

**SYNCRETIC BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AMONGST MUSLIMS
IN LAGOS STATE NIGERIA; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE YORUBA SPEAKING PEOPLE OF EPE**

By

MUHSIN ADEKUNLE BALOGUN

**A Thesis submitted to the University of
Birmingham for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

College of Arts and Law
School of Philosophy, Theology
and Religion
Department of Theology and
Religion
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT
United Kingdom.
January, 2011

This Thesis is ca. 79, 929 words.

ABSTRACT

Different disciplines have explored the history of Islām in Yoruba land which started in the early 18th century. However, the impact of religious syncretism has not been systematically studied. Therefore, this thesis examines the extent of the involvement of Yoruba Muslims in syncretic beliefs and practices in Nigeria using the Lagos State as a case study, with a view to bringing out the impact of *Tawhīd* on them. In agreement with previous research, this study notes that there is a prevalence of religious syncretism among many Yoruba Muslims, but it principally argues that its impact affects many of them negatively. If continuous awareness campaign could be carried out, the phenomenon will be reduced. A triangulated method was used to carry out this study. The findings of this thesis indicated reappraisal of the problem associated with many Yoruba Muslims' persistence in syncretism and its implications on their faith (*īmān*). While this study appreciates the attempts of some scholars to eradicate this endemic problem, it reveals that *Tawhīd* is not yet inculcated into many Yoruba Muslims within the Yoruba religio-cultural context. Therefore, a concerted effort is necessary among all stakeholders in the task of promoting the effective instillation of practical *Tawhīd*.

DEDICATION

With all humility and humbleness, this work is dedicated to my Lord, Almighty Allah, the most merciful, most munificent, the omniscient, the Giver of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, who out of His sheer mercy and kindness saw me through this programme. It is also for those in the course of establishing absolute *Tawhīd* in the world. ‘Verily, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are All for Allah, the Cherisher of the world...’ (Quran 6:163).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is impossible for me to know the best way to thank my God for His help in accomplishing this work. This dissertation took years from conception to completion. It involved countless cycles of exploration, meditation, doubt, perseverance and trust in Allah. I extol Allah and give Him uncountable thanks and glory.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my immense gratitude to all those who have given their invaluable support and assistance. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my beloved parents. I pray that Allah grants my father eternal bliss in paradise and mother good health and longevity and let paradise be her eventual abode. They have been wonderful, virtuous and responsible parents for bringing me up along this path since my infancy.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Jabal. M. Buaben. His encouragement and empathy before the inception and during the course of this programme has been invaluable, his unflinching support, insightful criticisms, scholarly guidance, suggestions and patient encouragements aided the bringing of this dissertation to its present state. I say *jazakum llah khayra*. I also express my earnest appreciation to all my teachers throughout my academic career. I sincerely thank Drs. S.L. Jimoh and L.M. Adetona for being good teachers and brothers. Their academic and moral support since my first degree is highly valued. They share my aspiration and encourage me to work hard. May Allah bless them all. I will not forget the encouragement of my academic father and mentor, Prof. Muhibbudeen and all my other teachers whom I may not be able to mention here for reason of space. I also thank those that gave me their time for interview and questionnaire during the field work; if not for them the work would remain uncompleted. I would like to thank Els Van Geyte of the English for International Students Unit for critiquing my work.

I thank my examiners Dr Ian Draper (internal), Dr. Amjad. M. Hussain (External) and Dr. Chris Shannahan (chairman), for reading the whole thesis thoroughly, and for a wonderful viva.

Let me at this juncture thank my siblings who have supported me unflinchingly. I mention Messers M.A. Balogun, Orunbo, Owolowo, Korede, Badmus, Umm Hafsat and the youngest Ilyas. I pray that God will let them reap the fruits of their labour and give them long life and prosperity.

My wholehearted thanks to my lovely and dauntless wife Hajia Aishat Balogun for her constant care, encouragement, understanding and co-operation. Throughout the period of the research, Aishat continued to encourage me and give me moral support whenever I was psychologically down. I thank my children ‘Abdullah, Raḍiyat, and Zakiyyat for their sacrifice and creation of a family environment during the writing of this work. God will bless them all and make them responsible children for us.

I will not forget the assistance I received from Tawfeeq, Sabiq, and Messers Abd. Rafii, Ajayi, Bolawole, Sallam, Umm Zaynab, Habeeb, Bro. Qadir, Shamsudeen,

Tawfeeq, Dhikr and all members of our NIMAB society during my programme at Birmingham.

I wish to thank my big brother and good friend Alh. Saula for his varied assistance throughout the period of my programme at Birmingham. I appreciate the support of my twin brother, *Shaykh* Ridwan for sharing my aspirations and for being a sincere and loyal brother. I equally thank all members of our Department. Many thanks are also due to Messers Harmona, Bello, Kolawole, Kilani, Okunade, Oyeleye, Loko, Fakeye, Afose, Akanmu, Kafar, Tomi, Sulayman and others whom space will not allow me to mention in the course of my programme. I also thank the Registrar for his assistance during the course of this programme; he shared my aspirations and enthusiasm. The provost also deserves appreciation for granting me study leave with pay throughout the years of the study.

My past and present students' encouragement cannot be forgotten. Tijani proved a sincere and loyal brother and student; he encountered a lot of hardship for the sake of my success. He shares my worries, troubles and hardship. I also say *jazakum llahu khayra* to Saad, Abd- Ghaniyy, Abiola, Edu, Balqis, Hafiz, David, Nurudeen, Thaqib, Maryam, Tayyib, and numerous others which space cannot allow me to mention.

I sincerely thank all my friends and colleagues at the post graduate school especially: brothers Al-Shehri, Younis, Amin, and sisters Ashiq and Shanaz. Once again, all praise is due to almighty Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

ABBREVIATIONS

AH: After Hijrah

AS: It is transliterated as '*Alayhi s-Sallam*. May
May Allah grant him peace.

B.C.E: Before the Christian era or before the Common Era

C.E: Christian era or Common era

Ch: Chapter

Q: Qur' ān

R. A: *Radiyallahu 'anhu* May Allah be pleased with
him.

S.A.W: *Ṣalla Allahu 'alayhi wasallam* .May the peace and blessing of Allah be
upon him.

S.W.T: *Ṣubḥānahu wa ta 'ālā*. Blessed and exalted is He.

VS: Verse.

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations..... i

Note on Transliteration.....iii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction.....13

1.1 Statement of the Problem.....15

1.2 Rationale for the Study.....24

1.3 Objectives of the Study.....26

1.4 Scope and Limitations.....27

1.5 Definition of Terms.....35

1.6 Review of Literature.....45

1.7 Hypotheses.....55

1.8 Research Questions.....55

1.9 Variables of the Study.....56

1.9.1 Research Instrument.....57

1.9.2 Data Collection Methods.....59

1.9.3 Data Analysis.....60

1.9.4 Structure of the Thesis.....60

1.9.5 Conclusion.....62

CHAPTER TWO: ISLAM IN LAGOS

2.0 Introduction.....64

2.1 Brief History of the Yoruba.....64

2.2 History of the Lagos State.....	70
2.2.1 Islam in Lagos; Its Growth and Development.....	76
2.2.2 The Spread of Islam in Epe.....	97
2.2.3 Factors Responsible for the Growth of Islam in Lagos State.....	110
2.2.4 Challenges Facing the Growth and Development of Islam in Lagos State.....	117
2.2.5 Conclusion.....	123

**CHAPTER THREE: YORUBA TRADITIONAL BELIEFS
AND PRACTICES IN LAGOS BEFORE ISLAM.**

3.0 Introduction.....	124
3.1 The Pre-Islamic Yoruba Religions.....	125
3.2 Superstitions.....	129
3.2.1 Belief in Witchcraft.....	136
3.2.2 Secret Societies/ Occultism.....	148
3.2.3 Black Magic; Charms and Amulets.....	157
3.2.4 Oracles/ Diviners.....	166
3.2.5 Ancestral /Hero Worship.....	171
3.2.5.1 Participation in Traditional Festivals.....	177
3.2.5.2 The Influence of Western Culture.....	185
3.2.5.3 Conclusion.....	191

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction.....	192
4.1 Research Methodology	193

4.2 Research Design.....	197
4.2.1 Methodology and Execution of the Field Research Project	199
4.2.2 Interview Research Method.....	199
4.2.3 Face-to-Face (one-to-one) Interview.....	200
4.2.4 Questionnaire Research Method.....	203
4.2.5 Procedure for Administration of the Questionnaire.....	204
4.2.5.1 Sampling Methodology.....	205
4.2.5.2 The Actual Selection of the Samples.....	208
4.2.5.3 Hypotheses	209
4.2.5.4 Test of Hypotheses/ Analysis of results.....	212
4.2.5.5 Ethical Issues	228
4.2.5.6 Insider-Outsider Problem.....	229
4.2.5.7 Results of the Interview.....	230
4.3.1 Rationale: Why Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State Hold on to Syncretism.....	230
4.3.2 Problems and Limitations of the Field Work.....	238
4.3.3 Solutions Proffered.....	240
4.3.4 Conclusion.....	241

**CHAPTER FIVE: CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF RELIGIOUS
SYNCRETISM AMONG YORUBA MUSLIMS IN
LAGOS STATE**

5.0 Introduction.....	243
5.1 Religious Syncretism in Superstitions.....	244
5.2 Islamic Ruling on Superstitions.....	252

5.2.1 Syncretism Involved in the Belief and Practice of Witchcraft.....	259
5.2.2 Islamic Ruling on the Belief and Practice of Witchcraft.....	262
5.2.3 Religious Syncretism in the Practice of Secret Societies/ Occultism.....	270
5.2.4 Islamic Ruling on Secret Societies/Occultism.....	272
5.2.5 Syncretism Involved in Charms and Amulets (<i>Oogun</i>).....	274
5.2.5.1 Islamic Ruling on Charms and Amulets (<i>Oogun</i>).....	277
5.2.5.2 Religious Syncretism involved in the Belief and Practice Oracles and Divination.....	285
5.2.5.3 Islamic Ruling on Belief and Practice of Oracles and Divination.....	288
5.2.5.4 Religious Syncretism in Ancestral and Hero Worship.....	394
5.2.5.5 Islamic Ruling on Ancestral and Hero Worship.....	296
5.2.5.6 Syncretism in Muslim Participation in Traditional Festivals.....	302
5.2.5.7 Islamic Ruling on Muslim Participation in Traditional Festivals.....	303
5.3 Influence and Infiltration of Western Culture.....	304
5.3.1 Islamic Ruling on Aping Western Culture.....	310
5.3.2 Conclusion.....	318

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction.....	320
6.1 Summary of the Study.....	320
6.2 Findings of the Study.....	330
6.2.1 Recommendations and Suggestions.....	341
6.2.2 Areas for Further Research.....	350
6.2.3 Glossary.....	352
6.2.4 Bibliography.....	354
Appendices	

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. 0 Introduction

This study is a focus on the various traditional and religious beliefs and practices in which Yoruba Muslims participate along with Islām (syncretism), with a view to bringing out the Islāmic position on each of them. The work is intended to critically look into the various syncretistic beliefs and practices which our Muslim brethren have hitherto clung on to. It should be stated from the outset that being a Muslim is not a problem in itself; but the gravest challenge facing the contemporary Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State is syncretism¹. Despite their acceptance of Islām, in some of them can be noticed shreds or vestiges of traditional beliefs and practices which they refuse to abdicate. It should be reiterated *inter alia* that Islām is a religion that encompasses all spheres of our daily lives and the Qur’ān enjoins all Muslims to enter into Islām wholeheartedly. Allah states: ‘O you who believe! Enter into Islām wholeheartedly; and follow not the footsteps of Satan for he is to you an avowed

¹ By way of definition, see for instance, Stewart Charles and Shaw Rosalind (ed.), *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*, London: Routledge (1994), 1. In the introduction, it is stated that: ‘the term ‘syncretism’ is a contentious term often taken to imply ‘inauthenticity’ or ‘contamination’, the infiltration of a supposedly ‘pure’ tradition, by symbols and meanings seen as belonging to other, incompatible traditions’. He claims further that ‘Syncretism is also a reconciliation of disparate or contradictory beliefs’. *The New Dictionary of Theology* sees it as ‘... the process of borrowing elements by one religion from another so much so that the receiving religion basic character will not be changed’. For more, see, S.B. Ferguson and D. F. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press (1988), 670. Maroney asserts that syncretism is when one religion adopts, or absorbs elements of another religion. See E. Maroney, *Religious Syncretism*, London: SCM Press (2006), 6. *Dictionary of Comparative Religion* asserts that it is a term used for fusion of religions, cults which occurred in Graeco-Roman world which is now used in all places where there is contact among religions. S.G.F. Brandon (ed.), *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson (1970), 568.

enemy' (Q2:208).² Nevertheless, the Muslims here have accepted Islām for many years and still this issue persists.³

Our curiosity arises out of the fact that Lagos historically, is one of the ancient and oldest Muslim States in the south–west of Nigeria, and one still finds quite a large proportion of Yoruba Muslims mixing their Islāmic religion with traditional beliefs and practices.

It is our hope that by embarking on this work, Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State in particular and the general Muslims will be more enlightened about those things that can adversely affect their *īmān*,⁴ and can also affect their *Tawḥīd* negatively, which is the basis, the bone, marrow and the focus of Islām and its foundation.⁵ It will also

² See Q; Chapter 2: 208 ; see also, I.R. al- Faruqi, *Islām*, Maryland: Amana Publications (1984), 8-9

³ There is no consensus of opinion among historians as to the exact date Islām entered Lagos State, but it is largely confirmed that as early as 18th century, Islām was widespread in all the Yoruba towns and cities including Lagos. See for instance, the work of A.O.K. Noah, (ed.), *Fundamentals of General Studies*, Ibadan: Rex Charles (1995), 78-81; T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām Among The Yoruba 1841-1908*, Lagos: Longman Press (1978), 4-5; A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation (1984) , 107-108; A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa 'Ulamā' Bilād Yorubā*, Cairo: Maktabat Wahabat (1991), 129-130; P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islām: A Study of Religious Development of Islām in West Africa from the 8th to the 20th century*, London: Longman (1982), 17-18; H. Meryvn, *The Development of Islām in West African History*, London: Longman (1984), 21; P.J. Ryan, S.J. *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, Missoula, Montana, USA: Scholars Press (1978), 118-119.

⁴ *īmān* technically, is the belief or conviction that a Muslim has in the existence of Allah and the absolute trust in Him, in His unique attributes (*sifātih*), His essence (*dhātih*) and His unique works (*af'ālih*). Its opposite is *shirk* (association of partners with Allah), which according to Islamic beliefs is unpardonable sin, except by sincere repentance. For more details, see A. Jazair, *Minhāj al-Muslim*, Lebanon: Dar-al-Fikr (1991), 7; A.B. Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)*, Riyādh: Tawheed Publications (1990), 1 & 7.

⁵ *Tawḥīd* which means, there is absolutely no one or deity worthy of worship other than Allah. To Him all heads should bow in submission and adoration and He is the only and exclusive Possessor of all powers. All are in need of His favours, and all should solicit His help and guidance. The focus of the message of all Prophets and Allah's Messengers was to call people to oneness of Allah and to abolish all forms of idol-worshipping and paganism. See Q 42:13; Q39: 64-66; Q16: 36; Q3: 64. There are many *Āḥadīth* to this effect on the importance of *Lā Ilaha Ilā llah* (There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah). See also, I. R. al- Faruqi, 'Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life' in: *Islamization of Knowledge*, Series No.4, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought (1995), 17; I.R. al- Faruqi and L.L. al-Faruqi, *The Cultural Atlas of Islām*, London: Collier Macmillan Publishers (1986), 389; P.J. Bearman, T.H. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, (vol x), Leiden, The Neitherlands: Koninklijke

familiarize not only students and teachers of Islamic Studies, but the general readers with the manifestations of syncretism and its implications.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Research analysts have advanced many considerations that constitute the research problem, so that the study will be manageable and the researcher remains motivated; it includes relevance, level of expertise, the magnitude of the research problem, availability of data, ethical issues and interest⁶. Ranjit claims that interest should be the most important factor that should be considered in stating a research problem; the relevance of the study should also be made apparent as a second priority.⁷

Islāmic history in Lagos State has long attracted keen interest within the spheres of sociology, history and journalism. Key issues up to now have been events, dates

Brill (2000), 389.; A.Y. Qadhi, *An Explanation of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdul- Wahnāb's Four Principles of Shirk*, Birmingham: Al-Hidayah Publishing & Distribution, 2002, 38-41; A.Y. Qadhi, *An Explanation of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdul- Wahnāb's Kashf al-Shubuhāt: A Critical Study of Shirk*, Birmingham: Al-Hidayah Publishing & Distribution, 2003, 16-18.

⁶ For details, see for instance, G.B. Adams & J.D. White, 'Dissertation Research in Public Administration and Cognate fields: An Assessment of Methods and Quality'. *Public Administration Review* (1994), 565-566; C.F. Nachmias & D. Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, 5th edition, London: Arnold (1997), 33; B. Allison, *The Student's Guide to Preparing Dissertations and Theses*, London: Kogan Page (1997), 7; M.B. Davies, *Doing a Successful Research Project; Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2007), 21; B.R. Dixon, G.D. Bouma & G.B.J. Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide for Students*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1987), 29; E.M. Phillips, and L. Conrad, 'Creating A Supportive Environment For Postgraduate Study', in O. Zuber-Skerritt, O (ed.), *Manual for Conducting Workshops on Postgraduate Supervision*, Brisbane: Tertiary Education Institute, University of Queensland (1992), 153-155; K. Howard & J.A Sharp, *The Management of A Student Research Project*, Aldershot: Gower (1983), 21-23; R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide For Beginners* (2nd ed.), London: SAGE Publications (2005), 43; F.C. Dane, *Research Methods*, California: Brooks and Cole Publishing Company (1990), 5-6.

⁷ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 43-44.

and personalities. However, the concern of this work is in analysing, interpreting and explaining the intermingling or interplaying of socio-cultural elements among the Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State despite the long advent of Islām. The study is interested in examining the problems of religious syncretism known as *Takhlīt* amongst these people.

Syncretistic beliefs and practices have manifested themselves in different ways and forms among the Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State. It appears that no studies aimed at unearthing the genesis, import and impact of these beliefs and practices in Nigeria have been carried out. Several scholars have approached this from different individual perspectives and have presented divergent viewpoints. Doi, in agreement with other scholars like Babalola, Kennedy, Pictal, Franz Rosenthal, Ladislav Holy, Trimmingham, Dopamu, Ilorin, Dada and Jeje, Mbiti, Parrinder, Benjamin Ray, Idowu and Mustapha Zugloul, comments to a large extent that Africans are in everything religious.⁸ Mbiti observes among others:

⁸ So, when Islām came it fitted the philosophy, religious beliefs and practices of the Yoruba people and because of this they easily adopted the religious beliefs and practices. For more views see, A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 107-110; Dada & Jeje, *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books (1972), 40-42; Kennedy John, *Nubian Ceremonial Life; Studies in Islāmic Syncretism and Cultural Change*, New York: University of California Press (1978), 5-7; E.O. Babalola, *Islām in West Africa*, Ado-Ekiti: Bamgboye and Co. Press (1982), 70-72 ; M.M. Pickthall, *The Cultural side of Islām*, India: Nusrat Ali Nasri Kitab Bhavan (1981), 1-2; E.G. Parrinder Geoffrey, *African Traditional Religion*, (3rd ed.), London: Sheldon Press (1981), 9-10; E.G. Parrinder Geoffrey, *West Africa Religion*, London: Epworth Press (1978), 7-9; J.S. Mbitti, *African Religions and philosophy*, London: Heinemann Educational (1967), 1-2; J.S. Mbiti, *Introduction To African Religion*, London: Heinemann (1975), 10-13; J.S. Trimmingham, *Islām in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press (1959), 21-23; Holy Ladislav, *Religion and Custom in A Muslim Society; The Berti of Sudan*, New York: Cambridge University Press (1991), 129-130; A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa ‘Ulamā’ Bilād Yorubā*, Cairo: Maktabat Wahabat (1991), 30-33; A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām wa Taqālid al-Jāhiliyyah; Baḥth fī Muḥārabah at-Taqālid al-Jāhiliyyah as-Shāi‘ah fī Ifrīqiyyah*, Cairo: Madani Press (1979), 11-13; M.S. Zugloul, *Azahār ar-Rubāh fī Akhbār Bilād Yorubā*, Lagos: Dar-Dawat Wal-Irshad (1987), 63-65; E.B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion*, London: SCM Press (1973), 11-13; B.C. Ray, *African Religions; Symbols, Ritual, and Community*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall (1976), 1-3; P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islām; A study of Religious Development from The 8th To The 20th Century*, London: Edward Arnold (1982), 17-19; Hiskett Mervyn, *The Development of Islām in West African History*, London: Longman (1984), 21-23; P.A. Dopamu (ed.), *African Culture, Modern Science and Religious Thought*, Ilorin :African Centre For Religions and the Sciences (2003), 1-3.

Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system and set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it. A study of these religious systems is, therefore ultimately a study of the people themselves in all the complexities of both traditional and modern life... this religion is the strongest element in traditional background, and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned.⁹

Advancing the factors responsible for easy penetration of Islām into Africa, Trimmingham noted that it is through accommodation and syncretism that made Islām adapt to the traditional peoples, and thus made the psychological process of its assimilation gradual because as at that period, he claims that Islām did not demand a violent break with the past, and it shares many similarities in its practice with traditional religions. In his own words:

...it is true that it possesses a body of legal regulations affecting every sphere of life which might be expected to conflict with local custom, yet an examination of social forms, shows that many Islamic elements fall within the framework of African customary law and far less points conflict arise than with Christianity...the traditional marriage system, especially the key institutions of polygamy and bride-price, have proved serious obstacles to the adoption of Christianity. Islam, on the contrary has not experienced this difficulty since these institutions are part of its marriage system. Conformity to regulations which conflict with customary law is not insisted upon since the clerical mediators of the law are Africans. Islām also makes precise and reasonable ethical demands and such elements as its taboos fall naturally within the sphere of Africa mentality.¹⁰

Doi, writing in the same vein, observes that Islām, wherever it goes, has not remained a stranger; it usually fits into the culture of the people.¹¹ Making the same observation, Edward Blyden also agrees with other scholars asserting that the culture and the customs of the people almost remained the same when Islām came.

He states:

⁹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1-2.

¹⁰ J.S. Trimmingham, *Islām in West Africa*, 29

¹¹ Doi reiterates that once the fundamental principles of Islam are not violated, Islam does not unduly frown on the traditions of any nation. In fact, it is a fundamental principle of *Fiqh*. For more see, A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 136-138; visit also, www.islamweb.net accessed 25/12/10

Their local institutions were not destroyed by the Arab influence introduced (in Africa). They only assumed new forms, and adapted themselves to the new teachings. In all thriving Mohammedan communities, in West and Central Africa, it may be noticed that the Arab (or Islāmic) superstructure has been superimposed on a permanent indigenous substructure; so that what really took place, when the Arab met the Negro in his own home, was a healthy amalgamation, and not absorption or an undue repression.¹²

Trimingham has submitted that ‘...one of the primary reasons for Islām’s progress is that it has become an Africa religion whose agents are Africans, which can be assimilated gradually without causing too great a disruption in communal life.’¹³

Babalola, making his own assertion and agreeing with Trimingham, posits that it is due to the flexible nature of Islām with which it responded to traditional religions, that it was able to record massive success and large populations accepting it. He suggests that Islām has been confronted with well-integrated indigenous societies, but it accommodates itself to the realities of this cultural reciprocity. According to Babalola:

Figurative rituals in the Islāmic context cannot be seen as a sign of apostasy but as reflection of the pragmatic results of the confrontation of Islām and traditional cultures’. (He concludes that) the reason why these indigenous aspects are retained, is... because they provide solutions that lie outside the realm of Islām’.¹⁴

¹² Edward W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islām and the Negro Race*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (1967), 11-12.

¹³ J.S. Trimingham, *The Christian Church and Islām in West Africa*, London: S.C.M. Press (1955), 9-11.

¹⁴E.O. Babalola, *The Advent and Growth of Islām in West Africa*, 69-87.

Babalola, concurring with Lewis, asserts that many aspects of West African people's traditional life are retained.¹⁵ Trimmingham claims that Islām recognizes mystical powers.¹⁶ The issue of syncretism has long existed with Muslims in Africa. Babalola, proposing that one of the reasons why Islām is able to make significant inroads into the people of West Africa and its easy acceptance, claims that:

To the Africans, Islām and traditional religion had many things in common; the Muslims, for instance, follow certain procedures in the slaughtering of animals and use of Qur'ānic amulets to protect themselves against evil spirits and ill health. The traditions of the conversion of the Mali chief through prayer to Allah and the mysterious crushing of Ali Yaji in Kano are some examples which showed the efficacy of Muslim prayers. Similarly, Africans believe in the life after death, ancestor worship and efficacy of local medicine and charms. What is more, Islām did not attempt to destroy or condemn indigenous cults and customs. In fact, rather than discredit them; the Muslim clerics modified them and shared in religious ceremonies such as fertility rites and ceremonies...¹⁷.

He is of the opinion that West Africa Muslims at that time were able to accept and retain themselves in Islām because the Muslim missionaries and teachers had practical solutions to almost all of the problems confronting the early converts. Furthermore, the *Mallam* offers a solution to African belief in the existence of witchcraft and evil spirits, and they used to give objects like charms and amulets to the Muslim converts which seemed to mean that the *Mallam* has extraordinary

¹⁵ This aspect was maintained because, in his view, Islamic theological teachings permit local practices and beliefs and Islam is pervaded by a host of spiritual forces like the *Jinn* which have been accepted and rationalized in Islamic Theology. Babalola maintains that the world of *Jinn* within Islamic demonology consists not only of many beliefs and practices derived from Arabs pre-Islamic religions but also of numerous spirits that were incorporated into Islam during its long period of expansion. Islam strongly believes in mystical powers and accommodates many spiritual forces found within West African cultures like witchcraft and magic. For Babalola quoting Lewis, in this way '...it could not be surprising, that many clerics will allow the faithfuls to resort to traditional methods of control when Muslim methods fail'. Ibid, 74.

¹⁶ J.S. Trimmingham, *Islām in West Africa*, 20-23. Mystic in this context involves contemplation and surrendering to the unity of Allah, remembrance of Allah often, devotion, avoidance of association of partners with Allah and commission of sins, this subject is known as Sufism (Islamic Mysticism) but Islam has nothing to do with occultism. See for instance, M.M. Zuhur-U-Din Ahmad, *An Examination of the Mystic Tendencies in Islam in the Light of the Qur'ān & Traditions*, Pakistan: Muhammad Ashraf (1981), 5; I.A. al-Muhasibi, *The Sunnah Way of the Sufis*, Pakistan: Zam Zam Publishers (2007), 37-38

¹⁷ E.O. Babalola, *The Advent and Growth of Islām in West Africa*, 83-86.

power that can neutralise evil forces; polygamy was not also frowned upon. Thus, according to him ‘...Muslim belief is supplementary to African Religion’.¹⁸ Rosander observes that ‘African Islām’ is the ‘contextualised’ or ‘localised’ form of Islām which is found in Sufi context, whereas ‘Islām in Africa’ is the effort by reformists to purify Islām from local indigenous African ideas and practices as well as western influences. He claims that ‘...African Islām’ has frequently been depicted as culturally as well as religiously flexible and accommodating’.¹⁹

Ilorin, while advancing reasons why Yoruba accepted Islām, largely agrees with Babalola but in contrast to him, he posits that Muslim missionaries and teachers delved into the art of medicine and the curing of spiritual related illness was due to the fact that the Muslim converts hitherto used to patronise the unbelievers and diviners, (*Babalawo*), and in order to divert their attention, and attract them to Islām, they started using Qur’ānic verses to solve their many problems. He claims that not every Muslim *Muallim* delved into this art, but many people and even the traditional rulers accepted Islām *en masse* because of this feat.²⁰

The problem of syncretism had long been with Muslims in Africa. The earliest document on the Islāmized Mande and the Visual arts is the 14th century account of Ibn Batuta, the (North African) *Maghribian* traveller who visited the medieval Empire of Mali and resided at the court of its ruler, Mansa Sulaiman ibn Abi Bakr. Ibn Batuta was shocked by the strange mixing of Islāmic and non-Muslim rituals he

¹⁸ Ibid. 85.

¹⁹ E.E. Rosander, ‘ The Islamization of ‘Tradition’ and ‘Modernity’ in D. Westerlund and E.E. Rosander (eds.), *African Islām and Islām in Africa: Encounters Between Sufis and Islamists*, London:Hurst and Company (1998), 1

²⁰ A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa ‘Ulamā ‘Bilād Yorubā*, 118-120; A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām wa Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah; Baḥth fī Muḥārabah at- Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah as-Shāi ‘at fī Ifrīqiyyah*, 20-34.

saw in the royal courts as well as in the town during the two Muslim festivals (□īds).²¹

John Hunwick examines the seven questions that the Songhay ruler, Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad asked Al-Maghili (1425/1440-909/1503-4), whose journeys in *Bilād al-Sūdān* were necessitated by the effect of his zealous reforming effort on the Muslim rulers with whom he came into contact. The seventh question asked by the ruler vividly described the state of syncretism. As Hunwick puts it:

...there are among them some who claim to have the knowledge of the future (*al-ghayb*) through sand divining...or through the disposition of the stars, information gathered from the jinns or the sounds and movements of birds ... Some assert that they can write (talismans) to bring good fortune, such as material prosperity or love, and to ward off ill fortune by defeating enemies, preventing steel from cutting or poison from taking effect and (they make) other similar claims and perform actions such as magicians are wont to do?...So, give us a legal ruling concerning these people and their ilk...²²

The above description was the state of affairs among many Muslims in West Africa in spite of the fact that Islām had been with them for many years, the same as in Yoruba land. John Hunwick claims that the arts of sand divination, talismans and various astrological procedures for telling the future have continued to be popular with Muslims up to these modern times²³. This was the state of affairs that the famous Nigerian (*Mujadid*) Reformer and Jihadist, *Shaykh* Uthman ibn Fodio met many Muslims in the North, and after several concerted efforts preaching and relying on the writing of Al-Maghili. Subsequently in his book *Ta'līm al-Ikhwān*, he builds up his case and declares the Hausa rulers and the ruler of Borno, *Shaykh*

²¹E. O. Babalola, *The Advent and Growth of Islam in West Africa*, 75-80.

²²J.O. Hunwick,(ed.), *Sharia in Songhay: The Replies of Al-Maghili To The Questions of Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad*, London: Oxford University Press (1985), 88-90; see also I.M. Lewis, (ed.), *Islam in Tropical Africa*, 330-332.

²³J.O. Hunwick, *Sharia in Songhay: the Replies of al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia al-Hajj Muhammad*, 89-90.

Muhammad al Amin al-Kanemi, to be ‘unbelievers’ (*Kuffār*), referring to al-Maghili’s rulings on those who mix acts of unbelief with their Islām.²⁴

The state of affairs in Yoruba land is akin to that of what happens among many Muslims in West Africa as well as those in Lagos State. Research work indicated that the Yoruba speaking people of Epe are not left out in this endemic problem called syncretism. Gbadamosi, for instance, suggests that many Yoruba Muslims are still wallowing in mixing some elements of traditional religions with Islām.²⁵ In similar vein, Clarke and Ryan claim that for the progress of Islām to be maintained and sustained among the Yoruba in the late 19th century, it was tolerant, borrowing and striking parallels with local customs and traditions; despite some attempts by some Yoruba scholars to reform this attitude; many Yoruba Muslims up until now still continue to be satisfied with borrowing from traditional culture.²⁶

Furthermore, in a study carried out by Simpson, he suggests that although traditional cults are declining, but traditional beliefs persist, and almost 31% out of 219 of his informants agree that traditional religions should be retained.²⁷ They believe that it will be dangerous for everyone in the community to ignore or abandon the traditional gods and some members of a lineage to retain the worship of traditional traditionals in case one would need it from time to time. Eades also

²⁴ I.A.B. Balogun, *The Life and Works of Uthman Dan Fodio (The Muslim Reformer of West Africa)*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau (1975), 26-27; A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 33-34

²⁵ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 197-199

²⁶ P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development of Islam in West Africa from the 8th to the 20th century*, 168; P.J. Ryan, S. J. *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 161 and 203. See also Q, Chapter 2 verse 170 ‘when it is said to them: ‘Follow what Allah has sent down’. They say: ‘Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following...’

²⁷ G. E. Simpson, *Yoruba Religion and Medicine in Ibadan*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press (1980), 143-145

asserts that Islām has had little effect on the social structure of the Yoruba because their attitude to religion is that of tolerance of religious pluralism and innovation.²⁸

Many Yoruba Muslims in Epe as my study suggests still believe in children having mystical powers called ‘*Abiku*’ who have the ability to come into the world and die shortly after birth. They also repose superstitious belief as regards some days of the week as some are classified prosperous and others ‘adversities’.²⁹ Many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos still repose belief in witchcraft. Some of them participate in secret cults; believe in magic and make enormous use of amulet and talisman; while a number of them still participate in traditional festivals and worship their ancestors,³⁰ which will be explained later in chapter three of this work. In the light of the above analysis, this study seeks to unearth the *raisons d’etre* of seemingly persistent syncretism among many Muslims in West Africa and Yoruba Muslims of Epe in Lagos State Nigeria in particular.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

This study is based on our extensive experience and interactions with Yoruba Muslims both in the academic community and Muslims at large in the study area. The motivation of this study was born out of the fact that the author being a Muslim himself and having grown up among this community marvels at some proportions of syncretism among this community, despite the age-long history of the acceptance of Islām among them. I have been curious of certain beliefs and practices within the

²⁸ J. S. Eades, *Changing Cultures; The Yoruba Today*, London: Cambridge University Press (1980), 133

²⁹ Interview with Alhaji. Durosimi at Iyana Era, Lagos, 16/10/08

³⁰ Interview with Alhaji- Simple, 15/08/09

Muslim community and have been wondering, ‘why do some of these Yoruba Muslims hold on to these practices, both the learned among them and the laity?’ This work seeks to unearth the reasons, events and issues that led to this problem.

Our concern also arose out of the fact that in the plethora of scholarly works, looking at the history of Islām in West Africa, many of them dwell on the history of Islām only. However, a review of such studies shows to the best of my knowledge that none has examined and applied the *Tawhīdic* approach to the study of this phenomenon called syncretism; as well as solutions to this problem, and its theological implications for the Muslims who are involved in it. Herein lies the lacuna this work sets out to fill.

My interest in this study is also derived from several years of academic research as well as my involvement in training Muslim *Imāms*,³¹ teachers and preaching to Muslims, and observing the active involvement of many Yoruba Muslims in these practices and beliefs. I notice that some ethos and basic rules of Islāmic faith are lacking. As a result, this study attempts a way of challenging the critical mind, by suggesting a framework for understanding the differences between Islām and syncretism.

It should be noted also that the motivation for this study is the fact that Islām is a universal religion that emphasises categorical submission to its fold and it covers all facets of our life: be it social, economic, political, medical and environmental. All

³¹ The plural of this word in Arabic is *A’immah*. It is being commonly used in English such as *Imams*, *Muallims* (*Mu’allimūn*), *Eids* (*A’ayād*) etc

these matters are dealt with and solutions are equally proffered to all these concomitant ever evolving problems of mankind.

In doing this, it is my hope that this study will suggest corrections of some erroneous impressions among many Yoruba Muslims of Lagos State that Islam does not prevent one from practising his traditional religions. Moreover, tackling the identified problems in this research work will culminate in our ability to produce a research report which will be an original contribution to Islamic knowledge through *Tawhīd* which is the bedrock of Islām. The work will also sensitize the Yoruba Muslims in the study area to understand the gravity of syncretism in Islām, the benefits as well as the rewards that await any Muslim that shuns it.³² The study will also have pedagogical implications by raising awareness for parents and Islāmic studies teachers to familiarize and inculcate in the children and pupils early in life, the importance of *Tawhīd*, Islāmic etiquette and the effects of syncretism.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is being carried out to achieve certain objectives which are:

1. To examine historically some traditional beliefs and practices in Lagos State prior to Islām.

³² For more details see, S.L.Jimoh, *Kufr in Broader Perspectives*, Lagos: The Companion (1995) 19; see also, Muhammad Ibrahim H.I. Surty, *The Qur'ān and Al-Shirk (Polytheism)*, (2nd rev. ed.), London: Ta Ha Publishers (1982), 61; M.A. Wahab, *Kitāb at-Tawhīd*, Riyādh: Dar-Sallam (2001), 17

2. To analyze as well as highlight the reasons why some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are still syncretising in their religious beliefs and practices.
3. To appraise the extent of the impact of traditional religions on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State.
4. To evaluate the effects of inadequate knowledge and understanding of *Tawḥīd* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State.
5. To consider some various syncretic beliefs and practices those are prevalent amongst some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State.
6. To raise awareness on various beliefs and practices that may negatively affect their faith (*īmān*).
7. To critically suggest definitive Islamic solutions to this problem.

Furthermore, the study also aims at disabusing the misconception amongst some historians and scholars of African Traditional Religion that Islam approves of syncretism.³³

This study therefore is interested in examining the various traditional beliefs and practices of some Yoruba Muslims in the study area that can be termed syncretism known as *al-takhlīt* in Arabic etymology, which have permeated both the individual and collective lives of some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State. The study aims at correcting these ‘aberrations’ with a view to bringing into focus the definitive Islāmic viewpoint on some of these beliefs and practices; according to the teachings

³³ See for instance, I.M. Lewis (ed.), *Islām in Tropical Africa* (2nd ed.), London: International African Institute (1966), 65; E.O. Babalola, *The Advent and Growth of Islām in West Africa*, Ado-Ekiti: Bamgboye & Co Press (1982), 73; J.S. Trimmingham, *Islām in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press (1959), 21-23. J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann Educational Books (1967), 251.

of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW).³⁴ It also aims at enlightening, sensitizing Yoruba Muslims on this issue of syncretism, its negative effects and how to reduce the problem.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

For reasons of time, space and means, I decided to limit the scope of this study to Muslims in Lagos State of Nigeria only and within a particular ethnic group in Lagos, namely the Yoruba people and a particular area, Epe. The reasons for choosing this cannot be overemphasised; Lagos State, as it shall be seen later on in our discussion is one of the earliest and oldest Yoruba States that had accepted Islam *ab initio* among other Yoruba cities as Clarke puts it:

By the beginning of the 19th century there were only a few relatively small Muslim Communities in Yoruba land in places like Old Oyo, Ilorin, Badagry, Epe and Lagos. These communities consisted in the main of Muslim merchants, missionaries and slaves from Hausa land, Borno and further north.³⁵

Losi, in his classical work on the History of Lagos, maintains that as far back as 1775, 'Islamic religion, known then as Mohammedans' religion', was established during the reign of Adele who ruled from 1775-1780.³⁶ He claims that this king

³⁴ *Sunnah*, according to Islamic beliefs is the approved ways and the practices of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW); failure to abide by the Prophet's footsteps will make Almighty Allah not to accept ones deeds. For more see, Z.Y.Nawāwī, *Riyāḍ aṣ-ṣālihin*, Lebanon: Dar- al- Fikr (1990), 8-9.

³⁵ P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islām: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*, 166; M. Hisket, *The Development of Islām in West Africa*, 19-29.

³⁶ J.B.Losi, *History of Lagos*, Lagos: Africa Education Press (1967), 19.

gave freedom of worship to some slaves under him. Islām was fervently practised among the Muslim liberated slaves who returned to Lagos across the sea in 1841. These groups of returnees made the nascent Muslim population in Lagos become stronger.³⁷ Lagos was historically noted as an Islamic nerve centre in the south west of Nigeria because Islamic associations, religious *Da'wah* were steadily going on there. The establishment and opening of the foremost Shitta Bey mosque in 1894 also contributed to Islamic awareness. One would be curious to study events as well as religious developments in such a State with a view to analysing the reasons why syncretism is still considered rampant among them; despite the age-long introduction of Islām and the multitude of Muslim missionaries, teachers, Muslim title-holders and those who have performed pilgrimage to Makkah among them. Lagos is a conglomerate of various Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds. It appears that the work will be able to cover a large population of Yoruba Muslims.

Epe town was also chosen based on the fact that in all the Yoruba states, it is noted for its majority being Muslims, and has been one of the important ancient Yoruba centres of Islāmic learning as far back as 1875. The practice of Islāmic law and establishment of Islāmic State was virtually won *de facto* in this period. The Muslims here had Muslim rulers and their cases were tried according to Malik law by these rulers in concert with the chief *Imām*, and their lives were guided by the Muslim code of conduct.³⁸ Muslim clerics swamped into the area from other Yoruba cities in order to establish Arabic and Islamic schools. Hence, Epe was

³⁷ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 28; H.A.B. Fasinro, *Ahmadiyya (Achievements and Conflicts) as I See it*, Lagos: Irede Publishers (1994), 1-2.

³⁸ T.O. Avoseh, *A Short History of Epe*, Lagos: Adeolu Press (1960), 5; S .Oyeweso, *Journey from Epe: Biography of S.L.Edu*, Lagos: West African Book Publishers (1996), 5.

noted for Islāmic activities such as teaching, preaching and healing.³⁹ Clarke also shares the assertion of the age-old introduction of Islām into Epe.⁴⁰

Another reason that made me to choose Lagos State is the fact that Lagos State is the former capital of Nigeria, the position it occupied from the time of colonialism up until the creation of Abuja in 1999; but it is still the commercial capital. It is populated by a large concentration of people from different ethnic groups, in which Yoruba occupies a prime of place as the mirror of other States.⁴¹ The work perhaps will be able to cover a large population of Yoruba Muslims.

Moreover, Yoruba speaking people were chosen because they are in everything religious⁴², and one will be able to analyse critically the reasons why they hold on to traditional beliefs and practices alongside Islām. It will also provide a better opportunity for thorough investigation, because the author is very familiar with the Yoruba people and their culture. Being a Yoruba Muslim since birth and my personal experience as a Yoruba will prove useful during the field work, combined with ‘my faith’ and my experience brought on by this faith will actually constitute ‘data’ or ‘evidence’ upon which inductive reflection can take place’.⁴³

³⁹ T.O Avoseh, *A Short History of Epe*, 164-165.

⁴⁰ ‘...Epe was almost entirely Muslim by the 1870s and Islam rapidly developed in Lagos between 1850 and 1900...’ For details, see P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islām: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to 20th Century*, 170.

⁴¹ A.O.K. Noah, *Fundamental of General Studies*, 15-17.

⁴² E.B. Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*, London: Longman (1962) 141-143; A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 107; ‘...Nigerians are in all things religious...’ E.B. Idowu, *God in Nigerian Belief*, Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information (1963), 1. ‘...Nigerians are religious people...’; S.Shagari, *My Vision of Nigeria* London: Frank Cass & Co (1981), 413; ‘...Religion rounds up the totality of African culture...’; K.S. Opoku, *West African Traditional Religions*, Accra: Federal International Ltd (ND), 11.

⁴³ P. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, New York: Anchor Press (1979), 141.

The benefits of being an insider-as-researcher are increasingly recognized by the academy as Needleman points out as regards the study of esoteric spirituality, when he says: ‘scholars need to allow the seekers within themselves to exist; and seekers after esoteric knowledge must, for their part, allow within themselves the validity of the outward, analytical, or critical mind’.⁴⁴ In other words, as a member of the researched community, I can serve as a bridge between the outsider and insider dichotomy, there will be deeper understanding of the community and to retain an objective posture through applying the theory and the adoption of a relevant methodology which allows for the two perspectives. By this method as Pearson observes, ‘...the researcher will act as both insider and outsider, embodying the resulting tension in a positive manner which will allow for reflexivity by moving from inside to outside the community and this will allow a more holistic study of the community...’⁴⁵

Researchers have argued the pros and cons of insider and outsider perspectives in carrying out a religious study. (Cantwell Smith, (1981),⁴⁶ Heim, (1995)⁴⁷ and Pearson 2002),⁴⁸ they suggested that both sides are valuable and neither is superior to the other. Pearson claims that if these two perspectives can be combined, perhaps it will increase our depth understanding of religion, which could be ethical and informative; and the value of the religious community and the academy will not be denied.

⁴⁴ J. Needleman and A. Faivre (eds), *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, London: SCM Press (1992), 29.

⁴⁵ J.O. Pearson, ‘Going Native in Reverse’: The Insider as Researcher in British Wicca’ in E. Arweck and M. D. Stringer (eds.), *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press (2002), 109.

⁴⁶ W. Cantwell Smith, *Towards a World Theology: Faith and the Comparative History of Religion*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, (1981), 5

⁴⁷ S.M. Heim, *Salvations, Truth and Difference in Religion*, New York: Orbis Books (1995), 45-46

⁴⁸ J.O. Pearson, ‘Going Native in Reverse’: The Insider as Researcher in British Wicca’ in E. Arweck and M. D. Stringer (eds), *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual*, 107

Albeit, scholars like Ahmad Baba, El-Masri, Ilorin and Gbadamosi, according to Rahman Doi, do not agree on the exact date Islām got to Yoruba land, majority opinion is that Islām was introduced to Yoruba in the early eighteen century.⁴⁹

Yoruba Muslims in Lagos were chosen in preference of other major ethnic groups like Hausa and Ibo because the Hausa Muslims seem to have been influenced by the *Jihād* of the famous reformist, (*Mujaddid*) Uthman Dan Fodio, and one rarely finds syncretistic beliefs and practices among them while the Ibo people are largely Christians; although this does not mean that there is no syncretism among them. Yoruba Muslims are noted for syncretism, as supported by a popular song among them which goes thus:

A wa o sooro ile wa o

A wa o sooro ile wa o

Imale o pe, o ye

Imale o pe ka wa ma sooro

Awa o sooro ile wa o.

Translation:

We shall observe or celebrate the tradition of our family (2ce)

Islām does not debar us from observing our tradition.

We shall (surely) observe the tradition of our family.⁵⁰

⁴⁹A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 109 -111; T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 3; N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan: University Press Ltd (1970), 35-37; A.A.Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa 'Ulamā Bilād Yorubā*, 5-6.

Another popular saying of the Yoruba that depicts their syncretic inclination is ‘*Oosa l’a fi n’wa omo, imale l’afi n’wo*’. (Translation: Children may be sought through the divinities, although we may bring them up in Islamic way).⁵¹ What this song implies, amongst other things is that being a Muslim does not prevent one from partaking in ancestral worship, and that being a Muslim does not prevent one from seeking assistance from gods and goddesses, entrapped between Islām and Yoruba traditional beliefs and practices. There still exist today, many Yoruba Muslims in my study areas who do not see anything wrong in mixing the beliefs and rites of Islām with those of polytheists. For instance, up until now, some Yoruba Muslims when getting married still mix it with the traditional system. They do not begin a journey, choose a new king and enter into a business without the sanction of the oracle.

Oyelade notes that the acceptance of foreign religion does not imply the need to break with the traditional cultural heritage. Hence, the Yoruba see a new religion as ‘an addition to’ and not ‘elimination by substitution’. Here lies the dilemma of the Yoruba Muslim. He has to combine three or more contending philosophies, teachings and views together with the teachings of his religion (Islām), if he is to remain a Yoruba of Oyelade’s imagination and description. He further claims that anything contrary to that ‘will be a direct antagonism to one’s family and society, an action capable of inviting great calamities.’⁵² This position is best exemplified by

⁵⁰ T.A.O. Avoseh, *Short History of Epe*, 15-17. It could also mean celebrating the custom of our people.

⁵¹ Interview with Akanmu, Yoruba Lecturer at the Department of Yoruba Languages, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education. 31/09/08.

⁵² T. Oyelade, ‘Yoruba Muslims and Cultural Accommodation’ in P. Ade-Dopamu & E.A.Odumuyiwa (eds.), *Religion, Science and Culture, NASR* (2003), 197.

the marriage contracted by the Yoruba culture and interlaced with western civilisation and Islām.⁵³

Islām as a religion is non-syncretic; its beliefs and practices are wholly divinely revealed, it does not stand in need of any borrowing from other faiths and it was complete at the time Allah perfected the religion.⁵⁴ The revelation of *Sūratul al-Kāfirūn* (Chapter 109) shows clearly the position of Islām on syncretism. Yet, in the name of ancestral customs and traditions, social conventions, imitative instincts, and due to ignorance, many among the Yoruba Muslims of Lagos State still syncretise. It should be noted that *Imām* al-Ghazali, a prolific and versatile scholar (d.505ce) wrote at length on many areas of Islamic Studies especially *Tawhid*.⁵⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah, a thirteenth century (C.E) theologian, and his student, Ibn Qayyim, both wrote extensively on the subject of syncretism purposely to return the Muslims

⁵³ A.A. Akanni, 'Dangers in the Muslim Home: Cultural and Civilization Challenges to Islamic Marriages in South-Western Nigeria' in I.L. Akintola, T.M Salisu, B.O Yusuf, (eds.), *Correlates of Islām*, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press (2009), 103.

⁵⁴ Q, Chapter, 5: Verse 3'...Today I have perfected your religion for you...' Although, crically looking the verses in Q, Chapter 3:3 '...confirmation of what came before it...' and Q, Chapter 4:47 '... confirming what was already with you...' Q10:37, 3:50. The Qur'ān came to confirm the true and original message in the previous messages, to guard and act as a check to its interpretation. The Qur'ān therefore confirms the main and uncorrupted features of previous revelations. The messengers contact with Allah through inspiration unified their message. It is apparent in these passages of the Qur'ān as confirming the uniformity and the truth in the message of the previous messengers in terms of unity of Allah, commanding what is good and forbidding evil and confirming their truth; which have not been interpolated nor abrogated and is in conformity with the Qur'ānic teachings. According to Islāmīc beliefs, any passage there in that contradicts the Qur'ān should be rejected. It also shows that the message of the earlier messengers came from Allah and they all sent with the same purpose to establish monotheism. The Qur'ān serves as a criterium for the previous revealed Books. For more details, See Q5: 48, Q2:62; Q2:91, 101, 136, Q3:85. See M.M. Khan and M. T. Al-Hilali, *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'ān in the English Language*, Madinah: King Fahd Complex (1419/), 116; A.Y.Ali, *Modern English Translation of the Holy Qur'ān; Meanings and Commentary*, Kansas: Manaar International (1998), 950.

⁵⁵ M. Ghazālī, *Aqīdah al-Muslim*, (4th ed.), Cairo: Dār Tawfiq, An-Namūdhjiyyat (1984), 73-74; M.A. Quasem, *The Ethics of Al-Ghazali: A Composite Ethics in Islam*, Selangor: National University of Malaysia (1975), 13-15

of their age to the orthodox Islām.⁵⁶ Following in their footsteps, one of the reforms carried out by Muḥammad Abdul Wahab in Arabia was in the area of syncretism.⁵⁷

Similarly, for *Shaykh* Uthman ibn Fodio,⁵⁸ there is an ample of evidence to show that syncretism is one of the problems he and his Lieutenants addressed among the Hausa Muslims of their age.⁵⁹ The Yoruba from time immemorial before their contact with Islam were mainly staunch worshippers of idols with many ancestral customs and traditions. As said earlier on when they eventually had contact with Islam they found it difficult to completely do away with their traditional beliefs and customs. This study is limited to Yoruba speaking Muslims of Epe area in Lagos. Since some logistic reasons will not allow us to cover other states and towns. This will serve as a sample of the Yoruba population in order to enlighten people on the phenomenon of syncretism.

This study was conceived and embarked upon with a full awareness of the fact that no reality or knowledge of a religious phenomenon or concept is exhaustive or can be described absolutely at any given period of history; so where reference is made to other African countries by way of comparison, this is done solely to draw some conclusions which are both general to Muslims in West Africa and specific to Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State.

⁵⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, (vols. 1-12) Madinah: King Fahd Publishing House (1995), 45-47; Commentary of Ahmad Ibrahim Isa on *Ibn Qayyim's al-Kayfiyat 'sh-Shafiyyah fil'-Intiṣārli 'l-Firqah an-Nājiyyah*, Beirut: al-Maktabatu 'l-Islami (1986), 23-25.

⁵⁷ Salih 'Abdullah, *Aqīdah 'sh-Shaykh Muhammad bn 'Abdu 'l wahhab as-Salafiyyah wa' Atharuhā fi 'l-'A alām 'l-Islāmī*, Madinah: Saudi Arabia, Islamic University (1416AH /996), 20-23.

⁵⁸ Although, Uthman ibn Fodio was differed to Muhammad Abdul Wahab with regards to Sufism and schools of law. For instance, Uthman ibn Fodio was a teacher of the Malik School of law and a scholar of the Qadriyyah order of Sufism but Muhammad Abdul Wahab refused Sufism to be a part of Islam.

⁵⁹ I. A. Ogunbiyi, *'Nūrul Al-bāb'*- The litmus test of pure Islam as interpreted by Shaykh 'Uthman b.Fudi' in: *Research Bulletin*, (vols.18 and 19), Ibadan: University of Ibadan Centre for Arabic Documentation (1990-91), 24-26.

1.5 Definition of Terms

(i) Syncretism: Syncretism consists of an attempt to reconcile disparate or contradictory beliefs while melding practices of various schools of thought. It is also seen as an attempt to merge and analogize discrete traditions, especially in theology and mythology of religion. The Oxford Dictionary first records the word syncretism in English in 1618, derived from modern Latin *syncretismus*, drawing on the Greek word (*synkretismos*), which means “Synchronization with Crete”. There are different types of syncretism, but religious syncretism is blending of two or more religious belief systems into a new system or incorporating into a religious tradition, beliefs from unrelated traditions.⁶⁰

Eric Maroney states that syncretism is simply borrowing. He also goes further to assert that syncretism ‘...occurs when one religion adopts, absorbs or otherwise accepts elements of another religion...’⁶¹ He points out that this term involves exchange and transformation. It is opposite to fundamentalism and embraces multiplicity. Maroney claims that this terminology is very complex in religion and has strange dynamics. He claims that the dictionary definition of the word implies ‘...fusion or reconciliation of differing systems of belief in religion especially when

⁶⁰ Ibid, 26

⁶¹ Eric Maroney, *Religious Syncretism*, 6; see also, S.G.F. Brandon (ed.), *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, 568; M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, (vol.14), New York: Macmillan (1987), 220

the result is heterogeneous or incongruous'.⁶² He suggests that although the three great Abrahamic monotheistic religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism go against it, but none of them can claim exclusivity.⁶³

Shaw and Stewart assert further that the different local versions of '...notionally standard world religions' such as Christianity and Islām are often pointed to as prime examples of syncretism in this critical sense, when looking at the works of missionaries and theologians'.⁶⁴ Historically, the meaning of the term is dynamic, as it was first used by Plutarch, and refers to the inhabitants of Crete, who, when they faced a common enemy, they overcame their differences of opinion and they co-operated among themselves, hence, 'Cretans', *kretoi*, coming together of Cretans' 'syncretism'.⁶⁵ Vroom argues that it is a process in which beliefs and practices from one religion are adopted by certain people in another religion, and 'subsequently assimilated or repudiated'.⁶⁶ Droogers maintains that 'it is contested interreligious interpenetration; and an aspect of the reciprocating influence between religious traditions'. It is also the incorporation of incompatible beliefs from one religion by another.⁶⁷ It is adopting of beliefs which are incompatible with beliefs that are 'logically' basic to a belief- system.

The *New Dictionary of Theology* traces the history of syncretism as it was used by Plutarch, which made reference to the ability of the Creten warring factions to unite

⁶² Eric Maroney, *Religious Syncretism*, 7

⁶³ Ibid, 16.

⁶⁴ R.Shaw & C.Stewart, 'Introduction: Problematizing Syncretism' in R.Shaw & C. Stewart (eds.), *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism; The Politics of Religious Synthesis*, 1.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 3.

⁶⁶ H.M. Vroom, 'Syncretism and Dialogue: A Philosophical Analysis' in J.Gort et al. (eds.), *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 27.

⁶⁷ A. Droogers, 'Syncretism: The Problem of Definition, the Definition of the Problem' in J.Gort et al. (eds.), *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 8.

against a common enemy. But in the 17th century it was used by Geory Calixtns (1586-1650) to seek unity among Protestant denominations. It was in the 19th century that the term was adopted by the schools of the history of religion to describe any religion that was the result of fusing two or more religions. In this sense, syncretism in a broader sense will mean the process of borrowing elements by one religion from another in such a way as not to change the basic character of the receiving religion.⁶⁸

It is seen as '*Takhlīt*' in Arabic which means 'mixing'. Muslim theologians define it as a practice whereby one professes Islam, performs Islamic acts such as *Ṣalāt*, *Ṣawm* etc., but at the same time, engages in some practices that are opposed to fundamental beliefs of Islām, for instance, divination. They are known as syncretics or mixers (*Mukhlītūn*).⁶⁹ Both *Imām* Muhammad al-Maghili and *Shaykh* Uthman ibn Fodio give character sketches of syncretists and deliver a verdict of infidelity on them. *Shaykh* 'Uthmān ibn Fodio in his book *Nūrul al-Bāb* lists ten items that constitute syncretism and states that such practices and beliefs emanate from none except the disbelievers and polytheists. They include: veneration of trees and stones by offering slaughtered animals on them, casting cotton on stones or at the foot of the tree, putting clothes or food on tombs of the scholar as votive offering, charming people (magic of love and separation), writing the Qur'ān and Allah's names on filthy objects or writing it with blood spilled during slaughter, divination, and consulting diviners.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ For more details, see S.B. Ferguson and D.F. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press (1988), 670; K. Rahner and H. Vargimmler (eds.), *Concise Theological Dictionary* (2nd ed.) London: Burn and Oates (1965), 67.

⁶⁹ S.L. Jimoh, *Kufr in broader Perspectives*, 19.

⁷⁰ I.A. Ogunbiyi, '*Nūrul al-Bāb*' - the litmus test of pure Islam as interpreted by *Shaykh* Uthman bn Fudi' in: *Research Buletin*, 24-27

Some acts according to Muslim theologians are capable of shutting Muslims out of the Islamic fold. These, they assert, constitute infidelity of faith, and these acts are termed ‘Violations of Islām (*Nawāqid al-Islām*)’. These include: associating partners with Allah, setting up intermediaries between oneself and Allah, magic and ridiculing or hating what the Prophet brought.⁷¹

For the purpose of this work, our working definition will be a situation where by a person observes the tenets of Islām like the five pillars of Islām, the six articles of faith and at the same time still believes and practises some elements of traditional religions and customs that go against the fundamental beliefs of Islām, especially the unity of Allah. This term is very significant because it is the substance of this study and this is the definition that is easily understood by a layman as used by ‘Uthmān ibn Fodio.

(ii) Orthodoxy: This is defined as the generally accepted or approved ways, forms, beliefs and practices. For the purpose of this work, however, orthodoxy refers to the state of holding or practising a belief which has a basis in the Qur’ān and finds support in the authentic *Sunnah* of Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.). Furthermore, orthodoxy could be extended to cover any belief or practice that conforms to that of the *Salaf as –Sāliḥīn* (the venerable predecessors); that is the immediate companions of the Prophet who lived and witnessed his deeds. In short, orthodoxy

⁷¹ A.A.Y. Qadhi, *An Explanation of Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdul -Wahhāb’s Four Principles of Shirk*, Birmingham, UK: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution (2002), 39-42; A.A.Y. Qadhi, *A Explanation of Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s Kashf al-Shubuhāh: A critical Study of Shirk*, Birmingham, UK: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution (2003), 36-38

is adherence to the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and the footsteps of the *Salaf*, while the opposite is heterodoxy.

The orthodox Muslims are popularly referred to as *Ahl' al Sunnah wa 'l-Jamā'ah* because of their strict and uncompromising adherence to the practices (*Sunnah*) of the Prophet. Abu 'l-Hassan al-Ash'ari, however, calls them '*Ahlu 'al-ḥadīth wa as-Sunnah* (people of *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah*)⁷². They are also referred to as *Al-Jamā'ah* (the group). This is based on the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (SAW) in which he declared that his '*Ummah*' will divide into seventy-three groups; and that all of them will end up in Hell save one, which he referred to as *Al-Jamā'ah*⁷³.

Another appellation given to them is *al -Firqah an-Nājiyyah* or *at- Ṭā'ifah 'al-Manṣūrah* (i.e. the victorious party). This is derivable from a statement of the Prophet that a group in his '*Ummah*' till resurrection will always be supported by Allah.⁷⁴ Scholars such as Al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad bn Ḥanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah and a host of others have all argued that the victorious party mentioned in the *Ḥadīth* refers to the '*Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*⁷⁵.

(iii) Culture: Many scholars have approached the term culture from different perspectives. According to Tylor, culture in its broad ethnographic sense, is the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs and any

⁷² M.A. Al-Khamis, *I'tiqād 'Ahli's-Sunnah*, Riyādh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowment, Propagation and Guidance (2002), 9-12.

⁷³ Ibn Majah, *Ḥadīth* No.3993. Qadhi opines that this saying of the Prophet should be interpreted with caution and circumspection.

⁷⁴ Abu Dawud, *Ḥadīth* No.4607.

⁷⁵ Ibrahim Ar-Rahili, *Mawqif 'Ahl -Sunnah wa 'l-Jama'ah min 'Ahl 'l-Ahwā' wa al-bid'ah*, (vol.1.), Madinah: Maktabatu 'l-Ghuraba'I 'l-Athariyyah (1415 AH/1995 CE), 60-63.

other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.⁷⁶ Ralph also sees culture as the way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation.⁷⁷ Patrick claims that other elements of culture also include the norms, values and social beliefs. He explains that culture is the totality of people's way of life, various spheres of human existence ranging from the political, economic and social systems of a society, the technology, religion, language and the festivals.⁷⁸ Culture gives particular identity to the group of people and distinguishes races, nation, and peoples indicating their peculiar world-views of life.⁷⁹ Culture is also a shared understanding about norms, rules, or laws that govern and control behaviour and beliefs.⁸⁰ Since human knowledge is by nature limited, all definitions about culture are also limited and incomplete. Culture is therefore what makes life meaningful to a group of people. Inculturation or enculturation is the gradual acquisition of the norms of a culture by another group of person or another culture. It should be noted here that there are many positive aspects of Yoruba culture. These include: respect to parents, in Yoruba culture it is a taboo to beat one's parent or to commit incest, honesty in any relationships, chastity, marriage, personal hygiene, sanction against fraud, theft, corruption, hooliganism, taking adequate of the family, hard-work and respect to privacy among others.

⁷⁶ E.B Tylor, *Primitive culture*, (vol 1.), London: John Murray (1891), 1.

⁷⁷ R. Ralph, 'Present World Conditions in Cultural Perspective' in R. Linton (ed.), *Science of Man in World Crisis*, New York: Columbia University Press (1945), 6-9.

⁷⁸ P A. Edewor, 'Basic Concepts in Culture' in P.A. Dopamu (ed.), *African Culture, Modern Science and Religious Thought*, University of Ilorin: African Centre for Religions and Sciences (2003), 194-196.

⁷⁹ E.B.Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1.London (1871), 1.

⁸⁰ Swarts .J. Marc and D. Jordan, *Culture: Anthropological Perspective*, New York: John Wiley (1990), 45-46

(iv) *Oro*: This is a Yoruba term which is used to denote the type of religion and beliefs the Yoruba people practise and have faith in. In the English language, it can be called tradition but the meaning of ‘tradition’ is more comprehensive as against what it is used for in the Yoruba language. The word ‘traditional’, means a religion that evolves from the peoples’ personal experience, and thereby links the forbearers with their descendants who now live it and practise it. It is traditional because it emanated from the peoples’ environment and on their soil. Each person is born into it, lives it and practises it. It is not imported nor preached. It has no founder. It is passed from one generation to another theoretically and practically. One can call it primitive religion. The word ‘primitive religion’ according to Quarcoopome means any belief or practice that is originally early or of ancient origin which entails ‘...paganism, heathenism, fetishism, idolatry, animism and polytheism’.⁸¹ Tradition also means teaching, learning and transmission of culture. The concept, according to Eliade, is applicable to virtually all fields of culture including science, art, education, law, and politics.⁸²

Eliade further points out that tradition is an act of transmitting or handing down, from one to another, from generation to generation, transmission of statements, beliefs, rules, customs, or the like especially by words of mouth, by practice without writing.⁸³ Some Yoruba believe that despite the acceptance of revealed religion, such traditional religion should be preserved. Some Yoruba Muslims in the study areas still retain and practise some aspects of traditional religion (*oro ile*) despite their acceptance of Islām. It could also mean *Esin- Ibile* in Yoruba language.

⁸¹ T.N.O Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: African Universities Press (1987), 46-48. He asserts further that all are derogatory terms to qualify traditional religion and they are of foreign origin.

⁸² M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, (vol, 2), 1-2.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 3.

(v) *Imale*: This term is used among the Yoruba to mean Islām; the origin of this word is controversial among scholars. To Ilorin, the word *Imale* connotes that the religion is a reference to the religion from Mali or from Mali present in Yoruba especially in old Oyo, the capital.⁸⁴ In contrast to him, Doi maintains that the presence of Malian traders does not suggest that the word *Imale* has any connection with Mali, but rather that the word is made up of *Imo-lile* meaning ‘knowledge by force’ or knowledge imparted in a forceful manner. He reasons that people with parochial knowledge of Islām in the beginning interpret the word to mean *Jihād* and that *Imo-lile* means ‘knowledge by force of ‘*Jihād*’. According to Doi, in ancient Mali Ibn Batuta saw children, including the children of the *qādī* put in chains by their parents for showing apathy in their study of the Qur’ān which still exists till today in some Yoruba land. He maintains that the first form or method of teaching the Qur’ān in Yoruba land might seem difficult, rote learning of it, the method which continues till today.⁸⁵

(vi) *Alufa*: Muslim scholars in Yoruba land are usually referred to as *Aafaa*. The nomenclature ‘*Aafaa*’ is used to refer to the category of Muslims who have acquired Qur’ānic, and may be Arabic education and teach this to people, especially children. Sometimes an *Aafaa* is also called this because he engages in missionary activities; such a person is called *Aafaa Arowasi*. But with the advent of Islām in Yoruba land, Muslim scholars, using the content of the Qur’ān, the recommended prayers of the Prophet (S.A.W.) and prayers and items derivable from what is popularly known as *nakali*, soon assumed the roles of the Yoruba traditional medicine men by attending

⁸⁴A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām fī Nigeria wa Shaykh ‘Uthmān bn Fūdī al-Fūlanī*, 147-149.

⁸⁵A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 109-111; see also, Patrick J. Ryan & S.J. Imale: *Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 27.

to people's problems be they physical, psychological or spiritual. These Muslim scholars are usually referred to as *Aafaa*. Sometimes Yoruba people make use of this title such that any practising Muslim who may not necessarily be a scholar, teacher or preacher, but because of his strict adherence to the teachings of Islām like keeping the beard and putting on the turban is also labelled *Aafaa*.

The word *Aafaa* which the Yoruba use to call their scholars is neither of Yoruba nor Hausa origin. It seems to be of Arabic origin as the various suggestions given by writers on its likely etymological origin are all in Arabic. For instance, Doi has cited four of such suggestions viz: *Al-fātiḥah* (the opening chapter of the Qur'ān frequently recited by the *Alfaas*); *al-fāhim* (for their profound understanding of Islām); *Alf* (a thousand because, they used to commit to memory, a thousand *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet); and *Alif* (the first letter of the Arabic Alphabet).⁸⁶ Jimoh, looking at these various suggestions critically, concludes that they are products of three linguistic theories, which he claims are common features in the language usage of the Yoruba which are convention, semantics and elision. According to him, names are given to people because of the functions they perform regularly and based on the meanings such names connote, and they can be shortened through the process of elision.⁸⁷ All these derivations are from the word, *Alufa*.

(vii) *Takhlīt*: is an Arabic word from the root verb *khalāṭa* which literally means 'to mix', 'to mingle', 'to commingle', and 'to blend'. Technically, it has come to mean syncretism, when used religiously; it is a religious syncretism which entails mixing

⁸⁶ Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 312-314.

⁸⁷ S.L. Jimoh, *Demonic-Possession Exorcism by Yoruba Muslim Aafas in Osun State of Nigeria: a Critical Examination*, unpublished PhD Thesis, Lagos State University (2007), 29-31.

or blending of two or more religious belief systems into a new system or existing religion. It is called *amulumala* in the Yoruba language. It also implies incorporating into religious tradition of beliefs from unrelated traditions. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Religion*,⁸⁸ religious syncretism can occur where we ‘...have multiple religious traditions that exist in proximity and function actively in the culture, or when a culture is conquered, and the conquerors bring their religious beliefs with them, but do not succeed in entirely eradicating the old beliefs, especially in their religious beliefs and practices’,⁸⁹ this explanation is more germane and significant to this work.

(viii) ‘*Urf*: An Arabic word derived from the verb ‘*arafa*’, to know’, ‘to be familiar with’, ‘and to get used to’. Technically, it means a way of doing things which is peculiar to a particular group or society for a long time. It is also known as the mores or norms of a particular society. It is also called ‘*adah*, *taqlīd*. Fuad contrasting the two, claims that habit means what a person does often or sometimes almost without thinking of it which is a personal behaviour, initially chosen at random but which becomes entrenched with repetition. ‘...Custom is a social, public concern transmitted across generations, by a group, community or nation’.⁹⁰ The term is very central to this work because we shall be looking at some customs of some Yoruba Muslims which they find difficult to shed despite their acceptance of Islām. When Islām came it met many customs, there was a great tendency for

⁸⁸ M. Eliade (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 220-223

⁸⁹ Ibid, 224. I have given full definitions of syncretism earlier on under the heading of syncretism. I would not like to repeat myself here, since what we are saying here is just the Arabic equivalent of the word, ‘syncretism’.

⁹⁰ L. Fuad, *The Body in Islamic Culture*, London: Saqi Books (2001), 116-117; see also, *Oxford Wordpower*, 342; see also, <http://www.missionislam.com/family/culture.htm> accessed 12/06/2009

people to embrace Islām while retaining some un-Islamic customs, either consciously or unconsciously.

Those customs that are compatible with Islāmic value should be obviously preserved. For example, among the Yoruba culture that can be adopted by Islamic faith include: good behaviour, respect to parents, honesty in any relationships, chastity, parent' consent and payment of dowry before marriage, personal hygiene, strengthening the ties of kinship, co-operation and mutual help, hospitality, obedience to the leaders,⁹¹ Islām re-affirms all these aspects of custom. However, some aspects of Yoruba custom that incorporate binge drinking, witchcraft, fortune telling, promiscuous sexual relationships, magic, participation in occultism, superstition, and other degrading practices which Islām has prohibited, a Muslim should abandon it and urge other Muslims to abandon it, because the Qur'ān has enjoined all believers to enter into Islām wholeheartedly.⁹² Muslims should not cling on to those features of their nation's pre-Islāmic culture which Islām has specifically forbidden, but we should identify wholeheartedly with Islamic values. Doi observes that Islām in effect is a basic universal culture and custom and local variations in culture should reflect only what was good by Islāmic standards.⁹³

1.6 Review of Literature

The following provides an overview of the literature and core sources that will often be consulted in this research. Studies and publications on Islām in Yoruba land have

⁹¹ N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 303-304. Fadipe writes that Yoruba also has some measures of social control.

⁹² See Quran 2:208.

⁹³ A.R.I. Doi, *The Western Civilization, Islām and the Muslim Youth, India*: Muslim Publishing House (1988), 3-5.

been in the main based on historical, anthropological and the regional influence of the religion and even such publications are very scanty as it will be seen presently.

In *The Advent and Growth of Islām in West Africa* written by E.O. Babalola⁹⁴, the author discusses the growth and development of Islām in some West African countries. The growth of Islām in Nigeria and the factors that facilitated its growth are specifically discussed. The work also discusses the role played by imperialists in the history of Islām and the nationalists' resistance to such effort and the zeal Muslims showed regarding Islamic education. However, the significant interest of this work to us is the section where the author discusses the effects and syncretic nature of Islām. The submission of the author, quoting the authority of Lewis and others that Islām approves of syncretism is problematic. However, the work is useful to us, in that it sheds more light on different syncretic practices among Muslims in West Africa including Nigeria. Babalola's agreement to a large extent that Islām approves of syncretism is exactly one of the reasons why our work is important. We seek to critique this opinion.

