

# Chief Imam Ishaq Sodiq Ogunbado: Life and Contribution to his Society.

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## ABSTRACT

As Al-Qur'an relates, many Prophets were sent to convey the creator's (Allah) messages to their societies or communities. They were equally dispatched to contribute to the betterment of such communities or environments. More so, Prophet Muhammad was sent as a witness, a bearer of glad tiding, a warner and a lamp spreading light to the whole word (rahmatan lil'alam). Such are his contributions to the mankind. He then says that the scholars are the successors of the Prophets. All the Prophets are role models and contributed to the world in one way or the other. Al-Qur'an and seerah narrate the Prophets life and contribution so that it will be lesson for those who are coming behind them. Based on this background, this paper aims to study life history or biography and contribution of an Icon, an Islamic scholar per excellence to his society, so as to emulate him as a role model as well. The paper is purely qualitative research which rely heavily on interviews and other literatures to achieve its aims. The finding shows that he was the first Chief Imam of Oyo Alaafin and its environs in Nigeria to translate Friday prayer sermon for the community to understand. He brought first Arabic printing press to his community. He was a propagator who practiced with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argued in ways that are best and most gracious. He was an educationist and a writer.

**Keyword:** Imam Ishaq Sodiq Ogunbado, Biography, Contribution, Society.

## INTRODUCTION

Chief Imam of Oyo Alaafin and its environs from 1983 till 1999. Former Vice president of League of Imam and Alfas Yoruba land. Grand Patron of Oyo Muslim Community and First Chief Missioner of Ansar-ud-deen Society of Nigeria, Oyo Branch.

Alhaji Chief Imam Ishaq Sodiq Ogunbado Akeugberu was born in Imam Akeugberu's compound, Akesan Area. Oyo Alaafin, presently in Oyo west local government of Oyo State Nigeria on August 19<sup>th</sup> 1914. He died on Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup> which was 47<sup>th</sup> day of the year 1999 at age of 85 years. On this memorable day, a solar eclipse occurred at the moon's descending mode of orbit, with a recorded magnitude of 0.9928.<sup>1</sup>

## Family

His father was Sheikh Sodiq Ogunbado Akeugberu, his mother was Awaw Aderoju Ogunbado, nee Balogun Aleelo of Oyo. He was the last son of his six siblings which are, Muhib S. Ogunbado, Fasasi S. Ogunbado, Ahmad Tijani S. Ogunbado (Olohun Ero), Khadijat S. Ogunbado - Ajokidero, wife of Imam Muhib Ajokidero, Amusat S. Ogunbado and an agnate sibling, Sanjatu S. Ogunbado.

He married his first wife Alhaja Rabiya Igbo Ogunbado nee Agboluaje of Igboowa compound, Imam Area, Akesan market on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1938. He later married another wife, Alhaja Rafat Asunke Ogunbado, nee Adeleke of Alaodi compound, Akesan market, Oyo in the late 60s. After his fruitful life, he left this sinful world to the world beyond in 1999. He left behind a wife with four (4) children, Fadhilah Igbaoreto Ogunbado, Ahamad Faosiy Tunde Ogunbado, Muin Akintunde Ogunbado, Sakiru Opeyemi Ogunbado and some grandchildren.

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar\\_eclipse\\_of\\_February\\_16,\\_1999](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_February_16,_1999), accessed on 10-10 24.

## Education

Chief Imam Ishaq Sodiq Ogunbado Akeugberu started his Arabic/Islamic education from his first teacher his father late Sheikh Sodiq Ogunbado. He then continued under one of his uncles at the same compound. It was there that he met his future father-in-law late Tijani Agboluaje. He was so gifted with sharp brain that he could master his education faster and he became tutor for his colleagues and other students at his school (Ile-keu). In 1946, he sat for qualifying exam and interview at the Ansar-ud-deen society Alakoro Lagos and came out in flying colour.

As it is in Islam, seeking knowledge is from cradle to grave, Imam Ogunbado also joined his contemporary who flocked to Sheikh Sanusi Alabi Adeyemi of Ode-omu, a very brilliant and young scholar, a graduate student of Sheikh Abdul-Salam Alkinla, an Ibadan based native of Ilorin, in 1950s when he came Oyo Alafin to disseminate his knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Notable among his contemporaries then were Sheikh Sulaiman Alawiye, Sheikh Abdul Azeez Abdul Salami, Sheikh Abdul Rahim Araoyo, and host of others.

