



Contributions of Gangaram Adamu Jaji - Maji to the Development of Qur'anic Scholarship in Kanem-Borno

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Abstract

Sheikh Adamu Gangaram was an erudite scholar who established his 1st Tsangaya Qur'anic learning institute at Jaji- maji he received students from all over Borno, Niger, Cameroon and other neighboring countries. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the impact of Gangaram Adamu teaching's to the development of Qur'anic studies and to discussed his biography, the establishment of his Tsangaya, his method of teaching the role he played in establishing Tsangaya at different villages and towns. In the process of carrying out the research, the instruments used for collecting data include: interviews with the families of the scholar as well as their students, written materials, and any available sources of information in relation with the scholar under study. This paper was conducted on the contributions of Sheikh Gangaram Adamu Jaji-maji to the development of Qur'anic studies. It also shows the significant played by this great intellectual Qur'anic scholar and paved on how to establish and manage the Tsangaya system in our contemporary time.

Keywords: Qur'anic Studies, Kanem-Borno, Tsangaya, Gangaram Adamu

Introduction

According to Mustapha Qur'anic studies can be define as a system and policy of education which places the overall development of Man at the Centre of its scheme. It has its unique philosophy, aims, objectives and goals covering all aspects of human endeavor in Arts, humanities, social sciences and the sciences. It is a system which is science propelled knowledge driven ethic conscious and moral sensitive. Tsangaya is one of the Islamic Education system developed in Nigeria. It is widely believed that the Tsangaya system has a long history of existence (Walker: 2012). Its origin can be traced to the old Timbuktu Scholastic culture. The Tsangaya which was

meant mainly to promote learning of Qur'an and other Islamic lesson has attracted the attention of much knowledge seeking.

Kanem-Borno as the Centre of Qur'anic Studies

Kanem-Borno had easy access and contact with the Maghreb and the Mediterranean littoral despite the Sahara desert separating them. According to Arkell (1961), Boahen (1961) Martins (1969), Adam and Vencounter (1981), that Kanem Borno and the Maghreb were linked by chains of trade routes Trans versing through the Sahara. It was linked to the Maghreb and Mediterranean littoral through the trans-Saharan trade routes and with the Nubian corridor from the east and it has links with Equatorial Africa through the route that ran across the sharia swamps. It was linked to Cordova (Spain) through the Mediterranean Sea via the Maghreb.

This facilitated and afforded easy access to this type of education by Kanem-Borno. Its introduction coincided with the expedition of Uqba Bin Nafi to the Maghrib in 666 A.D. which led to the establishment of a school for the teaching of Qur'an to non-Arabs in 670 A.D, about three hundred and sixty people from the Kavar region of Kanem-Borno into the School. Kanem- Borno was privileged to be connected to the Universities of Qayrawan (established 670 A.D.) Zaytuna (established 750 A.D.) and al-Azhar (established 970 A.D.). These institutions had greatly influenced the developments of Qur'anic education in Kanem-Borno. Kanem-Borno was privileged to be connected to the Universities of Qayrawan (established 670 A.D.) Zaytuna (established 750A.D.) and al-Azhar (established 970 A.D.). These institutions had greatly influenced the developments of Qur'anic education in Kanem - Borno.

