

ORITA

Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies

XLVIII/2

DECEMBER, 2016

Published by:

The Department of Religious Studies,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Orita is indexed in the following Index Services

- Ulrich's Int. Periodicals Directory (Index Services)
www.bowker.org.uk
R. R. Bowker, Box 727, New Providence NJ 07974-0727 USA.
- Zeller Verlag www.tandf.co.uk/journal (Social Science citation Index)
Postfact 1949, D-49009 Osnabruck.
- Periodica Islamica, journalseek.net/egi-bin/journalseek/journalsearch

Editorial Committee

Deji Ayegboyin Ph.D. (Ibadan)
Kunle Dada, Ph.D. (Ibadan)
Labeodan, Helen A. Ph.D. (Ibadan)
Famulusi, O. O. Ph.D (Ibadan)
Adekoya, J. S. Ph.D (Ibadan)
Fatokun, S. A. Ph.D (Ibadan)
Oluwatoyin, A. Gbadamosi

Chairman
Editor
Assistant Editor
Review Editor
Treasurer
Member
Business Manager

Consulting Editors

J. K. Olupona: olupona@fas.harvard.edu, Professor of African and African American Studies and Religion, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University, Cambridge U.S.A.

Mercy Amba Oduyoye: iwreghana@yahoo.com, Professor and Director, Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, Trinity College, Accra.

Allan Anderson: a.h.anderson@bham.ac.uk, Professor and Director, Pentecostal Studies, Graduate Institute for theology and Religion, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Akintunde E. Akinade: aea43@georgetown.edu, Professor of Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Georgetown University, Education City, Doha, State of Qatar.

E-mail Address: orita67@yahoo.com.co.uk
Websites: www.oritajournal.org

O. O. Familusi, Ph.D, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, E-mail: fameofame@yahoo.com.

Oláléyẹ Samuel Káyòdé, Ph.D., is a lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Mubarak Ademola Noibi, Ph.D, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan. E-mail: mubaraknoibi@gmail.com,

Mikail Kolawole AbdulSalam, is a graduate student in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan. E-mail: abdulsalammikail99@gmail.com

ORITA

Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies

XLVIII/2

DECEMBER, 2016

Contents

| <i>Authors</i> | <i>Articles</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|---|--|-------------|
| David Tuesday Adamo: | The Significance of Psalm 121 in African Context | 167 |
| Victor Selorme Gedzi, Yunus Dumba and Gabriel Eshun: | Field of Power: A Religious and Cultural Analysis of Trokosi in Ghana | 183 |
| Gbadamosi Oluwatoyin Adebola: | A Philosophical Analysis of Sacrifice as a Means to an End in Contemporary Nigerian Christianity and Yoruba Traditional Religion | 211 |
| Julius Adekoya and Deji Ayegboyin: | Martyrdom as Sacrifice in the History of the Church: Then and Now | 229 |
| Olufemi Adedolapo Ojeniyi and Olumuyiwa Olusesan Familusi: | Investment as a Mechanism for Job Creation in Anglican Diocese of Ibadan, Nigeria | 243 |
| Oláléyẹ Samuel Káyòdé: | <i>A Kii F'omo Orè B'orè</i> : A Classcode and Control in the Concept of <i>Èbọ</i> (Sacrifice) in Contemporary Nigeria | 273 |
| Mubarak Ademola Noibi and Mikail Kolawole AbdulSalam: | Abū Ibejī's Salafī Movement and the Muslim <i>Ummah</i> in Ibadan | 293 |

ABŪ IBEJI'S SALAFĪ MOVEMENT AND THE MUSLIM UMMAH IN IBADAN

Mubarak Ademola Noibi and Mikail Kolawole AbdulSalam

Abstract

Salafī movement developed in the second half the eighteenth century with the aim of redirecting Muslims to pristine Islam. However, some radical variants of Salafī movement which re-interpret Islamic religious teachings and constitute a challenge to other Muslims have emerged. Although scholars have focused on deviant Muslim groups, little has been done in the area of studying the composition and the ideological base of the Ibadan-based Abū Ibeji group; hence, the paper fills the gap by examining the ideological base of this radical Muslim group, as against established extant Islamic teachings, and their implications for other Muslims. The paper adopts content analysis approach and descriptive survey design. It analyses Islamic religious texts and ideas gleaned from in-depth interviews with selected members of the religious group, as well as the leadership of the Muslim community. Abū Ibeji group has recorded noticeable changes in established Islamic religious practices and principles such as prayer timing, gender rights, getting formal education, greetings and child naming ceremony among others. The group is not only overzealous but also plagued with incompetent leaders, ignorant followers and poverty. The group has the potential of developing into a terrorist organisation if something is not urgently done to curb it. There is the need for the Muslim community in Ibadan, in conjunction with the League of Imams and Alfas, to embark on an intensive reorientation and empowerment of the group members and, by extension, the general public.

