political

and economic foundations. The structural foundation addresses all forms of marginalization in the society which hitherto promotes violent agitations. The Political foundation revolves around all- inclusive political governance base on democratic norms in order to allow people have a say in the decision making process while the economic foundation for peace focuses on the promotion of robust economy to generate sufficient income in order to take care of the populace. Thus, in trying to build peace, the primary drivers of conflict must first be addressed positively. Richard (1999) identified Peace as the third most essential priority of man in the hierarchy of needs after food and shelter, because even if a man possesses all other needs in life without peace, such possession could be jeopardized. Thus without peace of mind, human mind is doomed. The author opined further that the first requirement for establishing sustainable peace in the society is to adopt a republican legal framework that is founded on the principle of fairness, justice and equities, amongst others. Galtung (1996) identified six major conditions for attaining sustainable peace. These are zero tolerance to violence, all inclusive participation of all able citizens in the development process, equal representation in the political decision making process, social justice and equal access to collective resources, embracing unity in diversity and tolerance of dissenting opinions. Galtung (1996:5) classified peace as being negative or positive. Thus a negative peace essentially refers to the absence of war or physical violence in spite of the presence of salient abnormalities, especially the prevailing structural violence; unfairness, injustice, economic marginalization, political exclusion, amongst others, that could generate violence. Peace is said to be positive when there is the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationship and the presence of all inclusive socio-economic and political participation. From these positions, it is clear that peace and peaceful co-existence has different dimensions; absence of war, justice and development leading to absence of structural violence, respect and tolerance ,tranquility or inner peace, harmonious relationship between man and his physical environment, modesty in dealing with others, love and humility, amongst others.

Religious scholars have equally contributed to the debate on how to achieve sustainable peace in the society. As opined by Richard (1999), apart from serving as primary avenue for establishing divine relationship between man and God, religion offers explanation for certain incomprehensive phenomenon in life which has led to the total

submission of man to the will of God. Religion also reforms the society by attaching great importance to faith, piety and peaceful co-existence. As noted by Abubakar (2006), of all the religions in the world, there is none that preaches and emphasizes peaceful co-existence as Islam because the concept is the corner stone of the religion. Peace is thus the foundation or pillar upon which Islam is built. Even by ordinary conceptual understanding, Islam literally means "peace". Technically, the religion denotes the total submission of all human activities to the will of Allah. Such unreserved submission allows a society to achieve peace, love, humility, piety, orderliness and the tranquility of mind. Peace as deduced from the conceptual understanding of Islam also implies living in perfect peace and harmony with fellow human beings, the environment and even with other harmless species created by Allah. Islam thus abhors disunity, dissention and strifes (Abubakar, 2006:2). There are various verses of the Qur'an to support peaceful co-existence. According to the Qur'an, Allah says; "Lo-Allah, enjoins justice and kindness and forbids wickedness (Qur'an 16 : 90). In order to establish and sustain peace and tranquility further in the society, Allah also commands Muslims thus "Allah's commandment is that you restore deposits to their owners and if you judge between mankind, that you judge justly" (Qur'an 4:58). Islam also condemns transgression and injustice in whatever forms as the following verses of the Qur'an clearly shows: "fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not the hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors" (Qur'an 2 :190). Even when a Muslim is attacked, he is enjoined to retaliate only to the degree and the like manner as admonished in the Qur'an where Allah says "And one who attack you, attack him in like manner (Qur'an 2 :194). In the event that a Muslim eventually fights a holy war, he is enjoined to cease fighting the moment the persecutor stops. As noted in the Qur'an, Allah commands; "And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. " But, if they desist (from fighting) then, let there be no hostility except against wrong doers" (Qur'an 2:193). In its attempt to maintain peaceful co-existence amongst the people, the Qur'an admonishes thus "And if the enemy inclines to peace, incline also to it and trust in Allah (Qur'an 8 : 61). Also in the Quran (4:90) Allah says: "If they hold along from you and wage not war against you and offer you peace, Allah allows you no war against them (Qur'an 4:90).