Several chapters of *Islām in Nigeria* by A. Rahman I. Doi's⁹⁵ work take a comprehensive look at the introduction, spread, and effects of Islam on the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria viz: Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo. Extensive information is found in this work on the advent and development of Islām in Yoruba land; the traditional Yoruba Religion and Islām; the life-cycle of Yoruba Muslims among others. Of a very significant relevance to this work, is the section the author devotes to syncretism among Muslims in Nigeria. He, like Babalola, also traces the genesis

⁹⁴E.O. Babalola, *The Advent And Growth Of Islām In West Africa*, Ado-Ekiti: Bamgboye & Co. Press, (1982).

⁹⁵ A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation (1984).

of syncretism in West Africa; the manifestations of syncretism and the practice of it among the Muslims in Nigeria among other things. But the work fails to highlight the Islamic rulings on these practices. This work and the earlier cited one are both of particular relevance to our work, but the fact that our work is focused on Muslim Yoruba in Lagos State and Doi's work is on Muslims in Nigeria as a whole shows some degrees of relatedness between the two works.

Another prominent work, *Islām in West Africa* by J. Spencer Trimingham,⁹⁶ written many years ago, is very useful to our work; it discusses the contact between traditional culture and Islām; the influence of Islām upon the ideas of supernatural and human personality. The background and effects of old beliefs and practices on Islām will be of particular interest to this work where the author enlightens us on the syncretic practises among Muslims in West Africa. This work, although discussing some aspects of syncretism, does not really highlight why Muslims cling on to it.

Writing about Islam among the Yoruba, the work *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba 1841-1908* by T.G.O. Gbadamosi⁹⁷, is the classical as well as magnum opus of the author on Islām in Yoruba land still relevant in contemporary times. It is the most comprehensive text relevant to our work because it gives us clues to the different religious beliefs and practices among the Yoruba before Islām came as well as the factors that facilitated its growth and development among the Yoruba. The work will be useful to our research because it gives us the background information about the resurgence of Islam, its consolidation as well as its zenith. It

⁹⁶ J.S. Trimingham, *Islām in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press (1959).

⁹⁷ T.G.O.Gbadamosi, *The Growth Of Islām among the Yoruba, 1841-1908*, London: Longman Group Limited, (1978).

was written by an erudite Yoruba Muslim historian, the work has been considered as the major source of information on Islām in Yoruba land, its development and its attendant challenges; credit has to be given for its deep rooted explanation of the development of Islām in Yoruba land, Lagos inclusive. But the work is historical in nature; it does not discuss the encounter between Islamic culture and the hitherto Yoruba traditional religions that give rise to syncretism.

Another prominent scholar, Peter B. Clarke in his *West Africa and Islām: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*⁹⁸, raises a vital point by highlighting the contacts of West African peoples with Islamic religion up until the 20th century C.E, i.e. the making of the West African Muslim community over a period of some twelve hundred years from a relatively slow start in the first eleven hundred years to a quicker pace in the 19th and 20th century. He also critiques the factors that facilitated the growth of Islām in the region. Clarke in this work asserts that Islām in West Africa is not peripheral to or mere appendage of the Muslim world. He argues that either a substantial ‘minority’ or overwhelming ‘majority’ of the inhabitants of a number of West African states are Muslims. The work also highlights traces of religious syncretism in some West African states and how such were dealt with by the reform movements. The historical background of the arrival of Islām in Lagos is traced including how the traditionalists saw it as a threat to their traditional religion. The work does not discuss the implications of such to Islamic development. Be that as it is may, the work will be useful to our research especially in the area where Islām in Lagos and its antecedents are discussed. This

⁹⁸ P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islām: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to 20th Century*, London: Edward Arnold (1982).

review only covers the syncretistic aspect of the history as these are the main areas of interest to this work.

Of equal importance to this research is the work of another prominent scholar, M. Hiskett, which is entitled *The Development of Islām in West Africa*.⁹⁹ Hiskett in this work, shares similar characteristics with Clarke in that the work enlightens us about Islām in West Africa as well as factors responsible for its growth and development. It also discusses the challenges that faced the development of Islām as well as its encounter with traditional religions in West Africa. The work will be useful to us as it throws light on the teething problems Islām faced upon its introduction to the West African people and how they adapted their belief system to the religion.

Another work that is germane to ours, is *Sociology of the Yoruba*¹⁰⁰ written by N.A. Fadipe. The work delves extensively into the origin, culture and beliefs of the Yoruba people and the various religions hitherto practised by them as well as their various gods and goddesses before they accepted the monotheistic religions. Lagos is not the focus of the work but elements of syncretic practices among the Yoruba people when they accepted the revealed religions were not left out in the work. These are found in the belief system and the social integration of the Yoruba people. The review of this book will only cover the syncretic aspect of the history of the Yoruba people as these are the main areas of interest of this work.

⁹⁹ M. Hiskett, *The Development of Islām in West Africa*, London: Longman (1984).

¹⁰⁰ N.A. Fadipe, *Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan: University Press (1970).

On their part, Dada and Jeje *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba*.¹⁰¹ The work written in Yoruba language appears to be an exposition of the various Yoruba traditional beliefs and worship. Broad accounts of cultural phenomena are found in the book, but of more interest to this work are the areas where the authors explain the issue of religion and spiritual training in Yoruba society. The authors viewed this phenomenon from a historical perspective, the Yoruba people of Lagos are also discussed in this work. The authors do refer to, although erroneously, the room for syncretism in Islām and how the Muslim syncretise; this will be another area of usefulness to our work.

Writing about Islām and the prevalence of syncretism in Songhay, John O. Hunwick in his book, *Shar‘ah in Songhay: the Replies of Al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad*,¹⁰² discusses the growth and development of Islām in West Africa with special reference to Middle Niger where Songhay was located as well as by these various Muslim rulers. In this work, Hunwick gives vivid sketches of the syncretic practices engaged in by these rulers and the biography of the famous scholar of West Africa Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karim al-Maghili and his influence on eradicating syncretism. Of particular interest to our work is the section devoted to the syncretistic practises among the people of Songhay and its rulers and the Islāmic verdict given by Maghili, the famous scholar, as replies to Askia al-hājj Muḥammad. This aspect will be useful to our work in order to serve as a parameter to judge various religious syncretism hitherto practised by Yoruba Muslims of Lagos.

¹⁰¹ Dada & Jeje, *Awon Asa Ati Orisa Ile Yoruba*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books (1973).

¹⁰² J.O. Hunwick, *Shar‘ah in Songhay: The Replies of Al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad*, London: Oxford University Press (1985).

Another oeuvre that is pertinent to our work is John S. Mbiti's *Introduction to African Religion*¹⁰³ and *African Religions and Philosophy*.¹⁰⁴ The pair of works gives us an understanding of African religions; the belief system of Africans and the social and spiritual life of the African. The two books are useful to our work in that they will provide an understanding of the religions the Yoruba were practising before Islam came, and the deep-rooted effect of these religions on them. But of particular interest to this work is the latter work, where the author highlights the various syncretic practises and beliefs of Muslims in West Africa. The author agrees to a large extent that Islam accommodates and approves of traditional beliefs and practices, seeing Islam as an African religion, opinion which this work will critique.

Other works of significance include: *West African Religion*¹⁰⁵ and *African Traditional Religion*,¹⁰⁶ written by Geoffrey Parrinder; *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community*,¹⁰⁷ written by Benjamin C. Ray; *West African Traditional Religion*,¹⁰⁸ written by T.N.O Quarcoopome; *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*,¹⁰⁹ written by J. Omosade Awolalu; *African Traditional Religion;¹¹⁰ Olodumare, God in Yoruba Beliefs;*¹¹¹ *African Culture, Modern Science And Religious Thought;*¹¹². All these books taken together have treated almost the same subject; Yoruba

¹⁰³ J.S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann Educational (1975).

¹⁰⁴ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann Educational (1969).

¹⁰⁵ G. Parrinder, *West African Religion: A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Akan, Ewe, Yoruba, Ibo, and Kindred Peoples*, (2nd.ed.) London: Epworth Press, (1969).

¹⁰⁶ G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, London: Sheldon Press, (3rd ed.) (1974).

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall (1976).

¹⁰⁸ T.N.O Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: African Universities Press (1987).

¹⁰⁹ O.J. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, London: Longman (1979).

¹¹⁰ E.B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, London: SCM Press (1973).

¹¹¹ E.B. Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Beliefs*, Lagos: Academy Longman Nig Ltd (1996).

¹¹² P. Ade Dopamu, (ed.), *African Culture, Modern Science and Religious Thought*, Ilorin: African Centre for Religions and Science (2003).

traditional religions, their belief system and culture. The only difference is the manner of approach and the structure of the works. Our interest covers references to the traditional aspects of Yoruba Religions and their traditional culture as these are the main interest of this study. The books are going to be useful to our work in the area of Yoruba traditional religions among Africans and Yoruba of Lagos State. The syncretistic topics covered in the books will also contribute to our work, since most of the works agree that Islam approves of syncretism.

Another prominent Yoruba Muslim scholar, Adam Abdullah Ilorin, in his *Nasīm aṣ-Sabā fī Akhabār al-Islām wa ‘Ulamā’ al-Bilād Yoruba*,¹¹³ and *Al-Islām wa Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah*¹¹⁴, discusses the penetration of Islam into Yoruba land; the religions hitherto practised by the Yoruba before their acceptance of Islām; and how different towns in Yoruba land accepted Islām. The former book discusses the contributions of Islamic clerics to the spread of Islām in Yoruba land, and their syncretic practices. The latter book will contribute more to our study because as the name suggests ‘Islām and Aping the Barbaric Practices’ Ilorin, in the work defines the word ‘*taqālīd*’ and explains some of the practices engaged in by the Yoruba Muslims despite their acceptance of Islam. Although not very elaborate, it will be useful to our work in the area of Muslim Yoruba clinging on to *Jāhiliyyah* (pre-Islāmic) practices after their confession of faith and acceptance of Islam.

On his part, Eric Maroney, in his *Religious Syncretism*,¹¹⁵ gives the global practices of syncretism among the different world’s three great Abrahamic monotheistic

¹¹³ A.A. Al-Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ-Sabā fī Akhabār al-Islām wa ‘Ulamā’ al-Bilād Yoruba*, (3rd ed.) Cairo: Maktabat Wahabat (1990).

¹¹⁴ A.A. Al-Ilorin, *Al-Islām wa Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah; Baḥṭh fī Muḥārabah at-Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah Ashā’iah fī Ifriqiyyah*, (2nd ed.), Cairo: Matbat Madani (1979).

¹¹⁵ E. Maroney, *Religious Syncretism*, London: SCM Press (2006).

religions; Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It throws more light on the different tribes of the world and their religions and the practice of *Taşawwuf* among the Sufi brotherhood. The book also gives different interpretations of the word syncretism, and why syncretism is a great enemy to these three great revealed religions, looking at the pros and cons of syncretism. No doubt the book is going to contribute to our research in the area of syncretism.

Dialogue And Syncretism,¹¹⁶ edited by G. Jerald, V. Hendrik, F. Rein, and W. Anton, is a scholarly contribution from different authors looking at syncretism from interdisciplinary approaches: sociological, philosophical, anthropological and theological. The book reiterates the problem in defining syncretism, although to a larger extent from a Christian and philosophical perspective. The work will still be useful to our project in the area of problems in defining syncretism, and the global trend of the phenomenon and how it could be curtailed.

On his part, Shaykh Uthman ibn Fodio a prolific author and reformer (*Mujaddid*), wrote, *'Ihyā as-Sunnah wa Ikhmād al-Bid'ah*.¹¹⁷ It is the most voluminous and the magnum opus of the author's several works, the book which literarily means 'Revival of the *Sunnah* and the Removal of Innovation'. The work can be viewed as a book of Theology and Islamic law. It is devoted more to innovation as well as syncretism among the Muslims, than the explanation of the *Sunnah*. Defining some key terms of the work, it goes on to discuss the need to adhere to the practice of the Prophet (S.A.W.). It discusses Theology, Jurisprudence and Mysticism. The book justifies the need for Muslims to adhere to the three major sources of Islamic Law,

¹¹⁶D. Jerald, et al. (eds.), *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Amsterdam: Eerdmans Publishing (1989).

¹¹⁷ U.B. Fudi, *'Ihyā'u Ssunnat wa Ikhmād al-Bid'ah*, Beirut: Dar- al-Fikr (1382AH).

quoting many verses of the Qur'ān, *Aḥādīth* and other authorities to prove this. It concludes with *Tanbihah* (Advice). The work, although not so detailed especially as relates to Yoruba Muslim syncretism, will contribute to our research especially in the areas of Islāmic verdicts on the different syncretic practices involved in by Yoruba Muslims.

For his part, Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips in *The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)*,¹¹⁸ defines and analyses the typology of *Tawḥīd* and *shirk*, and goes on to explain some different types of syncretism and their rulings in Islām. Although not so extensive especially as it relates to Yoruba land, it treats the topics in a fluid and simple way and also presents classical and modern theological issues. The work will be useful to ours in its treatment of some syncretic practices and beliefs hitherto adopted by some Yoruba Muslims and their rulings according to Islāmic law.

All these scholars have put forth historical or other insights in their works, and helped to direct our thoughts for this study. Despite all the published material just cited, to date it appears that through a detailed study of these works so far reviewed, there is no single one of them that focuses on syncretistic practices and beliefs among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State of Nigeria nor its attendant problem. This gives the impression that a very fundamental aspect of Islam i.e. *Tawḥīd*, an Islāmic development in Lagos State, needs scholarly attention. This study is an attempt to fill that vacuum not covered by these scholars.

¹¹⁸ A.A.B. Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed, (Islamic Monotheism)*, Riyādh: Tawheed Publications (1990).

1.7 Hypotheses

H01 – Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are prone to syncretism because of their ignorance.

H02 - Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are syncretic due to the effect of the Traditional Religions.

H03 - The more theological knowledge Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State have, the less their practice of syncretism.

1.8 Research Questions

The study raises many questions, among them are:

1. What are the reasons for syncretism persisting among some Yoruba speaking Muslims of Lagos State?
2. What are the reasons that some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State cannot submit themselves wholeheartedly to Allah?
3. Does *Tawhīd* really have an impact on these Muslims?
4. Do these Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State understand the implications of syncretism in Islām?
5. Why is an investigation into the syncretistic practises and beliefs of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State essential (*sine qua non*)?
6. Are there any worldly and spiritual benefits for a Muslim who shuns syncretism?
7. What are the solutions to this problem of *takhlīt* (syncretism)?

8. What is the role of *Tawhīd* on these Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State in reducing this phenomenon that affects the fabric of their belief?
9. What are the theological implications of these beliefs and practices?

These questions largely reflect the issues that constitute the research problem for this study. The type of methodology used in this study informs the nature of these questions.¹¹⁹

1.9 Variables of the Study

‘A variable is an image, perception or concept that is capable of measurement, or taking different values’. In other words, a concept that can be measured is called a variable. It is also a property that takes on different values. It is also a symbol in which numerals or values can be attached.¹²⁰ In research, change variables are called ‘independent variables’, while outcome or effect variables are called ‘dependent variables’, the unmeasured variables affecting the cause and effect relationship are known as ‘extraneous’ and the one that links the cause and effect relationship are called ‘intervening variables’.¹²¹ In other words, the independent variable is the cause responsible for bringing about change in a phenomenon and the dependant variable is the outcome of the change brought about by bringing in independent variables.

¹¹⁹ F.N. Kerlinger, *Foundations of Behavioural Research*, 28.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 27; B.R. Dixon, et al., *A Handbook of Social Science Research*, 50.

¹²¹ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology; A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 60.

In carrying out this study therefore, due attention will be given to all the aforementioned types of variables. Both will be measured on the viewpoint of the study design, using attributive variables which cannot be manipulated like the age, gender, and education of the respondents. As regards unit of measurement, categorical measurement, i.e. ordinal or ranking scale will be used. In carrying out this study, attention will be given to extraneous and intervening variables such as the age of the respondents, their educational background, their social status, knowledge of Islām that will affect the dependent variables which is the problem of syncretism and these variables will be qualitatively measured using ordinal or ranking scale because this has all the properties of a nominal scale.

1.9.1 Research Instrument

The main instrument that will be used to collect information for this study will be a combination of observation, interviews and questionnaire. Although, they all have their weaknesses and strengths, their weaknesses lie in their validity, reliability and personal bias. But be that as it may, they are the best instruments for this work, because they will be able to cover a lot of people cheaply, and information gathered will be substantiated with other sources of evidence such as the secondary sources in order to avoid bias. This mixed method of approach gives us the advantage of a comprehensive account of what is being researched. It provides a fuller description and more complete explanation of the phenomenon being studied and it also

addresses a wider range of the questions relating to ‘Why’? ‘Who’? ‘When’? and ‘What’? This method also places more emphasis on the integration of alternative approaches, and gives an explicit account of the way the different methods and data complement each other. It is problem-driven rather than theory driven and its underlying philosophy is that of pragmatism.¹²² Another benefit of using a variety of research strategies is that the problems that are associated with one strategy will be compensated for by the strengths of another, by using different research methods or sources of data to treat the same problem.¹²³

The data will be collected during the field work; non-participant observation will be used which is a situation whereby one does not get involved in the activities of the group but remains a passive observer, listening and drawing conclusion from this.¹²⁴ Although its weakness lies in its Hawthorn effect which is, a change that occurs in behaviour of individuals or groups which may be positive or negative which is attributed to their being observed.¹²⁵ It may result in distortion, this problem will be reduced by not all the members of the group will notice my presence and the possibility of observer’s bias will also minimized by adhering to research ethics. But the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages, because people will be studied in their natural setting and we will be able to get first hand information.

Most data from the primary sources for this study was collected during my fieldwork. Secondary sources were documents and other publications. Literature

¹²² M .Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Smal –Scale Social Research Projects*, (3rd ed.), Berkshire: Open University Press (2007), 117-118; A. Edwards & R.Talbot, *The Hard-Pressed Researcher: A Research Handbook for the Caring Professions*, 82.

¹²³ D. Hall & I. Hall, *Practical Social Research*, 44.

¹²⁴ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by- Step Guide for Beginners*, 120

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 120

search was carried out mainly in the Harold Turner Collections at the Orchard Learning Resource Centre (OLRC) at the University of Birmingham, and the University of Birmingham main library, and other libraries abroad.

1.9.2 Data collection Methods

In this work, both primary and secondary sources were used to gather data. However, these issues will be explored further in numbers 4.2.2 and 4.2.4 in chapter four of this work. The primary sources were mainly observation, questionnaire and interview. Data from secondary sources was library based by going through publications, documents, earlier research, personal records, and mass media.¹²⁶ Their weaknesses and strengths will be explained later on under the heading 'Research Design' in the chapter four of this work, along with the justification for choosing it.

The questionnaire was open-ended. Items were constructed using attitudinal scale while summated rating or Likert scale was used to collect the information. Ethical issues were taken care of which range from; no invasion of privacy; no deception, bias or inappropriate use of the information.¹²⁷ During the semi-structured interview, discussion was recorded by hand and audio taped with the permission of the interviewees.

¹²⁶ Ibid.,141

¹²⁷ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 510; R.Kumar, *Research Methodology; A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 212; F.C. Dane, *Research Methods*, 38.

1.9.3 Data Analysis

In this work, the data collected so far was interpreted and analysed using triangulation or mixed methods. Triangulation simply means the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis.¹²⁸ Qualitative analysis entails raw data to be interpreted and discussed verbally so that it will be more accessible and a well supported conclusion will be reached. Quantitatively, statistical analysis was used to explain the data, and a combination of percentage and chi-square was used. This mixed method approach was adopted because it would give a more comprehensive account of the issue being researched, so that the phenomenon of the problem under study can be fuller described and more complete explanation of the study could be made by providing more than one perspective on it, it will also be able to link between different methods and the different kinds of data.¹²⁹

1.9.4 Structure of the Work

The study consists of six chapters. Chapter one is entitled 'Introduction'. It starts with brief introduction, states the problem of the study otherwise known as the statement of the problem, the rationale for the study, and the objectives of the study. It also discusses the scope, delimitations and limitations of this study, and defines some relevant key terms. It also gives a comprehensive discourse on the term syncretism, contains a literature review and the hypotheses and also the research

¹²⁸ M.B. Davies, *Doing a Successful Research Project; Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*, 205.

¹²⁹ M .Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide*, 119.

instrument adopted in this work. The variables of the study, how the data will be collected as well its analysis all come under this chapter. [Chapter six is the conclusion, is a summary of our findings, the implications of the study. The body of thesis is therefore chapters two to five.]

Chapter Two, entitled ‘Islām in Lagos State’, touches on a brief history of the Yoruba, history of Lagos State, Islām in Lagos State; its growth and development, the spread of Islām in Epe, factors responsible for the growth and development of Islām in Lagos State and its impact is also discussed. The current challenges facing the Muslims in Lagos State are discussed.

Chapter Three, entitled ‘Yoruba Traditional Beliefs and Practices in Lagos State before Islām’, discusses various religious, traditional and cultural beliefs and practices in Lagos before the advent of Islām. It includes belief in superstitions, belief in and practice of secret cults/societies, belief in and practice of witchcraft, belief in black magic; charms and amulets, belief in ancestral/hero worship, belief in oracles/fortune telling; belief and participation in traditional festivals/rituals (*oro ile*). It also discusses the part western/foreign culture plays on syncretism.

Chapter Four, entitled ‘Research Methodology’, explains the various methods used in gathering data for this work. This chapter examines the Research Design, the Research Methodology and execution of the field work. The chapter tests the various hypotheses listed in chapter one of this work as well as analysing and interpreting the results gained from the questionnaire applied in the field work. It also explains the interview method used to obtain data from the random selected

respondents. It justifies the sampling methodology used to get samples for this work, the procedures employed to administer the questionnaire, and the ethical issues taken into cognizance during the administration of the research instruments are also explained. The responses of the samples selected are also discussed, problems encountered during the course of the field work and its appropriate solutions are also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter Five, which is entitled ‘Critical Appraisal of Religious Syncretism amongst Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State’, critically brings out the religious syncretism that is inherent in each of the above listed Yoruba religious, traditional and cultural beliefs and practices. They include belief in superstition, belief in and practice of secret societies, belief in and practice of witchcraft, belief in and practice of black magic; charms and amulets, belief in ancestral/hero worship, belief in fortune telling/oracles, belief and participation in traditional festivals /rituals (*oro ile*). It also discusses the Islamic rulings on each of the above mentioned practices and beliefs, and the importation/borrowing of western culture into Islām.

Chapter Six concludes the study, it summarises the whole discourse; states the findings of the study, gives suggestions and recommendations and suggests areas for further research.

1.9.5 Conclusion

This chapter being the first in this study is introductory. In it, we have discussed the problems inherent in the study, we have also discussed the significance or the

rationale and equally found justifications for it, also discussed are the objectives as well as the scope of our work. There are certain key words and terminologies which are central and crucial to this study. To enhance proper understanding and at the same time prepare a solid background for fuller discussion in subsequent chapters, these key words are not only defined but also comprehensively discussed. Also discussed is the substance of this work in terms of the research methodology that will be used to gather data for this research work, research instruments, how the data will be collected and analysed. The justifications for adopting such methods equally received our attention. We also discussed methods used in carrying out the research, variables of the study, research instrument as well methods of collecting the data and its analysis. The strengths and weaknesses of each method were discussed and our justifications for choosing the methods and how to minimize the limitations also received our attention. Likewise, a review of the existing literature has been another major concern of the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

ISLĀM IN LAGOS STATE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is about the history of the Yoruba as well as their earliest encounter with Islam as far back as 14th century. An attempt is also made to discuss the historical background of Lagos State. Our aim in this chapter is to trace the origin, mode of spread, development, and impacts of Islām on Muslims in Lagos State as well as the state of Islām in it today. We also seek to explain the growth as well as gradual development of Islām in Epe up until the present time. The rationale is to discover some of the factors that are responsible for the growth and development of Islām in the State. The chapter is concluded by critically looking at the challenges facing Islām as well the Muslims in the State today.

2.1 Brief History of the Yoruba

The word 'Yoruba' has generated an unending controversy, among scholars of Yoruba. Johnson, writing on the origin and early history of the Yoruba, claims that the origin of the Yoruba was shrouded in obscurity.¹³⁰ Biobaku asserts that many writers at one time or another have attempted to unearth the riddle of the origin of the Yoruba but with no real success.¹³¹ Biobaku suggests that each study is based on an aspect of Yoruba life, thought or relic. Many theories have been propounded to trace the origin of the Yoruba. A few examples will be examined here. Bishop

¹³⁰ R.S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas; from the earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, 3.

¹³¹ S.O. Biobaku, *The Origin of the Yoruba*, 1-2.

Crowther likened the Yoruba people to the Jews where he noted some striking similarities between the Yoruba and the shrewd Israelites and that the Yoruba are as intelligent and wide awake as the Jews. Amaury P. Talbot concludes that the Yoruba probably introduced Bronze into modern Nigeria.¹³²

Leo Frobenius, a German explorer, also propounded an interesting theory. He had visited the Yoruba country and discovered the now famous heads and terracottas at Ile –Ife. Apparently, elated by his findings he declared:

... Yoruba, whose peculiarities are not inadequately depicted, in the platonic account...this Yoruba, I assert, is Atlantis, the home of Poseidon's posterity, the Sea God by them named *Olokun*; the land of a people of whom Solon declared: 'They had even extended their lordship over Egypt and Tyrrhene!'¹³³

Frobenius thus claimed that in Yoruba land, he discovered the lost Atlantis.¹³⁴

Samuel Johnson based his own theory upon traditional stories of the origin of the Yoruba that the Yoruba sprang from Upper Egypt or Nubia; that they were the subjects of the Egyptian conqueror Nimrod who was of Phoenician origin and that they followed him in his wars of conquest as far as Arabia, where they settled for a

¹³² Talbot goes further to tell us that the Yoruba came in from the north-east and that was at the beginning of the second millennium. Talbot further asserts that the Yoruba were followed by the Bariba (Borguwa), the Bussawa, Tapa (Nupe) and the Jukun among others. He further reiterates that their migration to Ile-Ife was as a result of Nubian Wars of about 1870 B.C in Egypt or the conquest of Egypt a little later by the Hyksos with their bronze scimitars and chariots drawn by horses. He asserts further that after their arrival in Ile-Ife they became adept in the making of pottery and in iron-work and *Ogun*, the god of iron, was one of the earliest deities in the Yoruba pantheon. For details, see P.A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria* (4th vol.), London: Humphrey Milford (1926), 276-279.

¹³³ L. Frobenius, *The Voice of Africa: Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910-1912*, translated by R. Blind, (Vol 1), London: Hutchinson and Co (1913), 345

¹³⁴ Frobenius asserted that in Yorubaland he found the far famed and mysterious land 'far beyond the Pillars of Hercules (a hero of superhuman strength)'. Thus, western civilization crossed the ocean into Africa in the thirteen century B.C and the littoral (shore of the sea) settlements including those of the Yoruba were affected by it. But it soon decayed, leaving the Etruscans as the torch-bearers of civilisation. So, Yoruba civilization was Etruscan. Ibid, 345-346; S.O. Biobaku, *The Origin of the Yoruba*, 4.

time. The Yoruba were later driven from Arabia because they clung to polytheism and idolatry when the people around them were going over to Islām.¹³⁵

Lucas in his learned work on *'The Religion of the Yorubas'* also lends powerful support to the theory of Egyptian origin; he avers that the link with Egypt covered almost every period of Egyptian origin and the name 'Yoruba' was derived from *rpa* or *rba*, a mythical king in Northern Africa and later a feudal prince in Egypt. Lucas concludes that '...it would appear that the Yoruba migrated gradually from Northern Egypt to Southern Egypt and the Sudan until they reached their present home'.¹³⁶

Biobaku, analysing the various theories closely, asserts that all the theories agree upon one thing, namely: that the Yoruba migrated into their present areas, they were not aborigines and that all the theories point to near –Eastern origin.¹³⁷ Forde agrees with Biobaku and Fadipe that the word 'Yoruba' has been commonly applied to a large group, united more by language rather than by culture. He goes further to tell us that this word is derived from a foreign nickname, meaning cunning, and it was given to the subjects of Alafin of Oyo by the Fulani and Hausa. The Hausa word for Yoruba language is *Yarbanci*.¹³⁸

Biobaku also criticized the theory suggested by Lucas that the Yoruba are from Egypt. Biobaku argues that the proof that the modern Yoruba language is similar to

¹³⁵ R.S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas; from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, 4.

¹³⁶ J.O. Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, Lagos: C.M.S.Bookshop (1922), 353.

¹³⁷ S.O. Biobaku, *The Origin of the Yoruba*, 4.

¹³⁸ D. Forde, (ed.), *Ethnographic Survey of Africa: West Africa; The Yoruba –Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, (part iv), London: International African Institute (1962), 1

the ancient Egyptian language is not true, and giving the meaning of the word ‘Yoruba’ as ‘the living *rpa*’ or the ‘Creator of *rpa*’ which was adopted as a name by worshippers of *rpa* is open to doubt. He states that Yoruba was originally the name of only one section of the Yoruba peoples and was not the collective name used at Ile-Ife, their first settlement.¹³⁹

Johnson doubts the tradition which claims that the Yorubas sprung from Lamrudu (a king in Makkah), who was a staunch worshipper of idols, and Oduduwa who was one of the children of this king had a Priest called Asara who gave birth to Braima. Braima was subsequently won over to Mohammedan’s religion, Braima later destroyed the idols being worshipped by Lamrudu, and in the process civil war ensued between Mohammedan’s party and Lamrudu. In this war, Lamrudu was killed, and all his children were expelled from the town. They later settled down at Ile-Ife. Johnson asserts that this theory cannot be true because the Yoruba are not Arabian family, and no such accounts can be found in the history of the Arabs, despite their being meticulous in historiography and record keeping.¹⁴⁰ But the Yoruba coming from the East originally may sound plausible because their habits, manners and customs, all suggest that they are from the Eastern part of the world. Captain Clapperton made acquaintance with Sultan Bello of Sokoto, who was an authority on this area, and made a copious extract from his large geographical and historical work, from which the following is taken:

Yarba is an extensive province containing rivers, forests, sands and mountains, as also a great many wonderful and extraordinary things. In it, the talking green bird called *babaga* (parrot) is found. By the side of this province there is an anchorage or harbour for the ships of the

¹³⁹ Ibid. 5; S.O. Biobaku, *The Origin of the Yoruba*, 5

¹⁴⁰ See R.S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas from the earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, 5; see also, A.R.I., Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 107-109.

Christians, who used to go there and purchase slaves. These slaves were exported from our country and sold to the people of Yarba who resold them to the Christians. The inhabitants of this province (Yarba), it is supposed originated from the remnants of the children of Canaan, who were of the tribes of Nimrod. The cause of their being driven by Yaarooba, son of Kahtan, out of Arabia, to the western Coast between Egypt and Abyssinia. From the spot, they advanced into the interior of Africa, till they reached Yarba where they stopped at, a tribe of their own people. Thus it is supposed that all the tribes of the Soodan who inhabit the mountains, are originated from them; as also are the inhabitants of Ya-ory, upon the, the people of the Yarba are nearly of the same description as those of Noofe (Nupe)...¹⁴¹

From this Johnson suggests this as the origin of the term, ‘Yoruba,’ from *Yarba*, their first permanent settlement in Africa. Yarba is the same as the Hausa term *Yarriba* for Yoruba.¹⁴²

Yoruba land is occupied by the Egbado and Awori of the Ilaro division of Abeokuta province of Nigeria.¹⁴³ All these people speak a language known as Yoruba. This language, according to Fadipe, ‘... belongs to the Sudanic family, because these people had split into many groups before British rule. That is why today question is being asked as to whether the word ‘Yoruba’ does not refer to a linguistic, rather than an ethnic or cultural group’.¹⁴⁴ Fadipe claims that Yoruba as the designation of an ethnic group could not have been in vogue for long prior to 1856, but the name

¹⁴¹ Major Denham, Capt Clapperton and the Late Doctor. Oudney, *Narratives of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823 and 1824; Extending Across the Great Desert to the Tenth Degree of Northern Latitude, and from Kouka in Bornu, to Sackatoo, the Capital of the Felatah Empire in two volumes*, (vol.11), London: Darf Publishers Limited (1985), 402.

¹⁴² R.S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, 6.

¹⁴³ The various groups of Ijebu in Ijebu province; the Oyo and Ilorin provinces; the Ife and Ijesa of Oyo Province, the Ondo, Idoko, Ikale, and Ilaje of Ondo Province, the Ekiti, the People of Otun, Ado, Ikole and Efon; the Yagba and the Igbomina of Ilorin and Kabba provinces. For details, see N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 29-30; A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa Their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Language, Etc*, The Netherlands: Anthropological Publications (1966), 1-3; J. S. Eades, *Changing Culture: The Yoruba Today*, 1-2

¹⁴⁴ N. A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 29; D. Forde, (ed.), *Ethnographic Survey of Africa: West Africa; The Yoruba –Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, 1

gained currency after the journey of Captain Clapperton from Badagry on the gulf of Guinea to Katunga (Old Oyo or Eyeo) in his *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa*, which was published in 1829; he referred to the whole territory he passed through on that journey as the country of the *Yarriba* and to the people themselves as the *Yarribans*.¹⁴⁵

The area traditionally inhabited by the Yoruba lies between the rivers Mono in the West and Niger in the East.¹⁴⁶ Adediran suggests that the current term in use, 'Yoruba' was derived externally as its various folk-etymologies indicate this. Adediran argues further that Yoruba language was the major indigenous language in the area, and most of the names by which the country and its inhabitants were known to outsiders derived essentially from this. Extant traditions in different parts of Yoruba land refer to the Yoruba and their language as '*Anago*', a term which has died out in many parts of Yorubaland, but still in use among the western neighbours of the Yoruba. A similar extant term is '*Olukumi*' which was documented by European slave traders in the 18th and 19th centuries. Another term is '*Aku*' coined for Yoruba captives in Sierra Leone; this was derived from a common Yoruba form of greeting¹⁴⁷

According to Abimbola, the homeland of Yoruba culture is West Africa, and the population of the Yoruba in West Africa is forty million which one of the largest

¹⁴⁵Capt H. Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*, London: John Muray (1829), 4

¹⁴⁶ For details see, A. Adediran, 'Yoruba Ethnic Groups or a Yoruba Ethnic Group? A Review of the Problem of Ethnic Identification' in *Africa, Sao Paulo*, No. 7, (1984), 57-60.

¹⁴⁷ Adediran further tells us that like the other two terms, *Anago* and *Olukumi* which were derived from the language. According to him, these examples show that language is the basic element of Yoruba civilization. For more see B, Adediran, 'Yoruba land up to the Emergence of the States' in D. Ogunremi, and D. Adediran, (eds.), *Culture and Society in Yoruba land*, Ibadan: Rex Charles (1998), 1.

groups in sub-Saharan Africa is. But their largest concentration is in the south-western parts of Nigeria where they number about thirty-three million. Yoruba people are one of the largest ethno-linguistic or ethnic groups in West Africa.¹⁴⁸ Lagos, which is also known as 'Eko', is the second most populous Yoruba city, and the most populous is the metropolitan city of Ibadan.¹⁴⁹ Gbadamosi, making his own submission asserts that the Yoruba have a number of sub-ethnic groups.¹⁵⁰

2.2 History of the Lagos State

According to Kunle Lawal the word 'Lagos' was derived from the Portuguese word, 'Lagos' which means 'lagoons'. But he disagreed with the assertion that, the word is an offshoot of '*Lagos de curamo*' which many Encyclopaedias assert. It is plausible that Lagos was so named because of its physical and geographical

¹⁴⁸For more on Yoruba, see, <http://seeingblack.com/Yoruba/2004> accessed 12/06/2009
<http://www.YorubacustomsandBeliefs.com>, accessed, 14/06/2009
http://Yorubaorganization.com/articles/ifa_eng.htm; accessed, 20/07/2009
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/60871/Benin>; accessed 14/06/2009;
<http://www.cultural-expressions.com/ifa/ifahistory.htm>; accessed, 13/07/2009
www.africanguide.com/culture/tribes/yoruba.htm; accessed 15/06/09
www.gateway-africa.com/tribe/yoruba_tribe.html accessed 14/06/2009.

¹⁴⁹ Kola Abimbola, *Yoruba Culture: A Philosophical Account*, Birmingham: Iroko Academic Publishers (2006), 35; see also, C.R.A. Niven, *A Short history of the Yoruba peoples*, New York: Longmans (1958), 1-3; M.A. Fabumi, *Ife; the Genesis of Yoruba Race; An Anthology of Historical Notes on Ife City*, Lagos: John West Publications (1985), 1-3.

¹⁵⁰ Gbadamosi goes further to tell us that each sub-ethnic group developed its own dialect, local culture and traditions, but in spite of all these local developments and variations, there is unity in Yoruba culture. The evidence to this assertion is that five main characteristics can be adduced to confirm this unity: the role of Ife as the cradle of Yoruba, common language, various dialects are mutually intelligible and standard and it gained orthography in the last century. 'Yoruba culture is basically urban, the political structure is hierarchical, and they have complex traditional beliefs and worship'. For more see T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 1-4; ; J.A. Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire: Indirect Rule and Change in Western Nigeria 1894-1934*, London: Longman (1979), 4-5; Patrick J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition: A Study of Clerical Piety*, 100-103.

features; it was named after a small coastal lagoon town in Portugal.¹⁵¹ Lead claims that:

The official discovery of Lagos, Nigeria according to my research can be ascribed to one of two Portuguese sailors - either Lancelot de Freitas... or Goncalves de Cintra. I am inclined to think that the odds are on Lancelot De Freita as after all he was a local 'Lagosian' in the year 1450. Whereas Goncalves de Cintra came from Cintra or Sintra (as his name suggests) and returned from his voyage down the Africa Coast in 1461.¹⁵²

Lead suggests that there was a steady progress between 1434 and 1462 with 'exploration along the African coast'. Lancelot de Freitas might have stopped to provision himself and 'eye' the approach towards the present Carter Bridge and Ebute Metta areas and nostalgically scratched the word 'LAGOS' (THE LAGOONS) in his log book'.¹⁵³

Another modern native name for Lagos is 'Eko', the name which is historically quite controversial between the two claimants of the original settlers of the Island; Yoruba and Benin sources have made use of different facts to consolidate their claims on the territory. The Edo-Benin version claims that they are the original settlers or autochthonous people of Lagos; this version claims that Lagos was a military camp (Eko) for Benin forces that used the place as a launching pad for military expeditions against areas to the north of Lagos under *Oba* (king) Orhogbua. The Benin forces encamped on Lagos as a result of their defeat. The *Oba* later left Lagos when he heard that his son was to be installed as *Oba* of Benin because of his overstay in Lagos. On getting to Benin, he sent his grandson, Eskipa to be the head

¹⁵¹ K. Lawal. 'Background to Urbanization: Lagos Society Before 1900'. In K. Lawal (ed.), *Urban Transition in Africa*, Ibadan: Educational Publishers (1994), 1-2.

¹⁵² *Nigerian Magazine*, No.39, (1953), 257-260.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 258.

of the war-camp (now established in Lagos) with the title *Oloriogun*; this was also succeeded by his son, Edo who used the title as *Eleko*.¹⁵⁴

The Lagos or Yoruba-Awori version admits the relevance of the Benin factor in its history, which they believe came out of conquest and not an easy settlement. The Yoruba version was derived from Losi's History of Lagos, which Lawal suggests as the official version of Lagos circles.¹⁵⁵ Losi points out that the earliest settlers of Lagos were the Yoruba who migrated from Ile-Ife under Ogunfunminire; a prince in the ruling house who led a migration to Isheri, a town situated twelve miles north of Lagos. He claims that it was from this initial settlement at Isheri on the Ogun River that a series of migrations took place to such places as Ota, Ado (Odo), Ojo, Ogudu and Agboyi. All are old Awori speaking towns, they also moved to Yaba, Ebute Metta, Iddo Island (formerly Ile-Olofin). It was from Ile Olofin that Aromire led a migration across the Lagoon to the present Lagos Island.¹⁵⁶

Undoubtedly, the two accounts are clear on the fact that the control of Lagos by the Benin was achieved by military conquest and the earliest settlers were the Yorubas-

¹⁵⁴ J.U. Egharevba, *A Short History of Benin*, Ibadan: IUP (1960), 2-4. Eleko, literally, it means the owner of Lagos

¹⁵⁵ K. Lawal, 'Background to Urbanization: Lagos Society before 1900', in K. Lawal (ed.), *Urban Transition in Africa*, 3.

¹⁵⁶ Losi claimed that this Ile Olofin attracted many peoples from different areas and the people were settling there and its vicinity. The Benin version came in when one wealthy woman by name Aina had a disagreement with the landowners in the area; unable to secure justice in Ile Olofin appealed to Oba of Benin for redress, who then attacked and conquered Lagos after a protracted struggle. Oba of Benin now stationed his commander Aseru (Iseru) in Lagos, who subsequently died. It was one Yoruba personality, Ashipa that led the Isheri party to take Aseru's body to Benin for traditional burial. In consequence of this action, Oba rewarded him by making Ashipa, the first Eleko of Eko or *Oloriogun*, i.e the head warrior or military commander of his troops in Lagos. For details, see J.B. Losi, *History of Lagos*, 2-3.

Aworis.¹⁵⁷ Dioka acknowledges the fact that there is a perpetual controversy surrounding the earlier settlers in Lagos.¹⁵⁸

In 1960, when Nigeria gained independence and had four regions; (North, West, Mid-West, East and Lagos colony, a federal territory), Lagos continued to be the capital of Nigeria with all the special advantages attached to its status.¹⁵⁹ In December, 1991 Lagos State ceased to be the Capital of Nigeria after 77-year tenure as the seat of power of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 4; A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm as -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa 'Ulamā' Bilād Yorubā*, 191-192.

¹⁵⁸Dioka conceded to the position that most of the scholars tend to identify with the submission of Losi that Lagos was *ab initio* occupied by the Yoruba–Aworis who migrated from Ile-Ife and stopped at Isheri where the floating dish that guided them sank, hence they exclaimed ‘Awori’ (meaning the calabash has sunk) which remains the name of the group up until now. For details, see L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, Lagos : First Academic Publishers (2001), 14-15; A.E.F. Dosumu, *Lagos: A Legacy of Honour (Dosumu (1861)-Babangida(1991))*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books (1992), 1-3; K. Lawal, ‘The Coastal Scene :The Yoruba of Lagos Society Before 1900’ in D. Ogunremi & B. Adediran, (eds.), *Culture and Society in Yoruba land*, Ibadan: Rex Charles (1998), 79-81; R.O. Ajetunmobi and O.A. Awofisayo, ‘Introduction and Early History and Development of Lagos State’ in R.O. Ajetunmobi & N.O. Junaid-Eko (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, Lagos: Centre for Lagos Studies (2006), 2-4; H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, Lagos: Academy Press (2004), 1-3 ; T.A. Folami, *History of Lagos, Nigeria: The Shaping of an African City*, New York: Exposition Press (1982), 4-5 ;A.A. Babatunde & B. Sandra, ‘Lagos Before 1603’ in A. Adefuye, A.Babatunde & J. Osuntokun (eds.), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, Lagos: Lantern Books (1987), 18-21; A. Adekunle, ‘Lagos From the Earliest Times to British Occupation’ in D.F. Asaju (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*, vol.2, Lagos: Lagos State University Press (2006), 39-41.

¹⁵⁹ In 1967, when Nigeria was broken up into twelve states, Lagos State came into existence as an amalgamation of the then Lagos colony and some parts of the Western region and was composed of five main divisions, namely; Lagos colony, Badagry, Epe, Ikeja and Ikorodu. In 1976, during Local Government reform, it was further divided into eight divisions, viz. Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, Mushin West, Mushin East, (later called Somolu), Ikeja, Ikorodu, Badagry and Epe. In 1979, again the administration of Jakande further sub-divided the state into twenty three local Governments, viz. Agege, Ajeromi/Ifelodun, Alimosho, Apapa, Badagry, Ebute-Metta/Yaba, Epe, Ibeju-Lekki, Eti-Osa, Ikeja, Ikorodu, Ikoyi, Irepodun, Itire/Ikate, Kosofe, Lagos Island, Mushin, Odi-Olowo, Ojo, Oshodi /Isolo, Somolu and Surulere. For more details, see S.G. Odewunmi, ‘Lagos State: Location, Extent and Constituents’ in D.F. Asaju (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*, 33; M.A.A. Abegunde, ‘Aspects of the Physical Environment of Lagos’ in A. Adefuye, A. Babatunde & J. Osuntokun (eds), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, 6-7.

¹⁶⁰ On the return of Military Government in December 1983, Local Governments were returned to eight. Also, in May 1989, another military administration increased the number to twelve. In September 1991, it was increased to fifteen Local governments and in October 1996, another five more Local Governments were added to the existing ones, making twenty Local Governments. The latest and controversial Local Governments were the ones created in May, 2002 by the Lagos State House of Assembly; an additional thirty seven Local Government councils were added to the existing twenty bringing it to a total of fifty seven Local Governments. For more, see B.O. Animashaun, ‘Evolution and Development of Local Government System in Lagos State 1899-2006; S, Ologunro, ‘Lagos Adiministrations: 1967-2005’ in D.F. Asaju (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*, 121.

Lagos State covers 0.4 per cent of Nigeria; it is a mere 3,577 square kilometres, about one-quarter is liquid surface: lagoons, creeks and coastal river estuaries. According to the 1991 provisional census figures, it had 5.68 million people,¹⁶¹ it is the most densely populated state in Nigeria. Lagos was also considered as the most populous conurbation in Nigeria with 7,937,932 inhabitants at the 2006 census.¹⁶² Lagos State is classified as the 6th largest mega city in the world. Its estimated population is 15 million people which grow at the rate of 5.33% per annum and it is expected to hit 25 million by the year 2015. It has 70% of the country's total Value Added Manufacturing; 65% of the country's Total Value Added Tax; 65% of Nigeria's total commercial activities; is the hub of National Aviation Activities; has the highest National Vehicular Density; over 60% of all Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) calls originate and terminate in Lagos and it accounts for nearly 60% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product and over 65% of National Investments.¹⁶³

Geographically, Lagos State is sandwiched by latitudes 6° 22'N and 42' N and straddles longitudes 2° 42' E to 4° 20'E. It is bounded in the North by Ogun State and in the East by Ondo State. It shares an International boundary of about 45 kilometres with the Republic of Benin and the vast, deep blue Atlantic Ocean constitutes the approximately 180 kilometres long Southern limit. The total land

¹⁶¹ New Nigeria: 'Nigeria Provisional Census Result', *New Nigerian*, 20th, March, 1992, 12-15.

¹⁶² <http://apps.atlantaga.gov/sister/lagos/Nigeria/lagos.html>; <http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/> accessed 15/10/2009.

¹⁶³ Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos State, (2004), *State of Lagos Mega City and other Nigerian Cities*, Lagos State Report, Alausa, Ikeja; see also, S.Wilbul & Associates, *Lagos Plan for the Metropolitan Area*. Commissioned project by Lagos State Government, Lagos; T. Odumosu, & L. Adedokun, 'Some Aspects of the Urban and Rural Areas of Lagos State' in O.O. Arowolo (ed.), *Some Aspects of the Living Conditions of the People of Lagos State*, Lagos: Lagos State University, Ojo, Faculty of Social-Sciences (1990), 287.

area is about 3,577 square kilometres, but creeks, lagoons and estuaries constitute nearly 800 square kilometres (22%).¹⁶⁴ Beneath the surface of Lagos State, is sedimentary rocks made up of alluvial deposits, thus there is perennial flooding because of its physical environment. It is dissected by lagoons, creeks and rivers and its climate is characterized by high temperature, high humidity and heavy rainfall. The State is the most urbanized in the country with about 81% living in the urban areas. Linguistically, Yoruba represent the majority 72%; Igbo 10%; Edo 3%; Hausa 2%; all other ethnic groups and non-Nigerians exist in various proportions of at least 2% each.¹⁶⁵

Lagos State is a society that is rich in varied culture with many pantheons of divinities. Their physical environment and their activities dictate their religious rites and rituals reflecting worship of water bodies, respect for gods and goddesses. Their culture also manifests migrant origin, they have traditional festivals: Boat Regatta, *Zangbeto*, *Adamuorisa (Eyo)*, *Agbo* masquerade, (*Ofanran* Festival), *Agemo*, *Kori*, *Eibi*, *Egungun*, *Agere (Jigbo Dance)*, *Igunuko* etc.¹⁶⁶ They also have a host of indigenous religions, divinities and ancestors, *Oshugbo* cults, *Awo opa*, *Oro* to mention but a few.¹⁶⁷ In all of these, they are similar to other Yoruba people.

The presence of Islām and Christianity is strongly felt in all the towns and villages in Lagos. In Epe and Ibeju-Lekki, for instance, Islām is the most pronounced

¹⁶⁴ O. Ojo & A.Omotayo, 'The physical Environment of Lagos State' in O. O. Arowolo (ed.), *Some Aspects of the Living Conditions of the People of Lagos State*, 7-24.

¹⁶⁵ S.G. Odewunmi, 'Lagos State: Location, Extent and Constituents' in D.F.Asaju, (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*, 14-15.

¹⁶⁶ A.A. Ajala, 'Cultural Manifestation of Lagos State' in D.F.Asaju, (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*, 77-81; Lagos State Ministry of information and Culture, *Focus on Lagos Island*, Lagos (1991); Lagos State Council for Arts and culture, *Our Cultural Heritage*, (1973).

¹⁶⁷ H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, 269-273; R. O. Ajetunmobi, 'Traditional Religion and Festivals' in R.O. Ajetunmobi & N.O. Junaid-Eko (eds). *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, 86-89.

religion; there is no town without a central mosque. There is a plethora of Muslim organizations in Lagos State as well in all the towns in Lagos, and there are also multitudes of Islamic and Arabic schools and Muslim scholars. There is a Pilgrim Welfare Board overseeing the affairs of Muslim as well as Christian pilgrims. Lagos State also has an inter-religious council overseeing and settling disputes between Muslims and Christians.

2.2.1 Islām in Lagos: its Growth and Development.

The exact date of Islām's entry into Yoruba land cannot be fixed with precision, according to many scholars.¹⁶⁸ Gbadamosi suggests that Islām came to Yoruba land unannounced because its religious worship was hitherto observed surreptitiously.¹⁶⁹ In his analysis, he argues that in the seventeenth century, mention was made of Muslims in Yoruba land and towards the close of the eighteenth century Islām had spread far and wide. He makes mention of one *Baba Kewu* who sent a delegation headed by *Aafaa Yigi*, a Muslim Cleric from Tapa country, to castigate *Alafin Ajiboyede* (1530-1610) for his excesses regarding the murder of his chiefs who came to console him on the death of his son.¹⁷⁰

Ryan took a different position, hinging on Ilorin's position that Islām reached Yoruba land through Mali during the zenith of the reign of Mansa Musa in the

¹⁶⁸ S.A. Balogun, 'History of Islam up to 1800' in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. Ibadan: Heineman (1980), 218; R.S. Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, 26; A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa 'Ulamā' Bilād Yorubā*, 45; A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām fī Nayjiriya wa Shaykh 'Uthmān bn Fūdi al-Fulānī*, 147. A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 109-114.

¹⁶⁹ T.G.O. Gbadamosi. *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 4-5; A.L. Adekilekun, *Muslims and Islamic Law in Southern Nigeria (1899-1999)*, Ede: Moyanjuola Publishers (2001), 9.

¹⁷⁰ Gbadamosi claims that Islām was introduced to Oyo Ile by *Afaa Yigi* during the reign of *Alafin Ajagbo*, in other words, Islām would have been there since the seventeenth century.

fourteenth century, hence the name ‘*Imale*’ was taken after Mali. Ryan opines that the anthropologist, Peter Morton-Williams hypothesises that the earliest Yoruba’s contact with Islām was through the Wangarawa clerics from Mali, who were based in Bussa, and this was during the reign of Ali Yaji (750-87/1349-85). It was this time that the Muslims first entered Yoruba land. He asserts further that the aforementioned Baba Yigi episode actually took place in the sixteenth century.¹⁷¹ By the eighteenth century Islām had been widely proclaimed in Yoruba land as far as Porto Novo and Dahomey and many mosques were being constructed in different parts of Yoruba country; Oyo-Ile 1550; Ketu, 1760; Ibadan, 1827, Iseyin 1770; Lagos, 1775 etc. The *Jihād* of Uthman Dan Fodio further accelerated the wide spread of Islām in Yoruba land.¹⁷² Islām entered Yoruba land peacefully through traders, scholars, traditional rulers and chiefs, preachers, medicine, the ‘Africanness’ of the religion; polygamy, use of charms and amulets and Muslim festivals.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Patrick J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 104-106. He also suggested an Arab salt trader from North Africa in old Oyo who brought Islam in the 17th century and Dyula slave traders in the 18th century; see also, L. Brenner, ‘Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanami and Religion and Politics in Bornu’ in J. R. Willis, *Studies in West African Islamic History; The Cultivators of Islam*, (vol.1), London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd (1979), 15; N. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period*, London: Oxford University Press (1968), 15. Levtzion opines that Islām came to the North in the second half of the 14th century by Wangara Muslim traders of Mande origin.

¹⁷² M.O. Opeloye, ‘Evolution of Religious Culture among the Yoruba’ in D. Ogunremi & B. Adediran, (eds.), *Culture and Society in Yoruba land*, 142-143.

¹⁷³ See also, M.O. Opeloye, ‘Evolution of Religious Culture among the Yoruba’ in D. Ogunremi & B. Adediran, (eds.), *Culture and Society in Yoruba land*, 143; J.S. Trimingham, *The Influence of Islām upon Africa*, London: Longman (1968), 34-38; P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islām: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*, 225-227; J.S. Trimingham, *Islām in Africa*, 126-149; J.Hunwick, *West Africa, Islām, and the Arab World: Studies in Honour of Basil Davidson*, Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers (2000), 23; N. Levtzion, ‘Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa: An Introductory Essay’ in N. Levtzion and H.J. Fisher (eds.), *Rural and Urban Islām in West Africa*, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers (1987), 1-3. Levtzion writes that for five centuries, Islām in West Africa was exclusively associated with trade and Muslim clerics, who settled in commercial communities. The missionaries of Islām were Muslim clerics, they taught in schools, offered religious services and rendered magico-religious services to non-Muslim chiefs. See also, N. Levtzion, ‘Merchants Versus Scholars and Clerics in West Africa: Differential and Complementary Roles’ in N. Levtzion and H.J. Fisher (eds.), *Rural and Urban Islām in West Africa*, 21

This background becomes necessary because Islām first took firm root in the Northern part of Nigeria before coming down to the South of which Lagos is part, so, by the eighteenth century, Islām had spread to Oyo, Igboho, Kisi, Shaki, Iseyin down to Badagry and Lagos.

The actual date of Islām's entrance into Lagos like other Yoruba states cannot be fixed with precision according to many scholars.¹⁷⁴ Islām in Lagos was first practised clandestinely. There was a mention of some members of the court of *Oba* Adele Ajosun (1775-1780, and 1832-1834) the son of *Oba* Ologun Kutere, (1749-1775) who were practising the religion and worshipping singly and in secrecy. Gbadamosi asserts that he permitted the practice of Islām at the expense of his throne in 1780,¹⁷⁵ and was thus expelled from the palace because of his liberal religious policy.¹⁷⁶ *Oba* Oshinlokun (1780-1819) also adopted the policy of his predecessor and went further to allow Muslims to worship openly; henceforth, Muslims could pray congregationally both daily and *Jum'ah* (Friday) prayer and equally call the *Adhān* (call to prayer).¹⁷⁷ Gbadamosi mentions that Islām was established in Badagry in 1830 and said Lander was watching how glamorously

¹⁷⁴ J. Osuntokun, 'Introduction of Christianity and Islam in Lagos State', in Adefuye et al. (eds.), *History of the People of Lagos State*, 126-128; H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos* 185-187; L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 89-92; A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa 'Ulamā' Bilād Yorubā*, 194-196; A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 114-116; T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba*, 4-5; I.L. Akintola, 'A General Introduction to Islam in Lagos State' in D.F. Asaju (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*, 158; J.B. Losi, *History of Lagos*, 21-23; A.I. Animasaun, *The History of Muslim Community of Lagos*, Lagos (n.d), 2-3; H.A.B. Fasinro, *Ahmadiyya (Achievements and Conflicts) As I See It*, 1-2; Patrick, J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 118-119.

¹⁷⁵ T.G.O Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba*, 5. Gbadamosi and Fasinro go further to tell us that Islām was firmly established in his reign when he came back in 1832-1834. Fasinro writes that it was in 1834-1836 that he was recalled and some historians disagreed with this. They claim that he died in 1780; see for instance, T.A. Folami, *History of Lagos, Nigeria: The Shaping of an African City*, 87-86

¹⁷⁶ H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspective of Lagos*, 185.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 186.

Muslims were celebrating the ‘*Īd-al-Fiṭr*.¹⁷⁸ Another white man called Captain John Adams also saw how Islām was being practised at Ardra, Badagry in the last two decades of eighteenth century.¹⁷⁹ Islām was evidently entrenched in Lagos before 1840.

Fasinro asserts that Islām came to Lagos through two sources; the first is from Morocco to Mali to Sierra Leone to the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and then to Lagos, while the other source is through the Northern part of Nigeria; Borno, Sokoto, Kano, Ilorin, Iwo, Ibadan then Lagos. Hence, the first mosque that was built in Lagos was in 1775 at Obanikoro Street, Isale Eko. Hitherto, no Friday (*Jum‘ah*) prayer was held in Lagos because of the belief that no two Friday sermons should be held in a city. The first Friday (*Jum‘ah*) prayer held in Lagos in which Muslims came from all the *Ratibi* mosques was in 1841, led by one *Alfa* Salu, who was the first Chief *Imām* of Lagos at the site where Anima Shaun mosque is today at Shitta street junction by Animasahun Lane, off Balogun Street, in Lagos.¹⁸⁰

Around 1840, the Muslims were however few and they had hitherto twice suffered expulsion from Lagos. They had now gained favour with another prince, Kosoko, who it is believed in some quarters, influenced their return, their position hitherto was precarious. This is due to the fact that many of the Muslims then were foreigners of lowly state, the ‘*Gambaris*’ (the Hausa Muslims) and the religion was

¹⁷⁸ Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, London: (NP) (1832).

¹⁷⁹ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 4-5.

¹⁸⁰ H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspective of Lagos*, 3.

practised secretly in their homes.¹⁸¹ With the support of Kosoko, a community was formed praying under the leadership of Salu, a Hausa *Mallam* in Kosoko's retinue.

Another significant boost to the Muslim population and practices, were the scores of Muslims around 1841 that migrated from across the sea, including the return of liberated slaves. The Muslims in Sierra Leone were known as *Aku*, including those who had been Muslims before their capture and export as slaves, while some were converted while they were abroad; they were anxious to return home, from their base in two centres in Sierra Leone, Fourah Bey and Foulah Town. A number of them paid their fare back home, the prominent among them were Shitta and Savage, organising their own group for return. Muhammad Savage was the Muslim *Aku*, headman at Fourah Bay, bought his own ships, and at least sailed fifty of his own people back home in a group.¹⁸² There were number of these Muslims in Badagry, but the most prominent of these groups was the one headed by Salu Shitta.¹⁸³ It was reported that he gathered his family with their one-year-old son, Muhammad Shitta, left Waterloo in 1831 for Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone, and there became the *Imām* of the Muslim community of the town for some years because it was believed that he was one the most knowledgeable Muslims in Sierra Leone and pious enough to be in that post.¹⁸⁴ In 1844, when he and his son Muhammad Shitta left Sierra Leone and joined the *Aku* Muslims with his other family members; he was the head of about fifty *Aku* followers and they came down to Badagry,¹⁸⁵ and lived here for

¹⁸¹ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 31; *Gambari*, these are the Hausa people, the Yoruba call them 'Gambari'; Interview with Oluwa, 23/08/09.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁸³ This Salu Shitta was the father of Muhammad Shitta Bey, who built the famous mosque in Lagos in 1894; see also, J.B. Losi, *History of Lagos*, 30-35.

¹⁸⁴ C. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra-Leone*, London: Oxford (1879), 187 & 215.

¹⁸⁵ M. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of 19th Century Lagos Life*, London: Macmillan (1997), 88; J.F.A. Ajayi, 'Samuel Crowther of Oyo' in: P.D. Curtin (ed.), *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of Slave Trade*, Madison, London: University of Wisconsin Press (1967),

some time, interacting freely with other Muslims.¹⁸⁶ Avoseh suggests that Islām was introduced into Badagry around 1821 by some Oyo Muslim immigrants led by one Saibu Ogboalejo.¹⁸⁷

Opeloye and Akintola go on to tell us some of the prominent Muslims in Badagry then before 1840 which included Mogaji Akinola, Buraimoh, Atari, Sule Kayode, Eleshin Sulu, Alfa Ashiru and Mallam Abdullah of Hausa descent. A number of *Aku* Muslims had similarly settled in Badagry prior to 1844 but they could no longer remember vividly their original homelands. These *Aku* returnees mixed freely with the early group of Islamic faithful, they thus emboldened the indigenous Muslims and increased their confidence in the practice of Islam.¹⁸⁸

Lagos was the final destination of these returning Muslim emigrants; here we have two distinct groups; the Sierra Leonean and the Brazilian, the former group known as the group of Fourah Bay or Saro Muslims.¹⁸⁹ These groups of Muslims settled down in the Olowogbowo and Isale Eko area and were more than the latter group in number. Among these Saro group were members of such prominent families as Abdallah Cole, Amodu Carew, Muhammad Savage, Umar, Williams and Tinubu. They erected their first big mosque at Olowogbowo in 1861; initially called *Jami'u*

5-9; J. Peterson, *Province of Freedom: A History of Sierra-Leone 1878-1870*, Evanston, (NP) (1969), 164; E.W. Fashole-Luke, 'Christianity and Islam in Freetown' *The Sierra-Leone Bulletin of Religion* IX, 1, (1967), 3-5; E.W. Fashole-Luke, 'Religion in Freetown' in C. Fyfe and E. Jones (eds.), *Freetown: A Symposium*, Freetown: Sierra-Leone, University Press (1969), 130-133

¹⁸⁶ S. Oyeweso, *Eminent Yoruba Muslims of the 19th and early 20th Centuries*, Ibadan: Rex Charles (1999), 2.

¹⁸⁷ T.O. Avoseh, *Iwe Itan Esin Imale ni Ilu Agbadarigi*, Apapa: Adeolu Press (1960), 36.

¹⁸⁸ M.O. Opeloye & I.L. Akintola, 'The Growth and Influence of Islam on Badagry' in G.O. Ogunremi et al. (eds.), *Badagry: A Study in the History and Culture of an Ancient City*, Ibadan: Rex Charles (1994), 177.

¹⁸⁹ *Saro* is a corrupt Yoruba word for Sierra or a variant of Sierra Leone

al-Mubaraq (sic) (the Blessed Mosque) this later became popularly known as ‘the Horobay Mosque.’¹⁹⁰

The latter group known as the Brazilian group were better known as Aguda.¹⁹¹ This group came to Lagos a little later than the Sierra Leoneans. They were first reported to have come in 1840, and their number rose steadily but not equal to the Saro group. Muslim families notable among them were; Pedro, Martin, Da Silva, Tiamiyu, Gomez, Yahya Tokunbo, Agosto and Salvador. They settled mainly at Bamgbose Street in Lagos where they built their own mosques such as Olosun Mosque, Alagbayun Mosque, Tairu Eko Mosque and Brazilian Salvador Mosque.¹⁹² Some of them after settling down in Lagos later remembered their former towns inland and after persistent enquires, succeeded in moving over to their towns. During the period in question, they increased Muslim numbers and mosques were enlarged. Thus, more mosques sprang up in Lagos; there was co-operation among them and new skills were learnt from them. They also promoted western culture among the Muslims. Promotion of western education boosted the confidence of the nascent Muslim community. They turned Lagos into a ‘local’ community, while simultaneously preserving and strengthening its cosmopolitan image.

Apparently, when Kosoko became the king in 1845-1851, he bolstered the Muslim community’s firm hold in Lagos, and with the mixture of overseas Muslims, the

¹⁹⁰ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 180-1908*, 28. The correct form is *Mubarak*

¹⁹¹ *Aguda*, is the Yoruba word for the Brazillians, it also means the ‘Catholics’ , the religion of many of the Brazilian repatriates.

¹⁹² T.G.O. Gbadamosi, ‘Patterns and Developments in Lagos Religious History’ in A.B. Aderibigbe (ed.), *Lagos: The Development of an African City*, Lagos: Longman (1975), 176-178.

Muslims grew stronger still.¹⁹³ Calamity struck when in 1850, the British helped Akintoye against Kosoko and Kosoko was exiled from Lagos to Epe.¹⁹⁴ Many Muslims, including the Chief *Imām* Salu and other eminent leaders, followed him but the established position had been so strong that the defection did not obliterate Islām from Lagos. Another *Mallam*; *Mallam* Nafiu Gana was appointed to lead the prayers and act as the *Imām* for the community,¹⁹⁵ and at around 1860-1861 the Muslims were between 700 and 800, out of a population of 30,000. The survival of the Lagos Muslim community in the period 1840-1862 owed much to the influence of these Muslim immigrants.¹⁹⁶

Moreover, when Richard Burton visited Lagos in 1860, he observed that, ‘...a few Muslims have already risen to political importance’. He also confirmed the presence in Lagos of North African and Hausa *Mallam* and their followers, ‘...some of whom had learnt to speak Portuguese in Brazil’.¹⁹⁷ By 1891 the population of Muslims in Lagos had grown phenomenally to almost 14,295, ‘representing almost 44 per cent of the entire African population of 32,508 of the town and harbour of Lagos’.¹⁹⁸ Mosques were springing up; the Central mosque was built in 1864 at Victoria Street. Hitherto it was Animasahun Mosque at Shitta Street that was serving the purpose. The growth of Islām was assumed to be so rapid and phenomenal that the editor of The Lagos Times in 1881 gave vivid expression to its positioning in Yoruba land, saying ‘Yoruba Mohammedanism walks, trots and

¹⁹³ Ibid., 31.

¹⁹⁴ Some historians believe that he fled to Epe, when he was about to be overpowered by the Akintoye Group, but this is not our concern here.

¹⁹⁵ A.I. Animasahun, *The History of the Muslim Community of Lagos*, 27.

¹⁹⁶ P. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 170.

¹⁹⁷ R.F. Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa from Liverpool to Fernando Po*, vol. 2, London: (1866) 225, cited in P. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 170.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 22.

gallops about with the vigour, nobleness and energy of independent manhood'.¹⁹⁹ Another newspaper comments succinctly, '...silently but eloquently, Mohammedanism is declaring itself a power among us'.²⁰⁰ Islām reached a landmark or watershed in Yoruba land when the famous Shitta–Bey Mosque was formally opened in July, 1894.

Meanwhile, during this process of growth and development, there were bound to be hiccups and initial problems. Thus in August, 1875, a distinguished Hausa *Mallam*, Sulaiman arrived in Lagos and, holding open air preaching (public lecture), insisted that the Qur'ān is all-adequate, 'All sufficiency of the Holy Qur'an' against the use of *Hadīth* and commentaries, and this was new to Muslims in Lagos. This doctrine led to the first conflict within the Muslim Community in Lagos, and split the community permanently into two groups; the Qur'ānic group (*Alalukurani*) (under his leadership, this group is known as Qur'ānic Muslims of Lagos, they are also known as 'Onishakiti'; they broke away from *Jamā'at* party in 1877 to found a separate Central Mosque at Aroloya Street) and the *Jamā'at* Party, commentaries using *Jalālain* was under the Chief *Imām* of Lagos.²⁰¹

Meanwhile, the first Lagos Central mosque was built of mud and thatched roof in 1864, it was later rebuilt with burnt bricks and iron sheet roofing in 1876. Eventually, a new Central Mosque was founded in 1908 and completed in 1913 in

¹⁹⁹ *The Lagos Times*, 14th September, 1881.

²⁰⁰ *The Lagos Observer*, 3rd and 24th September, 1887.

²⁰¹ H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, 4; T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 65; H.O. Denmole, 'The Crisis of the Lagos Muslim Community 1915-1947' in A.A Adefuye, et al. (eds.), *History of the People of Lagos*, 278-283. Mallam Sulaymen seems to belong to *Quraniyyūn* (The Quran Party). Qur'an is sufficient to explain Islam and we should disregard the other sources of Islam, for instance, Hadith. This position, according to Islamic beliefs is against the Qur'an itself.

order to accommodate more people, during the tenure of *Imām* Ibrahim. So, from 1881 up until now, the Chief ‘*Imāmship*’ of Lagos Central Mosque was confined to two ruling Houses; the Nola Ruling House and the Ibrahim Ruling House. All other Central Mosques in Lagos are breakaways from Lagos Central Mosque of Nnamdi Azikwe Street, Lagos.²⁰²

Another spectacular event that was germane to the process of growth and development of Islām in Lagos State was the conflict that broke out between the Jama‘at party of Central Mosque and *Aafaa* Kasunmu Ekemode. *Aafaa* Kasunmu Ekemode was acting for *Alhāji* Issa as *Aafaa Tafsīr* (*Mufassīr*: Lit, commentator of the Qur’ān) for the Muslims, but he (*Aafaa* Kasunmu Ekemode) refused to vacate this post of *Aafaa Tafsīr* when the substantive holder *Alhāji* Issa came back from the Holy pilgrimage in Makkah, in 1915 after about three years absence. The case had to be settled in court, and Ekemode was asked to abdicate the post.²⁰³ Another event during this process of growth was the conflict that broke out in 1915 on the issue of water rate levied by the colonial administration. The chief *Imām*, Ibrahim and some leading members supported the introduction, while a considerable majority opposed it, especially the *Jamā‘at* party led by Adamu Animasahun. Hitherto some members of the mosque were not happy with the way in which Chief *Imām* handled the mosque, some of them believed that he was too strict on religious matters; this was promptly settled by the administrator, Colonel, H.C. Moorehouse, out of court.²⁰⁴

²⁰² H.O. Denmole, ‘The Crisis of the Lagos Muslim Community 1915-1947’ in A.A. Adefuye et al. (eds.), *History of the People of Lagos*, 280.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 279.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 281 Danmole writes further that this conflict was also aggravated by ethnic sentiments, *Imām* being from the north.

Furthermore, another bone of contention was the constitution regulating the affairs of the Mosque in 1918 which was prepared by the *Jamā'at* party and later presented to the Chief *Imām* for his assent. *Imām* Ibrahim refused to sign it, seeing it as unislamic, because the *Imām* believes that no Muslim country under Qur'ānic laws (*Sharī'ah*) had anything like a written constitution, so is an innovation and he would not set a precedent.²⁰⁵ As a result of this, an overwhelming majority refused to pray behind him. In 1922, the crisis came to a head in the mosque, where the two parties had prepared for physical confrontation in the mosque. Many people were physically assaulted; the imbroglio was so great that the fire brigade was called in to disperse the mob of worshippers. The mosque was later counter locked by the two parties in the same year and sealed up; none of the two parties could pray there.

