

# Alhaji Abdul-Kareem Akanni Bello

The late Al-Khaleepha Abdul-Kareem Oladehinde Akanni Bello was born on the 9th of September, 1907, in Ntabo Compound, Igbore, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, to Pa. Bello Bakare Fagbayi and Madam Safurat Bolarinwa Bakare.

During a time when Western education was not widely available, his parents decided that it was necessary for him to receive his education through an Arabic institution. He commenced his Arabic studies under the guidance of his Uncle, Imam Ibrahim Bakare Fagbayi, in Abeokuta. Subsequently, in the year 1930, he relocated to Lagos.

In 1937, he entered into marriage with his first wife, Alhaja Ashiawu Aduke, who also hailed from Igbeyi in Abeokuta. Around this period, Alhaji Kareem Bello initiated his professional career with the Nigerian Railway Corporation in 1945, specializing in upholstery tailoring. He actively engaged in the learning experience, and in line with his commitment to religious upliftment among his co-workers, he earned the nickname "ALFA YAYI."

In 1955, Alhaji Kareem Bello made the decision to voluntarily retire, which he subsequently carried out in 1956. Notably, he embarked on his first pilgrimage to Mecca in 1956 and repeated the sacred journey in 1968.

Alhaji Kareem Akanni Bello established himself as an esteemed religious leader in Islam. His journey began with As-solalatul-Ameen at the Owode mosque, which eventually evolved into the Central Council of Alaslatu of Nigeria (CCAN). With an unwavering commitment to the propagation of Asalatul prayer, he took the initiative to establish the Central Council of Alaslatu of Nigeria (Asalatul Agbaye), with the valued support of Alhaji Khaleefat Abdul Rasheed Bolaji Akewusola (RTA).

This groundbreaking formation garnered widespread acceptance among the majority of Muslims and Islamic scholars, leading to the establishment of numerous branches both within Nigeria and abroad.

The Central Council of Alaslatu of Nigeria (Asalatul Agbaye) expanded its reach with branches far wide within Nigeria extending to various locations, including Ibadan, Ogbomosho, Kanji, Basita, Ede, Ijewure, Owode, Ilaro, Abeokuta, Yagada, and in Lagos, covering areas like Bariga, Shoni, Araromi, and more.

At this point in its history, Alhaja Amirat Mualimat Aminat Omowunmi Gbajabiamila, Nee Carew, served as the first Iya Egbe (Mother of the Group). Alhaji Canvous Gbosere held the position of the first Baba Egbe (Father of the Group) for CCAN, while Alhaja Munirat Shomoye was the first Iya Adini (Mother of the Faith) for CCAN.

It's worth noting that during this time, the permanent headquarters of CCAN had not yet been established. Executive committee meetings were conducted at different branches that were established during this period. The initial headquarters of CCAN was initially used as a madrasah (Islamic school), located at 29, Ojo Street, Odi-Olowo, Mushin, Lagos, Nigeria, in 1955.

In 1958, the Central Council of Alaslatu of Nigeria (Asalatu Agbaye) finally established its permanent headquarters on the same land. This accomplishment was made possible with the support and dedication of several key individuals, including:

- Alhaji Abdul Hamed Ere
- Alhaji Muyideen Najimudeen (Director General)
- Alhaji Muhammad Hamzat Leshi (General Secretary)
- Alhaji Ishola Lawal Balogun (Balogun General)

These individuals played pivotal roles in the successful establishment of the headquarters. Additionally, the support and contributions of dedicated women within the organization were also crucial to its growth and success. Some of these women include:

- Alhaja Shawa Aduke
- Alhaja Hamdalat Amope
- Alhaja Iya Mosholashi
- Alhaja Iya Ilorin
- Alhaja Khadijat Moradeun

Their commitment and efforts contributed to the development and expansion of the Central Council of Alaslatu of Nigeria (Asalatu Agbaye) as a prominent organization within the Islamic community in Nigeria.

In 1976, following an event at the Ajumoni Central Mosque in Mushin, particularly after the passing of Alhaji Chief Imam Yusuf Arikewuyo (RTA), the Odi-Olowo Central Mosque was established. This mosque was founded without any rival source or competition. At this pivotal juncture, a devout, amiable, and God-fearing figure was chosen to become the first Chief Imam of the Jamiu Central Mosque.

The National Headquarters building of the Central Council of Asalatu of Nigeria (CCAN) was leased to the An Nurudeen Society of Nigeria, which was established by Khaleepha A.K. Bello in 1953 for the purpose of conducting an Arabic school. Baba A.K. Bello served as the proprietor of this school. He subsequently relocated his Arabic school (known as MORCAS) to this land after constructing the building using pallet wood.

Upon moving the Arabic school to this new location, he officially named it the "An Nurudeen Arabic School." This transition was made possible with the valuable assistance of Alhaji Abd

Kareem Mobolaji (A.K Bolaji) and Abu Bakarare Adebiyi, who was also known as Alfa Kekere and happened to be a sibling of Baba A.K. Bello.

In 1956, as Baba A.K. Bello embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, he left behind the responsibilities of the Arabic school. During his absence, Alfa Kekere, as previously mentioned, assumed the leadership role. Walimotul Quran sessions were conducted regularly after Baba's return from Mecca and Medina.

Baba A.K. Bello hired a team of dedicated Arabic teachers, known as Muhalims. Some of these Muhalims included:

- Muallim Rahem
- Muhalim Murtadha Olubon
- Muhalim Abd Fatai Omoyele
- Muhalim Moshud Megida
- Muhalim Mujithaba

These teachers played a crucial role in educating the students at the An Nurudeen Arabic School.

Throughout this period, the practice of Galibusolatul-I-ameen continued. Later on, an opportunity arose for the formation of Asalatul Agbaye, which was led by Baba A.K. Bello, in collaboration with Galibusolatul-I-ameen and Baba Alhaji Muk. A.K. Bolaji, who was known as the right-hand man of Baba A.K. Bello. Both of them held the title of Mukadam and worked closely together.

Additionally, Baba Imam Abu Bakare Adebiyi, nicknamed Alhaji Tawakalitu, who had already moved to Ilupeju, established his own mosque called Tawakalitu Mosque. These individuals worked hand in hand, furthering the cause of the Islamic community and promoting the practice of Asalatul Agbaye.

The establishment and leadership of the Odi-Olowo Central Mosque inspired the Muslims in the Igbore community in 1985. In recognition of his exceptional qualities and leadership, he was also honored with the position of Chief Imam of the Igbore Central Mosque in Abeokuta. His dedication to his faith and community left a lasting impact on those he served.

He was the chief imam, Mukadam, Khaleefah, President of Central Council Of Alasalatul of Nigerian till his demise in 1992. showcasing his commitment to the organization and its mission. His multifaceted role and leadership positions demonstrate his profound dedication to his faith and community throughout his lifetime.

O Allah, Surely Al-Khaleepha Abdul-kareem Oladehinde Akanni Bello is under Your protection, and in the rope of Your security, so save him from the trial of the grave and from the punishment of fire. You fulfill promises and grant rights, so forgive him and have mercy on him. Surely You are Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.