

## **RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN NIGERIA: FOCUS ON ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INCLINATIONS**

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria as a nation is not a religious state. The constitution with which the country was established recognizes the country as a multi-religious one. In other words, Nigeria is a state that adopts no particular religion as official state religion. That is because Nigerians profess belief in different forms of religions such as African Traditional Religion (ATR), Islam and Christianity. The competition between Muslims and Christians to absorb adherents of the ATR seems to have succeeded to a large extent that both Islam and Christianity occupy a prominent position in running the social and political affairs of the nation today. One of the agents of mobilization by the Muslims is the formation of Islamic movements. Attempt is made in this research to show the role played by some Islamic movements and some notable individual Muslims in making Islam relevant to social and political milieu positively and negatively. The research adopts descriptive, library and field methodologies. All is aimed at showing the degree of religiosity and spirituality of Nigerians in relation to the social and political milieu in Nigeria, a scenario that explains why Nigeria finds herself where she is today. The research concludes with some recommendations as a way forward.

**Keywords:** Religion, Spirituality, Politics, Islamic Movements, Secularism

### **Introduction**

Religion and spirituality are not new to the Nigerian communities. Few are Nigerians who claim to be atheists who do not believe in the existence of a Supreme-Being. There are also some others who are pagans. However, the mode of devotion, worship and form of spirituality attached to the beings they believe in differs from one pagan religion to another. The history of religion in Nigeria supports this proposition. None of the regions in the Nigerian history could be said to be irreligious before the emergence of the two famous adopted religions: Islam and Christianity. The Northern and Western Regions of Nigeria which are predominantly Muslims and the Southeastern region that is predominantly Christians were once from the time immemorial habited by idol worshippers as was the case in Mecca and Greek-Roman Empires. With the advent of Islam and Christianity, the social and political milieu of Nigeria changed drastically with

the dictates of the two adopted religions. As such, from the onset, the struggle to dominate and control the social and political milieu by the two religions, first by Islam in the north and second by Christianity in the south and later by both of them in Nigeria as a whole, consequently became competitive.

This research is interested in the struggle by the adherents of the two religions, Islam and Christianity, which are sometimes seen as 'Jihad' and 'Crusade' respectively in their bid to be seen as being religious on the one hand and equally dominate the social and political milieu on the other. This paper focuses on Islamic Movements in Nigeria especially those that are concerned with the happenings and events in their host communities socially and politically. The paper is not interested in the Movements that are ideologically creed oriented, like Boko Haram Group, which through their creed condemned socio-political milieu of orthodox Muslims. Our approach in this study is both historical and sociological. Therefore it is to be remarked that study of the religion and spirituality of a people is possible only if we should keep in view the political, economic, social and other factors related to the people of Nigeria. This study is more concerned with Islamic Movements that have substantial bearing on the people of Nigeria, socially and politically.

### **Religion**

Religion as a concept is not easy to define because it differs from one scholar to another depending on their orientation, inclination, cultural background and discipline. Religion is more than a belief in one or more gods; a set of morals and ethics; rites performed in honor of the divine beings; recognition of duties as divine commands; or perception of the infinite.<sup>1</sup> All these fulfill one aspect of the concept of religion and neglect the other. Neither a complex definition nor a simplest one given to religion carries us far enough towards a solution of the problem. Even the simple minimum suggested by E.B. Taylor that "religion is the belief in spiritual beings" at once brings the question of the nature of these beings, the origin of the belief and its validity for every individual.<sup>2</sup>

As such, to me, religion is what you take it to be. Religion is a belief in a set of revealed guidance to regulate one's relationship between one's self, one's Creator and His creatures; it could be pragmatic or metaphysical in nature or combination of the two, so as to fulfill the requirement of human nature; body and soul. Wherever religion is involved, naturally, spirituality follows and vice versa. This is to say religious matters always require spiritual commitment to make the belief in such religion solid and practicable in a given society. In the present day societies, religion and spirituality more often than not clash with secularism. This is because the latter is a belief or "system of social organization that does not allow religion to influence the government".<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, religion is practiced by the people, who in turn form the government and the

latter must sustain and protect the former's traditions..culture, and beliefs upon which the community could be said to be adequately represented.