However, at about the end of 1922, negotiations for settlement began in earnest and by March, 1923 under the auspices of Lieutenant Governor H.C, Moorehouse, the dispute was resolved and the *Imām* finally agreed to sign the Constitution; the *Jamā'at* went back to praying behind him.²⁰⁶ A year after, in 1923, the Chief *Imām* died and the problem of succession ensued. His natural deputy Tijani was not allowed to succeed him by the *Jamā'at* party. Ligali, their member, was preferred and they went to court and won. The differences between the two parties did not subside, as one of their leaders of (Chief *Imām* faction) built another Mosque some few metres away from the Central mosque and the *Lemomu* party went there and this gave the *Jamā'at* party the opportunity to dominate the Central mosque and affairs of the Muslim community. They later passed and adopted their constitution

²⁰⁵ The Imam viewed it as *Bidah* (innovation). As long as any law does not run contrary to the spirit of Islam. Islam does not explicitly specify the ways of governing.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 285.

they had been championing since 1918.²⁰⁷ During these protracted negotiations, *Oba* Esugbayi Eleko played some role in resolving the lingering crisis between the two conflicting parties, by aligning himself with the *Jamā'at* party and giving recognition to some title holders in the Mosque. Later, the suggestions put forward by the leader of the supporters of *Oba* Esugbayi, called Egerton Shyngle, were adopted by the government to settle the protracted crisis.²⁰⁸

There was also a crisis between the Ahmadiyyah movement and other Lagos Muslims in 1922 which led to arrest and conviction of some Muslim members, because hitherto Ahmadiyyah was highly despised among many Muslims in Lagos.²⁰⁹ The final peaceful of resolving the crisis started in 1929, when the colonial Administrator of Lagos, Mr. G. H. Findlay, convened a meeting with all the parties involved in the crisis, telling them of the futility of their conflict and that they should resolve their differences; at this meeting all of them agreed to live peacefully.²¹⁰ The Muslims themselves took steps to settle the protracted rifts. In 1937, Sanni Adewale from the *Lemomu* party was elected as the President of all Muslim societies in Lagos. This bridged the gulf between the *Lemomu* party²¹¹ and the *Jama'at* party, and every available opportunity was used to appeal to the Muslims to resolve their differences. For instance, in the opening of the Ummul-

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 286.

²⁰⁸ H. Macaulay, *Justitia Fiat: The moral obligations of the British Government to the House of King Docemo in Lagos*. West Africa, pamphlet No. 113.921.

²⁰⁹ Ahmadiyyah Movement was brought to Nigeria around 1916 and was subsequently split in 1940. The crisis in Ahmadiyyah arose as a result of some of the members of this movement breaking away from the movement as a result of the Ahmadiyyah's claim to prophethood. It should be noted that some of the beliefs of this movement contradict some of the fundamental beliefs of Islam. For instance, the claim that Ghulam Mizra Ahmad as the last messenger of Allah, a separate religious community, not praying in any other mosques aside from their own mosques or their *Imāms*, not marrying any Muslim except from their own movement etc. For more, see H.A.B. Fasinro, *Ahmadiyya (Achievements and Conflicts) as I see it*, 16-18, A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 351-353

²¹⁰ H.O. Danmole, 'The Crisis of the Lagos Muslim Community', 1915-1947, in A. Adefuye et al. (eds.), *History of the People of Lagos*, 289.

²¹¹ The correct word is *Imām*. Yoruba call it *Lemomu*

Khayr Mosque, April, 1940 in Lagos, by the Lagos Acting Administrator Mr. E. Dodds: a peace meeting was later held by the two parties in May 1940. So, in June 1940, they held a special prayer, led by one *Imām* which was impossible since 1925; although after the prayer they continued praying separately, but they used the Central mosque to discuss issues of common interest to all Muslims.

Consequently, at the end of 1940, the stage had been set for the ending of the lingering crisis which had bedevilled the Muslim Community in Lagos since 1915. Moreover, the death of Chief *Imām* Ligali in 1947 and the subsequent selection of Tijani Ibrahim, son of the late Chief *Imām* Ibrahim as the Chief *Imām* of the Central Mosque finally put to rest the protracted crisis, and the two compromised on their previous differences. So, from 1947 up until today, both parties have fused into what is now called *Jamā'atul Muslimeen* Council.²¹²

Another event that is apropos to the history of the growth and development of Islām in Lagos State was the formal opening of a 'magnificent' mosque built by a Muslim philanthropist, the renowned Muhammad Shitta Bey on 4th July, 1894. The occasion drew high calibre government officials and representatives of Muslim communities and societies throughout Yoruba land.²¹³ The colonial Governor, Sir G.T. Carter, was present and the special representative of the Sultan of Turkey, Abdallah Quillam; he was the president of the Liverpool Muslim Association. It was opened by this special envoy and at the behest of the Sultan of Turkey, Sultan Abd-al-Hamid (1876-1909), conferred on Shitta, 'the Muslim benefactor and stalwart, the honorary decoration of the order of the Mejidite of the third class with the title of

²¹² L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 95-98.

²¹³ *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 7th July, 1894.

‘Bey’ of the Ottoman Empire’.²¹⁴ It was a debut of international recognition. The mosque was at the time described as ‘the finest specimen of ecclesiastical architecture in West Africa’ while events attending its consecration were also adjudged ‘the noblest achievement with which the Negro of West Africa will mark the closing decade of the nineteenth century’²¹⁵. The occasion was also used for the propagation of Islām and the course of Western education and in forging a good and friendly relationship between the Muslim community and the British colonial government.²¹⁶

In July of the same year, the Muslims in the State petitioned the Governor demanding that the Muslims should be permitted to govern by their own law (*Sharī‘ah*).²¹⁷ Although, the request was turned down, but it demonstrated to some extent the strength of Islāmic consciousness and Muslim solidarity and growth.²¹⁸ But the movement was successful in Epe.²¹⁹ The Lagos Muslim Community played a significant role in the Ilorin crisis.²²⁰

²¹⁴ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba, 1841-1908*, 66; Gbadamosi writes that in Turkey, this is the highest distinction that could be bestowed on a civilian and in Lagos the title has become hereditary in the family of Shitta Bey up until the present time. The occasion was also adjudged as a landmark in the history of Islām in Lagos and Yoruba land, giving Islām official recognition and confirming its worth.

²¹⁵ M. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of 19th Century Lagos Life*, 86.

²¹⁶ For more, see S. Oyeweso, *Eminent Yoruba Muslims*, 4-6.

²¹⁷ *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 21st, July, published the petition.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

²¹⁹ *Epe Reorganisation Report 1934*; See also, H. Childs & E.J. Gibbons, *Report on the Administrative Re-organisation of the Epe District Native Treasury Area*, in Ijebu-Ode Provincial Office (N.D); T.O. Avoseh, *A Short History of Epe*, Lagos: Adeolu Press (1960), 24.

²²⁰ The Lagos Muslim Community in 1895 through 1896 were also fully involved in the reconciliatory and mediatory effort of the 1894 boundary brouhaha, and Ilorin hatred for the white people and their belligerent posture towards other Yoruba countries and they pleaded on behalf of Ilorin on the trade embargo placed on it by the Government. This crisis had begun in 1893 and finally crystallised in Ilorin defeat in 1897. The Lagos Muslim Community played a significant role. For more see T.G.O Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 180-182.

Another event that was germane to the growth and development of Islām in Lagos was in March 1895, when Muslims organised at various centres in Lagos and held public Tea parties after ‘*Eīd al-Fiṭr*’ festival symbolising western habit and taste, thus the debut of percolating into the Muslim community ‘western’ ideas and culture.²²¹ It led to the formation of Islāmic societies in Lagos, starting with the Killa Society, (*Egbe Killa*) formed in Lagos around 1895, and it later coalesced in the formation of the Nigerian Ahmadiyya Movement in 1911 and the Young *Anṣār Ud-Deen* in 1920. Prior to this time, the Moslem Literary Society and Juvenile Moslem Society were formed by young Muslims in Lagos, with the aim of improving the lot of Muslim men and women as compared to their Christian counterparts at that time, and most importantly to bridge the gap of western or secular education between the Muslims and Christians.²²² It was these two societies that came together to form the Ahmadiyyah Movement.

During the era of Christian- sponsored western education, the Muslims in Lagos played a prominent role. Initially there was a zeal, but later when the Muslims realized its potential danger, they started displaying apathy and opposition to western education, until when in 1867, the Government showed concern about educational development making available certain sums of money for education of liberated African slaves. Another factor that accelerated their agitation was in 1889, when a Committee of the Board of Education set up to look into poor attendance

²²¹ Ibid. 104.

²²²H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, 9-10; Fasinro mentioned that Ahmadiyyah was formed in 1916 and Young *Anṣār -Ud-Deen* in 1926.

found out that Muslims' boycott of western-cum- mission schools was the most significant factor.²²³

The Governor met with the Muslims and also gave Christian schools fifty pounds to include Arabic in their curriculum with a view to making their schools more attractive and beneficial to the Muslims.²²⁴ The Muslims were also urged to include in their Qur'ānic schools' curriculum the teaching in English of the 3 Rs, the basis of western education. It was Sir C.A Moloney, who first implemented the policy, but it was almost impracticable to carry out. The next Governor, Sir G.T. Carter, also continued along the path of his predecessor. On meeting the Muslims, he impressed it upon them the importance of western education but his advice was taken with scepticism. Later, the Governor realized that the core of Muslim opposition was religious, so, he modified government policy to be 'Muslim schools must be established and manned by Muslim teachers', and also to conform to the 1887 Education Ordinance.²²⁵

During this period, many important personalities came to Lagos to appeal to the Muslims to embrace western education. *Al -ḥājj* Harun al-Rashid from Sierra Leone came to Lagos on 20th of April 1894. He was an Arabic tutor at Fourah Bay College, and he pleaded with Lagos Muslims to adopt western education.²²⁶ The Sultan of Turkey was contacted by Lagos Muslims and in July 1894, he addressed them in a letter urging them to provide western learning for the rising Muslim

²²³ A.O.K. Noah, 'The Growth and Development of Education in Lagos State' in D. F. Asaju (ed.), *General Studies; Book of Readings*, vol. 2, 132-133.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 133; A.B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan: NPS Educational Publishers (1974), 93-95. One of the terms of the ordinance was that children should be allowed to practise the religion of their parents.

²²⁶ *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 5th May, 1894.

generation.²²⁷ This pleading was bolstered by Mr Abdallah Quillam, who was a special envoy of Abd al-Hamid II, the Sultan of Turkey, a professional Lawyer and a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Judicature, Liverpool.²²⁸ At the famous opening of Shitta Bey Mosque and in private discussion, he urged the Muslims to embrace western education.²²⁹

With all these internal agitations and ferment, the Muslims were yielding to pressure that western education is not a necessarily concomitant of Christianity but a desirable entity which did not have to involve Christianisation.²³⁰ When Dr E.W. Blyden was appointed as Agent of Native Affairs by Governor Carter in 1895, his major assignment was Muslim community and education. He was more fitted for this job because he had done it for four years in Sierra Leone and had sympathy for Islām.²³¹ He succeeded after several meetings and consultations with the Muslims to place one of the 'best' Muslim schools in Lagos under some government control; the one at Bankole Street. The three Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) and English were introduced. It was added that the Government would pay the teachers' salaries and concessions were given to Muslims' susceptibilities and sensibilities.²³² The first headmaster was Idris Animasahun, who volunteered to work for one year without pay, and was assisted by two teachers recruited from Sierra Leone on a salary of £2.10s. The school was officially opened on the 15th June 1896 as the

²²⁷ *Colonial Report, Annual* 1894.

²²⁸ *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 3rd October, 1891.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 23rd February, 1895.

²³⁰ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 168.

²³¹ A.B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, 96-97; A.O.K. Noah, 'The Growth and Development of Education in Lagos State' in D.F. Asaju, (ed.), *General Studies; Book of Readings*, 132.

²³² *Ibid.*, 169.

Government Muslim School with forty children and forty six young men.²³³ Due prominence was given to Arabic and Islāmic Studies.

Moreover, Muslims in Epe also agitated for this ilk of school and wrote a letter to the then Acting Governor, Captain G.C. Denton in June 1898. After discussion with the Inspector of Schools, Mr Henry Carr, he welcomed the idea and the school was built and was officially opened on 16th June 1898.²³⁴ *Al- ḥājj* Harun al-Rashid from Sierra Leone was the first headmaster. The same school was also opened to Muslims in Badagry in 1899.²³⁵ Blyden was so fascinated by the performances of the schools that he recommended a higher institution for the training of the Muslim youths, but this was rejected. Other Yoruba towns also desired this type of school but it was turned down based on logistic reasons.²³⁶ In 1926 they ceased to be government schools.²³⁷ They were later taken over by *Anṣār-ud-Deen*. Islām is considered as a religion that has contributed significantly in shaping the history of modern Lagos in all its ramifications.

The state of Islām in Lagos today has grown phenomenally from strength to strength, owing to many important factors such as education and religious rivalry. The presence of Islam is felt in all parts of Lagos State; including all the towns and villages. There is no town without a Central mosque. The Central Mosques in Lagos are too numerous to mention. Muslims in Lagos State in their multitude throng to ‘*Īd* (praying ground) on the two Muslim festivals with pomp and pageantry. There

²³³ Ibid., 177.

²³⁴ Ibid., 134.

²³⁵ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 172.

²³⁶ Ibid., 173.

²³⁷ T.G.O Gbadamosi, ‘The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in Nigeria’ *Journal of History Society of Nigeria*, iv, 1, Dec, (1967), 12.

are numerous *Al -ḥājj* and *Al -ḥājjah* (male and female pilgrims) among them. Some of these Yoruba Muslims consider the pilgrimage as a social fulfilment and conferment of honour as *Alḥāj* and *Alḥājah*, while some use it to make brisk business or to acquire ‘golden teeth’, *ḥājj* caps known as *sabaka*.²³⁸ Many Muslims in Lagos State have been influenced by Islām socially, culturally, morally, economically and politically.

Another aspect of development of Islām in Lagos today, is the large number of Muslim organisations. These associations are so numerous that it is very difficult to know their exact figure. The most popular among them are *Anṣār ud-Deen*, *Nawaru-Deen*, Muslim Elites, *Naṣrullah al-Fātiḥ* Association (NASFAT), *Fātiḥ al-Qarīb*, Muslim Student Society (MSS), The Muslim Congress (TMS), *‘Ibādu-llah-aṢ-sāliḥīn*, *Al-Mutaqqūn*, National Council of Muslim Youths (NACOMYO), Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) to mention but a few. Every Sunday,²³⁹ several Muslims dress in Muslim attire, attending one Islamic programme or another with their family in Lagos. These associations hold many open air *Da‘wah*.²⁴⁰ This is a positive development in the growth of Islām in Lagos State. Through this process, many Muslims are more enlightened about their role and responsibilities in Islām and many non-Muslims are accepting Islam in the process.²⁴¹ There is also an upsurge in the number of private Islāmic and Arabic Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools in virtually every community in Lagos

²³⁸ I.L Akintola, ‘A General Introduction to Islām in Lagos State’ in D. F. Asaju (ed.), *General Studies; Book of Readings*, 158.

²³⁹ Sunday is a weekend, and one of the days of rest, many Yoruba Muslims spend this day to attend lecture and attending meetings of Muslim Associations.

²⁴⁰ This term simply means Islamic lectures held in a free and unenclosed space. Muslims will sit down and some standing listening to and asking questions from the lecturer.

²⁴¹ Oral information from the Chief Missionary, Shaykh Abdu Rahman of *Anṣār-Deen* Society of Nigeria, Lagos 15/10/08.

State where Muslim parents send their children in order to have the dual benefits of the acquisition of both a western and an Islamic orientation. In the process these schools also help Islām and Muslims in the creation of jobs for the many unemployed Muslims who are graduates of Arabic Institutes (*Marākiz*), Colleges of Education or University.²⁴²

Furthermore, this effort has crystallized in the establishment of the Islamic University in Nigeria. Hitherto, five Islāmic Universities have been approved by the Federal Government; three of them have commenced full operation, while the remaining two are working relentlessly to start operation soon.²⁴³ Another accolade to educated Muslims in Lagos State especially those that graduated from the modern Arabic schools (*Ma'āhad, Marākiz*) is that the State University (Lagos State University), in conjunction with the Proprietors of some of these Arabic Schools or Institutes has established Diploma programme for graduates (*Khawārij*) of *Thānawiyyah* schools in order to upgrade their certificates and to bridge the gap of western education among these graduates and for them to get Government jobs, such as teaching in public primary and secondary schools.²⁴⁴

Islamic programming is constantly aired either in print or through the electronic media. There is no media station in Lagos that does not have an Islāmic studies Department where issues and activities of Islām are aired, especially during the

²⁴² Interview with the Proprietor of *Al-Hudah* Nursery and Primary school Bro.Agbaje ,Ijanikin, Lagos, 20/10/08.

²⁴³ Interview with Alh.Akinbode, Chief Missionary of NASFAT and a Member of Board of NASFAT University, Lagos, 01/10/08.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Muhibbu-Din, a Professor of Islamic Studies at the Lagos State University, Lagos 05/10/08 and *Shaykh* Gamawi, Proprietor and Co-ordinator of SOFWAT-al-Islam, Centre for Diploma in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Ajegunle, Lagos, 07/10/08.

Ramaḍān period.²⁴⁵ This has improved tremendously Islāmic awareness among Muslims not only in Lagos but Nigeria as a whole. There are series of open-air lectures by Muslim scholars especially during the *Ramaḍān* Period. There is also a proliferation of Muslim Musicians which have dominated the practice of Islām in Lagos State. Many Muslims are listening to this instead of the seemingly ‘profane’ music of modern Yoruba musicians and it is claimed in some quarters that it has some intrinsic benefits to the Muslims.²⁴⁶

The five tertiary institutions in Lagos State have Islamic Studies Departments while two of them have additional Arabic Studies. In addition to this, there are many Arabic Secondary schools where students attend to learn only Arabic and Islāmic Studies in Arabic and graduate with either *‘Idadiyyah* or *Thānawiyyah* certificate as the case may be. Some Muslims do proceed with their Islamic and Arabic education as far as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Europe, and America or within Nigeria for their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees respectively.²⁴⁷

Moreover, the Lagos State Government has set up an inter-religious body to see to any misunderstanding that may erupt between the Muslims and the Christians. They also have a Muslim Pilgrim Board that supervises and coordinates the travelling of Muslims for the purpose of *Ḥājj* to Makkah and Madīnah and with their welfare looked after. There are also a number of private Islāmic organizations that are involved in this venture of organising the journey of the Muslims to the holy land,

²⁴⁵ Interview with Said Rufai, employee and co-ordinator of Islamic programme, Muri International Television, Lagos, 07/10/08; interview with Aremu Gawat, Co-ordinator of Islamic Programme and Retiree of Nigeria Television Authority, Lagos 12/10/08. Gawat is still anchoring Islamic and *Ejisari* programmes on NTA (Nigeria Television Authority).

²⁴⁶ Interview with Qamarudeen Aiyeloyu, Muslim Musician at Lagos, 12/10/08.

²⁴⁷ Interview with *Mudir* Shaykh Mustapha Zuglool, *Dar Da ‘awah Wal –Irshād*, Isolo, Lagos, 13/10/08.

Makkah for the purpose of *Hāj*, because of the preponderance of citizens who want to undertake this rite.²⁴⁸

But apparently the problem of syncretism is still rampant among them as admitted by many of them. Many of them see it as simply a cultural heritage of Yoruba society which cannot be avoided. They believe that it is the way of looking after their entire welfare: social, spiritual, economic and legal. Some Yoruba Muslims admit that the state of Islām in Lagos today supposed to have been ‘pristine’ and in accordance with the *Sunnat* of the Prophet (S.A.W.), but many claim that the ignorance and lack of absolute faith in Allah, (*tawakkul*) that is pervasive among many Yoruba Muslims are still some of the factors responsible for this problem.²⁴⁹

2.2.2 Spread of Islām in Epe.

Epe is one of the ancient and major towns in Lagos State, Nigeria. It is located on the northern shore of the Lagos lagoon, about 32 kilometres south of Ijebu-Ode and about 77 kilometres away from Lagos Island. Epe came under British rule between 1862 and 1863. It was in 1892 that the town was formally annexed. From 1892 onwards, Epe was administered in the tradition of a British Colony and was known as the ‘Colony District of Epe’. This arrangement prevailed until 1951 when Epe, Lagos Colony and the Colony districts of Badagry, Ikeja and Ikorodu were placed under the Jurisdiction of the western regional government.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Interview with Bro. Hakeem Kosoko, a member of Lagos State Pilgrim Board, Alausa, Ikeja, 14/10/08.

²⁴⁹ Interview with some Members of NASFAT, FESTAC, Branch, Lagos 30/09/08.

²⁵⁰ So, between 1851 and 1967, it served as the headquarters of the Epe Division of the western Region which comprised Epe, Eredo, Agbowa-Ikosi, Ibeju, Ejinrin and Lekki District Councils. It was in May, 1967 that Epe was incorporated into the newly created Lagos State. Epe hitherto is the

There are rival and conflicting claims among the local historians as regards the earliest or autochthonous settlers of Epe; the town is today predominantly peopled by the Ijebu and Eko (Lagos).²⁵¹ The town was essentially dominated by the Ijebu who are regarded as the aborigines of the town and the neighbouring communities consist purely of Awori settlements but over time it has been incorporated into the Ijebu dialect of the Yoruba stock. Epe division consists of many communities whose foundations predate the 19th century.²⁵²

Physically, Epe is blessed with a long range of hills which naturally demarcate the town into two. It is close to Lekki lagoon where the Rivers Oshun, Shasha and Oni discharge their waters. In the 19th century, it played an important role as a transportation and communication channel to other coastal neighbours as Ijebu-Ode and Lagos; it is the highway for trade, diplomatic transactions and warfare. Epe has also been an important lagoon-side market during the period.²⁵³ Because of its location by the lagoon, the town is a veritable fishing emporium and generations of Epe people have derived their livelihood from fishing. Thus, Epe is popularly known as Epe *Eleja* (Epe, the fishing settlement). It is also home to a thriving boat-building industry. Many residents are also farmers and traders.

Religiously, the Ijebu-Epe people were staunch idol-worshippers, worshipping different gods and goddesses, and having different superstitious beliefs and

largest administrative division of the State. It consists of two Local Governments before 2003; Epe and Ibeju–Lekki. For more see, A. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, London: George Allen and Unwin (1969), 328-330.

²⁵¹ For details, see T.O. Avoseh, *A Short History of Epe*. 9

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁵³ R.S. Smith, 'To the Palaver Islands: War and Diplomacy on the Lagos Lagoon' *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, V. I., (1969).

practices. Another traditional religion they practised was brought in by Ijo and Ilaje who came in from the waterside of Okitipupa Division and Makun district of the defunct Ijo Confederation. They came in as fishermen to Epe and brought with them their social institution of *Aiyelala* which performs a socio-judicial function in Epe as it is believed to have the special power of detecting and punishing evil doers, witches and wizards and other vile characters and rendering them virtually powerless.²⁵⁴

The history of Islām in Epe essentially revolves around the famous migration of Kosoko to the area in 1851. Hitherto, Epe was a small settlement of Ijebu farmers and fishermen.²⁵⁵ Kosoko and his party took refuge in the town because of the struggle between him and Akintoye for the throne of the king.²⁵⁶ They were about 1,500 from Lagos,²⁵⁷ when in 1853, when Kosoko and his people tried to take Lagos by storm they were repulsed with heavy losses.²⁵⁸ Kosoko was subsequently made King of Palma and Lekki in 1854 in order to improve the relations with Lagos, but this was futile.²⁵⁹ The Muslims were so loyal to him and stood by him at his hours of hardship, they enjoyed his patronage, and he continued his policy of religious freedom and preaching without obstacle.

²⁵⁴ Oral Interview with Alhaji. Miftah, 12/10/08

²⁵⁵ S. Oyeweso, *Journey from Epe: Biography of S.L.Edu*, 5.

²⁵⁶ There are many versions to the story of the causes of migration; some historians believe that it was a self exile to Epe, while some believe that he deserted Lagos for cover in Epe as a result of heavy bombardment and superior fire-power used by the British force.

²⁵⁷ H. Childs and E.J. Gibbons, *Report on the Administrative Re- Organisation of the Epe District Native Treasury Area*. (1939)

²⁵⁸ *Lagos Official Handbook*, London, 1897-1898, 6.

²⁵⁹ *Epe Confidential Report*, 1934. This was done so that he would renounce his claim to Lagos and another subsidy of 2,000 head of cowries or 500 dollars was approved for him. For more, see T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 160.

These new settlers better known as Eko-Epe were mostly Muslims, Balogun Ajeniya, Osodi Tapa, Balogun Agbaje, Disu Kujeniya, Braimoh Edu, Iyanda Oloko and Posu were some of the ‘brave’ warriors that followed Kosoko to Epe, they were more powerful than the Ijebu- Epe, because many of them were warriors. Christianity had not been known to them at this period. Traditional religion was endemic in Epe among the Ijebus, but when they got there, traditional religions began to dwindle and Islām received an unprecedented boost. Some of the Lagos chiefs that followed Kosoko to Epe became converted to Islām, for instance, Balogun Ajeniya, who later became a great promoter and adherent of Islām in Epe.²⁶⁰

These groups of emigrants almost turned Epe into a Muslim settlement, which they ultimately achieved as the time went on. Mosques were built in earnest. It became a matter of healthy rivalry among the Chiefs that followed Kosoko to Epe to build a mosque in their own courts and this move accelerated the rapid spread of Islām in Epe. Later they formed a community (*Jamā‘ah*) under the leadership, (*Imām*) of *Mallam* Idris Salu Gana who happened to be their *Imām* in Lagos.²⁶¹ In 1862, Kosoko returned to Lagos when a political settlement was negotiated by Glover, whereby Kosoko and any of his followers could return to Lagos if they so desired. This was the Glover Resettlement Scheme.²⁶² An area at Isale Eko was set aside for them; the place is also known as Epetedo.²⁶³ Many of his followers took advantage of this and returned to Lagos, while a substantial number of them decided to live

²⁶⁰ L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 101.

²⁶¹ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 26.

²⁶² *Epe Reorganisation Report*, 1934.

²⁶³ Epetedo literally means a place founded by people of Epe.

permanently at Epe and ‘they were known as Eko-Epe in contradistinction to the Ijebu Epe’.²⁶⁴ During this period Epe was bombarded twice in 1861 and 1863.

As a result of the ceasefire, Epe began to experience peaceful development and growth of Islām. Looking at the factors responsible for this rapid progress, Dioka claims among others, the ‘Africanness’ of Islām in terms of type of marriage i.e. polygamy, the extended family model, religious tolerance, open air preaching during *Ramaḍān* fasting (*Wassi*), itinerant *mallam*, Islāmic associations, the use of charms to solve the problem facing the Muslims and to protect themselves against evil spirits and wicked people. Hence, syncretism started growing. Many people were coming from far and wide for the purpose of obtaining charms. The fame of this practice brought people to Epe and thus helped in the spread of Islām, because charms are part of traditional life and these charms placed the *Mallam* in a privileged position.²⁶⁵ The trade route also helped the spread of Islām in Epe. The eastern trade route that ran from Ilorin to Ekiti, and passed Owo, Akure and Ondo and from there to Lagos also touched Epe, Makun, Atijere, Itebu and other places. Hausa *Mallams* and traders found the road useful and this helped in the spread of Islām.²⁶⁶

When some of these people returned to Lagos, Islām was growing steadily in Epe. The Chief *Imām* then was Idris Salu Gana who returned to Lagos with Kosoko, leaving the leadership of the remaining Muslims with Chief *Imām* Awudu of Oke

²⁶⁴ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 69

²⁶⁵ L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 102.

²⁶⁶ A. Olukoju, ‘The politics of Free Trade between Lagos and the Hinterland 1861-1907’ in Adefuye et al (eds), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, 89.

Balogun who could be regarded as the first permanent Chief *Imām* of Epe.²⁶⁷ Balogun Ajeniya was the Balogun of the Muslims in Epe.²⁶⁸ It was near his house that the first Central mosque was built, and at the time of his death in 1875, the Eko-Epe were well organised politically. They had a Muslim ruler (*Baale*), the set up was entirely composed of Muslims, more than anywhere in Yoruba land, Islām became their way of life, they had Muslim rulers, their cases were tried according to the Malik school of thought by these rulers with their *Imām* and their entire lives were guided by the Muslim code of conduct.²⁶⁹ During this period, establishment of an Islāmic state had been won de facto equally for Iwo and Ikirun.²⁷⁰

It was from Epe that Islām spread to its outlying districts such as Odo-Egiri, Ibonwon, and Odo-Ragunsen, largely through the effort of Badiru Adebogun. He was traditionalist young man who came to Epe to learn a trade and for many years, served as tailor-apprentice to Sule Folami of Oke Balogun in Epe. In the process, he was converted to Islām by his master and due to the social milieu of the town; he later became a master–tailor. When he returned home, he kept to Islām despite

²⁶⁷ Tukur Papers (*Mallam Salia Tukur*, Chief *Imām* of Epe 1963- 1970), ‘The Events during the Life Time of each *Imām* of Epe from the year 1851 upward’.

²⁶⁸ *Epe Reorganisation Report*, 1934. The term ‘Balogun’ literally means (chief Warrior), it was a chieftancy title used during the Yoruba Pre-Islamic time as an epithet to depict a courageous warrior in a town or within a clan who emerged as a winner in the battle and he would be compensated for his gallantry. This title then was common among the *Ijebu* dialect. When Islām came, the title was adapted to Islām; this borrowing from local culture was given an Islamic outlook. This conferment in titles in the Muslim community as well as mobility hierachically closely follows the traditional pattern of distribution of titles along township lines. In other words, the title holder in the Muslim community will assume the responsibility of administrative role in the mosque. The post hierachically is: *Imām*, *Nā’ib Imām*, *Onitafsir*, *Baba Adini*, *Balogun Adini*, *Otun* and *Osi Balogun*, *Ekerin Adini*, *Ajanasi*, *Seriki* etc. They all involved in looking after the welfare of the Muslims, hosting important visitors to the community, organisation of ceremonial prayer (*‘Īd*) and settling disputes among others. The Muslim public title holders collectively promote the cause of Islām and the community. Criteria such as: Islamic devotion, age, nobility, wealth, knowledge among others are taken into consideration before the person is chosen for the post. For more see, T. G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 57-58; N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 198-200

²⁶⁹ T.O. Avoseh, *A Short History of Epe*, 24; Yoruba Muslims up untill today have the highest regard for Epe as an Islamic citadel in Yoruba land; they call it *Epe loni Qur’ān*; Epe is the owner of *Qur’ān*. Epe is the coastal Ilorin in this regard.

²⁷⁰ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 70.

strong opposition. Soon he had a nucleus of co-religionists from neighbouring villages, and they came together to worship at Odo Gbawojo and later at Ibonwon under the inspiration of this Badiru. Sunmoila was the leader of this community because; he was the eldest of these earliest Muslims. This nascent Muslim community was able to sustain itself through the co-operation and assistance of Muslims in Epe. Sule Folami, his master and *Aafaa* Abu of Epe persuaded many to join the community, which continued to grow until each of the Muslim villages was able to fend for itself, endowed with a mosque and an *Imām*.²⁷¹ By 1908 a plethora of Islamic cum Arabic schools were springing up in Epe established mostly by the foreign, itinerant scholars. It was in 1895 that Muslim society called Egbe Killa spread to Epe.

Muslims in Epe played a prominent role in the native Council. For instance, in the Epe Provincial Council of 1901, there were Disu Kujeniya, the Muslim Baale, Braimoh Edu, Yesufu Waki and Sanusi Alausa.²⁷² Braimah Edu and Seriki Abbass were members of the Central native Council set up by Sir William Macgregor for the whole country; they represented Epe and Badagry respectively following the Native Council Ordinance of 1901, this ordinance really affected the growth of Islām in Epe and other parts of Yoruba land. In Epe, for instance, there was a tension between Eko-Epe and their not-so-Islāmised Ijebu–Epe counterparts when they were brought together in the Epe Provincial Council of 1901.

On this Council was Ogunbona, the Ijebu *Baale* and a non-Muslim, representing probably not so-Islāmised Ijebu-Epe. The other five local members were Muslims

²⁷¹ Interview conducted with the present Chief *Imām* of Ibonwon, Alhaji Ismail, 10/10/2008.

²⁷² *Lagos Government Gazette*, No.55, November, 1901.

and they were the local leaders of the Muslim Eko of Epe. This Council used to meet at the house of Braimoh Edu, the Muslim Mogaji (later Muslim *Baale*). Their deliberations should have been guided by the principle of native law and custom, and the Eko-Epe dominated because they were more literate than the Ijebu-Epe and against this background, the latter remonstrated and protested because they saw it as a grandiose attempt to create and nurture a new dynasty as a subterfuge to exclude them permanently from political power.²⁷³ The friction between the two groups intensified and reached a deadlock which was resolved only after the council was dissolved in 1904.²⁷⁴ Thereafter, each had its own council. The non-Muslim Ijebu, included Oshugbo (a cultic society headed by the Oloja), and Regberegbe, age grade-association, and up until today, many people in Epe still celebrate Oko-Shi (age grade-association) regardless of their religious beliefs. Their *Baale*, Ogunbona was a Native Authority with jurisdiction only over Ijebu-Epe, and the Eko-Epe one was thoroughly Muslim.

In 1898, there was a minor skirmish between Muslims in Epe, which inexorably dragged on till 1903. The origins are now obscure it might but have arisen from a certain dowry case according to the Commissioner of Epe, Honby-Porter. This dispute degenerated to the formation of two rival factions in Epe, each led by a notable Epe Muslim; Muhammad Abu, a respected Muslim scholar and Braimah Edu, influential Muslim trader. It was Governor Freeman who attended to this log-jam,²⁷⁵ persuading the two groups to worship together with the *Baale*.

²⁷³ L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 103.

²⁷⁴ H. Childs & E.J. Gibbons, *Report on the Administrative Re-Organization of the Epe District Native Treasury Area*, paragraph 74.

²⁷⁵ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 161.

Another conflict between the two groups was when the Ijebu-Epe decided to perform a traditional rite which required everybody to stay indoors; Eko-Epe Muslims saw it as a flagrant trampling on their Islamic fundamental rights and entailing obedience to unIslamic tradition, because they were not allowed to go out for *Ṣalāt* in the mosque and for their livelihood. Besides, it was done to appease their gods and goddesses, which goes against Islām. Hence, it led to open conflict, arson and killing; the ringleaders were arrested, and bound over in substantial sums to keep the peace in 1899.²⁷⁶

Henceforth, mutual antagonism became intensified. There was another conflict when an Ijebu-Epe man was selected as the Chief *Imām* of the Central Mosque in the name of *Aafaa Mota*, who was seen as a respectable Ijebu Muslim and this was frowned at by Eko-Epe Muslims and the crisis exacerbated in consequence of this, the Central mosque was closed down in 1903 to both parties.²⁷⁷ This action was taken in order to forestall a breach of peace in the community, so the other party led by Braimoh Edu found an alternative place of worship in an old half neglected mosque belonging to their fathers. They renovated it and was used as their own Central Mosque. The other party, the Ijebu, continued to appeal to the Governor to open the closed mosque for them saying it was ‘their own fathers who built it’.²⁷⁸

The Governor also appointed relevant officers like their Eko-Epe counterparts to the Council. Considering the adverse impact of the crisis, the Government and the Lagos Muslims led by the Chief *Imām* made a huge effort at reconciling the two groups and the need to pray together in the same Mosque. This crisis adversely

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 105.

²⁷⁷ *Lagos Government Gazette*, 17 January, 1903.

²⁷⁸ S. Oyeweso, *Eminent Yoruba Muslims of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 88-90.

affected the tempo of the growth of Islām in Epe by the creation of separate mosques. It also engendered syncretism, especially among the Ijebu-Epe, because some of them practised Islām during the Muslim festivals, and some others reverted to traditional religion while some took solace in syncretism. It hindered the growth of Islāmic brotherhood and halted the rate of conversion to Islām in Epe and led to a resurgence of Christianity.²⁷⁹ It was in 1945 that the Ijebu-Epe built their own Mosque and their first *Imām* was Abd al-Qadir.²⁸⁰

Furthermore, Muslims in Epe were one of the ardent antagonists of Christianity and its evangelism. In 1876, when a Christian evangelist named Rev. D. Hinderer went to Epe to plant Christianity, he was driven away by the statement ‘we are already Muslims’.²⁸¹ The following year, two of them went to Epe but after three successive days of futile open air preaching, the Muslims in Epe drove them out.²⁸² But in 1892, they breathed a sigh of relief when the British occupied Ijebu-Ode,²⁸³ and this encouraged Mr. Braithwaite to transfer himself to Epe from Iganmu in 1893. For the almost thirteen years that he spent in Epe, he was met with stiff opposition and perpetual rivalry. The hundred people he initially claimed to have won dwindled to about forty. So, in 1906, he quit Epe and was replaced by Rev. Olubi. These Christians injected doses of fervour and stimulus into the Muslims and so the Muslims took it as a challenge and in this they also embarked on systematic

²⁷⁹ L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 104.

²⁸⁰ A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām fī Nayjiriyā wa Shaykh ‘Uthmān bn Fūdī al- Fulānī* (2nd ed.), Beirut: Mamar Maktabat (1965), 139.

²⁸¹ *The Annual Reports of Lagos Church Missions for 1895-1896*, 40-42.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 1897-1898, 47-48.

²⁸³ Peel admitted that hitherto there were no missionaries in Ijebu-land till this period when Ijebu-Ode was subdued by military expedition and a British resident was placed there to maintain peace, because of this, the district had a field day for evangelism. See J.D.Y, Peel, ‘Religious Change in Yoruba land’ in *Africa*, vol. 37, (1967), 303; M. Oduyoye, *Planting of Christianity in Yoruba land* (n.p), (1969), 72-73.

campaign for Islām.²⁸⁴ They went from village to village, building mosques; appointing *Imāms* and recruiting many *Mallams* to assist in teaching and preaching and they did this with zeal.²⁸⁵

Epe Muslims also forbade their children from attending Christian schools as much as the Christian evangelists strove to persuade them.²⁸⁶ Because of the Islāmised nature of Epe and their opposition to Christian- sponsored education; the Muslims were thrilled by the Muslim school established in Lagos. So, the Epe Muslims, under the leadership of the Chief *Imām*, Uthman Audu, influential Braimoh Edu, and the Muslim *Baale*, requested the government to establish at Epe a Muslim school ‘...conducted on similar lines to the one which was established in Lagos in 1896’.²⁸⁷ After the necessary efforts, the school was opened on 16th November 1898 by the Acting Governor, Captain G.C. Denton in the presence of Epe Muslims and at least six leading Muslims from Lagos. The headmaster then was *al- hājj* Harun al-Rashid from Sierra Leone.²⁸⁸ The school was later taken over by the *Anṣār-ud-Deen* Society, and it continued to be a denominational Government school till 1938, when it became Epe Native Authority School.²⁸⁹

As of today, majority of people living in Epe are the Yoruba Muslims. The Christians among them are mostly non-indigenous and some nominal Muslims

²⁸⁴ Ibid. 49-50.

²⁸⁵ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba*, 135.

²⁸⁶ *The Annual Reports of the Lagos Church Mission*, 1895-1896, 12-13; see also, S. Oyeweso, *Journey from Epe; Biography of S.L Edu*, 112.

²⁸⁷ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 171.

²⁸⁸ T.O. Avoseh, *History of Epe*, 28-29.

²⁸⁹ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba*, 192.

among them who take to syncretism.²⁹⁰ During traditional festivals, you will find among them names that connote Islām. Presently, there is apparently no unhealthy rivalry or rancour between the Eko-Epe and Ijebu-Epe. The bond of Islamic unity and brotherhood is obvious among them.²⁹¹ Today, there are as many as ten central mosques within Epe town and as many *Ratibi* Mosques. Many of the indigenes today are *Alḥāj* and *Alḥājah* who have made pilgrimage to Makkah.

Moreover, various Islamic organizations have been formed in Epe. The following are the major ones: *Anṣār-ud-Deen* was formed in 1943; the Ahmadiyyah Muslim Mission, 1921; the *Zumratul Islamiyyah*, 1945; the Muslim Student Society 1980; and the National Council for Muslim Youth Organisation 1990. In fact, there are about twenty Muslim Organizations in Epe.²⁹² Also, there are several Islamic cum Arabic Schools spread all over the town in order to cater for the ever increasing population of Muslims. There are many Muslim Scholars, Muslim Clerics, Arabic and Islamic Studies lecturers and Arabic school Principals. Some of the Muslims in Epe also travel as far as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Malaysia, Sudan, England, Canada, and USA to acquire Islamic cum Arabic education. The majority of the Muslim clerics in Epe engage in *Jalb* work (spiritualists, producing charms and amulets). A large proportion of them engage in divination and magic.²⁹³

Islām has had a tremendous impact on the Epe people; it perhaps affects all facets of their life: social, political, cultural and economic. It has had an influence on their

²⁹⁰ Interview with *Imām* Simple, 12/09/09. He did tell me that during the *Oro* festival (one of the traditional festivals in Epe), one will hear Muslim names among them. In addition to this, the people that killed the popular *Aafaa* Akodo at Epe, they were nominal Muslims who belong to secret cults.

²⁹¹ Oral information from the two Chiefs *Imām* of Epe., 12/09/09

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Oral Information from *Aafaa* Simpoo, 13/09/09

language like other Yoruba communities. Epe has produced many renowned Islamic scholars, to the extent that the town is famously known as '*Epe l'oni Qur'an*' (Epe is the custodian of the Qur'an).²⁹⁴ Modes of dress, marriage, naming ceremonies etc have all been altered to certain degree by the effect of Islām. There are many Islāmic and Arabic Nursery and Primary schools in order to bridge the gap between the Muslims and western education.

Hitherto, Epe can boast of many erudite scholars across the country, many of whom are teachers, preachers, *Imāms*, politicians, influential Muslims, top echelons in the civil service, while some are lecturers in higher institutions of learning both within and outside the country.²⁹⁵

Some Muslims in Epe today are still involved in syncretism, some bearing Muslim names and belonging to secret cults, while some take refuge in charms and amulets and hold fast to superstition. Some participate in traditional festivals; hero worship and still hold on to the fact that Islām does not debar them from worshipping their traditional religion or their ancestors. People that are involved in this syncretism include some Muslim clerics, Muslim title holders, and members of one Muslim organization or another.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ T.O Avoseh, *A Short History of Epe*, 24; see also, A.B. Kazeem, *History of Islam in Epe 1853-1992*, unpublished B.A Long Essay, University of Lagos (1994), 72.

²⁹⁵ Oral information from the Chief *Imām* of NACOMYO, Samii. He is a Graduate of Islamic University in Libya. 21/10/08.

²⁹⁶ Interview with *Imām* . Rashid, (Eko Epe Central mosque, Epe. 29/09/08.

2.2.3 Factors Responsible for the Growth of Islām in Lagos State.

As we asserted earlier that Islām recorded a phenomenal growth in Lagos State up until the present time, of course there are some reasons that are responsible for this phenomenon. They include the following:

(i) Itinerant *Mallams*: The *Mallams* that were moving from one locality to another in order to spread and preach the religion of Islam were responsible for the growth of Islām in Lagos and its environs. They travelled at their own expense from one town to another and taught people about Islām. Some of them were ‘white Arabs’ from outside the country, for example, *Shaykh* Ali bn. Muhammad al-Mekkwawi, who was from Morocco and had been to Makkah. Burton met him in Lagos around 1860.²⁹⁷ And a number of them were Hausa *Mallams* and some were from Ilorin. Most of them did not stay long. They used to leave one of their students behind to teach in the community.

(ii) Traders: In the early stage of Islām in Yoruba land, trade was another means of the propagation of Islām; many Arabs are traders either in kola nuts, trona, onions, and the like. This compelled them to travel from one big market town in Yoruba land to another for trade, and thereby spread the knowledge of Islām. In 1870, for instance, Simpson drew attention to a certain Muhammad ibn Muhammad, ‘a sheriff or Mohammedan missionary’, who had recently arrived in Lagos from Seid Okuba in Sham (Damascus), Syria and he hinted that many of his friends are travellers and traders at Kano, and that they might come down to Lagos, ‘...about

²⁹⁷ R.F. Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa*, vol.ii. 225; see also, N. Levtzion and H.J. Fisher (eds.), ‘Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa: An Introductory Essay’ in N. Levtzion and H.J. Fisher, *Rural and Urban Islām in West Africa*, 1-3.

which they had heard good information'.²⁹⁸ There were many traders during this period that used to propagate Islām in the course of their trade.

(iii) Muslim Scholarship: Because of the emphasis Islām places on the pursuance and acquisition of knowledge, the Muslims cannot help but spread knowledge as well as to teach others.²⁹⁹ Most of the *Mallams* at this period taught without reward, as most of them lived on *sadaqah* (charity). There was proliferation of Muslim scholars especially the Yoruba among them; many of them were teachers in Qur'ānic schools. This type of school was initially held in a semi-circular formation, the teacher or *Mallam* would be surrounded in a semi-circle by his pupils. They usually used ink (*tada*), slate (*wala*) and pen (*qalam*). Rote learning usually predominated and the session was held three times in a day, starting from Saturday and ending on Wednesday. There was also *Walimah* reminiscent of convocation day in contemporary universities marking the end of the recitation of the holy Qur'ān.³⁰⁰ Some of these schools still survive up until today.

(iv) Open–Air Preaching (Public Lecture): This is another significant factor that contributed to the growth of Islām in its early stage in Lagos State, because there was massive open air preaching which the Muslim scholars embarked upon without fear or favour. This open-air preaching was seen as the most popular means of disseminating Islāmic knowledge, which they popularly call *waqz* or *naṣīḥah*

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 62; see also, M. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle of Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period*, 15;

²⁹⁹ For example, A.A. Nawāwī, *Riyāḍ aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn (Garden of the Righteous)*, translated from Arabic by M. Z. Khan, Beirut: Ayif Publishers (1985), 634-638, Hadith, 1381-1397

³⁰⁰ A.B. Fafunwa, *The History of Education in Nigeria*, 54-65. See also I.L. Akintola, 'The Impact of Islām on Education and Life in Lagos State' in P.A. I. Obanya & O. Odunbunmi (eds.), *Selected Papers from a Conference on Educational Development in Lagos State*, Lagos: Lagos State University (1985), 7-10.

(*wassi*).³⁰¹ It was often ubiquitous during the *Ramaḍān* fast and continues up until today. They also used short ditties that incorporated religious issues for easy recollection by the audience during these occasions. Non-Muslims are usually convinced and converted into Islām. The Muslims on their part are more conscious of their role and responsibilities and sometimes the issue of syncretism features in their preaching. Allowance is sometimes given for questions and answers.

(v) Occupation of strategic positions: During the period in question, some Muslims occupied position of eminence in Government. Some were advisers to civil or military leaders; teachers to their children, religious chamberlains, and while other were members of one advisory council or another. They used all this influence to spread and develop Islām in Lagos.

(vi) Titled Office Holders in the Mosques: Through this, the Muslim community began to organise themselves. The leadership rested on the *Imām* or Chief *Imām* supported by other title holders in the Mosque especially the *Noibi*, *Ladani*, *Onitafsiro*, *Balogun Adini*, *Seriki Muslumi*, *Ajanasi*, *Baba Adini* (Patron of the religion). This arrangement has religious, social and political salutary effects on the development of Islām in Lagos and it survives up until today; they are crucial in the work of the progress of Islām, settling disputes among Muslims, looking after their welfare, organizing festival (*Īd*) prayers, welcoming important visitors as well as serving as their representatives.³⁰² They were all jointly responsible for the welfare and development of the community.

³⁰¹ T.G.O Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 36-37.

³⁰² Interview with some Muslim title-holders at Epe Central Mosque on 25/10/2009.

(vii) Muslim Organisations: Muslim associations which had begun many years since in the inchoate period of Islām also played a significant role in the development of Islām. Some Muslims came together and formed associations like *Egbe Killa*, *Egbe Alaslatu*. They were dedicated to Islām, promoted contact and co-operation among their Muslim members, promoting the importance of western education, fostered mutual help, propagated Islām and raised Islāmic awareness among their members. They organised series of activities and participated fully in all the social activities of their members such as: naming ceremonies, marriages, *walīmah al-Qur’ān*, funerals and the likes. They voluntarily used to come forward to donate money or labour as the case may be towards the development of Islām. They thereby raised the religious tone of the Muslim community and promoted community development projects, for instance: the rebuilding of the Mosque, clearing of ground for the festival prayers and they made the religion of Islām fashionable and popular.³⁰³ The more the population of Muslims increased, the more the associations. These associations helped in the progression and consolidation of the Muslim community, and later became the precursors of more important associations that came into being later, such as the *Anṣār -Deen* Society and the *Nawāīr-Deen* Society.

(viii) Alien Scholars: This is also a major factor that contributed to the accelerated growth and development of Islām in Lagos State. Scholars both within and outside the country used to travel in and out of the Lagos to preach Islām, conduct their business and in the process propagate Islām. Due to Lagos’ cosmopolitan nature

³⁰³ Interview with some members of Eko Epe Central mosque, 20/10/2009

and its being the capital of Nigeria at that time, Muslims from neighbouring cities and towns thronged to this city thereby spreading the religion.

(ix) Pilgrimage: This is also another area that draws some people to Islām and also consolidates some Muslims in the religion. They saw pilgrimage to Makkah as a proof of wealth and piety which enhances ones social status. Hitherto, the journey was arduous and took a number of months, not less than eighteen months and very dangerous. Sometimes, very few people returned and this usually sparked off huge expressions of joy and thanksgiving. As long ago as the 1860s, some Muslims were seen in Lagos who had been on pilgrimage to Makkah.³⁰⁴

(x) Muslim Rulers and Local Chiefs: The large number of Muslim rulers and chiefs was of great significance to the status of Islām. In fact, in Lagos by 1894, Islām was already in ascendancy: King Kosoko, Buraimoh Edu, Chief Ajeniya etc, used their positions to develop Islām and also to contribute to the growth of Islām. Their possession of political power was a great asset to the Muslim community and they used their position to consolidate the influence of Islām.³⁰⁵

(xi) The Colonial Effort: In this regard, the colonial government created conducive environment for the Muslims to preach their religion. The colonial government demonstrated a friendly disposition towards the Muslims in Lagos. They showed this in a number of ways: the colonial government showed signs of interest on the issue of Muslims' acceptance of western education; the opening of Shitta Bey

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 61. My father told me that when he came back from *Hajj* on 18th of Nov, 1953, after six months journey, he rode on horseback and many Muslims came to welcome him with fun and peagentry. Oral information received from *Alhaji* Aliyyu Balogun (May Allah have mercy on him) on 03/09/1990.

³⁰⁵ Oral information received from *Oba* Ijebu of Epe on 10/10/08.

Mosque; the resolution of the Epe crisis; Ilorin–Ibadan war camps and spoke favourably of Islām to the disappointment of the Christians, settling intra-Muslim crisis in Lagos. So, with all these, the relationship between the Muslims and the Government was friendly and helpful.³⁰⁶ In this wise, the Muslims approached the Government without any hesitation on a wide range of issues; for example the issue of a public incinerator that was very close to the Mosque at Oko Awo in 1903 which was removed, and the ban on drumming that was lifted by the Government.³⁰⁷ There was freedom of worship, respect and considerable assistance for both parties. Because of all this, Islām began to blossom in Lagos.

(xii) Muslim Ceremonies: The *‘Īd al-Mawlūd*, *Laylatul-Qadr*, *Walīmah al-Qur’ān* etc, all these social gatherings serve as an avenue to preach Islām to people and make them conscious of Islām. Children sometimes dance round the town at the admiration of the on-lookers there by drawing the attention and attraction of others to the religion. Sometimes, they do this with pomp and pageantry (colourful ceremonies) and people are entertained. They give the Muslims that attend these ceremonies food and drink and light Islamic singing.³⁰⁸

(xiii) No Racialism: Absence of racialism and clerical hierarchy among the Muslims in Lagos was one of the ways that promoted the religion *ab initio*. Every Muslim works towards the progress of the society, with self-help and self-reliance, and good organisation. Islām was able to progress rapidly and everybody came together and rallied round each other in order to solve any problem that faced the organisation. With no foreign aid or direction, unlike the Christians that have

³⁰⁶T.G.O Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 185-187.

³⁰⁷*Lagos Government Gazette*, Dec-Jan, 1903.

³⁰⁸A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa ‘Ulamāu Bilād Yorubā*, 54-55

different denominations, the Islāmic religion was able to grow rapidly in its early period.³⁰⁹

(xiv) ‘Africanness’ of Islām: The religion appeals to the Yoruba because it does not preach a violent break from the Yoruba culture, it is less intolerant of African custom. For instance, it accepts African dress, polygamy, charm, ceremonies etc; unlike Christianity that preaches ‘imperium in imperio’. Islām probably advocates tolerance to African culture and people did not find it difficult to adapt to Islāmic culture and its way of life, and the vestige of such legacy is still the challenge facing Islām today. Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos now erroneously see Islām as a religion that compels polygamy regardless of the principles or conditions that warrant it. The case of charms is another vestige that affects many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State up until now. In the name of ‘medicine’; many do not care the type of ‘medicine’ to take to in terms of illness or even to discriminate between causes of diseases and attribution of calamity.³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ P.B, Clarke, *West African and Islam: A Study of Religious Development of Islam in West Africa from the 8th to the 20th Century*, 18-19

³¹⁰ .Interview with President *Ibadu-LLahi-Salihin* at Epe on 25/09/08.

2.2.4 Challenges Facing the Growth and Development of Islām in Lagos –State.

There are several challenges facing Islām in Lagos State since its inception, but here I will consider only a few of them as this is one of the focuses of this work:

(i) Ignorance: This is a major challenge facing Islāmic religion in Lagos State. Many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are ignorant about the nitty gritty of Islām. This ignorance perhaps is born out of a nonchalant attitude and the preference given to secular education, which has made many Muslims prone to practise Islām as they like without recourse to the fundamental sources of Islāmic guidance. Despite the great emphasis Islām places on the pursuance of education, some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are still apparently ignorant of their religion, and this has caused some negative effects on the ways and manners by which some Muslims practise Islām.³¹¹

(ii) Wars and conflicts: The internecine warfare that characterised the Muslim communities in its earlier stage, or during its era of consolidation especially between 1861 and 1894. The continuing wars and conflicts of this period left scars on the socio-religious history of the Muslims in Yoruba land, including Lagos.³¹² It sometimes retarded sermons and open religious campaigns. For instance, the 1875 conflicts of ‘All-sufficiency of the Qur’ān’ split the budding Muslim community in Lagos into two groups. Others were the division over the payment of water rate in Lagos in 1903 and *Alfa* Ekemode versus the *Jamā’ah* saga when he refused to vacate the post of *Onitafsi*, when the substantive holder came back from *Hājj* in

³¹¹ Interview with a cross-section of *Anṣār -deen* Muslim Members, Mushin Branch at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos during the Ramadan Lecture on 25/09/08.

³¹² For more details, see T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam in Yoruba land 1804-1908*, 49-51.

1915. The refusal of Chief *Imām* Ibrahim to sign the constitution prepared by the *Jamā'ah* in 1918 which almost led to clash and blood shed, but for the timely intervention of the Government that flushed them out of the mosque with the use of water hose was another unsavoury incident. Similar belligerence also characterised Islām in Epe, especially between the Eko and Ijebu-Epe.³¹³ The crises always had a crippling effect on the inchoate Muslim community; it retarded the expansion and growth of Islām. It also affected unity and Muslim brotherhood and the overall effect was the stagnation and decrease in number of the Muslim population. Even today where there are many Muslim associations, the problem of disunity is still fairly common among them, and it sometimes results in intra and inter- associations or group-conflicts where members of one association see the other members as rivals. They are supposed to consider themselves as one body striving and racing to out-do or out-strip one another in good deed and God-consciousness.³¹⁴

(iii) British rule: Another threat that Islām faced during its nascent period was the establishment of the Native Council Ordinance of 1901. Under British rule, Native Councils were set up to enhance the prestige and authority of chiefs for the purpose of efficiency of administration of the British rule. Under this rule, local elders would meet and form a forum from various aspects of life and discuss local problems in customary ways. There were also native courts which were set up in order to enforce justice according to native law and custom. These Native Councils and Courts were given a legal force. This system adversely affected the growth and development of Islām in Yoruba land as well as Lagos State and it had adverse

³¹³ H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, 4.

³¹⁴ See Qur'ān, Chapter 5:2, 3:134 and 103:1-3.

effect on the politico-legal development of Islām in Lagos State.³¹⁵ For instance, the Muslims' petition to the colonial Government in 1894 wanting to be governed by their own religious law and justice was turned down by the Colonial Government because of the primacy of this fundamental principle of British administration; the native law and custom.

There was a conflict in the Epe Provincial Council of 1901, where the representatives had five Muslim Members of Eko–Epe and three non-Muslim members of Ijebu-Epe meeting at Muslim Mogaji house (Braitham Edu, later *Baale*). Friction was intensified until the council was dissolved in 1904, and now split into two each represented by Ijebu and Eko Epe respectively.³¹⁶ It invariably led to the loss of political power in Islām, because Islām perhaps, had much influence and power when it possessed political influence and this was not allowed by native laws and courts. This had adverse repercussions for Islām and the introduction of Islāmic system of law was forestalled and undermined, and Islām had to restrict itself to personal aspects of life. The effects apparently, are still seen today.

(iv) Western Education/Christianity: Islāmic growth in the 19th century was accompanied by two great forces of western education and Christianity. Their influence was felt in Lagos more than any other places in Yoruba land. In the first instance, there was stiff opposition against missionary work, through the mission they later resorted to providing literacy education. This was an adjunct to missionary work among people who were not literate in English. Because at this

³¹⁵ S. Oyeweso, *Eminent Yoruba Muslims of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 109.

³¹⁶ *The Lagos Weekly Record* .21 July, 1894.

period literacy provided trade and employment opportunities with European firms and so on, there was strong impetus for everybody to be literate in English. This popular desire for literacy gave the Missionary what is called ‘Divinely-provided opportunity’ for close contact and evangelising among the people, and special attention was devoted to the Muslims. As for the Muslims, James Johnson emphasised ‘...our desire is to get as much as we can of our religion into the Mohammedan scholars before they leave school’.³¹⁷

They were looking for every means to counter Islām and to check its growing influence. But their most potent instrument was the school, which served as the magnet to attract all, especially non-Christians, to the Christian’s way of life. Initially, it did not have influence especially in Epe where they were driven out. They later resorted to house to house persuasions. There were some positive results, because in Lagos where most of the Christian schools were concentrated, Muslims went to these government–assisted mission schools for the purpose of learning the English language.³¹⁸

Initially, the Muslims were reluctant and suspicious,³¹⁹ but under intense religious indoctrination and Christian guardianship, some Muslims in the process were converted to Christianity. This also served as a challenge to the Muslims in order to defend and propagate Islām. Another corollary effect of this was the production of Muslims who had western education and served as torch-bearers of the new

³¹⁷ CMS CA2/056. James Johnson to Sec.,CMS, 6 March,1876.

³¹⁸CMS CA2/056. James Johnson’s Annual Letter of 1875. See also his letter to Sec., CMS, 30 January,1878

³¹⁹ Because hitherto the Muslims saw the Christian sponsored education as a mirage to lure them from the straight path despite its intrinsic value in terms of employment, participation in governance and creation of job opportunity. In Epe in 1893, Muslims shunned and forbade their children from attending Christian schools.

civilisation to their co-religionists and they were the pioneer founders of various Muslim literary societies and educational societies especially: *Anṣār-ud-Deen*, *Nawair ud-Deen*. These societies brought the influence and impact of western education among the Muslims in Yoruba land and Lagos State.³²⁰

Another negative effect of western education among Muslims in Lagos perhaps, is that there was decline in the practice of Islam. Muslims were now importing western civilization and culture to Islām; and it gave way to heresy in Islām and adapting of western culture in Islāmic social and economic activities causing some innovations in some of the social, economic, religious and political life of Islām, thus secularizing the life of a Muslim. There was a decline in pupils' enrolment in Arabic cum Qur'anic school, western education has taken and preoccupied the attention of the parents because of its extrinsic value, thus the percentage of Muslim children and youth reading Islāmic studies in all the Lagos State owned tertiary institutions is abysmal as compared to their counterpart courses such as: Business Administration, Social Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, Law and Sciences.³²¹ Many Muslims it appears are no more bothered about Islamic knowledge and Arabic. The overall effect is what is manifesting today, an apparent nonchalant attitude to religion.³²²

(v) Syncretism: Because of the nature and the way Islām was introduced in Yoruba land, in terms of accommodating and accepting some African culture, some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State find it difficult to abdicate the negative aspects of Yoruba

³²⁰ T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1804-1908*, 146.

³²¹ M.A. Bidmos, *Utilizing the Potentials of Islamic Education in Nation Building*, An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Lagos, Lagos: University of Lagos Press (2008), 9-13.

³²² Interview with *Mudiru Safwat al-Islam*, Shaykh Ghamawi on 30/10/08.

culture which obviously contradict the spirit and fundamental principles of *Tawhīd*. Some participate in traditional festivals, use of charms and amulets, visit fortune tellers etc. Up until now, many Muslims in Lagos State do syncretise in their religious beliefs and practices, believing that Islām does not debar them from practising them.³²³

(vi) Unemployment: This is another challenge that Islām faces in Lagos State. The system of education bequeathed to Lagos and Nigeria as a whole favoured the Christian fully, and then it favours those who attend the schools founded by the Muslims, but fashioned along the lines of the western schools, while it dissuades the society from recognising the graduates of '*Ilmiyyah*' schools. So, there is overall shifting of attention to western education and 'secularism' by the Government. The teeming population of these youths that graduate each year from the Islāmic cum Arabic Institutes find it difficult to be gainfully employed. The struggle for survival appears to make some of these graduates to take to seemingly unsuitable jobs, for example: fortune telling, magic and amulet making and in the process some of them use human parts to make charms in order to make money.³²⁴

³²³ Patrick J. Ryan, S.J *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 145-179. Interview with *Mudīr, Dār al-Falāḥ*, Alhaji Musa Agboola at Orile-Iganmu on 30/10/08.

³²⁴ In Epe, 25th of April 2008, three Muslim clerics were found with human parts which they confessed that they deliberately killed an old man in order to make talismans to make money. The incident was widely reported in the media, and they are currently in prison.

2.2.5 Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion, we have been able to examine the controversial origin of the Yoruba by analysing various conflicting theories that prove it. We asserted that all the theories agree on one thing; that the Yoruba migrated to their present areas, they came from a near- Eastern origin and their culture is homogenous. We have also highlighted the history of the origin of Lagos State and justified its position among the Yoruba nation in Nigeria. I expatiated on the historical background of the rapid growth and development of Islām in the State. We also examined some major events in the course of growth and development of Islām that are normal characteristics of any new development, otherwise known as ‘teething problems’. I traced the history of Islām in Epe and justifying our work on the historical growth of Islām in the town to the extent that it almost became an Islāmic town. I analysed some of the problems that are hitherto responsible for the rapid growth and development of Islām in the State as well as identifying those encumbrances that are militating against its growth and development.

CHAPTER THREE

YORUBA TRADITIONAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN LAGOS BEFORE ISLĀM.

3.0 Introduction

In chapter two of this work, we explained on the multitude of problems facing Islām and Muslims in Lagos State, one of them being syncretism. In this chapter, we shall look at various traditional beliefs and practices adopted by the Yoruba in Lagos prior to the introduction of Islām. We are technically referring to pre-Islāmic Indegenous Yoruba Religions. They manifest themselves in superstition, secret cults or occultism, witchcraft, black magic, charms and amulets, ancestral or hero worship and fortune telling or oracles. It also includes belief and participation in traditional festivals.

We also argue in this chapter that some Yoruba Muslims retain these beliefs and practices despite their acceptance of Islām. In other words, we are also looking at the enduring effects of these practices on the people. This aspect is very essential to this work as it serves as the context of the work or the *raison d'être* why some Yoruba Muslims syncretise in their religion, Islām. The chapter is rounded off with a section which is an examination of beliefs and borrowing from western culture to Islām among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State.

3.1 The Pre-Islāmic Yoruba Religions

Before the acceptance of Islām in any nation traditional religions were present. For example, in the Qu'rān, Allah sent the Prophet Nūḥ (AS) purposely to remove his people 'from the abyss of ignorance and idol worshipping'. '...and We sent Noah to his folk (and he said): Truly I am a plain Warner to you that you serve none, save Allah, surely I fear for you the retribution of a painful Day' (Q11:25-126).

Similarly, Prophet Hūd, (AS) was also sent with the same message, Allah states: 'And to the tribe of 'Ād (we sent) their brother Hūd, He said my people, serve Allah, you have no other God save Him. Surely! You do but invent' (Q11:50, 54&56). In the case of Prophet Ṣāliḥ, (AS) the same message of *Tawḥīd* was repeated to him. The Qur'ān states:

And to the tribe of Thamūd (we sent) their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said my people, serve Allah, you have no other God save Him. He brought you from the earth and has made you husband it. So ask forgiveness of Him and turn to Him repentant, surely my Lord is nigh, responsive. (Q11:61)

Furthermore, Prophet Shu'ayb was also sent to the people of *Madyan* in order to warn them against association of partners with Allah '...And to *Midian* (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said O my people, serve Allah, you have no other god save Him...' (Q11:84). It is crystal clear that Prophet Ibrāhim was also sent to his people amidst a large amount of idol worshipping. The evidence can be gleaned from various verses of the Qur'ān. For instance: (Q26:69-76, Q6:77-79, Q16:120).

The same mission was given to Prophet Lūṭ (Q26:160-4), Prophet Ilyās (Q37:123-5), Prophet Ya‘qūb (Q2:133), Prophet Yūsuf (AS) (Q12:37-40), Prophet Sulaymān (AS) (27:23-26), Prophet Mūsā (AS) (26:23-24), and Prophet ‘Isā (AS) (Q43:63-64, Q5:17).

Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) was also sent as a universal messenger in the Arabian Peninsular. Many scholars describe their practices at this period as barbaric practices. In fact, this period is known in Islāmic history as the *jāhiliyyah* (barbaric) period.³²⁵ But the term ‘barbarism’ has attracted controversy among scholars, Hitti argues that the term *jāhiliyyah* usually rendered as ‘time of ignorance’ or ‘barbarism’ only means ‘...the period in which the Arabs had no dispensation, nor inspired Prophet, nor revealed book, for ignorance and barbarism can hardly be applied to such a cultured and lettered society...’³²⁶. Hitti claims that although the word occurs in several places in the Qur’ān,³²⁷ the critical comments mainly refer to the pre-Islamic idol-worship.³²⁸ Their ‘barbaric’ practices were categorized religiously, socially, morally and politically.³²⁹ Religiously, the Arabs had a pantheon of idols, they had cultic centres located at oases, and they went there like pilgrims. Their religion also included: fetishism (worshipping of stone), animism

³²⁵ I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, London: Aldine Transaction (2006), 219-223; see also, A.H.A. Nadwi, *Islām and the World*, Luknow, India: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications (1982), 35-34; B.G. Weiss & A.H. Green, *A Survey of Arab History*, Cairo, Egypt; The American University in Cairo Press (1985), 41-43

³²⁶ P.K.Hitti, *History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present*, revised, tenth edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2002), 87; P.K. Hitti, *The Arabs: A Short History*, 5th edition, London: Macmillan (1968), 20; C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, New York: Cornwall Press (1947), 8; H. Kennedy, *The Great Arabs Conquests: How the Spread of Islām Changed the World We Live in*, London: Phoenix Publisher (2007), 40

³²⁷ Q3:148, Q5:55, Q33:33, Q48: 26

³²⁸ Balyaeu asserts that this period is only given the name ‘ignorance’ or ‘barbarism’ because of lack of knowledge of the ‘true faith’ of Islam. It is historically used to designate the period that precedes the rise of Islam. For details, see E.A. Balyaeu, *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger Inc; Publishers (1969), 70

³²⁹ H.G.M.A. Sarwar, *Muḥammad: The Holy Prophet*, Lahore Pakistan: SH Muhammad Ashraf (1991), 2, and 21.

(worshipping of spirits, *jinn*), manism (ancestor-worship), totemism, astral triad (sun-moon Venus), as well as monotheism (Allah). They used to worship their idols throughout the year. They also believed in sacrifices, divination, shamanism, magic, witchcraft and sorcery. They equally had a number of superstitions.³³⁰ There are several places in the Qur'ān pointing to this.³³¹

All Prophets of Allah called people towards the fundamental theme of Islām, i.e. *al-Tawhīd* (Islamic Monotheism). They condemned most strongly *al-Shirk* (polytheism) of all kinds which is contrary to the concept of *Tawhīd*. From the verses quoted above, it is clear that all Prophets sent by Allah provided the same solution for the existence of older religions, which is '...the most acute, chronic and fatal disease of humankind; that is *shirk* (polytheism), which deprives them permanently of the privilege of vicegerency'³³². Based on this, Allah made mention of only twenty five Prophets on the basis of which one can easily judge the mission of all other Prophets.³³³

The Yoruba of Nigeria occupy a large area in the south-western part of Nigeria. They have a long history and trace their ancestral home to Ile-Ife, where they believe the act of creation began. They all claim to have had a common ancestor, Oduduwa. Talbot and Parinder claim that there are four features of West African Traditional Religion: '...polytheism, anthropomorphism, animism and ancestor

³³⁰ J. Henninger, 'Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion' in M.L. Swartz (ed.), *Studies on Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press (1981), 4-6.

³³¹ For instance, see Q3:64; Q39:64-67; Q42:13; Q21:24; Q7:199-201; Q112:1-4; Q16:36.

³³² Muhammad Ibrahim H.I. Surty, *The Qur'ān and Al-Shirk (Polytheism)*, 33

³³³ Ibid, 38; K.A. Futuh, *Dam 'ah 'ala Tawhīd; Ḥaqīqah al-Qubūriyyah wa Athāruhā fī Wāqī'i al-Ummah*, London: al-Muntada al-Islami Trust (2002), 192-193.

worship.³³⁴ Idowu proposes a five-fold classification of African Traditional Religion viz: Belief in God, belief in divinities, spirits, ancestors, and the practice of magic and medicine.³³⁵

In Yoruba cosmogony, it is believed that God is Supreme, Immanent, Creator, Unique etc., but He is too great to be approached directly. So, they take to divinities that they see as intermediaries, offspring and ministers of God in the 'theocratic government of the world'.³³⁶ These divinities are in three categories: (a) primordial; these, they believe, lived in the heaven since the creation of the heaven, (b) deified ancestors- these were human beings that lived extraordinary and mysterious lives on earth, when they died, they were 'canonised' or deified as gods. For instance, *Sango*, god of Thunder (*Jakuta*) in Yoruba land is a pointer to this fact. (c) The personification of natural forces and phenomena- it includes myriad of spirits that are associated with trees, rivers, lakes, mountains, etc. The *Olumo* rock in Abeokuta and *Oke-Ibadan* at Ibadan are classical examples. These divinities in Yoruba land are said to be 1700, and they include: *Orinsa-nla*, *Orunmila*, *Ogun*, *Esu*, *Sango*, *Sanpona*, *Osun*, *Oya* and *Ayelala* and they have their different portfolios and functions.

All these divinities are worshipped so that man will be in good relation with them by liturgy; which includes: libation, invocation, offering, prayer, songs, posture and attitude at worship, and various forms of sacrifice with various things which are

³³⁴ P.A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 14; J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion* (rev. ed.), Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Ltd (2005), 33. Parrinder suggests the following: Supreme god, the chief divinities, the cult of the divinised ancestors and charms and amulets. See, E.G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*, 11-12.

³³⁵ E.B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion; a Definition*, 139.

³³⁶ *Ibid*, 140

determined by taste and the occasion. It can be in form of sheep, goat, egg, yam and other food items. The sacrifice may be used for preventive, foundation, votive, meal and drink, propitiation and substitutionary offering or sacrifice.³³⁷ It should be noted that pouring out of liquid or some spirits on the ground for the invisible spirits to sanction the blessing, is very common among all the elements of the liturgy. They have both objects and places of worship. The priests serve as official servants of divinity; they are the mediators between god or divinity and man. There is also a significant role played by the medicine men, magicians and herbalists.³³⁸ Their belief in god can also be termed as ‘Henotheism’ which is adherence to one particular god out of several gods and goddesses.

3.2 Superstitions

According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, superstition is ‘belief that some objects or actions are lucky and unlucky, or that they cause events to happen, based on old ideas of magic’.³³⁹ It is used in Latin to mean unreasonable or excessive belief in fear or magic; especially a foreign or fantastic idea, and it thus came to mean a ‘cult’ in the ancient Roman Empire.³⁴⁰ Superstition is a belief or

³³⁷ J.O. Awolalu and P.A. Dopamu, *West African Religion*, 135; T.N.O. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 85-86

³³⁸ J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 151; E.B. Idowu, *Olodumare; God in Yoruba Belief*, 6.

³³⁹ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, England: Pearson Education Limited (2005), 1666. Superstition also entails ‘...beliefs and practices where fundamental premises are mistaken or false, irrational in so far as they cannot be proven through logic of empirical science’, for more see, S. Young (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*, vol. 2, New York: Macmillan (1999), 949-950.