He obtained Arabic Grade III in 1956 and Western State Arabic Certificate in 1959. He attended a seminar for Muslims Religious Leaders organized by Department of Arabic and Islamic studies University of Ibadan in 1972. This department was established in 1962 to cater for the growing demand and agitation for Arabic language and Islamic religion culture and civilization.<sup>3</sup> As such, he became one of the vanguards if not the first to combined both Arabic/Islamic and Western education together in present Oyo.

### As a *da'i* (Propagator to Islam)

Sheikh Imam Ogunbado combined most characteristics of *da'i*. A propagator must possess features such as knowledge and wisdom, high moral standard, honest and integrity, humility as well as boldness, competence, steadfastness, determination and putting trust in Allah (tawakul), lawful means of livelihood and so on. He invites or calls (all) to the rightful way of Almighty Allah with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argues in ways that are best and most gracious. That is to say, he processed all these characteristics and applied them in his propagation to Islam in his school (ile-keu) and society.

He was the leader of Oyo Muslim Welfare Association which came together to establish Ansar-ud-deen society of Nigeria, Oyo branch. As such, he became one of the pioneers member of the society in 1944 which officially launched in July 1945 alongside with the society first secretary general who brought the idea from Lagos, Alhaji Kadiri Ayoola Adediran. Others include Alhaji Aruna Aderinkola Lakonu (the first society chairman), Alhaji Sani Aide (2<sup>nd</sup> Chairman), Alhaji Bello Oladele, (3<sup>rd</sup> Chairman), Alhaji Akibu Sumonu, (Chief Atunesise Muslum of Oyo and 4<sup>th</sup> Chairman), Alhaji Akibu Salam Animosaun, (Education board chairman and headmaster of Ansar-ud-deen primary school, Oke Balogun). Alhaji Lasis Sulaimon Akintunde (5<sup>th</sup> Chairman), Alhaji Abdul Hameed Anjorin, Alhaji Quadri Obaninlete, Alhaji K. O. Akindele, Alhaji Mallam Dikko, Alhaji A.H.A. Azeez, Alhaji Anjonrin, Alhaji Pa sani Aide, Alhaji F.A. Shittu, Alhaji Quadri Obanilete and host of others.<sup>4</sup>

Because of his activities he was appointed as the first and pioneer Missioner of Ansar-ur-deen society Oyo branch. The then most populous religious society in the city. He was officially turbaned on Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1968.<sup>5</sup> He converted many non-Muslims to Islam and directed many Muslims to correct and authentic practice (creed of ahalu sunnah wal-jamah). He used whatever in his capacity as tools for the propagation. According to Imam Abdul Ganiy Adewuyi, 'Imam Ogunbado was so accommodating, treat both youth and adult equally, not easily to be offended, quite discipline and punctual'. Above all, his impact in Ansar-ud-deen society of Nigeria in general and Oyo Alafin in particular is immeasurable.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ogunbado, A. F. (2018). Muslim Education in Oyo Alaafin: Challenges and Developments. *Journal of Islam in Asia*. (IIUM Journal) Vol.15, No.1. Pp. 248-270

<sup>3</sup> Ogunbado, A. F. (2016). Historical Development of Muslim Education in Yoruba land, Southwest Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. Volume 4. Issue 8 (July 2016). Pp.13-21. (p18).

<sup>4</sup> Gbadamosi, T.G.O. (2010). A Chronology of Ansar-ud-deen Society of Nigeria 1923-2009. P317.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.319; Interviewed with Alh. Abdul-Ganiy Adewuyi, Missioner Ansar-ud-deen society, Asaleye Mosque, Owode Oyo. On 4th May 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Interviewed with Alh. Abdul-Ganiy Adewuyi...

His activities as Missioner / Imam at Ansar-ud-deen Society, reinforced his appointment as the Chief Imam of Oyo Alafin and its environs. In order words, Sheikh Imam Ogunbado was elevated and appointed as the Chief Imam of Oyo on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1984. He also became vice president of league of Imams and Alfas of Yorubaland. He held those positions till his departure to the world beyond.