### **Classification of Religion**

To avoid delving into a complex area of the type and nature of religions of the world, which may not have direct bearing on our topic, but worth mentioning, because of the influence they have on Nigerians' religiosity and religious activities; we might venture to reproduce what al- Masdoosi did in summary. He classified religion on the following grounds.<sup>4</sup>

- i. Revealed and non-revealed
- ii. Missionary and Non-Missionary; and
- iii. Geographical-racial and Universal

#### **1. Revealed and non-revealed**

Revealed religions comprise Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The rest of the religions are non-revealed and both are with different characteristics as follows:

Firstly, revealed religions are based on the concept of the unity of God while non-revealed religions are not necessarily so.

Secondly, revealed religions believe in prophets; non-revealed religions do not.

Thirdly, according to revealed religions, the main source of guidance and the criteria of right and wrong are the heavenly scriptures; but not so with non-revealed religions.

Fourthly, all revealed religions were born in the Middle East; all non-revealed religions, barring paganism, were born outside this area.

Fifthly, revealed religions are missionary religions according to their teachings and/or their historical traditions. Non-revealed religions are not missionary.

Sixthly, the teachings of revealed religions are well determined and clear. The teachings of non-revealed religion are vague and very elastic.

Seventhly, the teachings of revealed religions have an all-embracing tenor. They embrace the worldly as well as the heavenly or the so-called spiritual aspect of life. The teachings of non-revealed religions are not so. They deal either merely with the spiritual aspect of life, as is the case with Taoism, or they concern themselves only with worldly life, as is the case with Confucianism.<sup>5</sup>

#### **2. Missionary and Non-Missionary Religions**

It is common among the scholars of religions of the world to divide religion into missionary and non-missionary religions. Under the former are Buddhism, Christianity and Islam and the latter are Judaism, Brahmanism and Zoroastrianism. However, this division may be untenable to some scholars especially if the teachings of the religions concerned are to consider the criteria for deciding whether or not these religions are missionary. For example, according to the original teachings of Christianity, Jesus (Prophet Isa) peace be on him made it clear in his sayings that his mission was confined to recovering the "lost sheep of Israel".<sup>6</sup> Hence, when a Canaanite woman came to him

seeking guidance for her people, Jesus simply declined to give her any guidance.<sup>7</sup> However, developments in the history of Christianity might have made Christian Priests and scholars to explain away this original teaching of Jesus Christ and converted Christianity to a missionary religion.

This conversion may not be unconnected to many numerous sayings of Jesus (Prophet Isa) peace be upon him, that stress love among his disciples as a fundamental principle of Christianity which must be preached to all and sundry in humanity generally.<sup>8</sup> Infact, beside Judaism and Zoroastrianism which remained unchanged;

Buddhism changed to missionary religion only after the third Buddhist council during the reign of Asoka.<sup>9</sup> Hinduism too changed its well-known Hindu notion of a rigid caste system which confined Hinduism to the upper classes, and to India to become a missionary religion.

### 3. Racial and Geographical Classification

Racially, the religions of the world are divided under three categories viz: (i) Semitic (ii) Aryan and (iii) Mongolian.

#### i. Semitic Religions

Semitic religions are essentially revealed and mostly monotheistic which include Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Their teachings, except Judaism, are universal. Examples abound in the teachings of Islam that stress its universality as follows:

- a. All Muslims form one brotherhood. (Qur'an 49:10)
- b. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab and vice versa; all human beings are from Adam and Adam was from clay.<sup>10</sup>

From all indications Islam does not recognize superiority of race or tribe, but it based its teachings on the notion of the basic equality and fraternity of all mankind. Allah (SWT) says:

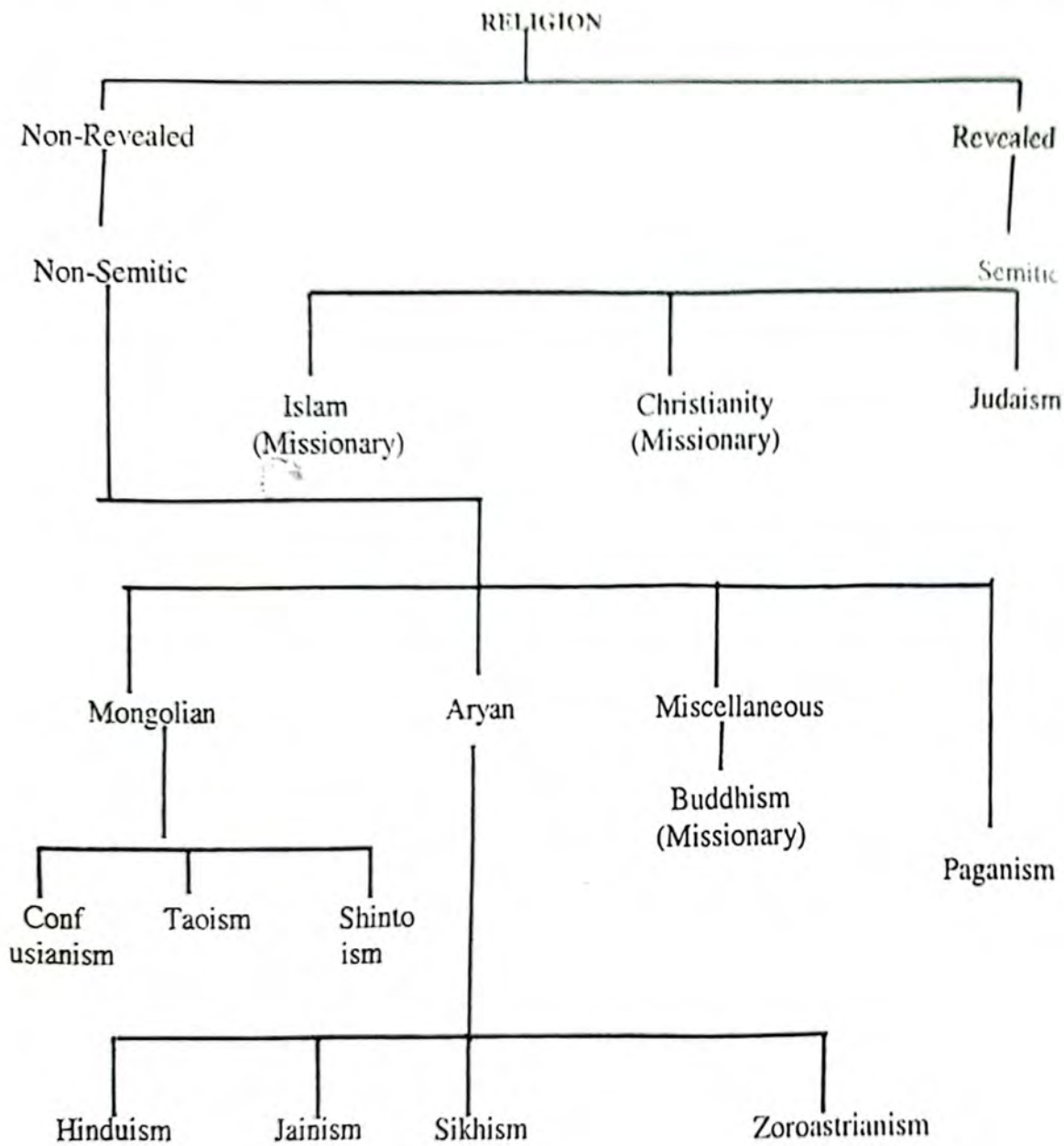
O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into Nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most Righteous of you. And God has full Knowledge and is well acquainted (With all things). (Qur'an 49:13).

#### ii. Aryan Religions.

Aryan religions include Hinduism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism. Some people consider Buddhism as an Aryan religion, but there is controversy surrounding that claim because some see it as part of Mongolian religions.