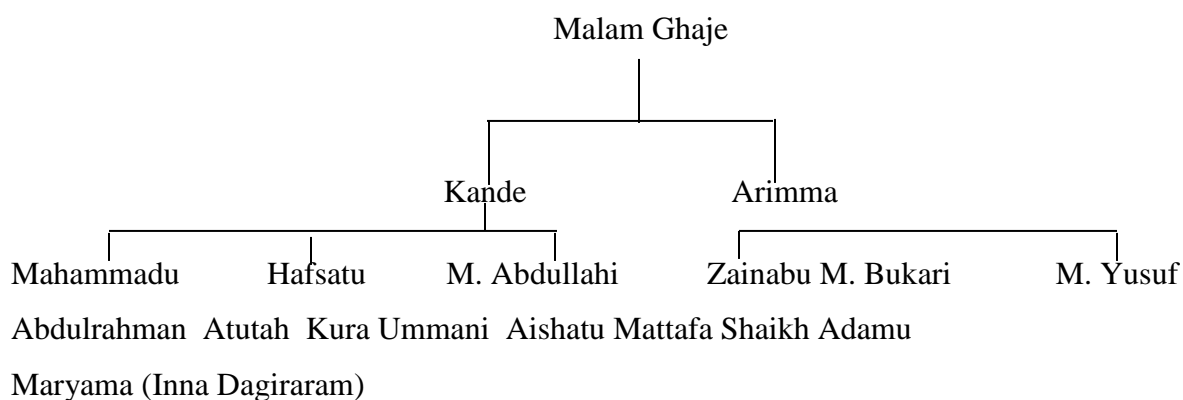
Gangaram Adamu's Genealogy

Malam Ghaje's forefathers who happened to be the grandfather of sheikh Adamu Gangaram Malam Ghaje was also one of the who have migrated from Yemen to Sudan , to Chad and from Chad to Kanem Borno Empire in pursuit of Qur'anic knowledge and impacting it. He has entered Kanem Borno together with his brother Malam Muhammad Nomau in the sixteenth century during the reign of Mai Ali bn Dunoma and settled in Kulamfardo or Kulambardo for some years. That settlement was an ancient town which happened to be one of the Ulama settlements near Kukawa

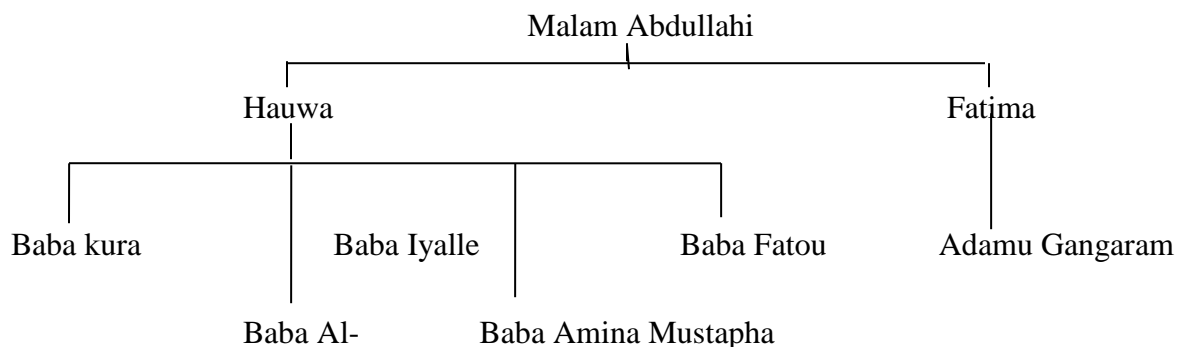
which existed around the 15th and 18th centuries with a very big Centre (Tsangaya) of impacting the Qur'anic knowledge with many great Ulama like Sheikh Abdullah Al-Barnawi (1616-1627).

Mallam Ghaje was one of the great Qur'anic scholars of considerable note among the Borno Ulama up to the time he migrated from Kanem Borno to Damagaram (Zinder) as Damagaram was also a vassal of Borno before its consolidation in the 19th century. Mallam Ghaje being an Arab and who left his country for the sake of seeking knowledge had finally settled in Damagaram and could not go any further due to old age. According to one of his great grandchildren, it was said that mallam Ghaje had made supplication to God to give his family forbearance to continue with seeking the Qur'anic education to the end of his generation. He was also said to have been admonishing his children and grandchildren on fear of God in whatever they tend to do.