The paper distilled the practical application of the Islamic injunction of peaceful co-existence by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in many instances. The treaty of al-Hudaybiyyah was one clear example to show how peace-loving the Prophet and his early followers were in their life time. Here was the Prophet leading thousands of his followers from Madinah to Makkah to perform the lesser Hajj; a religious rite. They carried no weapon apart from what was traditionally allowed by the custom of the Arabs, but the Prophet and his followers were prevented from entering Makkah by the Makkan aristocrats. A treaty was subsequently signed postponing the Prophet's visit to the following year. As part of the deal between the Muslims and the Makkan idol-worshippers, any youth in Makkah who joined the Muslim without the approval of his parents or guardian should be rejected but the reverse was the case with the Muslim where it was decided that any Muslim who wished to join the Makkan idolators should not be disallowed by the Prophet. The treaty seems very humiliating to the Muslims (Abdul, 1988). In spite of this seeming humiliating accord between the Muslims and the Makkan idol-worshippers, the Prophet accepted it just to give peace a chance. The constitution of al-Madinah represented an agreement between the Prophet and the non-Muslims in Madinah; the Arab tribes of Khazraj and Aws (who were idol worshippers) and the three Jewish tribes of Banu Qaynuz; Banu Qanuqa and Banu Nadir. They all lived peacefully within the tenets of the constitutional provisions with the Muslims under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad until the Jews breached the terms of the constitution by allying with the enemies from Makkah to attack the Muslims.

All the above quotations and illustrations are clear evidences that Islam is a religion of peace. In the area of progeny, Islam forbids adultery and fornication (Qur'an 24:3) because it could lead to broken homes and the reproduction of illegitimate and "street children" who could end up terrorizing the society. In an attempt to ensure the sanctity of intellect, Islam forbids taking of alcohol or any hard drug that could impair reasoning faculties (Qur'an 90:91, 93:94) because many criminal offences are committed by the drunk under the influence of alcohol. Though, Islam sees itself as the only acceptable religion in the sight of Allah, it recognizes the existence of the previous orthodox religions and thus enjoins good relationship between Muslims and the non-Muslims, particularly the Jews and the Christians as the consumption of their food and marriages of their

women are lawful to the Muslim (Qur'an 5:45). Furthermore, Islam identifies some social practices which can cause hatred and threaten peaceful co-existence which in turn could jeopardize the peace of the society. The religion, therefore, forbids such practices as slander, mockery, and suspicion, spying, backbiting, and gossiping amongst others, which could cause fight amongst the people. From the foregoing, it is quite clear that Islam is a complete religious culture of civilization covering acts of worship, all aspects of commendable behaviour, tolerance, kindness, patience, trust, justice, humility and modesty which are parts of the pre-conditions for peaceful co-existence.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ILORIN

Ilorin is one of the largest cities in Nigeria and it is the capital of Kwara State. Ilorin was founded as a provincial military headquarters of the ancient Oyo empire by a Yoruba warrior called Afonja in 1450 (Ibrahim, 2006). The city derives its name from a stone that was being used then to sharpen metal tools by one Ojo Isekuse, a disciple of Afonja, and other hunters and it was called "Okuta-Ilorin" (The stone for sharpening iron) which is located at Asaju's compound, Idiape quarters, Ilorin up till today (Ibrahim, 2006:4). The city later became a Northern Nigeria traditional protectorate when Shehu Alimi who was a disciple of Usman Dan-Fodio took control of Ilorin and began to spread the Islamic religion. The Ilorin Emirate came into existence in 1823 but was formally recognized by the British colonial Administration in 1832 (Oladosu, 2013). The Emirate covers five Local Government Areas including Ilorin West, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Asa and Moro Local Government Areas, with Ilorin as the capital. The Emirate is sub-divided into four main traditional units consisting of four Baloguns (traditional warlords); Alanamu, Ajikobi, Gambari and Fulani apart from other lesser traditional rulers like the "Magajis". Ilorin Emirate is endowed with rich agricultural land, expansive industrial layout for companies like, Global soap, Dangote flour, International Tobacco Company, Metal Company (like camp wire) and oil companies like the Lubcon oil (Ibrahim, 2013:6). Ilorin is a Centre of academic learning with about nine higher institutions; including a College of Education, Higher Islamic School, School of Nursing, a private university and federal university and many secondary schools (Iliyas, 2009). There are many major and mini markets in the city which serves as main points of contact and interaction amongst the people, having also served as a veritable