#### iii. Mongolian Religions

Mongolian religions comprise of Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism and probably Buddhism. These religions supplement one another, they constitute one family of religions, and none of them is self-sufficient. They are advanced forms of paganism.<sup>11</sup>



**Religions in the Pre-Colonial Period**

**Northern Nigeria**

For the purpose of this study, Nigeria is divided into its conventional three regions; the North, South-West and South-East. With this, the issue of religion can be seen clearly. The Northern Nigeria occupied by the Kanuri, Fulani, Hausa, Nupe and other minority tribes had embraced Islam for quite long, probably at the first century of Islam. The Sayfawa Dynasty declared Kanem-Borno region as an Islamic state under their ruler,



Umme Jilmi as far back as 11<sup>th</sup> century CE. He reigned for about 500 years before the British conquest in 1903. The Sayfawa Dynasty was succeeded by another more committed Islamic reformer, Shaikh Amin al-Kanemi who established Borno Caliphate and was succeeded by his disciples who continued to rule up to date. The North-West was also dominated by the Islamic revolution which culminated into the establishment of the Sokoto-caliphate spearheaded by the revolution (*Jihad*) of Uthman Dan Fodio. This development made Northern Nigeria Predominantly Muslims. Islam being a missionary religion extended its teachings and propagation for converting the non-Muslim ethnic groups to Islam; hence, its domination in the region. Islam became state religion in the whole of northern Nigeria especially before colonization. *Shari'ah* was in vogue. Administrative structure was based on *Shari'ah* with Arabic Language as the administrative and record keeping language. Correspondences, both internal and external were through Arabic. In a nutshell, Islamic civilization prevailed everywhere before the emergence of the colonial masters. Ngazargam in Kanem-Borno, Sokoto and Katsina in the Northwest were known as centers of learning in the Bilad Sudan as Timbuktu was in Mali as equivalent to *baitul-hikmah* in Baghdad of the Abbasid dynasty.

Our concern here is how the Islamic religious activities with its spiritual tendency did affect the life of Muslims in Nigeria vis-à-vis the social and political milieu of the period before colonization. It is a well-known fact that there were three major agents that aided the introduction and spread of Islam into West African soil; namely, itinerant scholars, trade, and *sufi* movements. Most of the itinerant scholars too were Sufis (i.e. Spiritual Mallams). It is believed in some quarters that Islam cannot survive without spirituality; while the latter cannot stand on its own without the former i.e. the *Shari'ah*. That is the thrust of the statement accredited to Imam Malik that: "whoever is a jurist but neglects sufism has gone astray and whoever is a *sufi* but neglects *Shari'ah* (jurisprudence) has equally erred but one that combines the two has established the truth".<sup>12</sup> Both Shaikh al-Amin al-Kanemi's Islamic revolution in the North-East and the Jihad of Shaikh Uthman Dan Fodio of the Sokoto Caliphate in the North-West were spiritually grounded in either of one *sufi tariqah* (*sufi* order) or the other. It is not the type of *sufi* order they belong to that matters to us, but the fact that they were able to accomplish the aims and objectives of their reformative activities through the inculcation of spiritual discipline into their disciples at a micro level and the Muslim followers at a macro level. In other words, the socio-political milieu of the period was embedded in the consciousness of spiritual commitment to the service of the supreme authority of Allah (SWT); through the tradition of the prophet (SAW); and obedience to the power that was in vogue at that point in time. This is in consonance with the ordinance of Allah(SWT) that obedience is first to Allah; then His Messenger; and those that are in the position of authority (Qur'an 4:59).

The spiritual commitment of the time was not limited to how long one was able to seclude himself away from the public attraction, in the name of '*Ibaadah* (worship of Allah) or number of '*adhkaar* (rotary prayers) one could offer, but how sincerely

committed one was to serve the community of Islam (Muslim 'Ummah) in the spirit of the consciousness of Allah in all human endeavors. The spiritual Islamic movement of Shaikh Uthman Dan Fodio simply called al-Jama'ah culminated into Sokoto Caliphate while that of Shaikh Amin al-Kanemi was considered community of Muslim without any appellation of a name of *Jama'at* or *sufi tariqah* which eventually culminated into Borno Caliphate.<sup>13</sup>

