

M.O.A. Abdul (1926-1986): An Indispensable Personality in the Field of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria

Yusuf, Badmas Olarewaju
*Department of Religions,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria*

&

Yusuph, Dauda Gambari
*Department of Religions,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria*

Introduction

The study of the twin fields of Arabic and Islamic Studies, especially at the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, and the seamless learning of the two courses in the country could be credited to the determination, relentless efforts, foresightedness, and sacrifices of some individuals who, in the face of daunting challenges, remained focus on finding a path through which generations after theirs would pass through. They had to decide between studying attractive and lucrative courses in the social sciences or the seeming hopelessness in pursuing a specialization in non-attractive courses like Arabic and Islamic studies, especially at a time when colonial imperialists and Christian missionaries were holding the ace.

The colonial period was also a time when traditional *Ulama* in the country rejected Western education out of the fear that it could lead to the conversion of their children to other religion or make them upholders of religious liberalism.¹ Having been tackled at the lower levels by some Muslim individuals, some extended the same strength to higher institutions. Preference for Arabic and Islamic studies therefore became easy at least based on the belief that specialization in the field would guarantee the preservation of Islamic culture and civilization in the country. This is

where Prof. M.O. A Abdul belonged. This chapter, therefore, is an effort to evaluate his legacies, as could be traced in the generations of students that passed through him all of whom have striven to preserve and sustain his legacies in the field of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria today.

Islamic Education in Nigeria in Pre-Abdul's Days

Nigeria is broadly divided into the North and the South. The entire North before the colonial administration operated Shariah, the Islamic Law.² The *Jihad* of Shaykh Uthman ibn Fudi (d.1817), which culminated in the formation of the Islamic Caliphate, made Islam a household religion among the northerners.³ Such was, however, not the case in the south, which was dominated by non-Muslims, though there are solid Islamic historical facts that show how Shariah was practiced in places like Ede, Epe, and Iwo, among others long before the incursion of British colonialism into Southern parts of Nigeria⁴. Christian missionary activities were equally more pronounced in the latter. In other words, the Southern parts of Nigeria had no central Islamic authority unlike in the North where spiritual and temporal powers were situated in Sokoto, the seat of the Caliphate.⁵ Thus while the North enjoyed some independence in Islamic practices including the application of the penal law⁶, concerted efforts were made by the British to facilitate their imperial hegemony. Learning and teaching of English language became a veritable weapon in this direction.⁷ Many Nigerians availed themselves of the opportunities offered by the colonial masters to become "British" and ultimately have access to the few resources on offer. A few brilliant ones were given scholarships to travel abroad. Arabic and Islamic studies did not therefore enjoy any reasonable patronage during the period.

The colonial period was equally one in which Christian evangelism spread like wildfire. As colonial imperialists were maneuvering education to suit their objectives, it was not long before the Christian missionaries came on board to challenge the existing educational system, though not to liberate Nigerians but to have the capacity to read and understand the bible and to facilitate their evangelization mission. Hence, the first set of schools in

Nigeria were missionary schools.⁸ Western education was therefore offered as a tool for liberation from the colonial masters but with Christianity as the vehicle. Adebayo rightly observes that education in the hands of the missionary was 4R. Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Religion: the curriculum focused on Bible Knowledge, Christian Ethics, Christian Literature, Arithmetic, Language, and Craft.⁹ What was given was purely to proselytise and to produce Christians or Biblical persons.¹⁰ Schools were, therefore, used to convert people to Christianity. It was against this backdrop that some Muslims took up the challenge to liberate the Muslims from the oppressions of the moment. The first efforts gave birth to the formation of Muslim societies like Ansarudeen (AUD, 1922), Anasru Islam, 1946, Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN) in 1954, and the establishment of Muslim schools, Ahmadiyyah, Anwarul -Islam, especially in Yorubaland.¹¹ The second effort was the resolution of some intellectuals who believed that the success recorded in the first phase could be replicated again at the higher levels to clear the path for the upcoming Muslims. As this was going on, scholars like M.O.A. Abdul picked interest in studying Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University, having won different scholarships that put them on the same pedestal as those who pursued careers in sciences, commercial, and arts courses.