Introduction

Salafī movement has a long history. Prophet Muhammad (S) had described his generation and the two subsequent ones as the best; hence, the first three generations of Muslims, otherwise known as the *salaf*, are taken as normative models. The call for return to *salaf* was initially championed by Imam Abū Hanīfah when sectarianism and ideological differences started to become prevalent among Muslims. This was followed by Ibn Taymiyyah and later Muhammad Ibn

Abdul-Wahhāb in the eighteenth century. The followers of Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb referred to themselves as monotheists (*muwahhīdūn*) and described their message as the call to true monotheism (*tawhīd*), the religion of Islam and call to *salafīyyah*. The movement, following the steps of their teacher and leader, Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb, as much as possible try to adhere to the teachings of the Prophet (S), his companions (*Sahābah*), the followers (*tāb'ūn*) and renowned scholars like Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, IbnTaymiyyah, Ibn Qayyīn and Ibn Kathīr among others.¹

Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb views the *salaf* as being in the position to give correct and proper explanation to issues pertaining to Islam. He also holds the view that there is no total allegiance to the teaching of any being except the Prophet (S).² Hence, any disputed issue should be viewed from the lens of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb states that once an authentic act of the Prophet (S) is known to them, acting according to it becomes obligatory without putting before it the statement of any other person.³ According to the followers of the *salaf*, making the Qur'an and *Sunnah* ultimate reference (Q4:59) is of paramount importance. Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb states that the *salaf* are followers of the Qur'an, the *Sunnah*, the pious predecessors of the Islamic nation and what is supported in the opinions of the four most popular *sunni* schools of Islamic jurisprudence under the leadership of Imams Malik, Shāfi'ī, Ḥanbal and Ḥanafī. However, people could follow any of the four schools of their choice insofar as they do not run opinions contrary to the Qur'an, *Sunnah*, *Ijmā'* (concensus of opinion of scholars) and views of the majority of Islamic scholars who follow the *salaf*.⁴ The *Salafīyyūn* are encouraged to refrain from engaging in absolute *ijtihād* (juristic exercise) such as those made by the four most popular

¹Jamal Al-Din M. Zarobozo, *The Life Teaching and Influence of Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhab* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, 2003), 159.

²Zarobozo, *The life teaching and influence*, 82-83.

³Zarobozo, *The life teaching and influence*, 101-102.

⁴Zarobozo, *The life teaching and influence*, 103

sunni Imams mentioned above. However, they could embark on *ijtihad* with respect to secondary issues (*furū'*) not touched by qualified *sunni* scholars. Moreover, they could switch to opinions with stronger evidence among any of the four schools in controversial matters. Nevertheless, one does not have to possess all the qualities mentioned by scholars before engaging in *ijtihad* and passing *fatwā* (legal opinion) as Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb states that: "One may not even find all those qualities in Abū Bakr or Umar".⁵ This stand may have led many incompetent scholars to form the habit of issuing out contentious *fatāwā* (legal opinions).

Although the *Salafiyyah* movement is universal, there are pockets of deviant adherents who have introduced new teachings into its ideology, thereby acting contrary to the views of its noble pioneers, all in the name of exercising *ijtihad*. This has wittingly or unwittingly led deviant *Salafi* movements into the problem of extremism in their thoughts and actions. One of such is the Ibadan-based Abū Ibeji *Salafi* movement. Although scholars have focused on deviant Muslim groups, little has been done in the area of studying the teachings of the *Salafi* movement; hence, the paper fills the gap by examining the ideological base of the radical Muslim movement, as against established extant Islamic teachings. The paper adopts content analysis approach and descriptive survey design. It analyses Islamic religious texts and ideas gleaned from in-depth interviews with selected members of the religious group, as well as the leadership of the Muslim community.

The paper is divided into six sections. While this section has introduced the paper, the next one introduces Abū Ibeji and his *Salafiyyah* movement. The third section examines the emergence and development of extremism. The fourth section discusses the causes of extremism while the fifth section addresses the doctrines of Abū Ibeji's *Salafi* movement. The last section concludes the paper.

Abū Ibeji and His *Salafi* Movement

Rasheed Mustapha, otherwise known as Abū Ibeji,⁶ is the initiator, facilitator and leader of a movement which regards itself as the true follows of the *salaf* in Ibadan. The movement strongly detests the formation of Islamic societies and, therefore, does not refer to itself as one. The movement has no name and it is not registered under the government or by any organisation. For the purpose of this study, the movement is referred to as Abū Ibeji's movement.

Though the early life of Abū Ibeji is not known, he is said to have hailed from Ilesha in Osun State, Nigeria. After the completion of his secondary school and dropping out of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo State,⁷ Abū Ibeji joined the Arabic Institute of Nigeria (*Al-Ma'hadul-'Arabī al-Nigīrī*), Elekuro in Ibadan, Oyo State in the second term of 1997/98 academic session and was placed in class one of its primary school (*al-Awwal al-Ibtidā'ī*). It was reported that although Abū Ibeji was not one of the best three students in his class, after two years in the school, he sat for a double promotion examination and passed, thereby advancing him a year ahead of his mates. He was placed in Class One of the junior secondary school (*al-Awwal al-I'dādī*).⁸ Abū Ibeji, who was said to be arrogant and reserved, fell below the best thirty students in his new class.⁹

On his involvement in Islamic activities, he was said to have entered the Islamic Institute as a member of the *Jama'atut-Tabligh*

⁶Abū Ibeji is formed from two languages. The first word being Arabic (Abū), meaning father, while the second one (Ibeji) being Yoruba, means twins. Abū Ibeji therefore means "Father of Twins", an indication that Rasheed Mustapha is father to a set of twins.

