

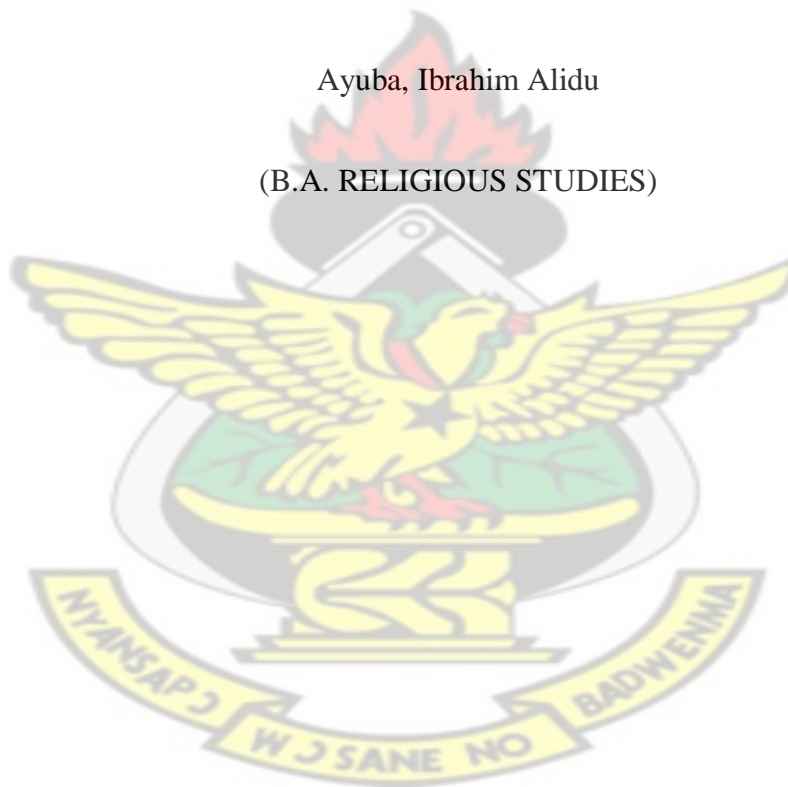
INTRA-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AMONG MUSLIM UMMAH (COMMUNITY)  
IN TAMALE FROM THE 1960s TO 2011

BY

KNUST

Ayuba, Ibrahim Alidu

(B.A. RELIGIOUS STUDIES)



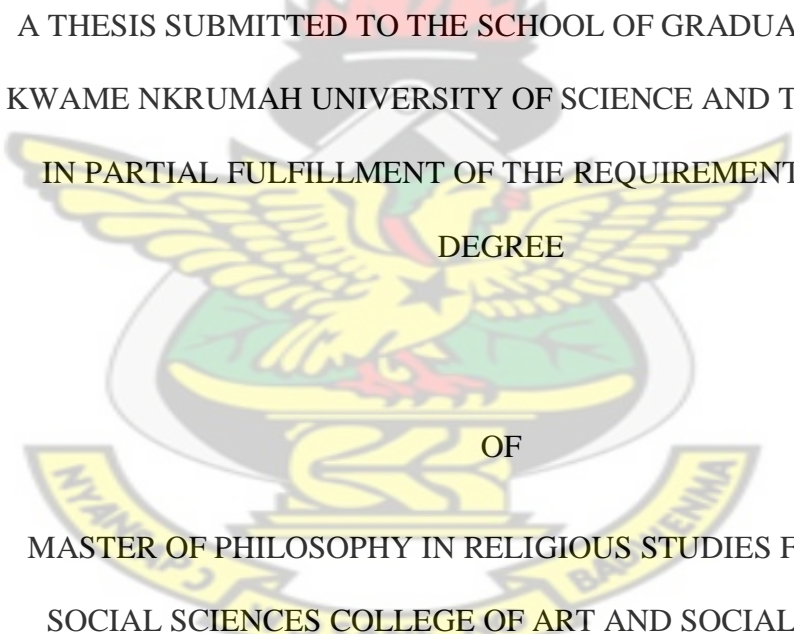
AUGUST, 2011

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(COMMUNITY) IN TAMALE FROM THE 1960s TO 2011

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(B.A. RELIGIOUS STUDIES)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES,  
KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE  
OF  
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES FACULTY OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCES COLLEGE OF ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



AUGUST, 2011

## Declaration

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Philosophy in Religious Studies and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of another degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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## Abstract

This study explored the Intra-Religious Conflicts among Muslim *ummah* (Community) in Tamale from the 1960s to 2011. It is aimed at finding out the causes of conflicts among Muslims and the effects of such conflicts on the advancement of their communities. The survey adopted a multi-faceted approach of data collection. Basically data was obtained from personal interviews with leaders of the Tijaniyyah, Ahlus-Sunnah, Ahmadiyyah and the Shiah Islamic denominations in Tamale. Structured questionnaire were also administered to a sampled size of 100 respondents across all the four Islamic denominations and the general public. Participatory observation was employed by the researcher to study at first hand the teachings and practices of the various Islamic denominations in Tamale. Content analysis was used to review the findings in relation to the Qur'an and Sunnah. The findings revealed that Intra-Religious Conflicts are real among Muslims in Tamale and are caused by factors like: doctrinal or theological differences, intolerance, political, chieftaincy and Arab influences. The conflicts have claimed lives, properties and damaged relationships among the Muslim *ummah* in Tamale. The conflict situations among Muslims in the metropolis require the collective efforts of individuals, the various Islamic denominations, the government and non-governmental organizations. The overall study would not only benefit the various Islamic denominations in Tamale but the general Ghanaian Muslim *ummah*, the wider population, the policy makers, the governmental and the non-governmental bodies since such conflicts have national and international implications.

## Acknowledgement

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To my Resource Persons, Afa Issah Iddriss Modoo (Director of Da'awah, Ahlus-Sunnah, Tamale), Dr. Hussein Zakariya (Director of CODEYAC and Tijaniyyahh Scholar), Sheikh Abdul Mumin Dalwu (Shiah Imam and Sarkin Zango), Ustaz Hussein S. Ja'afar (Secretary, Imamia Mission), Sheikh Yussif Nabahani, Maulvi Fahim Ahmad Khadim (Ahmadiyyah Mission), Mallam Jibril Fari, Sheikh Ibrahim Basha and all those who provided me with very valuable material and information for this study. I am highly overwhelmed by your assistance and say May Allah bless you all!

## **Dedication**

To my beloved parents Mallam Ayuba Yussif and Awai Katumi Amadu whose

Prayers and moral support contributed immensely to the success of this work.

Also to my dear wife Naaimaht Jafaru for her endless prayers and motivation

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Police
AEU	Ahmadiyyah Education Unit
ARD	Agricultural and Rural Development
CODEYAC	Community development and Youth Advisory Centre
CPP	Convention People's Party
FM	Frequency Modulation
GMSA	Ghana Muslim Students Association
IEU	Islamic Education Unit
IGP	Inspector General of Police
MAP	Muslim Association Party
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organization
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NYEP	National Youth Employment Program
PHC	Population and Housing Census
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
SAW	SallaLahu Alaihim Wasalam
UP	United Party
WANEP	West African Network for Peace

## **List of Words with their Meanings**

### **Arabic**

Aalim /Ulama	Scholar / Scholars
Ahadith da'if	Fake or fabricated sayings of the Prophet
Ahlul-Bayt	Members of the household (of the Prophet)
Asrar	Secret (Ways and means)
Awalu Sa'at	Beginning of time
Bid'a	Heresy
Da'awah / Tabligh	Preaching/ outreach
Da'ee / Du'at	Preacher
Eidil- Fitr / Adha	Minor and Grand Eids (Islamic Festivals)
Fatwa	Religious verdict
Hadith	A saying of the prophet Muhammad
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Mecca
Haram	Forbidden
Hikma	Wisdom
Hutbah	Sermon (during Jumu'a and Eids)
Imam / aimah	Islamic leader / leaders
Istigfar	Seeking forgiveness from Allah
Jannah and Jahanam	Paradise and Hell
Jaw haratul- Kamal	Tijaniyyah special prayers during Wurd
Jihad	Holy war (Straggles)
Jihad fi Sabilillah	Struggling in the course of Allah
Kafir / Kufar	Infidel / Infidels (Unbeliever)
Khalifah	Successor

Kutub	Genius
Kutubu Zaman	Genius of the Generation
Masjid	Mosque
Masjid baida'u	Beautiful Mosque
Masjid bayan	Mosque of enlightenment
Maulidin Nabih	Celebration of the Prophet's birthday
Mazhab	School of thought
Mubahala	Swearing or invocation of curse on wrong doers
Mushrik / Mushrikuun	Polytheist / Polytheists
Mut'a	Temporal marriage
Nika'ah	Marriage
Qud's	Shiah festival on last Fridays of Ramadan
Ramadan	The ninth month of Islamic calendar (month of fasting)
Sahaba	Companions of the Prophet
Salat	Daily prayers
Sharia	Islamic Law
Sheikh/ Shuyukh	Learned person (Singular and plural)
Shirk	Associating something with God
Subhi	Dawn
Sufi -turuq	Mystic paths or ways
Sufi	Mystic
Sunnah	Traditions of the Prophet
Tafsir	Exegeses of the Qur'an (Islamic book)
Takhlil	Exploitation
Tarbiyah	Initiation and mentoring

Tawasul	Intercessory Prayer
Tawheed	Belief in one God (first pillar of Islam)
Ummah	Community
Walih / Awliya	Saint /Saints
Wilaya	Sainthood
Zakat	Alms (third pillar of Islam)
Zikr	Praises/ remembrance of Allah
<b>Dagbani</b>	
Afa Tibrugu	Mystical Muslim scholar
Afanema	Muslim scholars
Afasili	Islam
Bag yuli	A form of sacrifices
Baga/ bagsi	Soothsayer / Soothsayers (diviners)
Bin namda na	The Lord of created things
Buga or Wuna	Lesser or individual/ personal gods
Buglana	Shrine overlord
Buglini	Shrine
Bukpaha	Wizard
Daabihi	Traders
Dagban Dabba	Traditionalists
Dagbantali	Traditional
Damba	A festival of the northern people of Ghana
Dang	Family or clan
Dien kuli	In-laws' funeral (sending gifts to bereaved In-laws)



Dihbu	Physical poisoning
Gban	Skin (the throne of the king of Dabgan)
Gomnanti Chugu	Government festival or Eid
Gonjenima	Fiddlers
Gurum	Talisman
Jinwariba	Wizard-Doctors
Kambonsi	Musketeers / warriors
karim zona	Qur'anic schools
Karimbihi	Students
Kasigriba	Sextons
Kpaluhi	Weavers
Kpema / Kpamba	Elder / Elders
kpin yi	Ghost
Kundi	Documents
Lilga	The ability to vanish from life threatening dangers
Lunsi	Drummers
Machelnima	Blacksmiths
Musulim Nima or Afanima	Muslim Scholars
Nabihi	Royals
Nakohnima	Butchers
Nam	Office of lesser chiefs in Dabgan
Natitam lana	The owner of Great Sovereignty
Nawun Nyeriba	Seers of God (referring to Tijaniyyah)
Nawuni	God/ Owner of ability / Supreme Deity
Nwubi	Inflict harm or to be devoured by a witch

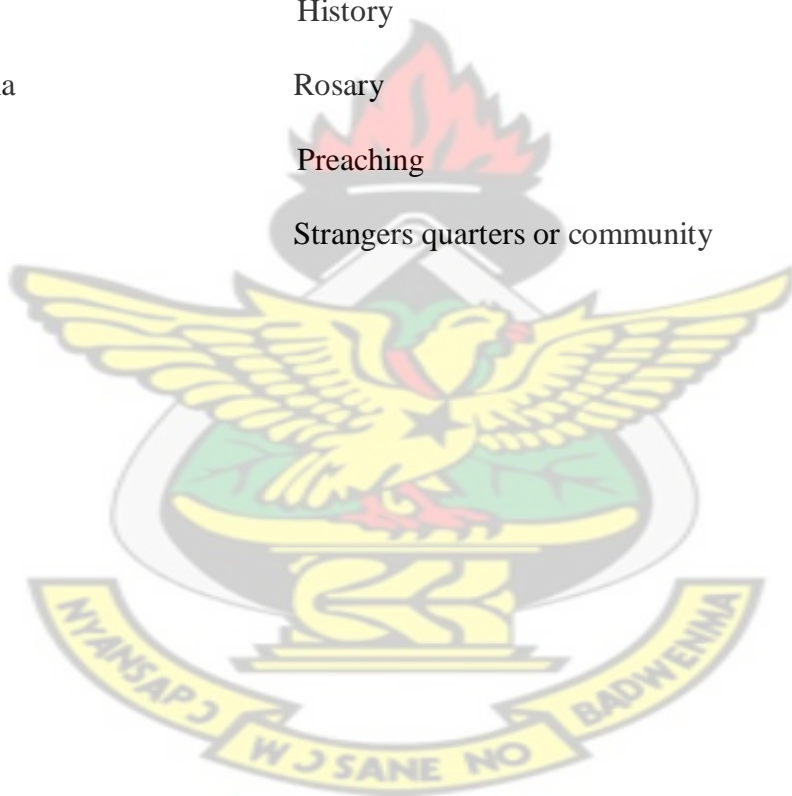


Pagli	Ability to be invisible especially to enemies
Pukpariba	Farmers
Sab bila	Amulet
Sonima	Witches
Sutili	Anti-knife powers
Tahnga	The ability to destroy one's assailants with a shout
Tarimba	Commoners
Ti duma nawuni	Our Lord God
Tibbu	Magico-religious acts (Mystical acts)
Tieli	Herbal or magical formulas for retentive memory
Tindamba	Priests or literally 'Landowners'
Tingbana	The spirits of the land
Wanzama	Barbers or Circumcisers
Yan nima	Ancestors
Ya-Na	Title of paramount king of Dagban
Yiko lana	The owner of ability or power
Za'amiu	Corrupt form of Arabic word Jami'u (congregation)

### **Hausa**

Aduwa	Supplication / prayers organized for dead persons
Akwashi rawa	let us go dancing
Alwalla	Performance of ablution
Anlo	Wooden or Metal slat
Halwa	Seclusion
Laada	Reward

Maasa	Fried millet or corn dough (cake)
Madaha	Singer of praises to God and religious personalities
Makaranta / Makarantu	Islamic school / Islamic schools
Mallam / Mallamai	Islamic scholar / Scholar
Munchiri	Altered Arabic term <i>Munkir</i> - One who condemns
Nasiha	Advise / preaching
Rawani	Turban
Sakawa	Fraud, literally meaning: Dipping in.
Tarihi	History
Tasbaha	Rosary
Wahzi	Preaching
Zango	Strangers quarters or community



# CHAPTER ONE

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The issue of conflicts is a common phenomenon the world over and Tamale is not an exception. In the article “Increasing Violent Conflicts in the North: The youth must rethink”, Yakubu, a youth development advocate in Tamale states that the causes of conflicts in the north are many and include disputes over land, tribal divides, chieftaincy disputes and religious divergence.

Religious conflicts seem to be increasing in recent times across the length and breadth of the globe such as the continuous insurgence among the Shiah, Ahmadiyyah and Sunni Muslims in Baghdad, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Jos in Nigeria. In Ghana, religious conflicts can be traceable to most settler communities like the Zango and some Muslim communities of which Tamale is not excluded. The negative effects of these conflicts on the development of such people and their communities cannot be underestimated.

Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana and the third largest commercial town after Accra and Kumasi is cosmopolitan in nature and therefore accommodates many different ethnic groups with different religious backgrounds. Among the different religions is Islam with its various denominations whose practices are not without problems.

Samwini (2006) observes that Muslims were present in Ghana among the Gonja as far back as the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, among the Dagonbas and Wala by the 17<sup>th</sup> century and among the southern people especially the Asante by the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Muslims lived peacefully all these times along their ethnic divides and did not quarrel. However, the arrival of the Ahmadiyyah Movement and the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah marked the beginning of resurgence in Ghana. The activities, the teachings, the practices and the sayings of these groups were often incompatible and polemical leading to various confrontations.

Two things have been realized from Samwini's observations. The first is that, Islam in the populous Muslim communities in Ghana started at different points in time. The second is that, these Islamic communities once were living peacefully and harmoniously until the emergence of some denominations with radical teachings that marred the existing peaceful atmosphere among Muslims.

The period starting from the 1960 has been chosen because many intra-religious conflicts occurred possibly due to the influx of Muslim oil producing countries in Ghana and their subsequent interest in some Muslim denominations. Oil producing countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and later Libya, Iran, Kuwait and others apart from having bilateral ties with Ghana also had vested interest in the promotion and propagation of Islam. The missions of these countries or their representatives have since sponsored some Muslim groups or denominations, organizations and programs. Another reason for the choice of the 1960s was the emergence of conflicts between the Abudu and the Andani royal gates of Dagban that seem to have a link with the recurrent religious clashes in Tamale between Munchiri and Nawun Nyarba. To begin this study from the 1960s is also due to the growing involvement of Muslims in Ghanaian politics since then.

Even though differences in Islam existed among Muslims in Tamale even before the 1960s, it seems the arrival of oil rich nations, the intensity of Abudu-Andani feuds

and the involvement of Islam in Ghanaian politics exacerbated the conflict situations among Muslims in Tamale and its environs.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, 70% of the inhabitants of Tamale are Muslims. The Muslim community in the metropolis consists of the Tijaniyyah, Ahlus-Sunnah, the Ahmadiyyah and the Shiah. The practices of these various Islamic denominations in Tamale metropolis often lead to conflicts. These situations seem to have begun as far back as the 1930s when the Ahmadiyyah emerged, and the subsequent confusions in 1952 leading to the breakaway of the Ahlus-Sunnah from the main orthodox group around 1965. Both Ahlus-Sunnah and the Ahmadiyyah seem to have emerged with reformist ideas aimed at ending what they termed as syncretism of the Tijaniyyah denomination. The situation seems to have provoked many verbal attacks on one another sometimes leading to violent physical confrontations and destruction of lives and properties. The clashes between the Tijaniyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah in 1976 and 1999 at Sakasaka and Gumani both suburbs of Tamale are but few examples of intra-Islamic religious conflicts that claimed lives and properties.

These conflict situations seem to have further aggravated the already high poverty levels within the communities in the metropolis. What then are the causes of intra-religious conflicts amongst Muslims in Tamale? How can these conflicts be resolved or minimized? What are the effects of these conflicts on the development of Muslims in Tamale since the 1960s? How can the situation be improved?

The conflict situations among Muslims in Tamale seem to be warding off potential investors from the area thereby increasing the existing poverty levels and heightening

frustrations among the people. The need to address these persistent conflicts and consequent low levels of development among Muslims in Tamale metropolis called for this research.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the causes of intra- religious conflicts within the Muslim *ummah* in Tamale since 1960
2. To determine the effects of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims and its consequences on the development of Tamale.
3. To offer possible recommendations to deal with the intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The focus of the study is on the various Muslim groups within the Tamale Metropolis. It started from the 1960s when the Nawun Nyarba-Munchiri (Tijaniyyah-Ahlus-Sunnah) differences emerged after the puritanical teachings of Afa Ajura in earnest, till the gradual intermingling of religion, chieftaincy and politics in recent times.

### **1.5 Methodology and Data Collection**

This thesis made use of both primary and secondary data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the process of data collection.

For the primary data, one hundred questionnaires were administered to members of the various Islamic denominations and the general public to sample their opinion.



Adequate interviews, participant observations and focus group discussions were also held with *aimah* (plural of Imam), leaders and scholars of the various Islamic denominations in Tamale. Household heads, chiefs, youth leaders and politicians were also contacted to determine their opinions, ideas, attitudes and knowledge on conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. The researcher's own knowledge and understanding of events due to his long presence in the conflict area also served as a useful source of information.

For the secondary data, reading materials or documents in the form of books, journals, magazines, news papers and other research works both published and unpublished were gathered and reviewed in connection with the stated objectives of the study.

### **1.6 Literature Review**

Samwini (2006) examined the early history of Islam in Ghana and the numerous fortunes it has gained in the fields of education, trade, health services, secretarial and financial services to the local administrators. He explained the roles Muslims played in the historical development of the Gonja, the Wala, the Mamprusi, the Dagbamba, the Asante and the Coastal tribes in Ghana. The histories and the development of many towns such as Wa, Salaga, Kintampo, Kete Krachi, Kumasi, Wenchi, Techiman and the Fante lands among others were examined vis-à-vis the involvement of visiting Muslim scholars from other parts of the world. The relationship between Muslims themselves and relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims were critically accessed. Samwini discussed further the theological differences among Muslims and enumerated among other things; radical preaching,



intolerance, desire for leadership and militancy to be the causes for intra-religious conflicts in Muslim Communities across the length and breadth of Ghana.

Although Samwini's work was clear and comprehensive, it did not delve specifically into the conflict situations in Tamale. This research would concentrate only on intra-religious conflict situations within the Muslim *ummah* in Tamale. The research will elaborate not only on the four main Islamic denominations or groups in Tamale but their sub groups as well. Doing this will help us unearth the root causes of differences among the Muslim *ummah* (community) and their associated conflicts.

On his part Mbillah (1999) after discussing the two historical phases of Islam, the peaceful and the militant phases went on to examine the political and ethnic factors for intra-Muslim conflicts in Ghana, factors that became the divisive elements of Muslims in the 1950s. Mbillah focused on doctrinal factors as a cause for intra-Muslim conflicts with a brief highlight on Muslim-Christian doctrinal conflicts. He laid emphasis on the effects of intra-religious conflicts on relationships between Muslims. His discussions included Muslim-Christian doctrinal conflicts and how Muslim and Christian leaders in Ghana held series of meetings to resolve such conflicts.

Mbillah however, failed to discuss the conflict situations in Tamale which seem to be the trouble spot of violence among Muslims. This work would give special attention to the intermittent conflicts among Muslim denominations in Tamale from the 1960s onwards. Mbillah's assessment of Muslim-Christian doctrinal conflicts and measures adopted by the leaders to resolve such conflicts would be studied in relation to the conflict situations among Muslim *ummah* in Tamale. His work will also serve as a guide and the basis upon which to build in tackling the conflicts in Tamale.

According to Mudhafar (1993), the genesis of intra-religious problems in Islam began at Saqifa. These differences began after the prophet's death when certain groups of Muslims converged at Saqifa to select a new leader. This election of the new Muslim leader did not please some Muslims leading to some differences which have continued up to date. Mudhafar explained that whiles Ali was busily preparing the prophet's corpse for burial, Abubakar, Umar, Uthman and other companions were engaged in leadership scramble. Mudhafar concluded with some exegesis of the Qur'an and Sunnah to buttress the Shiah's assertions that Ali was the right and the true chosen successor of the Holy Prophet.

Mudhafar however, failed to treat the issue fairly as he gave more credence and emphasis to the stands of Shiah possibly due to his personal orientation as a Shiah. This work will re-examine the incident objectively stating the stance of each faction and the aftermath and effects it has on relations among Muslims especially in Tamale even of today.

Similarly, Watt (1962) is of the view that Muhammad was able to build a state of considerable power between his migration to Medina in 622 and his death in 632. However, the period from 632 to 661 saw the leadership of the *ummah* by Abubakar, Umar, Uthman and Ali characterized with many instances of discontents, internal struggles, grievances, murders and wars. Many Muslims according to Watt lost interest in the system and isolated themselves from the community and subsequently developed their own theologies. He mentioned earlier separatists like the Khawarij (the Kharijites), the Mu'tazilites and the Shiah and their subsequent divisions into further smaller groups. Watt further traced how these groups gradually faded out of the system and how some of the existing ones metamorphosed into the present Islamic denominations.

What eludes us from Watt's submissions is how and why such problems persisted among the *ummah* and presently became fierce among some particular denominations. Watt like Mudhafar concentrated mainly on the early history of Islam and does not tell us how those factors of conflicts in those early Islamic days affect relations in present day Islamic communities. This study seeks to address these concerns in attempt to minimize the differences among Muslims in Tamale.

Leif Manger (1999), indicated that Muslims are well aware of their differences and inconsistencies within their own societies ranging from their belief systems, their customs and identities. He explained that to the Shiah, the 'Imams' are the right leaders of Islam after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. However, this view according to him goes contrary to the views of Sunni Muslims or (Sunni Islam) who believes the prophet had not selected a successor before passing away.

Manger's inability to indicate measures put in place to prevent the said inconsistencies from turning into deadly violence among Muslim communities was a lapse. On the whole, even though there are diversities within Islam itself, Muslims generally believe in one Qur'an, the same *qibla* and fast in the month of *Ramadan* among others. This study will critically examine both points of divergence and convergence within the *ummah*. These coupled with recent political, socio-cultural and economic atmosphere will be assessed in the light of Muslim relations in Tamale with the aim to averting future clashes among Muslims in the metropolis.

Guar-Gorman (1978) writes on the history of Islam and Ahmadiyyah in Fante land. He recounts that Islam came to Fante people of the coast in an entirely different mode from the mode in which it came to the north and southern Ghana. He explained that some Hausa Muslim troops were stationed at Elimina by the British colonialists

in 1872. These Hausa visitors managed to influence only a few Fante into Islam. However, some Fantes *kramo* (Muslims) who became dissatisfied with the leadership and spiritual guidance of the Hausa and other Muslims from the north invited the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission into then Gold Coast in 1921. The movement which was founded in India by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed sent into Gold Coast a missionary by name, Abdul-Rahim Nayyar to minister the small group of Fante Muslims. Gorman went further to mention some persecutions the Ahmadi went through in the hands of fellow Muslims concluding with the achievements of the Ahmadiyyah in the fields of education and health.

The persecutions of the Ahmadiyyah by other Muslims as mentioned by Gorman might have been the beginning of Intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Ghana. We will seek to understand how that violence among Muslims in the coast spread into most Muslim communities especially in Tamale and Wa. We will also examine the relationship among Sunni Muslims themselves thus the Tijaniyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah as well as their relationship with the Shiah in Tamale.

Closely related to Gorman's work was Ayarna (1988) who expounded more on the history and development of Ahmadism in Wa. His inclusion of the conflicts generated by the presence and the teachings of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission in Wa and Dagban will enhance our understanding of the effects of Muslim-Muslim relations in the areas during the 1950s. This work will critically address the issues raised by Ayarna as they relate to Tamale specifically.

On his part, Pobee (1987) captured some case studies during the days of Acheampong and stated that the introduction of the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama (ASWAJ) to Tamale and other parts of Ghana seemed frustrating and dangerous. He

cited an example of 1966 where Mustapha Nowali, an itinerant Somali preacher, provoked both the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Tijaniyyah factions in Tamale while addressing both factions on two separate nights. To the Ahlus-Sunnah group Nowali condemned the claim to see God by any Muslim, and emphasized it was not possible to see God by any means. Then the next day, while the Ahlus-Sunnah was almost certain of having won a point against the Tijaniyyah, the same Nowali in addressing the Tijaniyyah group claimed it was possible for a true believer to see God after the “*tarbiya*”, Sufi initiation. The outcome of these contradictory statements was a free for all fight between the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Tijaniyyah who had been disputing one another on this matter for many years in Tamale. However Pobee failed to address when and how the disputes over “seeing God” started between the groups and the effects of such disputes on the people of Tamale, aspects which this study seeks to examine.

In conclusion, there are many works on conflicts among people all over the world. Such works may be consulted in the course of this research. In any case, the unique nature of this research is the fact that it focuses on Tamale and the conflicts among Muslim denominations, an area of study rarely ventured in to. In that regard, the availability of works on conflicts in general does not override the need to carry on with this research.



## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study will be of great significance to Islam in general and to the individual Islamic denominations in particular. It will also be of benefit to the traditional chiefs, the metropolitan assembly and all peace loving members of communities experiencing conflicts. The analysis of the causes of conflicts and the appropriate recommendations from this study may go a long way to help all peace loving people in such conflict areas to seek, maintain and preserve peace and unity for development. The research will also add to the existing body of knowledge for researchers who are pursuing religious, social and development courses as well as those who will like to conduct similar researches in future.

The research will also serve as a guide to Imams, scholars, Chiefs and government officials in resolving conflicts, establishing and maintaining peace. In addition the thesis will serve as a training manual for governmental and non-governmental organizations in managing intra-religious conflicts in their operational areas.