³⁴⁰ *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1982), 332.

notion, not based on reason or knowledge, ‘...this word is used pejoratively to mean the supposedly irrational beliefs of others’³⁴¹.

Superstition is usually applied to beliefs and practices surrounding luck, prophecy and spiritual beings, most especially the ‘irrational’ belief that future events can be influenced or foretold by specific and unrelated behaviours or occurrences. For instance, luck charms, talismans, etc.³⁴²

The Medieval scholars claim that this terminology could be applied to any beliefs which are outside of or in opposition to revealed religions, either Christianity or Islām. Contemporarily, the terminology is used for ‘...concepts without foundation in, or in contravention of, scientific and logical knowledge’.³⁴³ It is also seen as a part of a people’s culture.³⁴⁴

In western traditional custom, for instance, superstitions are associated with bad luck including Friday the 13th, walking under a ladder. Breaking a mirror is seen as causing seven years of bad luck.³⁴⁵ People, who do not believe in revealed religions, may regard them as superstition. Religious practices are most likely to be labelled ‘superstitious’ by outsiders when they include belief in extraordinary events such as: miracles, life after death, supernatural interventions, apparitions, the

³⁴¹ Ibid, 333

³⁴²T. Robert, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, Oxford: England Blackwell (1996), 10-12.

³⁴³ P. Edward, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The middle Ages*. (N.P) Continuum International Publishing Group (2001), 10.

³⁴⁴ ‘Superstition’ ‘...is also used to denote any general culturally variable beliefs in a supernatural reality which is largely dependant on a given cultural belief set... while its superstitions may relate to things that are not fully understood or understood at all, such as: cemeteries, animals, demons, a devil, deceased ancestors, the weather, ripping one’s socks, death, luck etc. Ibid, 11

³⁴⁵ B.A. Lemu, *Islamic Studies for Senior Secondary Schools*, Lagos: IPB (1989), 117.

efficacy of prayer, charms, incantations, the meaningfulness of omens and prognostications.³⁴⁶

It is believed that some superstitions originated from religious practices and they continued to be observed by people who no longer adhere to the religion that gave birth to the practice, these practices would lose their original meaning in this process and in other instances, the practices are adapted to the current religion of the practitioner. Skinner, a behavioural psychologist asserted in his discussion of his psychological experiments that pigeons exhibit what appeared to him as superstitious behaviour. According to him:

...One pigeon was making turns in its cage, another would swing its head in a pendulum motion, while others also displayed a variety of other behaviours... all these behaviours were all done ritualistically in an attempt to receive food from a dispenser, even though the dispenser had already been programmed to release food at set intervals regardless of the pigeon's actions...³⁴⁷

From this experiment, Skinner suggested that the pigeons believed that they were influencing their feeding time by the actions they were performing and that were the equivalence of inherent superstitious behaviour in humans.³⁴⁸ It must be mentioned that this theory was challenged by some psychologists and they propounded alternative explanation for the pigeons' behaviour.³⁴⁹ Despite the criticism, Skinner's theory still stands the test of time to explain superstitious behaviour in human beings. This theory believes that whenever an individual performs an action expecting reinforcement, and there is none, it creates a sense of persistence within

³⁴⁶ Ibid, 117

³⁴⁷ B.F. Skinner, 'Superstition' in the Pigeon, *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, (1948), 38(2), 168

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 172.

³⁴⁹ For instance, J.E. Staddon, and V.L. Simmelhag, 'The 'superstition' experiment: A re-examination of its implications for the principles of adaptive behaviour' *Psychological Review* (1971), 78 (1), 41-43.

that individual, and this leads to superstitious behaviour, the individual feels that by continuing doing this action, reinforcement or reward will occur. It could be such reinforcement has come to some individuals at certain times in the past as a result of this action, although not always and they believe each time may be one of these occasions.³⁵⁰

In Africa, superstitions are common and very widespread, they include claims and conceptions, designed by human beings in the past, and these forms of beliefs permeate all aspects of African thought and culture: family life, trading, politics and social life.³⁵¹ In Yoruba culture for instance, there are many superstitious beliefs and practices which they apparently hold on to.³⁵² Among the Yoruba, superstition is known as (*eewo*) which literally means taboos, but critically looking at this term, it is not all superstitions that are taboos or forbidden. Some are merely senseless; others are harmful and contrary to religious beliefs and teachings. The English equivalence does not actually convey its real meaning and essence. The Yoruba in Lagos and elsewhere adhered to some of these superstitious beliefs and practices long before their acceptance of revealed religions. Some of them up until now still hold on to some of these beliefs, thinking that their observation can bring them benefit and their non observation can harm them. For instance, in Lagos, some Yoruba believe that to break a mirror will bring you seven years bad luck; other superstitious beliefs and practices that were in vogue and still retain up until now among the Yoruba in Lagos State include:

- (i) To open an umbrella in the house will bring bad luck.

³⁵⁰ <http://journals.royalsociety.org/content/v61648mh87863528>, retrieved 16/04/09

³⁵¹ <http://www.iheu.org/node/2856>, retrieved 16/04/2009

³⁵² Dada ati Jeje, *Asa ati Orisa ni Ile Yoruba*, 89.

- (ii) We should not use bare palms to collect rain water.
- (iii) Clothes worn inside out will bring good luck.
- (iv) An itchy palm means money will come your way.
- (v) A bird that comes in through your window brings bad luck.
- (vi) We should not enter the house backwardly.
- (vii) It is a bad luck to chase someone with a broom.
- (viii) A drowned woman floats face up, a drowned man floats face down.
- (xiv) We should not cook concoction (*agboo*) or pluck leaves from the tree at night.
- (xv) We should not step on spilled salt.
- (xvi) To drop a spoon means a child will visit you.
- (xvii) You must get out of bed on the same side you got in or you will have bad luck.
- (xviii) To give someone a purse or wallet without money in it, will bring that person bad luck.
- (xix) We should not cross a pregnant woman's legs lest she will give birth to a child that resembles that person.
- (xx) Whoever touches the nest of the bird called *ogurodo* will die
- (xxi) The fur of the *ehoro*, a kind of hare, is a charm which protects the house from the fire.³⁵³

Some Yoruba, it appears that despite their acceptance of the revealed religions still hold fast to these beliefs. This invariably influences their actions and inactions and they transmit it from one generation to another. It should be reiterated that although

³⁵³ Interview with Sister Shakirat, 25-08-09 and Sister Rahmat, 12-09-09

the essence of superstition in traditional Yoruba society is to inculcate moral rectitude, precaution from committing crime and health grounds as some of their examples will clearly show this.

There is superstitious belief among Yoruba in Lagos State as regards *Abiku*.³⁵⁴ It is believed that there exists a band of children with supernatural or mystical powers, who have the ability to transfer their spirits into the wombs of expectant mothers whom they pitch upon to torture. After birth these children are supposed to be ‘visited’ by their colleagues, they attend ‘nocturnal meetings’, taking along with them such things they demand from their parents and they are insatiable.³⁵⁵ Some of these children are allowed to come into the world and die shortly after birth with or without any signs of ill-health and very often they ‘return’ when they are in the best of health. ‘*Abikus*’ are believed to cut short their parents’ joys.³⁵⁶

Believing the phenomenon of *Abiku* going and coming back, some people give them indelible marks calculated to disfigure them in the hope that, bearing these marks, they may be rejected by their ‘comrades’. Sacrifices in various shapes and kinds are made. They dictate their own sacrifices and eager parents normally comply, because they want to stop him from ‘going away’ any more.³⁵⁷ They give them such names as ‘*Kokumo*’, ‘he does not die any more’. ‘*Malomo*’ ‘don’t go any more’, ‘*Kosoko*’ ‘no hoes’ (for digging graves). ‘*Duro-sinmi*’, ‘tarry behind to bury me’. As a result of this, many superstitious rituals are carried out for the expectant

³⁵⁴ Literally, *Abiku* means, ‘child born to die’. Ellis suggests that the name connotes, ‘*abi*’ ‘that which possesses’ and ‘*iku*’ death’; hence, ‘predestined to death’. For more, see, A.B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Languages, etc*, 111-112

³⁵⁵ A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 128.

³⁵⁶ Dada and Jeje, *Awon Asa ati Orisa ni Ile Yoruba*, 55

³⁵⁷ Interview with Alhaji. Durosimi at Iyana Era, Lagos, 16/10/08.

mother in order to ward off this phenomenon and to serve as ‘immunization’ for her against the onslaught of *Abiku* spirits.³⁵⁸

There is also superstitious belief as regards the days of the week with some days classified as auspicious and some as ominous. These days determine when to hold an occasion and vice-versa. All these have their specific names as *Ojo Aiku*, (Sunday) *Ojo Aje* (Monday), *Ojo Isegun* (Tuesday), *Ojo Ojoru*, (Wednesday), *Ojo Ojobo* (Thursday), *Ojo Eti*, (Friday), *Ojo Abameta* (Saturday). The names of these days connote various things and determine the activities of those days. Moreover, there is a superstitious belief as regards a virgin, at whose first menstrual period a chicken has to be killed, symbolising sacrifice (*etutu*) for the blood she will be experiencing every month. A woman who is deflowered by her husband must give sacrifice and gifts will be sent to her parents.³⁵⁹

In addition, there are other superstitious beliefs relating to birth among the Yoruba. For instance, marriage without children is considered as a shame no matter how rich, famous or prosperous the family is. When the wife is pregnant she is expected to observe some taboos based on individual patrilineal prohibitions (*eewo idile*). Some families will not allow the consumption of salts; generally the woman will not be allowed to go out in the hot sun or in the night in order to prevent the spirit of *Abiku* from entering her womb. She has to offer sacrifices to her husband’s ancestral spirits before delivery. If her delivery is difficult, the oracle would be consulted, and after delivery, the oracle would be consulted again to determine which ancestor he reincarnates (*ese-n-taye*). Some children ‘have names they bring

³⁵⁸ A.B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slaves Coast of West Africa*, 112-113

³⁵⁹ Dada ati Jeje, *Awon Asa ati Orisa ni Ile Yoruba*, 122

from heaven'; based on the way they are born. Some nursing mothers will not be allowed to eat certain food.³⁶⁰

Moreover, there are many materials that are brought out to name the child; *epo* (palm-oil), *iyó* (salt), *obi* (kolanut) etc, all these symbolising one spiritual power or the other. There are similar superstitious beliefs associated with marriage. For example, the oracle has to be consulted before the parents consent to the marriage, the bride will be carried in the night and the bridegroom must leave the house before the bride is 'carried into' the house while her feet will be washed before she enters symbolising 'spiritual cleansing'. In the case of death and burial ceremonies; expensive party will be held. If the deceased belongs to a secret society, he will be buried by his members, they will put some household utensils and money into his coffin so that he will utilise it at where he is going. Up until now, some Yoruba still believe that the dead person does not actually die but he is still around taking care of his family. This can be seen in their prayer to him when he is laid in state, 'not to forget his children'.³⁶¹

3.2.1 Belief in Witchcraft

According to Russel, witchcraft is the employment of mysterious supernatural powers involving magic and sorcery to wreak evil on the people, the power is organic and hereditary.³⁶² Witchcraft is to belief that someone possesses some

³⁶⁰ J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 197-200

³⁶¹ Dada and Jeje, *Awon Asa ati Orisa ni Ile Yoruba*, 224; N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 144-145

³⁶² B. Russell, 'Witchcraft' in A.C. Lehmann & J.E. Meyers (eds), *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion, An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, (3rd ed.), California: Mayfield

supernatural powers by which harm can be effected.³⁶³ Witchcraft is also considered as the ‘practice of magic, especially the use of spells and the invocation of evil spirits’.³⁶⁴ A witch is otherwise seen ‘...as a wise person who is adjudged to have supernatural powers in consequence of him or her forming a league with the devil or evil spirits; and through such alliance and co-operation, the person is enabled of such diabolical power as to be able to perform supernatural acts which are mostly destructive’.³⁶⁵

In other words, witches are considered as the personification of evil and wicked people who work harm against others. They wreak harm against people through their possession of mysterious powers unknown and unavailable to ordinary people. Idowu while describing their nefarious and diabolical deeds states:

Witches are human beings of very strong determined wills with diabolical bent ;...(they) are the veritably wicked ones who derive sadistic satisfaction from bringing misfortune upon other people...³⁶⁶

Witchcraft is viewed as ‘...a bad medicine directed destructively against other people, but its distinctive feature is that there is no palpable apparatus connected with it, no rites, ceremonies, incantations, or invocations that the witch has to perform...’³⁶⁷ Field observes that a witch is ‘...a person who is the abode of an evil

Publishing (1993), 198, See also, E.E.Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, Oxford: Clarendon Press (1976),1-2; D. Forde, *Ethnographic Survey of Africa, West Africa and the Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: International African Institute, 30-31; L. Frobenius, *The Voice of Africa; Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910-1912*, 199-201.

³⁶³ T.N.O Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 150-151; J.S.Eades, *Changing Culture: The Yoruba Today*, 124-125

³⁶⁴ S. Soanes and A. Stevenson (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1656.

³⁶⁵ J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 78-79.

³⁶⁶ E.B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion; A Definition*, 184-185.

³⁶⁷ J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 80.

entity...³⁶⁸ Witchcraft is an anti-social phenomenon which acts against the society.³⁶⁹

To some people, witchcraft is a way of providing an outlet for aggression caused by the conflicts, antagonisms, and frustrations of social living. It is considered as a convenient scapegoat for such aggressions. The dysfunctional aspect of this art is that it does real harm, causes real fears, and promotes dangerous problems. This is the exercise of evil through immanent power. Witchcraft, unlike sorcery, is derived from within, and cannot be learned. A witch's power to do evil may lie dormant and not be used or it may be increased by practice, but it is nearly always inherited. But, magic may either be malevolent or beneficent. Withchcraft frequently has an animal form such as a cat, a werewolf, or a bat. Witches can project evil over great distances without moving, or they may transport themselves at great speeds in order to do some needed mischief. The evil eye and evil tongue are variants of witchcraft and some people can cause terrible harm simply by looking or speaking, often without evil intent. Witchcraft, magic and divination are worldwide, and their antiquity is great.³⁷⁰

In his contribution, Mbiti admits largely the controversy surrounding the existence of witchcraft. Having given copious examples on the activities of these mysterious societies; he criticizes the large amount of ignorance, prejudice and falsifications

³⁶⁸ M.J. Field, *Religion and the Medicine of the Ga People*, Oxford: Oxford Press (1937), 12.

³⁶⁹ Parrinder claims that women are the most prone to the suspicion of witchcraft. In most parts of Yoruba land and in any typical African society, witches are believed to be female, and the most dangerous ones. A female witch-doctor is very rare, it is believed these secret societies are mainly concerned with females, kinship stresses are other roots of witchcraft. For more, see, G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 132.

³⁷⁰ W.A. Lessa & E.Z. Vogt (eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach* (4th ed.), New York: Harper & Row (1979), 332-333.

coming from modern authors and writers on this subject; most especially European and American writers, missionaries and colonial administrators. Besides, he asserts that every African man appears to know something about the mystical power which is often experienced, or manifested itself in form of magic, divination, witchcraft and other mysterious phenomena which defy immediate scientific explanation.³⁷¹ Anthropologists and sociologists use the term witchcraft in a specialized way, they believe that witches are women who leave their bodies on their beds in order to attend ‘meetings’ or to ‘suck’ or ‘eat’ the life of their victims. So, witchcraft is seen as an infectious or hereditary art.

Mbiti asserts that African societies do not usually draw academic distinction between witchcraft, sorcery, evil magic, evil eye and other means of mystical power to wreak havoc on people.³⁷² ‘Witchcraft’ according to him is a terminology that connotes ‘...harmful employment of mystical power in all its different manifestations...’ He claims that whatever the controversy, one thing is absolutely certain, that: ‘...African peoples believe that there are individuals who have access to mystical power which they employ for destructive purposes...’³⁷³ Russell, after his comprehensive analysis of witchcraft, claims that:

Witches are usually females and often elderly; they meet at night, leaving their bodies or changing their shapes. They suck the blood or devour the internal organs of their victims; they kill children and eat them, and sometimes bring their flesh to the secret assemblies; they ride through the air naked on

³⁷¹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 104.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 202.

³⁷³ Mbiti concludes that ‘... the belief in witchcraft among the Yoruba cannot be free from its psychological contagiousness because the belief, fear, exaggeration, fiction and irrationality, affects everyone, because it has become an essential aspect of Yoruba religious beliefs’ *Ibid*, 203.

broomsticks or other objects; they have familiar spirits; they dance in circles; they hold indiscriminate orgies and seduce sleeping people.³⁷⁴

He concludes that ‘...witchcraft is a diverse subject, which no single approach can completely fathom...examining it theologically, historically, mythologically, psychologically, anthropologically and sociologically.’³⁷⁵

Writing on witchcraft and the malevolent activities of witches and wizards, Reverend Evangelist J.O. Balogun of the God’s miracle Evangelical Ministry, who himself admitted to have belonged to fourteen secret cults of which he headed seven, testifies thus:

Witchcraft may be grouped into three sectional parts: the *agude*, *agude*, (in Yoruba accent) and the *agudegude*. The *agudegude* are the most powerful ones called *Oshorongu*. They are hermaphrodites. They possess both male and female organs. They are the wicked. They transform themselves into black cats and birds. They change into any form of animal of their choice.

They torment victims in dreams by becoming cows, snakes and lions pursuing them. They cook palatable dishes and give people to eat in dreams. They may have sex with a pregnant woman, show her a red piece of cloth, red palm-nuts or even kill a goat and allow the pregnant woman see the blood flowing at dawn, the pregnancy will be miscarried physically. If they are successful in burying a person in a dream and the victim fails to fight his way out to get free in this dream, he may not wake up alive physically.

Very strong and powerful wizards and witches do not have to harm a victim physically but by merely looking at him. By just rubbing body to body, havoc has been perpetrated. Blood has been sucked. When some possessed elders lay their palms on the heads of children pretending to bless or greet them, the result is always on the reverse.

Sometimes witches have their signs marked on the foreheads of their victims. It is a black ring with a red dot in the centre. Wherever he or she goes she is

³⁷⁴ .B. Russell, ‘Witchcraft’ in A.C. Lehmann & J.E. Myers (eds.), *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion, An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural* (3rd ed.), California: Mayfield Publishing (1993), 199.

³⁷⁵ Russel concludes that ‘... even taking all these subjects together, they do not seem to provide a full understanding of such a diverse subject.’ He also argues that its power may diminish from time to time, but it is unlikely to disappear. Ibid, 200

never free from their attacks. She or he becomes a prey to them. The sign is invisible to the ordinary eye.³⁷⁶

Scholars have distinguished witchcraft from sorcery; a sorcerer uses charms, incantations, spells and magic and with premeditation. But a witch performs no rite, utters no spell and possesses neither spell nor medicine and it is a psychic act. The sorcerer makes a magic to harm but the witch sometimes has inherent and intangible power for harming others. She also projects her evil thoughts from her mind, invisibly and without cursing and invoking; but a sorcerer manipulates tangible materials such as: nails, hair, spittle, sweat, urine, sleeping mats, dirty clothes, chewing sticks, footprints and a handkerchief (all connected with the body) in order to prepare offensive magic for his clients; to get rid of his enemies; and to carry out his devilish work.³⁷⁷

The sorcerer can also kill his enemies or those of his clients by the use of bad magic; by means of invocation and incantations; thus making an effigy of his victim spiritually; killing him through this means. He can equally send poisonous animals particularly snakes and scorpions to attack his victim.³⁷⁸ Sorcery also involves the use of '*magun*' 'do not mount' (technically it means 'do not have intercourse with'); a father or jealous husband secretly puts this bad magic on his wife and

³⁷⁶ J.O.Balogun, *Freedom from Clutches of Satan*, Abakaliki, Nigeria: Holy Ghost Outreach Ministries International, 14. Although, this statement could be seen as 'self praising' in order to 'purify' himself that he has renounced the witchcraft society and to sell his church as a centre of deliverance for any problem, so that many people will come to his church. Be that as it may, the statement still contains some facts about the activities of this society which we hear and read. In an Oral interview with Mrs. Salmat on 12-1-08. She told me that she did had a similar experience when she was pregnant and whenever she dreamt she would see a woman, who was her enemy and threatened her in real life, showing her a blood-stained cloth, and in the morning she would physically notice that she has been miscarried. Many other people have also made statements like this.

³⁷⁷ J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 81.

³⁷⁸ J.O.Awolalu & P.A.Dopamu., *West African Traditional Religion*, 281; T.N.O. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 151

anybody that has sexual intercourse with her will be caught in the trap and will die instantaneously and disgracefully. The husband can also fall victim if the woman remains faithful. It also involves the use of curses, imprecating the enemy with bad magic called 'epe' (curse). Through it, a person can become insane, or calling down lightning or incurable disease on their victim.³⁷⁹ Sorcery makes use of palpable magical apparatus, but witchcraft relies heavily on psychic powers.

In the psychology and sociology of the Yoruba, and in Africa generally, the existence of witchcraft and their diabolical activities have been ingrained in their minds. 'Strange', 'terminal', sudden diseases like accidents, 'untimely' death, demotion in jobs, failure in examinations, loss in business, disappointment in love, barrenness in women, impotence in men, and failure of crops to be harvested are attributed to witchcraft.³⁸⁰ The Yoruba do not believe that people that die young suffer infant mortality, poverty etc., they often believe that this type of misfortune is caused by witchcraft.³⁸¹

Scholars have divergent opinions on the controversy as to whether there is objective reality in the existence of witchcraft. Pritchard and Meek denounce the real existence of witchcraft and their diabolical activities; Pritchard says '...witchcraft is an imaginary offence because it is impossible. A witch cannot do what he is supposed to do and has in fact no real existence'.³⁸² Meek also debunks the existence of witchcraft when he says 'Witches and witchcraft do not, of course,

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 284-286.

³⁸⁰ J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu., *West African Traditional Religion*, 81.

³⁸¹ Owolabi, et al., *Ijinle Ede ati Litireso Yoruba*, Lagos: Evans Brothers Ltd (2000), 49-50. In other words, they do not critically assess their own faults in terms of good health care, training, good diet, good living to mention but a few.

³⁸² E.E. Evans-Pritchard., *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1937). 11-13

exist; witchcraft is a purely imaginary crime'.³⁸³ They consider it as a figment of imagination. But Field in her extensive study acknowledged the fact that it is very difficult to make investigations and understand witchcraft, but there is objective reality in the existence of witchcraft to Africans.³⁸⁴ She refuted the Europeans' claim that '...witches are people mentally afflicted with the obsession that they have the power to harm others by thinking them harm'.³⁸⁵ In other words, they view it as a fantasy or an illusion but Field was convinced that '...the African point of view is based on a solid reality and not on a superstitious and senselessly cruel fantasy'.³⁸⁶

Indeed, the belief in witchcraft among the Africans, Yoruba inclusive, is ubiquitous and one cannot make a categorical statement about it and their activities unless one belongs to that secret society. Nevertheless, the activities of witches are well known in African communities and all evils are attributed to them.³⁸⁷ Idowu claims that witchcraft is a reality in Africa.³⁸⁸ Most of the Yoruba also share the same view regardless of their educational background, economic, social and religious status. There are many Muslim Clerics or *Imām* as witch doctors, who give people charms and amulets to counter or protect against the diabolical influence of witchcraft.³⁸⁹

Many Scholars of African Traditional Religion explain that the main source of information concerning witchcraft is obtained from confessions made by witches

³⁸³ C.K. Meek, *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*, (NP): Kegan Paul (1931), 44.

³⁸⁴ M.J. Field, *Religion and the Medicine of the Ga People*, 80-82.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁸⁸ I.E. Bolaji, 'The Challenge of Witchcraft', *Orita*, Vol. iv, No.1, June, 1970, 16.

³⁸⁹ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 246-247.

themselves.³⁹⁰ It is these confessions that make people believe that witches actually exist; although modern scientists and psychologists have debunked this claim saying that these so called confessions are made under pressure, duress and threat, or when they are delirious and not conscious of what they are saying. But such confessions according to a pre-scientific and naturalistic approach may be upheld; and the Yoruba anti-wickedness divinities (i.e. *Ayelala*) single out wicked witches for punishment.³⁹¹

Some scholars of African Traditional Religion have come up with distinctive features of witches which include: ‘Witchcraft is intangible; it cannot be touched or handled, it is psychic; you cannot see it physically when it performs its action, it is shrouded in secrecy; a witch enjoys secrecy; whenever she goes about her ‘service’ or ‘trade’ she disguises herself using bird or familiar animal which she works constantly with, or flying to their assembly’³⁹²

It is also claimed that they organise nocturnal meetings which is *Ajo*, and they meet at midnight spiritually or in a dream; the meetings are held at different levels. It is said that important diabolical decisions are taken at these meetings, and the contributions and elevations or promotions at these meetings depend upon a donation of a human victim. In other words, the chief purpose of their meetings is spiritual cannibalism (anthropophagy), they devour ‘the soul of the flesh’ the dearer

³⁹⁰ See for instance, J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 83; G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 125; J.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 195; G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*. 165-166; G.E. Simpson, *Yoruba Religion and Medicine in Ibadan*, 75-76

³⁹¹ J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 83. A.B. Elias, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Language. Etc.* 116

³⁹² It is claimed that they usually mount on the backs of owls, antelopes, leopards, black cats, snakes, night birds like night-jars, owls, bats, fireflies or by transforming herself. And they are mostly women. For details, see G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 126.

to the contributor, the more elevation she earns.³⁹³ For instance, she can kill her own daughter, husband, etc.³⁹⁴

Scholars have maintained that witchcraft can be acquired through different ways: some people are born witches; some people also inherit powers from their mothers i.e. heredity; some people also pay for it in order to procure it while some unknowingly acquire it through food given by witches in which witchcraft would have been 'stuffed', it can also be an infection that can be taken with food, and the recipient now gets a craving for human flesh. It is also believed that the most stubborn of them are those born witches.³⁹⁵

Moreover, other methods used by witchcraft to infect or attack their victim may be in the form of incantations, words or rituals. She may also use nails, hair and clothes which she burns or pricks. The belief is that once she inflicts harm on his belongings, the injury will automatically wound his victim. Another method is that of planting a magic object into the ground across the path where the victim will likely pass or at his gate or sending flies, bees, or animals so that when they touch him or he sees them he will automatically fall sick or meet the intended misfortune. They also cause harm by ordinarily looking at the person, wishing him harm or speaking to him words intended to inflict harm on him.³⁹⁶

³⁹³ J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 85; Oral information from Alhaji. Isa, Yoruba traditional medicine man and a witch doctor, based in Epe on 10/10/08.

³⁹⁴ Interview with Alhaji. Imota Balogun, *Imām Zumratul Islamiyyah*, Epe branch 18/10/08. Imota explains to me that they normally have women at their headship i.e. head of council. Men are known as 'knife holders' in charge of executing their victims and whoever is killed or punished, it is believed, that they assume a collective or corporate responsibility. And in case their victim will be pardoned, it is one of the members that will be given the medicine to cure the victim or an expert in this way can order that a substitute sacrifice should be done.

³⁹⁵ G.Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 124; J.O. Awolalu, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 85.

³⁹⁶ J.S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, 166.

Witches may also carry another person's soul to be shared at their nocturnal meetings, the victim will wake up weak and sick and he will die instantly.³⁹⁷ They also inflict serious injuries on their victims like blindness or barrenness. The Yoruba also believe in 'voodoo death', death caused by witchcraft, sorcery or due to taboo violation, they believe that fear of these sorcery, witchcraft or supernatural sanctions is so firmly held, and that fear alone can kill.³⁹⁸

Furthermore, the motives for witchcraft include domestic tensions and jealousies that are bound to grow in any closely knit communities. That is why it is common among relatives and neighbours. Sometimes people may simply wish to get rid of another person for the fun of it; or to inherit their property; or to take revenge for some wrong done to them.³⁹⁹

The way and method in which witchcraft is counteracted is called witch-hunting or witch-doctors, most diviners practise witch-finding as part of their job, witch-doctors also sometimes go into trance, by using medicine, gazing into water and consulting the dead.

Accused witches are often made to submit to an ordeal to test their guilt or innocence. Sometimes, it may be some semi-poisonous matters to be swallowed, or witch-doctors going from one door to the other after a large number of people will

³⁹⁷ E.I. Metuh, *God and Man in African Religion; A Case Study of Igbo of Nigeria*, London: Geoffrey Chapman (1981), 101.

³⁹⁸ For details, see, W.B. Cannon, 'Voodoo' Death' in W.A. Lessa & E.Z. Vogt, *Reader in Comparative Religion: an Anthropological Approach*, 367.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, 167. Oral information confirming this also from *Aafaa* Yaro a traditional practioner at Epe, 09/10/09.

have been gathered; they will be interrogated and they will be made to pass through a traditional ordeal if accused.⁴⁰⁰ Some secret societies are often used in Yoruba land to deal with a convicted witch.⁴⁰¹

However, Awolalu and Dopamu suggest that the belief in witchcraft will be gradually declining, due to people advancement in education, securing good job, access to state-of-the-art hospitals, better understanding of revealed religions, effective education and good living.⁴⁰² In order to solve the riddle of the numerous spiritual beings in the African world-view, many writers base their explanation on the fact that the African traditional world view is anthropocentric, which does not realise that God is the principal source and end of the universe, man at the centre of the universe, above him is the supreme being. Ontologically, man is at the centre, with God and the Deities above and natural forces, for instance, witchcraft and medicine below.⁴⁰³

In other words, man looks to the superior divine forces for help, protection and security against evil spirits and the forces of evil which can hamper his progress and expose him to danger. He, in the same vein, harnesses the lower spirits in nature like medicine, witchcraft, magic in order to fulfil and achieve his worldly goals

⁴⁰⁰ G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 128.

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Akanmu, a lecturer in Yoruba Dept, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Lagos, 23/10/08. This method according to Akanmu is made up of masquerades covered with a cylindrical tent, up to fifteen feet high. They appear in streets in towns and villages; they dance during the day, and in the evening visit compounds looking for witches. They will bend their great height over terrified women, and the accused women will be rushed to the bush and passed through an ordeal, if not beaten to death. In traditional society, Sometimes these women will be made to dig the soil with their bare hands until the blood comes out and that blood will be the evidence of their guilt. In Lagos sometimes, these women are seriously flogged, ill-treated and chased out of the town and pelted with stones and humiliating song.

⁴⁰² Interview with Alhaji. Kasum, the *Baale* of Odomola village, 13/10/08; see also, J.O. Awolalu & P.O. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 283.

⁴⁰³ E.I. Metuh, *God and Man in African Religion; A Case Study of Igbo Nigeria*, 103.

which are varied and numerous without caring about the consequences of such means that he makes use of in order to amass his worldly desire. It may be difficult for some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State to uncompromisingly believe in Allah according to the Prophet's teachings in so far as the Yoruba society is concerned.

3.2.2. Secret Societies/Occultism

Fadipe claims that the need to form association among the Yoruba is a natural tendency; this is derivable from people living in one compound. Their purpose ranges from promoting and protecting the common interests of their clan in all fields of human endeavour.⁴⁰⁴ However, secret societies are associations that are closed cult groups or guilds. The Yoruba Anthropologists assert that various terms are used to describe this phenomenon.⁴⁰⁵ These societies are groups that have restricted membership and are involved in mysterious activities, many of them were formed out of religious inspiration, and most of these associations have initiatory rites and sometimes serve to boost the prestige of those in these societies.⁴⁰⁶

A secret society can also be seen as terminology that is used to describe a variety of organizations. Its exact meaning is controversial, and most of its definitions connote a degree of secrecy and secret knowledge. It includes denying membership or knowledge of another group, negative consequences for acknowledging one's

⁴⁰⁴ N.A.Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 243; D. Forde, *Ethnographic Survey of Africa, West Africa and the Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: International African Institute, 16-17; L. Frobenius, *The Voice of Africa; Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910-1912*, 197-199

⁴⁰⁵ G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 128; J.O. Awolalu & P.A.Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 243; R.S. Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba*, 143. N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 253.

⁴⁰⁶ R.S. Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba*, 129. D. Forde, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, 17

membership in public, and strong ties between members of the organization, also rites and rituals which outsiders are not permitted to observe.⁴⁰⁷

The secret society is used to describe ‘...fraternal organizations that have secret ceremonies, ranging from common and innocuous, collegiate fraternities to mythical organizations described as immensely powerful, with self-serving financial or political agenda, global reach, and often have luciferous beliefs’.⁴⁰⁸ Application of this term is disputed, because it is seen as pejorative.

Alan Axelord defines a secret society where; ‘...the organization is exclusive; it claims to own special secrets; it shows a strong inclination to favour its own’.⁴⁰⁹ Barrett, in his own analysis, uses slightly different terms to define what does and does not qualify as a secret society. He defines a secret society as ‘...any group that possesses the following characteristics: It has ‘carefully graded and progressed teachings’; teachings are ‘available only to selected individuals’; teachings lead to ‘hidden (and ‘unique’) truths’; truths bring ‘personal benefits beyond the reach and even the understanding of the uninitiated’.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ E.I. Metuh, *God and Man in African Religion; A Case Study of Igbo Nigeria*, 101. See also, J. Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, (3rd ed), vol.xi, Edinburgh: T&T Clark (1954), 287-289

⁴⁰⁸ <http://www.secret-societies.net> retrieved 11/11/09.

⁴⁰⁹ A. Alan, *International Encyclopaedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders*, New York: (NP) (1997), 7.

⁴¹⁰ Barrett goes on to tell us that ‘...a further characteristic common to most of them is the practice of rituals which non-members are not permitted to observe, or even to know the existence of. This society also involves oath taking at membership, parts of this oath can include: a promise to support the organization; to keep their activities secret; no matter what, that the new members will conceal their membership of the organization; sometimes the oath can be penalties, rituals...’ D.V. Barrett, *Secret Societies: From the Ancient and Arcane to the Modern and Clandestine* (NP) (NP), 1-2; see also, J.M. Roberts, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, .New York: Scribner (1972), 3.

A secret society, technically, in the science of religion, is *Maennerbund*. A *Maennerbund* is a secret society whose members undergo an initiation in which they take on, sometimes, the personality of different animals. The origin lies with the dawn of time, when Stone Age man in order to hunt successfully, imitated one or more of the important animals around him as a model. Sociologically, they have a strong hierarchic order, entail separation from daily life and absolutize the group's aim and put them beyond all other moral consideration.⁴¹¹

Occultism is derived from the word 'occult' which means 'mysterious practices and powers involving magic and spirits'.⁴¹² According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, the word 'occultism' is from '*occultare*' 'secrete' or '*occulere*' 'conceal'. It therefore means '...supernatural or magical powers; both in its practices and phenomena'.⁴¹³ The word 'occult' is from the Latin word '*occultus*' which means clandestine, or secret, all referring to 'knowledge of the hidden'.⁴¹⁴

These societies are secret and they always engage in mysterious activities. No one can say with precision what these secret societies stand for and practise; except those who are initiates, those who are not in these societies only speculate; some people claim they are good, others claim they are evil.⁴¹⁵ Originally in Yoruba land, these secret societies were instituted for the purpose of self preservation and saving of the community; they used to enforce and maintain traditions, customs and beliefs. This determines ritual behaviour and regulating social attitudes, they are

⁴¹¹ C. Glasse, *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 408.

⁴¹² *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1133.

⁴¹³ C. Soanes & A. Stevenson (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* 988.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.* 988.

⁴¹⁵ J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 242. Their secrets are being revealed sometimes by those who have renounced the association. They also include what we observe in the society, legends as well as from published works

the power of the community in Yoruba land. Their members usually make claim of esoteric knowledge and mysterious powers which the ordinary members of the society do not have access to, by so doing they consider themselves as superior to other members of the society.⁴¹⁶

The most popular meaning of this word is ‘knowledge of the paranormal’, as opposed to ‘knowledge of the measurable’.⁴¹⁷ The word ‘occult’ is popularly taken to mean ‘knowledge meant only for certain people’ or ‘knowledge that must be kept hidden’ but on the part of its practitioners it means the study of a deeper spiritual reality that extends beyond pure reason and the physical sciences.⁴¹⁸ The terms ‘esoteric’ and ‘arcane’ have a similar meaning, and the three terms are often used interchangeably.⁴¹⁹ It can also be used as a label given to a number of magical organizations or orders, as well as their teachings and practices as taught by this group. The name is also applied by a large body of literature and spiritual philosophy. Occultism on its own can be viewed as the study of occult or hidden wisdom, to the occultist it means the study of the ‘truth’, a deeper truth that exists beneath the surface: ‘The truth is always hidden in plain sight’, it involves subjects such as magic, alchemy, extra-sensory perception, astrology, spiritualism, and numerology. There is strong religious element to these studies and beliefs, and many of these occultists profess adherence to a religion.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, 244.

⁴¹⁷E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, Meridian, NewYork, (1974), 7; <http://www.icrcanada.org/kundandpara.html> accessed 28/12/09.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ <http://www.answers.com/topic/occultism> accessed 10/09/10

Religiously, occult is anything that is supernatural which is not achieved by or through God and is therefore the work of an opposing and malevolent entity. In religion therefore, the word connotes negative things and certain practices are considered by some as 'occult' is rarely used and is sometimes substituted with 'esoteric'.⁴²¹

For the sake of protection and superiority, some members of the community are induced to join these societies; some believe that one cannot absolutely say that these societies are absolutely evil; they sometimes exist for the well-being of the community, and they have different categories and functions.⁴²² But it appears that some secret societies sometimes get out of hand because of their secrecy by engaging in nefarious and anti social behaviour, committing brutal judicial murders, bullying, terrorism, exploitation, endangering the peace of the community, they sometimes perform outrageous deeds without the knowledge of the people, since their activities are shrouded in secrecy and their doings cannot be investigated or verified.⁴²³

Category and Functions of Secret Societies:

- a) Some secret societies are religiously orientated: These type of secret cults or societies worship a common divinity or spirit. They are often concerned with the cult of the dead; they feature more at funeral and memorial services. They are hierarchical. They embody supernatural power. They

⁴²¹ W. Benjamin, *Encyclopedia of the Occult, the Esoteric and the Supernatural*, New York: Stein and Day (1980), 10.

⁴²² Interview with the President of *FATHU QUARIB*, Alhaji.Kasim, on 21/10/08.

⁴²³ Oral information from Alhaji. Abdul-Ghaniyy Agbo-Tomokekere at Odomola, 10/10/08.

have officials with specific duties. They are usually connected with certain festivals which are occasions of general rejoicing when masked ‘spirits’ come out from the spiritual domain. They include the *Ogboni* Society, the *Oro* cult, the *Egungun* cult, the *Agemo* cult, and the *Eluku* cult among the Yoruba.

- b) Some of them are connected with puberty rites; members are admitted at the age of puberty; they are initiated and trained in special ‘schools’. They are given instruction in behaviour, tribal customs and religion and rigorous training, in order to prepare them for adulthood.
- c) Some secret societies are solely anti-social; they practise cannibalism; they are very dangerous and much feared by the people; their meeting places are usually in hide-outs, especially in the heart of the forest in secret clearings. It is believed that human victims are killed and feasted on such meetings.⁴²⁴

All these societies taken together admit members by initiatory rites; some last for several hours, days, weeks or months; their oath is to be loyal to the society and to keep its mysteries in total secrecy. Any person that divulges the secrecy will be severally sanctioned. In the past, the death penalty was usually imposed.⁴²⁵ We shall now examine briefly some of these secret societies among Yoruba in Lagos State. They are:

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 248.

⁴²⁵ Oral information from Chief Ligali, the *Aree Adini* of Noforija, 21/10/08.

(a) *Ogboni*: This secret society is common in virtually all Yoruba societies. It is otherwise called *Oshugbo* in Lagos. It later metamorphosed to *Akala* and The Reformed *Ogboni* Fraternity (R.O.F); it was introduced to Lagos by an Ijebu man called Onashigun during the reign of King Akisemoyin. It was one of the organs of Government in the past decades, it was the law enforcement agency of the Government, their supreme leader is Oluwo but Apena is the real administrator of the cult. He is assisted by an inner council consisting of six elders of the Cult called *Iwarefa*. *Gege* is the Deputy Apena.⁴²⁶ It is the most important among the secret societies in Yoruba land, Lagos inclusive. It is a political organization for the purpose of maintaining law and order in society. In the past they used to settle civil disputes; deal with criminal charges and see to the well being of the society; they also check the excesses of the king.⁴²⁷ They wield a lot of power, initiations are done through human sacrifices, and these rites are performed at *Ogboni* house (*iledi*) or in the sacred grove. Their members usually wear beads on the neck and the wrist; tie a wrapper across the left shoulder, and wear a sash (an embroidered cloth) called *saki* or *itagbe* over the right shoulder; when they are in council, they sit in order of seniority.⁴²⁸ Nowadays, they have lost most of their power.

(b) *Oro*: The word *oro*, according to Ellis means ‘fierceness’ or ‘provocation’.⁴²⁹ This is another cultural aspect of the Yoruba. It is a cult and not a religion. It is exclusively male, it has no special conclave of its own, and it is done to ward away

⁴²⁶ H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, 283-284; D. Forde, *The Yoruba-Speaking peoples of South- Western Nigeria*, 17

⁴²⁷ N.A..Fadipe, *Sociology of the Yoruba*, 243-244.

⁴²⁸ H.A.B. Fasinro, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, 270. J.O. Awolalu and P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 248-249; T. N.O. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 183

⁴²⁹ A.B.Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Language, etc*, 109-110

all sorts of evil spirits within the vicinity.⁴³⁰ They usually perform it during the night when only males are allowed to take part; those that are initiated, it comes out during the day on special day but during this time women are restricted inside their rooms as they are not allowed to see the *oro*, hence the saying: ‘*Eti ni obinrin fi ngburo Oro*, (Women just hear the *Oro* but do not see it’). ‘*Bobinrin foju kan Oro, Oro yoo gbe e*’ (‘If a woman sees *Oro*, *Oro* will carry her away’ into the spirit world).⁴³¹ The *Oro* cult has an annual festival lasting a week. During this period, women do whatever they want to do quite early in the day, and they retire into their houses. Certain evil practices are known to take place during this period; some people seize the opportunity to steal and even commit murder, demonstrating that some of these cults are dangerous and anti-social.⁴³²

(c) *Eyo/Adamu Orisa*: *Eyo* indicates Yoruba belief in ancestral worship. It is also an avenue to remember very important people that departed in the community. There are various accounts to how it was brought to Lagos.⁴³³ One account has it that *Adamu Orisha* and *Ogunran* were the two fetishes brought to Lagos by Chief Ologun. He was one of the chiefs that accompanied King Ado from Benin to Lagos. They were housed at *Ita Ado* and he used to propitiate it on every seventeenth day. Later, an Ijebu man used to join them in its worship and later the children of the

⁴³⁰ N.A. Fadipe, *Sociology of the Yoruba*, 249.

⁴³¹ R. S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, 29-33. Johnson claims that this society serves to demonstrate the superiority of male over female. In the past, it was the executive arm of the *Ogboni* society, they executed criminals and that is why the Yoruba will say: ‘*A kii ri ajeku Oro*’: (we never see the remains of an *Oro* victim’). They use bull-roarers (a sacred object used in religious ceremony, consisting of a piece of wood attached to a string, whirled round to produce a roaring noise) perforated bamboo or a wooden lath with a hole to make a weird and awe-inspiring sound. When heard in the night, the impression is that the air is full of the agonised cries of a host of angry or aggrieved spirits. For details, see T. Folami, *History of Lagos Nigeria*, 10 & 251, see also, G.E. Simpson, *Yoruba Religion and Medicine in Ibadan*, 53-54; G. Parinder, *West African Traditional Religion*, 130-131; R.O. Ajetunmobi, ‘Traditional Religion and Festivals’ in R.O. Ajetunmobi & N.O. Junaid –Eko, (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and Its Environs*, 92-93.

⁴³² Interview with Chief Kareem, *Olori Oloro* of Epe, 16/10/08.

⁴³³ R.O. Ajetunmobi, ‘Traditional Religion and Festivals’ in R.O. Ajetunmobi & N.O. Junaid –Eko, (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and Its Environs*, 103-104

first *Ologun Agan* introduced a man called 'Eyo' into it. Other account suggests that it was Ejilu and Malaki both were hunters and priests brought Eyo to Lagos in memory of their dead relation called Olugbani. Ajetumobi asserts that there is a consensus of opinion that it was the latter account that brought the cult to Lagos.⁴³⁴

Originally, it was one *Eyo* that was involved in the *Adamu Orisha* worship, known as *Okepa*, but this increased to six and was later brought from Oke-Ipa in Ikoyi back to Lagos Island and stationed within the premises of *Iga Ologun Agan* called *Awe Adimu (Adamu Orisa Conclave)*. This was at Alagbeji Street and *Awo Opa* at a place near *Oju Orori-Erelu Kuti*, and then many were organized in Lagos to give *Adamu Orisha* protection. To mark the memory of King Ologun Kutere, the Eyo play was staged for him. Since then the *Adamu Orisa* has been confined to funeral ceremonies of *Obas*, Chiefs and prominent dignitaries in the town.⁴³⁵ Today, *Eyo* has become an important cult and traditional festival attracting people from far and wide; Muslims and non Muslims participate in this *Adamu Orisha* annual outing, and it serves as a source of revenue for Lagos State Government.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ Ibid, 103.

⁴³⁵ Oral information from Oluwa 12/08/08. Oral information from Chief Ligali. Idi ganran, Lagos, 13/10/08. Oluwa says that here are four *orishas* in the Eyo play. Before it can be staged by anyone permission of the *Oba* must obtained and money paid. The *Adamu Orisha* had been designated as a fetish right from the start; but *Eyo* was a sort of body guard for *Adamu Orisha*

⁴³⁶ There is also an *Egungun* cult which was also introduced to Lagos from Oyo during the reign of King Adele 1. He gave his support to its establishment in Lagos; and there were a lot of controversies before its establishment, because it is similar to the *Awo opa* cult. But because of the king's vested interest, he accepted all the conditions attached to it. It was then agreed that no member of *Awo Opa* should belong to the *Egungun* cult; but an *Egungun* cult member could join *Awo Opa* and once he does this, he cannot return to *Egungun* again. It was also agreed that *Egungun* masquerades must not go to certain areas in Isale Eko particularly when going to the king's palace. It is an ancestral cult showing a belief in life after death, it is believed to be the spirit of a deceased person; who has returned from heaven to the earth to visit his people, hence, he is called '*Ara Orun*' 'The citizen of the heaven'. His dress looks like 'people from the heaven', his whole body is concealed, and women are not allowed to see their secret, except '*Iya Agan*' that is let into the secret of the cult. For more details see, R.O. Ajetunmobi, 'Traditional Religion and Festivals' in R.O. Ajetunmobi & N.O. Junaid -Eko, (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and Its Environs*, 87, J.O. Awolalu and P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 252-253.

It is the above mentioned cults that gave birth to secret cults that are being practised in many tertiary institutions today in Lagos and Nigeria as a whole. Although Wole Soyinka in 1952, at the University College, Ibadan was imputed to be the creator of this cult.⁴³⁷ By the 1980s and 90s cults were using violence as a means of recruiting members and fighting for their 'rights'. They also intimidate and wreak havoc, arson, manslaughtering, assassination and subvert the University's authority.⁴³⁸

Members of all these secret cults are Muslims and Christians; judges and magistrates, police and military officials, government secretaries, executive officials, business men and women, leading politicians, Chiefs and *Obas*, Principals of schools, lecturers and teachers, managers, proprietors and corporate officials. It appears that there is a highly concentrated and powerful influence of these secret cults on Yoruba society.⁴³⁹

3.2.3. Black magic; Charms and Amulets (*Oogun*)

'Black' magic is the magic that is believed to use the power of the devil or invocation of evil spirits for evil purposes as opposed to white magic which is used for good purposes.⁴⁴⁰ 'Black' magic is also known as dark magic; it is a form of sorcery that draws on assumed malevolent powers. It may be used for dark purposes or malevolent acts that deliberately cause harm in some way, it is also known as the

⁴³⁷ The purpose of its formation among others then were for the purpose of putting pressure in the British colonialists, to remove the colonial mentality and establish an identity of independence for its members, things have assumed a different dimension after independence in 1960

⁴³⁸ <http://mccoy.lib.siu.edu/jmccall/otherafricas/cult.html>; accessed 18/08/09 see also, *News Watch Magazine*, 2nd June 2009, Lagos: Newswatch Communication Ltd, 11.

⁴³⁹ A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 241.

⁴⁴⁰ C. Soanes and A. Stevenson (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 141.

dark arts of magic and dark side of magic. It is one of the most disturbing elements in African life; the other two are sorcery and witchcraft.⁴⁴¹ These terms, black and white do not have any racial prejudice.

In modern times, people use this term to describe magic that causes harm. Black magic will be invoked to kill, to steal, to injure, to cause misfortune for personal gain without regard to the harmful consequences to others. Some people believe that not everything that is called black magic truly has malevolent intentions behind it; some believe that it has beneficial and benevolent uses, such as killing off diseases or pests or rather its effect is malevolent by causing death to insects. Bailey claims that both black and white magic are forms of sorcery.⁴⁴² A charm, technically, means an object, act or saying that is believed to have magic power or a very small object worn on a chain, necklace or bracelet.⁴⁴³

Amulet is from the Latin word, *amuletum*; its earliest extant use in natural history is an object that protects a person from trouble. It has close meaning and usage with the word 'talisman' from Arabic *Ṭilāsim*. It is ultimately from Greek *telesma* or 'telein' which means 'to initiate into the mysteries' consists of any object intended to bring good luck and or protection to its owner as the case may be. Potential

⁴⁴¹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 164.

⁴⁴² The opposite of black magic is white magic; the differences between black magic and white magic are quite controversial, but I will bring out some differences, in the first place some people see the two as one, they believe that all forms of magic are evil, whether black or white. This view generally associates black magic with Satanism. The people that maintain this opinion include those that belong to the three major religions. They believe that any magic can have both good and bad consequences depending on who judges those consequences. In this school of thought, there is no demarcation between benevolent and malevolent magic, because there is no universal morality against which magic can be measured, see A.A. Bailey Alice, *A Treatise on White Magic*, New York: Lucis Publishers (1970), 3-6; <http://www.thelemapedia.org/index.php/magical/Formulae>; visit also, http://www-islamawareness.net/BlackMagic_fatwa003.html, accessed, 10/10/09

⁴⁴³ *Longman English Dictionary*, 248,

amulets include: gems, stones, statues, coins, drawings, pendants, rings, plants, animals and even words said in certain occasions.⁴⁴⁴

Amulets and talismans vary considerably according to their time and place of origin. A religious amulet might be the figure of a certain god or simply a representation of the deity. Many Yoruba Muslims believe in the protective and healing power of amulets and talismans. Talismans used by these people can be broken into three main categories: The first are the types carried or worn on the body; the second version of a talisman is one which is hung upon or above the bed of an infirm person and the last classification of talisman is one with medicinal qualities. The latter category of magical item can be further divided into external and internal; in the former, one could for example, place this type of amulet in a bath. The power of the amulet would be understood to be transmitted to the water, and thus to the bather. In the latter, magical inscriptions would be written or inscribed onto food, which will then be boiled. The resulting broth, when consumed, would transfer the healing and magical qualities engraved on the food into the person that consumed it. An amulet can also be seen as a charm.⁴⁴⁵

Some Yoruba in Lagos State usually use the Qur'ān in a talisman-like manner in grave situations, for instance, a bed-ridden and seriously ill person would have a

⁴⁴⁴ It may also be referred to in paranormal magic as lucky charms; such as amulets, touch pieces and painted pebbles. It can also mean charm bracelet, an item of jewellery worn around the wrist that carries personal charms, it can be called a spell; when a charm is a spell, it is usually traditional in form and often in verse and similar to blessing; an infusion of something with holiness, divine will, or one's hope <http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/burialcustoms/amuletsindex.html> accessed 12/12/09

⁴⁴⁵ It also includes luck, fetish, talisman, mascot charm, relic, totem, *mana* or collection or container thereof, carried about by the person or something thought to possess occult power. Or a medicine that has an occult operation. Its Arabic word is *ḥamāil*, a locket hung from the neck. It is a piece of stone, metal, parchment, or other substance, marked with peculiar figure, and worn, in faith, by individuals as a protection against danger, for good fortune or other purposes. For details, see <http://www.amulet.co.uk/amuldef.htm> accessed 12/06/09.

holy book placed under part of the bed or cushion, or worn around the waist for protection, blessing and written to be washed and drunk. They usually call it *naqali*, *tira* or *hantu*.⁴⁴⁶

There are distinctions among the practitioners between the medicine-men, magicians and herbalists. However, there are overlapping functions because the same name is applied to all of them in Yoruba language; any one of them may be called *Onisegun*. As a result of this it is very difficult to make any rigid distinction.⁴⁴⁷ By medicine, we mean the science or art of prevention, treatment, and cure of disease. A medicine man will therefore be one who has the working knowledge of making use of plant and animal substances; as well as supernatural forces to prevent or cure diseases. But magic is the art of making use of nature or supernatural forces for the purpose of achieving man's end; so a magician is somebody who is an expert in magic using in this case certain plants whose leaves, roots and bark are recognised to have medical properties and are therefore used for making medicine. Then a herbalist will be a man who has wide knowledge of the curative properties of herbs, plants, bark, and roots. In this wise, a medicine man is a herbalist, but a herbalist is not necessarily a medicine man because a medicine man uses additional natural phenomena in his art.⁴⁴⁸

In other words, both the medicine man and herbalist are generally good; because they are for the wellbeing of the society. The magician can be good or bad, he can choose to use his knowledge to harm or to kill, and here we mean sorcery; a

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Alhaj.Salihu, Chief *Imām* Ajimoni mosque, Lagos 12/10/08.

⁴⁴⁷ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 166.

⁴⁴⁸ J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 44

sorcerer.⁴⁴⁹ But in Yoruba land, regardless of the three functions they are usually combined in one person, it is hard to know a medicine-man who does not have the knowledge of herbs or some working knowledge of magic. Thus a medicine-man can be called a magician or a herbalist and vice-versa, only that they may have one form of knowledge more than the other. In other words, to avoid confusion of thought, the three professionals can be technically referred to as ‘men of hidden supernatural power’. They are ubiquitous throughout West Africa, both men and women are in this profession; they heal the sick, prevent diseases, protecting individuals and the society against unseen dangers and enemies. They make and stop rain; they increase farm produce; to gain popularity; good sales; attract followers and customers and other feats which ordinary person cannot do. They learn this knowledge by apprenticeship or by inheritance. Others claim their knowledge is from the spirits or divinities, nearly all of them perform with divination; they consult an oracle for their clients in order to discern the nature of the problem of their clients and what remedies should be given.⁴⁵⁰

Magic and medicine presuppose that vital forces or supernatural powers in the universe can be tapped and controlled by man. Magic is therefore using these resources for one’s benefit, its motto is, ‘my will be done’ and so magic differs from religion; because religion is submission and appeal to supernatural power or powers, its motto is ‘Thy will be done’. Medicine on the other hand, is the art of using available forces of nature to prevent diseases and to restore and preserve

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 198-199.

⁴⁵⁰ J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 146-147.

health. It is therefore prophylactic and therapeutic (preventive and curative). Magic commands and religion implores.⁴⁵¹

Both magic and medicine have the following characteristics in common: they have the same name; *Oogun* or *Egbogi* or *Isegun*; they are controlled by the same divinity *Osanyin*; they are sometimes prescribed with certain instructions that must be followed in order to be efficacious; ritual is common among the two; they depend on spiritual belief; incantations are common to both; sacrifice is common to both; they have common root; man's sense of need, they are symbolic; their efficacy lies in the appropriate use of supernatural agencies; taboos are common to the two. They both have specialists dealing with the forces employed, it is sometimes difficult to say where prayer ends and magic begins.

Magic, medicine and religion are inextricably related; in magic man uses two techniques; homoeopathic magic which works on the principle that like produces like, the similarity between the act performed and the result expected, i.e. spew water into the air in a ceremonial way to make rain fall. The second technique is contagious magic; this depends on the fact that things that have once been joined can affect one another. For instance, a woman's foot print can be treated magically to secure her love; a man can be harmed through his hair, nails, clothing, sleeping mat, placenta, faeces, footprint; anything that belongs to him. That is why people normally take extra care of anything that belongs to them.⁴⁵² However, these two

⁴⁵¹ T.N.O. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religions*, 141

⁴⁵² *Ibid*, 143.

categories of magical practices function in both good and evil ways; when used maliciously it is condemned as black , evil magic or sorcery.⁴⁵³

Frazer gives further distinction between imitative and contagious magic. He emphasises that the common factor in these two kinds of magic is the sympathetic principle: Things act on each other at a distance through a ‘secret sympathy’. Frazer sees the former as Law of similarity; in which like produces like and the effect resembles its cause. In this category, he claims that a magician can produce any effect he desires merely by imitating that thing.⁴⁵⁴ He gives example as to injure or destroy an enemy by injuring or destroying the image of him, as image suffers, so does the man, when it perishes, he must die. He claims that ‘... Drawing the figure of the person on the sand, ashes, clay, any object as his body, and pricking it with sharp stick or injuring his image, the target person will also experience the same effect’.⁴⁵⁵ It is also known as imitative or mimetic magic, but the most preferable term is Homeopathic.⁴⁵⁶

The other category which is contagious magic works on the principle that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. In other words, whatever a magician does to a material object will affect equally the person with whom the object was once in contact, whether it formed part of his body or not. It is known as

⁴⁵³ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 200-201; G. Gmelch, ‘Baseball Magic’ in A.C.Lehmann & J.E. Myers, *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, 262-263.

⁴⁵⁴ J.G. Frazer, ‘Sympathetic Magic’ in W.A. Lessa & E. Z. Vogt, *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 337.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 338

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 336. In modern times, the use of a picture or photograph of the person can also play the same role. It is also used to heal or prevent sickness.

the law of contact or contagion. This category includes using the hair, nails, umbilical cord, after-birth; placenta, (its uses as they believe can affect the fortune of individual for good or evil throughout life) extracted tooth, bandages, clothes with sweat, impression left by someone's body in sand or earth, or children wearing the teeth of a mouse or a rat so their teeth can be like those rodents. All these things work as things which have been co joined must remain afterwards, even when they dissevered from each other, whatever is done to the one must affect the other.⁴⁵⁷ Their prohibitions must also be observed.

It is also believed among the Yoruba that the power of magic and medicine can be futile if certain taboos are broken. Magic and medicine will not keep their powers if they are taken to the latrine, if touched after sex, or touched by a menstruating woman or an unauthorised person. Nearly anything can be used in the preparation of magic and medicines. They are used for virtually all department of man's life; some of them are worn like rings, amulets, leather girdles and other magical objects while some are burnt into powder and drunk in water or maize paste (*eko*). Other kinds may be hung on the door or in the house, buried in the ground or rubbed into incisions made on any part of the skin.⁴⁵⁸

Among the Yoruba regardless of their religion, there is a great deal of confusion in the terminology of both magic and medicine. Many people still refer to these practices as 'medicine', even some Yoruba see incantations (*ofo*) as medicine. Although among the Yoruba, incantations and magic do perform prophylactic or

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid, 338-340.

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with *Aafaa* Saeed, Chief *Mufassir* Eko-Epe Central Mosque 10/10/08. It ranges from animals, plants, objects and other inanimate objects: skulls, skins, bones, twigs, stones, sand, because the belief is that these all have occult powers that can be used to achieve man's ends

therapeutic functions. But they should be classified appropriately as either incantation or magic. It is only the local terms that can perform this function better. For instance, one can say *ofo* (incantations), *oogun itaja* (magic for selling wares by traders). *Oogun efori* (medicine for curing headache). Although the word *oogun* (magic, medicine) has been used as prefix to the actual practice, the goal and intention varies, one is non-therapeutic and the other is therapeutic. In other words, magic is used to produce, procure, enhance or induce non-therapeutic needs of men and women such as *arobi* (safe delivery of a baby), *owo* (protection), *awure* (good luck), *afero* (attracting customer), *isoye* (aiding memory) etc. But practically, the Yoruba medicine is *oogun iwosan* (medicine used for curing disease treating the sick or preventing it).⁴⁵⁹

Despite the confusion in the use of the word, it appears that it is thriving today among the Yoruba and the West Africa as a whole, although some of this magic is irrelevant today because of modern science and technology.⁴⁶⁰ In many places in Yoruba land, you will see a signboard that reads ‘traditional doctor is here’, they have a large number of clients from all walks of life. They advertise themselves on both print and electronic media whether a Muslim cleric or a traditional doctor. People are looking for different magic today ranging from *itaja* (magic of sales), examination success, job, social problem and protection against robbery.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ P.A. Dopamu, Health and Healing Within the Traditional African Religious Context’ in *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol.XVII/2, 69-70.

⁴⁶⁰ P.A. Dopamu, ‘Traditional Medicine with Particular Reference to the Yoruba of Western Nigeria’, in Gloria Thomas-Emeagwali (ed.), *African Systems of Science, Technology and Art: The Nigeria Experience*, London: Karnak House (1993), 43-44.

⁴⁶¹ P.A. Dopamu, ‘Yoruba Magic and Medicine and their Relevance for Today’, in *Religions: Journal of the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion*, Vol.4, 1979, 18.

Besides, magical-medicine as practised by Muslim *Aafaa* (clerics) today is called *Tira* but experience has shown that this *Tira* as it is done today, its ingredients are not only Qur'ānic verses written on paper, it also involves the use of animate and inanimate objects as practised in typical Yoruba magic.⁴⁶² Many Yoruba *Aafaa* also make use of magic, medicine and incantation in their *Tira* magical–medicine. In fact, this practice by most Yoruba *Aafaa* is an overlay of the practice of Yoruba magic and medicine.⁴⁶³ This practice is retained by *Aafaa* which they believe is a means of attracting people to Islām because it conforms to the superstitious beliefs of the people. The Yoruba believe and fear the spirit world; hence they make extensive use of amulets, charms, magic-medicine in their daily life. They are found at the entrance of the houses to drive away enemies, shops to attract customers, on cars and buses for safe driving, by babies to prevent infant mortality, buried in the ground on which the foundation of a house is laid.⁴⁶⁴

3.2.4. Oracles /Diviners

An oracle in Ancient Greece was believed to be someone who could communicate with the gods; give advice to the people and tell them what would happen. Oracle is from the Latin word *oraculum*, taken from *orare*, to speak; it is also seen as a priest or priestess acting as a medium for divine advice or prophecy in a classical antiquity or an infallible authority.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Interview with Alhaji. A. Simple 11/10/09

⁴⁶³ P.A.Dopamu & A.S.Agbetola, 'The Influence of Traditional Magic and Medicine on Tira Magical-Medicine in Yoruba land and their Contemporary Relevance', *Senate Research*, 1990-1992, 8.

⁴⁶⁴ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 244-245.

⁴⁶⁵ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1158.

Divination is manipulation of objects, believed to have mystical power, to reveal secrets, or an endeavour to obtain information about things in future otherwise removed from ordinary perception; by consulting informants other than human. Oracles are divided into three classes: (a) there are objects, which answer questions automatically, these are usually referred to as oracles; (b) there is also 'mechanical divination' which in anthropological literature means the use of complicated objects, the behaviour of which has to be interpreted by an expert who manipulates them. The third type, is where hidden knowledge is revealed by men or women believed to have special powers, speaking as the mediums of spirits in a condition of heightened excitement. Some of them claimed to have been called to their vocation by a supernatural experience.⁴⁶⁶

An oracle is also considered as a person or agency considered to be a source of wise counsel or prophetic opinion; an infallible authority, usually spiritual in nature. It could also be a revealed prediction or precognition of the future from deities, which is spoken through another object or life-form, like augury and auspice. Oracles were very common in many civilizations of antiquity in China, Egypt, Greece, India, Mesoamerica and Africa.⁴⁶⁷ The Yoruba has a long history of using oracles;

⁴⁶⁶In Zande, for instance, most mediums are persons believed to have been summoned to the service of the spirit on whose behalf they speak by some kind of psychological disturbance. It is also possible to become a diviner or a 'witch-doctor' by receiving instruction and ritual treatment from already qualified practitioners, undergoing a ritual of initiation; a father may sometimes teach his children, and anyone may also learn the secrets of the craft by paying a fee. It consists of the knowledge of the properties of plants; this person will also eat a sufficient quantity of the divining medicines. For more details see, L. Mair, 'Divination' in A.C. Lehmann & J.E. Myers (eds.), *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion, An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, 262.

⁴⁶⁷ T. Curnow, *The Oracles of the Ancient World: A Comprehensive Guide*, London: Duckworth (1995), 77; W.A. Lessa & E.Z. Vogt (eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 333.

they would deliver prophecies in an ecstatic state to visitors seeking advice, many still consult oracles today regardless of any religious affiliation.⁴⁶⁸

Furthermore, divination is also from the Latin word, *divinare*, ‘to be inspired by a god’, related to ‘divine, *diva* and *dues*’ is the attempt to gain insight into a question or situation by way of a standardized process or ritual.⁴⁶⁹ Divination can also be seen as a systematic method with which to organize what appears to be a disjointed, random facet of existence, such that they provide insight into a problem at hand. It is a cultural universal. They are basically two types; inspirational and non inspirational.⁴⁷⁰ The distinction between divination and fortune telling is that the former is formal and ritualistic and has a social character, usually in religious context while the latter is done everyday and very personal. Divination methods vary according to various culture and religion.⁴⁷¹ There are various ways of divination.⁴⁷²

The diviner seeks to interpret and unveil the mysteries of human life; to also convey the messages of the gods; to give guidance in daily affairs and settle disputes; to uncover the past and to look into the future; he may not be a priest. Generally, a

⁴⁶⁸ E.E. Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azade*, 66.

⁴⁶⁹ P.M. Peek, *African Divination Systems: Ways of Knowing*, Indiana: Indiana University Press (1991), 1-2.

⁴⁷⁰ W.A. Lessa & E.Z. Vogt (eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 334. Diviners ascertain their interpretations of how a querent should go about his business by reading signs, events, or omens or through an alleged contact with a supernatural agency

⁴⁷¹ www.africaart.com accessed 12/06/09.

⁴⁷² There are innumerable categories and methods of divination, including: omens and omen texts, sortilege (cleromancy) (casting lots), augury (possibilities/flight of birds), spontaneous, astrology (celestial bodies), bibliomancy (by books), bestiality (by animals), cartomancy (by cards), chiromancy/ palmistry (by palms), choromancy (time, lucky and unlucky days), cybermancy (by computers), gastromancy (by stomach based/scrying or reflective objects), geomancy (by markings in the ground etc. <http://www.paralumun.com/divination.htm> accessed, 09/10/09

diviner is also an expert in medicines and herbs, in addition to his work as a seer.⁴⁷³ The Yoruba see the oracle god as the elder brother to *Osanyin*, the doctor's god, being thousands of years older than *Osanyin* and so the diviner knows all the herbalist's remedies. It is believed that the diviner amasses a vast store of secret knowledge; and has a deep acquaintance with human nature, he is seen as a wise man of the village, is also regarded as a friend of the communities. He plays the role of a counsellor, judge, comforter, supplier of assurance and confidence during people's crises etc; the profession is honourable and highly respected.⁴⁷⁴

The Yoruba divination system, known as the *Ifa* system, is one of the most highly developed in West Africa.⁴⁷⁵ The *Ifa* system is associated with the cult of *Orunmila* among the Yoruba and is based on sixteen basic and 256 derivative figures called *Odu*. These figures are obtained by the manipulation of sixteen palm nuts called *Ikin* or by the cast or toss of a chain or string of eight half pods. This string or chain is called *Opele*.⁴⁷⁶ After the necessary complications of numbers, combinations, names and different interpretations, and the application, the diviner finally gives to the inquirer response to his query.

⁴⁷³ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 177. He goes further to tell us that diviners achieve this feat through the use of mediums, oracles, being possessed, divination objects, common sense, intuitive knowledge, insight, hypnotism and other secret knowledge

⁴⁷⁴ G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 137; Mbiti opines that people from all walks of life go to diviners for various things including business, profession, marriages, before and after the birth of a child, the appointment of a chief or the king, before embarking on travel, in time of sickness, in time of loss or theft, and at any time for guidance, security and comfort, before a major decision is taken. The secrets of the Diviners are closely guarded, it is claimed that they have esoteric secrets of which modern science is ignorant of, and their methods of knowing secrets are not easily explicable. For details, see J.S. Mbiti, *Introduction to Africa Religion*, 156-157.

⁴⁷⁵ This is the method of divination common among the Yoruba whether Muslim or Non-Muslim.

⁴⁷⁶ J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 149.

Moreover, some of them are trained privately by other diviners, and work as apprentices, for periods ranging from three to seven years. Some practitioners inherit this from their fathers. Training involves learning the names and signs of divination figures, the proverbs and stories connected with them and the practice, rites and cult of divination. There is usually a final ceremony attended by other diviners in the area, when the new diviner is authorised to practise, the initiation being brought to a climax by the new diviner taking ‘flames from a lamp into his hands, without his skin being burnt’. After that, he prays alone daily to *Orunmila*, and once a month together with his family, for whom he then prays.⁴⁷⁷

Among the Muslims in Yoruba land, some religious leaders or Muslim clerics (*Aafaa*) also practise divination and many clients from all walks of life patronise them daily. They consider it as a lucrative business, in addition to their provision of charms and amulets.⁴⁷⁸ The Yoruba believe that they originated from the Middle-East, and some scholars have conjectured that the *Ifa* oracle of the Yoruba might have been derived from the Arabic term *al-Fīl*, also the name of the deity *Orunmila* is thought to be the corruption of *al-Raml* (the divination) as a short form of *Ḍarb al-Raml* meaning ‘divination by sand’.⁴⁷⁹ The Yoruba Muslim or Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* diviners also have a similar type of oracle to the *Ifa*, but the only difference is that the sand especially brought from Makkah replaces the traditional *Iroko* dust used by *Babalawo*. This is kept in a tray and the method of manipulating the oracle is almost the same. The divining *Aafaa* in Yoruba land manipulates in the same way

⁴⁷⁷ Interview with *Aafaa* Said, Chief *Mufassir* of Eko–Epe Central mosque, 12/10/08. He displays his various ways of divining akin to a typical Yoruba *Babalawo* (Chief diviner).

⁴⁷⁸ Information from some Yoruba Muslims interviewed in Lagos who are members of the Muslim Elite at FESTAC, 18/10/08. Some of them told me that without it they (the Muslim cleric diviners) would hardly have any customers.

⁴⁷⁹ G. Parrinder, *Religion in an African City*, 81.

as the *Babalawo* (Chief Priest), the *Mallam* manipulates with certain numbers and then divines. This popular method is called *Yisabi* (corrupted from Arabic, *al-ḥisāb*, meaning calculations). This comes closer to the astrological method; the method of using dust and then marking it with finger-tips is called *Turabi* (Arabic word, *turāb* meaning dust). The *Tasbīḥ*, which is used as a rosary for remembering Allah, is also employed for the purpose of divination. Some Muslim *Aafaa* use the Qur'ān for this purpose as well.⁴⁸⁰

3.2.5. Ancestral/Hero Worship

Hero worshipping is literally known as revering somebody as an ideal or to adulate somebody.⁴⁸¹ It can also mean to love someone unquestioningly and uncritically or to excess, or venerate him as an idol or apotheosis, raising a person to the level of a deity.⁴⁸² Such people are also seen as 'ancestral spirits' 'the ancestors' or 'the spirits' or 'the living dead'.⁴⁸³

The belief in the existence, worship and influence of the ancestor has continued to be very strong among West African people. They are not only revered as past heroes; but the belief is that they are still present, watching over the household; directly concerned in all the affairs of the family and their property. They give

⁴⁸⁰ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 249-250. Doi opines that it appears the use of divination and consultation of oracles among Yoruba is very preponderant because many of them cannot embark on any venture or very important thing, like marriage, travelling for any purpose, vying for political posts, looking for a job or taking an apprenticeship, without consulting divination or oracle; and these Muslim *Aafaa* are largely the ones who are consulted

⁴⁸¹ *Dictionary of the English Language: the American Heritage* (4th ed.), Houghton Mifflin (2003).