platform of promoting peaceful co-existence amongst the populace. Some of the markets in Ilorin metropolis include Oja- Oba, Oja- Ago, Oja- Ipata, Oja- Baboko, Mandate Market and Shoprite modern market at Fate. Ilorin is equally blessed with traditional Arts such as the traditional pottery workshops at Dada, Eletu, Okekura, Oloje, and Abe Emi. Traditional textile (Aso Oke) small scale industry equally abounds in many places in Ilorin in virtually all the areas where pottery activities take place.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ILORIN INDIGENES TO ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP

Ilorin has a rich history of nurturing erudite Islamic scholars who are or were national and internationally acclaimed. Some of these scholars include Shayk Shehu Alimi, Shaykh Kamaldeen Al-Adaby, Shaykh Adam Abdulahi Al-Ilory and Shaykh Ahmad Rufai Salati. Other erudite Islamic scholars from Ilorin as documented by Suliman (2013) include Shaykh Muhammad Maimasa, Shaykh Amdaniyu Agbaji, Shaykh Muhammad Amin Babata, Shaykh Salman Ake, Shaykh Murtada Alaya, amongst others, who have contributed in one way or the other to Islamic scholarship around Ilorin and beyond.

The main contributions of these great indigenes of Ilorin to Islamic scholarship, especially within the Ilorin metropolis, started with the establishment of the first major mosque in the city in Agbarere area (Ile Elewa) in 1820, under the Chief Imam, Shayk Imam Munabbau. Another central mosque was built at Idiape in 1835 during the reign of the 1st Emir of Ilorin, Shayk Abdulsalam (Ibrahim, 2013). The Ilorin central mosque was re-built more than a century later; in 1974, within the reign of the 9th Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Sulu Gambari. Much of the fund for the re-building of the mosque was donated by Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki (Iliyasu, 2012). The foundation for the mosque was laid on April 30, 1977 by the then Emir of Gwandu, Alhaji Suliman Maaji on behalf of the former Sultan of Sokoto, Sultan Abubakar III. The Ilorin Central Mosque was officially opened in 1981 by the first Executive President of Nigeria; Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The rehabilitation and refurbishment of the Mosque took place under the reign of the eleventh and current Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Dr. Ibrahim Sulu Gambari with tremendous financial support from the former Governor of Kwara state, Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki, who set up the Ilorin Central Mosque Rehabilitation Technical Committee (ICMRTC), which was

headed by Alhaji Sheu Abdulgafar. The refurbished mosque was commissioned in 2013. The important point to note here is that these two central mosques at Agbarere and Oja oba served as the first major centres of Islamic scholarship and places of worship in Ilorin. Apart from establishing regular prayers in the mosque, the teaching of Arabic and Islamic knowledge was conducted in the two mosques. The mosque's training curriculum emphasized the reading and memorization of the Holy Qur'an, Islamic jurisprudence (shariah) and the Hadith (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Subsequently, "Area Mosques" "Masalasi Adugbo" or "community mosque" began to spring up in various compounds, and they also focused on all the areas of Islamic knowledge earlier mentioned; reading, memorization, Islamic jurisprudence and Hadith in their local areas.