## **1.8 Limitation of the study**

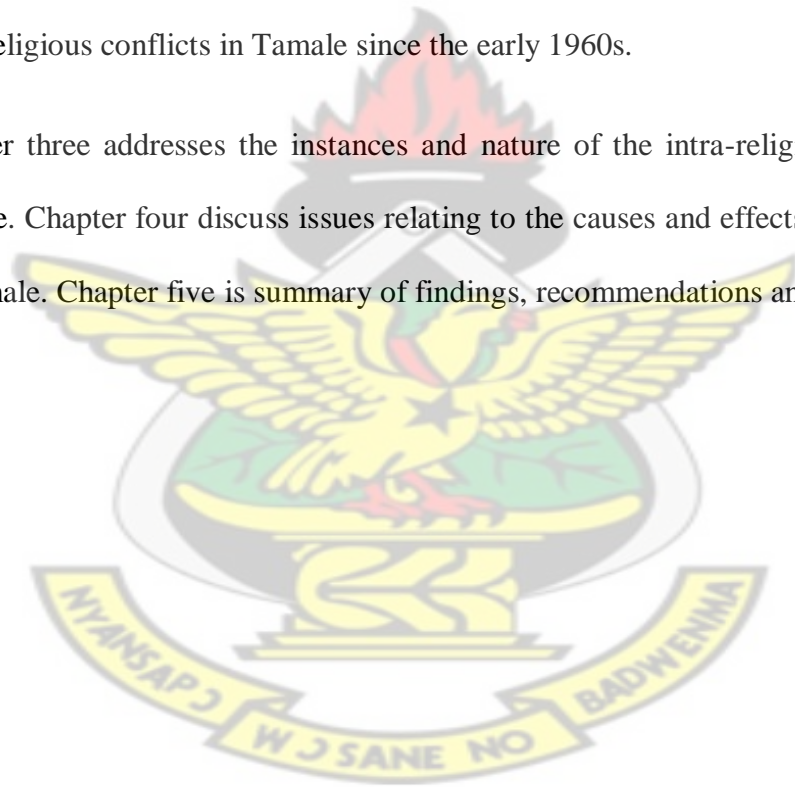
As with all research works, one major limitation is that this work may not capture everything about intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. The work is limited in the sense that it only traces the phenomenon of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims and their consequences on the people of Tamale from the period 1960 to date. This implies that, there is room for further research in other periods and areas of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims.

## 1.9 Organization of Work

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which spells out the background information, statement of the problem, objectives and scope of the study. The section also includes the methodology, significance and limitations of the study. In addition, the review of relevant literature is addressed.

Chapter two dealt with the historical background of the people of Dagban and the development of Islam in Tamale. The development of the various Islamic denominations in the area is also discussed in line with issues or events relating to intra-religious conflicts in Tamale since the early 1960s.

Chapter three addresses the instances and nature of the intra-religious conflicts in Tamale. Chapter four discuss issues relating to the causes and effects of the conflicts in Tamale. Chapter five is summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion.





## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DAGBAN, ISLAM AND VARIOUS ISLAMIC DENOMINATIONS IN TAMALE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter is about the history, mode of spread, development and impact of various Islamic groups in Tamale from the 1960s to date. According to Samwini (2006) and Mahama (2004), Islam started among the Dagbamba people of Northern Region around the 17<sup>th</sup> century and had since grown stronger relegating the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people to the background.

The aim of this chapter is to discover how the various Muslim groups emerged in Tamale, the impact of their activities on the people and the causes of conflicts among the various groups in Tamale from the 1960s to date.

#### **2.2 The People and Chiefs of Dagban**

According to Mahama (2004) the traditional state of Dagbamba is called Dagban, located in the Northern Region of Ghana. Dagban is 9611 square miles in area and runs in length from Kubalem in the South-east of Zabzugu District to Zantani in the North-west in Tolon-Kumbungu District, a distance of about 200 miles. In width, it is 100 miles. Dagban has the largest population among the four traditional states in the Northern Region. It has seven administrative districts out of thirteen in the region. The 2000 population census put the population of Dagban at 945,664. This is more than fifty percent (50%) of the population of Northern Region which stood at 1,820,806.

There are however some Dagbamba in the estimation of Mahama (2004) who live outside Dagban as indigenous people of the area. Such Dagbamba are found in the neighbouring villages of Gonja state like Jenton, Buheja, Fuo, Dabogshee, Kpalbe, Kpanshegu and Sankpagala. Dagban is inhabited not only by Dagbamba but also tribes mainly in the eastern corridor like the Konkomba, Chakosi (Anufo), Basari, Chamba, Bimoba, Kotokoli and Kabre. There is also a small affiliate tribe in the west of Dagban called Zantansi in a village of Zantani. These tribes constitute ten percent (10%) of the population of Dagban.

The main towns of Dagban include Yendi, Tamale, Karaga, Gushiegu, Zabzugu, Sang, Savelugu, Nyankpala, Kumbungu, Diari, Tolon and Nanton. Tamale is the biggest town and the capital of the Northern Region with a population of 202,317, followed by Yendi with a population of 24,937. Chereponi and Saboba which are inhabited by the Anufo and Komkomba have populations of 6,241 and 3,687 respectively.

Sovereignty of Dagban according to Mahama (2004) is vested in the Ya-Na, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Dagban military establishment. He is the Head of state and also the Chief Justice. He is the Head of legislative body. Today, even though these powers are no more, the Ya-Na still remains the head of the traditional state of Dagban. He still has enormous powers in traditional matters as the head of Dagban with a good deal of patronage in his hands. He is held in great reverence by the people with numerous titles, names and attributes. The office of the Ya-Na is the highest traditional authority in Dagban and only sons of former Ya-Na are qualified to occupy that office. The kingship and office of lesser chiefs is called *nam*. The politics and social organization of Dagban are centred on the *nam*. The throne of the Ya-Na and his subordinate chiefs is a collection of cow skins on which are placed

leather cushions. This is why the *nam* of Dagban is called *gban* (skin). The language of the Dagbamba is Dagbani, widely spoken in Northern Ghana and one of the six Ghanaian languages used for national broadcasting. Dagbani belongs to the Mole-Dagbani group of languages therefore similar to and partially understood by nearly all the tribes in Northern Ghana and also the Mossi of Burkina Faso.

Tamakloe (1931) recounts that Dagbamba comprise of the children of a mythical ancestor from somewhere in the north-east, who married a Mandingo princess from ancient Mali. Their son enlarged the family with Grumah wives and his children mixed with the aboriginal people. Eventually, the aborigines and the settlers assimilated into a common language and culture. Today, Dagbamba are divided into *nabihi* (Royals) and *tarimba* (commoners). Both the *nabihi* and the *tarimba* classes keep expanding due to inter-marriages. In addition to this broad classification there are also clans identified by their traditional professions. Even though these professional clans are non-royal, they have their own hierarchies in the trades. *Machelnima* (Blacksmiths), *nakohnima* (Butchers), *lunsi* (Drum beaters), *gonjenima* (fiddlers), *kpaluhi* (weavers), *pukpariba* (Farmers), *kambonsi* (Musketeers/warriors), *wanzama* (Barbers/Circumcisers) and *daabihi* (Traders) are some of the professional clans in Dagban.

Seebaway (1999) thinks that most Dagbamba people belong to one or the other of these traditional professional clans. However, belonging to one of these clans does not necessarily mean that one practices that profession, and actively practicing the profession does not also mean that one is a member of it. Many Dagbamba know the particular clans to which they belong and so adhere to its taboos, music and dance. Such members usually request the drummers to play their musical patterns for them to dance during social functions such as weddings, funerals and festivals.

There is also a joking or playing-relations between some of these clans. For instance, the members of the clan of *nakohnima* (Butchers) maintain joking relations with the *machelnima* (blacksmiths) clan. Members of one clan usually make fun of the members of the corresponding clan by calling them names such as ‘thieves’, ‘fools’, or ‘slaves’ among others. The expected response is denial and counter name calling.

Seebaway (1999) adds that, members of a professional clan who have shunned their clan’s profession may suffer some degree of physical, psychological or socio-economic setbacks. For example, a member of the *lunsi* (Drummers) clan may suffer inexplicable illness and other setbacks like the loss of children and loss of animals all due to his or her failure to practice the traditional profession. To reverse or to arrest such condition, the recalcitrant person has to perform some sacrifices. After the curative sacrifices the person is given a tool of his traditional profession like a knife for a butcher or a drum for a drummer for keeps which should be reached for and used once in a while. This is considered enough to keep away the curses from the fellow.

Members of certain clans of Dagbamba are believed to be vested with some magical powers associated with the practice of their professions. For example, *nakohnima* (Butchers) are believed to have the power to subdue wild cattle. This translates into *tahnga* or the power to shout at and paralyse cattle and people alike. *Machelnima* (Blacksmiths) are believed to have *sutuli* or ‘anti-knife powers’ by which no metallic object of any kind or magnitude can cut or cause them any harm. The *lunsi* (Drummers) on the other hand are believed to have *tieli*, thus herbal or magical formulas for extremely powerful retentive memory. These powers help them in preserving and recounting the history of Dagban orally as part of their professional duty without blemish, when and where ever it is required of them.

### 2.3 The Traditional Religious Beliefs and Functionaries of Dagban

The Religious life of Dagban is centred on two major religions thus *dagbandotali* (Traditional) and *afasili* (Islam). Officiating in these two religions are done by *dagban-dabba* (Traditionalists) and *afanima* (Muslims). The traditional and Islamic religions are different and yet manage to complement each other fairly well in Dagban society. However, as different as the two faiths may seem, they also share a lot in common. The most important similarity between these two religions is the belief in the Supreme Being, *nawuni* (literal meaning: king's god). Belief in *nawuni* is common among all Dagbamba be they Muslims or Traditionalists.

Seebaway (1999) opines that Dagbamba, in whatever religious persuasion describe God in similar terms or attributes. To them, He is *natitam lana* (The owner of Great Sovereignty); *bin namda na* (The Lord of created things); *yiko lana* (The owner of ability); *ti duma nawuni* (our Lord God) and many others. *Nawuni* (God) again, is feared and revered by Dagbamba whether they are Muslims or Traditionalists. Even though the traditionalists do not have daily worship of *Nawuni* like the Muslims, they have a host of lesser gods in sacred shrines or habitats of gods (*buglini*), as well as clan or individual gods (*buga* or *wuna*) who are regularly venerated.

The spirits of the land (*tingbana*); Ancestors (*yan nima*) and personal gods (*wuna*) are venerated through sacrifices and offerings. This is done at particular times of the year. Items used for sacrifices or offerings include grains, cola nuts, fresh cow milk, cowries, the blood of fowls, goats or other animals slaughtered for the purpose. There are also functionaries or specialists within the Traditional Religion of Dagban who play various roles. These are the *tindamba* (priests or literally, 'Landowners');



*buglana* (shrine overlord); *bagsi* (soothsayers); *Sonima* (witches); *kpamba* (Elders); *Jinwariba* (Wizard-Doctors) and *kasigriba* (sextons).

In the views of Seebaway (1999:48), the *tindana* is normally the traditional owner of the land as his name literally means, but in reality he does not own the land as personal property. His ownership of the land is in terms of his close association with the spirits of the land. He performs sacrifices that bring prosperity to the land or reverses calamities that could befall the land. His ownership of the land is of a ritual or symbolic kind. *Buglana* is the priest of the shrine (*bugli*). He presides over the sacrifices (*nmal bugli*) at the shrines. His duty includes incantation and supplication (*bugli pulbu/malbu*) for an individual or a community.

*Baga* (soothsayer or diviner) is the repository of the act of divination. Individuals who seek explanations for their misfortunes such as loss of property, causes of death of loved ones, illness and others consult him. Diviners usually give remedies in the form of sacrifices (*bag yuli*) which help to drive away misfortunes or invite blessings to the individual, the family, a village or a clan.

Seebaway (1999) further states that the *sonya* (witch) has the power to inflict harm and to 'devour' (*Nwubi*) her victims. *Sonima* (witches) employ spiritual means to kill their victims. When a victim proves elusive, they may resort to physical poisoning (*dihbu*). Such a victim normally suffers from a mysterious illness that ends in the abnormal inflation of his or her stomach and ultimately dying a slow and painful death. Though it is usually old women who are accused of being witches, there are also witches among young women. The young witches are even considered to be more deadly. *Bukpaha* (wizard) is the male witch. It is believed that male witches possess evil powers with which they cast misfortunes on individuals and

communities. Witches and wizards work in alliance with each other and are usually only able to harm the members of their own family or clan (*dang*). They fly about at night displaying their mysterious light (*so bugum*). It is believed that they hold nightly meetings as a secret society and usually attack their victims in a group. They are able to remove and replace the entrails of their victims. Then they cook, share and eat the “meat” of the victim. The said victim dies shortly afterwards. It is believed that a person can neutralize the ability of a witch to harm him or her by telling the witch in the face: *Aflo-fuu, sonya ngo ndanga, a ku to' nwubma*, meaning: ‘Aflo-Fuu’! You witch, I precede you and so you cannot devour or kill me!

*Kpema* (Elder), according to Seebaway (1999:49) is normally an old man who has knowledge of herbs which treat various illnesses. A *kpema* may additionally have the ability to give magical powers to those who need them. The *kpema* performs the sacrifices and invocations of the spirits who control a host of *tima* (magical powers). Some of the most popular *tima* are *lilga* (The ability to vanish from life threatening dangers); *tahnga* the ability to destroy one’s assailants with a shout); *pagli* (The ability to make oneself invisible to people, especially those who may mean you harm) and others.

*Jinwara* (wizard-doctor) belongs to the secret society of *jinwariba*. They are opposed to the witches, in that they have knowledge of magic and herbal medicine that is capable of fighting the witches thereby neutralizing the effects of witchcraft and saving the victims. Peligah (1982) thinks that all *jinwariba* are anti-witch. Their constructive spiritual powers counter balance or attack the evil destructive powers of witches who are generally hated and feared in society. However a *jinwara* may see the bewitching activities of the witches but be unable to do anything except talk or warn the victim. It is believed that the *sonya* and *junwara* (witch and wizard-doctor)



both belong to the same spiritual family but while the *sonya* is harmful to society, the *junwara* is harmless. In order not to create any confusion within their own spiritual fraternity, the *junwara* only warns the victim of the witchcraft hoping that he or she exposes the witch to the society, an action the witches always try to avoid. Another reason why the *junwara* only has to talk or warn the victim is that, witches mostly get to harm only people they are related to. The *junwara* does not want to be blamed for planting hatred or enmity within any family so he only alarms the victim of the dangers inflicted upon him or her by the witch.

Seebaway (1999) explains that, *kasigriba* (Sextons) are the undertakers who prepare and bury the dead among the Traditionalists in Dagban. They also take charge of the burial of strangers or unidentified bodies not confirmed to be Muslims and people who die by hanging or die mysteriously. It is believed that *kasigriba* have knowledge of herbs that can heal various types of illnesses as well as magical powers that can neutralize or drive away *kpin yi* (ghost). *Kasigriba* have strenuous initiation rites for newcomers into the profession. This fortifies them physically and spiritually against the hazards of their trade. It is also believed that *kasigriba* are also so fortified that they can even take poison without being harmed. Their chiefs, elders or seniors and even ordinary members in a community are revered and feared even though they usually appear dirty, wretched and most of the time drunk. It is again believed that they have knowledge of herbs and healing especially against witchcraft and poisoning (*dihbu*).

Dagbamba believe that wondering spirits of the dead *kpin yi* (ghosts) and *yogsi* (restless souls of premature death) can be a menace to the living. Peligah (1982) explains the powers of the *kasigriba*, stating that in the past when a powerful king or chief died, he was buried with a leading *kasigra* who ensured that the king's or

chief's spirit rested permanently. The *kasigra* who was buried with the powerful king or chief would vanish (*lil*) out of the grave. The other people would return from the cemetery or graveyard to find him at home waiting.

From the discussions in the above section, it is clear that Traditional Religion in Dagban revolves around many functionaries. The chief (Na) or the king (Ya-Na) even though not a religious functionary, but also has a very significant role to play. He may banish a witch or a wizard from his town if such a person is a menace to society. Chiefs in general and the Ya-Na (king) in particular are also known to have protective and healing powers which they use for the benefit of the people.

#### **2.4. Islam in Dagban**

The earliest traces of Islam in Dagban predate the formation of the kingdom of Dagban itself. It is recounted by Seebaway (1999) that Tohazie, the mythical ancestor of the Dagbamba had a son called Kpognumbu with Pagwabgu the lame daughter of the king of Mali. Kpognumbu married the daughter of a Grumah High Priest and his other wife was the daughter of the brother of the same high priest. The name of Kpognumbu's second father-in-law was Dramani, a corruption of the Muslim name 'Abdul-Rahman'. This means that, the Royals of Dagban might have come into contact with people who had also come into contact with some form of Islam. If even they may not have been committed Muslims, the people whom the Dagbamba came into contact with both in Mali and in Grumah territory may have been exposed to some form of Islam.

Tamakloe (1931) states that, when Na Muhammad Zangina became the Ya Na or king of the Dagbamba in 1648 to 1677, he sought the spiritual assistance of Wangara Muslims at Sabali. It is believed by the Dagbamba that Na Muhammad Zangina not

only converted to the Islamic Religion, he also invited Hausa Muslim scholars who came with many artisans such as weavers (*kpaluhi*), *machelnima* (Blacksmiths) and *goonje nima* (fiddlers) among others.

Dyula (wangara) Muslims, however appear to have been the first to arrive in Dagban and were the ones Na Zangina first consulted at Sabali. They were mostly traders who went about their business, itinerant preachers and *afa tibrisi* (practitioners of Islamic occult Science). The visitors found favour with the kings and chiefs whom they assisted in various ways. These Dyula Muslims specialized in amulet (*sab bila*) and Talisman (*gurum*) making. They were peddlers of *asrar*, a mystical formula of achieving desired result. The Wangarinsi, as Dagbamba call them, were helpers of the kings and chiefs of Dagban as well as any person who cared and could afford their fees.

Hausa *mallamai* (scholars) on the other hand seem to have come to Dagban with an open desire to convert people to Islam. They went about preaching and setting up Qur'anic schools called (*karim zona* in Dagbani and *makarantu* in Hausa). They taught children how to read the Qur'an and in doing this, the Hausa *mallamai* were highly innovative, renaming all the 28 letters of Arabic alphabets in Hausa and the diacritic signs or marks as well. To this day, their method of teaching the Qur'an is still used in some *karim zona* (Schools) in many rural areas of Dagban.

Seebaway (1999) however laments that, the system of Islamic education introduced by the Hausa in Dagban was so exacting that only a few were able to complete the reading of the entire Qur'an and then continue to master the Islamic sciences and Arabic language. According to him, most *karimbihi* (students) were only able to complete the reading of the Qur'an without understanding it. They were also able to

commit to memory a few chapters and verses of the Qur'an for use in their daily prayers. However, any product of this *makaranta* system with the most minimum level of literacy could gain recognition in his society as an *afa* (*mallam*). Some of these *afa* acquire additional knowledge of *asrar* (Secrets) which they used in solving problems of clients who come to them. Sometimes, they combined this with opening their own *karimzon* (Singular) or *makaranta*, where even non-Muslims neighbours sent their children to learn to read the Qur'an.

Many *afanema* (plural of *afa*) were not able to stick to pure unadulterated Islam as they were swayed by the demands and dictates of their society. Thus, even after centuries of Islamisation and an appreciable level of Islamic literacy in Dagban today, Seidu (1989:225) observed that "there are still some Muslims in the urban areas who practice 'mixing' and they do so mainly to satisfy the demands of their culture". The implication is that, Islam even today, cannot be separated from the cultural practices of Dagban.

Although syncretism or the mixing of Islam with cultural practices has been criticised by many Islamic reformists like Afa Yusuf Ajura of Ambariyyah, the Islamisation of Dagban owes a lot to this 'mixing'. This developed over the years, leading to a situation where many Dagbamba, instead of going to *kpema* (elder) drift towards the *afa*. Instead of going to *baga* (soothsayer) the *Afa Tibrugu* is visited. At the same time, some go to both the *kpema* and *afa* depending on what is amiss at particular time.

Seebaway (1999) adds that on matters of health, the *afa*'s role is limited, for being an *afa* is not the same as being a doctor or healer. An *afa* may know how to heal yet be handicapped if a particular problem requires more than a spiritual or psychological

solution. *Afanema* of Dagban also have collections of anonymous writings they refer to as *kundi* (Documents). Some of these writings are prescriptions for the treatment of illness, using Qur'an verses, seals, herbs, perfumes and other mystical additives. *Afatali* (the Muslim profession) requires the *afa* to be primarily a religious man (theologian, preacher and teacher) rather than a healer. Yet many *afanema* are associated with and practice some form of healing. This is a factor of the disagreement and subsequent conflicts among Muslims in Tamale and other parts of the country.

## **2.5 Islam and Islamic Groups in Tamale Before 1960**

Islam entered Ghana through the North around the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It first gained fame among the royals who used its mystical powers to their advantage. Islam offered help in terms of wars, calamities such as: floods, droughts, diseases and death. The people of Dagban embraced Islam around the 17<sup>th</sup> century and have since exploited the benefit of the new faith to the advantage of the society. According to Thomas (1974) till 1909 when formal education started in Northern Ghana Islamic or Qur'an education was the only source of literacy. The history of the North was primarily written by Arab scholars. All documentations of the northern people's economic, political and judicial transactions were written in Arabic Language. Similarly, the history of Asante according to Adu Boahen (1966) was as well initially chronicled by Muslims using Arabic language.

According to Iddrisu (2002), Mr M. Nazir Ahmad (local head) was the first Ahmadis to visit the North in 1928 and Bin Salih was the first Ahmadis to visit Tamale in 1936. Until then there were no cracks among Muslims in Tamale. The entire Muslim *ummah* in Tamale used to be one with a common vision and mission. Muslims in



Tamale then met together and prayed in the same Mosque and embarked on common activities and practices such as *Eid* (festivals), *maulid nabih* (prophet's birthday celebration), funerals, marriages, and outdoorings. Denominations started to emerge and some were breaking away from the main orthodox group around the 1950s. The period around the 1960s witnessed the intensive activities of reformist groups such as the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission otherwise known as *Hakimunima* by the local people and the Wahabiyyah group (Munchiri) who later changed their name to Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah.

Writing specifically on Tamale, Imoro (1978) recounts that Islam started in Tamale around 1885. The ancestors of Tamale were complete pagans until the reign of Dakpiema Nsong Na when Tamale became recognised as a chiefdom of Dagban kingdom. According to him, oral or drum history does not mention Muslims in Tamale before the reign of Dakpiema Nsong Na (1885) possibly because they had not made significant impact then or that relations between them and the natives had not been close. The fact that Tamale was a market centre with a market head (Dakpiema) suggests the possibility of the presence of Muslim traders from the Wangara and Hausa land. These Muslim traders had been in Western Dagban as far back as the seventeenth century.

Imoro (1978) observes that Islamic influence was first felt in Tamale in the court of Dakpiema Nsong Na in 1885 when Afa Togma became the first Muslim to ask Nsong Na for permission to build a Mosque in front of the palace. The Dakpiema readily granted the Hausa man (Afa Togma) permission and a piece of land in front of the palace for the construction of the first Mosque in Tamale. The Dakpiema himself did not accept Islam but allowed his subjects who wished to join Afa Togma to pray for the success of the weekly market days. Initially only a few people joint



but within a decade of its establishment, the palace Mosque could no longer contain the growing number of Moslems converts. Dakpiema even though not a convert himself offered a larger area and garnered communal labour from all natives to build a bigger Mosque where the Tamale Central Mosque stands today.

## 2.6 Tijaniyyah Muslims

The Tijaniyyah Brotherhood is one of several *Sufi turuq* (mystic ways) in West Africa. It is estimated to be the largest Muslim group in Tamale. According to Annette (2003) the *Sufi* Brotherhood was introduced to northern Ghana during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by some Hausa scholars who came into contact with Al-hajj Umar Tall. Alhaji Tall was an Islamic scholar from Futa Toro in the Western Senegal area who became the principal promoter of the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood in West Africa. One of the followers of Al-hajj Umar Tall, a Hausa scholar, Al-hajj Umar of Kete Krachi, settled in Salaga, an important centre for the northern Ghana's commerce in the late 1870s and became the spiritual leader of the Tijaniyyah in Ghana. When the Salaga market broke down by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hausa traders and clerics were dispersed all over the Northern Region and thus spreading the teaching of the Brotherhood to other important commercial centres in the region.

Hussein Zakaria who is also known as Al-Hussein, a Tijaniyyah scholar, disclosed in an interview that followers of both the Tijaniyyah and Qadiriyya *turuq* came to settle in Tamale around the turn of 19th century, when the *sufis* built the first Mosque in the newly established Regional Headquarters. Because the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood is closely related to the historical development of Islam in West Africa, the establishment of the group in Ghana created neither a break with nor a basic renewal of former trends. However, Stewart (1965) dates the popularisation of the Tijaniyyah

on Ghanaian grounds to the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This Al-Hussein explained that although Tijaniyyah adherents were in the area, the group did not consolidate itself as such until the beginning of the 1950s. The consolidation was initiated by the visit to Tamale of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse from Senegal in 1952. Another Tijaniyyah scholar, Baaba Mussah (Mai Gumani) adds that the visit by the Sheikh made the Tijaniyyah brotherhood grow, as Sheikh Niasse understood the importance of music and entertainment in Islam.

The visit of Niasse in 1952 caused the creation of a new Muslim faction in Tamale reacting to the reunion of the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyyah Brotherhoods. Still the Tijaniyyah has intimate relations with other Tijaniyyah groups in West Africa and especially in Senegal. Representatives from these countries take part in the yearly gathering of the Brotherhood which takes place at Prang in Brong Ahafo Region. The National Head of the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood, Sheikh Abdullai MaiKano (Baaba Giwa-Jallo) settled in Prang until his demise on Tuesday, September 12, 2005.

Abdul-Salam Ahmad, who is the Imam of Tijaniyyah and also the Northern Regional Imam since 2001 disclosed in an interview that the building of Tamale Central Mosque (*Jami'u*) was originally organised by the families of Nakwaha Na, Macheli and Zaami'u with the land provided by then Dakpem- Na called Nsun-Na. When the Muslim population kept growing, the Mosque was pulled down and a bigger one built by the Yari-Na family. By the early 1970s, that Mosque could no longer contain the growing number of strangers and new converts and so it was again pulled down as suggested by Mallam Maikano. The foundation of the present Mosque was then laid around 1974. The new Regional Mosque which is a three- story-building with provisions for expansion has the capacity of over 7000 worshipers. Abdul-Salam

Ahmad who is the current Imam of the Mosque gave the record of the Imamate as follow:

Imam Abdul-Rahman Umar (Dahamani) – he started in 1920 but was very old to continue  
Imam Iddrissu Haruna – 1920 to 1932  
Imam Abdallah Abdul-Rahman – 1932 to 1961  
Imam Muhammad Tatayin Haruna – for only six months in 1961  
Imam Muhammad Maisuna Iddrisu – for only two weeks in 1961  
Imam Adam Abdullahi – 1961 to 2000  
Imam Abdul-Salam Ahmad – 19th January, 2001 to date.

It should be noted that, Abdul-Salam's records of the Mosque *aimah* started not with Afa Togma who established the Mosque at the forecourt of the palace in 1885 as narrated by Imoro (1978). Abdul-Salam rather started in 1920s to date, an indication that he did not follow the drum history or that his account began from a particular stage of the Mosque's series of expansion due to the growing number of Muslims in Tamale. It has also been observed from the Imam's account that in 1961 alone three *aimah* were ordained into office as Imam of the Tamale Central Mosque.

Being the largest of its kind in the region, the Mosque stands as a landmark of Tamale. It is opened for use by members of inside and outside the Tijaniyyah community. The fact that the Chief Imam of the Mosque is always appointed from the Tijaniyyah fraternity indicates that the Mosque is regarded as being owned and managed by the *Sufi* branch of Islam. Apart from the daily and *jumuah* prayers, the Mosque is also a centre of *wurd* (Tijaniyyah litany) and Islamic studies. The history of Islam in Northern Ghana also recognised the fact that the Mosque and the *Sufi* practice are related to the Hausa community, denoting that Sufism is still seen by many observers as the doctrine of the wealthy foreigners. Even when adherents themselves are very keen and stressing that the Tijaniyyah group is not related to any special social group or their economic interest, the huge size and the outfit of the

Mosque nevertheless indicates a connection between the Tijaniyyah group in Tamale and the Hausa trading community. Hence the Tijaniyyah group in Tamale is still related to the Hausa, and a non-Dagbamba community of traders and artisans. However the majority of the adherents are still Dagbamba.