⁷Sulayman Ibraheem (Accountant and Teacher of Abū Ibeji at Arabic Training Institute of Nigeria and close associate of Sulayman Amubieya), interviewed by Dr Mubarak Noibi at the Arabic Training Institute of Nigeria on June, 2017.

⁸Abdul-Lateef Mudathir (Teacher at Front Model School and first two years class mate of Abū Ibeji at the Arabic Training Institute of Nigeria), interviewed by Dr Mubarak Noibi at Arabic Training Institute of Nigeria in June, 2017.

⁹Sulayman Ibraheem.

⁵Zorobo, *The life teaching and influence*, 106

but later joined the *Taḍāmūnūl-Muslimīn*, a society where he was active until he left due to some undisclosed reasons during his penultimate year (*al-thānī al-thanawī*) at the Institute.¹⁰ There were insinuations that Abū Ibeji may have, at this time, been influenced by the lectures of Shaykh Jabata whose views and positions were seen as extreme and sometimes heterodox by Islamic scholars and observers. In 2010, Rasheed Mustapha was employed by Shaykh Sulayman Amubieya as a supervisor in his shop at Agodi Gate Area in Ibadan. Reports of sales in the shop were often given at home as Abū Ibeji and Amubieya lived in the same neighbourhood.¹¹

There were three challenges between Sulayman Amubieya and Abū Ibeji. The challenges throw light on the personality of Abū Ibeji and, by extension, the teaching he impacted on members of his movement. The first issue relates to Abū Ibeji's attitude to his job as a supervisor at Sulayman Amubieya's shop. This involves the feedback Amubieya got from undisclosed sources that Abū Ibeji had set up his own personal stall just in front of the shop he was supervising and went on to sell the same materials that were sold in the shop. This was seen as gross misconduct, disloyalty and sabotage on the part of Abū Ibeji. Consequently, there were moves to audit the account of the shop, but that was later aborted.¹²

The second issue was that of a mosque which was put in place by Muslim traders at Agodi/Gate with the kind assistance of Sulayman Amubieya, who delegated the task of imamship to Sulayman Ibraheem. The Imam encouraged knowledgeable Muslims to hold lecture sessions at the mosque. One of those invited to the mosque was Abū Ibeji who soon caused confusion to the audience. He was reported to have preached that whoever organises trade/training completion ceremony, otherwise called 'freedom', for their apprentice artisans will be punished in Hell fire by Allah. Incidentally, the practice of 'freedom' was a common thing in

¹⁰ Abdul-Lateef Mudathir.

¹¹ Sulayman Ibraheem.

¹² Sulayman Ibraheem.

Agodi/Gate Spare Part Market. Thereafter, Amubieya, who had received the report and protest of concerned Muslim traders called on some of the aggrieved Muslim traders and Abū Ibeji to settle the matter. The meeting which took place overnight at the residence of Amubieya witnessed scholastic arguments between Abū Ibeji and Amubieya. Consequently, the superior and convincing arguments tendered by Amubieya on the permissibility of 'freedom' in Islam made Abū Ibeji to shift ground and pledged to make amendments in his subsequent preaching at the mosque. To the surprise of the traders who were present at the overnight meeting, Abū Ibeji, during his preaching at the mosque, claimed to have had the upper hand at the overnight meeting and went ahead to accuse Amubieya of lack of adequate knowledge.¹³

The above issue caused Abū Ibeji to be expelled from the mosque in question, while Amubieya refuted Abū Ibeji's position on the issue of 'freedom' at the mosque. The aftermath of this was that Abū Ibeji started defaming Amubieya in his preaching sessions. The series of defamation of Amubieya by Abū Ibeji formed the third issue between the two personalities. The continuous defamation of character got to the notice of a Human Rights group which approached Amubieya and sought his support towards prosecuting Abū Ibeji, on whose trail they had been for quite some time. Upon Amubieya's approval, the case was filed in court but the timely intervention of the Muslim community saved the day. As a result of this intervention, the case was referred by the Muslim community to the management of the Arabic Institute of Nigeria, which incidentally had produced Amubieya and Abū Ibeji. The case was then withdrawn from court as it was settled at the Arabic Institute.¹⁴

The above narrations bring to the fore the level of knowledge and sincerity of Abū Ibeji who conducted his lectures, which were usually attended by not more than a hundred individuals, some of whom were not his followers, in a fenced compound at Ori Eeru

¹³ Sulayman Ibraheem.

¹⁴ Sulayman Ibraheem.

Area, Mosfala, Ibadan with its gate manned by two men. The public address system used during the lectures was usually regulated in such a way that people outside the fence would not hear the voice of the lecturer at the programme. It should be noted that some of those who attended the programme usually disguised as followers of Abū Ibeji. It is through the effort of such non-followers that the recordings of Abū Ibeji's lectures are stealthily made and circulated.¹⁵

Emergence and Development of Extremism

According to Muslim scholars, extremism is not a recent phenomenon; it is as old as religion itself. History has it that heavenly messages and prophetic teachings were at times taken to the extreme. Muslim scholars have, at different periods, discussed it and responded to it appropriately. Before Prophet Muhammad (S), there had been differences in approaches and methods of responses to the call to monotheism by previous prophets. Many of the followers of earlier prophets responded positively while others were adamant and obstinate.¹⁶ Some of those who accepted the messages brought by the prophets exaggerated and distorted the messages. This accounts for why Allah instructs the *ahl al-kitāb* (people of the scripture), especially Christians, to eschew committing excesses in their religious beliefs. The instruction which is contained in the Qur'ān states as follows:

Say: "O people of the Scripture! Exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper), trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went astray in times gone by- who misled many and strayed (themselves) from the even way (Q5:77).

