

Alhaji Muniru Marhaba, Nima, Imam of the Wangara Community  
Sunday, 12 February 2006.

Alhaji Muniru Marhaba is Imam of the Wangara community in Ghana. He teaches, leads prayer, preaches and settles disputes among the Wangara community. He teaches elders *tafsir*, interpretation of the Quran. Alhaji is 71 years.

Alhaji is the son of Sheikh Muhammad Fodi Mori, a native of Bobo Dioulasso, who came from Burkina and taught in Ghana. Flourished and retired to Bobo Dioulasso where he died in 1981. He taught only elders and scholars. Almost like graduate study.

Q. How is the Imam of the community selected?

A. The Council of Muslim Chiefs elects and the Ga Traditional Council confirms. He is the link between the Wangara Community and the Ga Traditional Council. He is also the Deputy Imam of Ayawaso. He is the Imam of the entire Wangara Community in Ghana. He was elected Imam in 1975. His father had been Wangara Imam and went back to Burkina in 1965.

Alhaji was given a certificate of honor /appreciation by Iran in 2001 signed by Dr. Muhammad Hatami (Cultural Attache or Counselor) of Iran. Picture of Alhaji with Iranian Imams. Took a picture of the photo and the certificate. Alhaji is not Shi'i. He belongs to the Tijani brotherhood. At first they were all Qadiris. The father went to Mecca in 1938. Returned in 1943. Brought the Tijani and the family became Tijani. Then the Wangara Community became Tijani. Today Qadiriya found among Muslims who live at Cow Lane and among the Yorubas.

There is a mosque and school in Alhaji's house. This is the Marhaba Mosque, set up in 1953. Was smaller and has now been expanded substantially. Women pray in mosques. Their prayer mats are at the back. Convention. Prevents male distraction. All women, married, single, elderly can pray in a mosque. No age limits.

Menstruating women do not pray at all. They have to wait for cessation of blood. After birth, women do not pray until blood flow ceases.

Q. Islam and Commerce. Is Alhaji a trader?

A. Dabbles in commerce (cattle, etc), but his main occupation is Islamic practice – preaching and teaching.

Q. Can you tell me where Wangara Communities are established in the rest of Ghana?

A. There are significant Wangara communities in Obuasi (Alhaju Mahmud), Wenchi (Alhaji Benneh), Sunyani (Alhaja Baba Kamo Kulibari), and Sampa (Alhaji Sulaymana Ouatara).

The Asantehene's Imam is Alhaji Mumuni Haroun, a Kamaghate, a Wangara man. He is the fifth of the Kamaghate Imams to the Asantehene. He is now the deputy to the Zongo Imam in Kumasi as well.

The Talmud books of the Torah, Abrahamic scrolls, the psalms of David all foretold Muhammad's coming. Talked about the advent of Muhammad, "the praised one." When Muhammad came, Jews were in the ascendancy and chose not to follow Muhammad and Islam.

God has given Muslims one particular day of the week on which praising him is the best, a night in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of Ramadan. Why this particular day? God gave Muslims that day because of Christians in the West. One day the Prophet of Islam was sitting in council when Angel Gabriel brought him a message that a Jewish apostle, Bani Israel, had fought for a 1000 years with no weapon but the shoulder blade of the camel. He does not cook, carry water, etc. Whenever he is hungry, God causes fish to appear on his tongue and he eats. When he is thirsty, God causes water to gush from between his teeth and he drinks. Muhammad told this story told him by the Angel Gabriel to his followers. Bani Israel fought for 1000 years in the cause of the Jews. Muhammad and his followers despaired. How can they aspire to such spiritual greatness? God sent Gabriel to Muhammad and his followers to pray on the specific night in the 9<sup>th</sup> month, and that prayer on that auspicious day surmounts everything. This is the 27<sup>th</sup> night of the month of Ramadan. It is called *Laylat-ul-Qadr* ("the night of power" or "the night of determination"). During that month, the first six days was given to the Jews (this is when Moses was given the Torah). All the revealed books of God came in the 9<sup>th</sup> month.

All the prophets of God are one; they are all our prophets.