It was also the period when local Mallams and conscious Muslims prevented their children from pursuing Western education, which was a prominent tool for proselytisation. Many Muslim scholars considered Western education alien and toxic to local traditions and customs. The likes of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilori (d.1992) thought Western education was dangerous to Islam; hence, he not only publicly spoke against it but also forbade it in his *Madrasah*. He rejected the move to incorporate Western education into Islamic education, stating that whoever wishes to be acquire western education, should go to school properly. Yusuf and Yusuph observed that:

It is necessary to comment on Shaykh Adam's attitudes to Western education. Initially, he was vehement in his opposition to Western education. His reason was that such institutions were being used for proselytisation by the

Christians and to halt the spread of Islamic education, especially in Yorubaland. He cited examples of the Muslims who were converted to Christianity through their schools. They include T.O.S Benson of Ikorodu, Lagos state. He was formerly called Badmos, and when he converted in 1914, he changed his other Muslim name to Theophilus. This was why, in 1972, during the twentieth-anniversary celebration of his school, he rejected a suggestion that the English language be included in the school's curriculum. His other reason was that the students would be divided in their studies to the detriment of Arabic and Islamic education.¹² A reminiscence of how Christian missionaries during colonial administration in Nigeria, especially in the south, used Western education as a tool for proselytisation justified his (Shaykh Adam) reasons. Muslim students were converted to Christianity, and their Islamic names changed. Thus, Lawal is to Lawson, Dauda is to Davidson, Yusuf is to Joseph, and Musa is to Moses, among others.¹³

Shaykh Adam was not alone on this, but the same could be said of the Bamidele Movement of the Zumuratu group of Muslims in Yorubaland. It is a religious movement founded by Alhaji Abdul-Salami Bamidele Bada in Southwestern Nigeria. Rejection and condemnation of Western education was a cardinal principle in their schemes.¹⁴ Their resistance to Western education was borne out of the conviction that it corrupts young minds with the instrumentality of Western civilisation, which turns them to be liberal if they do not convert from Islam.¹⁵ This notion has existed among the Bamidele members until now that some Bamideles defied the rule and chose to be educated in Western-oriented schools. There is Dr Ali Abdulwaheed Adebisi in the Arabic Department of the University of Ilorin who is a staunch member of the Bamidele group. M.O.A. Abdul was, therefore, one of those few who saw the future and opportunity in education and believed that it could be incorporated into the Western school system where young Muslim scholars would have the privilege of

aligning Islamic scholarship with the Western education system to make a balanced individual. These were his convictions when he chose to make the study of Arabic and Islamic studies his future career at a time when he could make other choices with the same opportunity. It was this mission he was able to expand when he traveled abroad to pursue higher certificates.

Profiling M.O.A. Abdul

M.O.A. Abdul was from the Ijebu extraction of Yorubaland in Nigeria. He was born on the 6th of February, 1926, in Ijebu-Ode, his mother's hometown, while his father was from Ijebu- Ife, both in Ogun State.¹⁶ From a tender age, he was deeply inclined towards religious education and a zeal to master Islamic sciences in particular. However, these were traits from his father, who was a devoted Muslim scholar. He was, therefore, raised in a devoted family thoroughly instilled with the values of faith, humility, and an insatiable thirst for spiritual knowledge.¹⁷ As a teenager, M.O.A. Abdul experienced transformative religious learning and demonstrated a high sense of Islamic scholarship, which made him different from his peers. He was taught the rudiments of Islamic sciences by his father, who died in 1935 when he was a boy of nine (9) years old, and there is no record of him learning under any Mallam of his time.¹⁸ Still, his rare intellectual acumen reveals the uncommon gift Allah had bestowed on him right from that time, which earned him various scholarships at different levels of his education. The burden of taking care of the family fell on the shoulder of his mother after the demise of his father, so after his primary education at the Muslim School, Ijebu-Ode, in 1940, he was sponsored by Ijebu Muslim Mission to Government Teachers' College, Ibadan, in 1945 where he obtained Grade III Certificate, 1946.¹⁹ This was after he worked as an attendant in a filling station to raise fund for his Junior Cambridge Examination in 1944, in which he had flying grades. 1947 and 1948 witnessed his outstanding performance in the Senior Cambridge Examination and Teachers' Elementary Certificate Examination, both as an external candidate

respectively.²⁰ He was admitted into the prestigious University of London in 1959 to study for a Diploma in Arabic and Islamic Studies under the auspices of the defunct Western Region of Nigeria scholarship scheme. He followed it up with a degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the same University, leveraging a year left from the three-year scholarship for a diploma. However, he spent two years and the extension from the government, having observed his rare commitment and scholarship excellence displayed in the first award. He finished and returned to Nigeria in 1964. After three years, he secured a Rocky-Feller Foundation scholarship and proceeded to McGill University, Canada, for Master's and Doctoral degrees in Islamic Studies, between 1967 and 1969, respectively. He finally returned home to start working.²¹

