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Impact of Ramadan Tafsir on the Contemporary Muslims in Iwoland

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Abstract

Tafsīr is one of the religious activities in the month of *Ramaḍān* that do not only sustain the spirituality of the Muslims but also strengthen the socio-moral aspects of their lives. But that do the significance of *Ramadan Tafsīr* in the Islamic societies cannot be underrated as it has positively impacted the Muslim *Ummah* in general and Iwo town in particular. It is therefore necessary to expose and document its impacts on the Muslim *Ummah* in Iwo land with a focus on Iwo town. To achieve this, historical, analytical and phenomenological methods of research had been used. In accounting for the historical background of Iwo and *Ramadan Tafsīr* in the town, historical method had been employed while analytical method was used in explaining the impact of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* on the Muslim *Ummah* in Iwo town. Phenomenological method was used in relating these impacts to the people of Iwo town so as to determine the extent to which these impacts have taken effects on their lives. The paper discovered that the Impacts cut across the socio-moral and economic as well as spiritual aspects of the Muslims in Iwo town. It also revealed that most of the Mosques where *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* is done in Iwo town are facing challenges among which are non recording of *Tafsīr*; not broadcasting it on social media and lacking public address system as the *Muffassirun* are always talking on top of their voices. The paper concluded by advocating good

treatment of the *Mufassirūn* by the well to do Muslims in the town as well as prompt recording and live broadcasting of the *Tafsīr* with the intention of wider coverage.

Keywords: *Ramadan, Tafsīr, Mufassīr, Impact, Iwoland, Nigeria*

A. Introduction

Iwo town as popularly called 'Iwo Malami'¹, meaning the city of Islamic scholars². It has series of activities that make it a town of Islam and Islamic scholars among which is *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* that is usually done in the month of *Ramadan* in relation to fasting as ordained by Allah in Qur'ān Chapter 2:183. As a pillar of Islam, Ramadan has been legalized to instill disciplines in the people which are to be applied in their day- to- day activities. Thus, the act of doing *Tafsīr* in this month is considered important because the Glorious Qur'ān was revealed in the month of *Ramaḍān* as affirmed by Allah in Q2:185 thus:

Ramadan is the month in which was sent down the *Quran*, As a guide to mankind, also clear signs for Guidance and Judgment Between right and wrong. So every one of you who is present at his home, during that month should spend it in fasting. But if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period should be made up by days later. Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him In that He has guided you; and perchance you shall be grateful. (Q. 2:185)

¹Dynamic world, "The Advent of Islam In Iwo Land, 1673-2018 in historical Antecedent of islam in Iwoland; <http://wealthsoft.blogspot.com/historical-antecedent-of-Islam-in.html?m=1>. Accessed on 27th April,2022,at 12:30am.

² T.G.O. Gbadamosi "Islam in Yoruba land", (Lagos: Unilag press & Bookshop, 2018), 1-20.

It can be deduced from the above verse that the Messenger of Allah received the first revelation which was *Sūratu'l-^cAlaq* in the month of *Ramaḍān*. The Noble Qur'ān was first written in the *Lawḥ Maḥfouz* (The Preserved Tablet)³. It was then brought down from there to the lowest heaven in *Laylatu'l-Qadr*, the special night found in the month of *Ramaḍān*. This shows that the Noble Qur'ān was revealed by Allah in the month of *Ramaḍān* in two ways⁴. Allah has chosen this blessed month to reveal His Noble Book to show the importance of the month. Thus, Religious activities, especially, in the month of *Ramaḍān* continued to increase as the teachings of Islām progressed and expanded.

Ramadan *Tafsir* is a programme through which the propagation of Islam can be facilitated. It is a means of dialoguing between the presenter and the audience to enhance their proper understanding of the Book of Allah. According to Bidmos,⁵ 'dialogue is a discussion that is characterized by duality and reciprocity for the exchange of ideas or opinions on a particular issue, especially a religious or political issue to reach to agreement or settlement. In general terms, dialogue promotes an exchange of ideas in which the participants make proportionately equal contributions. According to Oladimeji,⁶ the dynamics of Da'wah require that the person involved in this duty should be someone with profound faith and knowledge which can be enhanced through Ramadan Tafsir . He would need to pay constant attention to the purification of his faith and the protection of his creed from different types of corrupt practices which the Qur'an has explained. He needs to possess the ability to evolve a balance between Islam in the text and Islam in his