The authorities of the Tijaniyyah group underline the esoteric aspect of the denomination which is to bring the believer into contact with God. Alhaji Abdulai Jabir, a Tijaniyyah scholar in Tamale described the Tijaniyyah experience in an interview as follows:

The Tijaniyyah adherent has a kind of prayer that he makes, mentioning the name of Almighty God up to a particular level. By which he will be very close to God in such a way that God will let him know that there is no difference between man and the ant that crawls. All creatures have the same soul. People should realise that not only human beings but non living things around worship God too. All should know God. Knowing God should be the duty of all creatures. That doctrine is very special to the Tijaniyyah followers and that is why we are called 'God seers' (Nawun Nyarba). He (Allah) sees you to be someone who is closer to Him.

Alhaji Jabir in the above comments explains the term Nawun Nyarba (seers of God) as the adherents of the Tijaniyyah denomination are nicknamed. His explanations suggest that the name is a mockery of the Tijaniyyah belief that one can attain piety through solitary meditation, devotion and constant *zikr* (Praises of Allah) that will lead to a religious experience (*hadara*). The Tijaniyyah adherent believes that when one eschews sin and persists in devotion, then one can attain a level that God facilitates everything to him as if he is in contact with Him (God).

Annette (2003) adds that, Sufi religious practice is marked by a commitment of the individual to mystical powers. Besides the *wurd*, i.e. the litany special to the Tijaniyyah order, the most learned and committed members perform the *hadra* after every Friday prayer. They gather in the Mosque around a square, white cloth to recite certain litanies. The recitation takes the form of meditation, with prayers repeated

often for hours in a formula learned by rote. Practising this ritual bring people into the state of trance, whereby the actors claim to get closer to God. The mystic powers which the Tijaniyyah elite evokes during the séance are believed to create a kind of social communion, the effects of which reach out to influence the well-being of the wider community of believers.

Hence, Sufism as it is practised in Tamale is organized so that it will indirectly refine the followers into religious elites, who are awakened to the relationship with Allah. With that they become endowed with blessings which are delegated to the whole community of believers. Sufis in general and the Tijaniyyah of Tamale in particular feel they are a wider group, whose privilege it is to enjoy the blessings of Allah and thereby become motivated to care for and engage in their Muslim community.

Owusu-Ansah (2000) on the healing practices of the Tijaniyyah states that, mystical powers of the Tijaniyyah are grounded on the esoteric knowledge. The powers are manifested during healing ceremonies in the Islamic clinics and by the Islamic therapists who sell their amulets and charms. He added that, the healing effect of medicine is not related to the chemical powers of the liquid, but rather to the blessings which the Tijaniyyah *mallam* attributes to the medicine.

Annette (2003) believes that through the daily ritual practices a believer expresses his or her submission and devotion to God. But, he becomes more religiously devoted through such additional practices of the Tijaniyyah. The credit which is given to religious practice makes Islamic ceremonies among the Tijaniyyah group very important occasions. Name giving ceremonies, weddings, funerals and installation of chiefs are all important and recurrent events, where the religious community is 're-blessed' or recreated. The religious authorities during such events



reunite with the adherents, who experience the religious powers which the authority creates and administers through the rituals they perform. The Tijaniyyah group stresses the powers of good example, which are used to guide not only fellow human beings, but also to guide the believer himself. Moral practice is one way among several others that could create a devoted Muslim and a peaceful community.

Even if enrolment in the religion is made possible through the religious practices of an individual, the same religious practices need a strong leadership and this makes the ability to read and study the religious texts a central aspect to be pursued. Consequently, together with ritual performance, certain intellectual skills, admission to social networks and economic means are essential marks of religious authority within the Tijaniyyah brotherhood.

## **2.7 Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'a Muslims**

Historians such as Boahen (1966), Levtzion and Pouwels (2000) and Robinson (2004) seem to agree that, at the end of the colonial era, a growing awareness of the Islamic world outside the Sudanese Africa became evident in West Africa. Ghanaian Muslims became exposed to a variety of Islamic ideas through the Islamic missionary efforts of Egyptian, Pakistani, Libyan, Algerian and Saudi Arabian groups. These Islamic groups offered scholarships to a growing number of students to study Islamic studies in their respective states. Here the students came in contact with new ideas and trends in Islam, which they brought back to the West African environment after their graduation. Annette (2003) observes that, inspired by the Middle Eastern debate on Islam in the late 1940s, Al-hajj Yussuf Ajura nursed an interest and by the 1950s introduced such new ideas in Tamale. The purpose of the



idea was to break away from the Wangara and Hausa Doctrines (Sufi orientations) as well as from the leading authorities within these traditions.

Annette (2003) states further that, this upcoming scholar gathered more supporters after the visit by Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse to Tamale in 1952, as this visit placed focus on the characteristics of the Sufi way of Islamic practice. The antagonistic reactions to the visit resulted in cracks within the Wangara and the Hausa inspired Muslim community in the Northern Region. Tanko Issahaq (deputy Imam of Ahlus-Sunnah and director of Ambariyyah) disclosed in an interview that, in 1953 the reformist Afa Ajura, as he is mostly called, began by inspiration from Nigeria, the building of the Sakasaka Mosque. The construction of which was later financially supported by the Saudi Arabian Embassy. Although the Mosque is still under construction, it is currently the second biggest Mosque in Tamale after Ja'amiu (central Mosque).

In addition to the building of the Mosque, the 'Ambariyyah Islamic Institute' was established during the same years to further the Islamic education of Muslims in Northern Region. The Ambariyyah Islamic Institute is still impressive in size and condition, housing several local and foreign students from Muslim West Africa. It should be noted here that, the Tijaniyyah adherents often will emphasize on how their history is related to the Hausa or Zango community of foreigners from West Africa. The Ahlus-Sunnah adherents point out to their local Dagbamba relations. They do not also hide their intimate connection with the Middle Eastern countries and the support they get from them in terms of scholarships and economic assistance.

Kaba (2000) notes that, it was not until 1967 that the Afa Ajura group gained a wide support to observe Friday prayers at the Sakasaka Mosque which he started constructing in 1953, making the break with the Sufi tradition manifest. Afa Ajura

then joined the newly formed group of Ghanaian students from Saudi Arabia. The aim of the group was to end what it termed innovation of Islam in Ghana by the Tijaniyyah. This group was given all sorts of names such as the reformers, the puritan, the Wahabiyyah and the Munchir until 1997 when it was officially registered as Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'a. The Association has experienced an enormous growth in the number of supporters in Ghana as a whole, and Northern Region in particular.

The Ahlus-Sunnah leaders attribute the drastic growth in the number of believers to several reasons. First of all, they explain the growth by the different priority, which they give to the religious engagement contrary to what was taught by the old Wangara and Hausa teachers. As Islam was brought to West Africa by traders, the Ahlus-Sunnah leaders claim that this fact has made the religion into a secondary issue for the Sufi Brotherhoods, the furthering of trade being the first. Through extensive preaching activities, the Ahlus-Sunnah claim to have changed the status of the religion and through religious education the basis of religious knowledge has risen among the common believers. Making the religious environment at home and in the public sphere more concentrated on pure values of Islam (Sunnah of the Prophet). They claim that a higher level of religious education characterizes the Ahlus-Sunnah religious establishment, literacy in Arabic being a precondition for obtaining any level of religious authority.

The name 'Ahlus-Sunnah' refers to those who follow the path of the Prophet, indicating that the dogmas are of central importance to the group. For a newcomer to the Islamic community in Ghana some confusion may arise as to who constitutes the Ahlus-Sunnah, since the adherent of both the Tijaniyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah use the term to distinguish the orthodox Muslim from the Shiah and the Ahmadiyyah

Muslim. Hence, the term is used to refer both to those who belong to the Sunni tradition within Islam and to the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'a group in Ghana. In this thesis, the term is used to refer to the last mentioned category.

Brenner (2001) argues that in contradiction to the previous Islamic tradition in Northern Ghana, which accredited the power of religious tradition to personal relationship and oral transmission, the Ahlus-Sunnah insist that every action must be based on the canonical religious texts, the Qur'an and the Hadith. By their principles, "What is not in the texts is not in Islam". Thus, the acquisition of Islamic knowledge is not dependent on admittance to esoterically based relationships. On the contrary Islamic knowledge may be acquired through acceptance of rational concepts, which are in theory accessible to everyone on an equal basis. But literacy and the ability to read the religious texts preferably in Arabic will not alone make the basis for religious knowledge. The text still has to be interpreted by religious scholars, and this precaution places religious authorities in a position where they continue to play a decisive role in the outlining of the religion. The ability of the Ahlus-Sunnah denomination to encompass these rather different approaches to the religious texts makes it attractive to a wide number of people.

The emphasis on the religious texts means that the Ahlus-Sunnah group is associated with Ahmad Bin Hanbal, founder of one of the four major Sunni law schools, and with the Wahabiyyahh Movement of Saudi Arabia. According to the Encyclopaedias of Islam (2000) and (1978), the Wahabiyyah Movement originated from initiatives taken by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab, a religious leader, born in Central Arabia in 1703. He headed a reform movement, for which the central issue was to revive the position of the Islamic religion and moral practices, directing its criticism primarily against Sufism, demanding that true Muslims react against what the movement saw

as heretical practices for which no basis existed in the religious texts. Going by what Kaba (1974) denotes as ‘primitive purity’ placed the movement under the protection of the ruling house of Central Arabia, to conquer the surrounding states of the Arabian peninsula, whereby the movement came to emphasize that a militant interpretation of *jihad*, holy war, was an Islamic requirement. This group was also inspired by the Hambali theologian Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328), whose ideas are clearly recognizable in discourse of the Ahlus-Sunnah group.

Kaba (1974) thinks that the Wahabiyyah movement inspired the *jihad* of West Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He indicates that there is a historical basis for the congruent views, which on some points unite the dogmas of the Hausa tradition with those of the Ahlus-Sunnah group. The increase of Wahabiyyah influence in Tamale should however, also be attributed to the growing number of young Muslims, who went to Saudi Arabia from the 1970s. At that time, the Wahabiyyah movement was influenced by an immigration of members of the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt, who brought with them reform ideas, creating a new ‘neo-wahabian’ approach. While still underlining the puritan and pietistic aspects of the religion, the group also emphasize the importance of political engagement in developing an equal dispersion of wealth and social rights. Younger Muslim Scholars in Tamale often refer to the writings of Hassan Al-Banna, Sayyed Qutb and Hassan Al-Turabi, who outlined the theoretical framework of the Ahlus-Sunnah group.

According to Similianov (2000) the Muslim Brotherhood like the Wahabiyyah Movement, argue for the Muslim *ummah* to return to the sources of Islamic religion. They also accept the personal experience of life hereafter as a result of the actual life conducted on earth. Meaning, people would be judged and accordingly punished or rewarded by their actions or inactions. As such, Islamic morals are supposed to

regulate all aspects of human life. The dogmas of the Wahabiyyah and for that matter the Ahlus-Sunnah emphasize the individual engagement in the religion. It also demands self-reflection and personal responsibility to educate oneself in order to follow correctly the footsteps of the Prophet. The Muslim Brotherhood however underlines the necessity for anti-western, but not anti-modern cleansing of all practices in order to further the development of the society.

By implication, the western world unlike Islam is based on materialistic approach to life. As such, Islam and especially Islamic morals have to force in and take over the guidance of social life in order to stop the western Phenomenon from bringing human life in danger. Voll (1994) notes that members of the Muslim Brotherhood see themselves as part of a revivalist movement of the modern era, a picture, which very much resembles how religious authorities as well as younger civil followers in Tamale see themselves.

## **2.8 Ahmadiyyah Muslims**

Islam in Ghana inspired and shaped a homogeneous group of sunni-Muslims, who were living together through the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century without being torn apart by religious differences. The Northern Region subsequently experienced a confrontation with a more disputed group of Muslims who settled in Tamale. The group came to challenge the positions of the Tijaniyyah on several issues within the Wangara and Hausa traditions. According to Wilks (1989), Missionaries from the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission migrated to Tamale from Wa in the North-western Ghana in 1932, where followers of the movement had since the late 1920s met severe resistance from the local Muslim community in Wa.



Originally, the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission was established in 1889, when an Indian Muslim, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadiani (1835-1908), claimed that he had been commissioned by Allah to disseminate the true teachings of Islam. Presently the Ahmadiyyah Muslims claim that it is not their intention to propagate a new religion, nor do they want to introduce innovations into Islam. But the fact that they attribute to Ghulam Ahmad a position as the Promised Messiah who came to revive the religion, orchestrated severe threats and accusations of not belonging to the Muslim *ummah* from other Muslim denominations. The Ahmadis recognize themselves as orthodox, as they relate themselves to the Sunni tradition of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The other denominations see the Ahmadiyyah as overruling a very basic fact in Islam, namely that Muhammad (SAW) was the seal of prophets in a line counting among its most prominent Prophets such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus (Ibrahim, Mussah and Issah). In Tamale, however, since the 1970s the relationship between the Ahmadiyyah movement and other Muslim denominations has on the institutional level developed in a more peaceful direction. Possibly because Ahmadis in Tamale do not engage in the debate with others and also possibly because the Tijaniyyah and Ahlus-Sunnah are too busy with each other that the Ahmadis are forgotten of.

Annette (2003) writes that the head office of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission is in London, while national missions are scattered all over Africa as well as throughout the rest of the world. The national head office is in Osu, Accra the capital city of Ghana. The Mission is heavily centralized on a strictly hierarchical basis at National, Regional and Village levels with a centrally appointed National Ameer and several Regional and Village Heads in each member country. The leaders are selected on the basis of the respect attributed to them because of their ministering of Islamic morals



and secular skills, rather than on their intellectual knowledge of the Islamic scripts. At the National level, the Mission laid down a common ground for religious and secular education and generates common funds for those purposes. The regional level offices organize secular education and the building of schools, hospitals and homeopathic clinics. The Local level offices are used to organize age groups for religious education and for common works like cleaning activities, Mosque building and Family Planning Education.

The Mission has a body responsible for registering members, a practice which distinguishes the Ahmadiyyah from other Muslim denominations in Ghana. Such registration forms the basis of the collection of *zakat*, which is administered and reallocated by the Mission's National headquarters. Every Ahmadiyyah Muslim is expected to pay from 1/6<sup>th</sup> to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of his or her income to the Mission and the money is used in the country, where the funds are raised, with the purpose of making each national Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission economically self-reliant.

The registration of members by the Mission makes it possible to estimate the growth and the number of members in the levels, say, Northern Region. Recent figures indicate that the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission is experiencing a growing interest in the Northern Region. In 1995 the denomination counted 400-500 adherents in Tamale Metropolis, a number which had by the beginning of the year 2001 risen to approximately 2000 registered members. The Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission enjoys a strong influence in the opinion of the other Muslims. The Mission also enjoys a strong influence on other Muslims of Tamale by making especially the educated youth into opinion leaders with influence far outside their movement. For example, some members from all levels of the Mission have been supported to pursue further

studies. Others have also been aided to secure good jobs or pursue different careers in and outside Ghana.

Annette (2003) observed that, central issues to the adherents of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission relate to the importance of promoting 'good morals' among Muslims. Islamic morals are basically seen as knowledge of how to cope with life; it is a way to secure for oneself a prosperous life, and also as a way to make other people experience 'the essence of Islam. Those are aspects which deliberately draw an important line between morals and mission. Ahmadiyyah focus on the importance of the responsible individual, who must see it as his duty to take care of social relationship. Members must also be able and willing to take personal stands regardless of any social pressure.

Members of the Mission practice the daily Islamic rituals rather seriously, but they are not very concerned about discussing specific ritual practices with other members of the Mission or with members of other denominations. One ceremony must be mentioned as it is seen by the other Muslims denominations in Tamale as a characteristic of the Mission. Members of the Ahmadiyyah never spare an occasion to organize children and youth groups to march along the streets of Tamale, all immaculately dressed in black and white, carrying flags and banners with proclamations like 'There is no compulsion in religion'. The march is accompanied by music and singing meant to illustrate to the public the happiness one experiences when his or her life is guided by (Ahmadiyyah) Islam.

Missionaries of Ahmadiyyah are trained in the Mission's Missionary Training College at Saltpond in Ghana or at the Jami'a Ahmadiyyah International Centre at Rabwa in Pakistan. The Institutions are also known as Markaz Maulvis, International

Missionaries. Some members of the Mission also get the opportunities to be trained technically in the manufacture of satellite discs and herbal medicine.

## **2.9 Shiah Muslims or the Ahlul-Bayt Group**

The Shiah makes up the smallest Muslim group in Tamale, known in the town as ‘the Iranians’ or Ali nyang doliba—an expression in Dagbanli which means “Ali’s followers”. The presence of the Shiah in Tamale as an Islamic group has only been felt within the last ten to fifteen years, but since the mid-1980s they have been known for their development work in relation to farming and water supply, with sponsorship of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Still in 2011, the members of the Shiah group are rather few, but as they take very active part in the discussions on Islamic religious issues and as they are very often referred to by authorities from other Islamic groups, they became popular in Tamale. The group also forms an important part of the Muslim Community in Tamale due to the wider group of young people it deals with. Their influence will probably increase even further, as their school (Fathul- Mubin) has grown considerably in size and enrolment in recent times.

The general secretary of the Imamia Mission, Hussein Sulaiman Ja’afar disclosed in an interview that in the year 2000, the Shiah denomination in Tamale totalled only to a couple of hundreds. He added that, a large group of young people took part in their study groups, language courses and also used their library but without considering themselves as belonging to the denomination.

Hussein Sulaiman Ja’afar added that, the Imamia, Isnaa-Ashari, Ahlul-Bayt, or Ja’afariyya as the Shiah denomination is also known, began in Tamale in 1978 by a group of Muslim students who were corresponding with Youssuf Lalljee - an Indian Islamic scholar and writer. The students organised themselves with the aim to

promote Islamic unity and to explain Shiah doctrines. With about 49 members, the group chose to be known as the Imamia Mission and got registered in 1981 with financial support coming from Dr. Khalil Tabatabai -an Iraqi living in Dubai.

According to Hussein Sulaiman Ja'afar, in 1981 Tabatabai visited the group in Tamale and supported two selected students to pursue further studies in Pakistan. Around the same time, the Agricultural and Rural Development - ARD (an Iranian Funded NGO) was established in Tamale and Kasoa by the Iranian government to aid in the development and economic empowerment of the Muslim *ummah*. The Cultural Consulate of Iran in Accra which is responsible for religion and culture, as well as the Iranian Embassy came in to support in the building of schools, libraries, donation of Corn mills, organisation of events such as the *Qud's* days (last Friday of Ramadan) and Intra-Religious dialogues meetings in an attempt to promote unity among the Muslim *ummah* of Tamale.

According to Ja'afar, Abdul-Mumin (Dalwu), one of the beneficiaries of the scholarship returned home after six years of Islamic studies abroad. He first studied for two years at Imam Hussein University in Karachi-Pakistan and other years in Syria, Egypt and Iran. Whiles in Iran, Dalwu converted from his Ahlus-Sunnah background to Shiism. Dalwu finally settled in his hometown-Tamale as the leader and Imam of the local Shiah denomination. He also became Director and teacher at Fathul- Mubin Institute, a healer and currently doubles as Sarkin Zango- Chief of the Hausa Community in Tamale.

Esposito (1998) and the encyclopaedia of Islam (1997), write that Shiism is based on the belief that leadership of the Muslim *ummah* belongs to the descendents of Ali, one of the closest supporters of Muhammad, and of Hussein, his Son. Members of

the Shiah denomination tend to vest religious and political leadership in the Imam, the religious leader. The Shiah *aimah* (plural of Imam) are believed to be inspired by Allah hence sinless and infallible.

Esposito (1998) stressed that the introduction of this doctrine came to establish an understanding of history as played out to restore God's rules on earth under the God inspired Imam, and that the struggle for this aim had to be performed by the oppressed minority group of Shiah Muslims. The Shiah was divided during the eighth century in two major groups, the Ithna Ashari (Arabic: the twelve, who believe in the twelve Imams) and the Ismaili (they believe Imamate ends on the seventh Imam). The former represent the Shiism in Tamale, as well as in Ghana as a whole. In the Ithna Ashari theology the disappearance of the twelfth Imam has given rise to an expectation of the Mahdi, a messianic figure, who shall return to restore religious virtue in the community. While waiting for his return, the community is to leave the guidance to the religious experts, who are able to interpret God's will.

The Shiah denomination in Tamale has an understanding of God as taking active part in the lives of the members of the community. Through powers hidden in dreams, fasting and recitation of religious books, the spiritual aspect in the form of mystic inspiration can be transmitted to some persons, who enjoy a profound belief and are therefore closer to God. The gifted persons are able to relate to other persons through the positive feelings coming from God. Members of the Shiah denomination see the religious person, not the religious text as the inspiration and creator of the good example, which makes the community to grow. Thus, spiritual healing and Islamic medical support are very important issues that affect the psychology and pedagogical approach of a religious practitioner or adherent. The link of Shiah to Sufism and the



Tijaniyyah denomination in Tamale is obvious, as these denominations are to some extent referring to the same roots or origin.

Annette (2003) states that in the case of the ordinary but devoted believer, he or she believes the mystic powers have to be supplemented with the reading of the texts. While the infallible *aimah* and their descendants, appointed by God through the holy prophet, have an intuitive, in born knowledge and others who are not tied to the *aimah* through kinship relations have to depend on their understanding of the texts.

Annette (2003) thinks that Shiah leaders in Tamale are eager to make their followers feel it as their duty constantly to be looking for the truth of life. And to this purpose they stress the importance of self-reflection, as the personal destiny of the believer should be used as a case study to reveal the purpose of life and direct further steps of the individual. Thus reading of the texts by Shiah should be approached from the angles of rationality, logic and philosophy. Doing so will enhance the arguments in the ongoing discussion among believers as to what decisions are the right ones to facilitate service to 'humanity'. The reading and acting according to the texts is expected to support what really matters, namely the service to humanity that is indicated by the superior position which religious rituals are expected to have to all followers of the religion.

Annette (2003) further states that, the philosophy behind the practice of rituals is to make the practitioner experience the feelings of submission, humility and love, which are exposed in the meeting with God. Hence, the Shiah group does not force people to take part in their rituals such as *salat* and *du'aul-kumail* (special praises to the prophet and his household). Their approach is characterized more by a certain level of freedom together with empathy for the followers' situation and his level of



engagement in the religion. On the other hand, the religious authorities emphasize that lack of religious knowledge makes the rituals grow stiff and will leave the followers with a religious practice, which is based on imitation and lack of understanding.

Annette (2003) also states that central to the service of the community is the doctrine of infallible Imam as the leader in any religious and political issues within the community. By linking the religious understanding to the practice of the believer in his society, the Shiah group in Tamale makes it a must for any follower to engage in politics, as the members see politics as encompassing the ultimate social life of the community. This approach may be understood as enforcing a rather reformist approach to renewal of society, but is made possible by the Shiah authorities, who stress an opinion that in the Islamic texts there are fixed entities, which have to be followed completely and flexible parts, which have to be interpreted according to time and place.

The Shiah followers mainly meet in their own Mosque which was built in 1994 by the community at Fuo, a suburb of Tamale. The construction was supported financially by the Iranian government, which has also established a boarding school, which provides students with free housing and tuitions from primary to secondary school levels. The school also makes room for courses in Islamic studies and Arabic language to a wider audience. The collaboration between the Shiah community and the Tijaniyyah Muslims in Tamale are demonstrated by the fact that many Tijaniyyah followers take part in Friday prayer in the Fuo Mosque, and also by the fact that the religious authorities from the two groups will often give sermons at the naming and funeral rites of their counterparts.

As to why there is a strong collaboration between the Shiah and the Tijaniyyah, Abdul-Mumin Dalwu (leader of Shiah group in Tamale) explained that Tijaniyyah is not a denomination, but a Sufi order and a sub group of Shiism drawing over 90% of its beliefs and practices from the Ja'afariya School of thought. He adds that the Tijaniyyah traces its origin to the genealogy of Ali and the Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet. Citing the acknowledgment of all the 12 aimah of the Shiahs by Sheikh Ahmad Tijani (founder of Tijaniyyah) in his book entitled *Ahzaab wal awrad*. Sheikh Tijani had not only acknowledged the 12 Shiah *aimah* but also believes in the occultation of the last Imam, Mahdi son of Hassan Al-Askari. Other areas of convergence between the two Muslim groups include *wilaya* (belief in Saints), *tawasul* (intercession), *maulid* (celebrating the Prophet's birthday) *zikr* (songs of praise), performing funerals, visiting and building of tombs, recitation and using the Qur'an for spirituality. These are some of the issues other Islamic groups such as the Ahlus-Sunnah and Ahmadiyyah detest causing countless verbal and physical confrontations among the Muslim ummah in and around Tamale.

## **2.10 Other Muslim Groups**

Before the 1952 visit to Ghana by Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse of Kaolack-Senegal, Islamic groups like Qadiriyyah and Naqshabandiyyah (mystical Islamic groups) existed in Tamale. Qadiriyyah and Naqshabandiyyah are both mystic groups that derive their names from their respective founders thus Abdul-Quadir Kailani and Mohammad Naqshabandi. They had the same creed and cult just like the Sunni Muslims but practiced in addition to that, seclusion and constant engagement in *zikr*. They believe that through seclusion and *zikr*, their sins would be cleanse and then draw them closer to God.

However, after the visit to Tamale by Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse in 1952, Tijaniyyah gained much prominence and patronage eclipsing the Qadiriyyah and the Naqshabandiyyah *туруq*. Apart from the Tijaniyyah, there is no other Sufi group practicing in Tamale to date. Hussein Zakaria (a Tijaniyyah scholar) disclosed in an interview that both Qadiriyyah and Naqshabandiyyah *туруq* (paths/ways) have gradually metamorphosed into the Tijaniyyah or Faila group.

There is a phenomenon in recent times that has the potential to generate new denomination(s) of Muslims in Tamale. This phenomenon is one that can generate or bring out a new denominations or groups from the major existing ones. For example, today in Tamale, Tijaniyyah cannot be said to be one since we now have the Maikano and Ceissey factions of Tijaniyyah. Same can be said of the Ahlus-Sunnah group since the Baasha and the Ambariyyah factions are both struggling for recognition and prominence. These groups bear the same brand name but differ in some of their practices and orientation. The leadership struggles that lead to the separations and formations of new Muslim groups from the existing denominations is a bad phenomenon that will not help the unity of the *ummah*.

### **2.11 Impact of Islamic Groups in Tamale**

It would be difficult to independently enumerate the individual impact of each of the four major Islamic groups in Tamale. Even though each group has different attitudes towards beliefs and practices, they have all in a common way benefited the people of Dagban.

From the various interactions with the Islamic groups in Tamale, they all claim that they have made positive impact on the moral behaviours of the people. The moral transformation emanates from their teachings of ethical principles from the Qur'an

and the Sunnah. The teaching of Moral values such as love, humility, respect, obedience, tolerance and peace positively enhanced the moral lives of the people. Another Islamic impact on the people of Tamale is the preservation of the people's history. Islamic education has been around centuries before formal education was introduced in northern Ghana. Apart from the role Islamic education played in the writings and preservation of the history of the northern people such as Gonja, Wala, Dagbamba and Mamprusi, it has also greatly influenced the educational, socio-cultural, political, health, economic and spiritual needs of the people that made them who they are today.

The various Islamic groups compete in the establishment of schools, hospitals, farms, orphanages, Mosques, social and religious clubs and organizations or programs to improve the well being of the people. Currently in Northern Region, there are about 191 Nurseries schools and Kindergartens, 305 Primary Schools, 72 Junior High Schools, 10 secondary schools and a few tertiary as well as technical and vocational training institutions set up by the various Islamic groups in Tamale and other parts of the region. In all, over 154,361 pupils are being educated under about 568 shelters provided by Muslims through the Islamic Education Unit of Ghana Education Service in Northern Region. This was disclosed in an interview with Ali Fiqri Ibrahim who is the Northern Regional Manager of the Islamic Education Unit and Dason Iddi Abdulai, the regional Statistician. Similarly there are some Islamic healing centres in Tamale and other places like the Rashidiyyah Islamic clinic, located in Gumani, a suburb of Tamale. The institutions have been established by these Islamic groups to support the health needs of the people regardless of their faith. It should be noted that Islam greatly complements the efforts of the government to bring holistic development to the people of Tamale.