⁴⁸² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/hero-worship> accessed 10/11/09

⁴⁸³ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 85.

blessings. It is believed that these are the people that are the guardians of the tribal traditions and history; it is commonly believed that if certain traditions and rituals are not performed to propitiate these fathers they may be angered, because they could punish with sickness or misfortune those who infringe on their rights.⁴⁸⁴

Humankind has some basic needs that make them to believe in ghosts and to worship ancestors; although the mortal body may die, the soul survives after death. It is claimed that the beginnings of religion were in ancestor worship - the need for the living to continue an emotional relationship with their dead relatives. It reminds the living of a vital continuing link between the living and the dead.⁴⁸⁵ They are seen as active members of the society. They play a strong and positive role in the security and prosperity of the family. The belief is that any possibility of the dead returning is regarded as undesirable and they could disrupt the social order and the daily routine of life. Hence, a cult of the dead is constructed and practised to separate them from the living. The belief in ghosts of ancestors is universal but the functions they play vary greatly among societies.⁴⁸⁶

The Yoruba, like all West African people, believe that only those who lead a good life, live to a ripe old age, die in good death and are accorded full burial rites can become ancestors, they are otherwise known as 'living dead'.⁴⁸⁷ These are those in state of personal immortality; their process of dying is yet to be complete, they are the links or nexus with the spirit world, they are bilingual, and they are close to God

⁴⁸⁴ G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 115-116.

⁴⁸⁵ T.N.O. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 42

⁴⁸⁶ S.A. Freed & R.S. Freed, 'Ghosts, Souls, and Ancestors: Power of the Dead' in A.C. Lehmann & J.E. Myers, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion; An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, 283; J.L. Brain, 'Ancestors as Elders in Africa-Further Thoughts' in W.A. Lessa & E.Z. Vogt, *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 394-395.

⁴⁸⁷ J.S. Mbiti, *Concept of God in Africa*, London: S.P.C.K. (1970), 230.

ontologically. They are part of human families; these living dead are still people and they return to their people from time to time and share meals with their people symbolically.⁴⁸⁸ They are spirits because they can only be approached spiritually and are invisible; it is the head of the family that usually officiates at the house-hold shrines.

The ancestors are still seen as elders in the world of the spirits, because Yoruba believe that their role as elders in the family still continues. So, they do not cease to show interest in the general welfare of their families. Death has raised their status, power and dignity, and their prestige has been enhanced. They possess considerable power both for good and evil, fortune and misfortune, prosperity and adversity; protection, well-being and calamity can be attributed to them. In fact, they are regarded as the invisible police of the families and communities.⁴⁸⁹ It is believed that people experience a sense of psychological relief when they pour out their hearts' troubles before the ancestors who have a foot in both worlds. The food and libation given to these ancestors are paradoxically acts of hospitality and welcome.⁴⁹⁰

The Yoruba believe that the ancestors are watching over them and if they misbehave, one day, they will come and rejoin with them in the world of spirits and they will ask them to give account of their conduct; especially their conduct towards

⁴⁸⁸ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*. 83-84.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, 85

⁴⁹⁰ J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 321-322. Up until now, many Yoruba people, regardless of their religion, from time to time try to ascertain the will of the ancestors through the oracle, secure their help, and appease them when they are provoked to anger, so people keep good terms with them. Belief in ancestors gives strong sanctions for public morality. It is believed that, as parents can punish dereliction of filial duties on the part of their children, so also neglected or offended ancestors can punish their offspring for moral offences. Thus, crimes such as: murder, sorcery, witchcraft, stealing, adultery, bearing false witness, taking false oath, hatred, incest, and other evils are all condemned and punished by the ancestors

their kinsmen. The land itself according to them belongs to the ancestors, for they owned it and worked on it. So, when it is said the land belongs to the stool, or it belongs to the chief, what they usually mean is that the land belongs to the ancestors. The old people normally cherish the memories of the dead because they believe they will soon join their ancestors. Some say that they have seen or held communication with the departed ones, the sick and the dying have visions of those who have gone before them, and these 'phantasms of the dying' are very common. The dead are believed to be constantly near although not seen.⁴⁹¹

There are many traditions associated with belief in ancestors; some people put a mouthful of food on the floor before eating, and at evening meal pots are not entirely emptied, nor washed till morning, in case the dead come and find nothing to eat. Particularly in the evening, the ancestors draw nearer, and so after nightfall people will not sweep the house, or throw water out in the yard, without first calling out a warning.⁴⁹²

Up until now, many Yoruba people believe that one of the most important duties they owe their departed souls is to ensure their burial, and later mourning ceremonies for the dead are duly carried out and great expenditure is incurred and huge debts are very often accumulated by this expression of filial feeling. Funeral ceremonies are performed with pomp and pageantry, sometimes explicitly requested by the deceased, and sickness, hunger, hardship and misfortune are regarded as the consequences of not observing the ceremonies. In this way, some people will be told that their ancestors are angry at them and so they should look for

⁴⁹¹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 84-85

⁴⁹² *Ibid*, 85

ways of propitiating them by giving offerings.⁴⁹³ Bad dreams are seen as the anger of a restless ghost. Family life is seen as being strengthened by this emphasis on performing full duties to the dead. Old people and parents are thereby honoured.⁴⁹⁴

The Yoruba ancestral cult has its special characteristics. However, it is sometimes equated with the *Egungun* and *Oro* cult. Apart from this, the dead can still be invoked at any times and one may offer food or kill a cock for the ‘great fathers’ (*babanla*). This is done most often at a time of distress; sometimes a pot or large container will be stood in the open in front or over the tomb and offerings in terms of food, are made. The dead are talked about in a familiar way and a man will stand calling the spirits of his forefathers or his father, as the case may be, to intervene at the time of distress. The chief ancestral cults among the Yoruba are connected with the *Egungun* and *Oro* cults. The *Egungun* cult is a representation of the dead, in the form of figures, masked and clothed from head to foot, which appear at funerals and on other occasions during the year. *Egungun* may appear at any time, singly or in company, they join in at festivals and other public holidays, and in these days beg for money.⁴⁹⁵

The *Egungun* sometimes dress in a plain cloth, with netting over their faces, or in sackcloth, and the more important have masks or horns on their heads. They sometimes walk, run or jump about, and chase people with sticks or whips in their hands, and are led by assistants who beat back the crowds with whips.⁴⁹⁶ The belief is that they are spirits of the dead and they speak in guttural or thin piping voices

⁴⁹³ Interview with Alhaji.Isa, Chief Onisegun of Oko Afo, Lagos. 10/09/08.

⁴⁹⁴ N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 143

⁴⁹⁵ J.O. Awolalu & P. A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 167

⁴⁹⁶ Personal observation at Epe in one of the annual festivals, 3/06/08.

representing the dead, whose voices are supposed to be nasal or broken. The great annual appearances occur in June, in the time of farming, in order to seek the assistance of the ancestors for good harvesting and profit. Their visible representatives appear during this period, their appearance is preceded by a vigil in the *Egungun* grove; a clump of trees outside the town, this is called 'kneeling'.⁴⁹⁷

The blessing and assistance of the dead are requested, and sacrifices of fowls and goats are offered for them to feast on. When a multitude of them appear in the town after the crowd has been gathered, they are full of excitement and exhilaration. They first dance to the Chief's house, perform plays there and then to other places in the town. It usually lasts for a week; they are otherwise called 'All Souls festivals', where the dead are remembered and their continued existence in the world beyond is affirmed. They eventually gather at the chief's compound to pray for blessing on the people and the crops, the harvest is gathered during the festival and part of the produce is brought and put on the *Egungun* shrines and in the temples of the gods to appease them.⁴⁹⁸

Some Yoruba, regardless of whether they are Muslims or Christians, give abnormal respect to their elders and chiefs even while on earth. This can be seen in the excessive veneration given to them; they prostrate to them, kneel before elders and chiefs. The gods being worshipped by Yoruba today were once ancestors being deified, they may also be natural forces personified like men, in the ancestral cults and the elders of the family are priests.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ T.N. A. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 183-184

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Baba Yiri, Chairman Organizing Committee of *Egungun* Festival in Ijanikin, Lagos, 02/06/08.

⁴⁹⁹ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 8

3.2.5.1. Participation in Traditional Festivals.

In every society, there are special occasions when people come together to celebrate important events, the events may be secular or religious. Celebrating these events is known as festival is marked by public enjoyment or religious ceremonies. In the whole of West Africa, festivals are observed by adherents of traditional religions, marking important social and religious events in the lives of the people and they result in a series of performances, entertainment, merry-making, rites and ceremonies. Festivals are therefore the most joyful and the most important social and religious activities in the West African traditional society. As Kofi Asare Opoku claims: ‘...festivals are rituals which recur at regular intervals and which have as their purpose the expression of beliefs held by a particular community’.⁵⁰⁰

The traditional festival is one of the enduring features of West African Traditional Religion; it is celebrated with pomp and pageantry in most parts of West Africa. These festivals are celebrated purposely to commemorate historical, cultural and religious events that are of great importance and significance to the community. Traditional festivals are performed also to celebrate specific divinities, spirits or ancestors, legendary figures, heroes and heroines. Other features include: every festival must have an origin in which stories, legends and myths will be narrated to show the events that led to the festivals or the miraculous delivery of some people from calamity. There must be adequate preparation before its celebration and a proper calendar is worked out to fix the date. In specific months and specific

⁵⁰⁰ K.A.Opoku, ‘Religious Themes in West African Festivals’ in *Dialogue and Alliance: A Journal of International Religious Foundation*, vol.4, No 1, (1990), 71.

seasons, such as rainy season, dry season, planting season and harvesting season. Harvest festival is also an annual festival around the time of the main harvest of a given region.⁵⁰¹ There is a merry making, singing, dancing, and procession and there are certain necessary rituals and rites that dominate events. These are usually performed by the king or the head of the community; this can be in terms of sacrifice or ceremony, or prayers and blessing, and in symbols and actions.

The functions of festival include social cohesion and solidarity, giving rhythm to the social, political, religious and everyday life of the town. Festivals are a means of validating the existing order; they also serve the purpose of renewal of covenant, relationships and solidarity.⁵⁰² It is also a means of thanking the divinities, ancestors and soliciting their continued blessing and protection. People express and achieve unity during festivals; they also serve to preserve people's culture, religion and philosophy. They create publicity and inculcate spiritual values.⁵⁰³

The aborigines of Lagos State like other African groups are distinctly religious, most of the leaders and founders of communities in Lagos State were religious leaders, they combined political administration with priesthood, and where the leader is not a priest, he surrounds himself with retinue of priests and deities of the land and consult with them from time to time in order to appease the deities.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ J.O. Awolalu and P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 155

⁵⁰² M. Oduyoye, 'Festivals: The Cultivation of Nature and the celebration of History' in A. Adegbola (ed.), *Traditional Religion in West Africa*, Ibadan: Daystar Press (1983), 153.

⁵⁰³ J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 158.

⁵⁰⁴ R.O. Ajetunmobi, 'Traditional Religion and Festivals' in R.O. Ajetunmobi & N.O. Junaid-Eko (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, 86.

Today many Muslims and Christians join in the celebration of these traditional festivals with splendid ceremony in Lagos State. Lagos today is unique for its colourful festivals and these have assumed a major position in the life of the state; this is a manifestation of respect for tradition and socio-cultural phenomena; and on the other hand socialise the people, display aesthetic consciousness, skills in acrobatic display, give an opportunity for economic gain, and even an avenue for launching an attack or vengeance on an opponent. Traditional festivals in Lagos are also used to break the monotony of Lagos life and offer a renewal of Lagos cultural values and innovations.⁵⁰⁵

Many Lagosians from far and wide troop to various localities at different periods of the year to celebrate the traditional festivals regardless of their Islāmic or Christian faiths. Notable festivals in Lagos include: *Adamu Orisa (Eyo Festival)* in Lagos Island; *Gelede, Kori, Agere, Kareta, Eluku* which is peculiar to Ikorodu; *Kayo-Kayo, Eebi (Oko-shi), Kilajolu, Eepa* in Epe; *Zangbeto* among the *Ogu* in Badagry; Boat Regatta in Agbowo-Eredo and the coastal settlements of Lagos State; *Odun-Efe* in the Ayobo area of Alimosho, and *Otto-Awori, Egan Oke, and Akesan* etc; *Orisha Iroko* in Badagry and *Akaka* in Ibeshe; *Oro* festival among the traditional Awori communities; *Igunnuko* among the Tapa in Lagos State and initiates from other parts of the State; while *Agere, Kareta* and *Egungun* Festivals take place across the State.⁵⁰⁶ Accompanying these festivals sometimes are: elaborate rituals,

⁵⁰⁵ O.Taye, 'Cultural Festivals in Lagos State' in R.O. Ajetunmobi & N. Junaid-Eko (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, 187.

⁵⁰⁶ *Egungun* is one of the major festivals among the Lagosians; it is often referred to as *Ara Orun* (visitor from heaven) or *Aruku* (corpse carrier). This festival epitomizes the traditional belief in life after death. It is born out of the fact that Yoruba people believe that those that died live elsewhere; and the festival is to keep this interaction stronger and to appease the dead people. It is very popular in Lagos State and it is a cult, every settlement in Lagos has its own cults, thus there are many shrines called *oju-ogun* where the spirits of the ancestors are worshipped and appeased.

sacrifices and appeasements which are often referred to as *Irubo*, *Etutu* and *Ipese*.

⁵⁰⁷ We shall only examine a few of these traditional festivals because of space and the nature of our work.

(i) Boat Regatta: The origin of this festival is enshrined in traditions; one account suggests that it evolved in Lagos in commemoration of Benin's successful invasion and colonization of Lagos; while another account indicates that it was developed out of the attachment of the Lagos riverside people to their water economy. They also have belief in the sea goddess-*Olokun* who is believed to contribute to their economic prosperity in fishing. Another view is that the festival came to being to commemorate the re-enactment of the return of Ashipa who carried the dead body of Aseru to Benin; thus, he returned to Lagos graciously with Benin paraphernalia of office and some other lieutenants in canoes.⁵⁰⁸

The festival is celebrated annually in most of the riverside areas of the State. It is associated with rowing and sailing in canoes.⁵⁰⁹ The boat regatta was first staged in Lagos in 1933. But before this period; the festival was staged by the people of Irewe, Agbowa, Eredo, Ejinrin, Ketu, Epe, Ikorodu and other parts of Amuwo Odofin in Lagos State. The ceremony is accompanied by a colourful display of decorated canoes, boats and paddles dancing as well as singing in praise of *Olokun* (the god and goddesses of sea). Riverine Lagosians engage in dances and rituals reflecting water creatures and customs of the performers.⁵¹⁰

Ibid, 186.

⁵⁰⁷ Interview with Baba Adam, *Baale* of Ipese town, 16/10/09.

⁵⁰⁸ O.A. Taye, 'Cultural Festivals in Lagos State' in R. Ajetunmobi (ed.), *Themes in Lagos and Its Environs*, 201

⁵⁰⁹ T. A. Folami, *History of Lagos Nigeria*, 18.

⁵¹⁰ Personal observation at Epe 13/10/08.

(ii) *Kayo-Kayo* - This is a socio-religious carnival celebrated in Epe town, mostly celebrated by the Muslims. The festival is observed by the descendants of *Oba* Kosoko notably referred to as Eko-Epe. This festival is marked annually during the first month of the Islamic calendar in commemoration of *Yawm-al- āshurā*, the tenth day of *Muḥarram*. The Yoruba also call it *āshūrā*'. The belief attached to these festivals has two cultural values; the arrival of their ancestors in Epe and the pride of place that the 'boat' enjoys as a means of transportation and safety to and from Epe.⁵¹¹

Kayo-Kayo festival is marked with the following activities: special prayers for peace and political stability held at Central mosque and the *Oba*'s palace; followed by *al-Kansara* bath, paying homage to the ancestors of Eko Epe at their respective palaces as a mark of respect, culture and tradition (while on these visits; the *Oba* of Epe would ride in a motorcade round the town). They move en masse to the lagoon to wash their feet symbolising the emergence of Prophet Nūḥ from his ark after his people had been drowned, while people continue with jubilating, drinking and dining, especially at Popo Oba Square, where king Kosoko kept his ammunition. This place has become a tourist centre in Epe; Government officials are invited to add colour to the event and help with fundraising.⁵¹² Each year the festival further attempts to be relevant to modern life, innovations are brought to the festival every year and indigenous Epe continue to identify with the festival as their own.⁵¹³

⁵¹¹ Interview with *Oba* Eko Epe 12/06/08.

⁵¹² Personal observation at Popo Oba, Epe 14/10/08.

⁵¹³ Interview with *Oba* Eko of Epe, 13/10/08

(iii) *Efe* and *Gelede*: These festivals are celebrated together. *Efe* is usually staged in the middle of the night preceding the *Gelede* in the morning; the activities that dominate *Efe* are the recitation of past historical phenomena belonging to a family, lineage or a community. This public display of recounting events always contain information about physical or moral weaknesses of an individual, group or community; genealogical history is used to reprimand an individual or group as deterrent against all forms of anti social behaviour.

Gelede on its own is essentially a women's cult. Before the outing of *Gelede*, respect is paid to the ancestral woman for peace, prosperity and orderliness during the festival. *Gelede* could be performed during the celebration of major festivals, or after the death of an important member of the cult or community, during chieftaincy, naming ceremony and coronation. Its major character is the wearing of scary costumes with superb elaborate dancing and stepping mannerisms. There is a mask depicting the two sexes. Its entire regalia are fashioned out to portray a woman with a 'bante' or a skirt underneath, to ridicule women. *Gelede* uses a combination of colourful clothes, numerous beads; artificial breasts, specially designed buttons and artificially decorated masks, plastic materials, purses, bags and rubber babies, fly whisks and gloves.⁵¹⁴

(iv) *Agbo* festival: According to oral history, the origin of this festival can be traced to one powerful fisherman in Epe called *Ekine*. It was narrated that one day his boat got sunk on the sea, so terrible was the situation for him that he had to appeal to the

⁵¹⁴ Interview with *Baale* of Oto-Awori 10/10/08.

goddesses and gods of the water for rescue. In appreciation of his rescue, he offered sacrifices, and performed other rituals and rites for the further guidance and blessing of the sea gods. It was related that from that time onwards he ordered his followers and descendants to continue this appreciation by way of worshipping the sea gods.

The followers and devotees of *Agbo* are dressed in mainly white apparel, which the people believe to mean peace. The riverside people of Epe do not refer to *Agbo* as masquerade, instead, a group of *Agbo* are known as *Imole*, i.e. deities themselves. Notable among them are *Ololo*, *Ofole*, *Alepa* and *Esiwu*. However, it is *Ajeye* that procures hens and chickens for deity propitiation during worships.⁵¹⁵ There is a strong belief among the people of Epe regardless of their religion that the *Agbo* deity provides children for the barren. In fact, prayers are offered annually at Epe during the *Agbo* festival. *Woro*, a kind of leaf symbolising peace for the people, is burnt in quantity to pray for peace in the community. Dancing, drumming and feasting are all features of the worship of the *Agbo* deity to make women fertile. It reduces the stress and anxiety of childlessness. It gives the women folk in Epe emotional stability, peace, social cohesion and interaction among the people in the community.⁵¹⁶

Beside the festivals mentioned above, the people of Lagos State also celebrate other festivals like: *Ebibi-Agemo*, *Kori*, *Igunuko*, *Iroko*, *Kare Taa*, *Eibi*, *Agere*, *Akaka* or *Turuku*, *Oro*, *Ogun*, and *Zangbeto*.⁵¹⁷ All of them represent the major festivals that

⁵¹⁵ A.A. Ajala, 'Cultural Manifestation in Lagos State' in D.F. Asaju (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*, 79-80.

⁵¹⁶ Oral information from Chief Raji, 12/10/09.

⁵¹⁷ L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 237.

are celebrated in Lagos. These are periodic celebrations marking the significant events among the people whose ideals, aspirations and philosophy are transmitted for the purpose of social continuity and play a major role in the history of Lagos.⁵¹⁸

Lagos is a melting pot of culture.

Despite the influence of westernization, modernity, and revealed religions, cultural festivals are apparently given prominent attention by the people of Lagos State.⁵¹⁹

This is attested to by many people following and participating in these festivals.

Many of them are Muslims and Christians.. Culture is highly valued in the society.

It is also regarded as their identity, memory, pride, achievement and their contribution to world civilization.⁵²⁰

In fact, today in Lagos State, festivals have been given more attention so much so that the celebrations of most of these festivals are announced over print and electronic media. The study of festivals has become increasingly popular as an area of research in some of the tertiary institutions in the State, where final year students of Religious Studies are required to submit long essays to the departments. It was noted during my visits to some of these departments that many students are conducting research on this area. This brings to light that for some of the hitherto unknown local festivals, most of the participants of these festivals are either Muslims or Christians.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸ O.A. Taye 'Cultural Festivals in Lagos State' in R. Ajetunmobi (ed.), *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, 200.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid, 201; A.A. Ajala, 'Cultural Manifestation in Lagos State' in D.F.Asaju (ed.), *Readings in General Studies*,

⁵²⁰ Interview with Alhaji. Rafii, 12/10/08.

⁵²¹ My discussions with various heads of Department of Religions in Lagos State based Tertiary institutions in Lagos metropolis as well as Epe town and my cursory looks at some of the long essays and project in those departments, from 17/10/08-19/10.08 confirm this.

3.2.5.2. The Influence of Western Culture

One of the factors that contribute to ‘mixed’ Islām among the Yoruba Muslims is in the area of western culture and civilization. This is as a result of colonialism, western education and interaction with Christianity. Although, it should be stated from the outset that Islām does not outrightly go against borrowing positive aspects of western or any culture. In fact, Muslims are enjoined to borrow the positive aspects of any culture as long as they do not expressly go against the basic tenets of Islām.⁵²² Western culture can be equated to western or European civilization; this is the culture of Indo-European origin. The term therefore, is used very broadly to refer to ‘...a heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, religious beliefs, political systems and specific artefacts and technologies’⁵²³. The west can be looked at from a dual perception arising from the post-Cold War division of the world into East and West.⁵²⁴

Historically, the word ‘West’ originated in terms of geopolitical boundaries; this began in the 1800s and 1900s, before this, individual people were known with their nations and languages. Western thoughts were shaped by ideas of the 1800s and 1900s originating in Europe; this culture is seen as encompassing Greco-Roman and

⁵²² A.H.A. Nadwi, *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission*, London: The Islamic Foundation (1983), 25; L.Poston, *Islamic Da‘wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press (1992), 13-15

⁵²³ M. Nakosteen, *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education AD 800-1350; with an Introduction to Medieval Muslim Education*, Colorado: University of Colorado Press (1964), 1-3

⁵²⁴ G.M. Munoz (ed.), *Islam, Modernism and the West; Cultural and Political Relations at the End of the Millenium*, London: I.B.Tauris Publishers (1999), 8-9. .He opines the west has apparently be in collision course with Islam since 80’s

Judeo-Christian culture, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and colonialism. The Classical West was dominated by Graeco-Roman culture, which was later absorbed by Christianity, which served the basis for the development of western civilization after the fall of Rome. In the medieval west, Greek and Roman traditional religion were replaced by Christianity and the Nicene Creed, around 4th and 5th centuries, when it became the state official religion and they served as the unifying force in Western Europe. Roman law fused with the Catholic Church, thus becoming the foundation on which all legal concepts and systems were based upon such as civil rights, equality before the law, equality of women and democracies were principles that formed the basis of modern western culture.⁵²⁵

The west ostensibly encouraged the spread of Christianity, because it was inextricably linked to the spread of western culture. Due to the influence of Islāmic culture and civilization which preserved the knowledge of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and India and during the Crusades, a number of these works were translated into Latin from Arabic texts. Both Greek and Arabic influences led to the beginning of Renaissance. ⁵²⁶So, from the late 15th to 17th century, western culture began to spread like wildfire to other parts of the world spread by explorers and missionaries during the age of discovery and later followed by imperialists from the 17th to early 20th century.

⁵²⁵<http://westerncultureglobal.org/what-is-western-culture.html>;22/10/10
http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Western_culture accessed 23/11/10. See also, P.N. Stearons, *Western Civilization in World History*, New York: Routledge(2003), 23; B.Thornton, *Greek Ways: How the Greeks Created Western Civilization*, London: Encounter Books (2002), 11

⁵²⁶ M. Nakosteen, *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education AD 800-1350; with an Introduction to Medieval Muslim Education*, 2

But in this era religion was relegated to the background. Western culture began to evolve. The 'Age of Discovery' now faded to 'Age of Enlightenment' into 18th century when the West had military advantages because of their development of firearms. They were more industrialised, scientific and technology based. So, western political thinking eventually spread in many forms around the world. But in the early 19th century, the 'Age of Revolution' the west now entered a period of world empires, massive economic and technological advance, and bloody international conflicts continuing into the 20th century. Religion at that time waned considerably in Western Europe with a growth of agnosticism and atheism and a separation between the Church and the state. Western culture tends to emphasize individualism, capitalism, creativity, '...the most individualistic culture in the world'.⁵²⁷ Nigel claims that Western culture:

...is linked to the classical definition of the western world as a set of literary, scientific, political, artistic and philosophical principles which set it apart from other civilizations. These traditions and knowledge are collected in the western canon'.⁵²⁸

Western culture appears to be applicable to countries whose history is marked by Western European immigration or settlement, such as the Americas and Australasia. Some features of western culture include the existence of political pluralism,

⁵²⁷Western culture may also imply a Graceo-Roman Classical and Renaissance cultural influence, concerning artistic, philosophic, literary, and legal themes and traditions. Ethnic groups as well as a tradition of rationalism in various spheres of life; developed by Hellenistic philosophy, Scholasticism, Humanisms, the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment, all are included in its political thought. Widespread rational arguments in favour of free thought, human rights, equality and democratic values. For detail see, <http://www.western.cultureglobal.org/knowledge-individualism.html> accessed 10/10/09

⁵²⁸J. Prudence and P. Nigel, *A History of Pagan Europe*, London: Barnes and Noble, (1995), 23.

prominent subcultures or countercultures like New Age movements, and increased cultural syncretism as a consequence of globalization and migration.⁵²⁹

Globalism since the end of the cold war, has spread western ideas so widely that almost all modern countries or cultures are to some extent been influenced by aspects of western culture which they have assimilated or absorbed, but recent stereotyped western views of ‘the West’ have been labelled Occidentalism, paralleling Orientalism, the term used for the 19th century stereotyped views of ‘the East’.⁵³⁰ Fukuyama asserts that the end of cold war signals the final triumph of the West; he claims that the West is politically based on liberal democracy and economically based on the market allocation of resources.⁵³¹

The west will be geographically viewed to include Europe as well as the overseas territories belonging to the Anglosphere, the Hispanidad, Lusosphere or Francophonie, for instance, Europe, the Americas, and Australia/New Zealand. Elements of western culture have had a very influential role on other cultures worldwide, to the extent that people equate modernization (adoption of technological progress) with westernization (adoption of western culture).⁵³² It also includes secularization and the trivialization of religion.⁵³³

⁵²⁹ http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Western_culture accessed 23/11/10. See also, P.N. Stearons, *Western Civilization in World History*, New York: Routledge(2003), 23

⁵³⁰ A.S. Ahmed and H. Donnan (eds.), *Islam, Globalization and Post-Modernity*, London: Routledge (1994), 4; D. Noibi, *Globalization, Terrorism and the Muslim World*. A Paper presented at the International Conference on Islam, Terrorism and Development in Africa, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, 8th-10th January, 2006, 2-4.

⁵³¹ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Hamish Hamilton (1992), 347.

⁵³² *Ibid*, 348

⁵³³ A. Rippin, *Muslims; Their Religious Beliefs and Practices; the Contemporary Period*, Vol.2, London; Routledge (1993), 5. Rippin suggests that the five pillars of modernity can be seen as ‘...abstraction, futurity, individualism, liberation, these can also be further seen as sovereign state, science based, bureaucratic nations, profit maximization among others. Although, it is claimed that there is the hold of the Catholic Church over many countries, e.g., no abortion in Ireland, the

Another feature of western culture is their focus on science and technology: electricity, communication devices, bridges, skyscrapers, computers, automobile, bicycle, and chromatography. In finance, they introduced double entry book keeping, Limited Liability Company, life insurance and charge cards. They were also known as explorers and adventurers of the globe and space. The West has succeeded in developing many themes which include philosophical traditions like Plato, Aristotle etc., Biblical and evangelical Christian cultural traditions, secular humanism, rationalism, Zionism, nationalism, agnosticism, atheism, materialism, law, widespread use of Greek and Latin roots or etymologies for almost all fields of knowledge; Scholasticism, scientific method, natural laws, human rights, constitutionalism, parliamentarism, presidentialism, romanticism, unionism and utopian socialism.

The west came to represent non-recognition of Islām, imperialism, and cultural erosion.⁵³⁴ Muslims in different periods in history have sought to challenge the negative western influence.⁵³⁵ In order to silence the Muslims, Ahmed suggests that the West has resorted to many tactics calling the Muslims different names in order to vilify any attempt to criticize unfavourable western culture.⁵³⁶

American morality was linked to evangelical Christianity. It is believed in some quarters that jazz, blues and funk were musics used by African slaves to comfort themselves. Reggae comes from Rastafarianism which started in Africa. But the musical equipment, for example: violin, piano, saxophone, ballet, ballroom dancing, polka, square dance, Jazz, Blues, Funk, Rap, rock music, the novel, photography, motion pictures, music videos, soap opera, painting, sculpture and artistic depictions of the nude male and female are used in the west in certain characteristic ways.

⁵³⁴ B.S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, London: Zed Books (1997), 131-133.

⁵³⁵ J.J.G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Husist and Company (1997), 26-28. For instance, Al-Afghani and Ibn Taymiyyah challenge the negative western influence politically and religiously.

⁵³⁶ A.S. Ahmed, *Islam under Siege; Living Dangerously in a Post-honour World*, USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd (2003), 34-35.

Globalization is a movement towards homogenization of culture, a ‘global culture’. In other words, ‘...there are imbalances or asymmetrical prejudices, stereotypes and caricatures, democracy, global politics, conflict of interests, confrontation and ethnocentrism, westernized elites, a tendency to hold western ideas as the only benchmark and placing them in opposition to Islām’.⁵³⁷ There is a bipolar system, a clash of civilization, with western media appears to be using and misusing words leading to a creation of Islām by the West.⁵³⁸

Doi, giving his opinion on the issue of civilization, points out that civilization is a relative term which can be interpreted differently. Doi claims that one may appreciate certain ethical and moral principles in certain people or nations as part of their civilization while others may see it as primitiveness or backwardness. According to him, ‘...civilization is an advanced state of human society as regards art, science, religion or government. It also means the type of culture of a specific people’.⁵³⁹ Doi asserts that the western civilization and culture attribute exaggerated value to the earthly life, ‘my kingdom is of this world alone’, and other features of western culture and civilization according to him include:

...Godlessness and God–forgetfulness, their only ‘positive religion’ is the worship of material progress. Their ‘temples’ of this religion are cinema-halls, dance–halls, factories... while their ‘priests’ are bankers, film–stars, dancers, managers of night-clubs. The degeneration of churches for dancing and meeting place for dating, boy- friend and girl-friend relationships, promiscuity, family disintegration, drug addiction, hippy cults, nudist, sodomy and homosexuality, pornography, taverns and pubs, law breaking and crime, modern unisex fashions’.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁷ G.M. Monoz, (ed.), *Islam, Modernism and the West; Cultural and Political Relations at the End of the Millenium*, 5.

⁵³⁸ A.S. Ahmed & H. Donnan (eds.), *Islam, Globalization and Post-Modernity*, 4-5. Muslim scholars see the approach to modernity via three perspectives, some assert that the value of modernity should be denied in its entirety, and others consider it as a mixed blessing.

⁵³⁹ A.R.I. Doi, *Western Civilization, Islām and the Muslim Youth*, United Kingdom: Muslim Publishing House (ND), 4-5.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 26-28.

Many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State up until now appear to imitate and copy some negative aspects of western culture. Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State in their socio-religious duties in one way or another have been influenced by the western ways and manners of celebrating marriage like their Christian counterparts, mixing it with Yoruba tradition in terms of introduction, engagement and reception. The birthday ceremony is another area that has attracted the attention of many Yoruba Muslims and a huge amount of money is being spent on it. Some of them also copy western ways of life in terms of dressing; some Yoruba Muslim women do wear blonde wigs like Caucasian Westerners and shave their hair like orthodox Jewish women; some Muslim men wear the clothes of women and vice versa (like cross-dressing eunuchs of old Indian culture), some do not consider anything wrong in girl and boy-friend affairs and some appear to be individualistic in behaviour.⁵⁴¹

3.2.5.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to discuss and analyse the different traditional beliefs and practices in which Yoruba were participating prior to the introduction of Islām in Lagos State. I also explained the functions and role in which each of these traditional beliefs and practices played in the life of a typical traditional Yoruba man which later coalesced in religious syncretism. We also gave justifications for the enduring effects of these traditional practices and why Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State still practise or believe in some of these traditional or cultural heritage, as the case may be, despite the fact that there are Muslims. We

⁵⁴¹ Interview with *Amir* Alhaji. Dhikru llahi, NASFAT Society in Lagos, 13/10/08.

also pointed out that due to western culture and civilization some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State do mix their religion with negative aspects of foreign culture.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the methodology and execution of the field work. My aim in this chapter is to test the various hypotheses listed in chapter one of this work as well as to analyse and interpret the results obtained from the questionnaire applied in the field work. The chapter also explains the methods used in conducting the interview to obtain data from the randomly selected respondents. I also justify the sampling methodology used to obtain samples for this work; the procedures employed to administer the questionnaire are also explained as well as the ethical issues taken into cognizance. The responses of the samples selected are also discussed; problems encountered during the course of the field work and the appropriate actions taken are also highlighted in this chapter.

4.1 Research Methodology

Research, according to many scholars can be viewed as a formal, organised, systematic and methodical way of investigating relevant information for understanding, solving problems or issues.⁵⁴² The information gathered from this process of inquiry may lead to formulation of new theories, principles or generalisations. Manion and Morrison maintain that methodology assists researchers towards an understanding of research process in the broadest terms possible. Basically, this methodology is divided into quantitative and qualitative method.⁵⁴³ A study of this nature is normative and theological in its focus; however, the significance of a pluralistic and interdisciplinary approach to any study of African religion has long been recognized by scholars.⁵⁴⁴ Various approaches were used to study this work; socio-anthropological studies available on this subject were used to investigate existing literature on the Yoruba worldview as it relates to their religio-cultural practice.

Therefore, the methodology that was used was that of qualitative inquiry (which involves: Ethnography, Phenomenology and Grounded-Theory Approach). This study adopted the generally acceptable position of qualitative researchers which as Bryman states is to ‘...express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people that they study...the social world must be

⁵⁴² For instance, R. Kumar, *Research Methodology : A Step-by- Step Guide for Beginners*, 2-3, J.W. Best and J.V. Khan, *Research in Education*, 6th edition, London: Prentice-Hall (1989), 17; A.D. Jacobs & L.C. Razavieh, *Introduction to Research in Education*, 2nd ed. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1979), 20

⁵⁴³ C.L.L. Manion &K. Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, 5th ed. London: Routledge Falmer (2003), 45

⁵⁴⁴ Harold Tuner, ‘A Methodology for Modern African Religious Movements’ in *Religious Innovations in Africa: collected Essays on New Religious Movements*, Boston: G.K.Hall (1979), 63.

interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied.⁵⁴⁵ This means that the approach studied and interpreted the problem of syncretism the way the Yoruba Muslim scholars and the generality of the Yoruba Muslims in the study area see it. In the words of Denzin and Lincoln, this study as a qualitative research would ‘...involve an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter and a study of things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them’.⁵⁴⁶

The epistemology (theory of knowledge) upon which this research method is based as observed by Lofland and Lofland, and as it is being used for our purpose in this work is that: (a) ‘...face to face interaction is the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another human being; and (b)...you must participate in the mind of another human being (in sociological terms, ‘take the role of the other’) to acquire social knowledge’⁵⁴⁷. In making use of this method, there is always the tendency to lay claim to the gathering of and examination of information and human behavioural pattern from a point and sense of belonging in one to one involvement and observation of those being studied.

The benefits of being an insider cannot be overemphasised as argued upon by reasearchers, they suggest that it is the insider who should hold the primary position for the proper understanding of the religion; although this does not prevent the outsider from critiquing the authority of the insider because all humanity should

⁵⁴⁵ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2007), 277; see also, A. Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, London: Unwin Hyman Ltd (1988), 60.

⁵⁴⁶ N.K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln, *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Thousand Oaks CA:SAGE (1998), 3; see also, N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln, ‘The Fifth Moment’ in N.K. Denzin & Y.S Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: SAGE (1994) , 578-579.

⁵⁴⁷ J. Lofland & L.H. Lofland, *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, (3rd ed.), Belmont: Wadsworth (1995), 16.

have equal access to knowledge that these religious traditions possess, but they maintain ‘...outsider’s point of view should not and cannot be formed independent of the insider’s perspective’⁵⁴⁸ This position taken by qualitative researchers according to Bryman is in line ‘...with interpretivism and demonstrates well the epistemological links with phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and *verstehen*.’⁵⁴⁹ A further description of what the intent and approach is in using this method has been given by Cartledge when he states that:

Qualitative researchers, wishing to focus on the world views of the subjects under study, tend to operate with an open and flexible research strategy rather than one which is overly prescriptive from the start. This means that research problems tend to be organized around more general and open questions rather than tightly defined and theory-driven questions. Qualitative researchers tend to favour a process that formulates and tests theories and concepts as they arise from within the data under collection.⁵⁵⁰

Looking at this type of research method Cresswell posits that ‘...Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem’.⁵⁵¹ The researcher builds a holistic picture, analyzes reports and detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. In agreement with Cresswell, choosing to use this method implies:

... commitment to spending some time on the fieldwork, getting involved in the very demanding task of enormous data analysis, writing elaborately to ensure that evidence substantiates claims, showing also multiple perspectives,

⁵⁴⁸ B. Sambur, ‘From the Dichotomy of Spiritualism/ Ritualism to the Dichotomy of Insider/ Outsider’ in: E. Arweck and M.D. Stringer (eds.), *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual*, 28

⁵⁴⁹ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 277.

⁵⁵⁰ M. Cartledge, *Practical Theology-Charismatic and Empirical perspectives*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press (2003), 70.

⁵⁵¹ J.W. Cresswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design-Choosing among Five Traditions*, London: SAGE (1998), 17.

and willingness to participate in form of social and human research devoid of strict guidelines or specific procedures, but rather constantly evolving...⁵⁵²

The historical study is descriptive and analytical; it considers detailed ethnographic and sociological discussion of the origin, development and enculturation in various areas of the beliefs and practices among the Yoruba Muslims.⁵⁵³

Justifications for choosing this approach among others include: the nature of the research questions as earlier stated, the need to explore this topic with a consideration for and beyond what others have written, commitment to engaging in sufficient and detailed data collection in the field and analysis of it. The material that was obtained using this approach was more 'human'. According to Martin Brett, it will be closer to the reality of the participant's life.⁵⁵⁴ Other features of this approach are: appropriateness of methods and theories, perspectives of the participants and their diversity, reflexivity of the researcher and the research, and variety of approaches and methods in qualitative research.⁵⁵⁵

The limitations to this approach as pointed out by Bryman is that research carried out in this way looks at the subjects as though they '...were incapable of their own reflections on the social world'⁵⁵⁶ It is also too explanatory; over describing or over-emphasising the people, data being analysed and the context and other phenomena

⁵⁵² Ibid., 17

⁵⁵³ See: U. Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*; London: SAGE Publications (1987), 3-4; D. Hall & I. Hall, *Practical Social Research: Project work in the Community*, London: Macmillan (1996), 26.

⁵⁵⁴ M.B. Davies, *Doing a Successful Research Project; Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*, 135-136.

⁵⁵⁵ U. Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 4-5.

⁵⁵⁶ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 18.

being studied.⁵⁵⁷ It also lays more emphasis on processes as they are unfolded and it is too flexible, lacking a strict applicable structure (or less structured) in its style of research, hence its use of unstructured or semi-structured interviews.⁵⁵⁸

4.2 Research Design

A research design is the blueprint of the steps that the investigator takes to collect, analyze, report and interpret both quantitative and qualitative research. It is also a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among variables under investigation. It provides answers to: Whom shall we study? What shall we observe? When will observations be made? How will data be collected? Research design enables the researcher to come up with solutions to these problems and guides him in the various stages of research.⁵⁵⁹ It can also be seen as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems.⁵⁶⁰

According to Cresswell, research design is divided into three: Quantitative Research Design, Qualitative Research Design and combined Quantitative and Qualitative Design.⁵⁶¹ Quantitative research design focuses on specific questions to gather observable data on variables while the qualitative research design entails broad data

⁵⁵⁷ J. Lofland & L.H. Lofland, *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 16; J. Lofland & L.H. Lofland, *Analyzing Social Situations* (2nd ed.), Belmont: Wadsworth (1984), 8.

⁵⁵⁸ H. Blumer, 'What is wrong with Social Theory?' *American Sociological Review* (1954), 19, 3-4.

⁵⁵⁹ C.F. Nachmias & D. Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, 99; B.R. Dixon, G.D. Bouma and G.B.J. Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide for Students*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1987), 104.

⁵⁶⁰ F.N. Kerlinger, *Foundations of Behavioural Research* (3rd ed.), New York: Kinehart and Winston, (1986), 94; A. Edwards and R. Talbot, *The Hard-Pressed Researcher: A Research Handbook for the Caring Professions* (2nd ed.), Essex: Pearson Education Limited, (1999), 32-33.

⁵⁶¹ J.W. Cresswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc (2005),

collection which seeks to understand participants' experiences, the third category combines the features of both the quantitative and qualitative research design. The approach selected for this study is a mixed method design (triangulation) because of the categories of people involved in carrying out this research. This will enable us to obtain rich information. In executing this study in order to obtain answers to the research questions stated earlier, a cross-sectional study design otherwise known as 'one-shot or status studies' and case study were used. The reason for using this is that this method 'is best suited to studies aimed at finding out the prevalence of a phenomenon, situation, problem attitude or issue, by taking a cross-section of the population'.⁵⁶² It is the most appropriate for our work as against other methods such as the longitudinal study, before and after study, retrospective and prospective study.

Moreover, this method is cheap and easy to analyse, and the research design is suitable to find out about the prevalence of syncretism among some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State where I was able to interact with the people, while its weakness lies in the fact that the method cannot measure change.⁵⁶³

Case study approach was also used in which Yoruba Muslims of Epe were used as representative or sample of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State. This gave us the benefits of gathering some data and organise them in terms of the case. It provides opportunity for intensive analysis of many specific details which are often overlooked by other methods. Generalisations were able to be made to other cases

⁵⁶² R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 93.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.* 95.

of the same type.⁵⁶⁴ The method enables me to focus on some few instances in-depth, and also to deal with intricacies of complex social situations. It allows holistic analysis and multiple methods of research.⁵⁶⁵ Although the method is being criticised to the credibility of its generalizations made from its findings, confidentiality and observer's effect in which those being studied behave differently from normal owing to the knowledge that they are 'under the microscope' and being observed in some way.⁵⁶⁶ All these limitations may be minimised if the researcher can be cautious in using the approach and make use of other methods of research design in order to make up some of its drawbacks.

4.2.1 Methodology and Execution of the Field Research Project.

The field work which comprised of a questionnaire and interviews took place between August and October, 2008 and 2009 respectively. The following two methods were used to carry out the field work: Questionnaire and Interview.

4.2.2 Interview Research Method

Interview in its simplest meaning is a conversation with a purpose.⁵⁶⁷ Creswell contends that interview is the commonest way of obtaining information from humankind. It is also a means of asking questions from participants and recording their answers.⁵⁶⁸ Interview can be classified into unstructured and structured interview; this is based on the degree of its flexibility.⁵⁶⁹ Unstructured interview is

⁵⁶⁴ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology : A Step-by- Step Guide for Beginners*, 113

⁵⁶⁵ For details, see M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide; for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, 45

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid, 46

⁵⁶⁷ M. B. Davies, *Doing a Successful Research Project; Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*, 164.

⁵⁶⁸ J.W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc (2005), 593.

⁵⁶⁹ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 123

where there is complete freedom as regards the sequence, content and the structure depending on the context of the discussion. This method is useful where in-depth information is needed. Whereas structured interviews entail that questions will be asked based on predetermined format of the questions and answers in the interview schedule. Interviews may take the forms of face-to-face, by telephone or any other electronic media.⁵⁷⁰ Structured interview has the advantage of providing uniform information which makes data to be compared easily and few skills are required as against the unstructured interview. This method was chosen because Interview has the advantages of being useful in collecting in-depth information, it can also be applied in many occasions, there is no ambiguity in interview, questions can easily be explained and supplemented, it only requires simple equipment and it provides a rewarding experience for the interviewees.⁵⁷¹

4.2.3 Face-to—Face (one-to-one-) Interview

(i) The **semi-structured interview**. According to Robson, semi-structured interview is used widely either singly or in conjunction with other methods.⁵⁷² In this method, same questions are asked from all those involved, probing questions are asked to explain areas of interest.⁵⁷³ This study employed this method in order to elicit information from the respondents. It follows a predetermined set of questions, using the same wording and order of questions as specified in the interview

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid, 126

⁵⁷¹ M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide; for Small- Scale Social Research Projects*, 203

⁵⁷² C. Robson, *Real World Research*, 2nd edition, Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers Ltd (2002), 278

⁵⁷³ B. Ghillham, *Research Interviewing: the Range of Techniques*, London: Open University Press (2005), 278

schedule, a written list of open ended questions. This was done in order to determine its face and content validity and and to provide uniform information and for easy comparability. I also came with a letter of introduction which I normally presented before the commencement of the interview.⁵⁷⁴ This was done in an ethical way as described by Burns;⁵⁷⁵ he is of the opinion that before conducting interview, the researcher should seek participants' informed consent. I did this through debriefing the participants on the nature of study, presenting consent letter and individual meetings.

At the inception, I ensured that semi-structured interview was carefully designed; which means that there was a specific clear list of issues to be addressed. However, I was flexible in terms of the order in which the topics were considered and more significantly in terms of letting the interviewees develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by me. The answers were open-ended, and there was more emphasis on my interviewees elaborating points of interest. This type best suits this work because it can be arranged easily; there is only one source of information at a time, and it is easy to control and to transcribe.

Furthermore, the interviews were recorded using field notes in order to ensure accuracy and were audio recorded after appropriate permission was given in order to supplement what was written down. Most of my interviewees were by appointment, mostly arranged via telephone conversations, in which time and venue were agreed upon. The interview would ensue after a brief introduction; the topic of the interview, the purpose of the interview, and a guarantee of the research ethics

⁵⁷⁴ Those who knew me did not think it was necessary to go through the letter.

⁵⁷⁵ R.B. Burns, *Introduction to Research Methods*, Canberra, Australia: Longman (1997), 17

of confidentiality, informed consent, etc. Informed consent was also sought on whether the interviews could be audio-recorded or not, and most participants agreed to its recording. Consent was also obtained with the participants about the data, whether it should be treated as confidential or could be shared with others. Random sampling methods were used to select those that were to be interviewed.

For those who did not understand English, a translation method was put in place and this method was adequately explained to the interviewees and was consented to. This translation to Yoruba (language) was done purposely to allow for every opinion to be heard and represented, so that not only the views of those that have access to western education would be heard. After translation by me, it was presented to a Yoruba teacher for vetting and cross examination in order to ensure its validity, originality, accuracy and authenticity. The validity of the information was guaranteed, as the translation does not have any effect on the information.

(ii) In my **Focus Group Method of interview**⁵⁷⁶: I ensured that a random sampling method was used to get representatives of small groups of Muslims whom I brought together to explore deeply their attitudes, perception, understanding, experience, feelings and ideas about the phenomenon called syncretism among some Yoruba Muslims, because most of them have common experience as relating to syncretism. In this method, I introduced broad discussion topics as contained in the semi-structured interview, for example, ‘what do you think are the causes of syncretism among many Yoruba Muslims ? What could you suggest as the solutions to syncretism? Could you explain some of the duties of the Muslim scholars? At the

⁵⁷⁶ For more on this method, see M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide, for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, 178.

session, broad discussion would now ensue; all the members of the group took the opportunity to express themselves freely without restriction.

Furthermore, the discussions were noted down and audio taped simultaneously in order to ensure accuracy and in accordance with research ethics. At the next session I took my notes to the group for correction, verification and confirmation.⁵⁷⁷ A flexible checklist was used to gather samples that fitted the focus group for the session. When I was using this method; three points were taken cognizance of. I made sure that there was a focus to the session, about which all the participants have similar knowledge i.e. syncretism, its origin, its prevalence, and suggesting solutions. I also ensured that emphasis was placed on interaction within the group as a means of eliciting information. I served the role of a moderator in order to facilitate and moderate the group interaction, listening to discussants from different backgrounds and schools of thought. I made certain that the discussion went on smoothly in a comfortable atmosphere, keeping the discussion on track, focused around the topic, encouraging participation from all members and ensuring that there was no abuse, intimidation, and unnecessary hindrance or censoring.

4.2.4 Questionnaire Research Method:

Descombe explains the features of a questionnaire as:

- i. 'It is designed to collect information which can be used as data for analysis,
- ii. It consists of a written list of questions,

⁵⁷⁷ I also made use of the opportunity of discussing with some final year students in Islamic Studies of Ado-Ekiti University in their course, 'Islam in West Africa and Islam in Yoruba land' on 26/08/09 and the following week. I also used the above criteria to choose many and different Muslim students in their various fields to participate in the discussion. I also participated in a NASFAT prayer meeting at FESTAC on Sunday 30/08/09 and went back to them also on 13/09/09.

iii. It gathers information by asking people directly about the points concerned with the research'.⁵⁷⁸

In a questionnaire, questions are read, interpreted and the answers are recorded down. 'It is developed in an interactive style'.⁵⁷⁹ The questionnaire is divided into two. Open and closed questions, the former is where the respondents are given freedom to decide the wording of the answer while the latter allows only answers which fit the questions set by the researcher.⁵⁸⁰ This method was chosen for this work because it gives uniform answers so that it will be easily quantified and compared. The questionnaire method was chosen because it is less expensive, ensures better anonymity, easier to arrange, it provides standardized answers and gives accurate data.⁵⁸¹

4.2.5 Procedure for Administration of the Questionnaire.

There are main three methods of administering questionnaires⁵⁸²: mailed questionnaire, collective administration and administration in a public place. The most suitable method for administering questionnaires for this work was collective administration. This entails obtaining a captive audience such as students in a classroom, people attending functions, participants in a program or people assembled in one place. I therefore made use of opportunities like this; especially during *Ramaḍān* where many Muslims throng to forums or gatherings to listen to lectures and *tafāsīr* of the holy Qur'ān. Often I attended the Sunday *Asalatu* as is

⁵⁷⁸ M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide, for Small- Scale Social Research Projects*, 154

⁵⁷⁹ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 126

⁵⁸⁰ M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide, for Small- Scale Social Research Projects*, 166

⁵⁸¹ Ibid, 170

⁵⁸² R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 129.

popularly called or a lecture forum ensuring that I got there before the commencement of the meeting or the lecture as the case may be. I would introduce myself to the *Imām* or the missionaries (*Du‘at*) who later assisted me to seek the co-operation of the members to fill the questionnaire and sometimes I would do the introduction myself. These forums ensured a very high response rate because many people participated in the exercise.

Another merit of this method was that it enabled me to have personal contact with the study population. I always explained the purpose, relevance and the importance of the study; and I would clarify any questions raised by the respondents. This method is very suitable for our study as it offers great anonymity, because there is no direct face-to-face interaction between me and the respondents and they are free to express their minds and thoughts.

It also gives room for more respondents to fill in the questionnaire easily, and it does not interfere with the reliability and validity of the responses given by the respondents.

4.2.5.1 Sampling Methodology

Sampling is a process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group.⁵⁸³ Its merit is that, it saves time, financial and human resources. Its

⁵⁸³ Ibid. 164.

disadvantage lies in the fact that selected subjects are only based on estimation and prediction.

Obviously, the random sampling method presented itself as the most relevant to this research work, after careful study and comparison with other methods of sampling like non-random or non-probability sampling design, which is used when the number of elements in a population is either unknown or cannot be individually identified. This method has a propensity towards bias, so it is not appropriate for our work. The mixed sampling design has the properties of both probability and non-probability.⁵⁸⁴ This method also is not relevant to our work because ours is to explore. Hence, the random sampling method was used to select samples for this work to elicit responses for the two instruments used to gather data for this work. The random sampling method ensures that every sampling unit of the population has an equal and known probability of being included in the sample.⁵⁸⁵

In order to draw representative respondents for this method, a stratified random sampling was used.⁵⁸⁶ My attempt here was to stratify the population in such a way that the population within a stratum was homogenous with respect to the characteristics in which they were stratified, and different groups of the population were adequately represented in the sample in order to increase its accuracy. Some cogent factors were put into consideration when selecting the stratified sampling for this work. The respondents were selected based on their age, their years of practising Islām, their knowledge of Islām; their ethnic background i.e. in terms of

⁵⁸⁴ M.B. Davies, *Doing a Successful Research Project: Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*, 60-62.

⁵⁸⁵ C.F. Nachmias & D.Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (5th ed.), London: Arnold (1997), 186.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

their language and culture; obviously only the Yoruba ethnic group was chosen.⁵⁸⁷ The reasons for this are not difficult to understand because they were born and brought up as Yoruba; they grew up amidst the interaction of both Islam and traditional religions. Therefore, they represented the relevant group to provide answers to the questions raised.

Another obvious reason why this method was chosen was born out of the fact that a cross section of the Yoruba speaking people within Lagos was chosen, but representing different schools of thought and inclination. This was done deliberately in order to ensure that the issue was not looked at from one particular opinion or school of thought. In this way, university teachers, traditional Arabic teachers, *'ilmiyyah* schools teachers, *du'at* of different Muslim organizations, *Imāms*, Muslim students from different disciplines and areas of specialisation, members of various Muslim organizations, Muslim journalists, musicians, scholars of Yoruba language and culture, their students, traditional medicine men and Muslim-*Aafaa* medicine people were randomly selected for this study.⁵⁸⁸ The reason for this selection was due to the fact that the research was purely academic, rather than being dogmatic or a particular doctrine where only the views of those that matter in some respect would be represented. This was done in line with the rules guiding random or probability sampling design.

⁵⁸⁷ The speakers of Yoruba language were chosen who are not native speakers with the conviction that their views also matters in this issue. This was done because they have lived in Lagos for several years and their views were relevant.

⁵⁸⁸ All these were Yoruba-speaking people living within Epe in particular and Lagos in general but they all have different views as regards this issue. Those who practise some of the aspects of syncretism and those who did not involve in them. Their views were sought for the sake of the research ethics. Those speaking Yorubas living in Epe were taken into consideration because they also have an understanding of the culture and tradition of the Yoruba. This is in line with the rules of random sampling method.

In random sampling design, it is compulsory that each element in the population has an equal and independent chance of selection in the sample. In other words, the choice of an element in the sample was not influenced by other considerations, for instance, personal preference.⁵⁸⁹ Besides, the concept of independence in random sampling was adequately taken cognisance of. I ensured that the selection of one person or his/her rejection did not affect the inclusion and exclusion of another; this was done to ensure that the entire population was represented. The benefit derived from this method was that the inferences drawn from the selected samples can be used to generalise the total sampling population.

4.2.5.2 The Actual Selection of the Samples.

To identify the unit of analysis which refers to information needed to answer the hypothesis or research question. Therefore, the unit of analysis involves Muslims, principals of *Madrasat*, Islamic Studies teachers, *Imāms* and others in the sampling frame. After this has been identified, the next procedure is to select the representatives of the unit. Representatives here mean ‘...selection of individuals or group of organization with common defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study’.⁵⁹⁰ This will enable the researcher to move towards the next step in choosing the target population or sampling frame. This target population refers to the category of people who share common features and on whom the researchers tend to generalise and draw conclusions from their findings.⁵⁹¹ From the sampling

⁵⁸⁹ R. Kumar, *A-Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 169.

⁵⁹⁰ J.W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 145

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid*, 146

frame, a sample can be chosen. A sample in a research refers to any group on which information is obtained from the larger group to which the result may be applied.⁵⁹²

The sampling procedures in quantitative survey approaches are generally categorized into probability and non-probability sampling. Creswell asserts that probability sampling ‘...the researcher selects individuals from the population who are representative of that population’, whereas in non-probability sampling ‘...the researcher selects individuals because they are available, convenient and represent some characteristic the investigator seeks to study’.⁵⁹³ Several procedures were employed in sample selection, depending on the techniques to be implemented. The method I used to obtain this random sample was through a questionnaire and questions relating to all these characteristics were raised as discussed above, which guided the random sampling. I knew of the existence of different subgroups within the population because their beliefs, characteristics, attitudes differed significantly from each other. In order to ensure that their opinions, behaviour, ideas, knowledge and experiences were properly reflected in my findings, these respondents were selected based on the factors mentioned in the preceding paragraph. All this information was provided freely by the participants in the questionnaire.

4.2.5.3 Hypotheses

The three hypotheses posited in chapter one were used to formulate the statements of the questionnaire for this work. They were moderated in order to give it face and content validity:

⁵⁹² R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by –Step Guide for Beginners*, 169

⁵⁹³ J.W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 149

Ho (i) Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are prone to syncretism because of their ignorance.

Ho (ii) Many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are syncretic based on the effect of traditional religions.

Ho (iii) The more *Tawh̄idic* knowledge many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State have, the less their practice of syncretism.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. A total of two hundred questionnaires were administered. The first part (section A) was used to ask the age of the respondents, ethnic background, years they have been practising Islam among others. The ethnic background shows that 195, or 97.5%, of my respondents were of the Yoruba ethnic group; owing largely to the cosmopolitan nature of Lagos, where many Yoruba Muslims from different Yoruba states are residing. On the question of the grading of Yoruba Muslims' knowledge about *Tawh̄id*, a total of 64 respondents; (32%) have excellent knowledge of *Tawh̄id*, while 65 respondents, representing 32.5% have good knowledge of *Tawh̄id* and the remaining 71 representing 35.5% have an average knowledge of *Tawh̄id*. This is due to the factors that were considered in selecting our samples for the application of the questionnaire; covering those that have deep knowledge of Islām and those who are just ordinary Muslims who do not have good knowledge of Islām.

On the question of how they became Muslims; 191 representing 95.5% of the respondents indicated that they were born as Muslims; and only 9, representing 4.5%, accepted Islam out of conviction. This is not surprising, because majority of Yoruba Muslims met with their parents practising Islam, and joined them. So they

see it as the family religion. Some are without the rudimentary knowledge of it, and this is also responsible for their large scale practice of syncretism.⁵⁹⁴ Babalola also claims that since these Yoruba Muslims were born into traditional religions or their vestiges, they do not have any alternative but to join their parents early in life.⁵⁹⁵

On the question of indicating their former traditional religions, only 20 representing 10% of the respondents indicated their traditional religions, and 180 representing 90% of the respondents did not indicate their former traditional religions. This is due to shyness because many of them do not want to be identified with their former traditional religions.⁵⁹⁶ On the question of whether they are still participating in traditional festivals, only 61, representing 30.5% of the respondents indicated their participation and a total of 139 representing 69.5% did not indicate their participation in any of the listed festivals. This is also due to diffidence and many do not want to be identified with participation in traditional festivals, and it was done openly, despite my repeated explanations that the questionnaire is for research alone and not for any other purpose.⁵⁹⁷

On the issue of believing in the efficacy of charms and others, a total of 47 representing 23.5% believed in the efficacy of black magic while 153, representing 76.5% said no. Another 69 (34.5%) believed in the magical power of witchcraft, while 131(65.5%) did not believe in it. 51 (25.5%) of the respondents believed in

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with Abd- Majeed, 14/09/09.

⁵⁹⁵ E.O. Babalola, *The Advent and Growth of Islam in West Africa*, 73.

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with some members of NASFAT (*Nasru LLah Fath Quarib* Association of Nigeria), Festac Branch, Lagos, 06/09/09.

⁵⁹⁷ I read the content of letter of Introduction to them, but this did not convince them enough, so many of them did not think it was necessary to disclose this. Nevertheless, many still participate in some of these traditional festivals as my interview with Oluwa on 28/08/09 shows. He confirmed to me that nothing could deter some Yoruba Muslims from Lagos Island from participating in the *Eyo* festival.

the efficacy of charms and amulets (*Oogun*) and 149 (74.5%) did not believe in it. On belief in oracles and divination 25 (12.5%) believed it, while 175 (87.5%) did not believe it. On the superstitious belief of *Abiku* (child born to die) 37 (18.5%) believed in it and 163 (81.5%) did not believe in it. On belief in ancestral worship 18 (9%) accepted it and 182 (91%) did not accept it. On the issue of blessing to be received from participating in traditional festivals 56 (28%) believed that it brings prosperity; while 144 (72%) did not share that belief. This result is due largely to our samples selected for responding to this questionnaire. Some felt shy of indicating their opinion, and some told me that they can only be effective with the permission of Allah.⁵⁹⁸ Doi and Patrick in their separate work assert that many Yoruba Muslims largely believe in all these things.⁵⁹⁹

4.2.5.4 Test of Hypotheses and Interpretation/Analysis of results

In the second part (section B) of the questionnaire, five statements were generated from each hypothesis making a total of fifteen items; Ho (i) Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are prone to syncretism because of their ignorance. Statements 1-5 on the questionnaire were used to test hypothesis one, having administered the questionnaire on the field, the information obtained for ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ were combined to arrive at ‘agree’, while ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’ were also combined to arrive at ‘disagree’.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁸ For instance *Ustādh* Sulayman and Yasir believe that some of them work based on the permission of Allah. Both of them are graduates of Islamic University, Madina, Saudi Arabia. Interview held 15/08/09, while Ajetunmobi, a PhD in History, agrees that they are efficacious. Interviewed on 14/08/09.

⁵⁹⁹ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 236-238; P.J.S.J. Ryan, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 81.

⁶⁰⁰ I now wrote out the frequencies in a cell, and further computed the expected frequencies and wrote them out in a different cell. I now computed the difference between the observed and the

Summary

Question	Agree	Disagree	D.F	S.L	X ² cal value	Tab value	Decision
1	163	37	4	0.05	15.4124	9.488	Reject ⁶⁰¹
2	150	50					
3	136	64					
4	135	65					
5	135	65					
Total	719	281					

Interpretation of result

The above table shows the summary of the data collected to test hypothesis one (**H₀₁**) which says; ‘Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are prone to syncretism because of their ignorance’. It was revealed, based on the result, that the calculated value of 15.4124 is greater than the tabled value of 9.488. Hence, the stated hypothesis is rejected; therefore some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are prone to

expected frequencies. It is this difference that led me to a computed value of the chi-square statistics which is $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$. After this, I now compared the

E

value of the statistics with the critical points of the chi-square distribution. After that I made a necessary decision i.e.

If $\chi^2_{cal} < \chi^2_{tab}$ **accept H₀** if $\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab}$ **reject H₀ and accept H_a**

For details, see A.A. Odumosu, *Inferential Statistics: A Simplified Approach*, Lagos: Ola Aina Press (2005), 50; R. Sapsford & Jupp, (eds.), *Data Collection and Analyses*, London: SAGE (1996), 153-154; D. Rose & O. Sullivan, *Introducing Data Analysis for Social Scientists*, (2nd ed.), Buckingham: University Press (1996), 3; B. Nolen, *Data Analysis: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Polity Press (1994), 104; B.R. Dixon, G.D. Bouma & G.V.J. Atkinson, *A Handbook of Social Science Research: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide for Students*, 173-175.

⁶⁰¹ The table above shows the summary of both the calculated value of the chi square and the table value; D. F above shows Degree of Freedom (D.F) = (r-1) (c-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-1) = 4 \times 1 = 4,$$

It is found by multiplying the number of rows in the table less one by the number of column less one. The level of significance using $\alpha = 5\%$ (0.05)

syncretism not on the account of ignorance. In support of this, Babalola, quoting Trimingham opines that Islām accommodates itself to West Africa traditional cultures and its flexibility helped Islām record huge success. In other words, some aspects of traditional life have to be retained not out of sheer ignorance but because they provide solutions that lie outside the realm of Islām.⁶⁰² It is also believed that, the belief in mystical powers is so strong in Islām that it cannot be done away with, as several places in the holy Qur’ān make reference to it.

Looking at the various factors responsible for the spread of Islām in West Africa, several writers on Islām in West Africa claim that it is due to Islāmic compatibility with traditional religions that made it to record huge success among the people accepting the religion.⁶⁰³

The issue of many Yoruba Muslims being inclined to syncretism is not out of ignorance alone as pointed out by Awolalu and Dopamu, in their extensive study of some Yoruba Muslims and Yoruba *Aafaa*’s involvement in the use of black magic and amulet. They conclude that it is not out of ignorance that these people employ black magic or believe in it. They assert that ‘...despite our education, development and technological climb, many people still concede (sic) the fact that there is more in the practice of magic than what the outsider can see on the face value.’⁶⁰⁴ In other words, some Yoruba, regardless of their religious affiliation, education and economic prosperity cannot do without resorting to the use of charms and black

⁶⁰² E.O. Babalola, *The Advent and Growth of Islam in West Africa*, 74.

⁶⁰³ Ibid. 85. See P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 12 and 168; I.M. Lewis, *Islām in Tropical Africa*, 65.

⁶⁰⁴ J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 273

magic.⁶⁰⁵ These scholars conclude that it is not out of ignorance that many people from all walks of life consult the magicians, soldiers, police officers, lawyers, doctors, politicians, administrators, magistrates, teachers, lecturers and people who are educated are part of those who consult these people that produce the black magic.

Some Yoruba Muslims, despite their age-long acceptance of Islām and the people of Epe in Lagos State being popularly called *Epe l'oni Qur'ān* (Epe, the owner of the Qur'ān) have a high concentration of syncretism. Belief in and employment of talismans, fortune telling, participation in traditional festivals among others are some of the hallmarks of some Yoruba Muslims in Epe, as my study shows.⁶⁰⁶

In his extensive survey on Islām among the Yoruba, Doi maintains that some Yoruba Muslims still hold on to traditional beliefs in Yoruba customs, superstitions, witchcraft, charms etc, which they found difficult to shed, despite the Islamic teaching of total submission to Allah's will. Islām is monotheistic and demands uncompromising faith in Allah. Modern problems in relations to Islām and the Muslims are solved by the well informed Muslims through *Ijmā'*, consensus of opinions of the '*Ulamā'*', which must be based on the Qur'ān. Having explained how some of these beliefs and practices have become mixed in with Islām, Doi concludes that most of the Muslim clerics '*...get their bread and butter by exploiting the ordinary Muslims who look upon them as their 'saviours' in times of stress and strain'*'.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, 273.

⁶⁰⁶ Personal interviews with some elderly Muslims in Epe, for instance: Alhaji. Kasumu, 12/08/09. Alhaji. Simple, 15/08/09 and *Aafaa* Kabir, 20/08/09.

⁶⁰⁷ A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 253.

Some Yoruba Muslims' persistence in syncretism cannot be factored on ignorance alone as shown in the extensive study carried out by Patrick. He claims that some of the Yoruba *Aafaa* are literate in Arabic and also have familiarity with the pharmacopoeia stemming from Traditionalist Yoruba sources. The *Aafaa* may claim superiority as an interpreter of the moral teaching of the Qur'ān, and add the ability to manufacture amulets and to divine based on the effect of his traditionalist background.⁶⁰⁸

Uthman ibn Fodio, while justifying his famous reform *Jihād* against his contemporary Muslims and '*Ulamā*', hinged his submission in his treatise '*Nūrul-Al-Bāb*' on the different kinds of unbelievers, and that any Muslim that has the habit of mixing traditional practices with Islām, chiefly: superstitions, divination and amulet among others should be branded as an unbeliever, killed and his property taken by the state, following the footsteps of a similar ruling given by Shaykh Abd-l-Kareem al-Maghili almost three hundred years before the Songhai ruler; Askia Muhammad in the 15th century.⁶⁰⁹ In an interview with Laguda, he asserts that the problem of syncretism among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos cannot be factored on ignorance, because according to him, a plethora of evidence abounds to prove that many of these Yoruba clerics are very knowledgeable in Islām. They still cling on to it and hitherto, some Muslim scholars are still preaching against it.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁸ P.J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 147 & 177.

⁶⁰⁹ J.O. Hunwick, *Sharia in Songhay: The Replies of Al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia Al- Hājj Muḥammad*, 46-47; see also I.A.B. Balogun, *The Life and Works of Uthman Dan Fodio*, 35.

⁶¹⁰ Interview with Bro.Laguda 17/08/09. He told me that he accepted Islam ten years ago when he was not fulfilled in Christianity. Laguda considers religion as representing utility and functionality; hitherto he is still searching for the face of God. Laguda is a senior Lecturer in the Christian Religious Department at Lagos State University.

The persistence of some Yoruba Muslims in syncretism is seen as one of the features that attracted people to Islām *ab initio* and while they embraced Islām, they found it difficult to leave other pre-Islamic practices which are against Islamic fundamental beliefs. This is known as accommodation. According to Trimmingham, Islām has accommodated itself to Africans to the extent that it became a natural aspect of the environment. He claims that ‘...Elements alien to the local genius were rejected and those adopted were moulded into conformity. Islam thus does no violent uprooting but offers immediate values without displacement of the old ...’⁶¹¹

Gbadamosi in his work also attributes the large scale rush to Islām as a result of the three aspects of Islam in Yoruba land which impressed the Yoruba Christians, ‘...its organisation, spirit of self help, and Africanness were up to a point, rosily conceived...’⁶¹² It is this tolerance or preservation of certain African practices that persuaded some people to proclaim Islam as the religion of Africa. At this period in question, ‘...Islām among the Yoruba made no root-and-branch assault on traditional African society, nor did it manifest any motive to establish, as the Christian converts were wont to do, an ‘emporium in impero’.⁶¹³ It was this admiration that the Christians have for Islam as regards the rate of people converting to Islam and still retaining their customs. To the African, every aspect of life is based on religion; this was the cause of the internal ferment which later coalesced in the emergence of the African Church movement. Fadipe also shares in this assertion.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹¹ J.S. Trimmingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, 41-42.

⁶¹² T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, 144.

⁶¹³ Ibid, 145

⁶¹⁴ N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, 291.

Jimoh, while discussing *Nawāqid-al-Islām* (Violations of Islam) does not consider ignorance as an excuse for committing all these crimes that constitute violations and syncretism. He claims that punishment should be meted out to the perpetrators.⁶¹⁵ Some Muslims interviewed in Lagos did not concede to the fact that many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State or even some Muslim scholars are perpetrating this evil out of ignorance.⁶¹⁶ Mbiti, exaggerates and commits error while surveying some areas of contact between Islām and traditional practices points out that to a large extent Islam does encourage traditional practices of magic, divination and recognizes the efficacy of sorcery and witchcraft.

The uses according to him are to win more converts and impress others. He asserts that more people will be converted to Islām, ‘...but its deep religious elements will hardly be embraced, because this will paradoxically facilitate quick conversions to Islam; but will hamper the process and manifestation of a deep or radical Islam. Both Islam and traditional religions accommodate each other, and Islam will be just a veneer of religious experience and social concern, despite the fact that their knowledge of the Qur’ān and Islāmic law are superb’.⁶¹⁷

Laguda shares in this submission that the involvement of many Yoruba Muslims in syncretism is not out of ignorance, but rather out of sheer love of material wealth which many of them find it difficult to do away with. He also affirms that many Muslim scholars in this contemporary period are preaching against the practice and

⁶¹⁵ S.L. Jimoh, *Kufr in Broader Perspectives*, 18-19.

⁶¹⁶ Interview with Bro.Lateef and Bro.Jimoh, 14/08/09.

⁶¹⁷ J.S. Mbiti. *African Religions and Philosophy*, 253-254; see also, J.S. Mbiti. *Islam in West Africa*, 30.

many Yoruba Muslims are aware of it.⁶¹⁸ Oluwa is of the view that most Yoruba Muslims in Yoruba land have an age-long awareness of syncretism and that informs the reason why some of them are called *Munāfiq* (hypocrite). Explaining further, he says although they practise Islām, at the same time they practise traditional religion along with it, and he claims this phenomenon cannot be eradicated.⁶¹⁹

Hypothesis (2)

Many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are syncretic based on the effect of traditional religions. Statements 6 to 10 on the questionnaire were used to analyse hypothesis two, ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ were combined while ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ were combined.