As the Chief Imam of Oyo, he introduced and brought many developments for the betterment of religion in his society at large. He started translating Friday sermon (khutbat l-jum'at) to Yoruba, so that the congregation will understand and learn from it. Prior to his imamship, his predecessors at central mosque only delivered the sermon in Arabic language which majority of the congregation did not understand, as such they benefited nothing from the sermon, this practice was common in Yourba land then. This development attracted and lured many Muslims to join the congregation on Fridays. He also launched morning *tafseer* -gathering to listen to the Qurianic interpretation during the holy month of Ramadan- at Oyo Centre Mosque where all Oyo *mufasirun* should attend and go to their individual *tafseer* gathering afterwards.

### As An Educationist

Educationalist per excellence, astute teacher who combined both Arabic/Islamic and western education, imparted his education to the following generation. He used to teach or tutor his fellow colleagues and other juniors pupils when he was with his uncle, later he continued to do the same thing on his own at Imam Akeugberu's compound, later at Osimale opposite to Abiodun Atiba town hall. He also established his school (ile-keu) at Oke Balogun Oyo. Many Pupils and some grown up adults graduated under his tutelage, notable among them are:-

1. Alhaji Bilal Ogunbado Akeugberu,<sup>7</sup> Imam Ratib Akeugberu/Igboowa from 2004 and later combined Mogaji Imam Akeugberu with Imam ratib, he died in 2023.
2. Alfa Mustapha Buseri, the first Imam Ratibi of Ajitose/Osibi mosque, prior to that, he was Naib Imam Ratibi of Balogun Alaelo's mosque and later Acting Imam. He became the most loyalist of his teacher during and after the demise of his teacher. He also died in 2004.
3. Alhaji Salahuddin Al-Amin 3<sup>rd</sup> *Mufasir* of Ilora central mosque, he was turbaned in 1969 -and died in 2000.
4. Alhaji Sakariyau Abiolu (aka, Baba Isawaka). A notable member of Ansar-ud-deen mission board, Oyo branch.
5. Alhaji Abdulkareem Akanbi, second Imam Ratib of Oyo central mosque, turbaned in 1985-and died 1995. He succeeded Muhammad Raji Adigun.
6. Alhaji Muhamad Saheed Garuba, first Imam Ratib of Gaa Amejiogbe from 1948-1999.
7. Alhaji Mudathir Agboluaje. (Lerinowon). Ansa-ud-deen Oyo branch mission board secretary from 2001 till his death in 2023.
8. Officer Aderibigbe Kamar, an access/protocol officer, based in Birmingham, United Kingdom.
9. Alhaji Ishaq Ojanjan.
10. Alhaja Aisatu Balogun, who later became Iya Sunna of Ansar-ud-deen Society Oyo Branch. She died 2001. Among others.

He continued as a teacher per excellence in many Ansar-ud-deen primary schools in Oyo and its purlieu at the beginning by volunteerism. Volunteerism as it was defined is "the act of contributing free labour to conduct community service or support a nonprofit organization". He volunteered himself to render his service to his community by teaching the pupils Arabic and Islamic studies free of charge. It was a known fact that Ansar-ud-deen society of Nigeria, is nonprofit organization. When Oyo branch established its schools, there were a lot of challenges and one of these main challenges was paying the teachers. Having realized this and because of this love for his society and community, Imam Ogunbado offered volunteerism service between 1955 until 1959. when the hypocrite approached him and told him that how would he get money to sustain his family. He used to answer them that he was doing that for the shake of his creator, and to be rewarded by him (Allah). Quranic verses were his reaction. He used to respond thus:

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<sup>7</sup> Conversation with Alfa Abd Lateef Ogunbado, July 2020.

I do not ask you any reward for it; my reward lies only with the Lord of all the worlds.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise,

Say, 'Whatever reward I may have asked you is for your own good. My [true] reward lies only with Allah, and He is witness to all things.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly,

Say, 'I do not ask you any reward for it, and I am no impostor.<sup>10</sup>

Also

"We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude.<sup>11</sup>

As Almighty Allah says in many places in the Qur'an that he will reward all the goodness towards his course, this noble promised was fulfilled through Ministry of Education as the ministry later recognized his efforts and placed him under its payment roll as of 1960 onwards. After twenty years of solid service to the community and humanity, he retired in 1974 to continue further contributions to the development of community at his own free will.