## 2.12 Conclusion

Islam as we have highlighted came early to the north through clerics and traders. It seems also clear from the foregoing that when Islam finally took root in northern societies, more so in Dagban where the ruling classes were the first to be influenced by the religion, it assumed a flexibility that enabled it to adapt and so infiltrate the fabric of the society. As a consequence of this flexibility there appeared not to have been any difficulty with intra-Islamic relationships until after the 1952 visit by Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse when differences in the Muslim *ummah* started to emerge in Tamale.

In spite of difficulties and imminent weakness of Islam in Tamale due to intra-religious conflicts, Islam has made an impact on the people of Dagban in the areas of conversion, education, culture, health and economics. It is fair to observe that but for the educational activities of Islam, albeit in Arabic language, the education and development of the north and Tamale in particular would have been much slower. Nevertheless, Islam seemingly infused Arabic culture into the north of Ghana through imperialism. Islam according to Samwini (2006) by 1950 was still Arabic and Hausa in everything it did. Arabic and Hausa are still the media of communication of most Islamic scholars in a largely non-Arab and non-Hausa community.

Is the 1952 visit by the Tijaniyyah Sheikh and the subsequent breakaway of the Ahlus-Sunnah from the main orthodox group the main cause of conflicts among Muslims in Tamale? How did the differences in teaching and practices affect relationship among Muslims in Tamale? These and others are questions we shall seek to address in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTRA-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AMONG MUSLIMS IN TAMALE

#### 3.1 Introduction

Peace was the hallmark of Islam in Tamale until the introduction of Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission in 1932. The arrival of the Mission marked the beginning of misunderstanding among the *ummah* as the main orthodox group challenged the Mission on some doctrines. Despite these challenges, Islam in Tamale remained relatively calm until the Visit by Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse in 1952. The visit created division of the main orthodox group followed by fierce verbal and physical confrontation among Muslims in Tamale. This chapter will attempt to review the many intra-religious conflicts that occurred among Muslims in Tamale over the years, focusing on the pronouncements and activities of the various denominations. This will subsequently provide the basis to examine the individual roles of each denomination in causing, sustaining and managing conflicts among Muslims in Tamale.

Instances of verbal and physical confrontations among Muslims in Tamale and the circumstances leading to that will be discussed. The new phenomenon of verbal and physical wrangling among adherents of the same denomination especially the Tijaniyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah will also be discussed.

Another aim of this chapter is to assess the link between the religious conflicts in Tamale to the political and chieftaincy issues in Dagban. Political and chieftaincy issues have influence over religious conflicts breaching the peace in the area with one type of conflict leading to the other.

### 3.2 Genesis of Intra-Religious Conflicts in Tamale

Islam in Tamale before 1960s had experienced some incidents between the orthodox Muslims and the Ahmadis. The situation became more volatile in the 1960s after the break away of Afa Yussif Ajura from the orthodox group. Aminu Muhammad, an instructor at Adabiyyah Islamic Institute in Tamale stated that, Muslims in Tamale before the 1960s were living in peace with one another and did things together. They performed each *Eidul-fitr* and *Eidul-adha* collectively. They were all celebrating *maulid nabih* (Prophet's birth day) and performing funerals for all their deceased persons. They were also converging in the same Mosque to pray among other things. All the *ulama* in Tamale used to meet in the Central Mosque for *Jumuah* (Friday) prayers and deliberated on matters regarding the entire Muslims of the region. In due course some individual *mallamai* (scholars in Hausa) established their own Mosques and schools in their homes or areas, but that had not prevented them from coming together on Fridays and on *Eid* days for congregational prayers and other deliberations of common interest. The establishment of the home based schools and Mosques, according to Aminu Muhammad was to ease the situation where people had to travel long distances before they could have access to Mosque for devotion and *makaranta* (Islamic school in Hausa) for Islamic education.

Yussif Nabahani a prominent Tijaniyyah scholar and teacher in Tamale added that but for the petty squabbles a section of the *ummah* used to have with the Ahmadi teaching which they perceived as false doctrines, relations among Muslims were virtually peaceful and harmonious. The issue with the Ahmadis was on their assertion that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, their founder is the Mahdi (promised Messiah) Muslims had been expecting. To the Ahmadi, Ghulam Ahmad is the person who came to accomplish the task of reforming Islam.

The second doctrinal controversy with the Ahmadis according to Nabahani was on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Issah Alaihi Salam). Ahmadis claim that Jesus Christ was not crucified and had not also ascended to heaven but had lived and died in India where he was buried in a little village of Kashmir. The Sunnis are against such doctrines and had a series of arguments with the Ahmadis. To some Sunnis, Ahmadis are not real Muslims but an organization set up by the west to disintegrate Islam hence the disagreements with them in the early 1930s and 1940s. Nba Nindoo and Nma Zahra (both elderly residents of Tamale) confirmed that indeed the town was very peaceful and relationships among Muslims were calm and cordial despite the disagreement with the Ahmadis. The situation however went chaotic shortly after the complete break away of Afa Ajura from the Central Mosque in 1965 and the beginning of prayers in his Sakasaka Mosque in 1967.

However, Faheem Ahmad Khadim, the Northern Regional Missionary in Charge of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission disclosed that it is only the astute attitude of the Mission that prevented it from having confrontations with the other denominations. That notwithstanding, the mission received severe criticism and condemnation from other Muslims who called and still call them infidels. Faheem also recounted some instances he heard about in the 1930s when some Ahmadis in Tamale went through various degrees of torture in the hands of Sunni Muslims. In his view Ahmadis are peaceful people who are focused on their vision of spiritual and personal development and mindless of frivolous issues that breed disunity among people. Muslims according to him should rather strive to correct and end the falsehoods that persist in sister religions. Such is rewarding and in accordance with the teachings of Islam but not to engage other Muslims in violent conflicts to the extent of killing and

maiming each other. He concluded that Ahmadis will not be detracted by any group or accusations since they believe in Allah as the best and only judge.

In narrating his personal experience, Alhassan Muhammad, popularly known as Alhaji Wofa (a scholar and opinion leader in Aboabu, Tamale) states that he together with Afa Yussif Ajura and other Muslims used to pray, meet and do things in common at the Tamale Central Mosque. According to him the problems started when Afa Yussif Ajura in a contest for the position of treasurer of the Mosque in the 1950s, lost to Alhaj Muhammad Yakubu popularly known as Alaafe Lana. Afa Ajura who was then a supporter of the Convention People's Party (CPP) attributed the loss to his political affiliation since majority of the *ulama* in the Central Mosque at the time were supporters of either the United Party (UP) or the Muslim Association Party (MAP) also known as the Crescent Party.

In a separate interview with Hussien Ja'afar the general secretary of the Imamia Mission now the Shiah group, he alluded to the fact that the breakaway of Afa Yussif Ajura from the Central Mosque was due to an incident that occurred among the *ulama* during the visit of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse to Tamale in 1952. According to Ja'afar, during that visit the right to host the sheikh was given to Alhaji Muhammad Alhassan a rich man in town popularly known as Chief Driver. That decision was contested by Afa Ajura who thought the Sheikh should have been hosted by one of the *ulama* instead of the rich man. However, when the sheikh visited Yendi he was accommodated by Alhaji Gomda who was then a leading scholar and the Imam of the town. Afa Ajura became peeved and coupled with the fact that he was with the Central Mosque but was not practicing *wurd* (Tijaniyyah litany) like others; he left the group to establish his own Mosque and school. After his departure from the main *ummah*, Afa Ajura started a vigorous and radical campaign against most of his

former group's practices like *wurd*, *maulid*, funerals, charms, *walima* (party for people who complete learning the Qur'an) and a host of other practices.

Other factors attributed to the breakaway of Afa Yussif Ajura from the Tamale Central Mosque included the controversy over the kingship of Na Mahamadu. Alhassan Muhammad (Alhaji Ofa) narrates that Muslims then had split into pro and anti-Naa Mahamadu. Whiles majority of the *ulama* were routing for the continuation of the king's leadership, a section of them led by Afa Ajura strongly agitated for the king's deskinment. Eventually, Na Mahamadu-the king and over lord of Dagban was deskinmed creating a bitter rivalry among the rank and file of Dagban. *Oni yi- oku yi*, meaning he must be deskinmed and he must not be deskinmed became a slogan among the people and a tool of identifying one's side of the divide.

It is apparent from the above discussions that the formation of a rival group as a result of the breakaway of Afa Yussif Ajura from the Central Mosque marked the beginning of bitter arguments, rivalry and division within the *ulama* and the Ahlus-Sunnah Muslims. Verbal and physical assaults also became rampant among Muslims in the Tamale metropolitan. As to the verity of the reasons that triggered the split of the *ummah* and the subsequent violence against one another, that remains yet to be ascertained as conflicting reports are given in that regard by the different groups. However, one could deduce from them that disagreement, greed, rivalry, quest for leadership among others marred the peace, unity, harmonious relationships and the fraternal Islamic practices Tamale enjoyed over the centuries.

### **3.3 Islam, Chieftaincy and Politics in Dagban**

Chieftaincy divide among Dagbamba contributes in no uncertain terms the exercitation of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. Mustapha Hamid,



a lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, disclosed in a Public lectures at the Ferdinand O. Ayim Memorial lectures in Accra that; the Abudus and Andanis trace their roots to a common ancestry and have been involved in protracted disputes which have contributed immensely to the underdevelopment of Dagban. According to him, the founding of Dagban state was born out of conflicts and disagreements. He revealed that Na Abdulai, from whom the Abudu gate derived its name ruled from 1837-1858. After him, his brother Na Andani II ruled from 1858 to 1896. These two had a common father, Na Yakubu I who reigned from 1799 to 1838. Na Yakubu I ascended to the throne through a military attack that led to the death of the then sitting Ya Na Suman Zoli (1778-1799). Two hundred and three years later according to Hamid, in 2002, one of Na Yakubu I's descendants, Na Yakubu Andani II was also killed in a similar communal war related to the chieftaincy disputes.

Hamid stated that as far back as 1899, governments had been involved in the Dagban skin affair. He pointed out that Dagban was partitioned in 1899 with Eastern Dagbamba going to the Germans and Western Dagbamba to the British who actively meddled in the enskinment of chiefs in the Dagban state. This perhaps set the tone for the external politicization and interference in Dagban skin affairs that have bedeviled the struggles for the Yendi skin to date.

The Northern People's Party (NPP), the Convention People's Party (CPP) and the National Liberation Council (NLC) also played significant roles in resolving the impasse. Mustapha Hamid said the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) enacted the Yendi Skin Affairs Amendment Law in 1985, thus PNDC Law 124 declares that any aggrieved party could seek redress from the law courts. But, genuine as they may be, the efforts by successive governments failed to restore

lasting peace in Dagban. The Abudus find favours in the Busia Danqua Traditions while the Andanis depend on the NDC for consolations.

In similar narrations, the *ulama* in Tamale pointed out how the Dagban chieftaincy affairs meddled with religion. According to Hussein Zakaria also known as Al-Hussein (a Tijaniyyah scholar), Dagban has very long historical relations with Islam dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The trading activities of the Dyula or Mande (Wangara) followed by the Hausa traders and scholars provided various assistance in terms of war, prayers, medications and secretarial services which drew them very close to the royals and to the point of converting some into Islam. Al-Hussein added that Na Wumbe was the first Dagbamba king who converted into Islam and came to be known as Na Mamman (Muhammad) Zangina from whose descendents some Dagban kings became Muslims up to date.

Abdul-Wahab Muhammad, an Islamic scholar in Tamale disclosed that, during the visit of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse to Dagban in 1952, he visited Na Mahaman Bla in his palace at Yendi. The king according to Abdul- Wahab expressed fears at the possible closure of his lineage to the ascension onto the throne since his only son had some deformities that could prevent him from becoming a king. The Sheikh then called for the king's deformed son and prayed for him assuring them that the child will be a king. True to the Sheikh's word when the king died, that boy became the regent and subsequently crowned as the over lord of Dagban. This therefore brought about disagreement among the royal families as the boy was favoured and also a breach of the earlier agreements that stated that the clans will ascend to the throne in turns. Most Tijaniyyah backed their Sheikh's "blessed" clan while the Ahlus-Sunnah who felt the right of the Andani gate had been usurped supported them in all matters till date.

Issah Idrissu Modoo, the director of Da'awah of Ahlus-Sunnah confirmed the story adding that during that time Na Andani was the chief of Mion, a village near Yendi. Mion is a very important village in Dagban and the seat of the chief next to the Ya Na. The entourage leading the Sheikh to Yendi refused to stop at Mion where the chief and his subjects had gathered waiting to welcome the grand Sheikh. The incident at Mion coupled with that of the Sheikh's prayers in the king's palace made Afa Ajura to believe that the Sheikh was not a unifier. According to Issah Modoo, since then Afa Ajura disassociated himself from the group and gave his backing to the Andani clan. These in brief explain why Dagban has been caught split into the webs of religion, politics and chieftaincy as it is today.

### **3.4 Instances of conflict Among Muslims in Tamale**

In this section we shall attempt to present the instances of intra-religious conflicts Tamale had witnessed over the years. Intra-Muslim relations in Tamale have not been cordial since the visit of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse in 1952 and the subsequent schism of the *ummah* in 1965. The schism generated several unwarranted arguments, insults and counter insults among Muslims. Many instances of police and law cases have been raised against one faction or another. Even among the learned and elite, several avoidable personality attacks and retaliatory attacks have been witnessed. Women and children were not left out in such needless schism as they insult, challenge, envy, sabotage and sometimes physically assault one another. The city of Tamale that was one time united and its Muslim inhabitants living peacefully with one another eventually became fragmented, hostile and economically poorer than before. The consequences of such violent schisms almost affected every aspect of life in Tamale. Businesses, social contracts like marriage, friendship and relationships were negatively affected. Lives and properties were damaged with many people

running away from the region for fear of their lives. Chieftaincy institutions, political parties, education, culture and tourism were all implicated and negatively affected by these conflicts.

According to Alhassan Muhammad and Hussein Ja'afar, several intermittent verbal disputes transpired among Muslim scholars in Tamale between 1952 and 1965 when Afa Ajura broke away. Yussif Nabahani, a Tijaniyyah scholar added that heated verbal confrontations transpired between Afa Ajura and his group on one side and Sheikh Hassan Nasirul-deen who was the leader of Tijaniyyah based in Kumasi and his students on the other side. Yussif Nabahani mentioned among others Alhaji Muntaka Zakaria, Sheikh Tahir Issah, Sheikh Ibrahim Gushegu, Sheikh Yakubu Issahaq and Sheikh Muhammad Panpanku as those who confronted Afa Ajura in the early days of his mission before the emergence of Sheikh Abdullai Maikano. The situation after 1965 as a result of the schism and the radical nature of both Afa Ajura and Abdullai Maikano became more volatile with Muslims arguing and fighting to the extent of killing one another over doctrinal differences.

#### **3.4.1 The 1969 Clash between Muchiri and Nawun Nyarba at Police Park**

In April 1969 due to hostile relationship and tension between the Nawun Nyarba and the Muchiri over *salatul-fatih*, a platform was created for the two factions to meet and resolve their differences. Gulkpe Na Alhassan and his counterpart Dakpem Na Alhassan in collaboration with then deputy Inspector General of Police (IGP) Bawa Andani Yakubu who later became Gushie Na (chief of Gushegu) organized a forum at the Tamale Police Park for the *ulama* to prove or otherwise the veracity of *salatul-fatih* from the Qur'an.

Two eye witnesses, Jibril Abdulai Fari and Hussein Ja'afar narrated on the event in separate interviews. Jibril Abdulai Fari is a public servant and a Tijaniyyah *murid* while Hussein Ja'afar is a Shia and the general secretary of Imamia Mission. According to them, Afa Ajura spoke first making references to the Qur'an and Hadith books which he took on the stage to disprove *salatul-fatih* and *wurd* (litany of the Tijaniyyah). According to them, Afa Ajura received loud applause from the crowd. Abdulai Maikano took to the stage empty handed and started gathering his proofs of *salatul-fatih* bit by bit from different verses and chapters of the Qur'an. Then a section of the crowd believed to be Munchiri, according to the informants could not take light to the method adopted by Maikano and nearly marred the whole program.

The situation compelled Gushie Na Bawa who was the chairman of the occasion to appeal for calm and urged Maikano to go straight to the point by quoting directly from the Qur'an and Hadith books as Afa Ajura had done. The response from Maikano who spoke in Hausa was "*Al Qur'ani hadaidai ne, daakanta zan walwale muku*" meaning; "the Qur'an is a memorized book, be patient, I will vividly explain to you". The event according to the source ended without any clear winner as the Nawun Nyarba were jubilating towards *zami'u* while the Munchiri were also jubilating towards Sakasaka. Reports indicated that some of the jubilant supporters later clashed at a point resulting in injuries to both sides. "*Al Qur'ani hadaidai ne daakanta zan walwale...*" remained a slogan in Tamale for a very long time with which the two denominations ridiculed each other.

Issah Iddrisu Modoo, a leading Ahlus-Sunnah Imam attested to this story adding that Maikano could not actually convince the public on the availability of their revered *salat* in either the Qur'an or the hadith. According to him, Maikano sought to



confuse the audience by playing round the verses of the Qur'an in an attempt to make a point but that was actually a contradiction to the issue prior to the debate. He explained that before the encounter, Maikano and most Tijaniyyah *ulama* argued that *salatul-fatih* could be found in the Qur'an which prompted the arguments with the Ahlus-Sunniah who equally read the Qur'an but have never come across such verse(s) or ahadith.

Shortly after the police park incident, Jibril indicated that report was sent to Accra suggesting that Maikano should be expelled from Ghana because he was but a foreign Fulani man who threatened the country's peace. He was as a result invited to Accra by the police for questioning. Presumably he defended himself well by proving his Ghanaian citizenship since in the view of Jibril, Maikano returned home victorious. Then after, series of arguments, debates, insults and counter-insults persistently heightened among the Muslim *ummah* in Tamale.

#### **3.4.2 The 1976 Incident at the Tamale Bus Stop**

Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse died in 1975 and many *ulama* around the World attended his funeral in Kaolack-Senegal. He was succeeded by Sheikh Aliyu Ceissey who traveled round to show appreciation to all those who came to mourn with them in Senegal. According to Yussif Nabani, upon reaching Tamale in the company of Maikano, an irate Munchiri mob attacked them at their residence near the Tamale Bus Stop. Many people were injured with one death recorded in the incident. The Benz car of Maikano was completely destroyed by the mob.

Alhassan Muhammad, a Tijaniyyah scholar and elder in Aboabu recounted almost the same story but tagged the year of the incident to 1972 citing one Seidu a young Munchir "combatant" as the person who lost his life in the event. Alhassan

Muhammad added that the deceased, Seidu was reported to have assured Afa Ajura of bringing back to him the head of Maikano prior to leaving to the “battle” ground. Similarly, Muhammad Abdul-Wahab (a Tijaniyyah scholar and headteacher of Ahmadiyyah English and Arabic school at Lamakara in Tamale) who was also an eyewitness to the said incident narrated that they were taken unaware by the heavily armed Munchir youth. Maikano and his group including the narrator were unaware of the attack and so were absolutely un-armed. Maikano upon sensing danger quickly stood on the bonnet of his car and calmed his people. He urged them not to be frightened but to put their trust in Allah. He further directed all Nawun Nyarba at the ground to pick stones and recite *salatul-fatih* on them before throwing at the attacking Munchir members. Abdul-Wahab explained further that with the same stones and weapons attacked with, they (the Nawun Nyarba) miraculously defeated the hundreds of well armed Munchir men who attacked them. Eventually, the attacking Munchir turned out against one another hitting with clubs, machetes, sticks and stones. The following morning according to the narrator, the regional hospital was choked with Munchir members who sustained various degrees of injuries from their own ammunitions.

Shuaib Alhassan, an elder in the Sakasaka Mosque and the main translator into Hausa since the days of the late Afa Ajura rebutted the above stories by the Tijaniyyah scholars saying they are all part of the malicious plans to portray the Ahlus-Sunnah group as radical and troublesome. He explained that, many such fake Tijaniyyah “Saints” came to Tamale and introduced many things that worsen the basic lives and beliefs of the people. He added that those *Shuyukh* were only making money from the innocent and desperate people by promising them many favours and robbing them of their properties. According to Shuaib, it was after Afa Ajura

enlightened them that the youth decided to rise and to stop further exploitations of people by the greedy *shuyukh*, hence that clash at bus stop in 1976.

However, on the same issue, Issah Modoo confirms that, really such an incident happened and many people got injured with Afa Asuma who was a faithful Ahlus-Sunnah and a direct relative of the Ahlus-Sunnah leader Afa Ajura lost his life in the process. He however disagreed with the assertion that the deceased promised to bring back to his brother the head of Maikano. He challenged all those who hold that view to prove when and how such promise was made.

It should be noted that both names: Seidu and Afa Asuma refer to the same person who died during the incident of Tamale Bus Stop in 1976. The name Afa Asuma could be correct since the informant (Issah Modoo) happens to be an insider and also a close associate of the deceased. The name Seidu could be a mistake even though the narrator (Alhassan Muhammed) rightly recollected the story and the year of the event. His inability to recollect the name rightly could be due to his old age, forgetfulness or distant association with the victim. His ability to remember that someone died however gave the researcher the urge to seek the true state of affairs. However, in a follow up interview with the family of the deceased at Nyanshegu, Abdul-Kadiri Abass described himself as the uncle of the deceased and confirmed the untimely death of their son in such religious conflict in 1976. He added that Afa Asuma was the second son of his sister and died leaving behind a pregnant wife.

Again, Jibril also narrated that closely following the bus stop incident, Afa Ajura led some of his followers to Prang in Brong Ahafo to launch an attack on Maikano in revenge to the defeat he suffered in Tamale. According to him the retaliatory attack meant to redeem the sinking image of the Ahlus-Sunnah also failed when women and

children of Prang the home base of Maikano and a center of Tijaniyyah confronted the Munchir forcing them to flee back to Tamale.

However, both Issah Modoo and Shuaib Alhassan of the Ahlus-Sunnah group discredited this story and stated that, Afa Ajura went to Prang at the invitation of Ustaz Issah Backi who was an Ahlus-Sunnah scholar, writer and a product of Azhar University resident in that town. The purpose of the visit was to commission a new school Ustaz Issah built and also to preach. When entering the town, Afa Ajura and his team including the narrators were besieged by Maikano's followers. Afa Ajura upon security advice aborted the program and returned home the following day after passing the night at Yeji. Shuaib Alhassan added that they did not go there to make any trouble neither were they defeated by Maikano but rather it was a wise decision they took to make peace and tranquility prevail. Issah Modoo however agreed that Prang was a strong base of Maikano and there was no much they could do against the wish of the overwhelming residents who thought their entry into the town might breed violence. Issah Modoo added that a few months later they went back to Prang under national security and preached for about three days without any hindrance before returning to Tamale.

### **3.4.3 The 1977 Airport Road Incident**

Aside the Bus stop incident discussed in (3.4.2), another incident occurred between the same rival groups in 1977. According to Yussif Nabahani, a *madaha* (one who sings songs of praise) of Maikano by name Abubakar C.K was having a marriage ceremony in Tamale. As his personal *madaha* and also by invitation, Maikano agreed to honour the invitation and to grace the marriage of his beloved *madaha*. Upon getting information of his arrival, the Munchir members organized and armed

themselves to the teeth. They were also purported to have cut down logs of trees and barricaded the Tamale airport road which happens to be the main road linking Tamale to its northern neighbouring towns and countries temporally denying them entry into the city and access to the rest of the country. According to Nabahani (a Tijaniyyah scholar), lorry tires were burnt on the road and men ready on guard with arms to prevent Maikano from entering the city and possibly to kill him. Information quickly got to Maikano who adamantly refused to go back insisting he must fulfill his mission in Tamale.

A combined team of army and police officers were deployed to save the situation from getting worse. Maikano was confined by the military at Kamina barracks whilst the police swooped on the rioting mob arresting many of them in the process. According to narration by Nabahani, Colonel Zuma who was then the Northern Regional Minister ordered an investigation into the lawlessness by the Munchiri and when a search was conducted, many arms and ammunitions were found hidden in the ceiling of Afa Ajura's Mosque at Sakasaka possibly preparing for another attack. As a result of this, Afa Ajura was remanded for two (2) weeks in police custody. Report indicates that he became ill in police custody and was admitted at the Tamale hospital chained to his sick bed with prison guards around to prevent him from escaping.

In an interview with the Ahlus-Sunnah to confirm or otherwise the authenticity of the story, Issah Modoo and Shuaib Alhassan established that indeed such incident did occur between them and the Tijaniyyah. They however dismissed some of the details in the narrations as presented by their counterparts in the Tijaniyyah camp. According to them the youth took the decision to prevent Maikano from entering Tamale as he and his followers did to Afa Ajura and the Ahlus-Sunnah delegates



meant for Prang previously. They added that Afa Ajura and about twenty others including some of the Tijaniyyah adherents were arrested and detained in police custody. They however rejected the allegation of hidden arms in the Mosque describing it as the usual exaggerations of the so called “seers of God”. Shuaib went further to add that Maikano was also brought to the police station and the two sides were made to sign a bond never to fight among themselves again.

#### **3.4.4 The 1997 Attack on Tijaniyyah at Gumani**

On Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> day of December 1997, the Tijaniyyah Muslim group was attacked by the Ahlus-Sunnah while celebrating *maulid-nabih* (birthday of the Prophet) at Gumani, a suburb of Tamale. Narrating the incident Baaba Mussah (a Tijaniyyah scholar) who was the event organizer and in whose home the event took place stated that people had gathered and were waiting for the invited guests to arrive for the commencement of the programme when the Munchir pounced on them with all forms of weapons. He added that one of the attackers who climbed the electricity pole to cut down power supply to the event grounds got electrocuted and died on the electricity pole. Several other people from both sides were injured and a number of moto-bikes belonging to the Tijaniyyah group who attended the occasion were burnt to ashes. According to Baaba Mussah some of the moto-bikes, bicycles and other belongings were also stolen. Tables and chairs were not spared as they were badly damaged by the invading Munchir.

Adding to the information Baba Muhammad Baki (Bachi ku nyan doo), a Tijaniyyah scholar stated that some arrests were made by the police soon after the event. He also alleged that Saeed Abubakar Zakaria, the leader of the Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale escaped to Accra and subsequently left for Canada. The situation in his view

compelled the city authorities to move the annual *maulid* celebrations of Baaba Mussah permanently from Gumani to the Jubilee Park formally known as the Tamale Police Park close to the police station to avert future confrontations. All other major religious activities and gatherings according to him were since limited only to the police park for security cover against detractors.

Tanko Issahaq, the deputy leader of the Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale discarded the wild spread arguments that Saeed Abubakar Zakaria evaded arrest by relocating from Tamale to Accra and later to Canada. He argued further that Accra was and still is part of Ghana such that anybody who commits a crime will not be spared hiding therein. Meanwhile, he confirmed that Saeed Abubakar was invited by the police for interrogation after the Gumani incident. He left Ghana for Canada a year later thus in 1998, a period wide enough for any action to be taken against him if he was indeed guilty. Tanko Issahaq indicated that, the Gumani incident and the like of it in Tamale emanate from the syncretic activities of the Tijaniyyah, most of which constitute immorality under the cover of religion. He added that the innovators kept growing and adding new things into the religion of Islam. He alleged that Maikano had introduced drumming and mixed dancing of male and female fellows into the already un-Islamic *maulid*. The situation according to him rendered many children and even some married women uncontrollable and promiscuous. Tanko Issahaq opines that some people might have taken advantage of the situation at Gumani to steal or destroy properties as alleged by the Nawun Nyarba, but theft and destruction of properties are uncharacteristics of the Ahlus-Sunnah.

In a similar research by Samwini (2006) he tagged the date of the Gumani incident to 1977 and the number of deaths to nine (9). The reasons for the attacks however remain the same by the account of Samwini and the narrations of Baaba Mussah.