Summary

Question	Agree	Disagree	D.F	S.L	X ² cal value	Tab value	Decision
6	115	85	4	0.05	12.5684	9.488	Reject
7	131	69					
8	114	86					
9	135	65					
10	106	94					
Total	601	399					

⁶¹⁸ Interview with Bro. Laguda, Sen.Lecturer, Christian Studies Dept., Lagos State University, 17/09/09.

⁶¹⁹ Interview with Bro. Oluwa, Lecturer 1, Fine Art Department, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, 28/08/09.

Interpretation of the results

The table above reveals the analysis of data collected to test H_{02} , which says: 'Many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are syncretic based on the effect of traditional Religions'. It was revealed based on the result that the calculated value X^2 12.5684 is greater than the table value 9.488. Hence, the stated hypothesis is rejected; therefore the syncretism of many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State is not based on the effect of traditional religions. In support of this, Patrick states that some Yoruba Muslims revert to traditionalists' practice not on the account of traditional influence but on the fact that some of them admit that this practice has to be carried out of necessity and during crisis.⁶²⁰ Mbiti does not consider the issue of syncretism as traditional influence but rather he sees it, although erroneously as being part of Islam and that Islām approves of it. He says: '...Islām does not ask its new adherents to abandon their accustomed confidence in all their mystical forces...'⁶²¹ He claims that many African Muslims resort to cultic practice in order to seek relief from afflictions that are not remedied by Islām.

Some practices of Islām have been seen in some quarters as giving support to traditional practices, for instance, offerings, sacrifices and giving of alms to obtain success or ward off evil. In other cases, traditional practices 'borrow' from Islām. Some of the charms of some Yoruba Muslim clerics contain Qur'ānic verses. They

⁶²⁰ P.J. Ryan.S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 161.

⁶²¹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 251.

use them to treat human complaints, and some of these *Aafaa* perform exorcisms, sometimes they use Qur'ānic quotations as magical formulae.⁶²² By so doing, some people accept this as an alternative to traditional practice.

Moreover, considering the length of time that Islām has been accepted among the Yoruba. It is claimed in some quarters that Islām came to Yoruba land as long ago as the 14th century.⁶²³ Despite the controversial date of its entrance among historians, the point still remains that many Yoruba Muslims are still involved in syncretism; although, scores of them have accepted Islām for many years and it supposed to have percolated into their minds and changed their orientation and belief system.⁶²⁴ Based on my study, it appears that it is out of lack of faith and confidence in Allah that many Yoruba Muslims have retained some of their traditional religious beliefs and practice. This is the case because of the numerous problems they face and their desire for instant solutions.

Furthermore, this study confirms on one hand the assertion of scholars such as Doi that the mixing of traditional religious beliefs and practices is partly a result of a lack of medical care and education. This contributes to many Yoruba Muslims' observance of superstitions or taboos, meaning that if they are afflicted with an ailment they will not consult a medical doctor, the diviner will prescribe something else for them and under this influence, they will be living in a bad condition.⁶²⁵ But on the other hand, it also buttresses the assertion of Awolalu that in spite of the

⁶²² Ibid., 248.

⁶²³ However, there is a controversy that surrounds the precise date of Islām's entrance into Yoruba land. See for instance, M. Hiskett *The Development of Islām in West Africa*, 148; P.J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 104.

⁶²⁴ Interview with Bro. Badmus, 17/08/09.

⁶²⁵ A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 230.

acceptance of revealed religions; Islām and Christianity, education and science, many Yoruba still find it difficult to do away with magic and the likes because their thoughts, words and actions all have magical association.⁶²⁶

Many Yoruba Muslims find it difficult to attribute their problems to a scientific explanation, no matter how rich they are. They psychologically believe that someone is behind their misfortune, enmity, ill-luck, domestic mishap, unhappy marriage, unemployment or any untoward happenings in their life. So, they look for immediate supernatural assistance, when they visit diviners, magicians and herbalists.⁶²⁷

Some of the Yoruba Muslims *Aafaa* also delve into this art out of economic reasons. Looking for sustenance, even though many of them know the truth, they just feel that by the time they tell their clients the fact, they will not be able to survive financially.⁶²⁸ These groups of Muslim clerics are not induced or influenced by traditional culture but out of eking out their living and greediness.⁶²⁹

Adetona suggests that another factor contributing to many Yoruba Muslims persistence in syncretism is born out of aping negative western culture blindly in order to feel superior. He makes mention of elaborate wedding feasts and engagements, birthdays, funeral ceremonies and he claims that the religion of Islām goes against all these.⁶³⁰ Ajetumobi also asserts that there is no moral justification on the part of some Muslims who are involved in this practice, because Islām is a

⁶²⁶ J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religions*, 273.

⁶²⁷ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 169.

⁶²⁸ Interview with Sulayman, 19/09/09

⁶²⁹ Interview with *Imām* Abdul Majeed, 30/08/09.

⁶³⁰ Interview with Bro. Lateef Adetona, 27/08/09.

religion of knowledge and enlightenment from its beginning and it makes acquisition of knowledge and education compulsory. Islām has nothing to do with ignorance.⁶³¹

Hypothesis 3

The more *Tawh̄dic* knowledge many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State have, the less they practise syncretism. Statements 11 to 15 on the questionnaire were used to analyse hypothesis three. ‘Agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ were combined, while ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ were combined.

⁶³¹ Interview with Bro.Ajetunmobi, 14/08/09.

Summary

Question	Agree	Disagree	D.F	S.L	X ² cal value	Tab value	Decision
11	157	43	4	0.05	14.0884	9.488	Reject
12	174	26					
13	144	36					
14	158	42					
15	162	38					
Total	795	205					

Interpretation of results

The table above shows a summary (an analysis) of data collected to test H₀₃ which is; ‘the more knowledge of *Tawhīd* many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State have, the less their practice of syncretism’. Based on the result from the above table, calculated X² 14.0884 is greater than the table value which is 9.488.

Hence, the stated hypothesis is rejected therefore the more knowledge of *Tawhīd* Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State have, does not lessen their practise of syncretism. Patrick in his survey of Muslim *Aafaa* as an agent of mixing or accommodating in Ile-Ife, found out that most of the Muslim Clerics that are indulging in charms, amulets and divination are doing so, not on the account that they do not have Islāmic knowledge or the knowledge of *Tawhīd* but out of their own whims and caprices.⁶³²

⁶³² P.J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 161.

Ilorin in his own submission does not agree with the fact that, many Yoruba Muslims do not have the knowledge of *Tawhīd*, because Islāmic knowledge and its dissemination or teaching is part of Islam right from its inception. Where ever Islam goes, it goes simultaneously with its rudimentary teachings.⁶³³ So, it cannot be justified that some Yoruba Muslims do not have the knowledge of Allah and the grave sin of *Shirk* (association of partners with Allah) that make them to be persistently syncretic, but it is possible that not everyone has had a good understanding of it.⁶³⁴

Lewis claims although erroneously that Islām does not discriminate between some of the traditional forces associated with traditional religion; and Islām also shares a large measure of agreement with the practices of traditional religion, once they depend upon techniques which derive their validity from a Muslim source. Lewis further points out which is wrong of course that Islām approves and sanctions magical procedures which are directed towards legitimate ends such as the cure of disease ‘...for the fulfilment of all these hopes lies ultimately of course, with God’.⁶³⁵

It may not be justified that some prominent Yoruba Muslims and Muslim *Aafaa* do not know the position of Islām on believing in any other power apart from Allah. Many of them recite *Sūrah al-Fāṭḥah* (opening chapter) which says ‘It is You we worship and from You we seek for assistance’ and often you hear them saying ‘*Lā*

⁶³³ A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa ‘Ulamāu Bilād Yorubā*, 89; A.B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, 114.

⁶³⁴ A.A. Ilorin: *Al-Islām wa Taqāṭīd al-Jāhiliyyah*, 103.

⁶³⁵ I.M. Lewis (ed.) *Islām in Tropical Africa*, 65.

Ḥawla wa lā Quwwah illā billahi l-‘Aliyy l-‘Azīm (There is no strength or power save Allah, the most High and mighty). Many of the Yoruba Muslims I spoke to know and realise the implications of the verse and the phrase; but perhaps they are not psychologically satisfied until they resort to charms and amulet.⁶³⁶

Looking at the antecedents that precipitated the *Jihād* of reform of Uthman Ibn Fodio, it may not be justified that those Muslims that the *Shaykh* waged war against were ignorant of the Islamic view on compromising Islamic theological teaching with that of traditional practice. Many of the ‘*Ulamā* (Islamic scholars) were fully aware of his preaching and his treatises. But they ignored his reform despite their profound knowledge of those bad things. He charged them with many hereses which were profligate against Islam.⁶³⁷ The state of Songhai is another area where one cannot admit that, some Muslims then did not have the knowledge of *Tawḥīd* or the Islamic position on compromising Islām with traditional religion.⁶³⁸ Hugh Clapperton noted with dismay during his second and last visit to Sokoto, in 1826-1827 that about nine years after Uthman’s death some Muslims had reverted to animist practice.⁶³⁹

Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State perhaps are aware of the Islāmīc stand on mixing some traditional beliefs and practices, (although not all Tradional practices are unIslāmīc) with Islām. But it may be lack of faith and *Tawakkul* (Trust in Allah)

⁶³⁶ Interview held with some members of QUARIB, it is another Islāmīc organization different from NASFAT in Lagos, 13/09/09.

⁶³⁷ I.A.B. Balogun, *The Life and Works of Uthman Dan Fodio (The Muslim Reformer of West Africa)*, 12.

⁶³⁸ J.O. Hunwick, *Sharia in Songhay: The Replies of al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad*, 88-89

⁶³⁹ H.Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*.London: Murray,(1829), 224.

that prevent many of them from believing and surrendering wholeheartedly to Allah. Many are aware of magic, secret cults, consultation of fortune tellers and use of talismans. Hitherto in Lagos, some Muslim scholars are preaching against the use of charms, amulets, fortune telling and magic.⁶⁴⁰ In fact, Clarke claims that as early as possible, some Muslim scholars in Osogbo wrote some books to discourage the then Muslims from borrowing and imitating the traditional culture but he opines that despite this effort ‘...many continued to be satisfied with borrowing and ‘striking parallels’ with their own culture and traditions...’.⁶⁴¹

Patrick in his study also mentions two forms of reform movements by some Yoruba scholars as conservative reformists and modernizing reformists. He sees the former as minimizing the extent of Muslim compromise with Traditionalist faith and he mentions scholars like Ahmad al-Rifai, the late *Mufti* of central mosque in Ibadan, and Ilorin who wrote a treatise called *at-Taqālid al-Jāhiliyyah*. The latter will be seen as more preoccupied with the challenge of Christianity than with that of Traditionalist faith, and they avoid open confrontation with Traditionalism or mixing of Traditionalist and Muslim rites. He also explains some of the techniques these two groups initiated like *Ṣalāt al-istikhārah* as against fortune telling and petitionary prayer as against *hanturu* (slate washings of Qur’ānic verses).⁶⁴² Nevertheless, many Yoruba Muslims still delve into syncretism.

⁶⁴⁰ For instance *Aafa* Michael preaches on the electronic media on Nigerian National Television using the mother tongue. His E-mail address is Zumratuljamiusersociety@gmail.com There are other Yoruba Muslim scholars in Yoruba land that hold open air preaching and they preach vehemently against syncretism. NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) *Ramaḍān* Programme 25/08/09. Bro. Lateef in an interview also confirmed to me some of these Yoruba Muslim Preachers 27/08/09.

⁶⁴¹ P.B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam*, 168.

⁶⁴² P.J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in Muslim Tradition*, 203-204. Patrick analyses the challenges that these reform efforts faced, and some other techniques devised by these reformists to find alternative to traditionalist practice.

Doi also claims that most of the Yoruba Muslims that engage in this profession of *Aafaa* have refused to tell their followers the Islamic position on syncretism deliberately because they earn a fortune from it and so they see it as a lucrative job. Also some Yoruba *Aafaa* claim that they use it to attract people to Islām and the practice is retained because it is in conformity with the superstitious belief of the Yoruba people, because some Yoruba believe and fear the spirit world despite the fact that they have knowledge of Islamic beliefs.⁶⁴³ Babalola considers this as one of the ways of spreading Islam in West Africa.⁶⁴⁴

4.2.5.5 Ethical Issues.

Ethical issues were given cognizance of at all points in the field work. Ethics that guide the tripartite stakeholders in the research enterprise viz:⁶⁴⁵ The participants, the researcher as well as the funding body. As regards the participants, I ensured that informed consent was given before the application of the instrument; as regards its purpose, its uses, how to record it, its translation to Yoruba language and its purpose, all these were guided by code of ethics which were respected religiously; confidentiality of any information given and its security, and no harm was caused to the participants. The interests of the participants were protected, incentives were also asked by some respondents which were not given based on ethics. We ensured fairness, accurate reporting, appropriate utilization of the information and no restriction was imposed by any funding body.

⁶⁴³ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 253; see also J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 270-272.

⁶⁴⁴ E.O. Babalola, *The Advent and Growth of Islām in West Africa*, 84.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 212; see also, M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide*, 144-145.

4.2.5.6 Insider-Outsider Problem.

As discussed in chapter one of this work, many researchers in the field of religion have argued that only insider can truly understand religious behaviour using the concept of 'faith'. But what constitutes an insider or outsider varies depending upon the perspective that it is being looked. Pearson has argued that it is useful to have both insider and outsider perspective in the study of any religious tradition.⁶⁴⁶ He asserts that rigorous 'self-reflexivity' should always be applied in these two perspectives. Outsider should value the view of an insider but should not totally depend on it because religion is not the sole property of an insider because that will go against the claim of the universality of religion and its being meaningful and relevant to the lives of others.

Sambur also claims that researchers should not always attribute either human or a divine element to every religious phenomenon, but they should be open to possibility of their occurrence within a variety of religious contexts. He suggests that: '...the study of religion is a serious endeavour, it should not be approached from the feistic subjectivism of the insider, and any more than it should be approached from the anthropological objectivism of the outsider'.⁶⁴⁷ Researchers in this field have claimed that it is almost certain that absolute objectivity can never be attained in study of anything; especially research which involves people will always have effect on the researcher. Puttick agrees with this position when he avers that '...to admit one's personal position is more valid and illuminating that (sic) than

⁶⁴⁶ J. Pearson, 'Going Native in Reverse': 'The Insider as Researcher in British Wica' in E. Arweck and M. D. Stringer (eds.), *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual*, 105-106.

⁶⁴⁷ B. Sambur, 'From the Dichotomy of Spiritualism/ Ritualism to the Dichotomy of Insider/ Outsider' Ibid, 30

hiding behind the defence of scientific objectivity, which is anyway unobtainable...⁶⁴⁸

Researchers have also queried the motives, religious and cultural background of the outsider engaged in the study of religion. For instance, they assert if the religious and cultural background of the outsider is a westernized Christian he may look at religious issue through the 'glasses of a western Christian culture' and thereby reducing religion to his own construction. Consideration should always be given to the researched community as fellow human beings with their own sensitivities and concerns.⁶⁴⁹ Although it could be argued that every scholar makes a study while carrying a baggage, I made use of this approach in this study.

4.2.5.7 Results of the Interview.

The following serves as the results of the interview:

4.3.1 Rationale: Why Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State hold on to Syncretism.

It should be noted as part of constraints of this work that despite my repeated explanations of different categories of syncretism, most of my interviewees focussed their explanations on some Yoruba Muslims and Muslim *Aafaa*'s involvement in the production of charms and amulet, divination, little or no

⁶⁴⁸ E. Puttick, *Women in New Religion: In Search of Community, Sexuality and Spiritual Power*, London: Macmillian (1997), 8-9

⁶⁴⁹ N. Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs*, London: Fontona Press (1997), 6-7

attention was given to other categories. When one talks to many Yoruba Muslims about syncretism what comes to their minds is consultation of *Aafaa jalab* and their activities as it will be seen in the following analysis.

Apart from what we analysed under the interpretation of results, my interviews with some learned and ordinary Yoruba Muslims suggest that the problem of syncretism among the Yoruba persisted because in our contemporary society, many Muslim *Aafaa* are driven by materialistic urge, so everyone wants to drive the best high status or most sophisticated cars, to live in a magnificent buildings, wear costly clothes, to the detriment of their faith, and besides, so many of them refuse to tell the truth about the Islamic position on syncretism.⁶⁵⁰

Jimoh, who has been an Islāmic studies teacher and preacher for almost forty years, while analysing the factors responsible for the persistence of this practice suggests that although the Yoruba Muslims have the knowledge of *Tawḥīd* of Allah as the creator, but they still believe that they cannot be satisfied with that alone. Hence, they cling on to syncretism and its total eradication cannot be achieved.⁶⁵¹

Saula, a teacher of Islāmic Studies for nearly thirty years submits that many of those who patronise or are involved in syncretism do so out of poverty because many of these people curry favour with traditional chiefs in order to obtain food and money. In addition to this, their level of literacy education is very poor.⁶⁵²

Ajetumobi bemoans the compromised attitude of some Islamic scholars in this regard as most of them do not teach by exemplifying a good model. Another

⁶⁵⁰ Interview with Bro. Raheem Ajetumobi, 14/08/09.

⁶⁵¹ Interview with Alh. Jimoh, 12/08/09.

⁶⁵² Interview with Bro. Saula, 12/08/09.

problem, according to Ajetumobi, is lack of patience on the part of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State forgetting that life is full of prosperity and adversity and that acceptance of the vicissitudes of life are the hallmark of a believer.⁶⁵³

Gawat in his own view claims that the problem is a vicious circle and systemic in which everybody is involved: parents, the Yoruba *Aafaa*, Yoruba Muslims, the Government and society as a whole.⁶⁵⁴ Bello suggests that the factor that is responsible for this persistent problem is lack of unity among Muslim scholars; in which many of them will be given different *Fatāwā Islāmīyyah* (Islamic ruling) without adequate or thorough knowledge of the issue. They mislead some ignorant Yoruba Muslims who look upon them as Islamic scholars. Another factor according to him is that *Da'wah* (religious preaching) does not reach the grassroots and the rural areas because most of these practices are endemic and ubiquitous in the countryside because many of them do not have access to education and they live in poverty.⁶⁵⁵

Muhibbudeen, a professor of Islāmic Theology whose teaching career spans almost forty years having considered the problem incisively, contends that the deep rooted effects of traditional religions cannot be ruled out from the causes, in spite of the Yoruba Muslims' belief in Allah. 'Africans are in everything religious' and he claims that these groups of Muslim *Aafaa* are 'Islāmic dealers' not representing the authentic Islām, commercialising the religion for their selfish end.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵³ Interview with Bro. Raheem Ajetumobi, 14/08/09.

⁶⁵⁴ Interview with Bro. Aremu Gawat, 26/08/09.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Bro. Jimoh Bello, 14/08/09.

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with Prof. Muhibdeen, Professor of Islamic Studies and Head, Department of Religions, Lagos State University, 17/08/09.

Another factor that contributes to this problem according to Jumuah is the fact that some Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* preach different ideologies owing to different sects, for instance: TMC (The Muslim Congress) MSS (Muslim Student Society) *Zumratul al-Muminin*, etc., each group defending its own ideology. Another factor shared by Jumuah,⁶⁵⁷ Adetona,⁶⁵⁸ and Kolawole⁶⁵⁹ is the graduates of the *Marākiz* and *Ma‘āhad* collectively known as ‘*ilmiyyah* schools (Islamic Higher Schools) which they see as pertinent to this persistent problem. They lack the right ‘*aqidah* (belief) in Allah and thus become commercial *Aafaa* without any vocational job.

Adetona suggests that these groups of graduates are a liability to Muslim society and the so called *Marākiz* have outlived their usefulness. Elsewhere in his work, he emphasizes the age-long love affair of Lagos Yoruba Muslims with Qur’ānic schools that culminated in a proliferation of Qur’ānic schools *ab initio*.⁶⁶⁰ In his recent article, Adetona catalogued the problems of these *Khawārij Marākiz* (Graduates of Modern Arabic Schools) as: ‘...no fixed profession, advanced fraud, and even hard drugs’. He asserts that ‘...although these schools were meant for *da’wah* through education in a short time... but the impact of these schools were no longer positively felt in the educational circles in Lagos...’⁶⁶¹ He maintains that the profession of about 20 out of the 200 graduates of their system cannot be ascertained. A few of them that are retained by their alma mater in order to augment

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Bro. Luqman Jumuah, Senior Lecturer (Islamic Studies) at Lagos State University, 7/08/09.

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with Bro. Lateef Adetona, Senior Lecturer (Islamic Studies) at Lagos State University, 27/08/09.

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Bro. Hakeem Kolawole, Lecturer (Islamic Studies) at Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, 21/08/09.

⁶⁶⁰ L.M. Adetona, *The Impact of Da’wah on the Development of Islam in Lagos (1900-2005)*. An unpublished PhD Thesis submitted to Lagos State University, (2006), 88-89.

⁶⁶¹ L.M. Adetona. ‘*Ilmiyyah* Schools in post Independence Lagos’ in I. Akintola (ed.), *Correlates of Islām*, Kaduna: Ahmadu Bello University Press (2009), 56-57.

their living resort to *jalb* (spiritual consultation) because of their precarious living standard. This group, he claims have deviated fully from their learning as they acquire additional skills from the traditional healers or native worshippers; they sometimes join associations of traditional herbalists in order to survive. He views the problem as a generational one.

Kolawole suggests further that these groups of people that are involved in this profession do not want to lose their prestige or honour, if they should leave the job. Many Yoruba Muslims also fear death. Their lack of belief in *Qadar* (destiny) is another factor compounding the problem. Laguda, an expert in Philosophy of Religion and African Traditional Religion, claims that syncretism does not constitute a problem. He sees it as a positive value culminating from the pluralistic nature of the society and environmental determinant. Lagos is a cosmopolitan city densely populated by different people from different environments. Different religions proffer solutions to their different problems which range from disease, ignorance, leadership, hunger etc; a 'religious supermarket'.⁶⁶² Another cause of this problem is the get-rich-quick-syndrome that is rife in the society today. The problem of social interaction among people is also responsible for this situation.⁶⁶³

Salisu in his own contribution maintains that initially these Muslim *Aafaa* were using all their arts in order to invite and attract people to Islām. Because of the early people's fear of sorcery and evil spirits, these means were employed to protect people from the unseen enemies, especially at the inception of Islam. This practice was retained since it was in conformity with the superstitious belief of the Yoruba

⁶⁶² Interview with Bro. Laguda, Senior Lecturer (Christian Studies) Lagos State University, 17/08/09.

⁶⁶³ Interview with Alh. Muhyideen, Spokesman for Badagry Muslim Community, 19/08/09.

people.⁶⁶⁴ Akintola suggests that this problem has become a serious cancer which has eaten deep into the fabrics of the Muslim's society because of the inability of the Government to provide job for the jobless youth, obsolete health facilities, low-standard of education, inadequate recreational facilities, corruption and inadequate infrastructural facilities. He proposes that if Government could provide adequate jobs and remuneration for this teeming population, and live up to her responsibilities this problem would soon be solved.⁶⁶⁵

Mojeed suggests that Muslim *Aafaa* persistently practising syncretism is due to greediness and laziness about seeking a vocation that suits their talent. Because the essence of Islamic education is to internalize in oneself the fear of Allah and recognition of how to serve Allah and our civic responsibilities to each other, one can venture into any job as long as it does not involve *ḥarām* (forbidden things). He affirms that it is also caused by lack of faith (*Īmān*) in Allah, love of this world and sheer ignorance⁶⁶⁶

Luqman, looking at this problem from a traditional perspective, contends that most of people that are doing these things or patronizing them are devoid of belief in Allah as the sole provider of sustenance. They are doing it in order to subdue the *Jinn* (Evil spirit) for their selfish ends and that many of them believe that you cannot be rich without eating human flesh. So you must get spiritual power from the realm of the spiritual world to order people to bring their wealth for you, while the other forms of syncretism are also caused by love of wealth, lack of Islamic

⁶⁶⁴ Interview with Bro. Salisu, Senior Lecturer (Islamic Studies) Lagos State University, 15/09/09.

⁶⁶⁵ Interview with Bro. Akintola, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, Lagos State University, 14/09/09.

⁶⁶⁶ Interview with Ustadh Mojeed, Chief Imām, Nawaru-deen, Lagos, 12/09/09.

education, lack of knowledge of *Tawhīd* and paucity in the number of the Islamic scholars that enlighten Muslims on it⁶⁶⁷.

Sadiq, a specialist in Guidance and Counselling Psychology, views the problem from a psychological perspective, and asserts that the Yoruba Muslims have been mentally influenced by the existence of a spiritual world and spiritual powers which are malevolent ‘wreaking havoc’ in their lives and the *Aafaa* have been ‘psychologically’ seen as ‘saviours’ and ‘spiritual godfatherism’ and the belief in superstitions, witchcraft and spiritual power of the ancestor has been ingrained in their minds.⁶⁶⁸

Further more, this practice was retained in order to immortalise Yoruba culture from becoming extinct. Some Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* and Muslim leaders do not serve as a good model. Many of them practise charms and amulets; members of secret cults and participate in traditional festivals.⁶⁶⁹ The general belief in Islamic theology is that there are differences between (*sihr*) magic, (*karāmat*) miracles of the saints (*awliyā’llah*) (friends of Allah), which some saints employ in order to strengthen themselves in their duty of inviting people to Islam. They were not informed before they were given this miraculous power and they received it through their absolute trust in Allah.

M’ujizah, prodigious (i.e, a remarkable and unnatural event) feats reserved exclusively for the prophets and Allah’s messengers are unchallengeable feats,

⁶⁶⁷ Interview with Ustadh Luqman, Chief *Mufassir* and *Usthadh*, Morogbo Central Mosque, 10/09/09.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Bro. Sadiq, Senior Lecturer, Foundations Department, Lagos State University, 26/09/09.

⁶⁶⁹ Interview with Bro. Oluwa, A member of the royal family in Lagos Island on 18/08/09

preserve for some of them, performed with the leave of Allah. *M'ujizah* are signs of Allah given to some of His Prophets and Messengers and often to establish the truth and the authenticity of their prophethood and messengership before their people.⁶⁷⁰ On the other hand, magic (*sihr*) is sourced from the devils, and it was received by ungodly *Awliyāu Shayātīn* (associates of the devils) such as magicians and sorcerers to bring about seemingly and not real prodigious happenings. *Sihr* (magic) is performed only with the connection and assistance of *Jinn* (evil spirits),⁶⁷¹ some invisible forces imbued with a certain powers not given to the ordinary man except the wicked. They get their power from *Shaytān* (the devil) in order to trick and deceive the unsuspecting people to satisfy their inordinate desires, and so they increase in ignorance, deviance and devilish acts.⁶⁷² So, some Yoruba Muslim clerics believe the fallacy that the power was given to them by Allah, so they perform the magic in order to copy fraudulently from the miracles of the saints and Allah's messengers.⁶⁷³

Looking at the future of African Traditional Religions, Laguda⁶⁷⁴ agrees largely with Parrinder when the latter asserts that Islam has a great advantage over other religions in terms of converting other people to its fold; because, it is believed that Islam has much to offer in all the fields of human endeavour. Islām is also seen as

⁶⁷⁰ It is often a sign of their prophethood and messengership. It is done by the leave of Allah. It is not done based on their own whims. Prophets and Messengers were not miracle workers. They were not sent with only miracle to convince the people to accept their message. The unique miracle of Prophet Muḥammad is the Qur'ān.

⁶⁷¹ For more details, see A.B. Philips, *The Exorcist Tradition in Islām*, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates: Dar Al-Fatah (1997), 48; A.A. Sulayman, *'Aalām al-Jinn wa ash-Shayātīn*, 4th ed. Kuwait: Maktab al-Falaah (1984), 18 ; W.S. Balee, *Wiqāyah al-Insān min al-Jinn wa ash-Shaytān*, Cairo: Daar al-Basheer (1989),15; A.B. Philips, *Ibn Taymeeyah Essay on the Jinn (Demons) (Abridged, Annotated and Translated)*, Riyadh: Tawheed Publications (1990), 17.

⁶⁷²S.L. Jumuah, *Sharifdeen of Tanzania; an Infant Prodigy, Sharifdeen Khalifa of Tanzania*, Lagos: OACE Publishing Company (1999), 8-10.

⁶⁷³ Ibid, 11

⁶⁷⁴ Interview with Bro. Laguda, 17/08/09.

a religion that appears indigenous in many areas of Yoruba land. He also claims that Islām will be conditioned by the spread of western secularism which is right now ‘staring the Muslims in the face’ and because of this, ‘...Neo-Muslims today tend to manifest a Western attitude towards religion...’ In other words, the adoption of western or secular ideas will limit the advance of Islām, primarily to its religious aspects.⁶⁷⁵

Many Yoruba scholars in their *Ramaḍān* lectures appear to express concern on the persistent attitude of some Yoruba Muslims holding on to syncretism. They claim that in spite of many preachings, orientation, education, modern science and technology and other means of disabusing their minds from these problems of superstition, ancestral worship, fortune telling, charms and amulets, some Yoruba Muslims appear to be dependent on these consultants who make huge money out of them, because of their gullibility.⁶⁷⁶

4.3.2 Problems and Limitations of the Field Work

As is normal with every human endeavour, one is bound to encounter some inconveniences. There were several unexpected problems and limitations that arose during the course of conducting the fieldwork. The first problem I faced was that of

⁶⁷⁵ G.Parrinder, *West African Religion*, 194.

⁶⁷⁶ Television Ramaḍān Lectures August-September, 2009. The lecturers are: Shaykh-Abdul Majeed, Chief *Imām Nawarudeen* Society, Ustadh Hakeem, Missionary *Ikhwān l-Muslimīn* and Ustadh Murtadah Lekki Chief Missionary, Lekki Central Mosque. I watched and listened to this programme over NTA (Nigeria Television Authority), LTV (Lagos Television) and MITV (Muri International Television)

failed interview appointments; cancelled sometimes at extremely short notice. When this happened repeatedly, I was forced to stop making arrangements.

Another problem I faced during this exercise was the transportation in Lagos. The state of Lagos roads is highly deplorable, resulting in traffic jams and delays, especially as many interviewees lived several kilometres outside of Lagos centre (in Epe, Ikorodu, Lagos Island, Badagry, Ibeju-Lekki). Even when I was able to reach the interviewees at the agreed time I often had to stay overnight on the outskirts of Lagos, resulting in fatigue.

Another problem during the field work was communication. As some of the telephone services providers in Lagos were ineffective. The problem was worsened by the incessant power outages which made communications very cumbersome except for business centres that made brisk money.

Another problem was a misunderstanding about the aims and objectives of this study by some of the participants. There was an instance, when I distributed the questionnaire to a group of Muslims in the mosque, and one of the participants showed anger and indignation and refused blatantly to fill in the questionnaire. He did not appear to understand my motives for embarking on the study. He equally said many unprintable words. He went away and did not come back.

There was a problem with some of my interviewees who asked for incentives before they could share their precious time, knowledge and experience with me, which I did not give, mainly for ethical reasons related to research. Finance, this was

another hindrance I faced as I was unable to travel to some areas based on my limited financial resources.

4.3.3 Solutions Proffered.

The solution I proffered to failed appointments was to be patient. I deliberately refused to comment to my interviewees' failed appointments. After most appointments, my strategy was to keep contacting them and most often it proved fruitful as some of them would call me later and we would mutually rearrange on new appointments. It sometimes resulted interviewing many people in one day in different places.

As regards transportation, I used to resort to riding a motorbike '*okada*' and getting a lift in order to get to my destination more quickly, cheaply and with a minimum of stress. This was exacerbated by the fact that this happened during *Ramaḍān*.

The problem of communication was overcome through using business centres to charge phones and to make calls. I also sometimes went there twice; first to book appointments and secondly turning up for the appointments. One of my respondents who refused to rate my questionnaire was taken with equanimity. I likened him to a companion that rebuffed 'Umar (RA) in his presence and 'Umar painstakingly bore and considered the person as ignorant despite his annoyance. So, I overlooked his attitude. Moreover, everybody is entitled to his opinion.

As regards the problem of finance, I was resolute and determined. So I made do with whatever was available. The problem of incentive being asked from me by some of my respondents which I refused to offer based on ethical reasons; but I overcame this by giving excuses and appeals that 'I am a poor student who is self funding himself'. Although, some respondents and interviewees refused to believe me, because of their erroneous belief that anybody that travels abroad is rich which I tried to refute and disabuse. But I did promise diplomatically that as soon as I finish my programme I will come back to say 'thank you'.

Lastly, the exercise was stimulating and the experience was challenging as it gave real life experience in contrast to what one reads in the Library.

4.3.4 Conclusion.

In this chapter, we have tested the hypotheses formulated earlier on in chapter one, and the emerging results of the statements of the questionnaire were also discussed. We also discussed and justified the type of interview methods used to gather data for this work. The sampling methods and how the samples were selected were also discussed. We also highlighted the procedures employed to administer the questionnaire and it was explained why the particular method was chosen. Ethical issues which were observed during the course of the field work were also explained. The chapter also discussed the responses of the samples as reasons why some Yoruba Muslims still holding on to syncretism as viewed by Yoruba Muslims and

Aafaa (Muslim clerics) themselves. The chapter was rounded off with problems encountered during the field work and how they were solved.

CHAPTER FIVE

CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM AMONG YORUBA MUSLIMS IN LAGOS STATE.

5.0 Introduction.

In chapter three of this work, I identified and explained traditional beliefs and practices in Lagos State. I equally emphasised how some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State still retain some of these traditional beliefs and practices which have given birth to religious syncretism. The practices will be analysed in this chapter. Some of these syncretic practices, it is believed are largely performed through the intervention and active participation of the evil spirits (*Jinn*) and the syncretics' obedience to him. Our purpose in this chapter is to critically and analytically appraise various traditional beliefs and practices that some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State involve in their Islam with a view to bringing out the various religious syncretisms inherent in each of the earlier mentioned beliefs and practices.

As a matter of coherence, the critical examination is done in the light of the orthodox Islamic provisions and with a view to determining the lawfulness or otherwise of such beliefs and practices among many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State. In other words, this chapter will consider the Islamic rulings on each of the syncretic beliefs and practices.

Traditional religion in Yoruba land is one in which traditional religious beliefs, customs, social organization, cults and philosophies are interwoven. It can be said that despite the acculturation through Islamic culture, Arabic Language and the responsive adaptation by the Yoruba Muslims, there are certain remains of traditional beliefs in Yoruba customs, for example: superstitions, witchcraft, black magic and secret societies which some of the Yoruba Muslims have found difficult to forsake. Since it is the same Yoruba that embrace Islām, there is no reason to doubt the interaction of Yoruba traditional religion and Islām.

It should be noted at the beginning of this section that it is not all Yoruba culture that are Islāmically wrong as we pointed out in chapter one of this work. For instance, the culture of respect to the elders, respect to strengthen the ties of family relationship, truthfulness, hygienic living, chastity and loyalty. The Yoruba condemn vices which include: fraud, dishonesty, rudeness, unhygienic living, lies, adultery, theft and hypocrisy. It should also be reiterated that not all acts of syncretism constitute infidelity or association of partners with Allah. Here we shall look at some of these areas of convergence among many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State.

5.1 Religious Syncretism in superstitions.

Superstition, as seen in its explanations, features and examples in chapter three connotes syncretism. Critically looking at its definitions, one would discern that superstition is devoid of knowledge and is an irrational belief in fear or magic. It is also seen as mixing the fear of something else with Almighty Allah. Another

syncretic aspect of this practice is where the practitioner believes that the outcome or future of certain events can be influenced by certain specified behaviour i.e. if one believes that by wearing lucky rings or lucky charms, amulets, talismans, using traditional medicine and lucky pens that guarantee examination success sold to the superstitious minds, success is guaranteed⁶⁷⁷ The traditional custom of believing in bad luck, for instance, Friday 13th, walking under a ladder, or breaking a mirror which will cause seven years of bad luck are all syncretic.⁶⁷⁸

Another syncretistic aspect of superstition among some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State is that it is borne out of fear of the unknown, ignorance and imagination; which Islām does not condone as a religion of knowledge and civilization.⁶⁷⁹ Although, some psychologists claim that superstition is an innate quality in individual human being.⁶⁸⁰ Islām is considered as a comprehensive religion that solves all problems.⁶⁸¹ Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State still adhere to some traditional superstitious beliefs despite their acceptance of Islām, believing its observation or otherwise can bring them benefit or harm. Furthermore, there are often ‘logical’ explanations to these, but the African being incurably religious has to frame this in a religious language. For instance, some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos state will not allow their children or themselves to cut their nails at night; they believe that this can induce the rats to eat their clothes. They will not cut firewood at night, or sit at the entrance of the house. On wedding day, the bride would not meet her groom at home. ‘*Oro ile*’ traditional customs like rubbing her body with

⁶⁷⁷ Interview with Ajet, Abd-Rahman, 14/08/09.

⁶⁷⁸ B.A. Lemu, *Islamic Studies for Senior Secondary Schools*, 117.

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with Aqfa Muhyideen, 18/08/09.

⁶⁸⁰ For example, B.F. Skinner, ‘Superstition’ in the Pigeon’ *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 168-172.

⁶⁸¹ Interview with Bro. Sadiq, 20/08/09.

kola nut and money, and pouring water on her feet must be observed by the newly married woman.⁶⁸²

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is not allowed to fetch water from the well in the night. They will not also allow a man to buy something from them when hawking their wares while going out in the morning; if their first son is a male, they will prefer a female person to buy from them. If they have an appointment with somebody and their left leg stumbles on a stone, they consider it as a bad omen or luck. Whistling in the night can annoy the elderly people (*'Agbagbas'*), the ardent traditionalists around them; 'they are the terror of the night'. They also believe that the cock should not crow at night and to ward off the crowing-danger, the cock must be killed on the spot and its head buried there. They also believe that if a rodent (*'okere'*) is seen by someone, it is a bad omen. It is also a bad omen if the partridge (*'Aparo'*) visits the town.

Besides, it is also regarded as dangerous if a pregnant woman plucks red pepper by the way-side or if her hen dies on her eggs during the incubation period. A pregnant woman does not walk in the afternoon between twelve and one o'clock, in order to stop her from giving birth to (a child-born-to- die, literally) *'Abiku'* and if she wants to go out at that particular time she must tie a needle and three stones to the edges of her clothes.⁶⁸³ All these superstitions are still believed in by many Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State and elsewhere. Many still hold on tenaciously and

⁶⁸² Interview with Alhaja Musadiq. She asserted that any attempt by a married woman to violate this, will cause problem to the couple. Some of the superstitious beliefs can be explained easily as they are being observed for the purpose of health and safety, but it is only when they are attached to religion and taboo that people will be able to observe them religiously.

⁶⁸³ Interview with Muhyideen 16/08/09 and Akanmu 17/08/09. They both told me that regardless of people's religion in Lagos State that some Yoruba people, whether Muslims or Christians still hold their belief tenaciously to this and observe this practice religiously.

religiously to observation of these beliefs and practices which appear not to have any rational basis.

Looking critically at these various superstitious beliefs and practices that were enumerated in the previous chapter, one will glean that many of them connote syncretism as irrational belief in things that do not have any effect except in psychological or traditional culture.⁶⁸⁴ The issue of '*Abiku*' for instance, which literally means 'child predestined to death' or the birth of the 'twins' is another major superstitious belief among many Yoruba Muslims.⁶⁸⁵ In the former, they believe that there are some children that have mystical powers who have the ability to transfer their spirits into the wombs of the expectant mothers and they torture them, and after birth these children are visited by their colleagues and they attend nocturnal meetings taking their complaints to these 'nocturnal meetings' which their parents are yet to fulfil for them and they die shortly after birth and return to their mothers as they will. Based on this phenomenon, some Yoruba give them indelible marks in order to disfigure them, for example, burning their toes, and various sacrifices are performed in order to stop them from 'going away'.⁶⁸⁶

Against that background, it is also believed that '*Abiku*' can turn to '*emere*', (people with mysterious power to perceive any potential harm to them) and they usually meet at the cross-roads '*Orita-meta*' between ten in the morning and twelve noon or between four and seven in the evening. It is believed that those are the periods of the day when they die if they choose to. In this society, the female youths usually

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Bro. Sadiq, 21/08/09.

⁶⁸⁵ A.B. Ellis, *Yoruba –Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa; their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Language, etc.*, 111-112

⁶⁸⁶ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 129.

predominate. Members are Muslims, Christians and pagans. Some Yoruba Muslims believe in '*Emere*'. This is syncretistic practice. Another syncretistic belief inherent in superstition is the belief relating to twins in which various sacrifices ('*saara*') fried plantains, cooked beans, honey, sugar, local sweet ('*aidun*') are performed so that they will grow up healthy. These sacrifices are done every now and then to the twins, and if in any event, one of them dies, they will carve an idol of him in order to represent him. Some also believe that witchcraft and any diabolical act cannot have any effect on the twins.⁶⁸⁷

The belief in *Abiku* has allowed it to constitute itself into a menace and hardly any sacrifice can prevent the phenomenon. There are many taboos that should be observed by the expectant mother: not going about in the night or the recesses of empty houses and if she must do so, she must tie a stone on one end of her wrapper to forestall '*Abiku*' from infecting her. The expectant mother will be taken to a herbalist for 'immunization' in order to ward off the spell of '*Abiku*' from infecting her.⁶⁸⁸ Other problem in the belief in '*Abiku*' include: '*Abikus*' have spirit companions from and to whom they make journeys; children with strange whims and fancies which their anxious mothers (and perhaps fathers too) dare not deny. They are recognised by 'amulets' (*Gbekude*) which are bought to hang around their necks and wrists; special feasts are prepared for them. Their identities are often clearly recognized from the presence of distinctive birth marks or physical stigmas.

⁶⁸⁷ Interview with Adebambo 22/08/09. Ademambo claims further that Yoruba see *Emere* as group of children who have been initiated into spiritual meetings while in the wombs. They have sworn an allegiance to their members that they would marry among themselves. Against this context, some of them will make their parents to be fortunate, if they are properly taken care of.

⁶⁸⁸ A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 130.

In order to discourage this ‘dismal cycle’, ‘*Abiku*’ are not mourned; rather they are buried unceremoniously and casually.⁶⁸⁹

Dr. Lesi of Lagos University Teaching Hospital dealt with the problem of ‘*Abiku*’ in his article ‘*Abiku Syndrome*’. In the article, the medical Doctor wades through a number of problems related to the ignorance of the peoples of West Africa where presumably, this idea is held and in Yoruba land in particular where the syndrome takes its name. He argues that before the children are born, the expectant mother appears to have experienced undernourishment and slept in stuffy rooms and this will make her to be deficient in both the oxygen and balanced diet upon which the unborn child depends. He claims that this may result to ‘still-born’ children, and very difficult for these children to survive. He asserts further that these children may be afflicted with ‘...heart disease, diabetes, and a congenital malformation... in some cases, the expectant mother is denied the opportunity to take certain nourishing food because of various family taboos’.⁶⁹⁰ He claims that this may result in cases of anaemia during pregnancy. The medical doctor states further:

...the baby’s heart fails as a result and it may die just before or at delivery... these are examples of the predicaments of the foetus which causes death within the first months of the birth ... these also include the unhygienic circumcision of females...use of unsterilized instruments may transport tetanus into the child...other causes (according to the medical doctor), are brain injuries during ‘re-moulding’ of the head at birth; congenital defects and infections of all kinds resulting from the poor sanitary conditions of our society... by observing that (sic) (rules of hygiene, and healthy living) with improved sanitation our so called ‘*Abiku*’ children will decide to stay’.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁹⁰ This is based on family or kinship basis. Some families will not allow a nursing mother to eat a particular meat, egg, fish etc.

⁶⁹¹ F.E. Lesi, ‘*Abiku Syndrome: Your Health*’ in: *Federal Ministry of Health Magazine*, Vol.2, No.5, (1969), 24-25.

It is the same syncretism that characterises belief in ‘*Abiku*’ that also involves belief in apparitions or seeing the ghost of a person after his death (*Akudaya*) or the mystical belief in the supernatural power of twins. All these are syncretic elements that are contained in superstitions.

Accommodating Muslims also hold on to the custom regarding certain days of the week as being more auspicious than others for various activities. Wednesday for instance, is characterized as replete with *alubarika* (Arabic: *al-barakah*, ‘blessing’), as well as Thursday. Marriages, the commencement of house-building and the celebration of the ceremonial completion of the Qur’ān by a student *walīmah al-Qur’ān* (‘Qur’ān banquet’) are all best held on these days. The *Aafaa* with his calendrical divination as well as being the Qur’ānic teacher and officiant at these ceremonies knows best how to advise his clients on the choice of the right day for any activity, including travelling. Thursday, more particularly at the eve of Friday, is esteemed by some accommodating Yoruba Muslims as a time for prayer for the dead as they superstitiously believe that the dead people come home in the night and look at what is going on at home. And they would be sad if sacrifice (*saara*) was not sent to them as they would come with their age groups (*egbe*).

Moreover, some Yoruba Muslims also work by a book called (*Qāla Shaykh*) literally; it means (*Shaykh* said) which delineates the day one can bath and vice-versa. In particular, some Yoruba Muslims will never bath on Saturdays and Wednesdays as those days are known for poverty striking anyone that takes a bath on that day. There are some specific days you cannot sleep with your wife etc.

There is a superstition arrogated to the last Wednesday of the month (*alaruba kokoro*) (key Wednesday) as being rich in blessing.

Looking critically at some of these Yoruba's superstitious beliefs and practices it appears that, some of them are observed on moral, preventive or health reasons; but the belief is that it is only religion that Yoruba understand and can deter them from doing or not doing something, since they are incurably religious. The practices are concealed under the guise of religion in order to control and regulate societal norms. For example, if one takes the issue of trimming fingernails at night; it can expose the person to injury by cutting his fingers in the darkness since there was no electricity in the olden days; a similar belief is held for a pregnant woman who should not go out in the night or fetch water from the well at night. The beliefs about married women not sitting down at the entrance of the house, or washing cloth in the night are observed for the purpose of promoting peace; cutting firewood at night can also cause harm because of the darkness.

The negative aspect of some of these superstitious beliefs arises when people believe that their lack of observation will bring doom or havoc, or believe that they are controlled by a divinity. Notably: belief in *Abiku*, *Emere*, *Gbekude*, or rubbing a newly married woman with kolanut, whistling at night annoying the 'elderly' people '*Agbagba*', or believing that a cock crowing in the night should be killed; these can be compared to *at -Tiyyārah*; observing the movement of the bird to deduce an omen, which Islam abolished among the Arabs in the Pre-Islāmic period. Some of these superstitious beliefs can be seen as irrational and to be waved aside. But some are religion-based: some days are auspicious while others are not;

pregnant women and nursing mothers are denied eating salutary food due to patrilineal clan taboos (*Eewo Idile*), children being called by the names they bring from heaven, some materials being used to pray for babies because they possess some spiritual power, consulting an oracle before consenting to marriage choice, carrying the bride only at night while the groom leaves the house, wearing expensive dresses for the dead so that he will be glamorous in the heaven, putting utensils and money in the coffin; praying to the dead person not to forget his children. All these examples have religious undertones which should be avoided.

5.2 Islamic Ruling on Superstitions.

Islam is a religion of knowledge, enlightenment and conviction. It does not condone any practice or belief that is based on slavish adherence or follower ship. The Qur'ān states: 'when it is said to them: 'Follow what Allah has revealed, they say: 'Nay! We shall follow the ways of our fathers.' "What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance'.⁶⁹² Ibn Kathīr is of the opinion that this verse was revealed to reprimand the Pre-Islāmic Arabs of Makkah to stop emulating the bad practice of their fore fathers.⁶⁹³ But Qurtubī asserts that the verse was revealed in condemnation of all forms of ignorant emulation (*taqlīd*).⁶⁹⁴ In several places in the Qur'ān, Allah emphasizes the sacrosanct role of knowledge and the acquisition of education. The first revelation itself centres on education and literacy where Allah states: 'Read in the name of Your Lord that created. He created mankind from

⁶⁹² A.Y. Ali, *Modern English Translation of the Holy Qur'ān, Meanings and Commentary*, Kansas City USA: Manar International (1998), Q2; 171, 64; Q5; 104, 92.

⁶⁹³ Ibn Kathir, Ismael, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol 1, Riyadh: Maktabat Rīyādh al-Hadīth (nd), 205

⁶⁹⁴ Al- Qurtubī, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, 1st ed. Bayrut, Lebanon: Daar- al-Kitab al-Arabiyy (1997), 206

clot. Read...'⁶⁹⁵ these verses and several others from the Qur'ān really recapitulate the place of education and enlightenment in Islam.⁶⁹⁶

In other words, Islām from the outset has made it abundantly and crystal clear that it is a religion of enlightenment and knowledge.⁶⁹⁷ Islām was the first educational movement known to the Arabian peninsular.⁶⁹⁸ The primary goal of such a movement was to instil accurate understanding of the religion of Islām, and the avoidance of superstition.⁶⁹⁹ A plethora of the sayings and actions of the Prophet also emphasized the importance of acquisition of knowledge and made it compulsory. The acquisition of knowledge is highly rewardable and it is a form of striving.⁷⁰⁰ The inference here is that in Islām, knowledge and education is inextricably and symbiotically interwoven; one without the other cannot function.

The thrust of Islamic religion is that the essence of the creation of humankind is to serve Allah, but such servitude to Allah is practically impossible without our knowledge of how, or the modus operandi of serving Him. That is why submission to Allah is largely dependent on conviction based on knowledge. This assertion was demonstrated by Prophet Ibrahim (AS) with his people, when he destroyed their idols and queried the rationale behind its worship which they could not defend.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., Q96;1-5

⁶⁹⁶ See for instance, Q3; 19, 20; 114, 39; 9, 58; 11.

⁶⁹⁷ M.A. Balogun, et al., *Islamic Antidote to the Problem of corruption in Tertiary Institutions*. A paper presented at International conference on Corruption in Academia and State of Education in Africa at Ijanikin, Lagos (2009), 8.

⁶⁹⁸ A.M. Munir, *Tarikh-al-Tarbiyyah al-Islamiyyah*, Cairo: Maktab al-Turath (1981), 93.

⁶⁹⁹ A.R. Saheed, 'Teaching and Learning in Early Islam: A Discourse on an Intellectual Tradition' in I. Akintola (ed.), *Correlates of Islam*, 191.

⁷⁰⁰ The Prophet states: 'He who issues forth in search of knowledge is busy in the cause of Allah till he returns from his quest'. He says again '...for him who adopts a path seeking knowledge, Allah eases the way to paradise and angels spread their wings for a seeker of knowledge, being pleased with his occupation...'. For more see, A. A. Nawawi, *Riyād aṢ- sāliḥīn*, 198.

⁷⁰¹ Q21: 65-67.

Prophet Yūsuf put the same rhetorical question to his companions in the prison.⁷⁰²

Islām is a religion of logic.⁷⁰³ Superstition is devoid of knowledge and logical reasoning.

The Qur’ān does not leave anybody in doubt that one of the characteristics of the human being is his ability to think and reason. This unique characteristic sets us above other creatures and constantly in this Book; Islām calls our attention to think right and reason in the right direction. Allah commands us to ‘think’,⁷⁰⁴ ‘reason’,⁷⁰⁵ and ‘reflect’.⁷⁰⁶ Muslims believe that whatever we do, we should ask ourselves logically, why are we doing this?

Evidence abounds in the Qur’ān that it is only Allah that can give direction, manual and perfect guidance. The Qur’ān depicts God as the ‘best disposer’ of the affairs of men and then asks ‘Isn’t God the Wisest of the Wise?’⁷⁰⁷ The Qur’ān also affirms that Allah orders all things.⁷⁰⁸ Allah’s guidance is free from superstition and human supposition.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰² Q12: 40.

⁷⁰³ Islam also reiterates among others the importance of logic and rationality which are part of the activities of philosophising. Philosophy primarily deals with rationality and reasoning. Logic which is also an aspect of philosophy is a mental activity involved in correct reasoning, while its opposite is fallacy. For more details, see A.O. Adefuye, *Lecture Modules on Philosophy and Logic*, Ijanikin: Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Press (2005), 3-4.

⁷⁰⁴ Q3:191, Allah says ‘... and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth...’

⁷⁰⁵ Q2:44, Allah says ‘...Have you then no sense?’

⁷⁰⁶ Q16:67 & 69 ‘... Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think’.

⁷⁰⁷ Q95:8.

⁷⁰⁸ Q6:95

⁷⁰⁹ Allah says: ‘God will not mislead a people after He Has guided them, in order that He may make clear to them what to avoid; for God has knowledge of all things’ Q9:115.

Elsewhere, Allah affirms that it is only Him that can give rules as regards forbidden and permissible things, not a culture, tradition of a people or the mere excuse ‘that is how we found our forefathers acting’. Allah states:⁷¹⁰

Then we have put you (O Muhammad) on a way of our commandment (i.e. legal ways and laws of the Islamic Monotheism). So follow you that and follow not the desires of those who know not.

Islām does not allow anyone to give verdict on any issue in Islām or make a judgement or pronouncement without recourse to the book of Allah or the Prophetic traditions. Such people who give judgement based on their culture, vain desires and their whims and caprices are classified as rebellious, wrong doers and unbelievers.⁷¹¹ Allah affirms:

Say: ‘Have you seen what things Allah has sent down to you for sustenance? Yet you hold forbidden some things thereof and (some things) lawful. ‘Say: Has Allah indeed permitted you or do you forge (things) to attribute to Allah.’⁷¹²

The Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) posits in one of his sayings that every Muslim must hold fast to the Book of Allah, the Qur’ān as well the *sunnat* of the Prophet, and his rightly guided Caliphs that we should shun all newly invented matters.⁷¹³ Allah emphasizes ‘Obey Allah and His Messenger...’⁷¹⁴ The Qurān emphatically calls for total submission to the will of Allah regardless of one’s

⁷¹⁰ Q45:18. Issues that are not spelt out expressly in the Quran, the Muslim scholars can deliberate and use their personal reasoning (*ijtihad*), logical deduction (*Qiyās*) and consensus (*Ijmā’*) to resolve it

⁷¹¹ Q5; 44, 46, 48-51.

⁷¹² Q10:59

⁷¹³ I.R. Alhanbaliyyu, *Jāmiu l-‘Ulūm wal Ḥukam; fi Shari‘ah Khamsīn Ḥadithan min Jawāmi‘ al-Kalam*, Cairo: Dar-l-Fajr lilturath (2002), 425; Hadith five of An-Nawawi’s collection also emphasizes that any fundamental religious issue relating to Islam that is not within the purview of Allah and his messenger, and the approval of the consensus of the scholars, will not be rewarded.

⁷¹⁴ Q4; 59, 80, 69, 60, 65, 115; 59; 7.

culture, tradition and any other affiliations, and Muslims must shun the footsteps of the devil.⁷¹⁵

Superstitions are as old as darkness itself. Fear of the unknown and inability to control or predict our own future have led people to all kinds of acts and beliefs. Despite overwhelming scientific discoveries, technology and all kinds of education; humankind is still being influenced by this attitude.⁷¹⁶ Muslims believe that superstition entails taking to omens from cats, birds, and mice; sticks and greasy stones; sun and stars; the number 13 or itching in one's body which they consider as irrational things which is a result of lack of belief in God who controls everything.⁷¹⁷ The Prophet says 'Following the direction of birds, sand divination, and bad omen is magic'.⁷¹⁸

Every tribe and nation has its own superstitions. The Arabs were as superstitious as anyone before Islām.⁷¹⁹ They would not undertake a journey or do anything important without first 'determining' that it would be safe to do so, by looking at the direction of birds and beasts.⁷²⁰ Particularly, if a bird flew from right to left in front of them, that was a bad omen; flight in the other direction was a good omen. During travel if a deer crossed going from right to left, the trip was cancelled. When they reached a destination, they would seek protection of *Jinn* by supplicating to

⁷¹⁵ Q2; 208.

⁷¹⁶ <http://www.themodernreligion.com/misc/hh/superstition.html> accessed 10/10/2010

⁷¹⁷ S.R. Al Shaykh, *Fath-I-Majid; Sharh Kitāb Tawhīd*, Makkah: Maktabat Nizar Mustafa –al-Baz (2004), 204.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid. 206.

⁷¹⁹ I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 205; H.G. M. A, Sarwar, *Muhammad: The Holy Prophet*, 25

⁷²⁰ P.K.Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 125; E.A. Belyaev, *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages*, 73-75

them. Their superstitious belief can also be gleaned from Q5:103.⁷²¹ Yet, such deeply held beliefs and practices were uprooted by Islām in a very short period.

Later on weakening of faith started among the Muslim societies. Some Yoruba Muslims Some Yoruba Muslims still hold fast to some of these beliefs and they allow them to affect their actions and behaviour. Some people are so attached to superstition to the extent that they cannot go out without putting on some superstitious objects like lucky charms, lucky rings, if they lose them, they fear disaster because they imagine themselves as ‘unprotected’ and their good luck taken away. Attribution of good and bad fortune to such objects is a very obvious form of *shirk* and anyone that believes in one God should not be influenced by such things. This is borne out of weakening in understanding of Islām and faith in holding tenaciously to the articles of faith in Islām. Uthman ibn Fodio, in his famous treatise *Nūr-al-Albāb*, lists ten practices that constitute syncretism. He posits:

...Among these eclectic ones is one who claims that he is a Muslim, does the works of Islam while at the same time he venerates some trees and stones by offering slaughtered animals and alms to them; or by pouring (grain) paste on them. This one is an unbeliever, who is not subject to the rules of Islam.⁷²²

⁷²¹ Allah says:

‘Allah has not instituted things like *Baḥairah* (a she-camel whose milk was spared for the sake of the idols and nobody was allowed to milk it) or *Ṣaibah* (a she-camel that was let loose for free pasture for their false gods) or *Waṣilah* (a she-camel set free for idols because it has been giving birth to two or three she-camels) or *Ham* (a stallion camel freed from work for the sake of their idols). But those who disbelieve invent lies against Allah, and most of them have no understanding. And when it is said to them ‘Come to what Allah has revealed and unto the Messenger’ they say ‘Enough for us is that which we found our fathers following’ even their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever or guidance (Q5:103-104)

Ibn Kathir explains these different types of superstitious beliefs and practices of the Arabs before Islam and they stuck to copying their forefathers who were devoid of guidance. For more details, see Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, 108; al-Qurtubī, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, *al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, 177

⁷²² I.A. Ogunbiyi, *Nūr al-Bāb-The Litmus Test of Pure Islam as Interpreted by Shaykh Uthman bin.Fodio*, 24-25.

Uthman ibn Fodio continues to tell us some of the superstitious practices that were endemic among the Hausa Muslims which can also be likened to the Yoruba Muslims as well. In his view, any Muslim that casts cotton or some other things on stones by the road side, at the foot of the trees or at the junctions of two roads is an unbeliever, or where a Muslim puts cloths, food or some other things on the tombs of a saint, a scholar, or a pious person ignorantly and superstitiously believes that he is fulfilling a vow, he considers this person also as an unbeliever.⁷²³

Believing in any kind of superstitions, and being influenced by it, is regarded as *ḥarām* (forbidden) and *shirk* (association of partners with Allah),⁷²⁴ it seems like putting trust in any another being aside from Allah; not having hope in Him, exposing oneself to danger and despair from Allah's mercy. It is considered as otiose, illogical and blameworthy. The prophet says: 'Bad omen is *shirk*'. He maintains that Muslims should not allow such a thing to influence or control them. He emphasizes: 'neither contagion, nor bad omen (*tiyyārah*) but I like good omen (*al-fā'al al-hasan*) (optimism, favourable auspice). They asked what *al-fā'al* is and he said: 'Good words that everybody hears'⁷²⁵

When a Muslim announces a plan, he says *Inshā'a-Allah* (if Allah wills), putting his trust in His Creator, and when embarking on a journey, he makes supplication to Allah for his safety. When he is unsure about a plan, he seeks Allah's help in

⁷²³ Ibid, 25

⁷²⁴ A. Mohammed, *Superstition in Islām*. Personal email sent to : M.A. Balogun, 06/11/10

⁷²⁵ A.A. Jabariyyin, *Tahadhīb Tashīl al-'Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah*, Riyādh: Maktabat Mālik Fahad al-Wataniyyah (1425/2005), 158-159.

making up his mind.⁷²⁶ The *duā'* of *istikhārah* (Supplication of Divine Guidance) as depicted by the Prophet is very relevant at this occasion. Jabir relates thus:

The Prophet used to teach us *Istikhārah* in every matter as he teaches *Sūrah* from the holy Qur'ān; He says: if any of you plans to do something, let him offer two genuflections of voluntary prayer, and he says:

'O Allah! I seek Your guidance (in making a choice) by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty. You have power, I have none. And You know, I know not. You are the Knower of hidden things.

O, Allah! If in Your knowledge, this matter is good for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs; immediate and in the distant future, then ordain it for me, make it easy for me and bless it for me. And if in Your knowledge, this matter is bad for my religion, my livelihood, and my affairs; immediate and in the distant future, then turn it away from me, and turn me away from it. And ordain for me the good wherever it be and make me pleased with it.⁷²⁷

Each word of the above mentioned supplication invites reflection. It shows how uncertainties in life bring people closer to Allah. In Allah every Muslim should put his hope. A Muslim should not be afflicted with superstitions. The light of Islām through *Tawhīd* can cure it.

5.2.1 Syncretism involved in the Belief and Practice of Witchcraft.

Witchcraft, in some of its different meanings and connotations, are reminiscence of syncretism. Because witchcraft involves the use of supernatural power for harmful and evil ends; it also involves the practice of magic, the use of spells and the

⁷²⁶ The Muslims are also enjoined to make adequate provisions and to prepare effectively; they will then put their trust in Allah.

⁷²⁷ S.A.Wahaf, *Ḥisn al-Muslim, Min Adhkār l-Kitāb wa Sunnat*, Riyādh: Dar Ibn al-Haytham (2007), 39-40. The Hadith itself can be found in *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, 162.

invocation of evil spirits.⁷²⁸ The practice of this magic is not possible without the active participation of the *Jinn* (evil spirit). This practice is tantamount to syncretism; because it involves the use of magic and those that practise it quite often have their requests granted. This is due largely to their close association with the *Shayāṭīn* (plural, Satans, evil *Jinn* or devils).⁷²⁹ They carry out their devilish requests; arrogation of power of harm and benefit to any other than Allah constitutes syncretism.⁷³⁰ Witchcraft is destructive.⁷³¹ Looking at this critically, one will see that the belief and practice of witchcraft connotes syncretism in Islam, because it involves alliance or forming a league with the devils which ultimately results in the destruction of good things.⁷³²

Idolaters and magicians use magic, talismans and chant formulas containing glorification and worship of the *Jinn* and most incantations in use among the Yoruba Muslims contain association of partners with Allah (*Shirk*) by way of the *Jinn*. They are subservient to the *Jinn* in order to satisfy their diabolical request by so doing; they mix their worship of absolute monotheism (*Lā ilah illā lahu*) with the worship and subservience or obeisance to the devils, and this constitutes syncretism.

⁷²⁸ S. Soanes & A. Stevenson (eds), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1656.

⁷²⁹ Qur'ān, Chapter 2:102. Although, every Muslim is expected to believe in *Qadar* (good and bad occurrence from Allah) as in (Q9:51), 'say, nothing will afflict us except what has been decreed for us...' These Qur'ānic evidence notwithstanding, it is also a fact that sometimes *Qadar* in most cases is predicated on causation (*sabab*). Therefore, the witchcraft in alliance with the *Jinn*, using the power they are given could serve as *sabab* for some happenings and calamities. In this context, not all afflictions are natural. They are sometimes remotely caused, but definitely, not without the full foreknowledge of Allah and His permission. Q38:41 avers that the affliction suffered by Prophet Ayyūb (A.S) as having been caused by the devil. The Qur'ān also reiterates that sorcerers could cause affliction and even separation between man and his wife.

⁷³⁰ A.B. Philips, *Ibn Taymeeyah's Essay on the Jinn (Demons) Abridged, annotated and translated*, 100.

⁷³¹ Awolalu concludes that witches are people that have supernatural powers; forming a league with the devils or evil spirits and through such alliance the possessor of the craft have diabolical power to perform supernatural acts which are often destructive. J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 78-79.

⁷³² Interview with Bro. Jimoh Luqman on 23/08/09.

Another area of syncretism that is inherent in this nefarious society is that it makes use of charms, incantations, spells and magic and it involves premeditation. All the things used by a sorcerer connote syncretism.⁷³³ All these acts cannot be possible without the active participation of evil *Jinn* and their involvement in the diabolical act. Critically looking at the constituents and components used by the sorcerer, one will certainly see that it contains features of syncretism, because all these are usually employed by idolaters who are using devilish and mysterious powers to have their desires fulfilled, which are mostly destructive like inducing love and the use of curses to make someone become mad. Muslims belief is that they normally please the *Jinn* by doing its biddings.⁷³⁴ In many of their materials, such as: incantations, spells, etc., used connote calling on others beside Allah who has power over everything, and that engenders syncretism.

Another syncretic aspect of the belief and practice of witchcraft is that it wipes away one of the fundamental articles of faith in Islām which emphasises belief in Allah, having foreknowledge of all occurrences. Although, the concept of destiny is controversial in Islam, but Jazāi'r examining the issue of trust in Allah (*tawakkul*) argues that after necessary preparations and hard working, the outcome of such an effort whether success or failure should be attributed to Allah.⁷³⁵ In other words, Muslims are enjoined to prepare, work hard and follow the rules and regulations of

⁷³³ J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, 281.

⁷³⁴ Interview with Abdul-Hakeem Kolawole, 21/08/09.

⁷³⁵ A.B.J. Jazair, *Minhāj al-Muslim*, 118-120

healthy living, because they take responsibility for some their actions and utterances.⁷³⁶

The belief that witchcraft can harm, kill or render any other havoc in the society engenders associations of partners with Allah; which He alone has the power upon. It also creates psychological fear among the Muslims to the extent that they will not be able to speak the truth, work hard, and preach according to the laid down rules and regulations in the Qur'ān as well as by the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW),⁷³⁷ for the fear that these people can harm them. Their acts of transforming themselves, using bird, animal familiars, flying to their assembly or nocturnal meetings,⁷³⁸ and their dependence on human victim contributions according to Islamic beliefs amount to syncretism.

Any Muslim who is involved in this type of alliance is actually associating partners with Allah by seeking the assistance of something outside Islam. Such a Muslim has already syncretised in his Islamic religion which preaches absolute submission to Allah's will.⁷³⁹

5.2.2 Islamic Ruling on the Belief and Practice of Witchcraft.

Islam recognises the existence of evil power and practice of magic and its efficacy which may affect people psychologically and physically. But its effects are largely

⁷³⁶ Quran, Chapter 2:155-156, Q.Chapter 3:186, Q.Chapter 3:145. Belief in destiny should be taken with caution and circumspection. Islam appears not to believe in fatalism.

⁷³⁷ Interview with *Imām* Rashid 19/08 09.

⁷³⁸ J.O. Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 85.

⁷³⁹ Qur'ān, Chapter 2;208

dependant on Allah's will.⁷⁴⁰ In Surah 113, Allah specifically refers to the practice of witchcraft, when He states:

Say: I seek refuge with (Allah), the Lord of the daybreak from the evil of what He has created. And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness; (or the moon as it sets or goes away). And from the evil of those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knots. And from the evil of the envier when he envies.⁷⁴¹

In other words, these particular verses of the Qur'ān and others rightly establish the fact that sorcery really exists. Most of the exegetes of the glorious Qur'ān emphasize that this particular verse '...and from the evil of those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knots...' refer to activities of the Witchcraft.⁷⁴² The Prophet in this regard identifies tying and blowing on knots (i.e. witchcraft) as another form of *Siḥr* (sorcery or magic).⁷⁴³ This verse is referring to the evil of the witches who blow on strings and then tie them in knots and cast spells on them.⁷⁴⁴ Yusuf Ali comments that it is women that blow on knots, because it was a favourite form of witchcraft practised by perverted women and he sees such secret arts as causing a psychological terror.⁷⁴⁵

By implication, the verse includes all types of witchcraft; those who tie a number of knots in string and blow on them while reciting magic spells. There is no doubt that there are some people who claim to harm others through magic. They achieve their

⁷⁴⁰ Q 2:102, Q10:77, 81-82, Q20:69-67, Q72:6.

⁷⁴¹ M.T. Hilal & M.M. Khan, *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'ān in the English Language*, 855, Q113: 1-5.

⁷⁴² See for instance, Ibn Kathir, Ismael, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, 66; Qurṭubī, M.A., *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, 13; M.S. Abdullah Al-Ashqar, *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wabil-Hāmish; Zubdat Tafsīr min Faḥ al-Qadīr*, Kuwait: Ministry of Education (1988), 827.

⁷⁴³ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, (1st ed.). Syria: Dar- al-Hadith (1969/70), Hadith no, 3905.

⁷⁴⁴ W.A. Bāli, *A-Ṣārim al-Battār fi-Taṣṣad lil-Saḥarat, al-Ashrār (The Cutting Edge: How to face Evil Sorcerers)*, translated by H. Kreidly, Beirut: Kitāb Al-Alami Lil-Nasher (2006), 16; See also, M.S. Abdullah Al-Ashqariy, *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wabil-Hāmish; Zubdat Tafsīr min Faḥ al-Qadīr*, 827.

⁷⁴⁵ A.Y. Ali, *Modern English Translation of the Holy Qur'ān, Meanings and Commentary*, 1479.

feat by means of *shirk* and drawing close to the evil *Jinn* (*Shayātīn*) and associating others with Allah. The witches call on unseen beings, devils, to inflict harm on other people through magic, secret use of poison, or hidden tricks of various kinds, ensuring that they get the results of their diabolical machinations.

Islām as a religion does not condone or have any thing to do with using supernatural power for harmful and evil ends. In the same vein, it considers the practice of magic and sorcery as devilish. Arrogation of power to harm and to benefit to other than Allah is *shirk* (association of partners with Allah). In fact, Muslims believe that it is the most egregious atrocity which Allah will not forgive except by sincere repentance.⁷⁴⁶ Allah states: ‘And invoke not besides Allah any such that will neither profit you nor harm you, but (in case) you did so, you shall certainly be one of the wrong-doers’⁷⁴⁷

Allah makes it abundantly clear that Muslims should not take the devils as helpers.⁷⁴⁸ But whoever takes the devil as his friend will surely bear the consequence. However, there are a number of sayings of the Prophet that point to the reality of the evil eye. For instance, Jābir relates that the Messenger of Allah said: ‘After Allah’s decree and destiny, evil eye is responsible for the death of many in my ‘*Ummah*’.⁷⁴⁹ He says again: ‘Ask refuge with Allah from the effect of the eye, for the evil eye is true’. ‘...if there was anything to precede destiny, it would

⁷⁴⁶ Q4:48 &116, Q39:64-67, Q3:64, Q31; 13, Q5:72.

⁷⁴⁷ Q10;106 &107

⁷⁴⁸ Q10:106

⁷⁴⁹ Al-Bani, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi*’, Ḥadīth No.1206.

have been the eye'. 'The envious or evil eye and its influence is a reality and it is by the will of Allah'.⁷⁵⁰

Marshalling the above mentioned sayings of the Prophet, some points are clear and germane, the reality and effect of the evil eye; the power of *Qadar* supersedes it, and that such effect cannot take place without the express will of Allah. Among the Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* there is hardly any difference between the evil eye mentioned in the sayings of the Prophet and the witchcraft in Yoruba land which is usually referred to as *Tayra as-Sūi* (evil bird). This similarity arose out of the influence of Yoruba traditional belief. Significantly, witches and evil eye possess a psychic malevolent power. There are some differences between evil eye and witchcraft.⁷⁵¹ Witchcraft and sorcerers in the understanding of the Muslim theologians are the same because both of them depend solely on magical powers to carry out their nefarious and malevolent acts. They cannot operate without active connection of the evil *Jinn*, which *'Ayn* does not possess.⁷⁵² In *Sharī'ah* (Islamic law) therefore, a witch is to be killed because it is a practice of sorcery.⁷⁵³

Islāmically, the witch can call on the devil to harm innocent people, but such malicious power and action will not come to effect except by Allah's leave. A Muslim should therefore have implicit trust in Allah that no evil can afflict him except if Allah wills. The Qur'ān says: 'Say: Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our protector. And in Allah, let the believers

⁷⁵⁰ W.S. Bali, *a-Ṣārim al-Battār fi at-Taṣṣad lil-Saḥarah al- Ashrār*, 149-150.