Mallam Ghaje and his brother Malam Muhammadu Nomau decided to move from Kalumbardo, after spending many years on transit, they finally arrived Damagram (Zindre) around 1840s during the reign of Sultan Tanimun Dan Salemana " Baki Jataw" "Dari" and they were received warmly by the Sultan who offered them a place very near to story (the present Jumm'at mosque) but after having spent some few days he asked the Sultan permission to be given a land a little far away from the palace due to the nature of the then palace which was a nuisance to any recite of the Qur'an. Malam Ghaje was given a very big land at the far north at the outskirts of the city which was named after Malam Ghaje as Malam Ghajeri ward, which had become today the heart of the city of Damagaram and just some metres away from the palace today which I suppose was due to the over population. Malam Ghaje had two wives, Kande and Arimma (Halima), Kande was the first wife and had six children among whom was the father of Sheikh Adamu Gangaram



The six of the first wife, Malam Abdullahi was the father of Sheikh Adamu Gangaram. The Sheikh also happened to be the sixth and the last born of the father. Malam Abdullahi gives birth to six children namely as stated on the chart below:



Mallam Abdullahi gave birth to Malam Adamu Gangaram through his wife Meram Kule (Fatima). He also travelled far and near in quest of Qur'anic knowledge, Malam Abdullahi who was an erudite scholar. He travelled to places like; Libya, Agadez and Arlit in present day Niger Republic in search of knowledge. He has studied jurisprudence under scholars in the Niger republic. He became a mystic Sufi in the Qadiriyya Sufi order in Damagaram by virtue of his knowledge.

His Birth and Childhood

Sheikh Adamu Gangaram was born in Damagaram (Zinder) Republic of Niger in 1877, the only son of his mother whom she bore in Malam Ghajeri's house. Sheikh Gangaram's mother was given out to marriage by the Sultan of Damagaram to Malam Abdullahi in appreciation to Malam Ghaje's commitment and devotion towards imparting the Qur'anic knowledge to the sultan and the entire people of Damagaram. Fatima's marriage did not work out quite well, she went back home to the Sultanate and Sheikh Gangaram was given birth to in the palace. After staying with his mother between two to three years of age, he was brought back to Malam Ghajeri ward to his father to acquire the basic Qur'anic education as was the practice of the then Islamic religious practices for people to send their children to Makarantar Allo, some at an early stage of life while others at the age of six to seven but Gangaram had his own basic at the tender age of three and became a Hafiz at the age of ten.

His Early Education

Gangaram Sheikh had his early education at home together with his brothers and cousins, but before he reached maturity he travelled to Guluska a nearby village and studied under his father's cousin Malam Hassana son of Malam Muhammadu Man. Sheikhs have travelled from Niger Republic to Borno in quest of Qur'anic knowledge until he had become a mystic Sufi not on choice due to the circumstances he found himself by virtue of his knowledge and training. It was widely believed at that time, one cannot master the Qur'an very well without going to Borno as it contained the most knowledgeable and great experts especially in the field of reciting the Qur'an, Borno has excelled in the central Sudan. It was believed that traveling away from home to search for knowledge is very important in one's life. Ibn Khaldun pointed out the importance of knowledge, thus:

"The human beings obtain their knowledge and character qualities and all their opinions and virtues either through study, instruction, lectures or through imitation of a teacher Thus the greater the number of authoritative teachers the more deeply rooted is habit one acquires. Furthermore technical terminologies used in scientific instruction are confusing to a student. By meeting many teachers, a student will distinguish the terminologies and will understand the science itself ..."

His traveling in quest of knowledge is absolutely necessary for acquisition of useful knowledge and perfection through finding authoritative teachers. In sheikh Adamu's case, he was opportune to leave his country (Niger Republic) to seek for knowledge and with intent of going as far as Makkah to perform pilgrimage. During his first visit to Nigeria he was only fifteen to sixteen years of age when he visited Katsina, Danmusa and Daura where he studied under eminent Qur'anic Malams and Sheikhs for some years, Adamu Gangaram in his long stay in what is today Katsina state seeking for Qur'anic knowledge he went back home to Damagaram and left to Agades, Airlit and Libya searching for knowledge. The sheikh stayed there for many years in his country the Niger republic and made another return journey to Nigeria following a cousin of his in person of Sheikh Abubakar Mustafa (Talba Kura) was to come to Nigeria on invitation by his Royal Highness, Emir of Gogaram (Bade) to come and educate his people and was also given an appointment as the Chief Imam to lead the jumm'at prayer and propagate Islam as well.