Abdul's Academic Career

Upon his return in 1964 from the United Kingdom, he joined the services of the University of Ibadan as an academic staff and was the first Nigerian to join the department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. He started as an Assistant Lecturer and rose through the ranks to the professorial cadre in 1982, the same year he became the Head of his Department.²² He was the first indigenous H.O.D. in the Department and the first Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria.²³ He was known for the attributes of meticulousness and diligence to duty.²⁴ M.O.A. Abdul equally belonged to many professional bodies and received different awards from organizations and societies in Nigeria and the diaspora. He served vital government assignments. He was one of the implementers of the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1978. He was also a consultant to the International Muslim Society for the Study of Religions, Ottawa, and an external examiner to universities in Nigeria and abroad, especially the University of Ghana. He was the pioneer Vice-President of the Nigerian Association of the Study of Religions (NASR) and the pioneer President of the Nigerian Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS).²⁵

Abdul's Authorship of Books/Scholarship

He also wrote several books, articles, and journals and fulfilled all academic requirements for career progression. Oladimeji listed about fourteen (14) books to his credit and thirty-five articles published in reputable journals covering local, national, and international outlets.²⁶ The titles of the books covered different aspects of Islamic discourses, especially the Qur'an, Hadith, and their sciences. It also includes exegetical and textual studies of both primary sources of Islam. Others are comparative studies between Islam and Christianity, Islam and customary practices, especially among the Yoruba, his tribe and environment where he grew up, the history of Islam and the Prophets of Allah, caliphate, and creedal matters. He equally wrote for the preliminary levels. The contents are geared toward entrenching Islam and propelling Islamic scholarship in the country and among the Yoruba communities. They were also meant to provide a basic understanding of Islam to the teeming population of Muslims conversing in English with little or no knowledge of Arabic. It should be noted that some of these works are translation works, while some are written in the Yoruba language to drive a local understanding. Apart from those published in India, Lahore, and Ankara, Turkey, others were published by the Islamic Publications Bureau in Lagos, Nigeria. The books are useful across various levels of learning, primary, secondary, and higher institutions. His textbooks are used for many external examinations in Nigeria and the West Africa sub-region, like the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), and National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS), among others.

The articles are purely academic works with tones and styles that depict high scholarly discourses. The contents are similar to those of the books and encompass other areas of relevance to scholarship at every level. Three of them focus on Islam in Yorubaland, depicting the common practices among the Yoruba Muslims, like art of divination and syncretic approach. The interferences between Yoruba and Arabic Language to the extent of loaning some words by Yoruba were also discussed. The themes of another three of his articles revolved around Islam and Christianity,

with Abraham (Ibrahim) as the father of faith and religious harmony in a given society. Four different articles discussed Islam as a religion in Nigeria. They focus on how Islam got to the country, religious tolerance, political involvement by Nigerian Muslims, and the study of the Arabic language. About four of his articles are translations from Arabic into English with commentaries. These include *Kitabu Usulud-Din* by Shaykh Uthman ibn Fudi, *Khutubatul- Jum'at bi Ghayri Lughatil-Arabiyyah*, *Kitab as-Sahaba* by Ibn Muqaffa, *Majma' Bayan* by Tabrisi. Some discussed the being of Allah. Such include the concept of justice concerning God, the existence of evil and God's Omnipotence, and a comparative discussion about God from Greek, Jewish, and Islamic philosophers. M.O.A. Abdul dedicated three of his articles to the science of the Qur'an to propel a better understanding of it. These include the concordance of the Qur'an and the historical development of *Tafsir*; other discussions targeted at local and international discussions like the need for Muslims to be literate, secondary education in Islam, and teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies textbooks in secondary school were discussed. The main focus of these articles was the relevance of Islamic law in contemporary times, *Tanzimat*, the emergence of *Khalifah*, and the concept of development, among others.