What this scenario signifies is that spirituality is a state of mind that bears consciousness and fear of authority, power of the Omniscient and Omnipresent Al-Mighty Allah in the secret and the open; the consciousness that will direct the bearer in all human endeavors. The prophet was reported to have said pointing his finger to his chest that; "Piety, is here" (*al-taqwa ha huna*).<sup>14</sup>

### South-Western Nigeria

Religious experience in the southwestern Nigeria was not the same as explained above in the north. There was no formidable pressure like the one that led to Islamic revolutions in the north. What was available in the southwest was the impact of individual itinerant scholars who might again be *Sufi* Mallams. They were small in number and were incapacitated in strength and ability to effect any revolutionary movement. The appearance of Mallams in Yorubaland which symbolized the introduction of Islam and its spread, though could not be dated with precision, predated the appearance of the Christian missionaries or European explorers in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century in Yorubaland. The popular saying of the Yoruba that: '*Ile la ba Ifa, ile la ba Imale, osan gangan niti Igbagbo* (i.e. we met *Ifa* at home, we met Islam at home, it is in the afternoon we heard of Christianity) Gbadamosi attests to this proposition.<sup>15</sup> In summary, the institution of Islamic religion predated Christian religion in Nigeria both of which met traditional religion and subsumed the latter proportionally in a competitive manner. Even though the number of Muslims and Islamic institutions met by the European colonialists and the Christian Missionaries in Yorubaland were more than the Christians; the Muslims' strength and status socially and politically cannot be compared with what was obtained in the northern Nigeria. In addition, Christian religion had the patronage of the colonialists and Christian missionaries in the Southern Nigeria. As explained elsewhere, colonialism in Nigeria, as well as in all other African countries was made possible through three major means in order of their strategic arrangements: Business, Bible and Bullet; all the three were aimed at three other things: African goods, Soul and Land. In other milder terms, materialism and westernization, which are replica twins, were means used in favor of Christian religion in Nigerian communities.

### South-Eastern Nigeria

Southeastern Nigeria was free from religious competitive struggle between Christianity and Islam as was the case in the southwest. Rather, Christianity had the monopoly of civilizing the traditional religious believers which did not happen by the Muslims until

much later in the middle 20<sup>th</sup> century, hence, the reason for the majority of Christians in the area to date.

### **Emergence of Islamic Movements in Nigeria: Islam and Spirituality**

We have been considering religion and spirituality within the context of the general views of different religions. Now that we are to present Islamic movements within the context of their role and impact in the social and political milieu in Nigeria, it is pertinent to give a cursory look again at the concept of religion and spirituality, specifically as seen by Islam. The simplest way of defining Islam is to say it is a system and comprehensive way of life. Some do not even feel comfortable describing Islam as a religion; probably because of the notion embedded in the word religion, which is an affair strictly between man and His Creator. That may be neglecting other aspects of man's relationship socially, politically, and economically with the living being as well as non-living things. Islam is therefore not confined to a set of rules, regulations, ethics and rituals alone (i.e. *Shari'ah*) that direct the affairs of man with his creator, but as well with the creatures, living and non-living.<sup>16</sup>

This definition of Islam goes beyond defining Islam literally or linguistically from its root '*silm*' meaning peace which makes Islam to be considered the religion of peace and a universal concept applicable to humanity as a whole. The same definition of Islam as a comprehensive system and way of life transcends physical phenomena to metaphysics. Since man is made up of soul and body, he is tempted to be thinking and acting physically and metaphysically. This tendency and characteristic features in man are the spirituality developed by individual thinkers, philosophers and scholars in different religions, but more relevant to us here, is Islamic religion.

It is believed that to satisfy human curiosity of the spirit in him and to get nearer or access to the invisible Supreme Being is to seclude oneself from the public and engage in absolute solitude and meditation about the Supreme Being. This is done through different methods as may be summarized below but not exclusively:

- i. Pagans believe in the physical man made gods and natural phenomenon behind which are spirits and the spirit of the super natural being which could be accessed, but through different smaller gods whom they worship; an act that made them polytheists.
- ii. Christianity is based on the belief in the existence of one Supreme God Who must be worshiped through obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ. However, methods of satisfying curiosity in Christendom differ from one denomination to another. While in Catholic Church, seclusion is alone not emphasized, but so also is celibacy advocated as a means to serve God better and avoid all social vices associated with women. Yet, other denominations believe in the contrary procedure.
- iii. In Islam, belief in the existence of only One God is not negotiable. Any method adopted to assert that oneness by any Muslim in form of worship and service to Almighty Allah physically and metaphysically must not contravene the clear



stated description of Allah in the Qur'an that says: He is Allah (the) One, the Self-Sufficient Master; whom all creatures need, He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable to Him. (Q.112:1-4)

The unequivocal statement of Allah with which He describes Himself as quoted above notwithstanding, in the realm of Islamic thought there are also different methods believed in some quarters to be means of attaining nearness or communion with Almighty Allah (SWT). The school of thought is of two types: Puritanical and Metaphysical.

- (I) Metaphysical approach to spirituality has esoteric meaning that is only accessible to group of people who believe in such and considered it to be the only way to know the nature of the Truth. These are the extremist *Sufi tariqah* followers who believe in secluding themselves from the public or community ('*Ummah*) responsibilities and engage in different types of '*adhkaar* (litany for the remembrance of Allah). The *sufi* group are known with different names or path, *Tariqah Tijaniyyah*, *Qadiriyyah*, *Shaziliyyah*, *Khalwabiyyah* and soon and so forth. Their belief may at times lead to pantheism whereby practices of Sufism reach a stage where a *sufi* believes he has known the nature of the Truth-Allah i.e. God is everything and everything is God! This is what is considered by the majority of Sunni Scholars as nothing but erratic innovation and *Kufr* (associating other things with God).
- (II) Puritanical approach to spirituality is based on Jurists' and traditionalists' interpretation of *Shari'ah*, Islamic law. To be spiritually committed to the cause of Allah is to be obedient to Him through His Messengers, and His revealed books embedded in the *Shari'ah*. Spirituality in this sense is not confined to unseen spiritual state of mind but a combination of both soul and body (celestial and terrestrial). The presence and consciousness of Allah in whatever services to Him within the confine of *Shari'ah* could be considered the spirit of Islam. We had earlier quoted the tradition of the prophet that refers to piety as being a state of mind, though could manifest in the body.

In a nutshell, manifestation of spirituality in religious activities in Nigeria, particularly as displayed by some Islamic movements with social and political inclination, should be seen in this context. That is piety of Allah and obedience to Him in propagating Islam in different spheres of life of the Nigerian Muslim Community socially, educationally and politically.

### **Islamic Movements/Organizations in Nigeria**

#### ***al-Jama'ah***

The final subjugation of northern Nigeria by the British colonialist was concluded in March 1903. The Islamic structure which they met on ground was so enormous and effective so much that the British conqueror Lord Lugard, could not afford not to acknowledge it; hence his option to rule under what he called indirect rule. This

significant acknowledgment was made possible by *al-Jama'ah* movement that staged the *Jihad* since the period of Shaikh Uthman Dan Fodio. The commitment of the Shaikh's followers and their subsequent successors to projecting Islam culminated into the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate.

The same scenario occurred among the followers of Shaikh Amin al-Kanemi in the Borno caliphate. Their own type of spirituality was a firm faith in the implementation of *Shari'ah* as beneficial to their own community; the Islamic '*Ummah*'. Scores of their written literature in different Islamic sciences attest to their wonderful contributions to the uplift of their community. The degree of their struggle to serve the community (*Ummah*) in the area of provision of education; observation of Islamic ethics and its inculcation to youth and adults; eradication of corruption and iniquities; display of strong faith in Allah in the face of trouble and vicissitude etc. are the measures of the level of spiritual commitment to the cause of Allah.

When for example the *Jama'ah* movement of Shaikh Uthman Dan Fodio concluded the physical *Jihad* between them and the non-Muslim rulers in 1805, with record of successes, he described the scenario as a lesser struggle (*Jihad al-'Asghar*). While he said the greater struggle (*Jihad al-'Akbar*) is the ability to fight against all social misdemeanors, establish justice against injustice in the community and usher in an upright and peaceful society.