This therefore is an indication that they both refer to the same incident that actually occurred in 1997 and which actual death toll was one person with many other people injured. In a follow up interview with Baaba Mussah, he was very emphatic and sure that the event took place in 1997 and not in 1977 as stated by Samwini. Baaba Mussah also alleged that Gumani was not fully established by 1977 and that he, the organizer of the said event (*maulid*) that brought about the problem was not then in Tamale.

#### 3.4.5 The 1998 Clash at Gumbihini

Baaba Mussah indicated that between 1998 and 1999 another clash occurred between the Tijaniyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah groups at Gumbihini a suburb of Tamale. He explained that some residents of Gumbihini who are Tijaniyyah had organized *maulid nabih* to commemorate the birth of the Prophet. When the programme ended, some Tijaniyyah celebrants were attacked on their way home and beaten up by some alleged Ahlus-Sunah members. Information about the attack on their colleagues got to those who were still on the *maulid* grounds who also organized themselves ready for revenge. Many people were injured from both groups and properties destroyed. The consequences could have been disastrous but for the timely intervention of the security personnel who stepped in to rescue the situation and effected some arrests.

When contacted for their view on the said Gumbihini incident, most of the Ahlus-Sunnah *ulama* declined having knowledge of that. However Issah Iddris Modoo stated that it could be one of the numerous petty wrangling between the two groups. He added that many of such instances occurred across the length and breadth of the metropolis and the region so much so that no one can list all of them. He went further to add that in most cases someone somewhere poses a question during the Tijaniyyah

*wahzi* (preaching) either on *salatul-fatih*, *wurd*, spreading of white cloths during *wurd* or *wazifa*, charms, funerals, *maulid*, holiness and spiritual powers of their revered *shuyukh*, *tarbiya* (initiation and mentorship into Tijaniyyah) or any other of their practices that is not in conformity with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Having the preconceived mind that the Ahlus-Sunnah is the only Islamic denomination that boldly and publicly deters and also condemns those practices in favour of true Islamic teachings, they will beat up the questioners and turn round to insult the Ahlus-Sunnah sometimes launching physical attacks on them. Issah Modoo ended up speculating that close to ninety percent of the clashes between the two groups in Tamale were started by the Tijaniyyah who have nothing to preach on, hence, dwell on speeches and songs against or insulting the Ahlus-Sunnah.

#### **3.4.6 Relationship between Ahmadiyyah and Shiah Groups in Tamale**

The Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission and the Shiah constitute the minority Islamic groups in Tamale. The Ahmadiyyah seems to enjoy some numerical advantage over the Shiah which started in the area only in the early 1980s. Relationship between these two groups on principles is cordial despite their doctrinal differences. Be it as it may, the Ahmadiyyah which regards itself as belonging to the Sunni group often condemns the Shiah over some of its beliefs and practices that depart from the rest of the *ummah*. The Ahmadiyyah criticizes the Shiah just like the Tijaniyyah for its belief in mysticism, and separately criticize the Shiah on the sacredness and infallibility of the Shiah *aimah*. The Shiah believes in the *Imamiyah* (Imamate) of the *ahlul-bayt* as being the rightful successors of the Prophet. The Shiah unlike other Muslim groups differ in the way it performs *alwalla* (blution), *ahzan* (calling for prayers) and *salat* (Prayers). They also believe in the practice of *mut'a* (temporal marriage).

Interactions with both leaderships of these Islamic groups in Tamale reveal that they have not had any verbal or physical discord before. Faheem Ahmad Khadim, leader of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission in Northern Region and Abdul-Mumin Dalwu, leader of the Shiah group in Tamale both say they respect each others views and do positive criticism of each other only when necessary but that is devoid of insults. None of these leaders seem to remember any wrangling or physical confrontations between their two groups in Tamale.

The seeming absence of rivalries or confrontations between these two Islamic groups in Tamale could be due to their relatively small sizes. Also, everything seems to be fine with them because of the quality of their leadership. The Shiah is well known in Tamale for its astute Islamic knowledge and penchant for research while the Ahmadiyyah is noted for its banch of scholars and professionals in all sectors of life. The combination of these factors may seem to influence relations between them and also with the others.

#### **3.4.7 Other Complicated Disturbances**

There have been many other Chieftaincy and political disturbances that had some form of complications with the intra-religious conflicts in Tamale. Among them was the killing of the overlord of Dagban, Ya Na Yakubu Andani II and fourty others on the 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2002 at Yendi. The unfortunate situation led to the widespread of violence across Dagban and even beyond. The Ya Na Yakubu was alleged to have been murdered by the Abudu royal faction of Dagban kingdom. Meanwhile the Abudu have close links with the Tijaniyyah and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) under whose administration the incident occurred.



According to Abdullai Baba a resident of Tamale, few days after the death of the Ya Na and fourty others, Tamale experienced violent clashes between the Andani and Abudu factions and many Andanis who were with the NPP or the Tijaniyyah reversed to the NDC and the Ahlus-Sunnah due to anger or for fear of their lives. Several houses belonging to the Abudu or Tijaniyyah or NPP were burnt down and people were firing gun shots indiscriminately in the metropolis. Subsequently, a dusk-to-dawn curfew that lasted for two years was imposed on Tamale and its surroundings.

Similarly, on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 Warizehi and Waterworks both suburbs of Tamale received their share of frequent violent conflicts in the metropolis. According to a resident of Warizehi Alhassan Tahiru, there were sporadic shootings in the areas immediately after votes counting at the polling stations for the presidential election. The incident which left two people wounded through gunshots was said to have been triggered by alleged vote rigging. The timely intervention of combined team of police and military brought the situation under control.

According to Alhassan the police later accused the late Alhaji Issah Mobila, the then Northern Regional CPP chairman and a very strong Ahlus-Sunnah of harboring and distributing arms to the youth to foment trouble. He voluntarily reported himself to the police where he was detained and later transferred to Kamina barracks only to meet his untimely death in the hands of the military on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2004.

Again from the Radio Savannah News Bulletin, of Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Gumbihini and Choggu, both suburbs of Tamale witnessed a horrible scene when about seven houses were burnt down rendering many people homeless. According to the report, the Northern Regional Director of National Disaster Management

Organisation (NADMO), Bawa Baako Alhassan who belongs to the NPP and also a strong Tijaniyyah adherent had his house and three Toyota Pick-ups burnt beyond recognition. His wife also sustained cutlass wounds and had to be flown to the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra. The scuffle was been triggered by a New Patriotic Party activist who purportedly passed a derogatory remark about the ruling NDC in one of the Radio Stations in Tamale. Some people were arrested in connection of the incident and arraigned before court. The Radio Reports indicated that the Deputy Regional Commander of Police, ACP Patrick Sarpong blamed the incident and recklessness on the part of some journalists who do very little to ensure sanity during phone-in programmes.

Later in the same year 2009, yet another incident occurred in Tamale involving the political parties, chieftaincy divide and the religious denominations. According to the Savannah News Bulletin, on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, a group of irate youth attacked the offices of the Metropolitan Health Insurance Scheme and the Coordinating Council of the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) calling for the resignation of the staff most of who were purported to be NPP and for that matter Abudus and Tijanis. The angry youth assaulted the staff and locked up the offices. The then coordinator of the National Youth Employment programme for Tamale Central, Karim Yussif was wounded in the process and had to be rushed to Tamale West Hospital for treatment. An eye witness, Haruna Iddrisu who was also the coordinator of the National Youth Employment for Tamale North, said that at about 9:00 o'clock in the morning, he and his colleagues were in their offices issuing forms to the personnel of NYEP when suddenly, the group arrived on the scene and identified themselves as NDC activists who had come to take over from the coordinators.

According to Haruna he and his colleagues demanded to know who authorized them to take over from them and that angered the visitors who started beating them.

Furthermore, according to Diamond Radio Break Fast News of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 2010, there was a clash between some supporters of the ruling NDC who are mostly believed to be Andanis or Ahlus-Sunnah and the opposition NPP youth group at Choggu-Mmanayili, a suburb of Tamale. The Assembly man of the area, Suleimana Issah disclosed in an interview that three people sustained gunshot wounds and were taken to hospital for treatment. The dispute started when the NPP Youth group in the area was alleged to have tried to prevent the NDC Youth group from removing the silt in the gutters around the shed of the NPP Youth Group in the area. Dissilting of the gutters was said to be awarded to the NDC Youth Group on contract.

To confirm the authenticity of these stories and their links to the political Parties and the royal clans, Abdul-Salam Ahmad, Northern Regional Imam and a Tijani as well as Issah Iddriss Modoo an Imam of the Ahlus-Sunnah respectively attested to the stories and the link of the Political Parties to the religious groups and the royal clans. They added that such is a very worrying phenomenon that makes Tamale volatile all the time. Issah Modoo added that the political parties are responsible for such divisions as they do so to gain the votes of the people. The *aimah* went further to infer that successive governments in Ghana right from Nkrumah's CPP to the present NDC toyed with the affairs of Dagban either by enskinning or deskinning some Ya Na to satisfy their selfish political desires.

### 3.4.8 Other Verbal Confrontations among Muslim Groups in Tamale

From the various interviews held with leaders of the Islamic groups in Tamale no year passes without tension being created as a result of verbal confrontations among the groups. It seems clear from the discussions in (3.4.1 to 3.4.6) that all the physical confrontations transpired only between the Tijaniya and the Ahlus-Sunnah otherwise known as the Nawun Nyarba or Faila and the Munchir. However with the verbal confrontations all the four Islamic groups are culpable.

For instance, every year during the month of *Ramadan* individual *mallamai* and their opinions are being attacked by other *mallamai*. In return they also fire back leading to wide spread tensions among their followers. It seems that since the schism in the 1960s, someone in the opposite denomination must be insulted directly or indirectly in every organized *da'awah*. In preaching during outdoorings, weddings, funerals, public *da'awah*, weekly and annual *tafasir* some *ulama* attack the beliefs of others. Shuaib Alhassan, a leading Ahlus-Sunnah scholar and the only preacher in Hausa, (a popular and widely spoken language by most Muslims besides Dagbanli, the local language of the people of Tamale), cited several instances where Afa Ajura and other Ahlus-Sunnah scholars were insulted or scorned by the Tijaniyyah and still do in most of their songs. He quoted some few lines of such songs as follow:

Munchiri waawa yaayi hasara.....  
Da doogon jemu irin na bunsuru....  
Hal da kaaton tumbi chike da haramu...  
Laailaa ha illa llahu, Laailah ha illa llah!!

This song is in Hausa which I have transliterated into English. It's nearest meaning in English is:

Munchiri is a fool and will perish.....  
With his long beard like a he goat.....  
And even with big potbelly filled with unlawful food...  
No god but Allah...No god but Allah!!(Chorus line)

Despite this clear example of the Tijaniyyah song that castigates the Ahlus-Sunnah *ulama*, the Tijaniyyah still claims and accuses the Ahlus-Sunnah of starting all the confrontations between them. A Tijaniyyah scholar, Baba Muhammad Baki who is nicknamed *bachu ku nyan doo* meaning in Dagbanli (words can't overpower a man) indicated that Tijaniyyah leaders and *ulama* of all pedigree; international, national and local are insulted by the Ahlus-Sunnah. He added further that Sheikh Ahmad Tijani (the founder of the Tijaniyyah order), Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, Sheikh Abdullai Maikano, Mallam Muntaka Zakaria, Sheikh Hamza Muntaka, Imam Rashid Hussain down to their students are chastised and branded liars, thieves and other repulsive and derogatory names by the Ahlul-Sunnah.

Reference can be made of the much talked about verbal exchanges between Ibrahim Basha and Rashid Hussain some years back. In his views, Shuaib Alhassan (Ahlus-Sunnah scholar) thinks that particular incident was very worrying and embarrassing since the two combatants were knowledgeable grownups who command a lot of respect and backing. When Basha was questioned, he claimed Rashid Hussain (Imam Rashid) was his close friend with whom he shared some good moments, recalling the warm reception accorded him by Rashid Hussain when they met in London. To confirm their friendship Basha also related the active role he personally played on behalf of his friend during his wedding when Rashid was still abroad.

According to Basha, they remained good friends until Rashid begun making some claims and passing wrong *fatwa* (religious verdicts). He wondered what *mazhab* (school of thought) Rashid was actually trying to propagate. For example, Rashid Hussain teaches that Muslims should not rinse their mouths nor wash their feet during ablution. Fasting should be broken only deep into the night. He also wears a strange kind of *rawani* (turban) and claims to possess and control *jinni* (spirits). "I



couldn't tell from his actions and sayings whether he was a Shiah, Naqshabandiyya, Qur'aniyu or a Tijaniyyah", Basha concluded.

When contacted on the matter, Abdul-Rashid Ahmad an aid to Imam Rashid Hussain indicated that the whole matter boils down to jealousy. He explained that God sends a *kutub* (Reformer/Genius) every century to clarify the religion. According to him any false claimant of that status of *kutub* dies immediately after making such claims. As such, many scholars across the world had faced the wrath of God for faking to be *kutub*. Hence, the fact that Imam Rashid did not die but still lives after claiming *kutubiya* for a decade now proves that he is a real *kutub*.

A *kutub* is someone endowed by Allah with knowledge, power and ability to see beyond the ordinary. Abdul-Rashid added that Imam Rashid makes his *fatwa* but does not compel anybody to believe or follow the rulings. Moreover, all the teachings and practices of Imam Rashid do not contradict the Qur'an and Sunnah. Abdul-Rashid thinks many *ulama* in Tamale including Basha envy Imam Rashid because he is the *kutub zaman* (Genius of the generation). He challenged their critics to revisit the verses of the Qur'an on ablution, *salat*, fasting, healing and other issues on which they criticise Imam Rashid. Abdul-Rashid commended Imam Rashid Hussein on his role at finding solution to the problems with Basha, an action Basha himself commended Imam Rashid on. All attempts for the researcher to personally meet with Imam Rashid failed due to his constant travels.

Even though the Ahmadiyyah claims it has no troubles with any Islamic group, its utterances do not only breed internal but also external tension, as it preaches like the Ahlus-Sunnah against most Tijaniyyah practices and condemns Christianity outrightly. The Maulvi in Charge of Northern Region, Faheem Ahmad Khadim

disclosed in an interview that they remain focused and will not be disrupted by any group. He added that the Ahmadiyyah and its adherents live in peace with all Muslim groups in Tamale and elsewhere. To prove its desire for peaceful co-existence with the others, the Ahmadiyyah extends invitations to all other groups when they are having any programme. According to Faheem, most of the groups turn down the invitations and never reply to the Mission let alone attend the programmes. Baba Suleiman, a leading member of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission thinks it is wrong for Muslims to fight against one another over doctrinal differences when the real battle against perpetrators of falsehood in sister religions are left unattended. He admitted knowledge of the countless accusations labeled against the Mission but says judgment is for Allah to make and not human beings.

The Shiah group in Tamale thinks it is constantly intimidated and branded fake and infidel by the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'a group. A group of Shiah students in Tamale lamented in a discussion as being extremely discriminated against by many Muslims who call them *kufar* (infidels) and would not even join them in any religious practice. The leader of the Shiah, Abdul-Mumim Dalwu cited a recent example of what he termed the unfortunate utterances of the Ahlus-Sunnah. Dalwu explained that in August, 2010, during *tafsir* (commentary of the Qur'an in the month of *Ramadan*) Saeed Abubakar-leader of the Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale declared that the Shiah are not Muslims and so will all go to *jahanam* (hell fire).

In response Dalwu challenged him (Saeed) to a *mubahala* (invocations for Allah's curse on the wrong party) which he never responded to. Rashid Hussain and other scholars added their voices to the condemnations of Saeed's claims. For the remaining days of *Ramadan* that issue remained the subject of discussions where scholars, young and old from both sides attacked one another. The atmosphere was

so heated that Haruna Friday, the Metropolitan Chief Executive, the Traditional Chiefs and other *ulama* had to intervene to avoid clashes between the two groups. The Tijaniyyah, especially the Rashidiyyah Mosque of Imam Rashid was almost implicated into the disagreement due to the amiable relation it has with the Shiah group in Tamale. Relationship between the Shia and Rashidiyyah is so cordial that their leadership as well as their adherents do almost everything in common.

The proliferation of Frequency Modulation (FM) Radio stations in Tamale seem to heighten the already volatile situation of the Metropolis as the radio stations transmit information far and fast. Some radio stations are themselves allegedly involved in the crisis as they seem openly to sympathize with some particular religious groups, political groups or chieftaincy divides mostly broadcasting mainly their programmes. As such, some radio stations in Tamale are associated with either Tijaniyyah and New Patriotic Party on one hand or the Ahlus-Sunnah and the National Democratic Congress on the other hand. For example Shaibu Sadiq, a presenter of Radio North Star claimed in an interview that their station is purported to favour the Tijaniyyah, the New Patriotic Party and the Abudu clan because the owner of the station in the person of the former Vice President of Ghana, Alhaji Aliu Mahama is perceived to belong to those entities. Similarly, Radio Justice owned by Francis Tetteh Justice who is an Ewe and an overt supporter of the NDC is believed to favour the Ahlus-Sunnah, National Democratic Congress and the Andanis due to its owner's ties with the said entities. Other Radio Stations in the city are accorded partial affiliations to the various groups or opposition to the groups based on the composition of their programmes and the comments made therein from time to time.

### 3.4.9 Internal Confrontations among Muslim Groups in Tamale

Conflicts among Muslims in Tamale are not limited only to different groups but often members of the same group turn up against each other thereby creating factions within groups. The phenomenon is very distinct among the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Tijaniyyah groups in Tamale and elsewhere. In Tamale such internal rivalries seem to possess the tendency to breed perpetual wranglings, criticism, and competition among Muslims than the inter-denominational violence is capable of doing. The situation seems to be swelling daily thus heightening tensions among Muslims and the vulnerability of Tamale and the region.

Among the Tijaniyyah group in Tamale, adherents loyal to Sheikh Abdullai Maikano and those loyal to Sheikh Abdul-Wadud Haruna popularly known as Ceissey always compete for supremacy. They are ultimately distinguishing themselves from each other with different conflicting sets of teachings that mostly lead to violence. The Maikano faction of the Tijaniyyah tolerate drumming and dancing alongside *zikr* widely referred to in Hausa as *akwashi rawa* meaning (let's go dancing) while the Ceissey faction discourages drumming and dancing. Muhammad Habibu-Llah, a young Tijaniyyah devotee and *madaha* (singer of praises) disclosed that some Tijaniyyah adherents named themselves as Faila and Munchir-Faila. He explains that, followers of Maikano who love singing, drumming and dancing are the Faila also known as the Jallo. The others who discourage drumming and dancing are the Munchir-Faila (critics of Faila) otherwise called the Ceissey. According to Habibu-Llah most of their songs critic the other faction and praise only people on their camps directly or proverbially. He added that, whether with or without drums, Tijaniyyah devotees can identify the side of a *madaha* by his songs and the names mentioned in them.

According to Abdul-Rashid Ahmad, an Imam and secretary at the Salawatiyyah grand Mosque at Gumani, attendants of annual *maulid* at Prang mainly belong to the Jallo or Maikano faction while annual congregations for Abdul-Wadud Haruna Ceissey's *maulid* gradually gain grounds and popularity in Kumasi. Tijaniyyah scholars in Tamale seem divided along these two lines that came out of leadership struggles between Maikano and Abbdul-Wadud and now between Abdul-Wadud and Ahmad Abdul-Faidi, the elder son and *khalifah* (successor) of the late Maikano. Variations between the two Tijaniyyah blocs include wearing dread-locks or bushy hair, *zikr* before commencing *salat* (daily prayers), drumming and dancing, arguments over who is the legitimate leader of the order in Ghana, who has more knowledge than the other, whose parents contributed most to the establishment and sustenance of the group in Ghana and the sub region among others. The major consequences of such wrangling include pervasions of disunity, divisions, rivalries and infighting that weaken the group.

Similarly according to Hussein Ja'afar (secretary of Imamia Mission), the situation among the Ahlus-Sunnah is not any different from that of the Tijaniyyah brotherhood as they are also split over leadership. Among the Ahlus-Sunnah group in Tamale are those loyal to Saeed Abubakar Zakaria and those loyal to Tanko Issahaq with Ibrahim Basha's faction steadily becoming a third force. Both Saeed and Tanko were bright students of Afa Ajura from the Ambariyyah Institute and loyal members of the Sakasaka Mosque. Family ties and tribal sentiments nearly marred relationship within the Ambariyyah fraternity in the wake of selecting a successor to Afa Ajura. Tanko Issahaq who is a Dagbamba and a direct relative of the late leader had a following while Saeed Abubakar Zakaria is a Mamprusi, brightest and most loyal follower of the late Ahlus-Sunnah leader also had backing of the youth. This internal



leadership straggle within the Sakasaka Mosque was amicably resolved. In the views of Shuaib Alhassan, an elder of the Sakasaka Mosque, the long struggles between Saeed Abubakar Zakaria and Tanko Issahaq over succession to Afa Ajura seem to have now settled with Saeed becoming the leader deputised by Tanko. The division within the Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale is now between the Ambariyyah Mosque of Afa Ajura and the Masjid Bayan of Ustaz Basha.

The main Ahlus-Sunnah group at Sakasaka seems to perceive Basha as a traitor or a defector. Explaining this point Shuaib Alhassan alleged that Afa Ajura brought Basha from Kumasi to assist him run his school. After teaching for about three years, Basha resigned from Ambariyyah to establish his own Nuuriyyah School at Dakpema which later moved to Zango. Shuaib added that Basha then joined the Tijaniyyah group against Afa Ajura who brought him to Tamale. After some period with the Tijaniyyah he defected again to join the Shiah group where he gained financial assistance to build his present school structures at Bilpiela coupled with a new abode and Mosque (Masjid Bayan) meaning (Mosque of explanation or enlightenment) at Bayan Waya, a suburb of Tamale.

However, Ibrahim Basha in a separate interview debunked all the allegations leveled against him saying he came back to Tamale because he considered the time was right for him to make impact on his own people after many years of seeking knowledge outside home. He added that his coming home with Afa Ajura only coincided with his desire and wishes to return home. Moreover, he claims he served Afa Ajura diligently and even taught most of those who criticise him today like Saeed Abubakar who is the present leader of the Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale. Basha expressed regret for joining the Tijaniyyah group out of ignorance, a group he found later to be full of syncretism and ignorance of the highest order. He added that majority of the

Tijaniyyah do not learn but confine themselves in their rooms doing *tibbu* (Dagbanli: mystical acts) thereby left with scanty knowledge with which they confuse people by doing wrong interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Ibrahim Basha however denied ever joining the Shiah at any stage in his life let alone making gains from them. He enumerated among other things six sensitive issues he has in variation with the Ahlus-Sunnah group at Sakasaka. He listed the varying issues as:

- a. Differences in days of commencing and ending Ramadan fasting
- b. *Awalu sa'at* ,meaning beginning of time (intervals within which to perform *Salat*)
- c. Wedding contracts on Sundays (Ambariyyah closes its Mosque on Sundays)
- d. Fundamentals of *nika'ah* (weddings or marriage)
- e. Refusal to school or work on Thursdays and on Fridays
- f. Mode of *da'awah* (preaching) devoid of compulsion and insults

Despite the differences Basha has and the criticisms he continuously attracts from the Tijaniyyah, the Ahlus-Sunnah of Ambariyyah and other Muslim groups in Tamale, he still seems to be popular among Muslims in the Metropolis. His fame and popularity might have come from his eloquence coupled with his regular series of weekly preaching on vast Islamic issues and the annual *tafsir* broadcast on most radio stations in Tamale.

A classic example of intra-denominational troubles among the Ahlus-Sunnah is the seeming continual wranglings between some *ulama* and students of Ambariyyah Institute on one hand and Murtada Hussein Masaka (former student of Ambariyyah and now a close ally to Basha) on the other hand. According to Dasana Wumbe an English teacher at the institute, Murtada who is now in the camp of Basha was a

bright student of Ambariyyah Institute who felt cheated by the *ulama* on his ticket or scholarship to study in Saudi Arabia. He has since broke away and never seems to relate well with some *ulama* and students of the Institute. Dasana added that Murtada and one of his former Ambariyyah school mate, Mashud Muhammad now reside in the same area, Kalpohin but do not greet each other whenever they meet. Those actions according to Dasana manifest the rivalries and in-flightings within the Ahlus-Sunnah, especially among some *ulama* of Ambariyyah and Masjid Bayan. Those actions and attitudes are capable of fueling trouble between the groups at the slightest provocation.

Murtada Hussein conceded having some squabbles with the authorities of Ambariyyah but that according to him was the thing of the past, long forgotten. He however thinks studying in Saudi is good but it is not the ultimate, and that students can succeed anywhere provided they are serious with their studies. He concluded with the confession that no human being is perfect and so not everybody will be happy with what he does or says all the time. Hence some will praise him and others will criticize him.

Likewise, a model of Intra-Tijaniyyah chaos was a case in the last ten days of Ramadan 2010 between Muhammed Baba Gbetobu and Luqman Bamba over a Dagbanli translated Qur'an. Bamba is said to have persistently criticized the translation of the Qur'an into Dagbanli by Baba Gbetobu. Gbetobu got angered by Bamba's prolonged rebuke and ridicule of his scholarly works and went live on radio North Star and lambasted Bamba. Gbetobu said among other things:

.....I am and will always be better than you regarding many things. You are nobody but a bustard. You are a liar, a fraudster, an adulterer and a wife snatcher. We are aware you duped many people of their wealth claiming to fortify them against all odds to smuggle cocaine into Europe. Most of such people are still languishing in jails after you heartlessly defrauded them. At least, I can translate the Qur'an into Dagbanli. As for you, even when you are given ten years you cannot do what I have done.....

It took the intervention of many religious and political leaders in Tamale to calm Bamba down and to restrain him from responding in retaliation to Gbetobu's comments. However, the next day during his *tafsir*, Bamba clarified that the translation work by Gbetobu was full of errors. Several attempts to sit with him for corrections yielded no result yet he went ahead to launch the book with those errors. Bamba added that, he respected the views and concerns of all the elders who spoke to him on the matter and that he will allow the matter to rest.

The said incident did not only mar relations between these two Tijaniyyah *ulama* alone but their families as well. Amin Bamba, a brother of Luqman Bamba expressed discontent in the regrettable manner the matter was handled. Amin Bamba conceded the work was indeed problematic but was also quick to rebuke his own brother for his role in the discord. He was however very worried over some comments of Gbetobu especially the one that addressed the Bamba family, saying the allegation was unfounded.

This particular discord between Gbetobu and Bamba brings to light the extent to which Tijaniyyah *ulama* engage in mysticism and the negative effects of such practices on people in general. If the allegation of Gbetobu is something to go by, then the indictment of Tijaniyyah and Shia by the Ahlus Sunnah on mysticism is in the right direction. The Ahlus Sunnah condemns the manufacture and usage of charms and also the use of the Qur'an for magico-religious purposes because they promote social vices like armed robbery and drug trafficking as alleged by Gbetobu.

In general, Luqman Bamba seems to be in the bad books of many people including his own Tijaniyyah colleagues in Tamale for being a braggart and insolent to other scholars. A specific case in question was his alleged public rudeness to Rashid Hussain of the Salawatiyyah Mosque who is said to have mentored him to the extent of crowning him with a turban, a sign of ultimate blessings in the Tijaniyyah order.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

From the preceding discussions, two broad issues seem to stand out for observation. First, is that the conflicts in Tamale are caused by many unjustifiable reasons which are aimed at satisfying the selfish desires of some leaders. The various conflicts listed in (3.4.1 to 3.4.5) go to attest that some religious leaders hide behind the Qur'an and Sunnah to incite violence among Muslims. In any case if Islam is against innovations it did not decree anywhere that those who innovate should be killed. The Qur'an rather urges Muslims to unite and eschew separations. Also wisdom and good language should be employed when inviting to Islam. It is therefore very clear from the above that the Qur'an which is the words of God urges Muslims to be united and persuasive in their utterances with each other and not to engage themselves in violence and disunity.