Abdul's Mentorship of Students

Prof. M.O.A. Abdul had several students he mentored, to his credit, across levels of learning. As stated earlier, he had taught at both primary and post-primary levels; needless to say, he influenced many of those he taught at those levels. Specifically, at the University, he supervised numerous long essays and dissertations. Oladimeji listed seven (7) dissertations he successfully supervised, while nine (9) theses were also completed under his supervision. The Master students include Adebowale Shittu Agbetola, Shuayb Abdul-Rahman, Muslih Tayo Yahya, Muhammad Al-Hassan Nasarawa, Kamaldeen Abdul-Azeez Balogun, Muratda Aremu Muhibbudin and Rushdat Olushola Solaja-Alagago (Mrs). The supervision was between 1978 and 1984. The PhD students whose supervision covered the period between 1977 and 1986 were Wahab Oladejo Adigun Nasiru,

Yasir Anjola Quadri, Dawud Olatokunbo Shittu Noibi, Kamil Koyejo Oloso and Asif Folarin Ahmed and Adebowale Shittu Agbetola.²⁷ Others are late Alani Seriki, formerly of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode and M.O. Adeleye. A few lines on some of his PhD supervisees and their achievements will show the impact M.O.A Abdul had on Islamic education in Nigeria through mentorship.

Professor Wahab Oladejo Adigun Nasiru was the first to be supervised by Prof. M.O.A. Abdul as a doctoral student had his thesis titled: *Islamic Learning among the Yoruba 1896-1963*. A product of the prestigious Islamic University, Madinah, Saudi Arabia, in 1963 for introductory courses in Arabic and Islamic Studies before attending the University of Ibadan for his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in Islamic studies. Prof Nasiru became the Editor-in-Chief of NATAIS journal, and External Examiner for many Universities across Nigeria and beyond and the Chief Examiner, Islamic Studies in West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), between 1972 -2006. He was also a founding Professor at Islamic University College, Ghana, between 2001 and 2004.²⁸

Prof Nasiru lectured at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and rose to become the HOD, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, between 1990 and 1992. Based on the training he received from Prof Abdul, he also successfully supervised eleven (11) PhD Theses. Himself a great scholar with about forty (40) publications to his credit, he also attended many international conferences both within and outside the country. He is widely respected for his scholarly achievements, moderate views, and humble personality, all of which are traits he learned from Prof Abdul.

Yasir Anjola Quadri is one of the prominent students of Prof M.O.A. Abdul. He was a foundation lecturer in the Department of Religions at the University of Ilorin from where he retired in 2018. Quadri completed his Ph.D. thesis in 1981 under the supervision of Prof. M.O.A. Abdul.²⁹ The title of his thesis is: *The Tijaniyyah in Nigeria: A Case study*. Quadri's experience spanned both teaching and administrative settings of the University system. Having learnt the nitty-gritty of rigorous academic

research under late Prof Musa Abdul, he also successfully supervised ten (10) PhD Theses, apart from countless dissertations and long essays he also supervised. His doctoral students include Prof. Lakin Is-haq Akintola, a retired Professor of Islamic Studies, Lagos State University (LASU) and the director of Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), Nigeria. Prof. Badmus Olarewaju Yusuf, University of Ilorin, Dr. L.O. Jimoh, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin (now Lagos State University of Education). Prof. Lateef Oladimeji, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. Dr. Y.K. Jimoh, formerly of University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University. Dr. A.M.B. Solagberu, a Principal Lecturer, Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies (CAILS), Ilorin. Dr. A.B. Taofiq (late), a lecturer at the University of Ilorin, Dr. Umar A., a lecturer, A.D. Rufa'i College for Legal and Islamic Studies, Misau, Bauchi State, Jimoh, L.A. a lecturer, Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun and Dr. D.G. Yusuf, University of Ilorin among others. He wrote several books and articles published in reputable journals within and outside the country.

The highly revered Professor Noibi is also one of the students trained by the late Abdul. He has a distinguished academic career that spanned twenty-three (23) years at the prestigious University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where he taught, researched, wrote, and supervised research in Islamic Studies.³⁰ Additionally, he held the esteemed position of Imam for the university's Muslim Community for many years before his retirement in 1996. He was a reputable research professor and consultant with IQRA Trust, London, where he shared his knowledge of Islam, focusing on promoting responsible ecological practices. He has also played an active role in various international multi-faith initiatives. He had his first and second degrees from Cairo University, Egypt, and American University in Cairo in 1969 and 1972, respectively. While he was in Egypt, he worked as a broadcaster in the Egyptian Broadcasting Service as a Yoruba translator between 1966 and 1972. He returned home to further his studies at the University of Ibadan for his PhD, where Prof. M.O.A. Abdul was assigned to supervise him. His thesis was titled: *Zaki Mubarak and A Critical Study of His Works on Sufism*. He completed the thesis in 1984.