³ Muhammad Abdul Azim Az-zarqani, *Manahilu l- Urfan fi Uhimi l-Qur'an* 1 (Cairo: Daru'l-Hadith, 1442 A. H/2001 C.E.), 24

⁴ Muhammad Abdul Azim Az-zarqani, *Manahilu l- Urfan fi Uhimi l-Qur'an...* 24

⁵ M.A Bidmos, *Inter-Religious Dialogue: The Nigeria Experience*, (Lagos: Islamic publications Bureau, 1993) 14

⁶ L.F, Oladimeji " An Appraisal of the place of Shari'iah in the Nigeria Constitution". In M.A Muhinnu-Din (ed), *Shari'ah in a Mulfi-faith Nigeria*. Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS) Publication (2009) 133-149.

context. This means that Ramadan *Tafsīr* is an avenue to equip the caller to Islam with beneficial information that will be useful while calling others to the teachings of Islam.

Today, social media have brought Ramadan *Tafsīr* and other knowledge fora to the global level across Nigeria and other parts of the sciences. In addition to Ramadan *Tafsīr*, Friday Sermon, Qur'ān and *Ḥadīths*, Ramadan Lecture and many others are carried out on social media. All these are used in one way or the other to convey the message of Islam, provide guides on Islamic sciences, Ramadan moon sighting, messages and many others in such a sophisticated manner.⁷ It is important to note that *Tafsīr* was used as an avenue to gain more knowledge by the early Muslims which has extended to contemporary society among which Iwo land is not an exception.

It is apposite to state here that *Tafsīr*, as a religious activity in the month of Ramadan, started in Iwo in the late 1940s in the Palace during the reign of Oba Kosiru Ayinde (1939-1952 C.E). The Muslims including the Monarch and his chiefs in Iwo used to troop out to listen to the *Tafsīr* and get more knowledge of Islam as well as to earn more rewards in this blessed month. It continued this way in the palace till Iwo became more developed as more central mosques and Muslim organizations were established; hence, Ramadan *Tafsīr* was conducted in the newly proliferated mosques by the Muslim organizations, with the permission of the Chief Imam, *Mufassir* and the Monarch of the town.⁸

It is pertinent to state here that the early *Tafsīr* session in Iwo land was conducted by selected *Mufassirūn* for some years on shifting bases until the year 1994 when permanent *Mufassir* was turbaned⁹. Alhaji Abdulazeez Akanmu was therefore officially

⁷ L.F. Oladimeji "Shariah Practice in Nigeria: A Re-Examination of its Appellate Jurisdiction". In O.S Amidu et al. (eds). Transformation in Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria. Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS) Publication (n.p 2009) 133-149.

⁸ Gbadamosi "Islam in Yoruba land"...19.

⁹ An oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Mutolib Mudathir Akinlade, Eketa-Ajanasi

installed and known as the first *Mufassir* in Iwoland. This marked the beginning of a new trend in the history and development of *Tafsir* and *Mufassir ship* Iwoland¹⁰. Hence, this new phase as well as the early Ramaḍān Tafsīr sessions in 1950 -1996) in Iwoland, are worthy of being studied.

It is against this backdrop that this research shall delve into the study of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* Sessions in selected Central Mosques in Iwoland with a view to examining the socio-moral and religious impacts of Ramadan *Tafsīr* which are the core points in religious rights. In order to achieve this, the paper has been segmented into seven; abstract, introduction, historical background of Muffassir ship in Iwo town, list of *Muffassirun* in Iwo Central Mosque, Impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* on the Muslim *Ummah* in Iwo Town, challenge facing *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* in Iwo Central Mosque and conclusion.

B. Discussion

1. Historical Background of *Mufassirūn* of Iwo Town

There was no permanent person to be *Mufassir* in Iwo Central Mosque in the olden days. The Council Imam and Alfas only chose anybody among themselves. At that time, anybody who was competent for *Tafsīr* would signify for recognition. It was not controversial till the period of Imam Abdul-Jabbar Akinlade when the system was later slightly changed to creation of a group called 'Preachers', (*Oniwaasi*). The leader of the preachers then was called Grand Mufty, in person of Alfa Adiatu Idi-Agbon Akinlewa, while Alfa Shaykh Salman Esin Lolorun Yio Beere, Ile-Legbe, Alfa Shaykh Alimi Ile- Pongbala and Alfa Agba Ile- Petugbele were members

of Iwoland, Akinlade compound, Isale-oba Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area, Aged; 57-years, On 15th February, 2022, Iwo, Osun-State.