According to the celebrated exegete (*mufasssir*), Ibn Kathīr, the above *āyah* addresses the *ahl al-kitāb* not to exceed limits with

regards to the one whom Allah has asked them to honour. The excess refers to the elevation of Prophet 'Īsā (Jesus) to the rank of God by Christians.¹⁷ A similar *āyah* is contained in Q4:171.

Aside from the earlier religious communities, excessive religious tendencies were also noticed among Muslims during the period of the mission of Prophet Muhammad (S), even though he spared no rod in stemming the dangerous tide. For instance, three men visited the Prophet's (S) wives to enquire about their husband's pattern of worship. Upon hearing the Prophet's exemplary dedication to Allah and his remarkable pattern of worship despite having been forgiven past and future sins by Allah, they deemed their worship grossly insufficient and resolved to move closer to Allah through some unilaterally decided individualistic actions. One of them said that he was going to be observing *tahajjud* (voluntary night prayer) all through the night forever. The second person said that he was going to be observing *Sawm* (fasting) uninterruptedly throughout the year. The third person said that he would prefer to live a life of celibacy. Upon the arrival of the Prophet (S), he said:

Are you the same people who said so and so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more pious than you; yet I observe fast and break it, offer prayers (tahajjud) and also sleep and I marry women. So he who does not follow my way of life (Sunnah) is not my follower.¹⁸

Another extreme tendency among the *Sahābah* occurred in the full glare of the Prophet (S). The episode was the case of a man that he sighted while he was delivering a *Khuṭbah* (sermon). Upon enquiry about him, the *Sahābah* told the Prophet (S) that the person was Abū Isrā'īl who had vowed to Allah (*Nadhr*) that he would remain standing and never sit down, and that he would never come

¹⁵Sulayman Ibraheem.

¹⁶Thameem Ushama, "The Phenomenon of Extremism in Religion in Muslim Life: An Analysis of Its Roots, Causes and Nature.", *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 14 (2014): 240.

¹⁷Safiur-Rahman R. Al-Mubarakpuri, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir fi Tadhīb Tafsiir Ibn Kathir*. (Riyadh: Dar as-Salam, 2000), 2:240.

¹⁸MuhammadAl-Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari* trans. Muhammad Khan (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), 7:1-2.

under the shade nor speak to anybody, and would observe fast. Then the Prophet (S) said: "Order him to speak and let him come in the shade, and make him sit down, but let him complete his fast".¹⁹

In the given *ḥadīth*, Abū Isrā'īl was said to have made a *nadh'r* to stand, keep off shade, not to converse with anyone and to fast, but the Prophet (S) disapproved all except fasting. A panoramic view of the issue indicates that even though some scholars are of the opinion that *nadh'r* is forbidden (*ḥarām*) as it entails the imposition on self what Allah has not imposed on one, the basic rule guiding *nadh'r* is that it is detested (*makrūh*) and, therefore, should be generally avoided. *Nadh'r* is divided into three types, namely: *Hukmal-Yamīn* (Principle of Swearing [as bases]), *Nadh'r Ma'āsiyyah* (Vow of Disobedience) and *Nadh'r Ṭā'ah* (Vow of Obedience).²⁰

Hukm al-yamīn occurs when a person, in a bid to establish the veracity of a piece of information, vows to undertake an action approved under the *Sharī'ah* to atone for giving a piece of information if it is later established to be false. It could also come in form of someone promising to do a virtuous act to another upon the latter's achievement of something, as a mark of encouragement to the person. As a sign of the promising party's seriousness to fulfil their promise, they openly declare that failure to actualise the promise will attract a specific action as *nadh'r*. In respect of *Nadh'r Ma'āsiyyah*, a person vows to do what is forbidden, such as consuming alcohol. The rule here is that the person in question must avoid fulfilling such vows. However, they are to observe restitution (*kaffārah*) for not actualising the vow. The last being *Nadh'r Ṭā'ah*, which is applicable when an individual vows to do what Allah loves even when such is voluntary (*nawāfil*), such as observing fasts on Mondays or Thursdays among others.²¹ It is in the light of the above explanations that the Prophet (S) disapproved of all but one of Abū Isrā'īl's *nadh'r*.

¹⁹Muhammad 'Uthaymīn, *Sharh Riyadh As-Sālihīn min Kalām Sayyid Al-Mursalīn* (Cairo: Maktabah at-Tawfiqah, n.d), 1: 106.

²⁰'Uthaymīn, *Sharh Riyadh As-Sālihīn*, 1: 106.

²¹'Uthaymīn, *Sharh Riyadh As-Sālihīn*, 1:578.