The second issue from the chapter shows that little is being done to put to an end the canker of continuous violence among Muslims and to avert further crisis in future. Whether by fate or by design some politicians and scholars gainfully profit from the intertwined religious, political and chieftaincy conflicts in the Northern Region. The fact that politicians in Tamale metropolis succeed not by virtue of hard work but just on Abudu and Andani ties depict their gains on the conflict situations. The next



chapter will attempt to determine the actual causes and effects of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

#### 4.1 Introduction

Thus far we have been discussing the history of the various events in the development of Islam and Islamic denominations, as well as the elements that marked the beginning of intra-Muslim conflicts in Tamale. Intra-religious conflicts in Tamale whose foundation was laid during the visit of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse in 1952 as shown in chapter three of this study, continued in intensity during the 1960s to the present.

The aim in this chapter is to analyze all the issues that emerged from the research in attempt to determine the causes and effects of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. It will address among other things, the views, the opinions, the practices, and the utterances of the various denominations relating to the discussions based on convergent and divergent analysis of the issues. The chapter will further examine some reconciliation measures to manage the conflicts in Tamale.

#### 4.2 Causes of Intra-Religious Conflicts among Muslims in Tamale

The *ulama* from the four Islamic groups outlined in the study attribute different reasons that account for violence among Muslims in Tamale metropolis. Among the various reasons collated from numerous interviews, discussions and observations include syncretism, doctrinal differences, quest for leadership, political influence, chieftaincy inclinations, socio-cultural factors, foreign influence, inappropriate *da'awah* or *tabligh* methods and lack of research among other issues.

#### 4.2.1 Syncretism as a Cause of Conflict among Muslims in Tamale

The Ahlus-Sunnah consistently accuses the Tijaniyyah of introducing new things into Islam. They believe such innovations by the Tijaniyyah constitute deliberate attempts to undermine the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Ahlus-Sunnah adds that introduction of things like, performing funerals, Celebrating *Maulid nabih* (birthday of the Prophet), participation in *wurd* (Tijaniyyah litany), recitation of *salatul-fatih* (special Tijaniyyah prayer) and *dalaailul-khairat* ((special book in praise of the Prophet), singing and dancing and utilization of charms are semblance of African traditional customs which are *bid'a* (innovations) and *shirk* (polytheism) and should be condemned outright before they pollute Islam. Allowing such grievous acts to be practiced by Muslims manifest weak faith, which is by itself condemnable by Islam.

Responding on the accusations of those Tijaniyyah practices that seen syncretic to the Ahlus-Sunnah, Hussein Zakaria, a leading scholar of the Tijaniyyah in Tamale said, such accusations emanate purely from little comprehension of the *shariah* (Islamic law) and the deliberate refusal of some Ahlus-Sunnah scholars to tell the truth for the fear of losing some of their followers. He in turn stated it is rather the Ahlus-Sunnah's condemnation of virtually everything by the Tijaniyyah that constitute *shirk* or *bid'a*. The Tijaniyyah have basis for all their practices from the Qur'an and Sunnah. They also think those practices do not violate the right of anybody but rather benefit the people. Hence condemning, chastising and denigrating those acts by the Ahlus-Sunnah depict their little understanding of Islam.

It appears clearly that both denominations depend on the Qur'an and Sunnah to justify their actions. At this point we shall examine some of the practices under contention to determine how they led Muslims into confrontations in Tamale.

#### **4.2.2. The Wurd, Salat-ul-Fatih and Tarbiyah**

Tijaniyyah practices such as *wurd*, *salatul-fatih* and *tarbiyah* as discussed in (2.6) above have attracted much criticism from the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Ahmadiyyah Muslim groups. *Wurd* according to Al-Hussein is a Tijaniyyah spiritual practice where they congregate round a white cloth repeating some verses of the Qur'an and praises to the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). He added that this formular was given to Sheikh Ahmad Tijani by the Prophet Muhammad in a dream. The litany consists of reciting the first chapter of the Qur'an once, *Istigfar* (seeking forgiveness) 30 times, *Salatul-Fatih* 50 times and *Jawharatul-Kamal* (also a Tjaniyyah special prayer) 12 times. After which supplication is made for the Prophet, their *Shuyukh* (Scholars), their deceased relatives, themselves and disperse. The *Tarbiyah* is an act where a believer is initiated in the *wurd* by a scholar who will guide him to higher spiritual heights. See appendix IV and V for the full texts of these Tijaniyyah special prayers.

The issues with this Tijaniyyah practice and therefore the concerns of the Ahlus-Sunnis and Ahmadiyyah are that:

- i. The Prophet has never done such a thing neither has he recommended it for his *ummah*.
- ii. In the process of that *wurd* a white cloth is spread, around which the Tijaniyyah worshippers sit to do their recitations. Such in the views of the Ahlus-Sunnah is an occult act.

- iii. Tijaniyyah prayers recited during the *wurd* thus, the *jawhara* and *salatul-fatih* are not authentic prayers because they are innovations brought by the *Shuyukh*.
- iv. The worse of the issues relating to the *wurd* was that, Tijaniyyah scholars demanded money from people before initiating them, thus making financial gains before ushering and mentoring people into the path. To the Ahlus-Sunnah, these are unacceptable.

The *wurd* in its entirety has been condemned by the Ahlus-Sunnah describing it and its element as *shirk* or *bid'a*. Their argument is that if people don't pay money to become Muslims why should they pay money to become Tijaniyyah? Those are the concerns of the Ahlus-Sunnah. They insist that collecting money from adherents for whatever reason in relation to initiations into the brotherhood is an act of extortion amounting to the sale of the religion, condemned in the Qur'an (2:41&174).

And believe in what I reveal, confirming the revelation which is with you,  
and be not the first to reject Faith therein, nor sell My Signs for a small price;  
and fear Me, and Me alone. (Qur'an 2:41)

Those who conceal Allah's revelations in the Book, and purchase for them a  
miserable profit,- they swallow into themselves naught but Fire; Allah will not  
address them on the Day of Resurrection. Nor purify them: Grievous will be  
their penalty. (Qur'an 2: 174)

Another issue raised against the *wurd* is the use of loud speakers in the process that disturbs the peace of neighbours. Issah Iddris Modoo (Ahlus-Sunnah scholar) lamented that residents of Gumani and other places where Tijaniyyah Mosques are located complain bitterly of continues and unnecessary noise coming from loud speakers as the Tijaniyyah sing their *zikr* and perform *wurd* every evening. He added



that Tijaniyyah practices did not start now, and that when they were kids some elders used to converge in Mosques after dawn prayers and put out all the lights. It was latter they got to understand what the elders were doing in those Mosques was *wurd*. However, in this recent time the practice of *wurd* has changed with many additions of songs, and even “raps” during the “*ibaadah*” (worship) and the use of loud speakers. In his views the best way to supplicate is quietly since it is not *fard* (a compulsory act) so that others must not be disturbed in the process.

Issah Modoo is of the view that it is not really necessary for the Tijaniyyah to shout through loud speakers before God can hear them. Thus, the practice must be looked at a second time to remove elements that make it a social quandary in addition to the religious tensions it already creates. The attempts by the Ahlus-Sunnah to address these lapses of Tijaniyyah *wurd* might have not been done well leading to many violent clashes among Muslims in Tamale. The 1969 and the 1976 clashes described in (3.4.1 and 3.4.2) were as a result of such practices.

From the preceding arguments on *wurd*, it is obvious that the act eventhough not decreed in the Qur'an or the Sunnah as argued by the Ahlus-Sunnah; does not violate the right of anybody. Through dialogues the two parties should be able to understand and tolerate each other since the practice have come to stay and no amount of condemnation or violence can end it. *Wurd* is not only practiced by the elderly, the youth and even children have interest in it. It is also important for the adherents to moderate their actions so as not to disturb other residents since Tamale is a metropolis with diverse religious inclination.

#### 4.2.3 The Manufacture of Charms or Amulets and Exorcism of Jinni and Witchcraft

The Tijaniyyah being a Sufi group believes strongly in spirituality and the efficacy of using the Qur'an to solve diverse needs of humanity. The Tijaniyyah scholars as a result of this belief engage in many acts of healing and protection to people who come to them for help. Most Tijaniyyah scholars go into *halwa* (seclusion) where they pray to the point of falling into trance. In those rooms designated for *halwa* they have many objects like the sand, stones, cowries, *tasbaha* (rosary), the Qur'an, *dalaailul-khairat* (a special book for prayers and praises to the Prophets), *anlo* (wooden or metal slates) and other things such as perfumes and inscents which they use to make charms and amulets for willing clients. In those rooms they also exorcise people who are possessed by Jinn and witchcraft.

Some Tijaniyyah *ulama* (scholars) claim to have knowledge into the past and the future predicament of people who visit them. They then, depending on the problems found, prepare some charms to protect or enhance the fortune of those people. They sometimes write some verses of the Qur'an on the wooden or metal slates and wash them for their clients to drink. In addition they write those verses on pieces of paper which are folded and made into talismans and amulets sown with animal skins or wrapped with threads of different colours. The products are mostly worn around the neck, waist and arms or hanged in rooms, stores or sometimes buried at particular places to achieve results.

The Ahlus-Sunnah and the Ahmadiyyah vehemently condemn these practices and likened them to the indigenous Dagban traditional beliefs and practices discussed in (2.3) leading to violent clashes among the groups in Tamale. Indeed such practices

have negative impact as beneficiaries of such magical powers sometimes use them to perpetrate evil and vices like causing divorce, armed robbery, *Sakawa* (internet fraud) and others. Many Tijaniyyah youth also depend on such practices as a source of income to the detriment of their education. Engagement in the above practices therefore renders many Tijaniyyah adherents ignorant of their own religion.

However, the Tijaniyyah adherents find scripture and historical evidence to defend their actions. Al-Hussein Zakaria relates that Allah in the Qur'an assures healing to believers in verses like Qur'an (17:82) and Qur'an (41:44). Thus, the Prophet used the Qur'an personally to free himself from evils when according to Ibn Kathir's commentary to the Holy Qur'an; He was put under a spell which was in the form of charm placed under a rock in a well. In that case Allah guided him to liberate himself from the spell by reciting Qur'an chapter 113 and 114. The argument is that, if the Prophet himself could go through such experience how much less ordinary human beings? And if Allah instructed him to liberate himself from the spell with verses of the Qur'an why then should the application of the Qur'an in healing be a worry to the Ahlus-Sunnah and Ahmadis? To the Tijaniyyah, the lessons in those verses are that evil exist and the Qur'an is a remedy to all evils as well as healing of all illnesses.

It is obvious that everything has its good and bad sides or its advantages and disadvantages, likewise the manufacture of charms by the Tijaniyyah denomination in Tamale. Many beneficiaries of the charms are those who use them to protect themselves and to enhance their livelihood. In this vain, it will be unwise to condemn the practice because it is useful to society. However, some practitioners and beneficiaries use the charms to cause harm to others and to enhance vices like murder, fraud, robbery and drug trafficking. This usage is wrong and could affect

the social harmony hence need to be checked. In effect the manufacture of charms is not utterly a bad thing but an act that requires monitoring and fear of God.

#### 4.2.4 Maulidin Nabih

*Maulid* is the annual celebration of the Prophet's birth anniversary by Tijaniyyah Muslims in Tamale and elsewhere. In the past the occasion was marked by *tafsir*, recitations of the Qur'an, poems and history in honour of the Prophet. However of late, the occasion is characterised with singing, drumming and dancing of both sexes. This therefore attracted further condemnation from other Muslim groups and even some members of the Tijaniyyah itself leading to many clashes like those of Gumani and Gumbihini discussed in (3.4.4 and 3.4.5).

In Tamale the celebration of *maulid* corresponds with *Damba*, a traditional festival of the Dagbamba people making it difficult to separate the traditional practices from the religious ones. This marriage between Islam and the traditional customs has led to the loss of the religious aspects of *maulid*. In recent times *maulid* has taken a new trend when individual *mallamai* organise their personal *mawalid* (plural of *maulid*) on different dates and venues throughout the year. The question many people ask is whether the practice, with the importance attached to it by the Tijaniyyah is Islamic at all? This question arises because there is no single verse or *hadith* or even any historical evidence to prove that the Prophet or his companions celebrated *maulid*. That is the more reason why the Ahmadiyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah describe the practice as *bid'a* and the latter even went further to physically battle the Tijaniyyah in attempt to end it.

Meanwhile when the Ahlus-Sunnah and Ahmadiyyah are busy condemning the practice, the Tijaniyyah continue giving it publicity and making it a national Islamic

event, a platform to seek the welfare of the entire Ghanaian Muslims. Largely the Tijaniyyah's response to the condemnations of *maulid* is centered on logic and the benefits it brings to the *ummah*. They argue that if people could celebrate their lives and those of their loved ones, why should the celebration of the life of the most important person in the world be a problem? To the musical aspects of the occasion purported to be introduced by the late Mallam Abdulai Maikano of Prang, some Tijaniyyah celebrants argue it is the desire of the youth and meant to attract them to the words of God. Despite the controversies, some practitioners defend their actions with religious proofs construed from the Qur'an, Sunnah and *taarihi* (history) as well.

In a counter accusation, the Tijaniyyah also blame the Ahlus-Sunnah of practices that are alien to pure and orthodox Islam. According to Rashid Hussain (Sheikh Salawatiyyah) in one of his *tafsir* in Tamale, the Ahlus-Sunnah annual conventions held in regional capitals across the country can be considered as the worse form of *bid'a* than the *maulid*. Salawatiyyahh argued that the Prophet never organized any convention neither has he anywhere in his *Sunnah* or *hadith* encouraged such conventions. Therefore going by the analogy of the Ahlus-Sunnah, that practice becomes *shirk*, *bid'a* and *haram* because "Annual Ahlus-Sunnah Convention" is neither in the Qu'ran nor *Sunnah*. Imam Salawatiyyah added that there are many such practices transpiring among the Ahlus-Sunnah yet they go about blaming other denominations of introducing innovations into Islam.

The researcher thinks *maulid* in principle is not that bad to warrant total condemnation. *Maulid* has the potentials of uniting the *ummah* as well as educating and informing Muslims on varied issues of religious and national development. However, some aspects of *maulid* such as drumming and mix dancing of both sexes



should be regulated in order to accommodate every Muslim. *Maulid* has established itself in Ghana as a durbar of Muslim scholars, chiefs, leaders and youth groups and also as a platform for Muslims to meet and share their views on national development. As such, *maulid* should be embraced by all Muslims even if not as a religious practice but as a social gathering to address Muslim issues.

#### 4.2.5 Funeral Rites for the dead

It is a common practice among the Tijaniyyah that when someone dies they organise some special prayers for the deceased on the third, seventh, fortieth and one year of the death. On these days they recite the Qur'an, the *Dalaailul-Hairaat* (a special prayer book) and pray for the spirit of the dead as an intercession for him or her. The occasions are also marked with donations of money, food and other items to the *Mallamai* praying for forgiveness of the departed soul. Many of the *Mallamai* seem to like the donations they receive very much. Food, *maasa* (fried millet or corn dough sprinkled with sugar or honey), bread and other meals are prepared and shared to the people, with the intention that the rewards for such acts of charity get to the soul of the departed relative to ease its transition.

Even though these rituals are considered by the Tijaniyyah as spiritually beneficial for the dead, the heavy financial burden and loss they impose on the bereaved family cannot be underestimated. The practice has led to two different types of funeral rites among the Tijaniyyah where the rich family's funeral is fully performed with all the intercessions and the poor family's funeral having low patronage because there is less financial gains for the *Mallamai*. The Ahlus-Sunnah and the Ahmadiyyah aggressively condemn these acts describing them as *takhilil*, a form of syncretism and

exploitative means of making gains from people. The glaring disagreements among the denominations on this matter are a threat to good relationships.

#### 4.2.6 Veneration of Shuyukh

Another controversial issue that creates rancour among Muslims in Tamale is the Tijaniyyah's belief in *wilayah* (Sainthood) or *waliyai* as they are commonly referred to in Hausa. They also believe that their spiritual leaders like Sheikh Ahmad Tijani, Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, Sheikh Abdullai Maikano and others have special powers and positions attained through constant worship and *zikr* that make their supplications automatically accepted by God. As a result of these beliefs the Tijaniyyah hold their *Shuyukh* in high esteem to the point of literally venerating them for blessings and fulfillment of their needs. When these *awliyah* (singular-*walih* meaning Saint) and *Shuyukh* pass away their graves are mostly built and turned into tombs or shrines, a practice most common among the Shiah.

Believers and lovers of these *Shuyukh* and *Awliyah* congregate periodically at their tombs or shrines to offer supplications for them (the departed). Some believers venerate such edifices with the hope of meeting their worldly needs or desires. For example, at Prang in Brong Ahafo, the tomb of Sheikh Abdullai Maikano is opened every morning after *subhi* (dawn) prayers for believers to circle round reciting supplications for him. Other believers come to the grave with all sorts of supplications calling on his intercession to God on their behalf. The tomb is also opened every year during *maulid* to thousands of believers who come from all over the country and neighbouring countries to also offer their prayers. The practice which the Ahlus-Sunnah likened to *shirk* (associating parties with God) is prohibited in

Islam. The condemnation of these practices usually creates conflicts among followers of these rival denominations in Tamale and other Muslim communities.

All the above practices by the Tijaniyyah and Shiah are considered as syncretism by the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Ahmadiyyah. The Ahlus-Sunnah and Ahmadiyyah regard such deeds as adulteration of the religion with traditional Hausa and Dagban cultures which contradict the pure Islamic values. The Ahlus-Sunnah in particular applies all means including violence to end the issues that keep growing stronger despite the wide condemnations. Be it syncretism or otherwise, the methods employed by the critics to stop those actions achieve little results. Dialogue and diplomacy in this case is vital as Allah said in Qur'an (16:125) that *da'awah* should be done with *hikma* (wisdom) and *mauizatul hasanah* (good preaching).

#### **4.3 Doctrinal Differences as a cause of Conflicts among Muslims in Tamale**

We stated in the earlier chapters that the sources of Islamic laws are the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In the case where the Qur'an and the Sunnah are silent or do not address an issue, other sources such as logic and consensus are contacted for guidance or explanations. Among such complimentary sources are the people who have established themselves in Islamic knowledge and sciences that they could employ, analyze and infer from the Qur'an and the Sunnah alongside the history of *sahaba* (companions) and their own personal experiences to make suitable rulings or judgments on all matters relating to Islam and Muslims. These personalities expressed varied ideas on different Islamic matters according to their levels of understandings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They developed their own schools of thought based on their understanding of the *shariah*, and propounded different theologies and doctrines that attracted massive following. Some of those scholars or

*aimah* as they are called, according to Ahmad Ya'kub (1999) got politically influenced to compile *ahadith da'if* (fake or false narrations) and to make bias judgments in favour of some individuals in authority.

This explains why we have some *ahadith* that contradict the Qur'an, upon which some *ulamah* depend to justify their actions or condemn others. It also explains why in a particular matter several view points or modalities are expressed by different *aimah*. For instance, on performing ablution, the Shiah don't wash thrice as the Sunni does but washes only the face and arms after which parts of the head and feet are wiped. On marriage the Shiah permit *mut'a* (temporal marriage) while other Muslims forbid it. These are some instances of doctrinal differences among Muslims which are usually mishandled, leading to conflicts.

Five *aimah* who had their doctrines named after them are considered the founders of the *Maliki*, *Shafi'i*, *Hambali*, the *Hanafi* and the *Ja'afari* schools of thought. Apart from the latter which is a Shiah school of thought propagating Shiah theology and doctrines, all the other four are Sunni who promote Sunni theology yet do not agree on many religious issues. Their differences tend to be challenging with each trying to outdo the other in every matter.

Muslims in West Africa according to Bari (2009) are widely *maliki*, also known as the *malikiya*. Ghanaian students who studied in Saudi Arabia came back home being followers of the *hambali* doctrines with much motivation to spread it wide across the country. Also among the local Muslim *ummah* are some who studied in liberal Egypt that has all the doctrines effectively operating. Some of these scholars adopted the *shafi'i* and *hanafi* doctrines which they are also propagating in their own small ways in Tamale.

Shortly after the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Shiah institutions with their *Ja'fari* school of thought came into Ghana and started delivering social and economic services in many communities across the country. They also trained many Ghanaian Muslims at home and abroad to propagate their doctrines. In effect all these five Islamic schools of thought are found operating in Tamale with different doctrines and activities.

All these were among the things Islam had warned against and forbidden that the Prophet said in a *hadith*: - “No people have ever fallen into error after receiving guidance except by falling into disputes”. The *hadith* here tries to emphasize that the recurrence of conflicts among the *ummah* are due to the Muslims’ neglects of the words of God and His Prophet. Most conflicts among Muslims in Tamale began with minor theological or doctrinal differences and later exploded to full scale violence. The many confrontations between the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Tijaniyyah, the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Ahmadiyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah and the Shiah as narrated in chapter three are basically on doctrinal differences.

#### **4.4 Leadership Struggles, a Source of Conflict among Muslims**

In a typical Islamic community like Tamale, *aimah*, chiefs, businessmen and women, Islamic scholars, political leaders and opinion leaders constitute the stakeholder for the Muslim *ummah*. It should be noted that some of these leaders notably *aimah* (Imams) and chiefs got those positions through inheritance or mere selections that are often based on all manner of dubious practices. When it comes to selecting leaders most often unqualified persons make their way in through wealth, tribal or age considerations.



Following such debatable methods of selecting leaders among Muslims, the leaders normally do not put up their best since they are not accountable to any body and will cling to their positions whether they are performing well or not. In Tamale, many people are not satisfied with the performance of their leaders whom they want changed. But as custom requires that elders or people in line with inheritance should take charge of affairs even when they are not competent, the situation creates a struggle between traditionalists who merely inherited leadership and reform minded youth who feel they can do better if they were at the helm of affairs.

For example, scholars who studied in Saudi Arabi and other Arab countries feel they should take over from the old and locally trained ones who still have some support and sympathy from the people. The youth feel they know better as they can speak Arabic fluently and recite the Qur'an melodiously. The situation has therefore created two blocks among the *ummah* thus, the reform minded and the traditionalists who occasionally battle each other verbally, physically and spiritually to the detriment of peace in the city. The youth may be making legitimate demands since the leadership style of the current leaders is replete with problems and lacks focus. The current leadership in most cases lacks innovation and the sense of urgency thereby depending most on customs and traditions that bring little development to the community. However, the youth are neither patient nor tactical in their demands, a situation which does not promote peaceful coexistence in Tamale.

Another face of the leadership struggles in Tamale according to Abdul-Rahman Fari, a leading Tijaniyyah scholar at Tishigu a suburb of Tamale is that, some leaders are greedy. In his views, most of the troubles among Muslim leaders in Tamale emanate from the drive to be in better position to manage or 'mismanage' the resources of Muslims. He alleged that majority of Muslim leaders are corrupt and not trustworthy,

a situation some among their followers capitalize on to incite the youth against the leadership. He stated that some leaders receive huge sums of money from Arab donors to execute projects such as building of schools, Mosques, health institutions, sinking boreholes or supporting the needy scholarships at home and abroad but mostly end up squandering or misdirecting the funds. Some members of the *ummah* may be genuinely concerned about such mismanagement or simply envy the the leaders and want to undercut or undo them in order to take their positions. Such situations usually create divisions among Muslims leading to conflicts.

To establish the extent of corruption among the *ummah* in Tamale, Imoro A. Latif (an operator at Kalan Internet Café) disclosed to the researcher that he helped some known *ulama* to mail photographs of some buildings as Islamic institutions and those of some groups of pupils posed as orphans in need of donors' aid (financial assistance). Also the case of Murtada Hussein Masaka versus authorities of Ambariyyah Institute discussed in (3.4.9) attests to some forms of corruption among the *ummah*. Some *ulama* in both Ahlus-Sunnah and Tijaniyyah camps accuse Ibrahim Basha of having mishandled funds meant for similar development projects. However, Basha denied all accusations labeled against him and challenged anybody who has a case against him to prove it or take it to the Law Court else Allah will be the final judge.

In a group discussion with some representatives of Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA) of Ghana Senior High School (Ghanasco) in Tamale, they alleged that sometimes money generated in most Mosques from daily and Friday's contributions as well as donations by philanthropists can not be accounted for. To some of the students, such misappropriation of Muslim assets by some leaders, scholars and *aimah* explain why some Muslims no longer want to donate to the

Mosques. These Muslim scholars and leaders according to the students are those who preach virtues and yet practice vices. The students also assume that Islam and Muslims are still lacking behind due to corruption and lack of visionary leaders. They complained that till date Muslims in Tamale and even in Ghana at large are yet to establish a hospital or a tertiary institution from internally generated funds.

Muslim leaders should rise up to the task in order to lead the *ummah* out of its present state of violence and consequent underdevelopment. Whether the old or the youth, the traditionalists or the reform minded at the helms of affairs, the attention should be focused on promoting peace and development. Resources should be prudently managed to instill the trust of the *ummah* and to bring everybody on board for peace, unity and holistic up-grading of the Muslim community. The youth should develop interest in every facet of the religion and social matters. In that way they can effectively collaborate with the aged to advance the *ummah* and wipe out corruption.

#### **4.5 Political Influence as a Source of Conflict among Muslims**

Another reason for the recurrence of conflicts among Muslims in Tamale is the involvement of the *ulama* in politics or the misuse of the *ulama* by politicians. Thus, some major Mosques in the Metropolitan are identified with particular political parties and seen to be advancing the course or agenda of those parties. The Tamale Central Mosque or *za'amiu* for example is predominantly pro-NPP while the Ahlus-Sunnah Mosque at Sakasaka is largely pro-CPP and pro-NDC. Majority of the aged in Sakasaka Mosque support the CPP while the youth largely support the NDC. Members of the Mosques who support other political parties are perceived as hypocrites and sidelined when it comes to decision making. According to Umar Yussif Alhassan, the northern regional secretary of NDC in Tamale, some major

political party advocates usually worship at home or in smaller area Mosques to avoid further politicisation of Islam at the major Mosques. He noticed that only few scholars from the Ahlus-Sunnah denomination occasionally discuss matters with the NDC party officials. The rest according to him, hardly approach the NDC party officials possibly because they have nothing of concern to share with the party. His statements therefore confirm to some extent the alleged inclination of religious groups to particular parties in Tamale.

We examined earlier in (3.2) how political differences tore apart the unity of the *ummah* with the breakaway of Afa Ajura from the Central Mosque. Also in (3.3) we discussed how the *ummah* further got hooked to some political parties to achieve their chieftaincy ambitions. Many respondents allege that some *ulama* cling to political parties to achieve their material needs mindless of their community's interest. That is why scholars or *aimah* who are supposed to be unifiers have taken entrenched political positions. Some *ulama* in Tamale regret their involvement with political parties and thereby call on others to desist.

Baba Muhammad Baki (Bachi Ku Nyandoo), a Tijaniyyah scholar cited himself as a victim of political manipulation, when he explained that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) used him against his colleagues during the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. He vigorously campaigned for them in Mosques and on political platforms only to be disappointed in the end. In his view the only consolation for his regrettable acts was the elevation of a Muslim brother to the highest post of a Vice President, the first of its kind in the history of the nation. He lamented that even with that, none of the promises made him were fulfilled.

It should be noted that, the behavior of some *ulama* is not due to material concerns only, but also highly motivated by chieftancy considerations. People in Tamale, the *aimah* and *ulama* included usually follow particular political parties because those parties are considered sympathetic towards them and likely to advance their chieftancy interest (abudu-Andani). Baba Muhammad Baki for instance, aside the promises, had some other motives for campaigning for the NPP. That may include helping a Muslim brother to win an election.

#### **4.6 The Chieftancy Divide as a Source of Religious Conflict in Tamale**

We discussed in (3.3) the involvement of the *ulama* into the Dagban chieftancy struggles that eventually culminated into conflicts among the *ummah*. Many people, rightly or wrongly blame Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse for taking sides and acting divisively leading to the disintegration of the *ummah*. In any case as an international visitor to the entire Muslims of Ghana and Dagban in particular, he needed to visit all the important chiefs in the area and not to be selective. Most of the chiefs were looking up to him as a special man of God who could help them solve their problems including the long dispute over the kingship of Yendi.

Much as some will blame Sheikh Niasse for being biased towards the Abudu gate, they need to take a second look into his actions since he was coming into the area for the first time and being led by people from the area. It is possible that Sheikh Niasse might not have been aware of any divisions among the royal family. In that case, all the blames needed to be laid on the people leading the delegation instead. Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse according to Abdul-Wahab Muhammad, in the 1952 visit, offered some prayers or supplications for the disabled son of the King. After the death of the King (Ya Na Mahaman-Bla) his disabled son became the regent and eventually



succeeded the father as the Ya Na of Dagban. What else could Sheikh Niasse do to his host who asked for a favour he could actually offer?