Aside from building mosques for the teaching and learning of Arabic language and Islamic studies, many erudite Islamic scholars of Ilorin descent also travelled near and far to acquire Islamic education within and outside Ilorin. Two of these prominent Islamic scholars were Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilory and shaykh kamaldeen Al-Adaby who eventually founded the "Al-marikaz" and "Al-adabiy" Group of Islamic schools respectively within Ilorin and beyond, especially in Lagos. Apart from having schools, the two scholars along with many of their disciples and ex-students founded Islamic societies within Nigeria and across the West African sub-region, one of which was the Ansarul-Islam Society of Nigeria. The society established many schools to provide quality Islamic and Western education to the people. The idea of the school was conceived by Shaykh Muhammad Kamaldeen. The first Arabic school of the Society, "Madrasati Al-Adabiyyah", was established in 1938 while the first Ansarul Islam primary school was established on 15th January 1947 (Eliasu, 2013). The Society established its first secondary school at Ijomu-oro in 1970 while that of Ilorin was established at ogidi, Ilorin in 1971. Currently, the society has about 13 secondary schools across Kwara State (Eliasu, 2013:34-35). Ansarul-Islam has equally proposed the establishment of Muhammad Kamaldeen University since 1990 to promote Islamic scholarship further at the highest level of education. Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-ilory was an itinerant Islamic scholar who travelled widely to disseminate both Arabic and Islamic knowledge. He was the proprietor of the "Markaz ta'lim" in Agege, Lagos. The Markaz Institute of Arabic and Islamic Training Centre, which was one of the promoters of standard

modern Arabic schools in Yoruba land was established in 1952 (Muhibudeen and Abdulfatah, 2012). The school which started in a rented apartment in Abeokuta was later relocated to its current site in Agege, Lagos State in 1955. Two of the aims and objectives of establishing the Markaz were en-visioning the institution as a centre for in-depth study of Islamic and Arabic knowledge while also formulating a comprehensive Islamic vision and methodology in the school helps Muslim scholars in their critical analysis of religious knowledge. The school was also established to develop appropriate methods for understanding the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet in order to firmly establish them as a source of guidance, knowledge and correct civilization. As a training Centre, the Markaz attracted students all over Nigeria and other African countries like Togo, Ghana, Mali, Cameroun and Niger. The Markaz training school influenced the establishment of other Islamic training Centers in Yoruba land. One of such Centre was the al-Ma'had al-Arabi which was founded in Ibadan in 1958 by Shaykh Murtada Abdas-Salam, with the assistance of Shaykh Adam al-ilory. In fact the latter provided a Teacher, Ustadh Raji Sulaiman, a native of Abeokuta as the first pioneering staff of Al-Ma'had al-Arabi (Muhibudeen and Abdulfatah, 2012:73). Shaykh Adam Abdullahi was actually honoured by the Egyptian Government with "wizain" Honourary Doctorate Degree.

The erudite scholar also authored many Arabic works which are used in Secondary schools and Tertiary institutions. Another erudite Ilorin indigenous scholar who spread Arabic knowledge to other areas was Shaykh Badmus Musa Agbaji, who was the first indigenous Ilorin scholar to translate Arabic poem into Yoruba (Sulaiman, 2013). Agbaji also composed Arabic poem on admonition and elegy. Shaykh Muhammad Bashir Olohundare al-ilory was another great indigenous Islamic scholar who founded the Al-Ikhlās movement of Nigeria. Some of the peace related curriculum contents of the Islamic schools established by these erudite scholars include Al-hidayah (Guidance), Al-Ibadah (Worship), accountability before Allah, Good conduct, Faith (Iman) Qadar (Predestination) Goodness and obedience to parents, Honesty and truthfulness in Islam, keeping promise, covenant with God and man and tolerance. Other curriculum outlines of the early Arabic schools include lessons on the Hadith of the Prophet, alms giving "sadaqah", peace (As-salam), forgiveness (Ghaffir), amongst others.