In the same vein, after the *Hijrah* (migration) to Madinah, the Prophet (S) established the bond of brotherhood on pairing basis between the *Muhājirūn* (emigrants) and the *Anṣār* (helpers). One of such brotherhood relation was that which existed between Salmān and Abū Al-Dardā'. Once, Salmān paid a visit to the house of Abū Al-Dardā' but, incidentally, Abū Al-Dardā' was not around but he met his wife Umm Al-Dardā'. Salmān noticed that Umm Al-Dardā' was putting on an unbefitting dress, upon which he enquired about what problem she had, judging by her appearance. Umm Al-Dardā' then replied to Salmān by saying that his brother, Abū Al-Dardā', had no worldly desire. Thereafter, Abū Al-Dardā' arrived and prepared a meal for Salmān. Before Salmān could take his meal, he invited Abū Al-Dardā' to join him in taking the meal but he refused on the premise that he was fasting. Nevertheless, on the insistence of Salmān, Abū Al-Dardā' broke his fast and partook in the meal. Salmān eventually passed the night in the residence of Abū Al-Dardā'. In the dead of the night and before the later part of the night, Abū Al-Dardā' made attempts to wake up for *tahajjud* but he was swiftly prevented from such by Salmān who asked him to go back to bed. However, at the later part of the night, Salmān woke up his brother after which they jointly observed *tahajjud*. The corrective actions, which later got the nod of the Prophet (S), include Salmān saying the following to Abū Al-Dardā': "It is true that you owe a duty to your Lord but you also owe a duty to yourself and your wife, therefore, render to everyone their due".²²

This shows that exuberance and excesses in religion were frowned upon and effectively curbed by the Prophet (S) and his companions. The examples given above are a few of the extremist tendencies exhibited during the mission of the Prophet (S). It is apparent from the above *aḥādīth* that extremism usually occurs due to misconceptions of individual (s) or emotional attachment to doctrines, sects, schools of thought or even political parties or schools of jurisprudence, which can occur in any situation or

²²'Uthaymīn, *Sharh Riyadh As-Sālihīn*, 1: 573-575.

Mubarak Ademola Noibi and Mikail Kolawole Abdul Salam milieu.²³ To round off, the Prophet (S) says that: "Ruined are those who insist on hardship in matters of life and religion".²⁴

Few years after the demise of the Prophet (S), specifically during the *khilāfah* (reign) of 'Alī bin Abī Tālib, the Muslim world witnessed two civil wars: Battle of Jamal and Battle of Siffin. It was the fallout of the arbitration which ensued after the latter battle that extremism became apparent in the *Ummah* (Muslim community), with the birth of the first sect in Islam: the *Khawārij* and later Shi'ism. The *Khawārij* were known to have gone into extreme in their ambition to live sinless lives. They believed that committing a sin leads to infidelity (*kufr*), necessitating repentance and re-entry into the fold of Islam. The *Khawārij* maintained that the Muslims who fail to subscribe to their opinion were unbelievers (*kāfirūn*).²⁵ They started by disagreeing with 'Alī on arbitrating with Mu'āwiyah and became puritanical and dealt ruthlessly with non-members, some of whom they assassinated.

The *Khawārij* were the first group in Islamic history to practise *takfir* (accusing people of committing sins grave enough to make them lose their Islamic identity); hence, they justified the killing of those who they regarded as infidels.²⁶ Another characteristic of the *Khawārij* was their lack of in-depth knowledge of Islamic scholarship. As such, their comprehension of the Qur'ān was superficial and prone to literal and extreme misinterpretations. Ironically, they were scornful of the people of knowledge and would consider the true scholars of Islam as misguided. This is because they consider themselves to be more righteous than the people of

knowledge.²⁷ The traces of dismissing the people of knowledge as misguided and less righteous can also be noticed in Abū Ibeji's lectures and the attitude of his followers to other Muslims.

Causes of Religious Extremism

Extremism does not come out of nowhere, nor does it emerge by accident. It must indeed have numerous interrelated causes. Therefore, knowledge of its causes in this respect is very essential. According to Qaradāwī, a primary cause of extremism is lack of knowledge. Ignorant youths are quick to pass judgment on an issue with only the smallest consideration for the legal consequences of their opinions. These clerical activists have little appreciation of the depth of Islamic jurisprudence, while the intricacies involved in the study and understanding of *Ḥadīth* and *Uṣūl-al-Fiqh* are foreign to them. Qaradāwī cites the *ḥadīth* which forbids a Muslim husband from returning to his family at night after long absence from home. There may be two reasons for this. First, it is to avoid giving an impression that he suspects his wife and that he is trying to catch her unawares. Second, it is to give time to prepare herself and house to receive him. With the advancement in communication technology, the aim of that *ḥadīth* can be fulfilled with a real time contact with wives on his expected time of arrival. Moreover, modern modes of travel often necessitate arrival by night. Few people may nevertheless still want to fulfil the *ḥadīth* the way it was done during the era of the Prophet (S) by first lodging in a hotel to avoid night arrival, the opportunities offered by technology and the dynamism of Islam notwithstanding.²⁸

Moreover, most of the problems of young extremists are partly related to three observable perilous trends: proliferation of sects and societies, abundance of independent preachers and reliance on preachers rather than the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. As a result, young

²³Ushama, "The Phenomenon of Extremism" *Asian Social Science*, 240.

²⁴Uthaymīn, *Sharh Riyadh As-Sālihīn*, 1: 564.

²⁵Masudul Hasan, *Hadrat Ali Murtada (RAA)*. (Delhi: Aakif Book Depot, 1992), 286.