⁷⁵¹ In my exclusive interview with Bro. Jumuah, he explained to me in detail, some differences between evil eye (*ayn*) and Yoruba witchcraft which is part of his ongoing work. This is not our concern here. 28/09/09. See also, A.A. Philips, *The Exorcist Tradition in Islaam*, 108-109

⁷⁵² A.M. Ghumi, *Al- 'Aqīdah Aṣ-Saḥīḥah bī-Mawāfaqah a-Sharī'ah*, Beirut: Dar-al-Arabiyyat (ND), 31& 38.

⁷⁵³ A.R.I. Doi, *Sharī'ah: the Islamic Law*, London: Ta Ha Publishers (1404AH /1984), 108.

put their trust'.⁷⁵⁴ He emphasises elsewhere: 'No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves, but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) before We bring it into existence...'⁷⁵⁵

The inference that can be drawn from the above cited portion of the Qur'ān is that whatever has befallen a Muslim was as a result of Allah having His full knowledge and allowing it. The sayings of the Prophet (SAW) also lend credence to this, when the Prophet says:

...Know that if all the people get together in order to benefit you with something, they will not be able to benefit you in anything except what Allah has decreed for you. And if they all get together in order to harm you with something; they will not be able to harm you in anything except what Allah decreed for you. The pens have stopped writing (Divine Allah's preordainments). And (the ink over) the paper (Book of Decrees) has dried...'⁷⁵⁶

Islam recognises all these evil power, and it has provided ample precaution and protection against their onslaught. Allah has indeed promised to always protect His servants, the desire or plan to harm other people is a Satanic one, and a Muslim who holds firmly to his *īmān* (faith in Allah) and *Tawakkul* (trust in Allah) has nothing to fear from the devil or witches who cringe to *Shaytān* (devil).⁷⁵⁷ Trust in Allah is part of our faith, which every Muslim should hold on to tenaciously whether during adversity or happiness.⁷⁵⁸ The Prophet demonstrates the reward of practical

⁷⁵⁴ Q9:51

⁷⁵⁵ 57:22, Q64:11

⁷⁵⁶ A.A. Nawawī, *Arba'ūn Ḥadīth*, 17 and no. 19.

⁷⁵⁷ M. Ghazali, *A'qīdah al-Muslim* (4th ed.), Cairo: Dar Tawfeeq an-Namhujyyat (1984), 100-102.

⁷⁵⁸ See, A.J. Jazair, *Mināj al-Muslim*, 119. Jazair has contended that attributing one's success to one's rationalism as *kufr* and *shirk* with Allah. Conversely, leaving everything to Allah regardless of prerequisites for success. Such as preparations, hard-working is a rebellion and crime. He opines that trust in Islam means optimism, because the Prophet (SAW) used to prepare adequately for any venture. Trust is part of *īmān*, all Messengers of Allah encountered a lot of problems but they did not allow their trust in Allah to enervate. See Q 33:23; Q3:174-175; Q25:59; Q14:12; Q3:160.

tawwakul (trust in Allah) in his long *Ḥadīth* where he was shown some Prophets and their people, and his own people thus:

...I was told: These are your people and of them there are seventy thousand who shall enter Paradise without any accounting or suffering. Then the Holy Prophet stood up and went to his chamber and the companions began to speculate about who would enter Paradise without any accounting or suffering. Some said: It may be they are the ones who kept company with the Holy Prophet; others said: It may be they are the ones who have been born Muslims and have never associated anyone with Allah; and so forth. Then the Holy Prophet came out and asked: What are you discussing? So they told him. He said: They are those who do not make charms or amulets nor seek them, nor seek omens but trust in their Lord...⁷⁵⁹

Every Muslim must believe that Allah is the supreme power, and He is wholly good, the devil was created by Allah and so he cannot do any harm except with Allah's permission. The Qur'ān says: 'No authority has he (*Shayṭān*) over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is over only those who take him as patron and who join partners with Allah.'⁷⁶⁰

Therefore, any Muslim who is apprehensive of witches should seek refuge in Allah. He should never turn to other witches to help him (*An-nushrah*) by so doing he would be surrendering himself to the devil. Islam does not allow using magical

⁷⁵⁹The hadith begins thus:

Ibn Abbas relates that the Holy Prophet said: I was shown many peoples. I saw a Prophet who had only a small party with him, some Prophets had only one or two persons with them and some did not have even one. Then suddenly I sighted a huge assemblage and I imagined that they were my people, but I was told: This is Moses and his people, but lift your eyes to the horizon. I looked and I beheld a great multitude. Then I was told: Now look at the other horizon; and there was a great multitude. I was told: ... On this Ukasha *ibn* Musin stood up and begged: Supplicate Allah that He makes me one of them. The Holy Prophet said: You are one of them. Then another person stood up and begged the same. The Holy Prophet answered: Ukasha has forestalled you.

See A.A. Nawāwī, *Riyāḍ Aṣ-Salihīn*, Hadith no 74, 62. See also, *Āḥadīth*, 75-84. There are many *Āḥadīth* to this effect

⁷⁶⁰Q.16:99, Q. 15:39-42.

means to cure magical problems.⁷⁶¹ The fact that *Shaytān* cannot harm anyone against his will be admitted by *Shaytān* himself on the Day of Judgement.⁷⁶²

A Muslim should therefore hold fast to his *Tawhīd* (belief in One God) and avoid all forms of *Shirk* (attributing partners to Allah) either by joining witchcraft to attack people with bad things or to nurse the fear of its evil attack.

Whenever a Muslim is afflicted with misfortunes, he should exercise patience as this is a test of his faith from Allah.⁷⁶³ But, when they strike he should believe that Allah has His full knowledge and should hold fast to patience and not attribute it to any one or object, because the Prophet has cautioned us elsewhere that saying ‘...had it been I had done this, so and so would have happened’ (saying this statement) is the work of the devil’. (*Law ani fa ‘altu kadhā kāna kadhā, faina ‘law ‘amal Shaytān’*). The Prophet said:

Wondrous is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything, and it is so for him alone. If he experiences something agreeable, he is grateful to God and that is good for him; and if he experiences adversity, he is steadfast and that is good for him.⁷⁶⁴

The Muslim should cast off all fear of witchcraft. It was part of the practice sunnat of Prophet Muḥammad that when he was about to sleep, he used to recite the

⁷⁶¹ A.A. Jabriyin, *Tahdhīb Tashīlu al-‘Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah*, 66.

⁷⁶² Allah says: ‘And when everything will have been decided, *Shaytān* will say: ‘Behold, God promised you something that was bound to come true! I too, held out (all manner of) promises to you, but I deceived you. Yet I had no power at all over you but called you-and you responded unto me. Hence, blame not me, but blame yourselves...Q14:22.

⁷⁶³ Allah says it repeatedly in the Qur’ān that He will always test our faith with different calamities. There are many well-known verses of the Holy Qur’ān inculcating steadfastness and extolling it. See for instance Q3:201; Q2: 156; Q39:11; Q42:44; Q2: 154; Q47:32.

⁷⁶⁴ There are many *Aḥādīth* in which the Prophet urges the Muslims to exercise patience. See A.A. Nawāwī, *Riyāḍ aṢ-salihīn*, Ḥadīth 25-53.

chapter of (*Al-Ikhlās*) reaffirming one's belief in the absolute oneness of Allah, followed by the *Surahs al-Falaq* and *an-Nās* asking for Allah's protection against all forms of evil blowing on his palms and using them to rub his body three times.⁷⁶⁵ It is recommended by the Prophet that a Muslim should recite verses of the throne; and the last two verses of *Surat al-Baqarah* before sleeping at night.⁷⁶⁶

Of equal importance is the chanting of the phrase which the Prophet says guarantees security from every evil (*Lā ilaha illā llahu waḥadahu, Lā sharīka llahu, lahu al-mulk walahu al-Ḥamd, wahuwa 'ala kulli shayin Qadīr*) at least one hundred times after *Ṣubh* prayer. It is also recommended that these *Surah* and verses should be recited before one sleeps. It is to be recited three times after Morning Prayer and *Maghrib* prayer and once in other prayer including *Ayyāh Kursiyy* every day. We could also say *Aūdhu bi-kalimāt llah tāmāh min shar ma khalaq* (I seek refuge with Allah's perfect words from the evil of what he has created), also *Bismillah lladhī la yaḍurr ma 'a ismihi shayun fī al-Arḍ walā fī as-Samā'* *wahuwa Samī'u al-'Alim* (In the name of Allah, Whose mention is a protection against whatsoever harm on the earth and in the heavens. Verily, He is the All-hearing, the All-Knowing), at least three times every morning and evening.⁷⁶⁷

The Prophet (SAW) warns every Muslim to beware of seven destructive things; one of them is the practice of and involvement in magic or sorcery, whose punishment is death.⁷⁶⁸ If a Muslim is afflicted with any diseases, calamity and misfortune, he

⁷⁶⁵ A.A. Nawawi, *Riyāḍ aṢ-salihīn*, 670. Ḥadīth no, 1466

⁷⁶⁶ Ḥadīth Bukāhri, 1021 and 1024

⁷⁶⁷ A.A. Nawwāwī, *Riyāḍ aṢ-salihīn*, Ḥadīth 1457, 1462, 666-668. See also A.A. Nawwāwī *Kitāb al-Adhkār*, Lebanon: Dar-al-Fikr, (1998), 75.

⁷⁶⁸ <http://www.islamawareness.net/BlackMagic/fortune.html> accessed, 12/06/09.

should consult an expert, and put his trust in Allah in all his affairs, be patient and seek reward from Allah.

He should believe that this part of Allah's test on him.⁷⁶⁹ He should follow the means prescribed in *Sharī'ah* and the permissible practical ways of treating his disease. He should not approach witchcraft, soothsayers, fortune-tellers and the like, for this will lead to another problem for him. He should turn to Allah and beseech Him with *du'ā'* at the end of the night, and following each prayer, for Allah is the '...One who removes harm and relieves distress... (He is merciful to His believing slaves and) answers the *duā'* of the one who is in difficulty'.⁷⁷⁰

5.2.3. Religious Syncretism in the Practice of Secret Societies/Occultism.

Secret societies as the words denote, connote secrecy.⁷⁷¹ From this explanation, one will glean that joining secret societies is an act of syncretism, they put their societal goal above all other considerations. Occultism implies mysterious practices and powers that involve magic and evil spirits. It is also knowledge of the hidden; all these descriptions are related to do with the evil *Jinn* which are syncretic.

⁷⁶⁹ For more, see A.M. Damashqi, *Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah a-Tahāwīyyah*, Beirut: Muassasat Risalat (2005), 470-472.

⁷⁷⁰ Q27:62.

⁷⁷¹ They are cult groups in guilds, their membership is restricted and they engage in mysterious activities. They also have initiatory rites and rituals which outsiders are not permitted to observe. Other features of this secret society are; they have a secret agenda, which outsiders cannot know, oath taking etc. For details, see E.L. Metuh. *God and Man in African Religion; A Case Study of Igbo Nigeria*, 101.

Some secret societies worship a common divinity or spirit, especially the cult of the dead. This is syncretism in Islam.⁷⁷² Take for instance, the *Ogboni* society; its members are drawn from Muslims, Christians and Pagans. The Muslims appear to be in the majority, they swear to secret oaths, and they wreak much havoc on the innocent people. Whenever they are celebrating their festival nobody dare go out because of their diabolical proclivity to attack people.⁷⁷³ Looking critically in the case of *Oro* cult one will discern that all their activities are reminiscence of syncretism.⁷⁷⁴

The popular *Eyo /adamu orisa* cult in Lagos which is celebrated annually and all other cults share the same characteristics and superstitions.⁷⁷⁵ It is full of association of partners with Allah and it is syncretistic.

The dreaded secret cult in Nigerian Tertiary institutions today that has assumed violent and deadly disposition, recruiting both Muslims and Christians into their midst looking for power other than that of Allah,⁷⁷⁶ It also amounts to syncretism because they initiate their members through secret oath of drinking blood of their members, like the *Jāhiliyyah* inheritance system,⁷⁷⁷ they engage in killing one

⁷⁷² Interview with Abdu-Rasheed 23/08/09.

⁷⁷³ Interview with Ganiyy Onibosu 19/08/09

⁷⁷⁴ For instance, it is male exclusive, they come together to ward off 'all sorts of evils' in the society. Their activities are done in the night. They come on special days and no females should come out, there are many superstitious beliefs that are attributed to them. For details, see T. Folami, *History of Lagos Nigeria: The Shaping of an African City*, 10.

⁷⁷⁵ Interview with some adult Muslims at Lagos Island, 24/08/09.

⁷⁷⁶ Interview with Alhaji. Wahab, 12/08/09.

⁷⁷⁷ These secret cults swear to oath of allegiance through blood drinking or water by putting the water inside a container called (*Igbaa*) among the Yoruba, once the oath is taken, the person is duty bound to be loyal to the association, but if he is disloyal, the spirit of the secret association will deal with him. In *Jahiliyyah* inheritance system, the Arabs used to swear this type of secret oath by saying, *Damī, damuka, ḥarbī, ḥarbuka, salāmī, salāmuka, ḥirthī, ḥirthuka, naṣrī, naṣruka*, (My blood is your blood, my war is your war, my peace is your peace, my inheritance is your inheritance, etc). For more details, see M.G. Haroun, *Foundation Principles of Islamic Law*, Ikeja: The Quranic People Enterprise (2005), 5.

another as inter-society's revenge or to punish erring members. Each secret cult has its own spirit that their members worship⁷⁷⁸

5.2.4 Islamic Ruling on Secret Societies/Occultism.

As its words connote, secrecy and its members are restricted and bound by oaths, they have esoteric initiatory rites and rituals which outsiders cannot observe.⁷⁷⁹

Secret cults in their different forms have nothing to do with Islam. Islam does not go against people coming together to promote the collective good, the progress of one another and society at large. Allah says: '...Help one another in righteousness and piety, but help not one another in sin and rancour...'⁷⁸⁰. In other words, we can come together to fight and put down evil in a spirit of justice and righteousness not coming together to wreak havoc on innocent people and make life difficult for them.⁷⁸¹ In (Q103:3) the same theme was repeated where the believers are enjoined to contribute to social welfare by directing and encouraging one another on the path of truth and perseverance. If one lived for himself, he would not be able to fulfil his whole duty.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁸ Interview with Abd. Rashid, 15/08/09. He told me that they have many groups and associations which they pay oath of allegiance such as Black axe, *Eiye*, Buccania, Vicarage etc. Countless number of students has been killed in their internecine fights because of rivalry and to determine who is more superior than the others, and many others have been maimed in this regard.

⁷⁷⁹ E.L. Metuh, *God and Man in African Religion*, 101.

⁷⁸⁰ Q5:2. Islām has nothing to do with secret talks. The only secret conversations allowed in Islām is where a person orders charity or gives it secretly, or commanding good and righteous deeds, or reconciling between humankind. For details see Q4 :114

⁷⁸¹ A.Y. Ali, *Modern English Translation of the Holy Qur'ān: Meanings & Commentary*, 208.

⁷⁸² Allah says, '...and do righteousness good deeds, and recommend one another to good deeds...'
See also, 3:104 and 110, and Q 2:143

Islām from its earliest period had urged and exhorted Muslims to come together with the spirit of love, unity, piety, and moral rectitude in order to achieve the goal of building a godly society. Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) displayed this spirit of coming together (togetherness) and co-operation when he formed a group known as *Ḥilf-fuḍūl* (alliance of *al- fuḍūl*) in Makkah long before he became the Prophet, this group was meant purposely to disallow people from confiscating people’s property in Makkah unjustly, maintain close relations with relatives and taking good care of them. He witnessed the signing of this pact prior to his prophethood.⁷⁸³

In various wars and battles fought by the Prophet, this spirit of togetherness and unity was spectacularly and vividly displayed by the Muslims, without any secrecy or initiatory rigmarole. They all became one, fighting for one cause and in the end, their mission was achieved. The organization was not formed on tribal jingoism or a political party; it was open to all. The Prophet (SAW) frowns upon racism.⁷⁸⁴

All the aforementioned secret societies have alliance with the devil and worshipping other deities alongside with Allah, invariably being loyal to them.⁷⁸⁵ Loyalty to and taking oath in the name of any being aside from Allah is tantamount to *shirk* (worshipping others beside Allah) which is unpardonable except the person repents and embraces Islam because that is apostasy. The Qur’ān affirms:

⁷⁸³ M.M. Sharif, *Khulāṣah Nūrul al-Yaqīn*, (1st ed.), Vol. 2, Lebanon: Dar-Fikr (1978), 22; see also, R. Ghannouchi, ‘The Participation of Islamists in a Non-Islamic Government’ in: A. Tamim (ed.), *Power- Sharing Islam*, London: Liberty for Muslim World Publications (1993), 58-61. This agreement was among many several Arab tribes to support the wronged people and even the Prophet maintained that even if he were to be invited to such after becoming the Prophet he would still join.

⁷⁸⁴ M.H. Haykal, *The Life of Muḥammad*, (8th ed.) North America. North American Publication (1976), 475; A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishāq’s Sīrat Rasūl Allah*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1987), 640

⁷⁸⁵ Their secrecy is usually known through published Texts and sometimes the confessions of some of their members. Through observation and tradition, their secrecy is also known.

Allah is the protector of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into light. But as for those who disbelieve, their supporters and helpers are *Tāghūt* (false deities and false leaders), they bring them out from light into darkness, those are the dwellers of the fire, and they will abide therein forever.⁷⁸⁶

Muslims are enjoined to obey and be subservient to Allah, not the traditional law of secret societies or any law that lies afoul of the supremacy of Allah. It is evident that men must not rely upon any power or person other than Allah to help them out or intercede for them.⁷⁸⁷

5.2.5 Syncretism involved in Charms and Amulets (*Oogun*)

Ab initio, it should be noted without any iota of doubt that black magic which involves charms and amulets presupposes syncretism because it involves the use of the power of the devil or the invocation of evil spirits for evil purposes.⁷⁸⁸ The essence of black magic is to kill, steal, injure, and cause misfortune or destruction for personal gain. Charms are objects or otherwise which have magic power and are worn on a chain to carry out evil ends. An amulet is also an object worn to protect the user from trouble; it has a similar meaning to ‘talisman’. Some Yoruba Muslims rely on these and they believe that they have occult power that can protect them against any danger, sickness or witchcraft, syncretic belief in other powers of protection apart from that of Allah.

Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are also guilty of syncretism whereby they use the Qur’ān in a talisman-like manner where they perform the washing of some

⁷⁸⁶ Q16:36, Q3; 79-80.

⁷⁸⁷ I. Husayn, *Tawhīd and Shirk*, 23.

⁷⁸⁸ C. Soanes & A. Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 141.

verses of the Qur'ān with traditional herbs or animal parts. Uthman ibn Fudi condemns the writing of God's names or Qur'ānic verses either with blood, bones or merely with the blood of animals slaughtered in the Muslim fashion; the medicinal mixture of water washed over God's names or Qur'ānic verses with bits of snake skin. This to Uthman ibn Fodio is reminiscent of the mixing of Qur'ānic instrumentality with traditionalist instrumentality (represented by such things as blood, bones and snake skin). Such mixing repudiates ones Islām, as implying twofold faith: both in God and in other forces.⁷⁸⁹

Another syncretism that characterises its practitioners is that hardly any distinction will be found among some Yoruba Muslims of Lagos State between medicine-men, magicians and herbalists as '*Onisegun*'. They are usually combined in one person, because virtually all of them have knowledge of herbs, some knowledge of magic as well as knowledge of oracle and divination in order to discern the nature of the problem of their client, as well as to recommend 'appropriate' remedies for their problem.⁷⁹⁰ That is why they are called 'men of hidden supernatural power'.⁷⁹¹ There is no difference between Traditional medicine men or herbalists and their Muslim Cleric herbalist counterparts.⁷⁹²

In his extensive study of the practice of Muslim Clerics in Yoruba land, Patrick avers that some Muslim clerics or *Aafaa* work as *Onitira* (writer of amulets or '*tira*') or *Onisegun* (makers of *oogun*, 'doctor'). The *Aafaa* usually makes use of techniques of control through their familiarity with the pharmacopoeia stemming

⁷⁸⁹ P.J. Ryan, S.J., *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 40.

⁷⁹⁰ Interview with *Aafa Saiid*, Chief *Mufassir*, Eko- Epe Central Mosque, 27/08/09.

⁷⁹¹ J.O. Omosade & P.A. Dopamu., *West African Traditional Religion*, 146.

⁷⁹² P.J. Ryan, S.J., *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 179.

from Traditionalist Yoruba sources; especially the *Ifa* system, in addition to their Arabic literacy relying on the ‘mysteries’ of the Arabic language. They often adapt the traditionalist techniques of control that are manipulative for good and evil, combining verses of the Qur’ān with *Ifa*- originated herbal prescriptions. Ryan submits ‘...this literal mixing strikes such *Aafaa* as pragmatic and sensible, although the forces of Reform look upon it as egregious impiety’.⁷⁹³

The homoeopathic and contagious magic that characterises traditional medicine is exactly the same that characterises the Muslim *Aafaa*’s amulet. The Muslim ‘*Onisegun*’ will ask his client to bring hair, nails, clothing, sleeping mat, footprints, etc., and anything that belongs to his supposed target either for the magic of love, separation, hallucination, possession, drowsiness, cries and shouts, sickness, haemorrhage and sexual impotence.⁷⁹⁴ He also specifies taboos like his traditionalist counterparts; failure to observe them renders the amulet inefficacious.⁷⁹⁵

Another syncretic aspect of black magic is its association with specific animals, plants, objects and inanimate objects like skulls, skins, bones etc. It is believed that they possess occult powers that can make their charms effective.⁷⁹⁶ The amulets are put in the same places as the traditionalist; buried in the ground, powder rubbed into incisions, rings, etc. This is symptomatic of syncretism.

⁷⁹³ Ibid, 177.

⁷⁹⁴ W.A.S.Bali., *As-sārim al-Battār fi at-Taṣad aṣ-Saḥarat al-Ashrār*, Cairo: Maktabat Ttabiina, (2000/1421), 53-54.

⁷⁹⁵ *Alhaji*. Najim, my interviewee told me that if after giving amulet to his client, he touches it after sex or before his bath renders it ineffective, and also if a menstruating woman touches it.

⁷⁹⁶ It is noteworthy that, when the three Muslim cleric magico-medicine men that were caught in Epe in 2008 having killed one old man and shared various parts of his body for ritual purposes, various human body parts were also found at their various apartments.

5.2.5.1 Islamic Ruling on Charms and Amulet (*Oogun*)

In chapter three, we explained the features of charms and amulets.⁷⁹⁷ They include anything done to beat the law of nature (*Khāriqah al-‘Adah*) using magical means.⁷⁹⁸

The origin of *sihr* has been falsely attributed to Prophet Sulayman, which the Qur’ān has refuted in Q2:102.⁷⁹⁹ There is unanimous opinion among the four schools of Law except *Imām Abū Ḥanīfah* and the *Mu‘tazilah* that there is reality in the effect of *sihr*,⁸⁰⁰ based on the verses of the Qur’ān and the saying of the Prophet that *sihr* is evil and an act of *kufr*. A *sāhir* is therefore considered *Kāfir* (infidel). There are various types of *sihr* identified by scholars.⁸⁰¹ Ar-Razi asserts that soliciting the assistance of *jinn* and demons to bring about seemingly prodigious feats is the focus of magic.⁸⁰²

⁷⁹⁷ M. Uthaymin, *Fatāwā Arkān al-Islām*, Riyādh: Dār-th-Tharya (1423.AH/2003), 152-153.

⁷⁹⁸⁷⁹⁸ Some of the characteristics are: it involves the use of the power of the devil and invocation of evil spirits for devilish purposes. It has been established elsewhere that *sihr* is anything done in the form of spells or charms that have effects on the minds, senses and body and makes the brain not to function normally. It is used for varied purposes ranging from inducing love, separation between husband and wife, hallucination, madness etc. They also give its taboos, see M. Khan et al, *Kitāb al-‘Aqīdah ‘al-Islāmiyyah*, Syria: Ministry of Endowment (1990), 14.

⁷⁹⁹ ‘They followed that which the Shayātīn (devils) gave out (falsely of the magic) in the lifetime of Sulāiman (Solomon). Sulāiman did not disbelieve, but the *Shayātīn* (devils) disbelieved, teaching men magic and such things that came down at Babylon to the two angels, Harut and Marut, ... And from these (angels) people learn that by which they cause separation between man and his wife, but they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah’s leave...’

⁸⁰⁰ M. S. Abdullah al-Ashqari, *Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm wa bil-Hāmish zubdat Tafsīr min Fath al-Qadīr*, 20; A.A.B. Philips, *The Exorsict Tradition in Islaam*, 99 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, 136-137; M.A. Qurtubee, *al-Jāmi li Ahkām al-Qur’ān*, 42-44

⁸⁰¹ W.A. Bali, *Aṣ- Sārim al-Battār fi at-Taṣaddi aṣ-Saharat al-Ashrār*, 30-31.

⁸⁰² *Ibid*, 31

The magician uses various concoctions to make his talismans and amulets to make the demons subservient to him.⁸⁰³ An amulet is known as *Tāmāim* in Arabic while a Talisman is *Talāsīm*. An amulet is a kind of charm containing some magical substances believed to have the potency of preventing evil or bring a seemingly ‘good’ thing. It is used among the Yoruba Muslims and worn in different parts of the body. When worn on the waist it is referred to as *igbadi* and *ifunpa* respectively.

Talisman as said in previous chapter is what Yoruba *Aafaa* refer to as *Tira* containing, most often, certain charts (*Khātim*) and other inscriptions written in Arabic characters but they may not necessarily be Arabic. They contain mixture of Qur’ānic verses, Names of Allah and names of the evil *Jinn*. Some other items, which may be lawful; such as dried leaves or unlawful; such as dried faeces, burnt and ground lizard, bone of died cat etc, are used as ingredients (*gaari tira*). This is then bound with thread of a particular colour and leather of a specified animal. When it is ready, it is kept in the pocket, under the pillow, tied with pin on cloth, kept under the car accelerator pedal, or hung at the entrance of the shop or house.

Orthodox Muslim theologians agree that amulets and talismans, if they contain *shirk* or *kufir* elements, are *ḥarām* (unlawful).⁸⁰⁴ However, they express two varying opinions on amulets and talismans whose content is nothing but verses of the Qur’ān,⁸⁰⁵ Names and Attributes of Allah or other lawful prayers. While some, such as

⁸⁰³ A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām wa at-Taḳālīd al-Jāhiliyyat: Baḥth fī Muḥārabah at- Taḳālīd al-Jāhiliyyah as-Shāi’ah fī Ifrīqiyyah*, 123-124.

⁸⁰⁴ A. Duwaysh, *Fatāwā la-Laljanah ‘ad-Dā’imah lil-Buḥūth ‘al- ‘Ilmiyyah wa al-‘Ifā’* Riyādh: Dār ‘an-Nahy (1411AH/1991 CE), 212.

⁸⁰⁵ Philips asserts that according to Islamic beliefs the use of amulets is strictly forbidden in Islam even if they contain Qur’ānic verses. He points out further that amulets and talismans are closely associated with traditional beliefs and rituals. Islamic scholars assert that incantation must fulfil three basic conditions: it must be Allah’s words, His Beautiful names and attributes, or the words of the Prophet (SAW), it must be Arabic or understood words and the person should believe that its effect

‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr bn al-As considers it permissible, arguing that after all, its content cannot be said to be *kufir* or *shirk*,⁸⁰⁶ others, including Abdullah Ibn Masud, Ibn Abbas and some *Tābi‘ūn* among the followers of Ibn Masud such as Ibrahim Ibn Yazid an-Nakhi have ruled against it.⁸⁰⁷ They are of the opinion that even if its content does not depict polytheism, it should not be used based on certain reasons, some of which are:⁸⁰⁸

1. Unlike the case with *ruqā* where some *Aḥādīth* allow it, if it does not contain *shirk*, all the *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet, without exception, give general prohibition to the use of amulets and talismans.
2. There is the fear that if talismans and amulets containing Qur’ānic and other lawful items are allowed, the allowance may be abused and other unlawful items might be introduced secretly into them and this may not be detected since amulets and talismans are usually bound in thread. This is compliance with the *Sharī‘ah* principle of *Sadd ‘a-dh-Dhari‘ah* (blocking the way to evil).
3. Using amulets and talismans containing verses of the Qur’ān, Names and Attributes of Allah exposes the Qur’ān and the sacred Names of Allah to ridicule. This is due to the fact that the one who wears it may wittingly or unwittingly enter places of impurity such as toilets and bathrooms while

depends on Allah. The Prophet says: ‘Whoever wears an amulet has committed *shirk*’ A.B. Philips, *The Exorcist Tradition in Islam*, 173-174. See also, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 3, 1197, no.5457

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁸⁰⁷ A.A. Jibrin, *Tahdhīb Tashīl al- ‘Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah*, 162.

⁸⁰⁸ A. Shahawi, *Al-Wiqāyah wal- ‘Ilāj mina al-Jinn wa Shayṭān*, Cairo: Al-Maktabah at-Tawfiqiyyah (nd), 148-149.

having it on. The person may even be in a state of impurity, such as *ḥayḍah*, *nifās*, *janābah*, etc.

4. Another very significant reason is the problem of misplacement of *tawakkul* (putting one's trust in Allah). Every believer is expected to have absolute trust in Allah and to rely totally on Him without any iota of doubt. However, there is high possibility that one who puts it on an amulet or talisman as the case may be, will instead of putting his trust in Allah alone, rely on the talisman or amulet. This is evident in the way such people behave whenever they forget to wear the amulet or talisman.

In the same vein, assimilation of both Qur'ānic and modern medicine to *Oogun* is a commonplace idea in the mind of the accommodating *Aafaa*. An example of this is the slate-washing *Hantu* or *hanturu*, a word derived from Hausa which is the adulterated form of the Arabic word; *Khatt*, which means writing. *Hantu*, concocted by collecting ink rinsed off the slates used in Qur'ānic schools is considered a modern technique of disease control.⁸⁰⁹ Among some Yoruba *Aafaa*, this is normally referred to the writing made with a kind of ink called *tadawa* on black slate called *walaa* (Arabic: *lawḥ*) this after completion, is washed with water and given to the *Aafaa*'s client to drink. Sometimes, he may be asked to bath with it. It may also be mixed with soap, perfume or pomade. In some cases, some other ingredients are added to the *hantu* like honey, salt, onion; and other natural products, often derived from Traditionalist prescriptive lore, can be added. It is believed that such ingredients will further boost the efficacy of the *hantu*.

⁸⁰⁹ P.J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale; Yoruba Participation in the Muuslim Tradition*, 178.

On the permissibility or otherwise of *hantu*, which contains nothing but the words of the Qur’ān, the earliest generation (*salaf*) of Muslim theologians as well as their successors (*Khalaf*) are divided into two camps – the proponents and the opponents. Ibn Qayyim has mentioned among the *salaf*: Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid and Abū Qallabah as belonging to the group of those who spoke in its favour and even practised it.⁸¹⁰ A report has it that Ibn Abbas ordered someone to write the Qur’ān in a clean vessel and drink it.⁸¹¹ Abu Qallabah was also once seen by Ayyub writing something from the Qur’ān, washing it with water and giving it to a man who had some pains to drink.⁸¹² Mujahid is also reported to have said, ‘There is nothing wrong in writing the Qur’ān for the sick, to bathe with or drink.’⁸¹³ Based on these reports and similar others, especially about Ahmad bn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah says:

It is permissible to write something from the Book of Allah (the Qur’ān) with ink made from allowable substances for the afflicted or sick and the writing may also be washed and drunk...⁸¹⁴

Lending support to the above view, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani sought to find justification for the practice of *hantu* when he made analogy between it and *nafath* (blowing) which is a practice performed and recommended by the Prophet during exorcism (*ruqyah*). He argues that the same spirit that informs the practice of *nafath* informs the practice of *hantu*. He believes that both is derivable from the blessing of

⁸¹⁰ M.A Ibn. Al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma’ād*, Kuwayt: Maktabat l-Manār l-Islāmiyyah (1414 AH/1994 CE), vol, 3, 119.

⁸¹¹ A.B. Philips *Ibn Taymeeyah’s Essay on the Jinn (demons) abridged, annotated and translated*, 102.

⁸¹² A. Ash-Shahawi, *Al-Wiqāyah wal-‘ilāj mina ‘al-Jinn wa ash-Shay.tān*, 181.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, 181

⁸¹⁴ I. Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ Fatāwā*, 64.

the Divine Words, which in the case of *nafath* is already contained in the moisture or the air, and in the case of *hantu* in the water used to wash the Divine Words.⁸¹⁵

On the other hand, some Muslim theologians have ruled against the practice of *hantu*. Their contention is that it is not traceable to the Prophet, hence it is *bid'ah* (innovation) and therefore not permissible. They also argue that all the reports given by the proponents on its practice, especially Ibn Abbas are weak. They are also of the opinion that the analogy drawn by the like of al-Asqalani and Ayyad between the practice of *nafath* and *hantu*. Abu Ameenah remarks thus:

...This line of reasoning is quite far fetched as the Prophet (SAW) used to blow in his hands before reciting the four Chapters beginning with *Qul* (say) into his hands and wiping them over his body prior to going to sleep...⁸¹⁶

Whatever the case, the position of the scholars in this group is not that writing and drinking verses of the Qur'ān is *ḥarām* (unlawful) or that it constitutes *kufir* (infidelity) or *shirk* (polytheism) in itself. Even when they adjudge it as not permissible, Jimoh submits that it is only to block the way to evil.⁸¹⁷

But *Hantu* will amount to *shirk*, if the content of what is written is *kufir* or *shirk* like the name of *rawaniyyah* or evil *jinn*; or where the Qur'ān is written in adulterated form; or the ink used in writing the verses of the Qur'ān is something not allowed in Islām, such as using blood or urine; or where the ingredients (*gaari tira*) mixed with the *hantu* are of unlawful (*ḥarām*) substances. Critically looking at the practice of

⁸¹⁵ I.H. Al-Asqalani, *Fath l-Bārī*, Cairo: Dār -Rayyan lil-Turath, (1998), Vol.10, 161, & Vol. 21, 323.

⁸¹⁶ A.A. Philips, *Ibn Taymeeyah's Essay on the Jinn (demons) abridged, annotated and translated*, 103-104.

⁸¹⁷ S.L. Jimoh, *Demonic-Possession Exorcism by Yoruba Muslim Aafas in Osun State of Nigeria: A Critical Examination*, 296.

hantu among these Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* reveals that most of them run afoul of the provisions of Islamic law; where some of them dilute the *hantu* with animal blood, or write meaningless letters or seals (*khātim*). Or they combine Quranic texts with traditionalist *Oogun*, often done by wrapping a calabash of the latter with *Sūrat Yasin* (Qur’ān, 36), wine, blood, urine, dead animal, or animals that Allah forbids the Muslims to eat: frog, lizard, the bones of dead people are used, etc.⁸¹⁸ This and other similar instances amount to *kufṛ* (infidelity) and render the *hantu ḥarām* (unlawful). Ibn Mas‘ud narrated that he heard Allah’s Messenger saying: ‘Incantation (*Ar-Ruqā*), talisman (*At-Tamā‘im*) and love charm are all acts of *shirk*’⁸¹⁹ Uthman ibn Fodio in his ruling on the qualification of apostasy mentions among others:

Among them is one, who claims that he is a Muslim, performs acts of Islām, yet, he charms people (*sihr*) separates two people between whom there is mutual affection (magic), and puts asunder a wife and her husband. This is also an unbeliever who is not subject to the rules of Islām.

Among them (i.e. apostate) is one who claims that he is a Muslim performs acts of Islām and yet, he writes the Qur’ān and the names of Almighty Allah on filthy objects such as dead people’s bones or the head of a dog (or its bone, live or hunting one) or he writes the Qur’ān or the Names of Almighty Allah with blood spilled during slaughter or he writes the Qur’ān or Allah’s name and then washes it with water, then shreds a snake’s slough and mixes it with the water (the water may be sewn into an amulet). This one too is an unbeliever who is not subject to the rules of Islām.⁸²⁰

It should be emphasised here that Islām does not rule against the use of herbs to cure both physical and psychological problems of human beings as long as this practice does not contain infidelity or association of partners with Allah. This can be done either by drinking, known among the Yoruba as *agbo* (cooked leaves or

⁸¹⁸ A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām wa Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah; Baḥth fī Muḥārabat at-Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah as-Shāi‘ah fī Ifrīqiyyah*, 128.

⁸¹⁹ M.A. Wahab, *Kitab At-Tauhid*, 46.

⁸²⁰ A.I. Ogunbiyi, ‘*Nūru al-Bāb’-The Litmus -Test of Pure Islām as Interpreted by Shaykh Uthmān bin. Fūdi*, 25.

herbs), or burning and licking them to cure physical problems. This practice includes the use of *Zaytūn* (olive oil and seeds) to treat headache, yellow fever, boils, pains, stomach aches, skin disease, etc., the use of *ḥabbat Saudā* (black seed) to treat varied diseases like asthma, toothache, leprosy, etc., and the use of honey, *zamzam*, date, water, garlic, ginger, and *rumān* (pomegranates). The idea of natural healing in Islām includes breastfeeding of the baby, (tooth brush) *siwāk*, dates, etc.,⁸²¹ consulting trained medical doctor is in line with preventing and curing diseases in Islām.

Islam believes in the potency of supplication (*du‘ā*); since it is Almighty Allah Himself that commands us to supplicate to Him and ask whatever we want. Allah assures His response, with right belief and trust in Him.⁸²² This supplication is very important to show our humility and servitude to Allah, virtually all the Prophets of Allah made sincere prayer to Allah and it was accepted.⁸²³ But any medicine that contains magic, *shirk* and forbidden things⁸²⁴ should be avoided by every Muslim.

⁸²¹ D.A. Ajibola, *Islāmic Remedies for All Diseases*, Ibadan: Al-Ameer Publishers (2003), 2-3.

⁸²² Q 40: 60; ‘And Your Lord has said: make *du‘ā* to Me, I will respond’ Other emphasis on *Du‘a*’ can be found in Q 7:29, Q2:186, Q 25:77, Q55:29 etc.

⁸²³ For detailed discussion on *Du‘a*, see A.Y. Qadhi, *Du‘ā, the Weapon of the Believer: A Treatise on the Status and Etiquette of Du‘ā in Islam*, Lagos: Hamzat international Islamic Publishing House (2001), 23-24.

⁸²⁴ U.B. Fudi, *Iḥyā as-Sunnat wa Ikhmād al-Bid‘ah*, 166.

5.2.5.2 Religious Syncretism involved in the Belief and Practice of Oracles/Divination.

Oracle and divining mean communicating with the gods and instructing people, telling them what will happen in future.⁸²⁵ This smacks of syncretism. Consulting diviners is common among many Yoruba.⁸²⁶

Another seeming reminiscence of traditionalism in Muslim clerics' divination is that they both sometimes deliver prophecies to their visitor in an ecstatic state;⁸²⁷ something the likes of which some Muslim diviners and some Sufi orders fall into.⁸²⁸ Diviners read signs, events, or omens or through an alleged contact with a supernatural agency.⁸²⁹ The relationship that exists between the diviner and the evil *Jinn* makes the practice syncretic. According to an authentic *ḥadīth*, the *Jinn* informs their friends, Muslim diviners, of certain events in the future which they steal from the lower reaches of the heavens, information about the future which the angels pass among themselves:

...they (the Jinn) would pass the information back down until it reaches the lips of magician or fortune-teller. Sometimes a meteor would overtake them before

⁸²⁵ 'It is a revealed prediction of the future from deities which is spoken through another object or life-form, like augury and auspice'. See, Longman *Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1158.

⁸²⁶ Quadri claims that before the advent of Islam in Yoruba land people used to consult often a diviner, an *Ifa* priest, before embarking on any venture, and thereafter they could prescribe some sacrifices for them so that they would succeed. But when Islam came, some Muslims would not consult any diviner while some would go to an *Afaa* (Muslim cleric diviner) '...for consultation they would render the same service like the *Ifa* priest'. Cited in Y.A. Quadri, 'The Yoruba Muslims of Nigeria and the Problem of Cultural Identity' in O. Odumuyiwa & P.A. Dopamu (eds.), *Religion, Science and Culture*, 242.

⁸²⁷ Interview with Bro. Adebambo, Head, Department of Yoruba Studies, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, 25/08/09.

⁸²⁸ M.H. Ansari, *Sufism and Sharī'ah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation (1986), 193.

⁸²⁹ www.africaart.com accessed 12/06/09.

they could pass it on. If they passed it on before being struck, they would add to it a hundred lies.⁸³⁰

Proof of the Jinn's ability can also be found in the Qur'ān, in the story about Prophet Sulaymān and Bilqees, the Queen of Sheba.⁸³¹ The utterances and activities diviners usually embark upon during the divinatory process smacks of syncretism.

The Muslim diviner achieves his aim through the use of mediums, oracles, being possessed, divinatory objects, intuitive knowledge and other secret knowledge. Patrick Ryan asserts that an accommodating *Aafaa* (Muslim Cleric) among the Yoruba accommodates Islām to a Yoruba need for divinatory and manipulative control; he divines into the mystery of life. There seems to be no clear distinction between these roles of the *Aafaa* and herbalism practised by the Traditional Diviner *Babalawo* and his ability to divine.⁸³² The Muslim *Aafaa* diviner delves into this art through his Arabic literacy and his learned or inherited traditional divinatory techniques from his cultural environment. Divination and its prescription share in common the aim of controlling nature, either by unravelling the present, the past and the future or by manipulating circumstances through the use of natural or artificial means. There are available among the *Aafaa* (Muslim Clerics) in Lagos many different methods used for divination.⁸³³

⁸³⁰ Collected by al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Arabic-English Vol. 7, 439, no. 657 and Muslim (*Saḥīḥ Muslim*) (English Trans.) Vol.4, 1209, no. 5535.

⁸³¹ Quran, 37:33-40.

⁸³² P.J. Ryan, S. J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 165.

⁸³³ These include *Kala Mūsā* (probably from the Arabic: *Qāla Mūsā*, ('Moses said'), a rectangular pair of sheets of paper facing each other, the exterior covered with opaque paper and the contents cannot be read from outside, it contains eight chapters, facing opposite each other, but it is only two chapters specifically, to be repeated alternatively, a string or tassel is extended to the clients so that when the book is closed, the client can pick one and the *Aafaa* reads Q:99;7-8, if his client picks the first of the verse his plans are approved, if second, the opposite is the case. Another method is *Kalla Mommodu* (probably from the Arabic: *Qala Muhammad*, 'Muhammad said') it entails the use of sand (*īyanrin*) on a tray on which figures are cut or pressed by the fingers (thus *īyanrin-tite*, 'sand pressing') etc. Other methods employed by these *Aafaa* include *Tesunbaa* (from the Arabic, *tasbihah*

All these methods when closely and critically perused and analysed, share the common trait of assigning to Arabic of almost any sort (manuals, statements, numbers, prayers, *Sūrah* (chapter) of the Qur’ān), a numinous potency even beyond the normal veneration for the Qur’ān known throughout the Muslim world. Uthman ibn Fodio defined as syncretic all attempts at divinatory control, control that he defined as tantamount to delving into God’s knowledge.⁸³⁴ This practice involves *shirk*, the association with God of powers other than He. Allah alone is the one whose right it is to know the future and whose healing word is not to be associated with the pharmacopoeia of alien forces.⁸³⁵

Another prominent feature of this practice that is akin to traditional methods, is the diviner’s prescription to their clients after pronouncing the result of their divination of appropriate sacrifices or alms (*saara*) from (Arabic *sadaq*). *Saara* is the near equivalence of *etutu* or *ebo* (sacrifice) in the traditional divinatory system. Prayers and charms are the principal means of the spiritual power of the Muslim cleric diviner.⁸³⁶ The *Saara* is seen as payment for the *Aafaa*’s services or propitiation to avert his client’s ‘impending’ problem. Here, the function of the *Aafaa* Muslim diviner is identical with that of marabout and traditional diviner (i.e. magico-religious specialist); after examining the situation of his client, through divination,

(rosary) of praise), calendrical divination, *Kitāb al-Sannah* is called *Tira Odun* in Yoruba, (‘Book of the Year’), sand drawing (*Khatt al-raml* in Arabic; *hati ramuli* in Yoruba), astrological divination under the name *yisabi* called (*hisāb*, ‘computation’) in Arabic, interpretation of dreams. This also involves the use of ground herbs that are applied to incisions made on the cheeks just below the eyes; there is also the use of the Quran to detect a liar etc. For more details of all these methods, see P.J. Ryan, S.J. *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 166-176.

⁸³⁴ U.B. Fudi, *Ihyā as-Sunnat wa Ikhmād al-Bid ‘ah*, 11

⁸³⁵ J.O. Hunwick, *Sharia in Songhay: The Replies of al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia Al-Hajj Muhammad*, 188.

⁸³⁶ Interview with Alh. Yusuf, 10/08/09.

the outcome often involves giving of present; an act of religious merit, the spiritualist who collects this either in cash or in kind will normally be pleased with the giver, and the ‘marabout’⁸³⁷ will thereafter write an amulet or conduct a vigorous and frantic prayer to facilitate his client’s request.⁸³⁸ This is a trait of syncretism.

5.2.5.3 Islamic Ruling on Belief and Practice of Oracles and Divination.

As analysed in detail above, oracle, which sometimes known as (*osanyin*) among the Yoruba means communicating with the gods and instructing people and telling them what will happen in future. Divination and consulting an oracle are similar in function, but performed through different means.⁸³⁹

In the *Aafaa*’s role as *onitira* (writer of amulets or *tira*) or *onisegun* (maker of *Oogun*, ‘doctor’), the *Aafaa* utilizes techniques of control made available to him not only by his Arabic literacy, but by his familiarity with the pharmacopoeia stemming from Traditionalist Yoruba sources, especially the Ifa system. The Muslim *Aafaa* diviner does not precisely appropriate the divinational techniques of the *babalawo* (traditional magico-medicine man), preferring to rely on the mysteries of Arabic to enhance his reputation and his business. As *onitira-onisegun*, however, they do borrow Traditionalist techniques of control that are manipulative for good or bad;

⁸³⁷ A Muslim holy man or a hermit. It was adapted for *Aafaa* who divines and manufactures charms.

⁸³⁸The Muslim diviner works closely with traditional *Babalawo*, thereby devising two methods of control: ‘Muslim’ means, consisting of Qur’anic verses and prayers (supplication), ‘Yoruba’ means, consisting of herbal concoctions and their accompanying incantations. Although, the two are different in theory, in practice they use both together. Most of them do consult oracles or diviners in order to ‘know’ the causes and the likely solution to their clients’ problem.

⁸³⁹ This category also includes astrology and reading one’s horoscope to predict the future. They are all fortune tellers. They are all forbidden in Islām. See Q6:59& Q27:65

combining verses of the Qur’ān with *Ifa* originated herbal prescriptions. This quite literal mixing strikes such *Aafaa* as pragmatic and sensible, albeit this practice is an egregious impiety.

The Qur’ān has made it abundantly clear that the knowledge of the unknown belongs to Allah exclusively. Whatever means that is employed either through astrology, palm reading, cards, drawing in sand, casting arrows, reading numbers and reading patterns in animal’s entrails. Allah says: ‘He knows the unseen, and to none does He disclose anything of the mysteries of His own unfathomable knowledge’.⁸⁴⁰ In the Qur’ān, Allah (SWT) affirms, ‘Say: none in the heavens or the earth knows the unseen except Allah’.⁸⁴¹ ‘He alone is the keys to the unseen and none knows it except Him alone’.⁸⁴²

Believing in someone having the knowledge of the unseen predisposes the person to assign to that creature some of Allah’s attributes with regard to the knowledge of the unseen and the future. Consequently, it destroys *Tawhīd al-Asmā’ wa as- Ṣifāt*, and represents a form of *shirk* in this aspect of *Tawhīd*. Anyone who visits or consults a diviner or oracle believing that he knows the unseen is in a state of *kufr* (disbelief). The Prophet says ‘Whosoever approaches a fortune-teller and believes what he says, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad’⁸⁴³ Islam forbids all such practices which are clearly *shirk* because they involve calling on some thing other than Allah, to reveal knowledge of the future. The Prophet states: ‘Oracles and drawing lines and observing the direction of the flight of birds to

⁸⁴⁰ Q 72:26, Q31:34.

⁸⁴¹ Q27:65.

⁸⁴² Q6:59.

⁸⁴³ A.A.Nawawi, *Riyāḍ Aṣ-Salihīn*, no, 16 Ḥadīth 75, 768.

deduce omens from them are all satanic practices'. The Prophet affirms that the *Sallāt* of such a devotee will not be accepted for forty days.⁸⁴⁴

A Muslim who is sick or confused about making a choice should not go to a fortune teller to know the causes of his ailment or to tell him the right thing to do, for instance: when he should travel, who can marry his daughter, where he should travel to, which business or profession he should do, etc. These diviners will aggravate the problem and extort his hard earned resources for their own selfish motives. The holy Prophet has forbidden Muslims from visiting them because they are liars, impostors, dangerous and the visit will have bad consequences.⁸⁴⁵ Zarabozo asserts that diviners should be taken to people in authority in order to receive the punishment they deserve. He maintains that allowing them to live among the people and not taking these people to those in authority, would harm and corrupt the society, leaving them would also help them to continue deceiving ignorant people who will ask them questions and believe in them.⁸⁴⁶

Bālī gives character sketches of a magician or a diviner who believes that he treats people with the Qur'ān; and concludes that doing this, is infidelity (*kufir*). The character sketches include:

- i. 'Asking after the client's name and the name of his mother.
- ii. Asking the client to bring his personal effects for instance, his cloth, hat, handkerchief and undershirt.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid, *Hadith* no 875, 1676, 768.

⁸⁴⁵ A.A.Bāz, *Risālah fī Ḥukm aṢ-siḥr wal-Kuhānah*, Madinah: Islamic University (1409/1998), 6-7.

⁸⁴⁶ M.J. Zarabozo, (ed.), *Fatāwā Regarding Women*, Madina: Dār –Sallam (2000), 28-29.

- iii. Asking him to bring a specific animal of a specific colour to slaughter and not mentioning Allah's name when it is going to be slaughtered and using the blood collected from the slaughtered animal to spatter where the body hurts or throw the animal into a deserted place.
- iv. Writing of talismans or spells.
- v. Writing amulets and talismans that are not understood.
- vi. Giving a client or a sick person a closed piece of paper that they call a *hijāb* and which contains a square pattern in which Arabic letters and numbers are written.
- vii. Instructing the client or patient to seclude himself in a dark place for a specific number of days, where he would not see the sun. This method is called *al- Hijbah* (the seclusion).
- viii. Asking the patient not to bathe for forty days.
- ix. Giving him certain things to bury in the ground.
- x. Giving him certain papers to burn and to breathe the smoke.
- xi. Reciting incantation, mumbles or muttering rambling words that are not understood.
- xii. Telling the patient his name and the name of his country, city or town which he originally came and the problem for which he came.
- xiii. Writing separate Arabic letters on a piece of paper that he calls *hijāb* or on a small platter made of white ceramic and orders the patient to soak it in water and drink that water'.⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴⁷ W.S. Bali, *Ṣārim-al-Battār fī t-Taṣṣad Ṣṣaḥarah al-Ashrār*, 43-44

He concludes that once a person patronises this type of sorcerer whether a fortune teller or a writer of talismans, it means that the person has gone against the saying of the Prophet that says: ‘Whoever consults a diviner and believes in what he says has disbelieved in what was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (SAW)’.⁸⁴⁸ Uthman ibn Fodio regards somebody that divines as an apostate who is not subjected to the rule of Islām when he states:

Among them is one, who claims that he is a Muslim, performs acts of Islam while at the same time claims that he knows something about the (realm of the) unknown through the lines made on the sand (divination) or by the state of the stars (astrology) or by promptings from *Jinns* or through the sounds or movements of birds or by some other means. This is also an unbeliever who is not subject to the rules of Islām.

Among them is one who claims that he is a Muslim while at the same time, consults diviners about his affairs and believes what they say. This one also is an unbeliever who is not subject to the rule of Islām.⁸⁴⁹

Askia Muhammad bn Abi Sakre Toure, the Emperor of Songhay (1493-1528) put some questions bordering on soothsaying to the famous theologian, Muḥammad bn Abd-al-Karim-al-Maghili (d.1504) while the latter was on his programme of social reform concerning the practice of divination and talisman. In his seventh question, he queried as follows:

On how people behave in some parts of these lands: to wit, there are among them some who claim to have some knowledge of the future (*al-ghayb*) through sand divining and the like, or through the disposition of the stars, information gathered from *jinns* or the sounds and movements of birds and so on. Some assert they can write (talismans) to bring good fortune, such as material prosperity or love, and to ward off ill fortune by defeating enemies, preventing steel from cutting or poison from taking effect and (they make) other similar claims and perform actions such as magicians are wont to do...

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid, 44

⁸⁴⁹ A.I.Ogunbiyi, ‘*Nūr al-Bāb-The Litmus-Test of Pure Islām as Interpreted by Shaykh Uthmān bn. Fūdi*, 24

The *Shaykh* replied thus:

And God it is who directs to the right course - is that every thing you have mentioned concerning some aspects of people's behaviour in these lands is manifest error. It is the bounden duty of the Commander of the Muslims (*amīr al-Muslimīn*), and all other believers who have power, to change every one of these reprehensible practices. As for one who claims to have knowledge of the future in any of the ways mentioned, or any other way, then he is a liar and an unbeliever. Such people must be forced to recant on pain of death. Then whoever renounces such deeds should be left in peace, but whoever persists should be put to the sword as an unbeliever; his body should not be washed or shrouded nor should he be buried in a Muslim graveyard. The Messenger of Allah said (SAW): whoever gives credence to a soothsayer has denied what was revealed to the heart of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Similarly, every sorcerer and enchantress should be forced to recant on pain of death, and similarly anyone who claims to have talismans or amulets or the like for obtaining good fortune or defeating armies and so on. Whoever renounces these things should be left in peace, but whoever persists should be killed. Whoever asserts that he only wrote something from the Book of God or some good words to empower him to do these things should not be believed, for he is a liar and it is a bounden duty to restrain him. If he does not desist, he should be given a heavy punishment for that in order to deter others (from doing the same) and to uphold the law and the faith.⁸⁵⁰

Therefore, according to Islāmic beliefs, every Muslim should shun this practice, because some people are totally dependant on divination, and the diviners make a lot of money out of them. Such people will never make a journey, buy or sell, move house, or get married, without first consulting the oracle, and asking what to do or when to do it. In this way, they surrender their own will and independence to another human being. The prayer for divine guidance is enough for every Muslim, if he is confused about the outcome of any decision like marriage, travelling, business transactions. This is the sunnatic replacement of superstition and consulting the diviners. This divine guidance is emphasising our poverty, worship and total trust in Allah.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁵⁰ J.O. Hunwick, *Sharī'ah in Songhay: The Replies of Al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia al-Ḥajj Mu ḥammad*, 88-89.

⁸⁵¹ R.M. Badr, *Fiqh al-'Adiyah wal -Adhkār; A'amal al-Yawm wa-Laylat*, Kuwait: Endowment House (2003), 175.

Divination and the likes are considered as *shirk akbar* (the major and serious form of polytheism) because it implies the acquisition of knowledge of the unseen, which is unique to Allah, alone. One who believes that he possesses such knowledge of the unseen is certainly claiming the acquisition of a Divine attribute that Allah alone possesses. It also involves using devils and holding fast to them, a ritual that can only be perfected when the performer is in complete submission to the devil. This is also a form of polytheism.⁸⁵² Ibn Bāz, in his treatise on this issue observes thus:

It is permissible to seek treatment according to scholarly consensus. A Muslim may go to a doctor to treat his internal diseases, injuries, nervous complaints, etc., so that the disease can be identified and treated appropriately. To use permissible medicine based on the doctor knowledge of medicine does not run afoul of putting one's trust in Allah because it is an ordinary means and it is Allah who sends down the disease and He also sends down the cure; those who know it, know it and those who do not, do not know it. But Allah has not created the healing of a disease for His slaves by means that he has forbidden for them. So, it is not allowed for a Muslim to go to soothsayers, diviners, witchdoctors, and the like who claim to know the unseen, to find out about his problems or worries.⁸⁵³

5.2.5.4 Religious Syncretism in Ancestral and Hero worship

Ancestral and Hero worshipping as the name suggests: indicates syncretism.⁸⁵⁴

They are considered as 'living dead', immortal and spirits who can only be approached spiritually. Death has raised their status. They possess considerable power for good and evil, hence, food and libation should be given to them. This

⁸⁵² <http://www.islamawareness.net/blackmagic/fortune.html> accessed 12/06/09.

⁸⁵³ A.A. Baz, *Risālah fī Ḥukm as-Siḥr wal -Kuhānat*, 3-5; see also, <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/12578> accessed 12/06/2009.

⁸⁵⁴ It involves venerating someone as an idol and raising people to the level of a deity most especially after their death. The belief is that, these people are still present, watching over the household, directly concerned in all the affairs of the family and their property. The belief is that if certain traditions and rituals are not performed to propitiate these 'fathers' they will be angered. For more details, see G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*, 115.

corpus of belief is syncretism. In Islām a dead person has nothing to do with this world.⁸⁵⁵ Uthman ibn Fodio sees this act as syncretic, when he condemns saint-worship or tomb veneration or casting of cotton on stones, path, trees and cross-roads.⁸⁵⁶

The belief arrogated to ancestors that they are present among us, watching our household, concerned in all the affairs of the household, giving blessing, etc, means that they are likened to God, who is omnipresent. This belief goes against the principle of the oneness and uniqueness of Allah. They also believe that if certain traditions are not performed to propitiate these fathers they will be angered; this is superstition amounts to syncretism.⁸⁵⁷

Another area of syncretism in this belief is the practice of ascertaining the will of the ancestors through the oracle, securing their help and appeasing them when they are provoked to anger. Offended ancestors can punish their offspring for moral offences. Crimes such as: witchcraft, stealing, adultery and murder are punished by them.⁸⁵⁸

Some Yoruba Muslims, whenever they dream of their ancestors in a bad state, will superstitiously believe that their ancestors are angry with them.⁸⁵⁹ So, they have to prepare sacrifice (*saara*) and ask the *Aafaa* to help them read some portions of the

⁸⁵⁵ A.B. Philips, *The Exorcist Tradition in Islam*, Sharjah, United Arab Emirate: Dar Al Fatah Printing, Publishing & Distribution (1997), 19-20; see also, Q35:22, Q27:80 and Q23: 99-100. Philips asserts that the consensus of opinion among orthodox scholars is that dead people cannot have any relationship with the living.

⁸⁵⁶ P.J. Ryan.S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 40.

⁸⁵⁷ G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*, 115-116.

⁸⁵⁸ Interview with Sister Shakirat, 25/08/09.

⁸⁵⁹ Some of them will go to fortunetellers to inquire about the meaning of the dream and what they can do to solve the riddle of the vision

Qur'ān. After the recitation, people will gather at their houses to eat the sacrifice and sometimes such sacrifice will be taken to the Central and the *Ratibi* mosque, in most cases, immediately after the *Ṣubḥ* prayer (early Morning Prayer) in the form of local staple food.⁸⁶⁰ This smacks of syncretism. This also prompts extravagant expenditure at the funerals of departed ancestors.⁸⁶¹ Sometimes people call the spirit of the dead to intervene in the family's conflicts.⁸⁶² This is syncretism.

Sometimes, the ancestors will be represented by *Egungun*, they believe that they represent the dead and they gather at the chief's compound and pray for blessing on the people. All this amounts to syncretism.

5.2.5.5 Islamic Ruling on Ancestral and Hero Worship.

As analysed above, ancestral worship is also an aspect of syncretism. It involves worshipping someone like a deity after his death. They consider these people as immortal and that they participate in worldly affairs. All the superstitions attached to this belief are condemned in Islām.

⁸⁶⁰ Interview with *Aafaa* Kabir, 22/08/09. This type of sacrifice has happened several times in the local and *Jumu'at* mosque in my presence. I also took time to interview some of the Yoruba Muslims at the Mosque when they brought these sacrifices and they gave me the same response.

⁸⁶¹ Interview with Alh. Muhyideen, he even confirmed to me that when one of their late Central Mosque *Imām* was about to be buried, his children put a radio in the coffin so that he could listen to it in the heaven. Incurring huge debts by this filial feeling, pomp and pageantry always accompany a funeral ceremony. Some of these fathers sometimes go to the extent of instructing their children that certain things should be done after their death, so that they would 'hear' in heaven and they will come to the earth with some of their colleagues to watch the respect accorded them. They are also influenced by their prayer '*Bi a se nse laye , be na lase se ni orun* (As we do in this world, so, we shall do in the hereafter)

⁸⁶² I witnessed an occasion where the sand collected from the grave of the head of the family was put into water for people to drink, in which they believed that anybody that was guilty of the offence, the 'spirit' of the man would deal with him/her.

This superstitious belief is dismissed in the Qur'ān which makes it clear that the people of earlier times stand in the same relationship as we do to Allah, that is, He created them just as He created us, and we should worship Him not them. The evidence to this is in the following verse: 'there is no deity save Him: it is He who gives life and gives death, the Lord and Cherisher to you and your earliest ancestors...' ⁸⁶³ Allah affirms elsewhere: O you people! Worship your Guardian Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that you may become righteous... ⁸⁶⁴

Hero worship takes various forms. An example is the claim of some of the ancient kings to be gods, such as the Pharaohs of Egypt, some of the Roman Emperors and some of the Emperors of China, who took the title of 'Son of the Heaven'. There are also great men, saints, holy men, great prophets, and outstanding leaders, good people about whom legends and stories were spread so that either before or after their death, people attributed divinity to them. ⁸⁶⁵

The Qur'ān as well as the *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet have asserted that humankind are the same, and all are servants of Allah, and that death is the end of the living

⁸⁶³ Q44:8-9.

⁸⁶⁴ Q2:21.

⁸⁶⁵ Among the Yoruba Muslims, some go to the graves to make offerings at irregular intervals where they seek the blessing of the ancestor. Sometimes a libation is poured out since the belief is that the dead person is still dwelling there in some degree. In days of adversity, sacrifices are performed to satisfy them. Some of them used to keep graves of their dead outside and inside the houses of the family where prayers are said on festivals or when they are celebrating some events like return from journeys, weddings, etc. And that informs the reason why some construct the graves of concrete with different designs usually of *wala* (the slate) or of a bottle with which the dead used to perform his ablutions. Many of these graves bear fragments of Qur'ānic verses inscribed in Arabic along with the name and date of birth and death of the deceased. They have the idea that the departed soul is nearer to the tomb in which he was buried, or can come to it on occasions. For more, see A.R.I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 230.

creature. After death the functions and role of every living being cease. The Prophet avers: ‘If a man dies all his work has ceased except through three means; a virtuous child praying for him, a constant charity or beneficial knowledge’.⁸⁶⁶

Therefore in Islām, it is forbidden to worship at the grave side,⁸⁶⁷ ancestors or to believe that dead saints can solve one’s problems or grant relief in distress.⁸⁶⁸ It is also forbidden to request their aid and assistance.⁸⁶⁹ It is stated in the Qur’ān thus: ‘Your Lord has ordained that you should worship none but Him’.⁸⁷⁰ The same ruling is also applicable to supplication to the dead, the righteous Prophets or others, seeking their intercession or rescue from difficulties, calamity or dilemmas. Allah asks: ‘...or who listens to the distressed when he calls on him, and who relieves his suffering, and makes you (mankind) inheritors of the earth? (Can there be another) god besides Allah? Little is that you heed!’⁸⁷¹

Allah emphasizes: ‘those whom you implore besides Allah are servants like you...’⁸⁷² because these ancestors cannot help themselves or help living people.

⁸⁶⁶ A.A. Nawawi, *Riyāḍ Aṣ-Salihīn*, 350; *Sahīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, 867, no. 4005, and *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2, 812, no. 2874.

⁸⁶⁷ The Prophet states that ‘Do not face graves during prayer nor sit on them’. In another narration, he says ‘...Beware! Those who proceeded before you, used to make their Prophets’ graves into places of worship, Beware! Don’t take (any) graves as places of worship. I forbid you to do so’. An-nawawi, Hadith no: 1763. See also, A.B. Philips, *Funeral Rites in Islaam*, 153-155

⁸⁶⁸ Ibn Taymiyah asserts that it is only the disbelievers, magicians and the likes that can believe that if a person dies, he can come back and be of assistance to them, such as paying of debt, communicating with them and offers advice to them. He says: ‘...images of those who die come to them, but they are actually devils taking their forms’ For more details, see *Majmū‘ ar-Rasāil al-Muniriyyah*, Cairo: Idārah at-Tiba‘ah al-Muniriyyah (1343), 194-195

⁸⁶⁹ M.N. al-Albaanee, *Tawassul: Seeking a Means of Nearness to Allah: Its Types and Rulings*, Birmingham, UK: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution Ltd (1996), 38. Al-baanee affirms that Muslims can seek nearness to Allah, which is known in Arabic Language as *Tawassul* through three means: by calling on Allah through the Beautiful names of Allah, by means of one’s righteous actions and by means of the supplication made by a righteous living person. He gave many examples from the practice of the Prophet as well as the *Ṣaḥābat*

⁸⁷⁰ Q17:23.

⁸⁷¹ Q27:62.

⁸⁷² Q 7:194 &198.

Standing in front of the grave for instance with humility, subserviently imploring and asking for their assistance, such as a cure for the sick, acquisition of children or any similar assistance amounts to *shirk*. Allah says: ‘And who is more astray than one who invokes besides Allah, such as will not answer him to the Day of Judgement and who (in fact) are unconscious of their call of them’.⁸⁷³ The Prophet states: ‘Whoever dies while invoking a partner besides Allah will enter the Hell fire’.⁸⁷⁴

The ancestors do not possess any power to do anything in the universe including the ability to cause harm and bring benefits as Allah has asserted ‘If Allah does touch you with hurt, there is none that can remove it but He: if He does design some benefit for you, there is none that can keep back His favour...’⁸⁷⁵. In other words, these departed souls have nothing to do with those that are alive.

Instead of traditional adoration of the ancestors, maximum care of the parents while alive is very important in Islām, after Allah, it is they that deserve best benevolence. Islam recommends also that after their death, what profits them is to make constant *du‘ā* for them, say good words about them, pay their debts, and give charity on their behalf. In addition to this, there was an advice the Prophet gave to a man from the tribe of Salma who asked; if there was any good thing he could render to his parents after their death, the Prophet responded by saying ‘...Yes, pray for them, seek Allah’s forgiveness for them, carry out the promise you made to them, strengthen the ties of kinship, and honour their friends’.⁸⁷⁶ Islam disallows visiting graves on

⁸⁷³ Q 46:5.

⁸⁷⁴ Collected by Bukhārī (*Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*) (English Trans.), Vol. 4, p. 8. no. 176.

⁸⁷⁵ Q 10:107, Q4:60, Q53:19-23.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 155, Hadith, 343.

the anniversary of a person's death, or at the time of special annual festivals of saints.⁸⁷⁷

The Qur'ān dispels people's belief in ancestors and heroes as conjectures and fancies as they are not gods who can render any assistance to mankind. Ibn Abbas was one of the most knowledgeable of the Qur'ān among the Companions. He explained the causes of idol worship and the process by which they came to be worshipped. He said:

All the idols which were worshipped by the people of Nuuh (AS) were worshipped by the Arabs later on. The names (of the idols) formerly belonged to some pious men of the people of Nuuh, and when they died Satan inspired their people to prepare and place idols at places where they used to sit, and to call those idols by the names of the pious people. The people did so but the idols were not worshipped till those people (who installed them) had died and the origin of the idols had become obscure whereupon people began worshipping them.⁸⁷⁸

The worship of ancestors also includes sanctifying spiritual leaders, consecrating prophets, saints and even men of piety or religious authority which people call to bring them, i.e. their followers nearer to Allah and to intercede on their behalf.

Allah affirms:

...And those who choose protecting friends beside Him (say): We worship them only that they may bring us near unto Allah'. Lo! Allah will judge between them in that wherein they differ. No! Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful.⁸⁷⁹ (Al-Qur'ān, 39:3)

⁸⁷⁷ A.A. Bilal Philips, *Funeral Rites in Islam*, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications (1996), 147. Philips affirms that Islam does not forbid visiting the grave to pray for the Muslims inmates and to serve as reflection on the shortness of this present life.

⁸⁷⁸ Bukhari, *Saḥīḥ- al -Bukhārī*, vol.4, 414-415.

⁸⁷⁹ Al-Qur'ān, 39:3

Priest worship and the worship of saints and ascetics is a form of superstition to which men have been prone to in all ages. In Islamic belief there is no intercession or mediation between Allah and men in this world. Allah says:

They worship besides Allah that which neither hurts them nor benefits them, and they say: 'these are our intercessors with Allah' say: 'Would you inform Allah of something that He knows not in the heaven or on the earth. Glorified be He and high exalted above all that they associate with Him'.⁸⁸⁰

It is crystal clear that man must not call, rely, pray to any power or person other than Allah to help him out or intercede for him.⁸⁸¹ Every Muslim must also avoid exaggerated respect for the holiness of the saints and religious heroes to the extent that after their death, they turn their graveyards into places of worship, asking them for help, refuge and salvation, all of which should only be sought from Allah.⁸⁸² Islām forbids praise and exaltation of religious leaders which could lead to worship. It also forbids extremism (*ghuluww*). The Qur'ān states: 'O people of the Scripture (Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion...' (Q: 4:171).⁸⁸³ The Prophet also warned the Muslims against exaggeration in religion. He states: 'Beware of exaggeration, your predecessors perished on account of their exaggeration'. 'Destroyed are those who are extreme (in religion)'. He said it three

⁸⁸⁰ In another place in the Qur'ān, Allah says:

They have taken as Lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks and the Messiah, son of Mary, when they were bidden to worship only one God. There is no God save Him. Be He glorified from all that they ascribe as partner to Him. (Q 9:31).

Other places in the Quran forbidding this act are; Q39:43:46, 13:16, Q18:102, Q29:41, Q42:9, Q46:5.

⁸⁸¹ M.A. Bashmeel, *Towards Understanding Tauheed; Reflections on Islamic Monotheism*, Lagos: Hamzat International Islamic Publishing House (2001), 26-27. See also, Ibn Katheer, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 26-27. A.A.J. Jazair, *Minhāj al-Muslim*, 12-13

⁸⁸² I. Husayn, *Tawheed and Shirk*, 22.

⁸⁸³ The same warning was repeated in Q5:77 'Say (O Muḥammad (SAW)) O people of the scripture (Jews and Christians)! Exceed not the limits in your religion (by believing in something) other than the truth...', See also, Q2:185, Q30:1

times.⁸⁸⁴ Yasir Qadhi asserts that one of the causes of shirk is exaggeration in religion.⁸⁸⁵

5.2.5.6 Syncretism involved in the Muslims' Participation in Traditional Festivals.

Traditional festivals are one of the legacies of African Traditional Religion; they are celebrated purposely among others to commemorate historical, cultural and religious events that are of great significance to the community. They may be for specific divinities, spirits and heroes held in specific months or seasons; particular rituals and rites dominate the event, usually performed by the head of the community. There is always an origin or myth that led to the festival.⁸⁸⁶ This demonstrates their roots in superstition. We are concerned here with traditional festivals that have relationship with associating partners with Allah. Agricultural festival and other similar festivals that are celebrated for the purpose of historical event are not included.⁸⁸⁷

These various traditional festivals aim at thanking the divinities and ancestors and soliciting for their continued blessing and protection.⁸⁸⁸ The festivals are usually

⁸⁸⁴ A.A. Nawawi, *Riyāḍ Aṣ-Salihīn*, 99. Hadith no: 144. See also, M.A. Wahāb, *Kitāb at- Tawḥīd*, 78-79. The prophet (SAW) also says: 'The commandments of faith are easy. Whoever imports hardship into them is vanquished by them. So, be moderate, and perform in proportion to your strength ...' Hadith no: 145.