He taught at the University of Ibadan and Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo

University) as well as the Muslim College, London. He was appointed external examiner across Universities in Nigeria, Ghana, and Norway. He also served as an external assessor for the Professorial cadre across Nigerian Universities, among other academic responsibilities, which he discharged diligently. He has so many publications to his credit. He was also a regular commentator on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Irish Radio stations on Islamic matters relating to Nigeria. Professor Noibi is the pioneer Executive Secretary of the Muslim Ummah of Southwest Nigeria (MUSWEN), an Islamic umbrella body for all Muslims of Southwestern Nigeria. He also held different offices, ranging from being the Chief Imam of the University of Ibadan for ten years, Deputy Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Council of Ulama of Nigeria. Vice President (Islamic Studies), National Association for the Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS). Member, National Committee of Islamic Studies Curriculum Developers (Nigeria). Member, Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council. Member, National Committee on the Implementation of AlMajiri Education in Nigeria. Member, Board of Trustee, Sultan Foundation for Peace and Development, Nigeria. Member, Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC). Chairman, Takaful (Islamic Insurance) Advisory Council, of National Insurance Commission, Nigeria. Member, Board of Trustee, Muslim Community of Ijebu Imusin, Nigeria.

In the diaspora, Prof. Noibi is a Chairman and member of different organizations worldwide. Some include Member, General Assembly, International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO), and Kuwait. Adviser, Muslim Association of Nigeria in the United Kingdom. Founder and Amir of the Council of Muslim Organizations (CNMO). London, Member, Central Working Committee and Senior Councilor, Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). Chairman, Council for Welfare of Muslim Prisoners, UK. Faith Representative on Southwark Alliance, UK. Founder, Southwark Muslim Forum (SMF). Member, Muslim Scholars' Congress, Jakarta, Indonesia and Pakistani International Advisory Council, Council, Muslim World Congress, Karachi, Pakistan. He is a member of the

International Council, World Conference on Religion and Peace.

Also, Prof. Noibi is a recipient of many honorary awards both at home and abroad. These include the Fellowship of Islamic Studies, Nigeria (FISN) and the Fellowship of Islamic Academy, Cambridge (FIAC). Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE), DSc (Honoris Causa), Crescent University, Abeokuta, Nigeria and Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu, Osun State, Nigeria. Award of Excellence, Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Oyo State Chapter. The Muslim Association of Nigeria, UK, Honourary Membership Award. The Prestigious Editor's Lifetime Achievement Award by Muslim News, London, and many more. He owes a great deal of his achievements to Prof Abdul's training and mentorship.

Professor K.K. Oloso obtained his Ph.D. in 1984 from the same university, with Prof. M.O.A. Abdul as the supervisor.³¹ His thesis focused on the History of Hajj operations in Nigeria from 1954 to 1980. Hence, he remains a significant point of reference among Islamic scholars in Nigeria in this regard. He was offered an appointment by his *alma mater* in 1984 after his Ph.D, and he rose to become a Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Prof. Oloso was appointed as the Head of the Department twice. First, between 2005 and 2006, as acting head, and between 2015 and 2020, as substantive head.³²

Professor Oloso' is a highly esteemed academic who contributed significantly to Arabic and Islamic Studies. His dedication and commitment to research further caught the attention of renowned scholars, like Professor M.O.A. Abdul, his PhD supervisor, who mentored and guided him toward fulfilling his academic potential. Throughout his career, Professor Oloso demonstrated a unique ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Following the footsteps of his Ph.D thesis supervisor, his charismatic teaching style and innovative approach to academia have garnered widespread recognition, catapulting him to the forefront of his field.

Professor Kamil Koyejo Oloso is a prolific author whose works have expanded the boundaries of knowledge in his fields. He has authored

several influential books and contributed chapters to numerous scholarly publications. His works are widely respected in the academic community, evidenced by his extensive publications in peer-reviewed journals. He has actively participated in national and international conferences, where he presented his research findings and insights. He has more than fifty (50) academic publications to his credit. Prof. Olosio is the *Wakilul-Muslimin* (Chief of Staff), Oyo State Muslim Ummah.

Professor Asif Folarin Ahmed is a highly acclaimed scholar and academician with extensive Arabic and Islamic Studies expertise. He retired from the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) as a Professor of Islamic Studies in 2016. He held different positions and offices there including the Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences.