²⁶Craig A.Green, "The Khawārij and The Creed of Takfeer: Declaring a Muslim to be an Apostate and its Effects Upon Modern Day Islamic Movements". (Unpublished 2009 M.A dissertation, University of South Africa. <http://www.citeseerx.ist.psu.edu> (accessed June 20, 2017), 26

²⁷Ali M. Sallābi, 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2010), 2: 291.

²⁸Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*(Riyadh: IIPH, 1991), p.53.

ones are very vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization by extremist groups, who often distort religious injunctions.²⁹ Such ignorant youths, as a consequence, follow trends which may be considered by them as best. Some may be committing very reprehensible acts while thinking that they are reforming Muslims.

Extremists do not thoroughly read the Qur'an and the Prophet's (S) sayings to understand the true sense of the text, its intents, aims, and meanings. In their traditions, they only take the superficial meanings of the text and then match it with their purposes. They neither adhere to the rules of deducing nor do they combine the religious directives together. Rather, they substitute the true intent of a text with an erroneous one, and then interpret it according to their whims and caprices.³⁰ One reason for the prevailing interpretation by extremists is traceable to misunderstanding of the *āyāt* of the Qur'an or *ahādīth* by taking a particular text without linking it to other references and examining them holistically. It is important to have adequate knowledge of Islamic sciences before taking up responsibility of guiding others. Rasheed Mustapha only has a Senior Secondary School Certificate in Arabic and Islamic Studies and would need further education in the twin disciplines to be able to correctly serve as a true guide to people in their religious lives.

Another cause of extremism in religious matters is disagreement (*ikhtilāf*), mostly among jurisconsults (*mujtahidūn*) and jurists (*fuqahā'*). Disagreement is a part of human life, but becomes a problem when people cannot tolerate each other's differences, thereby leading to conflicts. During the Battle of the *Aḥzāb* (confederates), the Prophet (S) was reported to have asked his companions not to perform the *Salātul-'Aṣr* (mid-afternoon prayer) until they get to (the place of) Banū Qurayzah. While still on their

²⁹Freedom C. Onuoha, "Why do Youths Join Boko Haram?" Special Report 348, 2014. United States Institute of Peace. <http://www.usip.org> (accessed June 20, 2017), 5.

³⁰Wan Zulkifli Wan Hassan et al., "The Sustainability of Fiqh in Critical Fatwas (juristic rulings) Concerning Zakat in Terengganu," *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* 7, (2012): 2.

way, and it was the appointed time for the *ṣalāt*, some of the companions deferred the *ṣalāt* as they were instructed while some others performed it. The matter was later brought to the notice of the Prophet (S) and he did not disapprove of the action taken by either of the parties.³¹

The fact that the Prophet (S) approved of the actions of both groups shows that each position taken by the companions was valid. There were many occasions when scholars disagree; usually politely but sometimes strongly, but without passing disparaging comments on each other.³² The height of what righteous scholars of religion do is to say the like of what Imam Al-Shāfi' said, that: "I believe my opinion is right with the possibility that it is wrong and I believe the opinion of those who disagree with me is wrong with the possibility that it is right." This is the spirit with which Muslim scholars usually approach issues on which there is no consensus of opinion. They mostly maintain a noble level of professional respect for each other.³³ This is against the approach of Abū Ibeji who is in the habit of attacking other scholars and accusing them of infidelity.

Ideology of Abū Ibeji's *Salafī* Movement

Ibeji's *Salafī* movement is peculiar in terms of its ideology when compared to the ideology of the universal *Salafī* movement. The movement's ideological differences cover participation in governance within a democratic government, labelling of erring Muslims as unbelievers, trampling on the rights of women and unique interpretation of texts. In the area of politics, Abū Ibeji's movement is opposed to political participation in a democratic dispensation since it gives sovereignty to man as against sovereignty to Allah. The movement in question is of the view that the

³¹Salman Al-Oadah, *How to Disagree* (Riyadh: Islam today, 2013), 31.

³²Abdullah Saeed, Rowan Gould, and Adis Duderija, *Islamic Teachings on Contemporary Issues for Young Muslims* (Victoria: National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies, 2016), 61.

³³Abdul Hakim Jackson, "The Etiquette of Disagreement." Federation of Australian Muslim Students and Youth. <http://www.famsy.com/salam> (accessed June 20, 2017), 4.

participation of a Muslim in the process or governance is tantamount to disbelief (*kufr*). This is anchored in the belief that democracy is not only alien to Islam but also contrary to it, for sovereignty belongs only to Allah; hence, it is not permissible to give legislative rights to any human being. In view of this, they claim that whoever partakes in democratic system knowing so well that it is forbidden, has become an unbeliever (*kāfir*).³⁴

Similarly, the movement asserts that it is *kufr* for Muslims to cast their votes in a democratic setting since it is a step towards democracy and that the only acceptable system of governance is the choice of leaders through consultation (*shūrah*).³⁵ Furthermore, the movement passed a *fatwā* that it is forbidden (*harām*) to take pleasure in serving under a democratic government or serving as a public servant under the system of government, as doing that is tantamount to committing *shirk* (polytheism). Hence, Muslim public servants are seen as polytheists (*Mushrikūn*).³⁶ The movement based its stand on the *āyāt* of the Qur'ān which describes those who fail to judge by the teachings of Islam as infidels (Q5:44), oppressors (Q5:45), and evildoers (Q5:47).