#### **Jama'atu Nasril Islam (Society for the Victory of Islam)**

The first democratic Government came on board as a result of Nigeria's attainment of independence in 1960 and as a republic nation in 1963. Nigeria comprised of three regions: the north; the west and eastern regions. Either by accident or design, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, one of the great grand-sons of the founder of the Sokoto caliphate, Shaikh Uthman Dan Fodio became the premier of northern region which is twice bigger than both western and eastern regions put together; and of course contains the largest population of Muslims. Sardauna's (as he was popularly known and called) coming to power as premier of the northern region ushered in a new dimension into the political arena. Sardauna did not see himself as only head of government and political leader but he assumed the position of a religious leader as well. He was on the forefront of all provinces of the Sokoto caliphate.

As premier, he established a council of Mallams to advise him on practical matters of "church and State" and later an organization called "Society for the victory of Islam (Jama'atu Nasril Islam). With this Islamic movement, he undertook conversion campaigns among the pagan/polytheist communities of the north. Sardauna was not an Islamic scholar, but he had Shaikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, the Grand Kadi of northern region, as his religious adviser and Arabic interpreter when the need arose. Sardauna's pilgrimage to Makkah which also facilitated his cordial and strong relationship with King

Saud and later King Faisal of Saudi Arabia had significant impact on the status of Islam in Nigeria.

Even before Sardauna's international connections, he had made up his mind to step into his great grandfather's shoe. In one of his speeches to the cream of 'Ulama' (scholars), Kings and heads of states in 1963 at the meeting of the World Muslim League he declared:

I have personally devoted my life to the cause of Islam and because of that I am prepared to sacrifice, and I am sacrificing already, all that I possess towards that cause. It will please you, brothers, to hear that in my endeavor to expand the religion of Islam I have, by the Grace of Allah been able to convert some 60,000 non-Muslims in my region to Islam within a period of five months, from November, 1963 to March, 1964.<sup>17</sup>

He further urged his colleague members of the World Muslim League to work in unity for "a large scale international organization as is done by the Christian Missionaries". He equally stressed the importance of the need of the Muslim community (Muslim 'Ummah) to collaborate and unite together (as America and other Christian countries did) to be able to provide meaningful aid to the Muslim people in terms of hospital welfare, clinics, schools and other amenities.<sup>18</sup>

John Paden sees Sardauna as a man of two components, secularism and spiritualism, because: He believed in physical and material development such as food, clothing, health, shelter, industries and commerce. Yet these are worldly matters (*abinduniya*) and are a means rather than an end in life expense on one's immortal soul.<sup>19</sup>

Ahmadu Bello epitomizes the spirit of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) which he founded and funded and followed up its growth, development and functionality up to the point of his death in January 15, 1966 during the first military coup in Nigeria. However, JNI took up the challenges of Islamic propagation in various forms i.e. as mouth piece of all Muslims with relation to government policies on issues affecting them; provision of western education from primary and secondary levels, reconciliation between warring sects among Muslims; like the *Sufi Tariqah Tijaniyyah* and *Qadiriyyah*. The activities of JNI extended beyond northern region to the Yoruba speaking parts of the north i.e. Kwara State, but more significantly in the Southeast region of Nigeria.<sup>20</sup>

The death of Sardauna really slowed down the activities of JNI in no small measure. And that was the more reason why similar organizations emerged on a stronger status to represent the interest of Muslims; as in the case of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs with wider representation in Nigeria for example.