Prof. Ahmed's PhD thesis, supervised by late Musa Abdul was titled: *The Qadiriyyah and Its Impacts in Nigeria*. His research interests focus on Sufism but with bias in the Qadiriyyah Order. He has collaborated extensively with various researchers and institutions nationally and internationally. He was a significant contributor to the Encyclopedia of the Arts,³³ and he developed, wrote, edited, and revised course materials for NOUN, covering both Arabic and Islamic studies. His research output include over forty-two (42) publications in high-impact international journals and conference proceedings spread across local, national, and international outlets. He taught and supervised projects at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He produced six (6) doctoral students.³⁴

He is Moderator, and External Examiner for a number of institutions of higher learning including College of Education, Okene, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Tai Solarin College of Education, Ijebu-Ode, and College of Education, Oyo, between 1989-2003. Others include Institutions of Arabic and Islamic Studies affiliated with the University of Ibadan, Isolo (Lagos), Ososa (Ijebu-Ode), and Zulfikra Abiola College of Arabic and Islamic Studies (Z.A.C.A.I.S.), Abeokuta, 1992-2003. The universities where he served as examiner included University of Jos (2000 - 2003), and University of Ghana (2001- 2005), External Examiner

(Islamic Studies), Kogi State University, (2007 to date). External Examiner (Islamic Studies) Lagos State University, Ojo – Lagos, February 2007. He was a Visiting Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, to Lagos State University, Ojo – Lagos, 2005 – 2006, Visiting Reader of Islamic Studies, to National Open University of Nigeria, Victoria Island, Lagos, November 2006 to May 2008) and Professor of Islamic Studies, at the National Open University of Nigeria, 2008- 2016

Professor Kamaldeen AbdulAzeez Balogun is another prominent student of Prof. M.O.A Abdul; in fact, he supervised both his master's dissertation and Ph.D. thesis. However, because Prof M.O.A. Abdul was strong, he needed help to complete the last chapter of the thesis before being transferred to a colleague, who equally doubled as his student-Professor. D.O.S. Noibi.³⁵ No doubt, Prof. Balogun only had a change of supervisor, not a change of style and method, because the latter also exhibited the traits acquired from his supervisor. Like M. O. A. Abdul, Prof. Balogun is equally an Ogun-born scholar from Abeokuta, the state capital. He is also one of the academic stars in Nigerian Universities, with impacts that are difficult to match. He epitomizes academics' "town and gown" syndrome by combining academic scholarship with active community services, the trait he took from Musa Abdul. He is presently the grand-Mufti of Egbaland and the Chief Imam of Gbagura mosque in Abeokuta.³⁶ He is a model, an elder statesman, a mentor, an administrator, an arbitrator, a prolific writer, an orator, and a down-to-heart scholar, among other qualities. He is a comprehensive personality with a high sense of responsibility to the entire Muslim Community of Ogun State. Prof. Balogun is one of the shining Islamic scholars in academics from Southwestern Nigeria.

He has over fifty (50) articles published in high-impact academic journals at local, national, and international levels.³⁷ His writing covers learning aspects, especially blending Islamic texts and contemporary society. He wrote two Arabic texts namely, *Ar-Rihlatul-Bahth* and *Arbaun Qissah*. He created an understanding that depicts the texts' relevance and importance to society.³⁸ Prof. Balogun supervised several research works across the levels of learning. Owoyemi identifies about ten (10) postgraduate

research completed under his watch before retirement.³⁹ Prof. Balogun was described by one of his student-mentees as having reminiscence for leadership. He is described as a modest, tranquil, moderate, and sincere leader in all ramifications who had imparted positively into the lives of many.⁴⁰ Oyesanya identified thirteen (13) PhD viva voce that Professor Balogun conducted across Nigerian Universities.⁴¹ The unique contributions of Prof. Balogun to the development of learning and research in Islamic Studies are now becoming a universal practice. They are as follows. The first is the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in Doctoral supervision. The objective is to shift the focus from singularity and promote a collaborative approach leveraging insights from various academic disciplines. The second is post-doctoral supervision follow-up, which retains and strengthens the bond between the supervisor and the supervisee after the supervision. And the third is the timely completion of a doctoral thesis. This keeps the students on their toes. These are traits that Balogun emulated from late Prof M.O.A Abdul.