Meanwhile, a closer view of the above issues reveals that Muslims can participate in democracy as a lesser evil between exclusion and participation. A juristic principle that gives credence to participation in democratic setting is "necessity begets need" (*al-Darūrāt Tubīḥul-Maḥzūrāt*) if it is done sincerely in the interest of

³⁴Uthman AbdulFatah (Member, Abū Ibeji's movement) interviewed by Mikail AbdulSalam at Ogundepo Area, Masfala Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria in March, 2017.

³⁵Abdulhameed Ibn Ghazali (Member, Abū Ibeji's movement) interviewed by Mikail AbdulSalam (Member, Abū Ibeji's movement) interviewed by Mikail AbdulSalam at Ogundepo area, Masfala Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria in March, 2017.

³⁶Abdulhameed Ibn Ghazali (Member, Abū Ibeji's movement) interviewed by Mikail AbdulSalam (Member, Abū Ibeji's movement) interviewed by Mikail AbdulSalam at Ogundepo area, Masfala Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria in March, 2017.

Muslims.³⁷ This principle goes in tandem with another principle which stipulates that stumbling blocks should be removed (*Nafyul-ḥaraj*).³⁸ Based on these principles, Allah, in His infinite mercy, allows believers to do what is needful, especially when they are incapacitated in doing what is right. Moreover, Allah states in the Qur'ān (Q.12:54-56) how Prophet Yusuf (AS) sought appointment as the "Minister of Agricultural Resources" under an un-Islamic (*Fir'awn*) government in Egypt with the sole aim of serving Allah by engaging in humanitarian duty of overseeing the provision of food to Egyptians and their neighbours for a number of years. Similarly, the Prophet (S) allied himself with the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl*, a political accord whose aim was to sustain peace and security in Makkah, and support the oppressed.³⁹

Another contentious issue is '*aqīqah*' which, according to Islamic jurisprudence, is the slaughtering of animal on the seventh day after the birth of a child in order to give thanks to Allah and for seeking His blessings on the child. Islamic scholars have agreed on the obligation of offering '*aqīqah*' if it is within the capacity of the child's father. However, Abū Ibeji's movement is of the view that the animal killed should be distributed to people raw rather than cooked. Also, people for whom the meat is given must not be told the reason for which they are given. Moreover, it holds that it is (*harām*) to invite officiating officers and relatives to the '*aqīqah*' on the seventh day. Similarly, according to them, feasting should not be done at the sitting. Their leader, popularly known as Abū Ibeji stated in one of his Sunday *halqah* programme that "to experience deadly hunger is far better than eating '*aqīqah*' meal".⁴⁰ Hence, the movement argues

³⁷Abdullah A. Al-Bassam, *Tawḍīḥul-Aḥkām min Bulūghil-Marām* (n.p: Maktabatul-Mustūrah, 1989), 1:69.

³⁸Al-Bassam, *Tawḍīḥul-Aḥkām*, 1:78.

³⁹Muhammad Al-Khudri, *Nurūl-Yakīn fī Sirati Sayyidil-Mursalīn* (Al-Manṣūrah: Maktabatul-Imān, 2006), 13-14.

⁴⁰This assertion was made by Abū Ibeji in the presence of Mikail AbdulSalam during the former's routine lectures delivered on 22 January, 2017, at Idiobi Area, Mosfala Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

that if such food or meat is presented to one, one must not eat it, and the best thing is to return the food to the giver.⁴¹

The opinion expressed above runs contrary to the views of reputable scholars, including those considered to be leaders in the universal *Salafī* movement. According to Shaykh Jibrīn, the ‘*aqīqah*’ meat should be divided into three parts and shared among the immediate family members of the new born, other relations and the generality of Muslims who are available. Meanwhile, Shaykh ‘Uthaymīn sanctions the act of congregating people for ‘*aqīqah*’ purpose just as the meat could be given out as charity.⁴² Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah is of the view that it is better for the ‘*aqīqah*’ meat to be cut into pieces, cooked and served for people to relish.⁴³ Shaykh Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah also shares the last opinion with the addition that sparing the poor and the neighbours the burden of cooking will increase the blessings in the ‘*aqīqah*’.⁴⁴

On the study and practice of Common Law, Abū Ibejī’s movement opines that whoever studies or accepts the verdicts of any law besides the *Sharī’ah* has indeed committed *Shirk*, meaning that the person has become a *kāfir*.⁴⁵ It is in line with this view that it does not welcome Muslims studying or practising Common Law. The movement bases its argument on their interpretation of Q5:44. This view is opposed to that of the true *salaf*. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah learnt philosophy just for him to know its evils. Therefore, being a specialist in the field of Common Law does not mean having preference for the law over the *Sharī’ah*, but studying it to further the

⁴¹ Abdullah Abdulrauf.

⁴² Muhammad ‘Uthaymīn, et al., *Fatāwā al-Nisā’* (Cairo: Dār al-Fajr li- Turāth, 2003), 472.

⁴³ Taqiyyudīn M. Al-Hambali, *Mutahā al- Irādāt* (Beirut: Muasasah Al-Risālah, 2006), 217.

⁴⁴ Muhammad Al-Jawziyyah, *Tuhfatul-Mawlūd bi Ahkāmīl-Mawlūd* (Cairo: Maktabah ibn Taymiyyah, 1999), 90.