### South-Western Nigeria

The challenges that faced the Muslims of the South Western region were quite different from the North. Islam, though came to Yorubaland centuries before Christianity, was still in its rudimentary stage of development when the colonialists and missionaries emerged. Muslims in Yorubaland did not enjoy the privilege of the revolutionary status of Islam as was the case in the north. The statement in some quarters that *Shari'ah* was fully and formally established in Yoruba-land and towns like Iwo, Ikirun, Ede, Lagos and Epe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to me, is a sweeping one and overestimated.<sup>21</sup> However, one may not contest the fact that in those towns and areas of Yorubaland, Islamic rituals, social and cultural activities of Muslims were to a large extent guided by Islamic tenets, but not to the status of full implementation of *Shari'ah*. Moreover, no single example of an Islamic case was cited to buttress such claim. The colonialists and missionaries collaborated in assisting the spread of Christianity and establishment of schools at the expense of Muslim children who were at the risk of conversion to Christianity. The Muslims of Lagos for example stood up to the challenges, 'fought' the colonial masters, challenged the ploy of the Christian missionaries with the little means of '*Jihad*' they had at their disposal, in terms of western education and civilization because, to the Muslims in Yorubaland, the propagation of Christianity through colonialism and missionary was a new form of 'Crusade' on Muslims and Islam generally. It is in this context I use the term *Jihad*, struggle in the cause of Islam and 'crusade', struggle in the cause of Christianity a scenario that became competitive tendency between the two groups of believers in Nigeria; Muslims and Christians to attain position of power or social status in the Nigerian society.

The point we are driving home here is that the spiritual commitment to Islamic cause by the Muslims of Yorubaland of Southwestern region could not be seen in terms of asceticism or physical *Jihad*, but their determination against all odds to fight the Christian 'crusade'; Thus, this was one of the reasons that prompted Muslims in the Southwestern region to establish Islamic organizations like Ansar-Ud-Deen Society (1923), Zumratul Islamiyyah (1926), Nawairu-Ud-Deen Society (1934) and Ansarul-Islam Society (1945) in Kwara state, among others which took up the task of establishing secular schools of Islamic orientation at primary and secondary levels in different parts of the country.<sup>22</sup>

It is instructive to note that the products from the schools established by the aforementioned Islamic organizations which were able to combine secular education with Islamic education, and were not victims of Christian evangelization by conversion, turned out to be pioneer vanguard for the propagation of Islam through establishment of Islamic movements.

What is particularly of interest to us in this study is the effects of the role played by the Islamic movements in the Nigerian society which include but not limited to the followings:

- (i) Sensitizing of the Muslim parents to realizing the importance of acquiring western education along with Islamic education as means of fighting against the aggressive propagation of missionary activities in the community i.e. *Jihad* against crusade.
- (ii) Raising a reasonable number of Muslim elites who could perform and compete favorably well with their Christian counterparts in education and administration to enhance social status of Muslims and their participation in (Nigerian) politics;
- (iii) Erase from the minds of Nigerian Muslims the negative impression earlier given by the missionary activities that acquiring secular education is tantamount to apostatising, a phenomenon that was responsible for the Muslim apathy for Western education;
- (iv) Creating a friendly relationship between the Muslim elites and Christian elites, because they schooled together; work together in offices, shared opinions together on issues that affect the continuous existence of Nigeria as one nation; socially, politically, economically and religiously; and
- (v) Articulating the notion that spirituality is better shown by a faithful Muslim in actions, characters and above all, sincerity of purpose i.e. Consciousness of Allah at heart in the secret and the open.

However, this scenario created by the establishment of Muslim organizations is not free from negative impact on the Nigerian society, some of which are:

- i. Creation of permanent competition between Muslim and Christian elites in attaining political positions hiding behind one religion or another.
- ii. Facilitation of manipulation of religion of Islam by some unscrupulous opportunist Muslims who exploit, rather than represent the interest of Islam.
- iii. Ridiculing the real teachings of religion by negative attitude of some politicians socially and politically.

### **Conclusion**

Religion and spirituality have been treated in the small piece in a wholesome manner. Quite a number of different religions of the world are reiterated against the backdrop of their belief and ways of actualizing spirituality in their religions especially the revealed religions. The fusion and inseparable nature of religion, spirituality and secularism, particularly in Islamic perception is extensively explained. This is done through exposition of the activities of some Islamic Organizations and their effects both positively and negatively on the Nigerian Muslim community and the nation as a whole. The paper reveals two type of spirituality according to how they are acquired and maintained: spirituality through asceticism which could involve physical abstinence from active

participation in social and political life and spirituality that could be achieved through consciousness of Allah (SWT) in whatever one does socially, economically and politically. Spirituality is not seen in this paper absolutely with abstract parameter but more importantly within the content feasible contribution by some selected Islamic Organizations in Nigeria.

#### Endnotes

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