M.O.A Abdul's Influence on Arabic and Islamic Education in Nigeria

The influence of Prof M.O.A Abdul in the field of Arabic and Islamic Studies cannot be underestimated. This can be felt in many ways viz the books he wrote, the various lectures/talks he gave as well as the impact he made on those that had direct contact with him especially his PhD students. For example, few people who have chosen a career in Arabic and Islamic Studies today can claim not to have read Abdul's works in preparing for one examination or the other. His books such as *The Historical Origin of Islam*, *The Holy Book of Islam*, *The Prophet of Islam*, *The Classical Caliphate* among others were readily available for aspiring students of Arabic and Islamic Studies in secondary and post-secondary schools at that time. The books were considered so valuable at that time that the civilian government of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) which was controlling most part of the Southwest Nigeria then and was providing free education gave copies of these books free of charge to students in all public schools. Apart from students who benefitted and are

still benefiting from the books of Abdul, those in the academic profession within and outside Nigeria also rely on Abdul's journal articles as sources of information and data for their academic works. They see those works as extant materials that must form the basis of their research. The influence of Abdul can also be felt in the writings of some of his PhD students who took after him not only in their areas of research interests but also in their style. One can see a good number of them like Prof Quadri also engaging in translation of some Arabic texts into English as Abdul did thereby making Arabic works available to the English audience. Works such as *Al-Akhdari*, *Muqaddimatul 'Izziyyah*, and *Ar-Risaalah* among many others have been translated by Prof Quadri. He also has a translation of Glorious Qur'an into Yoruba language in a similar way as Abdul had did. The likes of Prof Balogun also took after Abdul in the area of Islamic philosophy. Needless to say anything regarding Abdul's influence in the area of lectures and talks he gave at one time or another. The lives of many have been positively influenced by them. All these are no doubt great influence of a great mentor that can hardly be ignored or underestimated.

Conclusion

This chapter has appraised the life and works of Professor M.O.A. Abdul as an academic sage in the twin fields of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria, focusing on his intellectual achievements, including personal values, passions, and contributions to society. He took a career in less attractive and non-lucrative courses when there were many opportunities for brilliant and vibrant students like him in other fields of study. Through teaching, research, and writing, he committed to making religious studies a household course in Nigerian higher institutions. He left indelible marks that are traceable to his postgraduate students, especially the Ph.D. Students who kept his flag flying till the present time. These students are scholars of repute across the globe and have made remarkable impacts on the lives of many, both within and outside the academic circle. Professor M.O.A. Abdul remains the source of their inspiration, and they keep replicating different traits of him in their dealings. The paper concludes that Prof. M.O.A. Abdul was an iconic academic with an everlasting legacy

that is difficult to match. His former students are leading Islamic Studies scholars in Nigeria and beyond, exhibiting his teachings and principles. Therefore, the paper recommends a revivalist approach to make Prof. M.O.A. Abdul more visible and relevant in learning Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria by reproducing his works and domesticating his philosophy by his students and grand-students.

Notes and References

- 1 A.B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, (New York, Taylor and Francis Group, 1974)
- 2 A.Olayiwola, *Islam in Nigeria: One Crescent many Focuses*, (Lagos, Sakirabe Publisher, 2007)9
- 3 A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, (Zaria, Gaskiya Corporation Limited, 1984)108
- 4 T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 1841-1908*, (London, Longman Group Limited, 1978) 5
- 5 A.Olayiwola,...40
- 6 N.L Ebbe, *World Factbook of Criminal Justice Systems*, (New York, State University of New York, Retrieved from <https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=f583475bfa34831aJmldHM9MTcwMDY5NzYwMCZpZ3VpZD0yNmYwYzIiYi00NzhLTZjZTYtMzE3Zi1kMWMxNDYxZTZkZDkmaW5zaWQ9NTQzNQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=26f0c25b-478a-6ce6-317f-d1c1461e6dd9&psq=how+penal+system+was+introduced+in+Nigeria&u=alaHR0cHM6Ly9ianMub2pwLmdvdi9jb250ZW50L3B1Yi9wZGYvd2ZiY2pzbmlnLnBkZg&ntb=1>) 3
- 7 A.B. Fafunwa,...114
- 8 A.B. Fafunwa,...
- 9 R.I. Adebayo, *Muslim Educational Reforms in Southwestern Nigeria, in Muslim Educational Reform Activities in Nigeria*, (Kano, Bayero University Kano, 2005) 131
- 10 R.I. Adebayo,...71
- 11 R.I. Adebayo,...69
- 12 Yusuf,...15
- 13 B.O. Yusuf and D.G. Yusuph, "Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Illori(1917-1992): A Muslim Reformer of 20th Century in Yorubaland, Nigeria" *Al-Wifaq Research Journal of Islamic Science*, 6(1), 2023 (<https://doi.org/10.55603/alwifaq.v6i1.e1>) 14
- 14 A.R.I.Doi,... 285
- 15 A.R.I Doi,... 285-6, 288