⁴⁵ Adeoye Idris (Member, Abū Ibejī’s movement) interviewed by Mikail AbdulSalam at Olunloyo Area, Amuloko Akonran Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, on Tuesday 15 August, 2017.

cause of Allah, enhancing the cause of humanity or discovering defects embedded in it. Sincerely, if Muslims are not specialists in the profession, it will be difficult for them to even defend their religion and claim their rights.

On the right of freedom of movement for women, the movement in question deems it wrong for a woman to step out of her house without her unmarried kin (*mahram*). Hence, a woman is expected to always stay indoors; otherwise she should be with her unmarried kin, even when she has a need to fulfil just a step away from the door of her home. For those willing to study, their ruling is that they should be confined to their homes and their education should be acquired right there.⁴⁶ Similarly, they are not allowed to engage in any economic activity both within and outside their home.⁴⁷

The issue of *mahram* for a female in Islam is limited to travels. This automatically knocks out the point of the movement that every movement of a lady outside her home without a *mahram* is forbidden. While discussing the issue of travelling, some scholars have reported *Ijmā’* that a *mahram* should accompany a female Muslim in her travels, Ibn Taymiyyah is of the view that a female Muslim could travel for pilgrimage without a *mahram* once her safety is guaranteed. In furtherance to that, Abū Al-Abbās has said that Ibn Taymiyyah’s opinion applies to all forms of travels by female Muslims.⁴⁸ In that case, the restriction of the movement of female Muslims is baseless, especially within the vicinity of the home. Moreover, women could engage in economic activities as the wives of the Prophet (S) and his companions engaged in such. For instance, it is on record that the Prophet’s wife, Sawdah bint Zam’ah went out for her need at night in order to avoid being noticed. Also, Asmā’ bint Abū Bakr was in the field of Agriculture while Qailah

⁴⁶ Uthman AbdulFatah.

⁴⁷ Habeeb AbdulWakil As-Salafī (Member, Abū Ibejī’s movement) interviewed by Mikail AbdulSalam at Oloya Area, Amuloko Akonran Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, on Thursday 10 August, 2017.

⁴⁸ Al-Bassām, *Tawdīh Al-Ahkām*, 4: 27.

was a trader who consulted the Prophet (S) regularly on her business.⁴⁹

The final issue deals with the manner of taking meals. Culturally, all the food items consumed by Arabs during the era of the Prophet (S) did not need cutlery and so were eaten without one. Conversely, the movement in question terms the use of cutlery as innovation (*bid'ah*). This is because, according to them, the Prophet (S) ate with his three fingers, and he commanded believers to follow the tradition.⁵⁰ That is why he said in one of his traditions that "if any one of you finishes eating, they must not wash their hand until they had licked their hand or helped to lick it"⁵¹. This implies that to lick one's hand after eating, one must eat with hand not spoon or fork. In that regard, the *ḥadīth* which states that "if anyone innovates something which is not in harmony with our religion, that thing must be rejected"⁵² is being applied to the issue, thereby treating the use of cutlery to eat as *bid'ah*.

However, not all food items can be conveniently taken with bare hand without the use of cutlery, especially when Allah has mentioned that iron from which cutlery are mostly made is to serve some beneficial purposes to man (Q57:25). Again, the aim of the *ḥadīth* on the licking of hand is to avoid wastage (*isrāf*); hence when cutlery is used, the consumption of the meal in totality must be strictly followed, even if it requires packing it with a bare hand. Moreover, on the opinion that using cutlery is *bid'ah*, the manner of eating permissible (*ḥalāl*) food items falls under the discretion of the person concerned in so far as the cutlery used is not made of gold, silver or unpermissible (*ḥarām*) materials. In addition, scholars have

restricted the *ḥadīth* on *bid'ah* quoted above to only religious matters.⁵³

Conclusion

In conclusion, Abū Ibeji's *Salafi* movement is fraught with ignorance and excesses. The movement holds views that are diametrically opposed to the views of the *Salafiyūn*, yet claims to be one. The movement has the potential of posing dangers to the society if something urgent is not done to curtail its spread and orientate its members as it may develop into a terrorist organisation. We, therefore, suggest that the Muslim *Ummah* of South West Nigeria, the Muslim Community of Oyo State, and the League of Imams and Alfas should engage in mass enlightenment campaigns and debates aimed at guiding members of the movement and, by extension, the general public. In the same vein, there is the need to empower the poor Muslims since the lowly state of their finances could attract them to the movement as their hope. It is hoped that doing the above, the movement would go into extinction and each of its members will live a meaningful life within the confines of the *Sharī'ah*.

⁴⁹ Mubarak A. Noibi, "An Islamic Strategy for the Empowerment of Muslim Women in Nigeria" *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* 45, nos 1&2 (2013), 6-7.

⁵⁰ Abdulhameed Ibn Ghazali.

⁵¹ Muḥyiddīn Al-Nawawī, *Riyadh al-Salihin*. Trans. Muhammad S. Khan (Cairo: Mussash al-Mukhtār, 2002), 222.

⁵² Muḥyiddīn Al-Nawawī et al., *Jāmi' Shurūh Al-'Arba'in Al-Nawawīyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Ghaddī al-Jadīd, 2013), 97.

⁵³ Al-Nawawī, *Jāmi' Shurūh Al-'Arba'in*, 97.