¹⁰ An oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Mutolib Mudathir Akinlade, Eketa-Ajanasi...

of the group. It was among them that the post of a *Mufassir* was being shifted till the period of Imam Salahudeen Omotokese when Shaykh Muhalliy Adedimeji was chosen to act as *Mufassir* but not turbaned from 1978-1985.¹¹

Though in the period of the late Muhalliy Adedimeji as *Mufassir*, the late Alhaji Abdul-Ganiyy Kewulere in underground was viewed as secondment to Shaykh Muhalliy Adedimeji in *Tafsir* during the *Ramadan* by the then Chief Imam Salahudeen Omotokese. It was concluded that the two of them should be interpreting the Qur'ān at the same time and place using the same verse. This continued till it led to enmity, because majority of the listeners from outside the town listened to different interpretations from the two opposing scholars. The people showed interest in Shaykh Muhalliy Adedimeji than Shaykh Abdul-Ganiyy¹².

In the long run, people complained that the system would cause grievances publicly. As a result of this, the system was abolished during the reign of the subsequent Imam; Alhaji Imran Imoru who changed the method and dialogued with his colleagues to create an office of *Mufassir* separately as a permanent seat. The Council Imam of *Alfas* embraced the new development and implemented it by unanimously electing the late Shaykh Abdul-Azeez Akanmu Akinlewa as the first *Mufassir* to be turbaned on the 19th February, 1994 till 1996 when he died¹³. Before his demise while on sick bed, the Council of *Alfas* approached him for the *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* of the year but he could not do it, and could not produce someone to replace him. Thus, the Council Imam of *Alfas* requested from him saying; “Do you allow the Council to choose

¹¹ An oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Shaykh Ashimiyy Ejalonibu, Otun Imaam of Iwoland, Molare compound, Molete Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged;89- years, On 14th March, 2022, Iwo, Osun-State.

¹² An oral interview conducted with Alhaji Shaykh Ashimiyy Ejalonibu...

¹³ An oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Muhammed-Thanni Abdul-Muhmin, Mufassir of Iwoland, Akinlewa Compound, Molete Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged; 55- years, On 13th of April, 2022, Iwo, Osun-State.

anybody for the assignment for the month of *Ramaḍān*?"¹⁴. On this, he said in affirmative and thereafter, Alhaji Asimiyu Ejalonibu Molare was chosen to do *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* for the year. And after the demise of *Mufassir* Abdul-Azeez Akanmu Akinlewa, the Council of Alfa concluded that Shaykh Asimiyu Ejalonibu should continue to handle the post of *Mufassir* in Iwo Central Mosque which he did with good performance. However, He was man not counted everything, with that he was not turbaned from 1996 till 2015 when he became the Deputy-Imam (*Na'ibu'l-Imām*) of Iwo Central Mosque.¹⁵

In 2016, the office of *Mufassir* was vacant and the Council of Alfa suggested the late Alhaji Shaykh Daood Ajibola of Daodu Agba Compound, Isale Oba, Iwo, to assume the office but he could not accept the offer as a result of his ill health. So, Shaykh Daood suggested to the Council to appoint Shaykh Abdul-Muhmin Abdul-Azeez to act on his behalf for the *Tafsīr* of the year. However, this led to another quarrel as Alfa Nura'in Mogaji Asati believed that he could do it better than Shaykh Abdul-Muhmin Mogaji Akinlewa¹⁶. The Council concluded that the two of them were fit for the post. This was witnessed by the incumbent Chief Imam of Iwo; Shaykh Abdul-Fatah Obelawo Olododo Fojugbagi during the regime of the Royal Highness Dr. Abdul-Rasheed Adewale Akanbi Ilufemiloye Telu 1. It was later suggested that the duo (the competitors for the office of *Mufassir*) should competitively handle *Tafsīr* for the month of *Ramaḍān* in 2016.