Gangaram left his cousin at Gogaram and proceeded with his knowledge seeking by visiting the Kanem Borno where he studied the Qur'an under many Sheikhs lived in towns like kukawa, Konduga, Mouguno, Dikwa, Geidam and many other towns and villages. The names of the Sheikhs could also not be recalled but that of one time Sheikh of the ruling families of Borno who happened

to be a friend to Gangaram in person of Shehu Garbai. It was after many years that Gangaram return to Bade emirate and stayed in many of the villages spreading knowledge of Qur'anic education.

Gangaram Adamu's Family

Gangaram visit to Njibulwa there at Njibulwa, he got married to his first wife named Umm Kulthum (Magaltum) whose father was Shuwa Arab Nomad. Ummu Kulthum gave birth to five children namely:

1. Hajara (Yani Kura)
2. Mallam Bukar (Goroma)
3. Malam Muhammad Bashar (Madu)
4. Baba Fureira (Kulwuri)
5. Malam Yahaya

The second wife of Malam, Hadiza, hailed from Kanuri (Manga) speaking people of Njibulwa she was blessed with two children namely:

1. Mallam Salihu (Changama)
2. Baba Hauwa

The first of his children were born in Njibulwa while the rest of them were given birth to at Jaji-maji, as the Sheikh had already migrated from Ngubulwa to Jaji-maji with the sole aim of continuing his journey to Makkah with his family.

His Field and Area of Specialization

The version of the Qur'an which we read today was compiled in its present form during the time of Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan, he was the fourth Caliph of the prophet S.A.W the first copy was brought to Egypt which was conquered under the command of Amr Bn Al-As in 20 AH/642 AD. From there the Qur'an was introduced to the rest part of North Africa region. Abusa Sa'id Uthman Al-Misri (d.246 A.H/860AD) known as Warsh who studied under Nafi'a al-Madini was credited with introducing his master's system of recitation to Egypt. Muhammad Ibn Umar Khairun d.306AH/918AD learned the recitation of Warsh from the Egyptian Qurra (reciters) and went to

Qairawan where thought, it is from that the recitation of Warsh was disseminated to the rest of Maghreb and Borno.

Sheikh Gangaram could not be compared with his contemporaries in terms of Qur'anic recitation. One of his students in person of Malam Yahaya Usman (M Haiyo) Jaji-maji who followed Gangaram from Daura town and also settled at jaji-maji and the former Chief Imam remarked that up to date he has never seen any Malam reciting and acquiring knowledge of Qur'an better than Gangaram. Mallam Haiyo followed Gangaram Jaji-maji in search of Qur'anic knowledge. He stated that the Sheikh hailed from the Damagaram Sultanate, he was told that he came to Jaji-maji with the intention of heading eastward to Makkah for pilgrimage which Allah had not wished. He was given a big residence in the Bulamari ward of Jaji-maji where he used some part to build a Masjid while the other part he used to build a Tsangaya school. Another part was allocated for the students, an apartment for his wives, his own apartment and a big compound and his Zaure (Study room) where he received his guests and where students took their lessons from malam.

Among the contributions made by the Sheikh according to M. o were the establishments of the first Tsangaya in Jajimaji with over 300 students from different parts of central Sudan in search of knowledge.

Gangaram the Chief Imam of Jaji-maji

Sheikh Adamu had his own mosque where he and the entire people of the Bulamar ward in Jaji-maji observed their prayer which still exists together with Tsangaya. After the construction of the central Masjid at Jaji-maji, Gangaram was appointed as the chief Imam of Jaji-maji on 19th/12/1968 Jajimaji central Masjid is located in the heart of Jajimaji town.

Gangaram as the Imam of Jajimaji led his people in prayers at his five daily prayer mosque in his Tsangaya long before he built the Jajimaji central mosque and appointed as the Imam there. The Sheikh was highly respected and had possessed the above mentioned qualities to become an Imam.