The other issue related to that visit of 1952 was the neglect of Na Andani at Mion. According to the narration by Issah Iddris Modoo, Na Mahaman Bla was the King or the Ya Na resident in Yendi and Na Andani was the chief of Mion. The customary succession plans of chieftaincy in Dagban regard the chief of Mion as the next to be Ya Na. That makes the chief of Mion the second most important chief of the land. Issah Modoo indicated that Na Andani at Mion prepared the grounds with his elders and people sited to receive Sheikh Niasse. The Sheikh however came and passed without stopping at Mion, only to go and facilitate the grounds for a minor to become a king over his uncle. The situation compelled Afa Ajura who was not in support of the events to challenge the other scholars leading to his break away and the alignment of *ulama* to the royal Gates. Afa Ajura chose to defend the rights of the “oppressed Andani” whiles the other *ulama* backed the Sheikh’s “blessed Abudu”. This then explains why some *ulama* openly back the Abudu or the Andani.

It should be noted that this division of the *ulama* led to the “*Oni yi Oku yi*” syndrome talked about in (3.2). In any case why should scholars meddle in chieftaincy matters to the extent of changing the customary agreements of succession? The *ulama* should try as much as possible to be neutral in issues of this nature so as to arbitrate among disputing factions. The moment the *ulama* begin taking sides like the Tijaniyyah for Abudu and Ahlus-Sunnah for Andani, they become discredited and lose the trust in mediation. The issue of whether it was right or wrong for Na Abdulai Bla to become king of Dagban over and above his uncle Na Andani remains a hotly debated one to this date. Among the *ulama* in Dagban Afa Ajura emerged as the one who stood for the truth and in support of the sidelined Andanis, exposing him to

criticisms from his pro-Abudu colleagues. Majority of the *ulama* seem to persistently follow a particular course when even they knew the decisions held were wrong. The truth should always be said and the right thing done for peace to prevail. There can never be peace when justice is denied.

Some respondents opined that the involvement of some scholars in the chieftaincy discourse of Dagban further exacerbated the conflict situations in the region and divided Muslims along Abudu and Andani lines. According to Alhassan Muhammad (also known as Alhaji Wofa and a Tijaniyyah scholar), situations in Tamale are so polarized that any Abudu and Andani animosity translates into Tijaniyyah and Ahlus-Sunnah and even further to NPP and NDC grudges. Therefore most of the conflicts among Muslims in Tamale were actually not religious but rather rooted in political or chieftaincy loyalties. The complexity of the situations underground coupled with the large number of Muslims in Tamale and their divisions on many issues make many conflicts look religious.

#### **4.7 Socio-Cultural Influence as Cause of Conflict in Tamale**

Other reasons for conflicts among Muslims in Tamale according to Al-Hussein Zakaria are socio cultural in nature. He explains that people living in a society have some responsibilities towards one another and also cannot easily discard their culture despite their conversion to Islam. The situation where some people want to impose foreign cultures on others can create some challenges as some people will not easily give up. He added that there should not be compulsion in religion and the intelligence and freewill given to man should also be utilized accordingly.

For example, in Dagban certain chiefs are highly venerated and are always seated at special places among their subjects. Some Muslim chiefs when they come to the

Mosque are offered special places especially during *Eid* prayers. This becomes a subject of controversy between the Ahlus-Sunnah who thinks such a practice is *bid'a* since all Muslims regardless of their social rank are equal before Allah. On the contrary, the Tijaniyyah sees nothing wrong with it so they continue according chiefs such respect and special places in the Mosques.

Again, the culture of Dagban and most people in the north attach much importance to age and therefore give privileges to elders over young ones. This culture translates into making elders *aimah* and leaders of the *ummah* over the youth even when they are more advanced in knowledge. This age old traditional practice of elevating elders over the youth does not go down well with some Muslims, leading to heated arguments. Young Muslims who studied abroad contest the elders in every issue including the right to mediate in family, community, social, religious and chieftaincy misunderstandings. The end result is leaving the *ummah* fragmented between the young and the old, the liberals and the fanatics, and the traditionalists and the reformists.

Furthermore, traditional socio-cultural practices like husbands sending money and other items to their in-laws when particular members of the family dies, gradually found their ways into Islam and are subjects of disagreement among the *ulama* and denominations who hold conflicting views. The practice which is called *dien kuli* (inlaw's funeral) in Dabganli requires the sending of a ram and half piece of wax print to the family of ones wife when an important member such as the father, mother or aunt dies to help in the funeral and other expenses.

Attitudes identified with the Ahlus-Sunnah such as wearing of long beards, short trousers, speaking Arabic and "behaving in extremity" that is outward manifestation

of Islam according to Al-Hussein, do not necessarily make one a good or exemplary Muslim. Also, the culture and traditions of the people which do not contradict the Qur'an and Sunnah should not be condemned but taken on board or refined a little to keep the people's identity. The seeming imposition of Arab culture on Muslims of Tamale by the Ahlus-Sunnah who see nothing good about their own culture and traditions contributes to instability. The Ahlus-Sunnah just does not condemn those practices but radically battle those who practice them leading to exchanges of words and blows.

The Ahlus-Sunnah however stand firm in their condemnations of anything traditional. They describe such acts and their practitioners as *shirk* and *mushrikuun* that means associating partners with God and those engaged in it respectively. The Ahlus-Sunnah according to Shaibu Alhassan, are of the view that, a true Muslim is a person who avoids all cultural traditions and follows only the directives of Allah as taught by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). It is to facilitate such good morals that the Ahlus-Sunnah set out to demonstrate to the people that anybody who calls himself a Muslim should not possess charms like the Tijaniyyah do. He is of the view that the Tijaniyyah cannot disassociate themselves from traditions such as funerals, charms and divinations because they benefit greatly from them.

The issue whether Islam condemns anything traditional or African remains highly controversial and debatable. The researcher is of the view that, there are some practices in African traditions that are in complete contradictions to Islam. Practices such as worships of deities, occultism and killing of animals on stones, trees and other objects of worship are clearly un-Islamic and therefore disallowed. On the other hand, traditional practices like respect for the elderly, morality and descent dressings agree with the teachings of Islam. There is therefore the need for Muslims

to critically analyze most traditional practices before rushing to condemn or accept them. For all you know some of the condemned practices may not actually be contravening the spirit and morality of Islam.

#### **4 .8 Foreign Influence as the Cause of Conflicts among Muslims**

It was discussed in section (2.4) of this study that the spread of Islam in Dagban was largely due to the activities of Hausa traders. The religion remained that of “strangers” until it began to influence the indigenes and more importantly the traditional rulers through provisions of health care, secretarial services and more importantly, provision of magico-religious services especially during wars. Eventually the chiefs and their subjects began accepting Islam. After the conversions of the chiefs and royals into Islam, the religion grew and subsequently relegated many of the traditional beliefs of the people to the background.

Practicing a foreign religion requires a clear understanding of it, consequently in the early 1970s according to Bari (2009), some Dagbamba gained scholarships to study Islam and other Islamic sciences in the Arab world. Countries like: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya and later Iran among others offered scholarship for people to study the Islamic religion in their respective countries. These students were not only imparted with Islamic knowledge but were also introduced to new orientations of Islam. Upon their return, they spread those new doctrines into the various Muslim communities in Ghana. Some Arab and Islamic institutions in the Middle East established intimate relations with these Arab trained scholars and also sponsored their Islamic activities financially. They established schools and contributed in diverse ways to the development of Islamic communities in Ghana.



Saudi Arabia and Iran appear prominent in the drive to consolidate their perspectives of Islam which is Wahabiyyah and Shiism in Ghana. Saudi Arabia sponsor Wahabiyyah group currently known as the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama'at in most Ghanaian Muslim communities. It has made great impact on Ghanaian Muslim population. The Iranians also came to Ghana with Shiism which is a different doctrinal persuasion from the Ahlus-Sunnah. These two rivals brought their differences to bear on the local Muslim *ummah*. They call each other names and condemn each other's doctrines. Their rivalries grow even stronger, causing instability among Muslims in Tamale. In August 2010 for instance, during *tafsir* in *Ramadan* Seidu Abubakar Zakaria, the Chief Imam of the Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale described the Shiah as *kufar* (infidels) leading to a great tension in the Metropolis when Abdul Mumin Dalwu, the leader of the Shiah in Tamale went on air and vehemently defended his denomination and in the process even called for a *mubahala* (invoking the curse of Allah on the one who is on the wrong side).

One could infer from the above that the bitterness between the Arabs and Persians as well as their rivalries in terms of international politics is brought to bear on the innocent Muslims of Tamale. This also goes to explain why sponsorships and donations from the Arab world are mostly limited and one sided. Some *ulama* in Tamale according to Jibril Abdullai Fari radically and desperately condemn and impose certain beliefs and practices not because of piety but just to impress some people and through that improve their livelihoods. This therefore means that some scholars are being greedy, selfish and also seek personal gains with their leadership positions. It should be noted that Selfishness, greed and personal desires are all negative tendencies, and each one of them has the tendency of facilitating intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale.

#### **4.9 Da'awah or Tabligh as the Immediate Causes of Religious Conflicts in Tamale**

*Da'awah* according to most scholars from all the four Islamic denominations in Tamale is the most pronounced and powerful source of conflicts among the *ummah*. *Da'awah* is so important in Islam that it has been mentioned several times in the Qur'an. For example Qu'ran (41:33) declares:

And whose words can be better than his, who calls people towards Allah, and  
Performs good deeds, and says: 'I am one of those who submit to Allah!

Also Allah in the Qur'an commanded the Prophet to preach when He said:

Preach to them the truth, for preaching proves very  
beneficial for the believers (Qur'an 55:51)

The verses above state the virtues of preaching and also state the contents of preaching. It urges preachers to say the truth for in the truth come many beneficial things. It is clearly stated in the Qur'an, the Sunnah and history that peace, love, unity, and respect for one another's rights are all good and beneficial to mankind. By implication any preaching that does not lead to these good virtues but brings about conflicts and destruction of life and property is not what Allah prescribes in His Holy Book. Many Muslims embrace the call from Allah to preach but they do not embrace the kind and modalities of *da'awah* Allah recommends. On how to preach, or call others to Islam, Allah says in Qur'an chapter (16:125)

Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and good  
preaching and argue with them in the best and gracious ways,  
for your Lord knows those who have strayed from His path,  
and those who receive guidance

The injunction here is that Allah did not command Muslims to preach in a way that the preaching will tear the *ummah* apart and breed conflicts among people. He only instructed Muslims to unify themselves through His words and lead a better life with each other.

Preaching in Tamale takes different forms, *tafsir* (commentaries of Qur'an), *tabligh* (outreach programmes), and *da'awah* (call or invitation). They are also referred to as *waaiz* and *nasiha* among others all meaning 'preaching'. In Tamale preaching could be held and heard during *tafsir* in the Month of *Ramadan*, during annual *maulid* of Tijaniyyah, *da'awah* of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'a and the *tabligh* of the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission. Other places where preaching could be heard include the electronic and print media, during naming ceremonies, weddings and funerals. On such occasions meant for the enlightenment of the faithful, some scholars indulge in polemics. They make derogatory comments aimed at bringing down other scholars as well as condemning other doctrinal persuasions. These therefore attract responses that gradually lead to confrontations between their supporters and eventually the destruction of lives and properties.

The research has come to establish that; *da'awah* is usually the immediate cause of most of the conflicts that occur in Tamale. According to Abdul-Mumin Dalwu, the chief of Zango and leader of Shiah denomination in Tamale, most *ulama* do not research and so go about preaching with little knowledge especially of other denominations. Such myopic preachers according to him are those who hastily condemn anything they do not know. He added that most preachers are not sincere and bold to tell their followers things they have not come across. They therefore give personal meanings and interpretations of issues that turn out to be false and offensive to others. He added further that scholars in Tamale are too proud to come back to

their people and tell them they made mistakes in their earlier submissions for fear of losing trust of the people. As such, anything said by a scholar is said forever even if it causes a problem or misleads the public. Such are serious matters that affect Islam in terms of Muslim-Muslim as well as Muslim-non-Muslim relationships in Tamale.

Issah Iddris Modoo emphasized that *da'awah* is the leading cause of conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. He added that some scholars during Friday sermons preach disunity among the *ummah* citing the case of *masjid baida'u* (beautiful Mosque) in Tishigu, a suburb of Tamale where *aimah* purely propagate doctrinal differences during *khutbah*. Doctrinal differences exist but during Friday prayers due to the inter-denominational nature of the congregations, *aimah* rarely talk about such issues. But in *masjid baida'u*, Issah Modoo alleged that the *aimah* always praise themselves and make comments aimed at denigrating the Ahlus-Sunnah.

On his part, Baba Mussah of Gumani thinks some *ulama* misinform people about many Islamic matters. He explained that some youth in Tamale have been polluted with the perception that *jihad* means battles or combats against those who hold opposing views. He stated further that the attack on the Tijaniyyah at his residence at Gumani on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1997 was due to the conviction of the aggressors that they were doing *jihad fii sabili llah* (fighting in the course of Allah). The youth who perpetrated that cruel attack according to Baba Mussah were assured of getting *laada* (divine reward) for any soul taken from that *maulid* ground. The same assurance of getting *jannah* (paradise) was promised any one of them who happens to die there. As such, the youth went there to kill or to be killed.

Such indoctrination is absolutely wrong and dangerous, especially in a multi religious and multi cultural country like Ghana. When allowed to stay, such

convictions will only breed violence and ignite conflicts that will claim lives and properties among Muslims and between Muslims and members of other faiths. *Da'awah* or all forms of preaching should be structured to tackle issues and not personalities. *Da'awah* according to majority of Muslims interviewed from all the four Islamic denominations in Tamale should be devoid of insults and provocations since they are the very reasons why Muslims fight against one another every now and then.

#### **4.10 Effects of Intra-Religious Conflicts on the People of Tamale**

Conflicts all over the world have always brought misery to the people on whom they befall. The case is the same as intra-religious conflicts among Muslims have created and still create many negative consequences on the people of Tamale and Ghana at large. No faction in the crisis so far seems to have achieved its objectives for starting or involving in the conflicts, yet much irreversible harm has been done to lives, properties and communal relations.

The recurrent of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale as we saw in (3.4.1 to 3.4.6) have terminated some lives of innocent people who could have been great assets to the Muslim communities and the country as a whole. Hard earned properties of the combatants and even neutral people in and around the troubled areas have been destroyed setting back the progress of many people and their businesses. The untimely death of Afa Asuma and the other Ahlus-Sunnah man who tried to cut down electricity wires, respectively, during the 1976 and 1997 conflicts between Tijaniyyah and Ahlus-Sunnah are clear examples of such lost lives. Properties such as houses, vehicles and business premises belonging to members of the two disputing



denominations were also affected. The tension, enmity and pain created in such people still linger to spark fresh troubles among Muslims in Tamale.

Also, the intra-religious conflicts in Tamale left behind a trace of seeming irreparable mistrust and strained relations among Muslims of even the same household. In some instances brothers, families, organisation and even *ulama* do not seem to trust one another for fear of sabotage, jealousy and betrayal. Some families and denominations in Tamale go to the extent of terminating and discouraging marriages, fraternal relationships and other social contracts with the other groups possibly to prove their loyalties to the groups they support. For example, according to Baba Muhammad Baki, Afa Nurudeen who is a biological son of Afa Ajura, leader and founder of Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale is being accused by his own brothers of being a Tijaniyyah. The consequence of such allegation is that he lives miserably while his other brothers enjoy from their father's investments.

Another consequence of the intra-religious conflicts in Tamale is the disunity planted among Muslims. Individual groups or denominations seem to stand independent from one another having their own leadership, programs and activities distinct from the others. The affairs of Muslims in the Metropolis and the region at large are not coordinated because it lacks centralised leadership. The denominations are not united and even perceive one another as enemies doing everything within their means to suppress the others in order to progress. Contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an some Muslims in Tamale seem to overtly rejoice over the problems of others and mourn over their progress all due to doctrinal differences. According to Nba Adam Atinga a Frafra convert in Tamale, he is worried over the level of disunity among Muslims over the years. He observes that for the past sixteen years now, Muslims in Tamale have never collectively observed or celebrated any *Eid* festival together. Some

extreme Muslims of Tamale according to him will not even allow their wards to attend schools belonging to other denominations. They don't pray in opponents Mosques nor see anything good about the others.

At the official level, institutions in Tamale are falling apart with new ones emerging as a result of disunity propelled by intra-religious conflicts. For instance, the Ahlus-Sunnah in Tamale are trying hard to establish what they call the Ambariyyah Islamic Education Unit besides the Islamic Education Unit charged with the responsibilities of managing all Islamic schools in the region irrespective of doctrinal persuasion. As stated by Nba Atinga above, the disunity of the *ummah* is manifested in the variation of days for Islamic festivals like *Eid-ul-fitr* and *Eid-ul-adha* that are celebrated every year with many setbacks and controversies in Tamale. Muslim Politicians in Tamale have to go through the hassles of observing and addressing three or more different congregations on different grounds every year. Mostly the Tijaniyyah, the Ahmadiyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah of Basha usually observe *Eid* on the same day at different grounds. The Regional Minister, and his deputy and other government officials have to decide which of the congregations they have to attend. One to two days later the Minister has to observe and address another *Eid* congregation of the main Ahlus-Sunnah denomination at the Ambariyyah school park; then follows later, the turn of Imam Rashid and his Rashidiyyah congregation at Gumani. The politicians have to devise ways to attend each congregation lest they would be accused of taking sides.

Closely associated to the point of the *ummah*'s disunity discussed above is the meddling of the state with Islamic practices. The state in most instances seems to dictate to Muslims through the National Chief Imam on the days to observe *Eid* prayers. In some cases especially after the Ramadan fasting, some Muslims have to

wait for a day or two before they observe the *Eidl-fitr* prayers. This is so because the state grants a national holiday status to the Muslim festivals, and directives have to come from the central government in consultation with the office of the National Chief Imam. The situation does not help in the unity of the *ummah* but rather deepen its segregation. Since the Tijaniyyah is more related to the Chief Imam, the Ahlus-Sunnah mostly does not only refuse to observe *Eid* prayers on such public holidays but describe them as *gomnanti chugu* or *gomnanti Eidi* (state or government *Eid*). This situation in Tamale does not only manifest the disparity between the Nawun Nyarba and the Munchir but also their respective factions as well.

A further consequence of conflicts among Muslims of Tamale is the bad name and image it has created to outsiders of the good people of the Northern Region. An impression seems to have been created in the country that any Muslim or a Dagbamba or better still, any northerner is a violent person and a trouble maker who needs to be avoided lest he or she influences people with the same mentality. Such a situation negatively damages the image and progress of northerners anywhere in the country regardless of their faith. Islam is widely regarded among non-Muslims and even among some skeptical Muslims as a violent religion possibly due to the endless rivalry and what seem to be leadership struggles that end up in clashes among people of the same faith.

The clashes among Muslims in Tamale seem to deepen divisions among Dagbamba in the line of chieftaincy and politics thereby exacerbating and complicating the issues of peace in the Northern Region. The religious conflicts, the political violence and the chieftaincy feuds between the Abudu and Andani seem intertwined such that problems in one trigger problems in the others opening up more violence and hatred among the people. Political activities in Tamale are virtually turned to religious or

traditional affairs where membership could be determined even at birth. Politicians in Tamale and from Dagban have their successes or failures lingering on their chieftaincy lineage or their Islamic denomination and inclination. Politics, businesses and almost any other thing belonging or championed by a member of one group seem not to be patronized by members of the other groups all because of enmity amongst them.

#### **4.11 Attempted Resolution Measures to the Muslim Conflicts in Tamale**

It seems there is no clear roadmap towards finding permanent solutions to the nagging problems of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. Muslims in Tamale seem to be left alone to wallow in their own troubles if they cannot reason up and patch up with their differences. The entire country seems tired of constant interventions in conflicts among Muslims in the north and so left at the mercy of some greedy politicians and scholars who make capital gains out of their problems. Aside the failed attempt at uniting the Ahlus-Sunnah and Tijaniyyah initiated by B.A Yakubu and some chiefs in Tamale as discussed in (3.4.1), no serious efforts have since been made to iron out their differences.

According to Hussein Ja'afar (Imamia general secretary), there is hope for the future since most of the religious groups in Tamale now unlike before seem to preach peace and tolerance. Some of the *aimah* preach in their *khutbah* (sermons) but whether such calls to peace are real or not, no one can really tell for now since the same scholars in other programs make comments that can incite violence.

Again we are not sure whether joint police and army interventions during crisis times are interpreted to mean conflict resolution measures since after succeeding to calm nerves down everybody go to sleep until there is another new wave of violence. This

ad hoc approach is not helping in peace building since the same problems keep coming over and over again. Closely related to official measures at solving the conflict problems in Tamale is what some residents describe as the hypocritical calls by some politicians, chiefs and other Muslim leaders in town during violence. The same politicians and scholars, we are told by Alhassan Muhammad are, most of the times agents de provocateurs of the conflicts in and around Tamale as they seem to apply the divide and rule tactics.

Another source of hope for the people of Tamale is the occasional contributions of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) on its educational programs aimed at bringing peace among Muslims, chiefs and political parties in Tamale. Al-Hussein Zakaria disclosed that, the NCCE in the year 2000 organized the leadership of all the Islamic denominations in Tamale and discussed with them the way forward to the peace situation in Tamale. Shaibu Alhassan of the Ahlus-Sunnah attests to such meetings with NCCE adding that they help explain the government policies and the consequences of conflicts on development.

The most frank and reliable effort at fostering peace and unity among various religious, political or chieftaincy factions in Tamale are those carried out by some NGOs such as Community Development and Youth Advisory Centre (CODEYAC) and West African Network for Peace (WANEP). These organisations organise seminars, workshops, trainings and capacity building for youth groups, religious leaders, chiefs and politicians on fostering peace and harmony in the communities. These NGOs may seem not to be doing very well possibly due to limited capacities in terms of manpower, logistics and sometimes lack of proper understanding of the real situations underground.



Some Islamic denominations and individual scholars on their own accord, perhaps tired of fighting one another are seeking peace for the *ummah*. They put up internal measures to mend broken relations and to curb further confrontations with other Muslim groups in Tamale. They urge their preachers and followers to desist from making comments that can inflame passions and spark new violence. They also seem to make moves aimed at unifying with the others as they try to visit and in some cases attend functions organized by their opponents.

Individually, Imam Rashid Hussein of the Salawatiyyah Mosque seems to champion that initiative of peace building and fostering unity among Muslims, chiefs and political parties in Northern Region. He constantly calls for peace and tolerance among all the religious groups as well as the political parties and chieftaincy factions or “royal gates” in Tamale and Dagban at large on many platforms and also in electronic media. According to Abdul-Rashid Ahmad, Rashid Hussein (Salawatiyyah) organizes special prayers every year for peace in Dagban and also meets with some chiefs and politicians to discuss the way forward to peace and harmony in the region.

Ironically, Rashid Salawatiyyah has also been involved in some of the very bad conflicts among Islamic scholars in Tamale. A case in point was when he and Ibrahim Basha went on air to literally abuse and cast invectives against each other in the months of Ramadan in 2007 and 2008. Similar invectives occurred between him and Seidu Abubakar Zakaria of the Ahlus-Sunnah and Luqman Bamba a colleague of his in the Tijaniyyah brotherhood.

Rashid Salawatiyyah’s attempts at fostering unity among the *ulama* in Tamale are not only limited to the words of his mouth but he tries to manifest them by ways of

real actions. For instance, he was in 2009 alleged to have paid Ibrahim Basha a surprised visit in his *Masjidul-Bayan* during *tafsir* and the result was a lovely embrace to the amazement of their followers and critics who thought they could never be reconciled. As to whether such measures will be sustainable, we cannot guarantee since he may not be able to extend such gestures to all his colleague *ulama* in Tamale. What then may be the feelings of those he could not visit? Is it that they are not important or is it that he does not want to make peace with them? Some critics are not comfortable with his moves as they speculate the fear of some *ulama* misinterpreting his gestures as spying which may result in violent acts against him in the process. At the end of it all, the million dollar question is, could there be peace among Muslims in Tamale as was the case before the introductions of other doctrinal persuasions? The continuation of conflicts in Tamale is possibly due to the condemnation of doctrines and personality attacks among the *ummah* since polemics breed polemics.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

From the preceding discussions, we could establish that conflicts have done much harm than good to the people of Tamale. Doctrinal difference among the four Islamic denominations, coupled with bad leadership and other external factors have effectively influenced and jeopardized relationships in the metropolis in particular and Dagban in general. Intolerance among scholars paves the way for socio-economic, political and religious consequences to the Muslim *ummah* as a whole. The next chapter will conclude the study with some findings and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we examined the various causes of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale with particular emphasis on their effects on the people. The discussion brought to the fore doctrinal differences, leadership struggles, bad leadership and external influences as the causes of the conflicts. The outcomes of such conflicts have negative consequences on social, political, economic and religious advancement. This chapter concludes the study. It deals with summary of findings, the issues emerging out of the study and some recommendations.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

The study began with the following hypothetical questions: What are the causes of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale? What are the effects of such conflicts to the development of Muslims? How can the conflict be removed or minimised? And how can the situation be improved?

The findings of the research revealed that conflicts among Muslim *ummah* in Tamale are real, perpetrated by improper handling of doctrinal differences, leadership crisis and external influences. Among these it was found out that doctrinal differences among Muslims have been the major causes of verbal and physical confrontations among the various denominations in Tamale over the years. Differences in some beliefs and practices like *maulid*, *wurd*, magical charms, performing of funeral rites and other “secondary religious issues” always generate conflicts among the *ummah* in Tamale. These doctrinal differences are described as “secondary religious issues”

because they do not constitute the fundamentals of Islamic beliefs and practices. It should be noted that all the religious groups in Tamale unanimously observe all the five pillars of Islam without blemish. The disagreements on these controversial issues which as a matter of fact are to supplement or compliment the five pillars are the major causes of the intra-religious conflicts in Tamale.

Conflicts among Islamic denominations in the metropolis are also caused by the absence of good leadership. The absence of a centralised leadership to manage the issues of doctrinal differences and their attendant problems is fueling the persistent intra-religious conflicts in Tamale. The existence of fragmented leadership in charge of various groups with different doctrinal positions and objectives requires a centralised leadership to effectively manage all issues of convergence and divergence in such a multi-sectarian environment. In the absence of a centralised organ, most leaders of the denominations place their personal interests first to the detriment of Islam and Muslims in Tamale as a whole. They exhibit their sentiments in the name of theology thereby manifesting bad qualities like intolerance, selfishness, ignorance and provocative language on the uniformed masses. They hammer on trivial issues that often lead to misunderstanding and controversies among the various denominations and even within their own group.

The study brought to light the extent to which external factors such as partisan politics, chieftaincy divides and foreign influences affected relationships among Muslims in Tamale. The symbiotic relationships of religious denominations with different political parties, royal families and Arab nations exacerbated the conflict situations in Tamale. The tensions perpetrated by these external forces have deepened the differences among ordinary Muslims and exacerbated the conflicts situation in Tamale.

The perpetrated conflicts among Muslims in the metropolis have negatively affected social, political, economic and religious cohesion. Social relationships such as marriages, friendships, celebration of festivals and performance of funeral rites have been marred by these conflicts. Relationships and mutual cooperation are also destroyed among individuals, families and organisations because they belong to different religious denominations. In some worse cases, relationships are terminated because of alliances of religious affiliation to political and chieftaincy divides. The situation is commonly high between the Nawun-Nyarba (Tijaniyyah) and the Munchiri (Ahlus-Sunnah) with their affiliate political and chieftaincy factions. Conflicts among Muslims in Tamale have greatly affected the development of education in the area. Resources which could have been used to establish educational facilities have to be redirected or re-allocated for internal peace keeping and conflict resolution exercises in order to save precious lives and properties.

Intra-religious conflicts have also affected the political development of Muslims in the area. It was established earlier on that most religious denominations encourage their members to actively take part in politics as a means to establish social justice and ensure equitable distributions of resources. It was however realized that the political ambitions of some Muslims are being thwarted due to the disunity among the *ummah*. Some politicians no matter how good and efficient they are may not get the support of other Muslims because they belong to different denominations.