Thereafter, comments were made by the congregation on the knowledge, quality and presentation of the two scholars. Having considered his dexterity and prowess of knowledge, the Chief Imam

¹⁴ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Alhaji Abdulfatah Adeyemi Olododo Obelawo, The Chief Imam of Iwoland, Fojugbagi Compound, Isale-Oba Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged ;88-years, On 24th April, 2022

¹⁵ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Alhaji Abdulfatah Adeyemi Olododo Obelawo, The Chief Imam of Iwoland, Fojugbagi...

¹⁶ Muhammad bin Isa At-Tirmidhi, *Jami'u-t-Tirmidhi*, Abu Khaliyl (Trans), 1 (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007) Hadith Number 2910, Babu Fada'ilu'l-Qur'an.

of Iwoland and the Oluwo of Iwoland made a recommendation of Shaykh Abdul Muhmin Muhammed Thanni of Akinlewa Compound, Molete Quarters, Iwo as the new *Mufassir* of Iwo land and the Council of Alfes unanimously accepted the recommendation. Thus, the Oluwo of Iwoland, His Royal Highness, Dr. Abdul Rasheed Adewale Akanbi Ilufemiloye, Telu 1, therefore announced the new *Mufassir*; Shaykh Abdul Muhmin Muhammed Thanni of Akinlewa Compound, Molete Quarters, Iwo in the presence of Khalifa Asiru Adio Imran (The then Otun Ajanasi of Iwo). The new *Mufassir* was turbaned on the 4th December, 2016 and has been acting till date¹⁷.

2. List of *Mufassirūn* in Iwo Town: Till Present

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the decades of *Ramaḍān Tafṣīr* in Iwo town as well as shifting method of *Mufassir ship* had a number of appointed *Mufassirūn*. However, there are no proper and specific documents other than oral account from the elders who witnessed the course of history. Thus, the documentation of this information will be of an immense benefit in solving the problem that may arise due to either missing or lost information as far as the history of *Mufassirship* in Iwoland is concerned. The under listed are the recognized *Mufassirūn*¹⁸:

a. Those who were recognized but not turbaned are;

- 1) Alhaji Mudathir, Badru-Deen Iyalaje and Alhaji Salahudeen Aremu Omotokese [1958-1978] during the tenure of Chief Imam of Iwoland, Alhaji Jabaar Akinlade and in the regime of His Royal Highness, Adiatu Omotosho Abimbola II Lamuye.

¹⁷ An oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Shaykh Ashimiyi Ejalonibu, Otun Imaam of Iwoland, Molare

¹⁸ An oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Shaykh Ashimiyi Ejalonibu, Otun Imaam of Iwoland, Molare...

- 2) Alhaji Salahudeen Aremu Omotokese and Alhaji Ahmad Muhaliyy Adedimeji Aroworeki [1978-1980] during the tenure of Chief Imam Mudathir Badru-Deen Iyalaje and in the regime of His Royal Highness Adiatu Omotosho Abimbola II Lamuye.
 - 3) Alhaji Imran Muhammad Ashir Amoo Imoru and Alhaji Adiatu Bello Yagboyaju Alaye [1980-1985] during the tenure of Chief Imam Salahudeen Aremu Omotokese and in the regime of His Royal Highness Adiatu Abimbola Omotosho II Lamuye. Later, Alhaji Ahmad Muhaliyy Adedimeji Aroworeki and Alhaji Abdul-Ganiyy Keulere Alaye continued the *Tafsīr* till the end of the tenure.
 - 4) Alhaji Sambaqiyy Katayeyanjue [1985-1994] performed the duties of Imam of Iwoland and Mufassir together. This was because there was no any royal majesty on stool and no Imam according to the system in Iwoland.
 - 5) Alhaji Ashim Ejalonibu Molare [1996 till 2015] started from tenure of Chief Imam of Iwoland Alhaji Imran Amoo, to the regime of Muhammad Ashir Imoru, another Chief Imam of Iwoland, to the period of Alhaji Abdul-Ganiyy Keulere Alaye, another Chief Imam of Iwoland, to the reign of Alhaji Imran Badru-Deen Amin, and another Chief Imam of Iwoland Alhaji Mudathir Ajao Akinlade
- b. Those Turbaned *Mufassirūn* are;
- 1) Alhaji Shaykh Abdul-Azeez Akanmu, Muhammad-Thanni Akinlewa [1994-1996] in the tenure of Chief Imam of Iwoland, Alhaji Imran Amoo Muhammad Ashir Imoru, in the regime of His Royal Highness Ashir Olatunbosun Ariwajoye Tadese 1.