THE IMPACT OF ISLAMIC SCOLARSHIP ON PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN ILORIN

That Ilorin metropolis is relatively peaceful is not in doubt. The contribution of Islamic scholarship to the sustenance of peace in the city as captured in this section is linked to many factors. Some of these factors are discussed below. The first major contribution of Islamic scholarship to peaceful co-existence in Ilorin was linked to the establishment of Arabic schools within the Ilorin metropolis. As a result of their love for Arabic and Islamic education, many leading scholars in different communities within the Ilorin metropolis established Arabic schools to train young children so that they may grow into a cultured, well behaved, divinely-conscious and God-fearing Muslims. As noted by Oladosu (2013), there are about two hundred and seventy-two Arabic schools that are formally registered with the Kwara State Ministry of Education in Ilorin Emirate as of 2013, even though there are much more than that, with greater numbers of Arabic schools largely unregistered. Some of these schools include Shamsudeen College of Arabic and Islamic studies, Akalambi, Sobi Road, Ilorin. Daral-kitab Wa Al-Sunnah, Gaa Akanbi Ilorin, Omo- iya College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Muhydeen College of Education, Kulende, Ilorin. Kamal School of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Abayawo, Ilorin. Az-zumratul Adabiyah School of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Masingba, Ilorin. Al Azhar School of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ogidi. Darul- ulum, Isale koto, Ilorin, amongst others. The Arabic schools focus their curriculum on the study of the Arabic Language to improve communication skills, and *Tafsir* (interpretation of the Qur'an) to eliminate misconception about the Qur'an. There was also the study of Hadith (Prophetic traditions) and *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence). Some of the courses taken in the schools directly relating to peaceful co-existence include "*Tasaamuh*" (Tolerance), "*Ta'at*" (Obedience), "*Sidiq*" (Honesty), "*Adlu*" (Justice), "*Insaaf'adlu*" (Fairness), amongst others.

The contribution of Arabic Teachers to peaceful co-existence in the Ilorin metropolis was also well documented by Murtala and Muktar (2013). As a result of the establishment of Arabic schools, otherwise called "*Ile-kewu*" or "*Makgarata Allo*" within the Ilorin metropolis, many Arabic teachers, some of whom are the direct and indirect graduates of Al-marqaz and Al-adabiy Arabic schools started coaching young children. Apart from focusing their attention on reading and writing Arabic, special attention of

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the teachers was focused on proper upbringing of children according to Islamic tenets by the Teacher (*Mu'allim*). These foundational teachings borders essentially on intense discipline, modesty, humility, peaceful co-existence amongst the students and zero tolerance to defiant character. In fact, many stubborn children were deliberately pushed to the Arabic teachers for proper upbringing while fighting amongst the students was highly prohibited. Most disobedient students "*Omo-kewu*" were seriously whipped with "*koboko*" while many of the students were assigned domestic responsibilities by the teachers to inculcate better sense of responsibilities in them. Thus the students were very afraid of running into trouble with their teacher and fellow students. Such children equally remain largely peaceful even at home for fear of being reported to the teacher. Many of the Arabic teachers also taught in advanced Quranic schools known as "*Makaranta ilim*" (Advanced Quranic school) which primarily focused essentially on divine and moral education with the primary aim of developing the totality of human reasoning faculties and the potential for man to be peaceful with his environment and fellow human-beings.

The activities of the League of Imams, as Islamic scholars, has helped to sustain peace in Ilorin. Thus the mosque serves as veritable office and centre of Islamic activities where the Imams from the central and community mosques preach peace along other acts of commendable behaviours within the metropolis, especially during the month of Ramadan and Friday prayers. Through regular "*Tafsir*" (Quranic interpretation) and "*Khutba*" (sermon) Muslims are being regularly admonished on the etiquette of good living and harmonious relationship. Sermons are regularly conducted on Friday on what is expected of individuals to make this world worthy of living in. A greater percentage of the Imam's preaching commends virtues of good deeds and their reward and the punishment for bad deeds. Much of these messages are often imbibed by many Muslims in their personal relationship with one another which has literally translated into peaceful co-existence amongst the people. The Chief Imam and other community imams equally settle major quarrels amongst the people and within the families which are beyond the capacity of family heads.