Numerous pupils were taught in Ansaru-ud-deen schools, among his numerous pupils are:

1. Alhaji Moshood Adebayo who later became Chief Imam of Oyo and its environs (Imam Ajokidero 111) he was turbaned on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2004 (10<sup>th</sup> rabiul thanni 1425) and joined his ancestors on Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
2. Professor Moshood Lanrewaju Nassar, a Professor at Management and Accounting Department, Obafemi Awolowo university (OAU) and former Acting Vice Chancellor. LAUTECH September 2010 till July 2011.
3. Professor Yunus Adeleke Dauda, Department of Industrial Relations and Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University.
4. Jamal Adediran, a retired Controller of Customs at Nigeria Customs Service.
5. Engineer Aderibigbe Fatai, A successful Mechanical Engineering and Commercial agent based in Rome Italy. He was his pupil at Ansar-ud-deen, Oke Balogun between 1961-1964. likewise, his tutee and Arabic/Islamic school (Ile-keu), from 1966-67.
6. Wahid Animiashaun, a United State of America based successful Nigerian.
7. Comrade Muftau Saka. And many more.

As it has been mentioned earlier among the characteristics of *da'i* or a leader. Imam Ogunbado strongly believed in lawful means of livelihood, so as to avoid unlawful earnings and consumption or parasitic living, depend on others or beggary. Therefore, he engaged himself in act of weaving (Aso oke) as a side source of income. This is popularly known occupation in Oyo Alaafin and its neighbourhood in those days till present days. Likewise in accordance to Allah and his apostle injunctions to seek lawful means of living. Al-Qur'an says:

O Apostles! Eat of the good things and act righteously. Indeed, I know best what you do.<sup>12</sup>

Hadith says:

It is better for any of you to take rope and cut wood (from forest) and carry it over his body and sell it as a means of earning and living) rather than ask a person for something which person may

<sup>8</sup> Al-Quran, surah al-Shu'ara (26):164.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, Surah Saba' (34):47

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, surah Sad (38): 86.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, surah Al-insan (76):9.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, Surah Al-Mu'minun (23):51.

give or not.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally:

He who refrain from begging and making efforts for family member and being kind to neighbors, searching livelihood lawful and will meet God with such face as will brighten like a fool moon.<sup>14</sup>

### As an Exemplary Leader and a Contractor.

As an exemplary leader a contractor who model the way and set the sample by align actions with shared value. Imam Ishaq Ogunbado set samples for other *alfas* / scholar to emulate, that being Imam or Arabic scholar does not deter someone from engaging himself in other things that can generate income and so as to eradicate poverty in the society. He showed that eradication of poverty is a responsibility of all. He used to walk his talk and practiced what he preached and believed in having impact on others. Therefore, he was a registered contractor and entrepreneur, He registered as a contractor with Public Works Department (PWD) Reference number 1.106/389/53 dated August 11<sup>th</sup> 1955 with registration number 70. He also was a renowned contractor under Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources with registration number Reference number IP/V-30/893/1966 dated 28<sup>th</sup> July 1966. He likewise registered his company under I. S. Ogunbado & Sons with S.G.L. No 003589, registration number 21453.

He demonstrated all these to confirm his preaching that even many Prophets engaged themselves in different occupations and careers. Prophet Aadam, the father of humankind, was a farmer while Prophet Idris was a tailor. Prophet Nuhu was a carpenter by professional; he used to build boats. Prophet Daud was a blacksmith as well as shepherd. Most notable job of the prophets was shepherd, Prophet Musa, Prophet Yakub, Prophet Ismail, Prophet Ishaq, Prophet Hisa, and their seal, beloved Prophet Muhammad (s.aw) were all shepherds. Prophet Muhammad was also a merchant<sup>15</sup>

He was an entrepreneur, a book seller. He established Ogunbado Printing Press at early 1960s but officially opened and registered on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1964. His establishment was the pioneer of Arabic printing press in Oyo Alafin and its surroundings. Abubakr says:

This Pioneering Arabic press has been able to influence others in different Yoruba towns to established similar industry. Notable among them are Barika printing works, Opeloyeru Printing service and Oluseyi Press Limited all of which were located in Ibadan. Others are Sebotimo Printing Press in Ijebu-ode, Ogunbado Printing works in Oyo and Otun printing press in Iwo.<sup>16</sup>

The press served the Oyos and their neighbours both non-Muslims and Muslims, the former can publish the English language and the Yoruba language works while the later benefited more with the ability of the press to print and publish Arabic works.