2) Shaykh Abdul-Muhmin Akanji, Abdul-Azeez Thanniyy Akinlewa [2016 till date] in the tenure of Chief Imam of Iwoland, Alhaji Abdul-Fatah Adeyemi Olododo Obelawo in the regime of His Royal Highness Dr; Abdulrasheed Adewale Akanbi Ilufemiloye Tellu 1.¹⁹

3. The Impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* Session on the Muslim *Ummah* in Iwo Town

There is no gain saying the fact that *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* in Iwo town has impacted the Muslim *Ummah* positively in various ways; spiritually, socially, economically and morally. These are explained in details as follows:

a. Spiritual Impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr*

Ramaḍān itself is spiritually inclined and *Tafsīr* in is a reward multiplier. Meanwhile, *Tafsīr* cannot be done without firstly reading the Glorious Qu'rān which attracts a lot of rewards. On this, the Prophet of Allah said:

Whoever reads a letter from the Book of Allah, he will have a reward, and this reward will be multiplied by ten. I am not saying that '*Alif, Lam, Mim* (a combination of letters frequently mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān) is a letter, rather I am saying that *Alif* is a letter, *Lam* is a letter and *Mim* is a letter (At-Tirmidhi).²⁰

Tafsīr, as an interpretation of Qu'rān requires a lot of knowledge and learning. On this, Uthman bin Affan said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said "*The best of you are those who*

¹⁹ An oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Muhammed-Thanni Abdul-Muhmin, Mufassir of Iwoland...

²⁰ Muhammad bin Isa At-Tirmidhi, *Jami'u-t-Tirmidhi, Abu Khaliyl* (Trans), 1 (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007) Hadith Number 2910, Babu Fada'ilu'l-Qur'an

learn the Qur'ān and teach it to others" (Al-Bukhari).²¹ More so, *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* makes some Muslims to be aware of the meaning and application of the verses of the Glorious Qur'ān. Rapt attention is usually paid to the exegetes because of spiritual consciousness in the *Ramaḍān* which makes assimilation of Qur'ān interpretations sinks into the memory. This is because *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* arouses piety especially when explaining the verses that talk about punishment of hell fire for the evil-doers, at some *Tafsīr* gatherings, pious ones will be shedding tears.²²

Iwo central mosque makes *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* an instrument to elevate the spiritual values of the ruler and the ruled in the town. The Oluwo of Iwo will be on ground listening to the *Tafsīr* which has been considered as annual tradition. The appearance of the king at the *Tafsīr* is considered sacrosanct as it is believed that through Qur'ān interpretations, there are bad habits of the audience including the king that can be changed by the words of Allah which cannot be challenged by anyone including the Oba or regarded as embarrassment to him. The *Tafsīr* of Iwo Central Mosque is done in the Palace where Muslims from the town are also allowed to enter and learn Qur'ān exegesis with a view to accelerating the spiritual devotion of the attendant Muslims in the town. In Iwo Central Mosque, the appointment of a *Mufassir* is separated from Imamship as *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* is the core duty of his office while other duties are secondary.²³

²¹ Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalānī, *Fat-ḥu'l-Bārī: SharḥṢaḥīḥu'l-Bukhārī*, 2 (Cairo: Daru'l Bayani'l-Arabi, 2007) 142, *Bābu Faḍā'ilu'l-A'māl*

²² An Oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Shaykh Amuda Yousuf Adiatu Yagboyaju, Ajanasi Agba of Iwoland, Alaye compound, Gidigbo Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged: 56-years, on March 2022.