The contributions of Muslim home as an agent of peaceful co-existence in the Ilorin metropolis cannot be overemphasized. Many parents in Ilorin were raised within the tenets of Islamic upbringing. These parents, having

initially benefited as pupils of the Arabic schools have adopted Islamic etiquette of upbringing for their children. The children are constantly admonished on act of worship in Islam which is not restricted to praying alone, but including other acts of modesty. Children are encouraged and at times forced to pray and be disciplined while quarrels among children are settled by parents, most of the times using the Shariah. The children were thus admonished by their parents to imbibe the culture of good behaviour devoid of rancour. Many Islamic preachers from Ilorin, who are first and foremost great Islamic scholars, have contributed their quotas to the sustenance of peaceful co-existence in Ilorin through regular preaching "*Wa-asi*". Many of the preachers have released musical albums to preach peace. Some of the notable preachers from Ilorin include Late Shaykh Abdul-raheem Abata, Shaykh Buhari Musa, Shaykh Shehu Dan Bornu, Shaykh Abdulganiyu Aboto, Shaykh Faruk Onikijipa, Late Shaykh Sasili Sambo, Shaykh Saanu Sheu, amongst others. Their preaching, especially during the month of Ramadan has helped to promote unity amongst the Muslim populace, especially in the area of the sustenance and application of the Islamic tenets relating to establishment of regular prayers, fasting during the month of Ramadan and *Zakatul fitri*.

Many Muslims attends similar preaching sessions "*wa-asi*" and the *Tafsir* programmes during the month of Ramadan which are conducted in the morning, afternoon and night, admonishing Muslims on how to live a virtuous life and be peaceful with others. The month of Ramadan ends with a festival; "*idil-fitr*" where the celebration brings many Muslims together as friends rather than enemy. During the Ramadan fast, some Muslims even cook for others to break their fast within the town as a demonstration of love for one another. The preacher's admonitions have strengthened the bond of brotherhood amongst the Muslims thus promoting love rather than hatred. Many Muslims are also documented to have regularly paid *Zakat* during the month of Ramadan to the less privileged as recommended by Muslim scholars during *Tafsir* programme, leading to spread of bond of friendship amongst Muslims in Ilorin metropolis.

Equally aligned to the contributions of Islamic preachers to peaceful co-existence in Ilorin are the works of Islamic singers, who are Islamic scholars in their own right. Thus, Islamic singers like Ibrahim Labaika, Aminat Ajao Obirere, Sheida Fatimah Jafariyyah, Mumini Damilola Esin Ogbamilaye, Kamaldeén Aiyeloyun, amongst others, have dedicated tracks

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or the entire album to promoting sustainable peace in Ilorin environment. Many people listen to their music and imbibe their messages to reasonable extents in promoting peaceful co-existence amongst the people.

The establishment of the Shariah Court has helped in no small measure to stabilize Ilorin peacefully. The court, which was established to adjudicate on Islamic personal law to deal with intra and inter family matters have been resolving conflict between couples and amongst people in the metropolis. In many instances, much of these conflicts were resolved through mediation rather than litigation to the satisfaction of the feuding parties, and this approach has helped tremendously in promoting peaceful co-existence within the city. Two notable Islamic scholars who have once occupied the position of the Grand Kadi of the Shariah Court of Appeal are Justices AbdulKadir Orire and Mustapha Ambali. The efforts of the Emir of Ilorin and his subordinate rulers, many of who are first and foremost Islamic scholars in Ilorin, have promoted peaceful co-existence amongst the populace. Many serious conflicts are referred to the Emir and his four lieutenants; "Baloguns" Ajikobi, Alanamu, Fulani and Gambari for resolution, mostly, according to the Shariah. The Emir and his Baloguns a times invite erudite Islamic scholars to help them in the interpretation of relevant aspects of Islamic jurisprudence in order to take informed decisions on the cases referred to them. Furthermore, there are many sustained Islamic programmes across radio stations in Kwara state that have been dedicated to promoting unity in diversity and peaceful co-existence amongst the people. Virtually all the presenters of Islamic programmes are erudite Islamic scholars who admonise people on the virtues of good deeds. Some of the programmes and their presenters include "Wasi Idaji" (early morning sermon) anchored by Alhaji Olayiwola Imam. "Al- Hidayah" (guidance) by Hajiya Rukayat Olayiwola Imam. "Madrasatu Muhammad" (Prophet Muhammad's School) by Dr. Imam Ali Agan. There is the Al-Sabaab Muslim (Muslim youths on unity) being anchored by Ganiyat Sanni Lawal, Children and Islam is presented by Tururah Ismail. There is also the Shayk Alimi Islamic Foundation programme, just to mention a few. In some of the Islamic programme on radio, Islamic scholars are often invited to talk on topical issues such as tolerance, unity, modesty and peaceful co-existence.