The conflicts have also affected the economic development of Muslims in the north. Geographically, Northern Region is predominantly a Savanna area, which is good for commercial farming. Able bodied men and women in the area who should engage themselves in farming to raise money for family upkeep are rather engaged in conflicts and the destructions of lives and property. Others who could not stand such



turmoil migrate to other parts of the country thereby weakening the economic base of the area. Businesses and potential investors are avoiding the area for fear of violence and consequent destructions of their investments. Existing businesses are also relocating to other areas to avoid destruction of their business premises by irate mob during crisis.

Moreover, the intra-religious conflicts in Tamale have marred and disfigured the plight of Muslims and the religion of Islam in general. The practitioners of Islam as a result of the numerous intra-religious conflicts have lost the trust, confidence and sympathy some people especially sister religious groups have in them. Many people in Ghana and abroad perceive Islam as a violent religion and all Muslims as violent people. The concept of *jihad* has been reduced by some Islamic denominations to fighting people whose opinions are different from theirs both within and outside Islam. The altered concept of Jihad has led to many fights between the Ahlus-Sunnah and Tijaniyyah in Tamale. It has also jeopardized relationships between Muslims and Christians as well as relationships between Muslims and Traditional practitioners in the area.

### **5.3 Issues Emerging out of the Study**

The study came up with some key issues which are worth noting. First of all, there is a growing leadership problem among Muslim in Tamale. Issues relating to the leadership mostly do not only lead to confrontations but also cause the creations of separate independent groups from the main denominations. For instance, the formation of Ibrahim Basha's group from the main Ahlus-Sunnah group and the formation of the Jallo and Ceissey groups from the Tijaniyyah denominations are worth noting.

Another emerging issue of concern is the ever increasing presence and involvement of so much external influences on Islam and that is affecting internal cohesion and unity of the *ummah*. Foreign influences by the Arabs and Persians, partisan politics of NDC and NPP and the Abudu and Andani chieftain divide are all in one way or the other affecting the Islamic fraternity of Muslims in Tamale. In this bit much has not been done to end religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. Opposing denominations are up to date repeating their actions that led to earlier confrontations with others. There is no sign of active engagement of the different groups in pursuit of peaceful collaboration of the people regardless of their doctrinal persuasions. The state together with other stakeholders, NGOs and individuals usually do next to nothing to stop these conflicts until full fledged ones erupt from what could have been avoided.

Furthermore, some Muslims either from the elite or from the ordinary folk seem to be inseparable from their original African traditions and cultural practices. This explains why some Muslims including *ulama* still visit the soothsayers and practice some major traditional beliefs alongside the Islamic creed of *tawhid* (belief in only One Allah Who has no associates). The end result of such arguments between the Ahlus-Sunnah and the 'syncretics' who adhere to Islamic mysticism is often violent confrontation. Syncretism and the radical response to it is a major issue and a cause of conflict among Muslims in Tamale.

Moreover, theological and historical issues contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah are still not well understood by some Muslims. These sources still need to be studied and pondered over repeatedly by scholars from all the denominations. This would help to avoid instances where verses of the Qur'an and or *hadith* are interpreted differently, which often confuse the ordinary believer thereby creating cracks within the *ummah*.

There is no doubt that there exist among the *ulama* in Tamale a worrying problem of interpretation or “misinterpretation” of the Islamic sources that confuse the listeners and send them contemplating on the right perspectives of the scriptures.

Preaching in whatever form or media seems to be creating most of the controversies among Muslims. In whatever form preaching takes, *tafsir* (Qur’anic commentary), *khutbah* (Sermon), *tabligh* (outreach), *da’awah* or *waizi* (public preaching), it serves as a platform for one or a group of *ulama* to criticize others or exchange insults instead of discussing religious or social matters that could better the lives of listeners. Quite a number of violence among Muslims in Tamale started from what an *aalim* (scholar) said somewhere during a preaching session.

It was also noted that some personalities or individual scholars play pivotal roles in generating the numerous conflicts that occurred in Tamale over the years. They also by their actions strengthened the bases of their various denominations in Tamale. We can therefore confidently imply that their actions provided a similitude of a “double edged sword”. The continuous mentioning of Afa Yussif Ajura, Sheikh Abdulai Maikano and Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse throughout the work, suggest that their actions caused violence at one time or the other but they also did a lot for their individual denominations.

A careful study of all schools of thought in Islam like the malikiyyah, shafi’iyyah, hanafiyyah, hambaliyyah and ja’afariyyah shows that what they have in common is much more than their differences. The same apply to all the Islamic denominations in Tamale. All Muslims believe in the same God, the same Prophet and the same Qur’an. They all believe in the day of resurrection and divine rewards and punishments. They all say their five daily prayers towards the same direction, that is,

ka'abah. They all fast the whole month of Ramadan. They all perform pilgrimage to Makkah (*hajj*) at the same time. They all believe that they should make friends with the people of faith and good intentions and keep away from enemies of God. They all adhere to the same virtues and values like truthfulness, love, and tolerance. According to the Qur'an, all believers are "brothers" regardless of their race, gender, and denomination; there are certain duties towards each other that brothers and sisters in faith must discharge.

Imam Ja'afar Sadiq, (the great grand son of the Prophet Muhammad and the founder of the Ja'afariyyah (Shiah) school of thought) stated that Islamic fraternity is very important and to enhance it, some basic requirements need to be followed. When Mu'alla b. Khunays (a student of Ja'afar) asked him about what a Muslim owes another, he replied: "there are seven duties incumbent upon him. Should he neglect but one of them, he is not a friend or a servant of God, and truly he has done nothing for the sake of God" (Muzaffar, pp 76 &77). Then Imam Sadiq went ahead to mention the following duties of a Muslim to the other:

- a. Wish for your brother what you wish for yourself, and wish that what you do not desire for yourself should not befall your brother.
- b. Do not make your brother angry, but seek to please him and obey his wishes.
- c. Help him with your soul, your property, your tongue, your hands and your feet.
- d. Be the eyes that he sees with, his guide and his mirror.
- e. Do not eat your fill when he is hungry, nor drink and clothe yourself when he is thirsty and naked.

- f. If he has no servant, but you do, it is incumbent on you to send your servant to him to wash his clothes, cook his food and spread out his mattress.
- g. Accept his promise and his invitation; visit him when he is sick, attend his funeral, and see to his needs before he asks you, hurrying to do them if you can.

Unfortunately, there have always been some myopic and egotistic people among Muslims who have tried to magnify the differences and advocate for segregation instead of unity and brotherhood. They hasten to find some excuses to call anyone who disagrees with them a *kafir* (unbeliever) or a *mushrik* (polytheist) and any act that does not please them *bid'a* (heresy). Of course, there are unbelievers and there are heretics, but one must be very cautious in using these terms. It is very important for Muslim leaders and scholars to be circumspect in their utterances on matters concerning doctrinal differences in the Muslim community. This attitude will enhance peace and harmony in the *ummah* despite these differences.

Islam brought unity and solidarity for those who suffered a great deal from enmity and hostility, Qur'an (3:103). This act of unity is esteemed as a Divine act, Qur'an (8:63). On the contrary, the action of people such as Pharaoh (Fir'awna) was to disunite people, Qur'an (28:4). Qur'an (8:46) warns believers that if they dispute with each other they will weaken the *ummah* and will therefore be defeated. In fact, the call for unity is not limited to Muslims. The Qur'an invites all people of faith such as Christians and Jews to unify their efforts and concentrate on their common ground (Qur'an 3:64). Let us hope and pray that the need for unity as expounded in these verses be demonstrated among the Muslim community in Tamale.



## **5.4 Recommendations**

Upon thorough study of intra-religious conflicts among various Islamic denominations in Tamale, the following recommendations are hereby made to meet the challenges.

### **5.4.1 Education and Leadership Training**

It has been established by the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) that majority of people in the conflict areas are illiterates or semi-literates. Secular education and adult literacy development programs should be pursued to improve the levels of understanding among the people. The curriculum of such educational institutions should be made to include education on tolerance and conflict resolution. Islamic education should be given some attention by the state to ensure that relevant knowledge is impacted to the growing number of students. Majority of Islamic schools in Tamale concurrently run English and Arabic curricula and some of the Arabic teachers are also on government payroll. That makes the state a stakeholder in Islamic education, and is thus qualified without blemish to regulate the activities of the schools for the betterment of the entire nation. The Islamic Education Unit (IEU) as well as the Ahmadiyyah Education Unit (AEU) should be supported to broadening their bases and provide quality education to a lot of people in deprived communities.

Leadership training should be impacted to the children to prepare them for future challenges. Moral values such as truthfulness, tolerance and obedience should be taught in schools. Adults and youth already in leadership positions should be given periodic capacity building workshops and seminars to sensitize them on the effects of conflicts and the needs to enhance peace and harmony. It is only when the people are

educated and capable of making balanced decisions on their own that they would reject the temptations to violence.

Furthermore, to minimise the extent of conflicts due to leadership struggles, the researcher also recommends that the selections of *aimah* and other Muslim leaders be based on qualification and the degree to which the *ummah* like the fellow and not by mere inheritance.

#### **5.4.2 Dialogue among Various Denominations**

The significance of dialogue among various denominations towards understanding one another for effective and peaceful coexistence cannot be over emphasized. According to Mirza Ahmad (1992) dialogue is a tool that facilitates the understandings of others' stance and also influences positive attitudes towards one another for advancement of peace. Leaders of the various Islamic denominations in Tamale should be engaged in peaceful, regular and fruitful dialogues to do away with hostility and bitterness. Through dialogue, it is believed they will study one another and appreciate their positives. Aspects of their beliefs and practices that were not understood could be explained better by the practitioners to avoid speculation. Doing that will paint true pictures of the groups, generate respect for one another and establish the need for tolerance since none can do away with the other. Inter-denominational dialogue among Muslims in Tamale can minimize violence among Muslims and promote peace and harmony. Institutions like CODEYAC, WANEP and others who are into peace building should be more proactive in initiating and regularly carrying out such programs.

### 5.4.3 Rewards and Sanctions for Offenders

To address the increasing conflict situations among Muslims in Tamale, there is the need for national government to institute strict measures to severely punish any individual or group of people who by their actions perpetrate violence. It is only when people are made to take responsibility for their actions that they will desist from doing things that could cause harm to the society. In the same way that people are punished for their acts of violence to deter others, they should also be rewarded for their acts that promote peace and harmony in the society. In today's corporate world, awards are instituted to all manner of people to promote healthy competitions and emulation of the good deeds of others. It is against this background that we seek recognition for *ulama* who contribute in their small ways to end conflicts and promote peace and development in their communities. Such awards when instituted will urge the upcoming ones to develop interest in peace building, a phenomenon that will help Northern Ghana in its quest for peace and accelerated development.

### 5.4.4 Inter-Denominational Da'awah Committee

It was observed that *da'awah* contributed immensely to the Muslim-Muslim conflicts in Tamale. It is against this background that we suggest the establishment of a "Da'awah Committee" or "Da'awah Regulatory Body" comprising the various Islamic denominations in Tamale. The body is then mandated to come out with a blue print of what it considers to be a descent and acceptable *da'awah*. It should be the duty of this committee to censor all Public Preaching to ensure they do not provoke others and lead to violence among the *ummah*. The Committee may also serve as a centre for complains, where the aggrieved could launch complains against malpractices for appropriate actions to be taken against offenders. Preachers who go

on radio and television should be taught etiquettes of *da'awah* or *tabligh*. The committee's primary role should be to ensure peaceful *da'awah* and also take charge of training young *da'ee* or *du'at* (preachers) to effectively and efficiently propagate violent free Islamic propagation in the near future.

#### **5.4.5 Improvement of Social and Economic Activities**

It is worth recommending that the government takes interest in the provision of Social and Economic facilities to engage the youth in productive activities. Many of the youth who partake in the violence are those who have nothing doing for a living. Some politicians and selfish religious leaders thereby take advantage of their conditions to incite them against others, since the idle man's hands are what the devil play with. Social entities such as Youth Clubs, Red Cross, Scouts and others should be rejuvenated in order to attract young men and women into those bodies. Through such activities the youth will be reoriented to contribute to national development rather than destroying lives and properties through intra religious conflicts

#### **5.5 General Conclusion**

The single most important malady of Muslims in Tamale today, seems to be the absence of peace. People in the metropolis seem not to be content because there is growing restlessness, fear, resentment, lack of trust and general discontent. The problems emanate from the growing disagreements among Muslim scholars and denominations which intermingle with politics and chieftaincy matters in the area. Of course everyone has the right to disagree with anyone else on any matter, but disagreements because of holding different religious and political views which could lead to violence should be avoided as much as possible.

The disagreements among Islamic denominations in Tamale have led to many unwanted disputes or violent conflicts among the people that claimed innocent lives and the destructions of properties since its inception in the early 1950s. The petty Muslim disagreements of the 1950s paved way for major schisms in the 1960s and subsequently generated into violent actions among Muslims that persist up to date. Since the inception of such struggles among the Muslim *ulama* in Tamale, the city has not enjoyed permanent peace due to intermittent intra Muslim religious conflicts. The precarious conflict situations in Tamale that started on doctrinal differences no longer distinguish religion from politics or chieftaincy. Factors related to conflicts in these entities mingle with one another exacerbating the situation.

It is most unfortunate that Tamale is lacking peace, with investors declining to invest in the area for fear of losing their investment by irate mob during the occasional eruption of conflicts. It is however good news that for some time now, widespread violence has been in the decline but traces of threats that are capable of regenerating fresh violence still persist among the Muslim *ummah*. Accusations and counter accusations of syncretism, insults and abuses against one another still persist among the groups, especially between the Tijaniyyah and the Ahlus-Sunnah. Questions are still posed on the authenticity and legalities of some beliefs and practices like: funeral, *salatul-fatih*, *wurd*, *maulid*, charms and amulets, singing and dancing. Verbal confrontation is the order of the day among scholars especially in the month of Ramadan when scholars make unguided statements. The simple question many then ask is: could there ever be peace among Muslims in Tamale? It is worthy to state that this study cannot claim to have addressed all the issues relating to intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. Still there are other areas which may come up for further research in the nearest future.



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Interviewee and Date(s)	Rank/Position/Organisation
A.Wahab Muhammad 02/09/10	Tijaniyyah Scholar, Head teacher of Ahmadiyyah Primary
Abdul Salam Ahmad 23/10/10	Northern Regional Imam and Tijaniyyah Leader
Abdullai Baba 23/01/11	Resident of Tamale
Abdullai Jabir 10/12/10	Tijaniyyah Scholar
Abdul-Mumin Dalwu 24/10/10 & 24/01/11	Shiah Leader and Chief of Zongo –Tamale,
Abdul-Rahman Fari 03/04/11	Muslim Scholar
Abdul-Rashid Ahmad 12/07/11	Rashidiyya Scholar and Imam
Adam Atinga 18/03/11	An elderly Frafra convert resident in Tamale
Al- Hussein Zakaria 27/08/10 & 24/01/11	Director of CODEYAC, Member, Inter-Religious dialogue and Tijaniyyah scholar
Alhassan Muhammad 22/01/11	Muslim scholar and elder at Aboabu
Alhassan Tahiru 20/05/11	Resident of Warizehi, Tamale



Ali Fiqri Ibrahim	Manager Islamic Education Unit
14/10/10	
Amin Bamba	Muslim scholar and Imam
16/07/11	
Amin Muhammad Adabiyya	Islamic scholar and teacher, Tamale
24/03/11	
Baba Muhmmad Baki	A Tijaniyyah Muslim Scholar
02/04/11	
Baba Mussah	Tijaniyyah Scholar and Imam
21/01/11	
Baba Suleiman	Ahmadiyyah elder in Tamale
09/04/11	
Dasana Wumbe	English Teacher at Ambarriya Institute, Tamale
23/01/11	
Dason Iddi Abdulai	Statistician, Islamic Education Unit
14/10/10	
Faheem Ahmad Khadim	Reginal Amir of Ahmadiyyah Mission N/R
02/04/11	
Haruna Iddrisu	Coordinator, NYEP, Tamale North
15/01/11	
Hussein Suleiman Ja'afar	Secretary of Imamia Mission & Shiah Scholar
25/10/10 & 18/01/11	
Ibrahim Basha	Ahlus-Sunnah Scholar, Imam of Masjid Bayan in Tamale
16/07/11	
Imoro A. Latif	Operator, Kalan Internet Café, Tamale
20/01/11	

Issah Iddrisu Mo Doo	Director of Da'awah, Ahlul- Sunnah
27/08/10 & 13/07/11	
Jibril Abullai Fari	Islamic Scholar in Tamale
03/04/11	
Muhammad Habibu Llah	Young Tijaniyyah <i>Madaha</i> , Jallo camp
07/07/11	
Nba Abdul-Kadiri	Family head at Nyanshegu, Tamale
15/07/11	
Nba Nindoo	Elderly native of Tamale
26/12/10	
Nma Zahra	Elderly native of Tamale
26/12/10	
Shaibu Alhassan	Ahlus-Sunnah Scholar and Hausa Translator
14/07/11	
Shaibu Sadiq	Presentor, Radio North Star, Tamale
27/06/11	
Sualiu Aswad Bawa	Ahlus Sunnah Scholar, Imam, teacher of Nuriyyah
16/07/11	
Suleimana Issah	Assembly man, Chogu Nmana yili
17/12/10	
Tanko Issahq	Deputy Leader of Ahlus-Sunnah
20/02/11	
Umar Yussif Alhassan	NDC Northern Reginal Secretary, Tamale
29/07/11	
Yussif Nabahani	Tijaniyyah Scholar
03/04/11	

## Appendices

Appendix I	Group Photograph of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse and Ya Na Mahaman Bla at Yendi in 1952
Appendix II	Kings of Dagban
Appendix III	A News Item on Leadership Struggles among Muslims
Appendix IV	Salatul Fatih Text, Transliteration and Translation
Appendix V	Jawharatul-Kamal Text, Transliteration and Translation
Appendix VII	Research Questionnaire



## Appendix I

Group Photograph of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse and Ya-Na Mahaman-Bla at Yendi in  
1952



Source: Archives of Afa Issah Mo Doo (Tamale)

## Appendix II

### KINGS OF DAGBAN

FROM SITOBU, SON OF NAA GBEWAA

NO.	NAME OF KING	PERIOD OF REIGN	YEARS
1.	NAA NYAGSE	1416-1432	16
2.	NAA ZULANDE	1432-1442	10
3.	NAA BERIGU-WEIDA	1442-1456	14
4.	NAA DARIGU DIEDA	1456-1469	13
5.	NAA ZOLIGU	1469-1486	17
6.	NAA ZONG (ZONGMA)	1486-1506	20
7.	NAA NENG-MITONI	1506-1514	8
8.	NAA DIMANI	1514-1527	13
9.	NAA YANZUU	1527-1543	16
10.	NAA DARIZEIGU	1543-1554	11
11.	NAA LURO (Old Yendi)	1554-1570	16
12.	NAA TITUGRI	1570-1589	19
13.	NAA ZAGLI	1589-1609	20
14.	NAA ZOKULI	1609-1627	18
15.	NAA GUNGOMLI	1627-1648	21
16.	NAA ZANGINA	1648-1677	29
17.	NAA ANDANI SIGLI	1677-1687	10
18.	NAA BINBEGU (ZIMLI)	1687-1700	13
19.	NAA GARIBA	1700-1720	20
20.	NAA SALA ZIBIUM	1720-1735	15
21.	NAA ZIBILIM BANDAMDA	1735-1749	14



22.	NAA MAHAMI	1749-1765	16
23	NAA SUMANI ZOLI	1765-1785	20
24	NAA ANDANI JANGBARIGA	1785-1806	21
25.	NAA ZIBILIM KULUNKU	1806-1824	18
26.	NAA YAKUBU NANTOO	1824-1849	25
27.	NAA ABDULAI NABEGU	1849-1876	27
28.	NAA ANDANI NAANIGOW	1876-1899	23
29.	NAA ALHASSAN TIPARIGA	1899-1917	18
30.	NAA ABUDU SATAN KUGLI	1917-1938	21
31.	NAA MAHAMA KPEMA	1938-1948	10
32.	NAA MAHAMA BILA	1948-953	5
33.	NAA ABUDU MARIGON	1953-1968	15
34.	NAA ANDANI ZOLEKUGLI	1968-1968	100DAYS
35.	NAA MAHAMADU III	1969-1974	5
36	NAA YAKUBU ANDAN II	1974-2002	28

Source: Archives of Afa Issah Mo Doo (Tamale)

## Appendix III

### A News Item on leadership Struggles among Muslims



#### By Our Group

**M**uslims leaders in Ghana have been urged to exhibit good leadership qualities so as to inspire their followers in the quest for needed development in Muslim communities.

This view was expressed when *Muslim News* conducted separate exclusive interviews with some Muslim Leaders in the country to find out their views on the perception of abysmal and inspiring leadership in the Muslim community.

Speaking with the National Imam of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, **Sheikh Umar Ibrahim Imam**, he expressed dissatisfaction about the current output of the Muslim Ummah saying "the leaders of the Muslim Ummah are currently not doing much for the enhancement of the development of the Ummah".

He continued that the activities of the Ullamah (Islamic scholars), Chiefs and successful individuals knowledgeable in Islamic Jurisprudence do not impact positively on conditions and development of the Ummah.

He advised muslim Leaders to be more responsible to their community in whatever capacity they serve. He said Chiefs and Imams in particular should realize their responsibilities and remain proactive, creative and persevering in leadership by the tenets of the teachings of the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw).

**Sheikh Umar Ibrahim** attributed the shortcomings facing Muslim leadership in the country to the nominal and ceremonial nature of the leaders, which he said make them less responsible and less creative resulting in the nature and extent of deprivation in the Muslim community.

*Contd. on page 5*



## Appendix IV

### Salatul Fatih Text, Transliteration and Translation



Salat Al-Fatih is held in particular esteem with the Tijaniyyah Order.

The above is transliterated as:-

Allahumma salli 'wa sallim was baarik ala Sayyidina Muhammadil  
nil-fatihi lima Ughliqa wal khatimi lima sabaqa wan-naa-siril-haqqi  
bil-haqqi wal-hadi ila Sirati-kal-mustaqima sal-lal-lahu 'alayhi  
wa 'ala alihi wa-ashaabihi haqqa qadrihi wa-miq-da rihil-'azim.

In English, it goes like this:-

*O God bless our Master Muhammad (pbuh) who opened what had been closed, and  
who is the Seal of what had gone before, he who makes the Truth Victorious by the  
Truth, the guide to thy straight path, and bless his household as is the due of his  
immense position and grandeur.*

## Appendix V

Jawharatul-Kamal Text, Transliteration and Translation



Source: Zaami'u Central Mosque Archives (Tamale)

### Transliteration of Jawhatul Kamal:

Allah-umma Salli wa Sallim 'ala 'Ayni Ra'hmati Rabbaniyati wal Yaqutati-l-Muta'haqqiqati-l-'hâitati bi-Markazi-l-Fuhumi wal Ma'ani. Wâ-Nuri-l-Akwâni-l-mutakawwinati al-Adami Sa'hibi-l-Haqqi -r-Rabbani. Al-Barqi-l-Asta'i bi-Muzuni-l-arba'hi-l-maliati li-kulli muta'arridin mina-l-bu'huri wal awââni. Wa Nurika-llami'i al-Ladhi mala'ata bihi kawnaka-l-'haiti bi-amkinati-lmakââni. Allah-umma Salli wa Sallim alâ 'Ayni-l-Haqqi al-lati tatajalla minha 'Urushu al-Haqaiq 'Aynu-l-Ma'arifi-l-Aqam. Siratika Tammi-l-Asqam. Allah-umma Salli wa Sallim alâ Tal'ati-l-Haqqi bil-Haqqi. Al-Kanzi-l-A'adhami, IfâdhatukaMinka Ilayk. I'hâtatu-n-Nuri-l-Mutalsam. Salla Allah-u 'alayhi wa 'alâ ââlihi salatan tu-'arrifuna bihaa iyyaah

**In English, it goes like this:-**

O Allah, send benediction upon and salute the Source of Divine Mercy. The true *Rabi* who encompasses the center of comprehension and meaning. The Light of the World which is and fact to be, the Son of Adam, the Possessor of Divine Truth; the Most-Luminous Lightning in the profitable rain-clouds which fill all the intervening seas as receptacles; The Bright Light with which You have filled the universe and which surrounds the places of existence. O Allah, bless and salute the Source of Truth from which are manifested the manifestations of realities; the Source of Knowledge, the Most-Upright; the Complete and Most-Straight Path. O Allah, bless and salute the Advent of the Truth by the Truth; the Greatest Treasure, Your Overflowing that is coming from **Itself to Itself**; the Circle of Mysterious Light. May Allah bless the Prophet and his household, a prayer which brings us to knowledge of Him.





## Appendix VII

### Research Questionnaire

Intra-Religious Conflicts among Muslim Ummah (Communities) in Tamale from  
1960 to 2011

#### Research Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to solicit your opinion on the causes and effects of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale. It is solely an academic exercise. Please tick ( ☐ ) your choice of response where answers are provided and fill in the space where answers are not provided.

Please be informed that your identity will be treated as highly confidential.

#### Personal Data/Information

1. Name: (Mr. Mrs. Dr. Alhaj, Hajia, Ustaz, Sheikh) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
3. Age group: 18-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51 and above ☐
4. Educational level: Madrasa ☐ Middle school /SHS ☐ Tertiary ☐
5. Name of Islamic group you belong to: Tijaniya ☐ Ahmadiyyah ☐ Ahlus-Sunnah ☐ Shiah ☐ Other specify: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Position held in the group: Secretary ☐ Treasurer ☐ Imam ☐ Organizer ☐ Others specify \_\_\_\_\_
7. Years in that position: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Causes of Intra-Religious Conflicts in Tamale

1. What are the three most important reasons why you think your group is so unique? a \_\_\_\_\_  
b \_\_\_\_\_  
c \_\_\_\_\_
2. What has been your experience when you try to negotiate with other Islamic groups on your upheld values \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have problem accepting the views and upheld values of other groups?  
Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes proceed to question 5
4. Why can't you accept their views? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What specific measures has your group set up to prevent intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What specifically is the cause of intra-religious conflicts in Tamale?

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7. What other causes have you identified as the fuel or ingredients for the conflict situations among Muslims in Tamale?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

8. What do you think could be done to correct the situations?

---

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9. Please state your reaction(s) to the intra-religious conflict situations among Muslims in Tamale \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which Muslim groups are usually involved? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is/are the immediate thing(s) that usually spark the conflicts in Tamale?

---

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12. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following Statements:

a) The remote cause of intra-religious conflicts in Tamale is deeply rooted in chieftaincy matters in Dabgan. I agree [ ] I disagree [ ]

b) Intra-religious conflicts in Tamale are highly political. I agree [ ] I disagree [ ]

c) Syncretism is now the cause of intra-religious conflicts in Tamale. I agree [ ] I disagree [ ]

d) The methods of Da'awah used by some of the groups are very bad condemning and insulting. I agree [ ] I disagree [ ]

13. Do you consider lack of research on the part of the aimah or Ulama as a cause of the intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale? Yes [ ] No [ ]

14. When was the last time Muslims in Tamale disagree among themselves?

i. 6months to 1year ago [ ]

ii. 2years ago [ ]

iii. 3years ago [ ]

iv. Other specify \_\_\_\_\_

15. How many times did you witness intra-conflicts among Muslims in Tamale?

Once [ ] Twice [ ] Thrice [ ] other specify \_\_\_\_\_

16. Could you remember some instances of heated tensions or violent clashes among any Muslim groups in Tamale from the 1950s to date? Use the guide below:

Year	Groups Involved	Venue	Immediate Causes	Effects	Resolution Measures
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					
../19...					

17. What was the extent of damage caused to property and human life during such instances or disturbances? \_\_\_\_\_

18. In general how do you feel about the security of life versus the growth of Islam in Tamale if intra-religious conflicts continue to occur among Muslims?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. Please state three measures that could be adapted to stop intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale.

- i) \_\_\_\_\_  
ii) \_\_\_\_\_  
iii) \_\_\_\_\_

20. Please, is there anything else you think amount to the causes, effects and solutions to the problems of intra-religious conflicts among Muslims in Tamale? Use the space bellow:

**Thank you for sharing your time and opinion with us**

KNUST