²³ A.M, Muhammed Thaani, "Imamship in Iwo land" (Unpublished M.A Dissertation. Department of religious, Faculty of Arts University of Ilorin, 2017), 42

More importantly, the spiritual impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* in Iwoland as observed in different *Tafsīr* sittings; focus on installing Islamic monotheism in the audience and refraining them from associating partner with Allah. It also enjoins them to have reliance on Allah, establishment of *Salawatu Mafrūdah* (obligatory prayers), good morality and essence of generosity to fellow human beings in general and other Muslims in particular. Through *Ramaḍān Tafsīr*, some Muslims are aware of the essence of fasting as well as things that can vitiate their fasting or jeopardize their relationship with other Muslims. It has assisted different calibers of Muslims attending it to be conscious of Allah in their respective dealings.²⁴

b. Economic Impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr*

In *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* sittings, some small business owners display their products or goods, as they see the places as centers of having access to their potential buyers, most especially, those who sell fruits, Islamic materials like Jalabia, Prophetic medicines, Islamic books, food stuff and provisions, do sell a lot than others. The sales made during *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* by some businessmen and women used to multiply the sales made in post *Ramaḍān* period because of the population of Muslims at the *Tafsīr* programmes.²⁵

Ramaḍān Tafsīr creates avenues for philanthropists to spend their wealth on the needy. For instance, at the *Tafsīr* sitting of Islahudeen Nigeria Missionary Association popularly called '*Tafsīr* Oluko-Agba'; the Mogajis who happen

²⁴ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Isiaq Mudathir Alliy Ajibope, Chief Imam of Islahudeen Akewukawe Society of Nigeria, Iwo Chapter, Ajibopenle Compound, Gidigbo Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged; 54- years, On 29th March, 2022.

²⁵ An oral interview conducted with shaykh Isiaq Mudathir Alliy Ajibope...

to be a wealthy family in the organization do give *Iftār* to *Tafsīr* attendants in some days in *Ramaḍān*. Also, Oluwo of Iwo does give provisions, money, ram as well as clothes to the members of council of Imams and Alfas attached to the Central Mosque. The Royal Father buys clothes for the Chief Imam and his cabinet when concluding the *Tafsīr* as garment of graduation and celebration of successful ending of *Tafsīr* and *Ramaḍān*.²⁶ Also, in the Central Mosque of Telemu, A philanthropist, Mr. Mutalib Abdulganiyy of Alaayan Compound, Telemu Town, Ola-Oluwa Local Government Area Osun State, annually provides and installs a befitting and modern public address system for the Central Mosque during the *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* to replace a faulty public address system whenever the situation demands for it.²⁷

In Islahudeen Nigeria Missionary Association, having its headquarters in Iwo, the organization luckily has philanthropists and influential personalities in Iwoland, Osun State and various states as sponsors during the life of *Shaykh* Abdul-Baaqi Muhammad and after his demise. Among the lates were: Olola Islahudeen Alhaji Abdur-Rauf Beauty, Muhammad Tiamiy, Alhaji Abdul-Azeez Afolabi Orile-Owuand Alhaji Abdur-Razaq Awayewaserere among others. Among the sponsors that are alive are: Rabshi Imec Al-Mogaji, Professor Lai Olurode, Alhaji Sulaiman Bello (Seebee) and host of others. They sponsor *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* on radio and television apart from financial supports given to the organisation. Mogaji families give a package to *iftār*

²⁶ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Muqadam Hussain Akinola, Chief Imam of Islahudeen Missionary Association, Akinola Compound, Oke-Adan Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged; 82-Years, On 18th March, 2022.

²⁷ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Taofeeq Abiola Abdulganiyy, Mufassir of Telemu town, Ile-Oba Compound, Telemu, Ola-Oluwa Local Government Area. Aged; 48-years, On 17th March, 2022.

congregants and donate equipment for easy-doing of the programme.²⁸

Moreover, at some *Ramaḍān Tafṣīr* sittings, some wealthy Muslims do pay their *Zakah* due to multiple rewards attached to it in the blessed month. The needy get *Zakah* and *Sadaqah* at the venue which attracts more Muslims and makes them to be punctual. This has been assisting in retrieving the Muslims from poverty²⁹. *Ramaḍān Tafṣīr* serves as a meeting centre for some Muslims to exchange different economic opportunities apart from spiritual benefit.