The Contribution of Muslim Scholars towards Intra- Religious Harmony, especially between Muslims and the Christians is well documented. As posited by Oladimeji (2013), Islam was introduced to Ilorin, a town largely populated by Muslims by Shehu Alimi in the 18th century. However, the flood of non- Muslims to Ilorin metropolis was largely aided in 1967, when the town became the Capital of Kwara State. Since then, both Muslims and the Christians have been living in relative harmony with one another. In order to further promote inter- religious harmony amongst the populace, the Kwara State Government under the leadership of Dr. Abubakar Bukola Saraki established the Kwara State Committee on Religious Matter (KCRM) on 28th December, 2004 (Oladimeji, 2013:4). The Islamic Scholars in the Committee include Alhaji. M.S Koro, Chairman, Alhaji. Dr. Idris, Alhaji Dr. H.N Yahaya, Hon. Justice Halimat Yusuf, Alhaji Bashir Muhammad Solih (Chief Imam Ilorin), Barrister Jimoh, Abdulmumeen, Arch Moyo Uthman, etc. The Muslim members in this Committee deliberate with their non-Muslim counterparts on issues concerning how to achieve sustainable peaceful co-existence in Kwara State in general and Ilorin in particular. The Committee was charged, amongst other responsibilities to, promote inter religious understanding and peaceful co-existence by bridging the destructive communication gap amongst various religious adherents (Oladimeji, 2013). The Committee was also established to serve as an advisory body to the Kwara State Government for quick resolution of religious disputes in the State with the additional responsibility of encouraging dialogue amongst the populace through regular meetings and seminars in order to promote greater harmony and peaceful co-existence in the State (Oladimeji, 2013).

As part of its efforts to sustain peaceful co-existence in the State, the Committee was able to organized peace seminars in 2005, 2006 and 2008 for different categories of religious adherents. Their effort has generated a reasonable atmosphere of love and bridge-building among the different religious adherents. For instance, a particular case that was neatly handled in 2007 by the Committee happened between the Muslims and the Christians over an alleged closeness of a Deeper Life Ministry (DLM) to the Muslim praying ground at Obanisuwa, in the Airport area of Ilorin metropolis. An amicable resolution was achieved when it was resolved that the Muslim community in the area should approach the Federal Ministry of Housing, Environment and Urban Development to formally release the disputed parcel of land for their sole use as "Eid" praying

ground while the Committee also advised the Deeper Life Christian Ministry to obtain all relevant documents on the land before it commences the development of such land for religious activities. Above all, the sustenance of peaceful co-existence in Ilorin has largely been achieved by repeated prayers by Islamic scholars, especially the League of Imams in Ilorin Emirate. Such supplications are being regularly answered by God. Special prayers are often arranged by politicians for peaceful tenure and understanding amongst the people. Such prayers are at times conducted for sustainable rain in the city and its environs in order to increase food supply and thus reduce hardship which could promote the breach of peace and security, and Allah has not failed the community in this regard.

In conclusion, having examined and evaluated the impact of Islamic scholarship on peaceful co-existence in Ilorin metropolis, this paper found that the city has enjoyed relative peace as reflected in low level security breach, relative harmonious and peaceful co-existence amongst the people. The sustainability of peace in the city was largely due to the contributions of Islamic scholars to intra and inter-religious harmony, socio-religious tolerance, functional religious dispute resolution mechanisms, amongst others. However this tremendous contribution is being largely threatened by the activities of "touts" within the metropolis who regularly terrorize traders, especially around Oja-Oba and Post office to demand illegal fees for "trade permit". The activity of these miscreants is being re-inforced by the destructive actions of political thugs that repeatedly perpetrate terror against perceived political enemies in the city. Therefore, there is the need to curtail the activities of these society "misfits" in order to continue to sustain peace in Ilorin.

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