Imam Ogunbado used the press as a propagation tool, whereby he published some religious pamphlets, some were distributed free of charge while some were sold with cheap price. He published *Eko nipa esin Islam* part 1 to 6, which were used as (Islamic Religion Knowledge, IRK) school syllabus for primary schools. Some of his publications include but not limited to:

1. Nafila Oru Aawe Ramadan
2. Aniyan Siwaju Ise
3. Ilana Esin Islam
4. Imo Logaju

<sup>13</sup> Al-Gazali, abu Hamid (1991). *Ihya Ulum I din*, trans Fazlul Karim, NewDelhi: Islamic book Service, vol.2: 50

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 51

<sup>15</sup> Ogunbado, A. F. (2011). "Mechanisms of Poverty Eradication: An Islamic Perspective". *The Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 4, (2011). pp. 295-315.

<sup>16</sup> Razaq D. Abubakare, *The Interplay of Arabic and Yoruba Culture in South-western Nigeria*. (Iwo: Dar' l-'ilm Publisher, 2004), 173.



5. Esin Asejere part 1 and 2.
6. Bi Ase Nkirun ati Awon Aniyan re
7. Itan Igbesi Aye Anobi Muhammad (s.a.w).
8. Eko Nipa Esin Islam part 1-6.
9. Asayan eko .<sup>17</sup>

Islamic calendar published by Ogunbado printing press used to be most demanded item because of its uniqueness and accuracy. Many people from surrounding cities always booked for it before its production date. Looking at the establishment from another angle, it added to the development of the city on its own capacity; because, it attracted the customers on the one hand and the students or apprentices (learners) on the other hand from surrounding cities. Many students (learners) graduated from this press notable among them are Omotayo press and Olojede press both established themselves in Oyo Alafin in late 60s, and others from Oke-Ogun. Numerous were graduated from them. It is also important to mention that Allahu Lateef Press which trained tens of the new printers in Oyo and cities beyond was directly extension of Ogunbado Printing Press.

To these effects, many organizations recognized his impact as a great versatile propagator (da'i), educationalist per excellence, astute teacher, a reformist, an entrepreneur and an exemplary leader, many societies or organizations recognised his contributions to the development of his community at large, he was honored with many awards during his life time. After his demise, his contributions still been honored with numerous posthumous awards, to mention but a few.

1. Ansar-ud-deen Society of Nigeria, Oyo branch, at its award ceremony at Ansar-ud- deen Society Mosque Oke Eletu, Oyo, in 2001.
2. Federation of Muslim Women's Association of Nigeria, Oyo state chapter at its 25<sup>th</sup> (Silver jubilee) anniversary, staged at Obafemi Awolowo (liberty) Stadium, Ibadan 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2012.
3. Public Awareness Group of Oyo State. Oyo Chapter its award and turbaning ceremony at Durbar Stadium Oyo, on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014.
4. Association of Professional Printer of Nigeria (ASSPPO) Oyo Zone, at its occasion of Annual Printers Day and Get-together Party on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

This is about a biography and contributions of an icon to his community, it is about Sheikh Imam Ishaq Sodiq Ogunbado, a former grand or Chief Imam of Oyo Alafin and its environs in Oyo west local government in Nigeria. it was realised that chief or grand Imam immensely contributed to the development of his society. He was born in 1914 and died in 1999. His life is worthy to be emulated. He was a great versatile Propagator who propagate with wisdom and beautiful preaching. Many non-muslim reverted to Islam through his manner of approach. He was educationalist per excellence and astute teacher that trained many pupils in his society. He was a reformist that reformed many things in his community. He was an entrepreneur, he established a printing press which is first of its kinds in the city. He was an orator and pious exemplary leader who is worth to be emulate.

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Madam Fadhilat Ogunbado, Director of Ogunbado Printing Press. On 27-05-2016.

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4. Adediran, Jamal, a retired Controller of Customs at Nigeria Customs Service. Interview by Author on 1<sup>st</sup> nov. 2024.
5. Dauda, Yunus Adeleke. Faculty of Management Sciences, Lagos State University. Interviewed by the Author on 08-August-2024.