- 16 L.F. Oladimeji, "Life and Contributions of Musa Abdul to the Growth and Development of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria", *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies (JARS)*, (Vol.15, 2001)1
- 17 L.F. Oladimeji, "Life and Works of Musa Oladipupo Ajibola Abdul", (A Long Essay submitted to the Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, 1987)2
- 18 L.F. Oladimeji, "Life and Contributions of Musa Abdul to the Growth and Development of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria".....
- 19 L.F. Oladimeji,...
- 20 L.F. Oladimeji, "Life and Works of Musa Oladipupo Ajibola Abdul"....5
- 21 L.F. Oladimeji,....6
- 22 L.F. Oladimeji, "Life and Contributions of Musa Abdul to the Growth and Development of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria",...2
- 23 A. John, First Nigerian Professors: Pioneering Achievements in Different Academic Fields,
<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=5f5e8ffbe44f8cd5JmltdHM9MTcwMDY5NzYwMCZpZ3VpZD0yNmYwYzI1Yi00NzhhlLTZjZTYtMzE3Zi1kMWMxNDYxZTZkZDkmaW5zaWQ9NTE4Ng&p=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=26f0c25b-478a-6ce6-317f-d1c1461e6dd9&psq=Prof.+m.o.a.abdul%40University+of+Ibadan&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9wb3N0Z3JhZHVhdGVuaWdlcmhlLmNvbS8yMDIzLzA3L2ZpcnN0LW5pZ2VyaWFuLXByb2Zlc3NvcnMtcGlubmVlcmluZy1hY2hpZXZlbWVudHMtaW4tZGlmZmVyZW50LWFjYWVWRlbWljLWZpZWxkcy8&ntb=1>
- 24 L.F.Oladimeji,....3
- 25 L.F. Oladimeji,....4
- 26 L.F. Oladimeji...7
- 27 L.F. Oladimeji, "Life and Works of Musa Oladipupo Ajibola Abdul",...24-25
- 28 Z.I. Oseni, Fluorescence of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria, A Festschrift in honour of Professor Wahab O.A. Nasiru, (Ibadan, Hebn Publishers Plc, 2008) ...428

- 29 Yasir Anjola Quadri: A Professor of Prestigious Rarity - Ridwaanullah Abimbola | Mahfouz Adedimeji
- 30 NOIBI, Dr. Dawud Olatokunbo Shittu – Biographical Legacy and Research Foundation (blerf.org)
- 31 Professor K.K. Oloso's CV
- 32 Professor K.K. Oloso...
- 33 Professor A.F. Ahmed's CV
- 34 Professor A.F. Ahmed...
- 35 This was narrated when contacted while we were gathering materials for this paper on 12th/10/2023
- 36 This was gathered from Amisu Saeed Kayode, a former Amir of MSSN, Ogun State Area Unit on 25/11/2023
- 37 S.A. Owoyemi, An Appraisal of Professor Kamaldeen Abdul-Azeez Balogun's Strategies in Building Symbiotic Relationship Between the Town and Gown, K.E. Obasola et al, Islam's Response to the Quest for Peace, Orderliness and Well-Being in Nigeria, (A Festschrift in Honour of Prof. Kamaldeen AbdulAzeez Balogun, Department of Religious Studies, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, 2020)2
- 38 S.A. Owoyemi,4-5
- 39 S.A. Owoyemi...
- 40 A.O. Azeez, Reminiscing on Professor Kamaldeen Balogun's Leadership Model: The Memoir of a PhD Candidate, in K.E. Obasola et al,...26
- 41 O.S. Oyesanya, Prof. Kamaldeen A. Balogun and Rebirth of Islamic Studies in Nigeria, ((1) (PDF) Prof. Kamaldeen A. Balogun and Rebirth of Islamic Studies in Nigeria +234(0)8077849875 (researchgate.net) 3