c. Social Impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafṣīr*

Ramaḍān Tafṣīr connects Muslims and non-Muslims together in some communities in Iwoland. There are traditional rulers who are not Muslims but consider *Ramaḍān Tafṣīr* as a social obligation that needs to be supported morally and financially to exhibit religious tolerance in their communities. The late Olupo of Oluponna, Oba Emmanuel Oyeleso Oyebamiji (Sikiru) Fadare II, gave support to the *Tafṣīr* programme in his palace. Being a Christian, he did not sit with the *Tafṣīr* congregation but he gave financial supports and other gifts to them as the responsibility of a traditional ruler³⁰. The same with the late king of Ikiri-Ile, Oba Christopher Oyelami Oyediran Ojubanire IV. He allowed *Tafṣīr* programme in his palace but did not participate in it though he used to give *Mufassir* and his cabinet financial gift

²⁸ An oral interview conducted with Alhaji Ismaheel Alaye, khalifa Alaye, Alaye compound, Gidigbo Quarter, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged: 46 years, On 14th January, 2022

²⁹ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Muqadam Hussain Akinola.

³⁰ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Alhaji Musa Raji, Chief Imam of Telemu town, Telemu Central Mosque, Telemu town, Ola-Oluwa local Government Area. Aged; 72-Years, On 15th April, 2022.

at the end of *Ramaḍān*³¹. The present king of Ikire-Ile, Oba Abdul Azeez Olatubosun Adebamiji Ogunkojo , Ilufemiloye 1, gives support to *Tafsīr* programme in his palace with *Iftār* (Breakfast Programme) and other financial assistance.

Thus, *Tafsīr* brings in religious tolerance between the non-Muslim traditional rulers and their subjects who are Muslims. One thing that makes *Tafsīr* socially relevant is that people in the town have access to relate with the king and dignitaries in the town at *Tafsīr* programme. Some even discuss personal issues with who- is-who attending the *Tafsīr* in which they might not have access to if not because of *Tafsīr* programme³².

d. Moral Impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr*

One of the important moral impacts of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* is unity. It encourages and facilitates unity among Muslims as large population of people come together to listen to *Tafsīr* which strengthens their togetherness and simplifies accessibility to one another. Discrimination is eschewed while the rich and the poor sit at the same place without any thought of suspicion. This of course, makes the rich to assist the poor among Muslims because close relation unveil the gravity of suffering of others to the well-to-do among the Muslims. Quite number of times, the philanthropists give money and food stuff at *Tafsīr* programme to alleviate people's poverty.

³¹ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Yaqub AbdulBaaqiy Muhammad, South-West Wazeer of Yorubaland, Islahudeen Madrasah Iwo town, Isale-oba Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area On 14th April, 2022.

³² An Oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Musuliudeen Soliudeen Asisoloriro, Mufassir of Kuta town, Ayedire Local Government Area, Oosa Compound, Aged; 65- years, On 13th February, 2022.

Some Muslim influential politicians do meet after the *Tafsīr* with the masses for appointments and other benefits because many might have gone to their offices severally without having access to them. Some among them, out of love for their religion, use the forum to even announce some government opportunities for Muslims as a way of helping Islam through Muslim economic empowerment³³.

Ramaḍān Tafsīr teaches timeliness and punctuality. As indicated in some Qur'ān verses like *Wal-Asr*, *waduha walayli* and so on. Certain number of hours are fixed for *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* like 12-noon to 2pm, 2pm to 4pm and 4:30pm to 6pm. This has made the *Tafsīr* congregants to be at the venue on or before the scheduled time which teaches time consciousness. There are Muslims who do not miss a single day *Tafsīr* out of 29th or 30th days of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* programme³⁴.

4. Challenges facing *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* in Iwo Central Mosque

Ever before now, *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* in Iwo Central Mosque has been facing some challenges. This has been preventing the wide spread of messages delivered during the *Tafsīr* as only those who attended the programme benefitted from it. In the present time, the new challenges that are affecting the positive impact of *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* in the town include but not limited to the following³⁵:

³³ An Oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Abdulwaheed Abdulraheem, Mufassir of Nawa'irul Deen Society of Nigeria, Iwo Branch, Isale-Oba Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area, Aged 66 -years, On 15th April, 2022.

³⁴ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Alhaji Abdulganiyy Adio, Chief Imam of Ikire-Ile town, Moluberin Compound, Isale-Oba Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged; 49 years, On March, 2022.

³⁵ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Qasim Ayoade Abdulrahman, Imam/ Principal of Markaz Islamic Cultural Centre Iwo, Ajiko's Compound, Isale-Oba Quarters, Iwo Local Government Area. Aged; 50- years, On 24th March, 2022.