The Contributions of Gangaram Adamu to Qur'anic Studies

Gangaram Adamu was the first to established Tsangaya at Jaji-maji, with him as the head of the institution. The tsangaya which was meant mainly to promote learning of Qur'an and other Islamic

lesson has attracted the attention of much knowledge seeking Malams, renowned among them were Goni Haruna of Bulumkutu ward, Maiduguri, Goni Malam Haladu of Jaji-maji who became a resident of Jaji-maji, who's Tsangaya was full of students who came from different parts of Nigeria. Goni Mallam Haiyo was also given permission by Gangaram to establish another learning institute at his ward. Some of the Qur'anic learning institute directed to be established by Gangaram were in the other wards of Jaji-maji such as Garim Gawo, Tatukori, Karasuwa and many other villages which gave rise to the opening of many Masjid.

Writing of the Quran came in to being since from the time of the prophet (S.A.W), upon the revelation of Surah, the prophet (S.A.W) instructed his companions to write the verses down which was then written on scraps of leather, shoulder blades, palm rasps; and any other materials at their disposal. The writing was arranged according to the chapters and verses. The art of reading and writing of the Qur'an by hand was in existence in Muslim world before the advent of printing technology. writing the Quran by hand as prestigious in Borno as well as profitable profession in the 18th century and is still prestigious due to the fact that only those who learn the Qur'an by heart could write it, Gangaram Adamu was one of the renowned copyist of the Qur'an during his time.

During his life time, Gangaram contributed to Islam tremendously. More especially in the field of Qur'anic studies, he engaged himself in different activities to move Islam forward. He received invitations for Qur'anic recitation from different towns and villages. Many people in Nigeria and West Africa at large have benefited from his vast Qur'anic knowledge, He was leading by example; and he practiced what he preached. He understood that patience is one of the qualities which one should practice and hold in all his dealings. He divided patience into three: patience in following the directives of Allah (SWT), patience on abstinence from whatever affected a person such as destinies.

Some of his Good Moral Qualities to be derived in his Life

Good moral is one of qualities, which each and every Muslim is expected to possess (Labaran, 2008). Some of his good qualities include:

1. Rendering assistance to both teachers and students of Islamic studies, to enhance teaching and learning activities

2. Assisting the orphans and Widows
3. Sponsoring the studies of the less privileged in society
4. He was paying greater attention to his family when the need necessary ,

It was part of his behaviors to respect elders, in another report, Sheikh Gangaram was known for his assistance to his neighbors. He likes telling the truth. He didn't used to make unnecessary request from people. He was interested in self- reliance and calling Ummah to be self-reliant. He lived an exemplary life. For example, he was one time a washman, hand designer. Nobody was taking his responsibilities, he was known with higher contentment. Sheikh Gangaram was simple and flexible to any one interacting in him. It was after his death that some people were confessing about his assistance to them.

His Death and Legacy

Sheikh Gangaram died after a brief illness in the hours of Friday in the month of Ramadan at the age of 95 and was buried at Jaji-maji same day. He did not left behind him money or property, but he left behind him copies of the glorious Qur'an. He wrote with his hand 30 copies of Qur'an from the bottom of his heart.

Conclusion

The carrier of a person to be a Gangaram at Kanem-Borno empire had its origin from the time Sayfawa dynasty. In attaining such a certain status, one has to be admitted in tsangaya at the early part of his life, starting to learn the Huruf (Arabic alphabet) Surah Al-fatiha and then proceed to learn the whole of the Qur'an through various hardships under many different learned teachers from various walks of life. The main goals of so doing is memorizing the whole of the Qur'an which one become perfect in through writing copy of the Qur'an without referring to a text which earns a great deal of dignity and respect here and the worlds hereafter. This paper was conducted on the contributions of Sheikh Gangaram Adamu Jaji-maji to the development of Qur'anic studies. It also shows the significant played by this great intellectual Qur'anic scholar and paved on how to establish and manage the Tsangaya system in our contemporary time. The exposition gained in this research has proved the truth of the assumption that the present crisis is related to how some scholars

either Qur'anic/Mufasssirun have been handling the state of their students and listeners during their teachings, instructions, sermons or Tafsir.

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