- a. Non-Recording of *Tafsir* Programme: As relevant as some *Tafsir* programmes in the past, they were not recorded. It was only when the lectures were being delivered that they were beneficial to the listeners. Some central mosques could not produce *Tafsir* programmes done in the five to ten years ago for reference or research purpose;
- b. Non-Digitalisation of *Tafsir* Programme: The benefits in the *Tafsir* programme needs to be **shared** to others who are indigene of the town but not living there due to job or other reasons. Even those at home for one reason or the other do not have access to the *Tafsir* because of non-sharing on social media and less powerful or no public address system³⁶;
- c. Non-Sponsoring of *Tafsir* Programme on Radio and Television: For wider spread, *Tafsir* programmes in Iwo central Mosque needs to be sponsored on radio and television like it is done in other mosques in the town by the rich members among Muslims to spread its benefits across the Muslim society as the main central mosque. The messages does not leave the four corner of the Mosque even to the people outside the Mosque far away as the sound system is not powerful to reach long distance;
- d. Non-Relating the *Qur'an* Interpretation to the Current Issues: The *Mufassirūn* do discuss verses traditionally using old stories which makes it look boredom to the listeners. Since the Qur'ān is not only meant for the people of the past, it needs to be related to all generations by making the interpretation general to the present gathering. By this, the

³⁶ An Oral Interview conducted with Shaykh Alhaji Sulayman Salman, Chief Imam of Bode-Osi town, Ola-Oluwa Local Government Area, Oba's Compound, Aged;49- years, On 13th February,2022.

listeners will not be sleeping or absent-minded due to the fact that the discussion is not related to them³⁷.

- e. Non-Assessment of *Tafsīr* Lectures: In most cases which cut across many mosques where *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* is done, *Tafsīr* is done without doing any revision of the past discussion of verses that might have been forgotten by the listeners which amounted to the waste of knowledge. Thus, there is need to have previous knowledge in the *Tafsīr* sitting to check and balance the learning of the audience.

C. Conclusion

This study, so far, has discussed the significance of Qur'an in relation to the Month of *Ramaḍān* in which it was revealed. Thus, explanation of this Book in this blessed month becomes an annual activity in all societies in general and Iwo in particular. It was discussed that *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* started in Iwo in the late 1940's in the palace of Oba Kosiru Ayinde (1939 – 1952 C.E) with different *Mufassir* on shifting bases. It was Alhaji Abdulazeez Akanmu who became the first turbaned Mufassir. In all, it has been discussed that Iwo Central Mosque had five recognized *Mufassirūn*, out of which two were turbaned; Alhaji Abdulazeez Akanmu (1994–1996) and Shaykh Abdul-Muhmin Muhammad-Thanni Akinlewa (2015 – till date) while the remaining three were not turbaned; Shaykh Muhalli Adedimeji Aroworeki (1991-1995), Alhaji Abdulganiyy Keulere Alaye (1991-1995) and Shaykh Ashimiyy Ejalonibu (1996-2015). The paper had also explained the impacts of this *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* on the Muslim *Ummah* in Iwo town socially, morally, economically and spiritually. The challenges facing *Ramaḍān Tafsīr* in Iwo central Mosque were exposed to include but limited to non recording and

³⁷ An Oral Interview conducted with Alhaji Shaykh Amuda Yousuf Adiatu Yagboyaju, Ajanasi Agba of Iwoland.

digitalization of the *Tafsir* as well as non relating the interpretation to the current issues among others.

The paper pointed out that the post of *Mufassir* is very important in any mosques as it protects the Book of Allah by explaining its content to the Muslim *Ummah*. However, the post has not been given the deserved rights and honour as people seek it by hereditary and not by qualification. In view of this, this paper recommends that; system of screening should be adopted in appointing *Mufassir* by putting them to test of conducting *Tafsir* for the congregation, recording of the *Tafsir* should be facilitated for the benefit of others, digitalization of *Tafsir* by broadcasting it live and sharing it to other social media should be facilitated, purchase of powerful public address system to enhance the voice of both the *Mufassir* and the *Ajanasi*, the *Tafsir* should be discussed in relation to the contemporary issues to solve societal challenges, introduction of previous knowledge in the modern *Tafsir* to strengthen the attention of the audience in *Tafsir* gatherings.

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