⁸⁸⁵ A.Y. Qadhi, *An Explanation of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's Kashf al-Shubuhāt: A Critical Study of Shirk*, 45-46

⁸⁸⁶ Interview with Bro. Yusuf on 04/09/09.

⁸⁸⁷ If devoid of elements of *shirk* and heresy against Islam as *Egungun* festival is done for its purpose.

⁸⁸⁸ Some of these traditional festivals in Lagos State emanated as a result of some of the religious leaders in Lagos State who combined both religious and administrative duties and they surrounded

accompanied with elaborate rituals, sacrifices and appeasements, which are referred to as *Irubo*, *Etutu*, and *Ipese*.

Take the issue of *Egungun* festival for instance, this festival symbolises the traditional belief in life after death. The superstitious belief associated with this festival is that those that died live elsewhere and is meant to appease the dead people. Some Yoruba Muslims and non-Muslims worship through this festival in Lagos State, hence, it is syncretism.⁸⁸⁹ Many of them have the same characteristics and rationale for their celebration. Participation in some of these festivals which have their root in *shirk* by Yoruba Muslims is an indication of syncretism.

5.2.5.7 Islamic Ruling on Muslims' Participation in Traditional Festivals.

We have already established the syncretism in the practice of some of these festivals, looking critically at their composition and modus operandi of their celebration.

Islām abolished any festival that has to do with traditional religion. It was related that when the Prophet got to Madina, he found the people earmarking two days for annual playing. The *Ḥadīth* goes thus:

themselves with deities of the land and consulted with them. As soon as these leaders died, they started worshipping them. Interview with Bro. Abd-Rasheed Ajetumobi, 13/08/09.

⁸⁸⁹ L.C. Dioka, *Lagos and its Environs*, 237.

Anas related that when Allah's Messenger (SAW) came to Madina the people had two days (annually) in which they used to enjoy themselves with games. He asked: 'What are these two days?' They said, 'We used to play games on them during the pre-Islamic period'. Allah's messenger (SAW) said, 'Allah has substituted them with something better than them: 'Īd al-Ad-ḥah (the festival of sacrifice) and 'Īd al-Fiṭr (the festival of Fast-Breaking).⁸⁹⁰

In other words, Muslims should abide by what the Islām has sanctioned, which is the day of *Adḥāh* (festival of sacrifice) and the day of *Fiṭr* (breaking of the fast of Ramaḍān) and other festive occasions which Islām sanctions.⁸⁹¹ Muslims should not revert to traditional religion by celebrating any festival apart from the ones approved by the Prophet (SAW). Other festive occasions that Islām permits include: the *walīmah an-Nikāḥ* (wedding feast), naming feast, etc.; all these should be done with moderation and in an orthodox manner. A Muslim should avoid getting involved in any activities which have traditional religious origins and associations of partners with Allah, because if he does so he cannot avoid being involved in practices of *shirk*.

5.3 Influence and Infiltration of Western culture

The interplay and acculturation of traditional, Islamic and western culture has in one way had some negative impact on Yoruba Muslims and their practice of Islām.⁸⁹² One cannot rule out the influence of colonialism, Christianity and western education in this regard by way of interaction. Thus, in some of their Islāmic

⁸⁹⁰ *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 1, 293, no. 1130.

⁸⁹¹ A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām wa Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah; Baḥṭh fī Muḥārabat at-Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah as-Shāri'ah fī Ifrīqiyyah*, 152.

⁸⁹² <http://www.missionislam.com/family/culture.htm> accessed 12/06/2009

ceremonies, there seems to be some instances of mixture of some negative western culture with Islām.⁸⁹³ The culture of the West was later influenced by Christianity.⁸⁹⁴ It should be reiterated here that there are some positive values of western culture which could be imbibed and promoted as explained in chapter three.

Nadwi has stated that it is necessary for Muslims to take maximum advantages of modern sciences, in terms of technological inventions which the Western world has offered. Muslims should not display inferiority complex, rather they should compete and excel, but avoid those things that expressly go against Islam.⁸⁹⁵

Looking at the practice of marriage, naming, and funerals among the Yoruba Muslims there is intermingling of these three forces. Take for instance, the practice of marriage; one will discern that some Yoruba Muslims undertake their marriage from four perspectives: Yoruba traditional culture; western civilization, Christianity and their religion, Islam. Some Yoruba Muslims begin their marriage in the traditional way; by seeking the sanction of the oracle.⁸⁹⁶ In this regard Balogun has rightly observed that ‘... no convert immediately forgets his old way. It takes time

⁸⁹³ Interview with Bro. Lateef Adetona 23/08/09.

⁸⁹⁴ J. Prudence & P. Nigel, *A History of Pagan Europe*, 36.

⁸⁹⁵ A.H.A. Nadwi, *Western Civilization: Islam and Muslims*, Luknow, India: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications (1979), 4. Nadwi also explains the consequences awaiting any Muslim world that shuns the challenges of modern civilization, because, Islam is considered as a universal religion and a total way of life.

⁸⁹⁶ The man seeks the sanction of the oracle before he betroths a lady for marriage instead of the traditional consultation of *ifa* priest, he would go to an *Aafaa* who has devised means of divination. For instance, *khatt raml* resemblance of *ifa*. (Yoruba Traditional Method of Divination). This *Aafaa* would press certain signs on sand poured on tray, mutters some Qur’anic verses and he would be foretelling the future. Instead of asking their clients to put certain sacrifices at a road junction, he will ask them to give *sadaqah* (charity) to the poor, the blind, and the needy. Sometimes, he will direct that the *sadaqah* should be brought to him. For detail see Y.A. Quadri, ‘The Yoruba Muslims of Nigeria and the Problem of Cultural Identity’ in E.A. Odumuyiwa & P.A. Dopamu (eds.), *Religion, Science and Culture*, 242.

to perfectly and fully synchronise with the new religion'.⁸⁹⁷ Many converts deliberately or otherwise syncretise their old religious practices with the new religions. This is exactly why Uthman bn Fodio had to fight the syncretics.⁸⁹⁸

Furthermore, another aspect of this practice is that the parents are very interested in knowing which part of the world, country, state, region and tribe the suitor comes from. For example, an Ondo may not marry anyone from Ogbomosho; likewise a typical Ijebu may not marry someone from Egba or someone from Ibadan may not marry an Ijebu. This tribal sentiment is a direct manifestation of the effects of a history of defeat, victory, deceit and slavery arising from inter- and intra-tribal wars among the peoples of these various areas in pre-colonial Nigeria. Stories are passed from generation to generation; the hatred one community has for other is also passed on in this way. This hatred has an impact on their lives including marriage.

The issue of the inter-mixture of modernity and tradition comes in; after the choice is blessed by the results of divination and tribe, he brings in his culture of bringing the families of the two parties to know each other. This is known nowadays as the introduction or engagement. In some cases, the two are held together while in some, they are held separately. Other people hold them along with solemnization of the marriage 'proper'. The formal request for the hand of the lady in marriage is made to her family through a letter designed on a card by an artist, and specially presented in a tray before a gathering; the letter is read to the admiration of the public by a teenager from the family of the prospective bride.

⁸⁹⁷ Ismail A.B. Balogun, 'Religion and Cultural Identity in Nigeria' in E.A. Odumuyiwa & P.A. Dopamu (eds.), *Religion, Science and Culture*, 141.

⁸⁹⁸ Ismail A.B. Balogun, 'Religion and Cultural Identity in Nigeria' in E.A. Odumuyiwa & P.A. Dopamu (eds.), *Religion, Science and Culture*, 141.

Then the role of middle women popularly called '*alaga iduro*' and '*alaga ijoko*' often adds colour and glamour to this event. These are professional singers and dancers who help both families to present and receive letters; they also help in presenting and collecting engagement load ('*eru*') which consists of items listed by the family of the prospective bride like tubers of yam, bags of salt, fruits of all kinds, kola nuts, (*obi*) bitter kola, (*orogbo*) alligator pepper (*atare*), bottles of honey, cat fish, (*eja aro*), electric fish, (*eje ooji*), a bottle of wine (schnapps) and a big box containing clothes for the bride. This includes an assorted and specified amount of money for a whole range of people: father's consent, mother's consent, older wives' consent, and consent of the young children within the family - all are put in an envelope and presented by the father or guardian of the bridegroom. Each of these items is employed to invoke blessings on the would-be-couple by the '*alaga ijoko*' who picks one after the other and ensures that the items listed are brought and the specified number and amount are met.

Furthermore, these '*alaga ijoko*' will simultaneously provide singing, dancing and collection of money from families, friends and everybody in attendance. The prospective bridegroom will be asked to prostrate sometimes for some members of the family of his prospective bride. The impression created is that such an occasion is only done once in a lifetime to justify the reason why everybody present must be prepared to joyfully and benevolently spend money. In fact, nowadays, the role of these professional singers and dancers has become so important that a marriage is considered incomplete by some Yoruba Muslims without it.

When this segment is over the Muslim clerics take over; the couples leave the stage to change their dress from traditional ‘*Aso ofi*’ to another cloth, oftentimes white lace materials with cap and head gear to match. The parents of the couples stand up to welcome the ‘august’ guests. The Muslim clerics are given little or no time and attention. The Muslim cleric picks items such as: kettle, prayer mat, rosary and a copy of the Qur’ān to explain their uses and their significance in the life of a Muslim.

Here there is a combination of traditional items and the Muslim items. If they exchange rings, it is done after this stage to indicate the Christian concept of monogamy and being faithful to the wife. Albeit, theoretically, the officiating *Aafaa* explains that it only indicates love, not monogamy and the position of Islām on polygamy is stressed here. Then, there is the signing of the marriage certificate in which different people will be called to pray for the couple and it will be conducted by another person.

Another aspect of their mixing other western culture with Islam is the practice of reception; the couple change their dresses again to wedding gown. The Yoruba Muslim woman sometimes modify this gown to suit her purpose, in such a way that it leaves a greater part of the body uncovered while others modify it in such a way that it will not leave part of the body but will still leave the head uncovered. Other aspects of the adoption of European culture include the ‘bridal train’ following the couple as well as the cutting of the wedding cake, the husband feeding and kissing the wife publicly and vice-versa, expression of love by the couple through sharing

the cake and drink as well as the presentation of gifts to the couple as part of the reception at marriage ceremonies.

Another aspect which is to abide by the laws of the country based on English law is the registration of marriage.⁸⁹⁹ Although this is of European origin, Yoruba Muslims have cultivated the habit of also registering the marriage under English law. It is usually done at the local government office of choice of the intending couple. The English laws binding the couple are read and explained to them at the occasion: absolute love, monogamy. A party to any marriage under this law can only love or marry another person either after seven years of separation or after divorce has been granted by a court of law. A violation of any of the laws is punishable by seven years imprisonment. A number of family members, relative, friends and well wishers are in attendance. A certificate of marriage indicating agreement to the laws is then signed by the couple. Photographs are copiously taken for the purpose of remembering the occasion.

Some other parts of negative western culture that have infiltrated into the practice of Islām among some Yoruba Muslims include: some Muslim women dressing provocatively, tight trousers, dancing flirtatiously in public, girlfriend and boyfriend syndrome, wearing of wigs, tattooing, filling of the teeth,⁹⁰⁰ pornography, unisex styles etc. All these are disallowed in Islam.

⁸⁹⁹ Nigeria got her independence from the British. Invariably, some of her laws were adopted from both the European and American laws.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibn Mas'ud says: 'Allah has cursed tatoos and those who are tattooed, and those women who have their teeth filed for beauty (*al-washr*) and those who have their hair plucked and thus alter Allah's creation...' An-Nawawi, Hadith, 1651. Q4:117-119 'Those who alter Allah's creation'. Abdullah asserts that it is not allowed for humankind to alter how they were created, see M.S. Abdullah al-Ashqar, *Al-Qurān al-Karīm wabil-Hāmish; Zubdat Tafṣīr min Faḥ al-Qadīr*, 123; Ibn Kathīr, Ishmael, *Tafṣīr Ibn Kathīr*, 557. Except in case of a necessity. For instance, for medical reason, there is a room for necessity in Islāmic law, but for beautification is not allowed

In all these aspects, there is mixing of traditional, western culture and Islam. Perhaps, the participants are not satisfied with the culture of Islam.⁹⁰¹ But not all aspects of the two systems, these Muslims are borrowing from constitute association of partners with Allah.

5.3.1 Islamic Ruling on Aping Western Culture.

As analysed in preceding chapter of this work, it should be reiterated again that not all western culture are bad or evil. Some of them are good and are necessary for the promotion of the collective good of the society.

Doi while looking the most important features of negative western civilization and culture catalogues the following:

- (i) ‘Godlessness and God forgetfulness,
- (ii) Boy-friend/ Girl-friend syndrome, the curse of promiscuity,
- (iii) Individualism,
- (iv) Sodomy and homosexuality (gay and lesbian marriage),
- (v) Nudist or naturist societies,
- (vi) Pornography,
- (vii) Unisex fashion...⁹⁰²

⁹⁰¹ Interview with Bro.Lateef Adetona.18/08/09

⁹⁰² A.R.I.DoI, *The Western Civilization, Islām and the Muslim Youth*, 10-12

Doi asserts that today Muslims are suffering from two maladies: ‘apologetism and inferiority complex’. He claims that ‘Islam is a total and comprehensive way of life that does not need borrowing from any other ideology except what is good’.⁹⁰³ The Prophet states; ‘whosoever imitates any community he is one of them’ (will rise on the Day of Resurrection with them).⁹⁰⁴ Allah also affirms: ‘Whatever the Messenger gives you, hold fast to it and whatever he has forbidden you refrain from it’ (Q59:8)

Ignorance and lack of understanding of Islām is one of the causes of the Muslim imitating the negative values of the West.⁹⁰⁵ A Muslim must accept what Allah and His Messenger (SAW) have brought all the time.⁹⁰⁶ The true love of Allah is depicted through following the footsteps of the Messenger of Allah. Islām does not go against material wealth provided it is gotten through lawful means and it does not prevent one from serving Allah.

The combination of certain features of Yoruba traditional system of marriage, European cultural heritage (English law) and negative aspects of western civilization has a negative impact on the Yoruba’s Muslim marriage. The divination in which they engage in at the point of choosing a suitor impinges on absolute faith in Allah as the determinant and knower of all things.⁹⁰⁷ However, Islām has provided alternative mechanisms for guidance for Muslims and it recommends *Istikhārah* as discussed in Islamic ruling on superstition.

⁹⁰³ Ibid, 11

⁹⁰⁴ Allah says: ‘Say! (O Prophet): if you love Allah, then follow me. It is only then that Allah will love you’ (Q3:32). Islam does not go against copying the positive aspects of other people culture. This hadith speaks about the negative and harmful aspects of other people culture. As against the fundamental beliefs of Islām. For more, see A.A. Nawāwi, *Riyāḍ Aṣ-Salihīn*, Ḥadīth 157-159, 110-111.

⁹⁰⁵ N.H. Ali, *Islām and the World*, 44.

⁹⁰⁶ Any emerging problem will always be solved by the consensus of opinion of Muslim scholars.

⁹⁰⁷ Q6:59, Allah says: ‘with Him are the keys to the unseen and none knows it except Him alone’; Q27:65, Allah says again: ‘Say! None in the heavens nor the earth knows the unseen except Allah’

Islām is a universal religion that goes against tribalism. Islām sees all human beings as one; and thereby calls for the eradication and elimination of all natural and artificial boundaries among peoples of the world. Consequently, all language, geographical, tribal or colour barriers are removed by Islām as emphasised in the Qur’ān.⁹⁰⁸ The brotherhood (*Mu’akhah*) interactions among the helpers (*Anṣār*) and the Emigrants (*Muhājirūn*) in Madinah is a vivid example of this.⁹⁰⁹ A Muslim can choose a suitor from any part of the world from the point of view of Islām. The Prophet says:

Oh men, all of you are descended from Adam and Adam was made of clay. There is no pride whatever in ancestry; there is no merit in an Arab as against a non-Arab nor in a non-Arab against an Arab; neither does a white man possess any superiority over a black man nor a black man over a white man except in point of piety.⁹¹⁰

Another implication of negative cultural influence on the marriage of the Yoruba Muslim is with regards to the invocation on items brought for the traditional engagement to bless the couple which has been incorporated into the Yoruba Muslim marriage. For example, the use of wine or shinaps to pray for the couple and prostration to man other than Allah is not allowed in Islām.⁹¹¹ It is only Allah that we can direct our invocation to; Allah states: ‘...Invoke me, I will respond to your (invocation)...’ (Q40:60). Any attempt by Yoruba Muslims to still want to

⁹⁰⁸ Q49:13 ‘O Mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has *At-Taqwa* (the pious)...’ ‘The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic Religion)...’ Q49:10

⁹⁰⁹ A.D. al ‘Umarī, *Mādinan Society at the Time of the Prophet*, Virginia, USA: International Islamic Publishing House (1993), 64-65. ‘Umarī claims that despite the various problems faced by the emigrants, the helpers (*Anṣār*) showed a sacrifice and selflessness based on bonds of faith, love and equality. Two incidents were recorded during the life of the Prophet where he bemoaned indication of tribalism which he termed as survival or remnant of *Jāhiliyyah*

⁹¹⁰ K. Ahmad, *Islām: Its Meaning and Message*, Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau (1977), 169; see also, A.D. Al ‘Umari, *Mādinan Society at the Time of the Prophet*, 233-234

⁹¹¹ A.A. Akanni, ‘Dangers in the Muslim Home: Cultural and Civilization Challenges to Islamic Marriages in South-western Nigeria’ in I.L. Akintola et al (ed.), *Correlates of Islam*, 106.

invoke those items in their marriage may amount to blind adoration of old tradition which Islām has come to eradicate.⁹¹²

All forms of money being paid by the bridegroom during engagement appear to be reminiscent of traditional practices. The family of the would-be-wife would ask for money for all categories of peoples in the family as against the dowry that Islām sanctions. At times a premium is placed on the payment and the correctness of the exact amounts required for these categories of people as against the dowry which could be ignored or deferred. At times dowry is paid twice, one during the traditional engagement and the other during *nikāh* (solemnization of marriage). This puts unnecessary financial burden on the would-be-husband.⁹¹³ The consequences of this are better imagined than experienced.

Another matter of concern as regards Islamic marriage among the Yoruba Muslims is the exchange of rings. The *Ḥadīth* of the prophet being used to justify its wearing among the Muslims, to say the least is misapplied.⁹¹⁴ Unless used as dowry; the way and manner of its use calls for critical assessment, but today it is being used as

⁹¹² (Q2: 170) Man using items such as kola nut (*obi*), bitter *kola* (*orogbo*), honey, (*oyin*) catfish (*eja aro*) . Some scholars see it as a symbolism using the blessing of these Allah’s creatures to make their requests to Allah, while others view it otherwise. But for Aromatic schnapps or gins, it is forbidden in Islam. Replacing those items with Islamic instruments for the observance of *Ṣalāt* (ritual prayer), like kettles, praying mats, rosary, and the glorious Quran while conducting the ceremony and there by explaining the significance of each of them seems to be commendable in this regard.

⁹¹³ See Q2:223

⁹¹⁴ M. Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, Delhi: Taj Company (1986), 675. The ring was purportedly given by the *Ṣahābah* in lieu of dowry when he does not have the financial wherewithal to pay for the dowry, after the Prophet had given him a number of options. Often in pairs, the Muslim couple exchange engagement rings during their engagement as in English law and also wedding rings during the *nikah*. Where the marriage is registered at the registry, the engagement ring is also exchanged by the Muslim couple. Sometimes, a Muslim woman feels unloved, insulted and cheated whenever her husband does not put on the ring for what ever reason. She considers herself as the only legal wife, any other woman is illegal. For more details, see also, M.N, Al-Albani, *Etiquette of Conducting Nikāh, from the Pristine Sunnah*, Ilorin, Nigeria: Jami ‘at Ihyaa Minhaaj al-Sunnah (1994), 38

it is in English law, which implies absolute love and strict monogamy. Whenever this ‘covenant’ is being threatened, the wife goes to the English court forgetting that her marriage was conducted under Islāmic law (*Shari‘ah*). If the marriage ends up in divorce in this manner, an important Islāmic injunction has been violated that made provisions for different ways of reconciling misunderstandings between the couple.⁹¹⁵

In view of this analysis, this elaborate and syncretic wedding ought to be done without in view of its negative effects which range from, young people delaying marriages because of their expensive four-layer wedding ceremony (introduction, engagement, *nikāh*, and reception), parents showing off, to show the ‘whole wide world’ that they have successfully trained their children who are now ‘graduates’ and the engendering of spendthrift practices, which the Qur’ān condemns. Allah affirms: ‘...But spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of spendthrift. Verily, the spendthrifts are brothers of the (devils) *Shayātīn* ...’⁹¹⁶ during the delay many unIslamic practices may crop up. For instance, immoral relationships, abortion, marriage not out of love but out of circumstances.⁹¹⁷ Marriages could run into debt and ruining the budding family economically and leading to nagging, squabbles and quarrelling between the couple on the issue of maintaining the family economically. The wedding party at the reception is not exempt from immorality including mixed dancing, which Islām frowns at.⁹¹⁸ However, Islām permits

⁹¹⁵ Q4:34-35 & Q 65.

⁹¹⁶ Q17: 26-27

⁹¹⁷ B. A. Lemu, *Islamic Studies for Senior Secondary Schools*, 170

⁹¹⁸ L.M. Adetona, *The Abuse of Islamic Rites and Ceremonies in the Contemporary Nigerian Society*, Lagos: Al-Basit Production (1995), 44.

publicity of the Islamic marriage, beating of the *duff* (tambourine) and chaste song.

919

Some Yoruba Muslims also ape western culture in terms of family planning (permanent method and limited number of children), monogamy,⁹²⁰ eating with left hands, clapping,⁹²¹ some Muslim women dressing provocatively; wedding anniversary, celebration of happy new year and Christmas day, memorial services⁹²², wearing of wigs, unisex styles, artificial nails etc.⁹²³ The list here is not exhaustive, of some aspects which some Muslims have imbibed, integrated and incorporated into their religion.⁹²⁴ All these to say the least is not allowed in Islam but they cannot be considered as *shirk* or *kufir* as such.

There are a number of the sayings of the Prophet that go against many of the aforementioned practices that some Yoruba Muslims have incorporated into Islam.⁹²⁵

⁹¹⁹ A. Ummu l-Khayri, *The Fragile Vessels (Rifqan bi al- Qawārīr)*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau (2004), 12.

⁹²⁰ A.R.I. Doi, *Woman in Sharī'ah (Islamic Law)*, 55-57; A.R.I, Doi, *Shar'ī'a: The Islamic Law*, London: Ta Ha Publishers (1984), 460-462 Islam has already provided natural family planning in terms of two years breastfeeding by the nursing mother. Allah enjoins us to avoid infanticide and abortion because it is a crime in Islam except on medical ground. Q 6:151, Q17:31, Q81:8 Polygamy is not a rule but an exception. But anyone that genuinely desires it and can fulfil its requirements should not be denied as it is prevailed in some Muslim countries. Experience has shown that restricting people to one wife in some societies may cause much harm than good.

⁹²¹ M. N. Al-Albani, *Etiquette of Conducting Nikkāh from the Pristine Sunnah*, 35-36; L.M. Adetona, *The Abuse of Islamic Rites and Ceremonies in the Contemporary Nigerian Society*, 15. Albani also included the shaving of the beards, plucking eyebrows, painting fingernails and growing them long as copying negative aspects of western culture.. All these rules will be relaxed, when there is a necessity. For instance, a person whose right hand has been cut

⁹²² A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 147.

⁹²³ M.S. al- Munajjid, *Unheeded Unlawful Things which People should be Cautious of in Islām*, Riyadh: Dar Al-Khudayri (1999), 146.

⁹²⁴ A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 341-342.

⁹²⁵ For more information on these and others, see A.A. Nawawi, *Riyād Aṣ-Salihīn*, 535, 538, etc. There are number of authentic *Aḥādīth* under the aforementioned heading in which the Prophet condemns all these practices

Umm Muhammad has written a detailed treatise on the seemingly controversial issue of celebrating either the birthday of the Prophet or any Muslim. Rahrān claims that there is no precedence for this celebration in the traditions of Islām rooted in the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*. It started during the reign of the Fatimid dynasty.⁹²⁶ This innovation (*bid'ah*) started at the beginning of the seventh century after *Hijrah*.⁹²⁷ Although, some scholars disagree with this position.⁹²⁸

Most often, the ceremony is not exempted from specific forms of *shirk* in varying degrees, such as the excessive praise in which certain divine characteristics are attributed to the Prophet (SAW) or seeking favour from Allah through his position (*jah*); copying Christians in the use of the name of Jesus to seek favour from Allah or idolaters using intercessors, or other similar expressions which infringe upon the

⁹²⁶ A.B. A-Rahrani, *Al-Inharafāt l- 'Aqdiyyat wal -'ilmiyyat: fī l-Qarnayn Thālith 'Ashar wa Rabiū 'Ashara l-Hijriyyat wa Atharuhumā fī hayāt l-Islāmiyyat*, Makkat: Dar Taybat (1998), 383, see also, N.J.G. Kaptein, *Muhammad's Birthday Festival: Early History in the Central Muslim Lands and Development in the Muslim West until the 10th/16th Century*, Laiden, Netherlands (1993), 20. He asserts that the birthday was originally a shite festival, and then followed by the Fatimid.

⁹²⁷ This remains up until today among some Muslim communities owing to ignorance and alien influences. Some unIslamic elements that have been hitherto incorporated into it; such as dancing and singing, use of sophisticated musical instrument, unrestrained mixing of men and women, exaggerated praise of the prophet, the traditional story of Aminah's delivery and at the announcement of Prophet Muhammad's birth, everyone in attendance stands up, remaining on his feet for several moments in memory of the blessed event and in reverence of the beloved Prophet (SAW) etc. For detail, see U. Muhammad, *The Observance of Mawlid An-Nabawi and other Birthdays*, Jeddah: Abul-Qasim Publishing House (1994), 4-5.; N.J.G. Kaptein, *Muhammad's Birthday Festival: Early History in the Central Muslim Lands and Development in the Muslim West until the 10th/16th Century*, 63; H.A.R. Gibbs & J.H. Kramers (eds.), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, Neitherland: E. J. Brill (1974), 365-366.

⁹²⁸ Up until now, the festival is an internationally famous festival among Muslims. Some scholars have approved this festival, for example, *Imām* al-Suyuti (d.1505), *Imām* Hajar, they claim that the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is a commendable innovation, but a significant number of scholars of that era disagreed with this opinion. See for instance, B. Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press (1993), 68-69. They assert that it should be within the confines of *Sharī'ah*; see, I.J. al-Suyuti, *Al-Hāwī Lil-Fatāwī*, vol 1, Bayrut, Lubnan: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah (2000), 188

exclusive right of Allah.⁹²⁹ An obvious contradiction to the spirit of the *Sunnah* is the act of arising from one's seat at the mention of the Prophet.⁹³⁰

In these ceremonies of the Prophet's birthday, there appears to be excesses as to include supplication directed to the Prophet himself or the dedication of sacrificial animals to him. Although, this appears to be the manifestations of these people's sincere affection for the Prophet (SAW) and for Islām. But, it seems they lack adequate knowledge, they sometimes fall prey to those, who pose as spiritual leaders, and seek to ensure popularity through the propagation of what which people already, like and accept unquestionably. The occasion is reminiscent of the Christian celebration of the birth of 'Isā (AS) the son of Maryam (AS) (Jesus).⁹³¹ The Muslims copy this from them to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) as well as the birthday of their children.⁹³² In this regard, it appears that some Yoruba Muslims are copying the Christians'.⁹³³

Celebrating the birthday of Muslim children every year, where friends are invited for eating and drinking, merry making, cutting of cakes and exchange of gifts is seen as imitating traditional festival and one imported from the culture of the Christians and the Jews.⁹³⁴

⁹²⁹ P.J. Ryan, S.J, *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 188-189.

⁹³⁰ K.M. Ḥamid, *Dam 'atun ala Tawhīd; Ḥaqīqah –l-Qubūriyyah wa Ath āruhā fī Wāqi 'i l-Ummah*, Riyādh: Al-Muntada Al-Islamic Trust (2002), 48-49; M.J. Zaynu, *Minhāj l-Furqat a-N ājiyyat wa Tāifat al-Mansūrat*, Makkat: At-Tab 'atu al-Asliyyat lilawafis, (ND), 127-128. The Prophet said: 'Whoever likes that men show deference to him by standing, let him take his seat in hell fire'

⁹³¹ K.M. Hamid, *Dam 'atun ala Tawhīd ; Ḥaqīqah–l-Qubūriyyah wa Athāruhā fī Wāqi 'i al-Ummah*, 48

⁹³² M.J. Zaynu, *Minhāj l-Furqah a-Nājiyyah wa Tāifah al-Man Sūrah*, 108.

⁹³³ A.A. Nawawi, *Arba 'un Ḥadith*, Hadith 5 & 24; see Quran 5:3.

⁹³⁴ A.A. Ilorin, *Al-Islām wa Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah; Baḥth fī Muḥārabah at-Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah as-Shāi 'ah fī Ifrīqiyyāh* 151. Nevertheless, there is a wide difference of opinion on these issues. See for instance, B. Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, 68-69

Islām does not suppress human nature. It does not forbid one from seeking pleasure in lawful activities. Muslims can gather to eat, talk and enjoy themselves in an *ḥalāl* atmosphere. The Islāmic festivals were established, replacing traditional holidays and serving as a lawful alternative to other celebrations. Others also include reading, memorizing and studying the Qur’ān, pursuance of education, *walīmah* *Nikāḥ* (Marriage feasting), feasting at the end of the completion of the Qur’ān, (*ḥadhāqah al-Qur’ān*) by children,⁹³⁵ naming feasting (*‘Aqīqah*), house warming and return from journey.⁹³⁶ There are other countless ways to make a child feel loved and wanted; children could be rewarded with a gift for a special achievement.⁹³⁷ Muslims must be satisfied with the provisions of the Qur’ān as well as the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (SAW) without aping the negative aspects of the western culture. Allah states: ‘O you who believe! Enter into Islām wholeheartedly... (Q 2:209). Allah reiterates elsewhere; ‘...This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islām as your religion...’ (Q 5:4).

5.3.2 Conclusion.

In this chapter, I have critically and analytically brought out the Islamic religious syncretism that is involved in some aspects of the vestiges of traditional beliefs and practices of the Yoruba which some Muslims have found difficult to renounce,

⁹³⁵ This is line with ‘Umar ibn Khāṭab as reported in Muwaṭṭa Imām Mālik, whom after spending twelve years to memorize Sūratu al-Baqarah slaughtered an animal, when he was asked, he said ‘*shukra lillah*’ to thank Allah. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar did the same thing as his father. For details, See Imam Malik, *Muwaṭṭā*, 10-11

⁹³⁶ A.R. al-Jazir, *al-Fiqh ala Madhāib l-Araba*, Istanbul, Turkey: Maktabat al- Haqiqah (1978), 401.

⁹³⁷ U. Muḥammad, *The Observance of Mawlid an-Nabawi and other Birthdays*, 41.

mentioned earlier on in chapters two and three. An attempt has also been made in this chapter to discuss the Islamic Rulings on the various religious syncretisms the Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are involved in.

The chapter has examined critically the practice of soliciting the assistance of Jinns. Those Muslim *Aafaa* who engage in such practices are sorcerers in disguise; and their actions, amount to *kufir* and *shirk*. Equally, the chapter examines the content, peculiar features and the Islamicity or otherwise of *nakali* and *hanturu*, the various arguments therein were also thoroughly examined. This was done with the aim of raising awareness among Yoruba Muslims who are hitherto holding on to some of these practices.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. It summarises the whole discourse, states the findings of the study, gives recommendations and suggests areas for further research.

6.1 Summary of the Study

The main thrust of this study was to critically look at the syncretic beliefs and practices among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State as well as the different manifestations of the phenomenon and the reasons why the predicament persists. It also examined some traditional beliefs and practices among the Yoruba before the advent of Islām and their enduring impact on them. The study also aimed at drawing attention to what we consider to be misconceptions and misrepresentations by some scholars who claim that Islām approves of syncretism. It also intended in analysing the syncretic aspects that are involved in the different areas of syncretism among the Yoruba Muslims and to bringing out the Islāmic rulings on each of these syncretic beliefs and practices. It also aimed at raising awareness among the Yoruba Muslims on some of these practices that may

negatively affect their faith. The study also examined ways of reducing the problem.

The focus was to appraise the extent to which Islām, the knowledge and understanding of *Tawhīd* have brought to bear on the beliefs and practices of the Yoruba traditional culture which was being practised by the Yoruba long before their acceptance of Islam in the early 17th/18th century. This study has built on previous work by Yoruba scholars to inculcate the teachings of *Tawhīd*. Syncretism, otherwise known in Arabic as '*Takhlīt*' ('mixing') is an age long practice among Muslims in Africa. The approaches and attitudes adopted at different age in different periods to its study however vary. Indeed, there is quite a large amount of literature existing on this subject. In order to gain insight into what scholars - both classical and modern - have written on this subject, an extensive literature review was carried out at the outset of this study. Published materials in the form of books and articles, written in Arabic, Yoruba and English by Muslim and Christian authors as well as authors from African Traditional Religions were reviewed.

A step-by-step explanation of the methods adopted in carrying out the research work was given: the rationale, the research questions, the objectives, and the sampling method of random sampling technique. Both primary and secondary sources were extensively used to gather data for this study and the triangulated methods chosen for collecting information for this study and their technique were equally justified. The data was also analysed using the triangulated method. Since the study revolves round syncretic practices and beliefs, a vivid description of some of these practices was given. The Yoruba tradition (*oro ile*), Muslim Yoruba and

the Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* are the focus of the study. Islām preaches total submission to its fold and condemns syncretism. All these aspects received our attention as key or operational concepts in this study.

As a matter of logic and agreement with the research methodology, chapter two gave some information about the study population itself; that is, some of its socio-economic-demographic character.⁹³⁸ This was done to give us some background on the population from which the information is collected. In other words, chapter two of this work gave a brief history of the origin of the Yoruba, marshalling all the theories about the origin of the Yoruba, which all agree upon one point, that the Yoruba migrated into their present areas, and all the theories point to near-Eastern origin. We also traced the history of Lagos State, being the location of the study, with emphasis on its traditional, political and cultural milieu. The history of Islām in Yoruba land was briefly traced, culminating on proposal of controversial date; of an earlier time scale to the introduction of Islām, on the basis that it was being practised clandestinely because of its vulnerability to traditionalists. However, researchers do agree that by 18th century Islām was widely entrenched in Yoruba land including Lagos.

Attention was also given to the two groups of repatriated Muslims that boosted and bolstered the population of the Muslims in Lagos. The first group was liberated slaves from Sierra Leone in 1841, while the second group was the Brazilians both of whom caused the nascent Muslims population to grow stronger. Muslim individuals like a Muslim merchant–prince and philanthropist, Shitta Bey, who

⁹³⁸ As recommended by R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 202.

contributed his own quota to Islām by constructing a ‘magnificent’ mosque in 1894, which improved and consolidated tremendously the image of Islām across Yoruba land, within Government circles and also gained international recognition was also highlighted. The formation of societies in Lagos, starting from the Killa Society (*Egbe Killa*) in 1895 was also mentioned.

The role played by the Lagos Muslims during the era of Christian sponsored western education that often led to Muslims unwittingly converting to Christianity was also explained. The steady growth of Islām in Lagos today is very significant as the religion is growing phenomenally Islām spread to Epe through the migration of *Oba* Kosoko and his followers to the town in the year 1851, and they succeeded in Islamicizing the Epe population which hitherto a traditional inclined religions. Later the Epe population was so strong in Islām that when the first Christian Evangelist, Rev. D. Hinderer went there in 1876, he was driven away from the town with a statement ‘we are already Muslims’. We assert that today, Islām is growing in Epe tremendously but the problem of syncretism is still very much endemic with them. At the end of this chapter, we encapsulated those factors that are responsible for the growth of Islām in Lagos which include: traders, Muslim scholarship, preaching, Muslim organizations and Muslim ceremonies among others. In the same vein, factors inhibiting its growth are also highlighted: ignorance, disunity, western education and syncretism.

Chapter three concentrates on some of the various religious, traditional, and cultural beliefs and practices among the Yoruba ethnic group in Lagos prior to the advent of Islām in this area. This is otherwise technically termed as ‘ignorant’ (*Jāhiliyyah*)

practice as it was the mores and norms of all nations to whom Allah sent His Messengers. They were found worshipping and sticking fast to their forefathers' religions. The same is true for the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs; before the emergence of Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) as a Messenger. Examples are made of the People of Prophets Nūḥ (AS), Hūd (AS), Ṣāliḥ (AS), Shu‘ayb (AS), Ibrāhīm (AS), Mūsā (AS), ‘Īsā (AS) and Muḥammad (SAW). The Yoruba people in Lagos were worshipping idols and ancestors, and had sundry superstitious beliefs and practices ranging from belief in *Abiku* (a child born to die), a bride should not meet her bridegroom at home, finger nails should not be trimmed at night, etc. They retain a belief in witchcraft and its diabolical machinations to the extent that they make excessive use of charms and amulets to prevent its evil effects. The people that provide these spiritual havens are mostly Yoruba.

The participation in secret societies or occultism is another heritage of traditional culture, which is wreaking havoc in the society. Some examples of these societies are given. Black magic in the form of charms and amulets, the overlapping functions among the medicine-men, magicians and herbalists are highlighted. This profession is everywhere in Yoruba land and thriving. Their characteristics are also explained. Other traditional practices among the Yoruba before Islām include consulting oracles or act of divination. Rarely any Yoruba performs or embarks on any venture without consulting the oracle first; travelling, marriage and choice of job. Also receiving our attention in this chapter is ancestral or hero worship; the belief in ancestors is rampant among the Yoruba. They believe that past heroes are still present, watching over the household, directly concerned with the affairs of the household. The traditional festival is another pre-Islāmic belief of the Yoruba in

which they carry out the tradition of their family to mark important social and religious ceremonies. These festivals are observed by them in order to mark or commemorate important events be it historical, cultural or religious in the lives of the people. They may be held to celebrate events of specific divinities, spirits or ancestors, and involve a series of performances, entertainment, merry making, rites and ceremonies. These traditional festivals include *egungun*, boat regatta, *kayo-kayo*, *gelede*. The enduring effects of these traditional beliefs and practises are also examined. The chapter is rounded off by looking at infiltration of some negative western culture among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos as a result of interaction and western education. Some of these negative western cultures are identified.

In chapter four of this work, attention is concentrated on the different methods used in gathering data for this study as well as the triangulated methods used in analysing the data. The hypotheses that were earlier on formulated in chapter one were analysed and tested through questionnaires. All of the hypotheses were rejected, and the reasons for their rejection were qualitatively explained and elaborated. The second instrument used to collect data for this work took the form of interviews, and the random and stratified sampling methods used to get respondents for these instruments is also explained and justified. Some reasons why some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State hold on to syncretism are also explained, for example: disunity, inadequate understanding of *Tawhīd*, and lack of adequate health facilities and love of material wealth.

In chapter five of the work, attention is placed on critically appraising the religious syncretism inherent in the vestiges of the traditional beliefs and practices mentioned in chapter three of this work. The continued observation and practice of those traditional beliefs and practices mentioned earlier on give birth to religious syncretism among the Yoruba Muslims. The religious syncretism involved in superstitions is defined as combining the fear of Allah with the fear of inanimate objects that cannot harm or benefit anyone or to be swayed in belief that if you wear a certain ring or do a certain thing, something bad or good will happen to you. To believe in child born to die (*Abiku*), ghost or apparition (*Akudaya*) which is fundamentally has no basis in Islām. The practice of and belief in the evil machinations of witchcraft which entails seeking other power to benefit or harm aside from Allah constitutes syncretism. To form a league with devils to cause harm or to use sorcery to induce love, madness among others, is evil. It is arrogation or sharing of power between Allah and the devil which is syncretic. Also explained in the chapter is the syncretism involved in secret societies which entails the formation of cultic groups, allegiance to the group, initiatory rites, rituals, oath takings among members, etc., make it syncretic. The mere secrecy itself speaks volumes of its syncretism. Islām has nothing to do with secrecy. The Qur’ān makes it clear that secret counsels and conspiracies are from the devil.⁹³⁹

Black magic in the form of charms and amulets, the constituents of which involve the use of the power of the devil or invocation of evil spirits for evil purposes constitutes attribution of power of benefit and harm to an object, which is syncretism. They combine the two forces; the power of Allah and the devil. The

⁹³⁹ See Q58: 10

washing of Qur'ānic verses with traditional herbs or animal parts is reminiscent of mixing of Qur'ānic instrumentality with the traditionalist instrumentality implies a twofold faith: both in Allah and in other forces. The same syncretism characterises consulting oracles and divination by delving into the knowledge of the unseen by Satanic means which absolutely belongs to Allah alone. Their utterances of incantation during the process of their divination, the pronouncements they make to their clients after the result of their divination, appropriate sacrifice (*saara*) equivalent to *etutu* or *ebo* in the traditional divinatory system and other features of its syncretism are discussed. In-depth analysis of some of these methods of divination is also carried out in this chapter.

Another subject of discourse in this chapter is ancestral worship, which is raising a person to the level of deity mostly after death. The various beliefs attached to dead people include making them eternal as if they are still alive, propitiating them and attributing powers of good and evil to them, also implies syncretism. Participation of Yoruba Muslims in traditional festivals to commemorate religious or cultural events, to remember and thank specific divinities is an act of aberration of Islāmic absolute belief in Allah and hence, syncretic. Soliciting for continued blessing and protection from the ancestors is a relic of traditional practice. The imitation and imbibing of some negative western values which go against Islām, all these received our attention in the chapter and examples given of all.

Having analysed and discussed the various syncretic beliefs and practices among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State, there is the need to subject those beliefs and practices to critical examination with a view to determining their level of

syncretism and association of partners with Allah (*shirk*). This was done to determine their deviation from orthodoxy. All these were critically examined in this chapter for the purpose of adjudging their heterodoxy and heresy.

Chapter five of this work is the core of the study as it gives the Islāmic rulings on each of the aforementioned syncretic beliefs and practices that are prevalent among the Yoruba Muslims. Each of the syncretic beliefs and practices attracted both Qur'ānic verses and sayings of the Prophet (SAW) and views of orthodox Muslim theologians, disapproving and condemning such practices as they connote idolatry, the most grievous atrocity in Islām which Allah will not forgive except if the perpetrator repents and re-admits him/herself into Islām. Superstition in Islām can be classified as *ṭiyyārah* (bad omen) which the Prophet (SAW) condemns as irrational. The power to make things permissible or impermissible belongs only to Allah and Prophet Muḥammad (SAW).⁹⁴⁰ Recommendations are also given on the ways to avoid the effects of superstition.

Witchcraft is another condemnable practice mentioned in the chapter which was likened to magic, albeit it is real, but its effects depend on Allah's leave. It is stated that the practice is clearly *shirk* (association of partners with Allah) by using devils as sources of power attributing the power of good and evil to mankind. The Islāmic ruling on it is that the practice is magic and a magician should be killed. It is an act of *shirk*. Solutions are equally suggested in order to prevent the Muslims from the evil effects of witchcraft. Secret societies or occultism is equally condemned in Islām as examples of one forming an alliance with the devil as his friend and

⁹⁴⁰ There are four sources of guidance in Islām: The Qur'ān, the *Sunnah*, *Ijmā'* and *Qiyās*.

protector. It is only Allah that possesses the power to harm or give benefit, any other person laying claim to this power has apostated and has become an infidel. Consulting, believing in oracles or diviners constitutes one of the violations of Islām and any Muslim that believes in divination or oracle has committed an act of *kufr* (disbelief). Several verses of the Qur’ān and *Ahādīth* of the Prophet (SAW) are marshalled attributing the power of knowing the unseen to Allah alone. Anybody that lays claim to such power has become an idolater.

Ancestral worship with various beliefs attached to it, is tantamount to *shirk*. It was also the beginning of *shirk* when righteous people were deified. The belief arrogated to worshipping ancestors is unfounded in Islām. Participation in traditional festival smacks of *shirk* (association of partnership with Allah) and is condemned in Islām. It is reiterated that Muslims should be satisfied with the festivals that are sanctioned in Islām.⁹⁴¹

Aping some negative culture is also considered in the chapter which again Islām does not allow. Various examples are cited like birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries, funeral anniversaries, Muslim men aping women in dress and appearance. It is argued in the chapter that Muslims should be satisfied with Islāmic culture and not borrowing some negative cultures that are against the tenets of Islām.⁹⁴² The importance of this chapter to our work is that it demonstrates the Islāmic rulings and positions on all these beliefs and practices by way of raising awareness.

⁹⁴¹ A.A. Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)*, 188.

⁹⁴² Here we mean the social, political, economic and political systems of Islam with various cultural differences are enough for all Muslims to understand and imbibe. Islam is a universal religion.

6.2 Findings of the Study

This study has sought to investigate syncretic beliefs and practices among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State. The intention of this study was to appraise the extent of religious syncretism that the Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State have been involved in despite the long advent of Islām there. The study aimed at discovering the reasons and manifestations as well as giving Islāmic rulings on each of these syncretic beliefs and practices.

The most significant outcome of this work is that at the moment, the issue and practice of syncretism is still in vogue amidst the Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State. Field work carried out in Lagos Island, Epe, Badagry, Ikorodu and Ibeju-Lekki indicated a high level of religious syncretism among these Yoruba Muslims as stated in chapter one of this work. These findings reveal that certain worldly factors of this contemporary age which include emphasis on job promotion, love charm, monogamy,⁹⁴³ economic prosperity and adversity, lack of employment,⁹⁴⁴ as well as ignorance are responsible for the widespread nature of this phenomenon.

⁹⁴³ Interview with Alhaji- Yusuff 17/09/09, he told me that this is the household word nowadays among the Yoruba women owing to what they hear from their mothers, some Yoruba films also depicting mostly the negative aspects of polygamy and the social problem. Many of these women go to any length to achieve this.

⁹⁴⁴ Reports recently show that Nigeria is the third in the rate of unemployment in the whole world. See The TELL Magazine, vol. 3, 2008, 13-15; NEWSWATCH Magazine, vol. 9, 2009, 23-24.

Our findings also show that due to frustration emanating from serious unemployment and a high level of corruption among politicians that the country is faced with.⁹⁴⁵ Many Yoruba Muslim youths have taken solace and protection in divination, charms and amulets in order to live comfortably.⁹⁴⁶ The get-rich-quick syndrome among some Muslim youths and Yoruba society lacking religious and moral education and training; and failure on the part of the parents to inculcate exemplary leadership in children is also responsible for this problem. Al-Ghazali asserts that children learn most by imitation⁹⁴⁷,

Furthermore, this has led to everyone now looks for a way of making quick money, thus syncretism ensues. This phenomenon has led many people to adopt ungodly and satanic means of survival. Demonic rituals that involve ritual killings are one of the methods some people now adopt to make money. As our findings reveal, demonic rituals are no longer the reserves of shrines and groves. Evidence abounds that many syncretic commercial Muslim *Aafaa* and church priests also engage in such rituals, in order to survive financially.⁹⁴⁸

The study also reveals that the problem of syncretism among the Yoruba Muslims is born out of the fact that some Yoruba Muslims do not have adequate knowledge of 'pristine' (true) Islām and are ignorant of oneness or unity of Allah, (*Tawhīd*) and as

⁹⁴⁵ 'Nigeria Ranked Most Corrupt Country', *The Punch*, Thursday, 14th September, 2000, 1.

⁹⁴⁶ Interview with *Aafaa* Ilyas at Epe. He told me how students seeking admission, unemployed graduates seeking jobs used to patronize him and he collected a huge sum of money from them. He showed me some of the complimentary gifts he received from them. 30/08/09

⁹⁴⁷ M.A. Quasem, *The Ethics of Al-Ghazālī: A Composite Ethics in Islām*, Selangor: National University of Malaysia (1975), 96; A.N. Ulwan, *Child Education in Islām*, Dar El-Salam: As Salam Publishing (2001), 61.

⁹⁴⁸ There were three Muslim *Aafaa* caught and confessed that they killed an old man in Epe purposely to make use of parts of his body to make money, they even shared it among themselves. The incident was reported in both print and electronic media. It was also shown on a popular Yoruba programme on GALAXY Television 'IRIRI AIYE' on 13th April, 2008.

many of them are not ready to undertake Islāmic Studies, their attention is being diverted to pursue secular courses that can help them employed in highly lucrative jobs as contained in the objectives of the National Policy of Education (2004).⁹⁴⁹ The findings also suggest that many Yoruba Muslims are very complacent about the way they perform ablutions, ritual bath (*ghusl*), pray five times daily, let alone respect the message of *Tawhīd*. Our findings also discovers that the problem of religious syncretism among Yoruba Muslims is as a result of the legacies of African traditional religions, as many Yoruba Muslims cannot see any difference in Muslims worshipping their ancestors; otherwise called ‘*oro ile*’ or participating in his traditional festivals so as to promote the good and progress of society and themselves. According to them, Islām does not debar them from participating in their traditional rites.

The findings also indicate that nowadays, there are a large number of accidents, sudden deaths and calamities in our society. Many believe that the reason for this problem is the failure to worship or remember the ancestors, and so ‘they are angry with them’ and have to be appeased, and the problem cannot be solved by Islām but only by recourse to seeking refuge through traditional means (‘*oro-ile*’). Besides, anybody who opposes this in society or within the family may cause disunity.⁹⁵⁰ The study also shows that there is a misconception among some Yoruba Muslims as they see the acquisition of Arabic knowledge as an avenue to manufacturing charms and amulets; many among them do not see it as a way of understanding Islām and Arabic literacy. So, typically an *Aafaa*, among his role as *Imām* or religious leader,

⁹⁴⁹ For details, see M.A. Bidmos, *Utilizing the Potentials of Islamic Education in Nation Building: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Lagos*, 10-11.

⁹⁵⁰ They will call the person ‘*alaqidat*’, ‘Wahabis’ etc. It sometimes causes rift, division, and boycotting among the family and in the society.

is also looked upon like in African traditional religion, as a priest who can only speak with the divinities in times of difficulty and frustration; a professional man of prayer who can solve spiritual problems in an Islāmic way.⁹⁵¹

Our findings also suggest that the political climate of Nigeria, including election rigging and ‘do or die’ politics is also contributing to Yoruba Muslims’ persistence in syncretism; many politicians see it as the only way to make money and to be famous. These groups of politicians go to the extent of paganistic and traditional oath taking,⁹⁵² charms, amulets, consulting oracles, sacrifices among others to ensure that they win the election by all costs. Many of these politicians are either Muslims or Christians. The Yoruba ethnic society called Odua People Congress (OPC) was born out of political impasse in 1992. This society was formed purposely to defend the Yoruba ethnic group from being cheated of their share of national resources; their members include Muslims and Christians and they make huge use of African traditional charms, amulets, magic and sorcery as their many encounters with the police and their opponents have shown.⁹⁵³

Our findings further evince that the problem of syncretism arose out of the fact that many Yoruba Muslims do not have patience and many of them as our investigation reveals do not believe in the fact Allah has full knowledge of all occurrences. When

⁹⁵¹ See A.I. Lawal, *Of a tongue and its numerous ‘Faces’: The Story of Arabic in Nigeria*, 28-29; P.J. Ryan, S.J., *Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition*, 180; A.R.I. Doi, *Islām in Nigeria*, 314.

⁹⁵² Ogun State Governor and members of the House of Assembly recently accused one another of having sworn an oath in nudity not to be ‘unfaithful’. Many of these people are Muslims and Christians. See ‘Ogun House of Assembly Members Accuse one another of Naked Oath Taking’ *Nigerian Tribune*, 9th July, 2009, 6.

⁹⁵³ In July, 2009, there was religious uproar in Maiduguri, Nigeria championed by an association called BOKO HARAM; they go against western education and Muslims participating in Democracy. Members of this organization are Muslims, and they made use of charms and amulets to fight their fellow Muslims and the police. Many people died in this mayhem, including their leader. The association still survives till today. It was widely reported in both print and electronic media.

a calamity strikes they rush to diviners or magicians to unearth the causes of the incident or accident as the case may be: ‘why me and not my neighbour’ ‘despite my devotion’. Such people are bothered by these rhetorical questions, and so when they consult a diviner for instance, whatever he tells them will be taken as the gospel truth, and they observe it scrupulously. If a misfortune strikes, they will attribute it to someone with whom they have a misunderstanding or someone to whom they refused favours, not considering their own faults.⁹⁵⁴

Our findings also suggest that there is an acute paucity of Yoruba Islamic scholars preaching against syncretism, some out of fear of attack from witchcraft, while some get their living from the innocent, ignorant Muslims. The few among them that preach against it appears not to make any significant impact as there is a readily available answer: ‘such and such *Imām* is doing it’; ‘he finished his Arabic Education from Arabic -speaking country’; ‘he spent twelve years at *Markaz*’ etc. Comments of this nature have sapped the enthusiasm of ordinary Muslims and so they do not serve as good models in this regard. This problem of syncretism as my findings reveal causes disintegration and disaffection among family members; parents and children, husband and wife. The reason for this is that some members will consult diviners and will try to impose the instruction of diviners on other members of the family who are not inclined to it. There are some instances in which marriage will not be allowed to take place between the couples, or a journey will not be made even to Makkah to perform pilgrimage (*Hājj*).

⁹⁵⁴ They will not reflect on their own negligence, lack of preparation, hard-working, lack of health care facilities, lack of job, quantitative education (education for the sake of certificate), crime and lack of sanitation to mention but a few

Our findings also indicate that this phenomenon of syncretism among Yoruba Muslims has made them lose their honour and prestige among their Muslim counterparts from other tribes, for instance, Hausa Muslims to the extent that a typical Hausa Muslim may not pray in a mosque behind a Yoruba Muslim *Imām*. The fear is that he is a syncretic person, either by tying amulet around his waist, or having incision around his eyes, or participates in one traditional festival or another, or worships his ancestors. This makes the Yoruba Muslims objects of derision to their Hausa Muslim counterpart, taking their Islamic devotion and *Tawhīd* with scepticism. The study shows that some Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* are being despised as they are seen as using religion to exploit and capitalise on their followers' ignorance and gullibility.

It can also be suggested from our various investigations that the problem of syncretism has discouraged many non-Muslims from embracing Islām, as some Yoruba Muslims and *Aafaa* are found wanting in the area of absolute belief in Allah, particularly where *Aafaa* are caught with human skulls, bones, blood and skins. Listening to sermons (*waƙƙi*) or embracing Islām at the hands of such people will be difficult, because there is a tendency for generalisation.⁹⁵⁵ Our investigation also reveals that some people are scared to transact business with Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* because some of them are involved in fraud and hard drugs in the name of Islām.

⁹⁵⁵ The crisis that claimed the life of one popular Muslim Preacher in Epe, *Aafaa* Akodo in 2003 in which the cult members of *Oshugbo* murdered him in his house. Those that were arrested appealed to the Government to release them on the grounds that the three Muslim *Aafaa* that were caught with human parts in 2008 were also guilty of manslaughtering.

Yoruba culture is ridden with indigenous religious activities. Right from the inception of Islām among the Yoruba, they have been incorporating elements of traditional religions into Islām because some of them see Islām as a foreign religion, as in one of their popular sayings, *'Ile laborisa, ile laba imale, osangan gan ni igbagbo de'* which means 'We met traditional religions at home as well as Islām, (*esin imale*), then Christianity came later'.⁹⁵⁶ Our study also indicates that the problem of syncretism is a generational problem, being passed from one generation to the other. Yoruba Muslims are wont to tell their children that 'this is what I met my father doing, when he was alive and he was an *Imām*'.⁹⁵⁷ Thus, the problem may be very difficult to eradicate, or unless young educated Yoruba Muslims conduct many *Da'wah* activities.⁹⁵⁸

The study also indicates that disunity among Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* as a result of different ideologies, from different Muslim organizations also compounds this problem of syncretism. In other words, while some Muslim organizations support it, some of them oppose it. This division does not help matters at all. These different organizations are supposed to make a positive contribution to Islām, but they keep sowing the embers of discord among themselves. Our findings equally show that some Yoruba Muslims, who are deeply involved in this problem of mixed Islām, do

⁹⁵⁶ As explained in chapter one of this work, this is used to depict the historical origin of religions, the first was traditional religion, followed by Islām and later, Christianity. Akintola claims that the Yoruba Muslims are called *Imale* owing to the fact that it was the Malian people that brought Islām into Nigeria at the end of 14th century. Hence, the religion of Mali (*esin Mali*). Other scholars also disagree with this, for instance, Doi claims that the word is combination of *Imo+ lile = imolile* (hard knowledge) he points out that people with shallow knowledge of Islām viewed Islām as religion spread by force but Doi asserts that it is hard knowledge because of its rote memorization of the Qur'ānic in Arabic as it was being imparted in a difficult way. For more details, see, I.L. Akintola, 'A General Introduction to Islam in Lagos State' in D.F. Asaju, (ed), *General Studies: Book of Readings*, vol 2,161; A.I.R. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, 110; A.A. Ilorin, *Nasīm Ṣṣabah fi Akhbār al-Islām wa 'Ulamā' Bilād Yoruba*, 11

⁹⁵⁷ This was what the People of Prophet Ibrahim told him when he invited them to renounce idol worshipping and the likes. See for instance, Q21:51-54; Q5:104; Q2:170 and Q31:21

⁹⁵⁸ Many Muslim organizations are springing up today. It is hoped that some of them will gear their efforts towards raising awareness of the young educated Muslims on the problem of syncretism.

not know the grave implication and danger it has on their religion, Islām. So, they treat it with triviality, due to a lack of religious awareness. While a large proportion of them that are aware do not care about the consequences that await the perpetrators in terms of nullifying their faith.

Our investigation also suggests that some Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* (clerics) who are graduates of one *Markaz* (Arabic and Islamic Institute) are also contributing to this problem as some of them are not taught the right Islamic ‘*aqāid*’ (beliefs) while in these institutes.⁹⁵⁹ With no vocational training, upon graduation because of a lack of employment, most of them become commercial *jalabi*, (*Aafaa Jalabi*) popularly called, spiritualists or consultants providing advice on varied problems. Some Yoruba Muslims consider them as scholars, as whatever they say is taken as golden truth, thereby misleading many ignorant people.

The increased phenomenon of ‘jilting’ and disappointment (short term relationships) among contemporary Muslim youths was another finding of this study. Females in particular experience this problem, because it appears there are not many responsible suitors. While women, because of their ever increasing number, are (the ones) looking for suitors.⁹⁶⁰ Consequently, ‘casual’ or short-term relationship is now a household word. If a woman cannot withstand the psychological torture associated with it, her only solace and ‘saviour’ is the Muslim *Aafaa*. The issue of monogamy nowadays being campaigned for by some Yoruba Muslim women educationists, who are the so called ‘elite’ under the aegis of women’s liberation, have been influenced by western culture discussed in chapter

⁹⁵⁹ Interview with Adetona, 27/06/09

⁹⁶⁰ Interview with Alhaja-Habibat 23/09/09

three of this work.⁹⁶¹ In order to overcome or prevent the so called ‘evil’ of limited polygyny they resort to the Muslim *Aafaa* to concoct a charm for them in order to prevent their husbands marrying anyone else.

The findings of this study indicate that syncretism in its various forms is posing a serious problem to Yoruba Muslim society as it indicates a major threat to the fabric of the society. It causes havoc ranging through ritual killings, separation, disunity and mutual suspicions. Unless, an urgent action is taken to solve the problem, the up-coming youths may be influenced by this endemic problem. The proliferation of Arabic schools, as our findings show, does not serve as a solution to reduce the problem among the Yoruba Muslims. In fact, it is observed in some quarters that those groups of Muslim Institutes have outlived their relevance, their graduates becoming a liability to the Muslims.⁹⁶² Another outcome of this study suggests that Yoruba Muslims are not satisfied with Islāmic culture. They accept borrowing from other faiths - Christianity and otherwise - not minding the fact that Islām is a perfect religion and was completed before the demise of the holy Prophet Muḥammad (SAW). Some still believe that there is nothing wrong in the celebration of

⁹⁶¹ Although, we are aware that there are some few Muslim countries where marrying more than one wife is illegal. For instance, in Tunisia. While in other countries, such as, Syria, Morocco, Iraq and Pakistan polygamy is allowed but with strict conditions. We do agree that looking at the issue critically and pragmatically, it is very difficult to provide and maintain justice among the wives which is one of the fundamental conditions of polygamy which some Muslims have abused. But the point still remains that any Muslim that desires it should not be disallowed to practise polygamy, having the consciousness of fulfilling the conditions that are attached to it. Doi does not agree with some of these Muslim countries that put these laws in place. By refusing what Allah and His Prophet have allowed. He claims further that their action could not be further than the effect of colonialism. This action according to him violates Islamic law on polygamy. Doi considers polygamy as an old custom in Africa as they see it a sign of wealth and nobility. Conversely, monogamy has not empirically proven to be a source of prosperity and peace in any society. For more details, See A.R.I. Doi, *The Islamic Law*, London: Ta Ha Publishers (1984), 56; A.R.I. Doi, *Women in Sharī‘ah,(Islamic Law)*, 460-462; H. Abdalati, *Islam in Focus*, np, Islamic Teaching Center, (nd)117-118; H.Abdalati, *The Family Structure in Islam*, Lagos:Islamic Publication Bureau, (1982), 245-246

⁹⁶² Interview with Bro. L.M.Adetona 12/09/09,

birthdays, funeral ceremonies and marriage anniversaries.⁹⁶³ The Muslim scholars appear not to have played their role enough here, by compromising with some Yoruba Muslims who are imitating the negative aspect of western culture.

Another principal result of this study is that some of the Yoruba Muslim medicine-men or *Aafaa* who hitherto rely solely on herbs and the various formulae contained in talisman (*nakali*) do not discard their old methods of healing. Most of them are more familiar with combining the herbal and the spiritual; and in doing so they syncretise by introducing some alien features which to a large extent, have some semblances with what happens among the traditional Yoruba medicine men. In so doing the question of borrowing comes in. For instance, our analysis of Yoruba traditional methods of magic and divination given in chapter five of this work indicate unseen forces appeased by means of *etutu* or *ebo*; sacrifices in the forms of animal slaughtering; blood and other traditional items are made to them; incantations (*ofò* and *ogede*) containing glorifications of the devil; taking sick people to riversides for spiritual baths with the belief that the spirit of the river will help in solving their problem. All these, feature prominently in the *Aafaa* and some Yoruba Muslim medicine men (*Onisegun*) healing methods which are akin to Yoruba traditional religion and their methods of healing which predated Islām. A majority of those who later became Muslims and *Aafaa* attending to people's problems are from traditional homes. It may therefore be suggested that these *Aafaa*, unable to completely break away from their background, adapt such features from the traditional method.

⁹⁶³ There is a wide difference of opinion on this matter as regards celebration of birthdays and marriage anniversaries, while some scholars go against it, others view it as commendable innovation as said earlier on.

Our study also suggests that the problem of syncretism also persists as a result of the failure of the Government at all levels to provide social amenities ranging from constant electricity supply, good roads, state-of the-art educational institutions, efficient hospitals and creation of job opportunity.

Another area that this study discovers is that much is still left to be done as many Yoruba Muslim communities hitherto still relapse into syncretism. Both our questionnaire and the corroborative interviews revealed that many respondents would not deny some of the positive impacts of Islām on Yoruba Muslims as popularised by Trimingham, in terms of dressing, language, eating, morality etc., in the areas of syncretism such as; superstitions, witchcraft, use of charms and amulets and ancestral worship among others. The study discovers that such an area is usually ignored whenever discussion on it comes up. Throughout this study, it has been argued that many Yoruba Muslims do not appreciate the meanings and significance of *Tawḥīd* as this knowledge perhaps is still insignificant among them.

However, the proliferation of Islamic associations as our study shows does not reduce the prevalence of the phenomenon significantly; but only in sensitising the Muslims through their weekly meetings, giving pamphlet of *Du‘ā* (supplication), preaching about pillars of Islām, various ritual baths etc. But the argument here is that most of their missionaries are graduates of one *Markaz* or ‘*Ilmiyyah* School (modern Arabic school) or another, who get their income by exploiting the ignorance of their followers.⁹⁶⁴ This study also shows that the problem of

⁹⁶⁴ Adetona has argued elsewhere that hitherto, there are 54 modern Arabic schools in Lagos State which run both ‘*idadiyyah* (primary) and *thānawīyyah* (secondary) schools programmes. For more, see L.M. Adetona, ‘*Ilmiyyah* school in Post-Independence Lagos’ in I. Akintola, et al (eds.), *Correlates of Islam*, 52.

syncretism is common that it leads to mistaken identities. In some cases, if a Muslim dies you will see cult members that will come around and argue that it is their corpse for them to bury. Similarly, some collective prayers, sacrifices, ceremonies and charities are carried out based on the advice and instructions of an *Aafaa* who is a magico-medicine man. Some of these Muslims are title-holders in the mosques, and their rams are the most expensive during the ‘*Īd-al-Aḍḥā* (Festival of Sacrifice), albeit some of them are called *Munāfiqūn* (hypocrites).

The findings so far have suggested that there is pessimism in the efforts at eradicating syncretism among the Yoruba Muslims nowadays because of the drift of society, not many Yoruba Islamic scholars are interested in sensitizing Muslims about the grave danger of syncretism.

6.2.1 Recommendations and Suggestions.

Based on some the negative effects of syncretism especially, religious, social, moral, economic and otherwise among the Yoruba Muslims. The following are some of the recommendations we would like to make based on the findings of this study:

- ❖ The curriculum of the various Islamic and Arabic schools could be overhauled with a view to meeting the modern challenges of education that are more relevant to the society. The few among these graduates

educating and teaching against these practices should not relent in their efforts to eradicate syncretism among Yoruba society.

- ❖ Relentless and ceaseless religious campaigns and awareness could be mounted every where in Yoruba land with a view to making the Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* and their clientele realise the evil effects of syncretism. They could be made to realise that Islām is a perfect religion and it gives solution to all the various problems that face human existence. They could also consult trained guidance counsellors who can give professional advice on their various problems. They may be made to realize that their appeasements to the devils in various forms are not Islāmic. They give the *Shayātīn* (demons) the opportunity to assume a position of importance and authority and make their clients stoop low and take directives from the jinn.

- ❖ The rate at which Muslims patronize Muslim *Aafaa* magicians and diviners to find out the causes of their problems; and what to do to solve them; the outcome of their business; the best wife or husband; the outcome of their journey etc is highly bemoaned nowadays. The fact that they are unmindful of their syncretic methods of treating their numerous problems, worries, and anxieties suggests the low level of awareness and understanding of Islām among Yoruba Muslims. It equally underscores the minimal efforts put in by scholars who are committed to the propagation of orthodox Islām and eradication of all sorts of innovation (*bid'ah*), and thus the eradication of syncretism is yet to bear appreciable

fruits. The alternative for Muslims is to visit trained medical doctors and seek professional advice when they are ill or have any physical or psychological problem, this should be emphasised by our orthodox *Du'at* (religious preachers) and scholars.

- ❖ It is also recommended that more concerted efforts should be geared towards, public *da'wah*; issues such as: accountability, lawful sources of livelihood, sincere *Īmān* (faith), hard working, intergrated education, and reliance on Allah with wisdom and beautiful preaching; education against all forms of heterodoxy and heresy in order to reduce the rate of its growth and spread could be embarked upon.⁹⁶⁵ In towns in Lagos State, where the practice is in vogue, a series of public lectures could be organized. The lectures might also be put on audio-tapes and the internet to ensure wider circulation and continuous benefit.

- ❖ Muslim individuals, philanthropists, voluntary organizations and Muslim societies could come together to sponsor indigent Muslim children to proceed on courses on *Tawhīd*, *Ḥadīth*, Qur'ān in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya among others to study and learn more about authentic Islām. Since our indigenous *Marākiz* and *Mah'ād* appear not to be doing enough in the area of *Tawhīd*. When they come back they could spread this knowledge among the Muslims. They could be employed in schools; both modern Arabic schools and English based

⁹⁶⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Public Duties in Islam: The Institution of Ḥisbah*, Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation (1985), 87-89. Ibn Taymiyyah suggests that among the strategy for reform include: love, sincerity, correct knowledge, gentleness and patience.

Muslim schools, so that the younger generation of Muslims will be imbued with the knowledge of *Tawhīd* right from an early age.

- ❖ This study has pedagogical implications for parents, guardians, carers and Muslim teachers that the teaching of unity of Allah to children should commence very early in life. They could be alerted to their responsibility by ensuring that their education should be taken with utmost seriousness as regards their responsibility for intellectual education; responsibility for faith education; physical, psychological; social and sexual education.⁹⁶⁶ Parents should be aware of their duties so that children will be guided to the right path from their infancy as demonstrated by Luqman (AS).⁹⁶⁷ There are many *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet (SAW) confirming the responsibilities of the parents to their children and the parents as shepherds whom Allah will query with regards to the way and manner in which their children are brought up.⁹⁶⁸

- ❖ The management and Boards of education of our hitherto *Mah‘ād* (Modern Arabic schools) could not be conservative. They may learn from education of some Muslim countries in integrating both secular and religious education.⁹⁶⁹ Retford in Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom,

⁹⁶⁶ For more details see A.N. Ulwan, *Child Education in Islam*, 61-63.

⁹⁶⁷ See Q 31:13-19

⁹⁶⁸ A.A. Nawawī *Riyād aṢ-salīhīn*, 140 and 300, ‘All of you are sheperds...’ see also, Q 66: 6

⁹⁶⁹ After a series of conferences since 1970s, it was the conference of 1980 that served as catalyst for a change in *da‘wah* through education all over the Islamic cum Muslim countries. Today the Saudi Arabian Government with the same ‘Wahabbi’ posture, not only adopts modern technology, but also accommodates people i.e. the west and their sciences that hitherto it would have nothing to do with. Yet, it now has a system of education that can withstand any one in the world and it is purely an Islamized form of education. Recently (September, 2009) the Saudi authorities opened a University of Science and Technology at the cost of \$50 billion having all the modern facilities of learning.. For more, see G.N. Saqib, ‘Modernization of Muslim Society and Education: Need for a Practical

there is a model Muslim Boys College called *Jāmi‘a al-Karam* is able to integrate both secular and Islamic education and it starts from ‘*Ilmiyyah* School.’⁹⁷⁰ It has one of the best modern facilities for sciences and laboratories and pupils are trained islamically to live a Muslim life.⁹⁷¹ Today in Europe and America, where secular education prevails, there are a good number of schools of this nature.⁹⁷² In other words, these institutions’ curricula could be overhauled in order to make provision for the acquisition of both effective secular and Islamic education (integrated approach). The school could be able to meet the standard requirements of teaching in Nigerian schools (National Certificate of Education or Bachelor of Education as the case may be), so that the graduates of these schools can be offered employment and better pay by the Government schools.

- ❖ Provision could also be made for vocational jobs in the school curriculum, so that any graduates of the institutions can go to any sector if they desire so, such as: poultry, fishery, information technology, driving, tailoring and bricklaying as no job is looked down upon in Islām.⁹⁷³ Qualified and trained teachers with sound ‘*aqā’d*’ (beliefs, faith) could be employed to teach in these schools.

Approach’ in Wasihullah Khan (ed.), *Education and Society in the Muslim. World*, Jeddah: Houdar and Stoughton and King Abdul Aziz University (1981), 530; T. Kucukcan, ‘Some Reflections of the Wahabiyyah Movement’ in *Hamdard Islamicus*, vol 9, no 111, 2,4. Malaysia is also another Muslim country that is using this approach and it is result-oriented. For more details, see <http://www.iiu.edu.my/istac/> accessed 11/12/2010

⁹⁷⁰ www.alkaram.org accessed 12/12/2010

⁹⁷¹ For more information, see <http://www.Buinternet.com/alkaram/page8.html> accessed 25/12/09.

⁹⁷² Most of the information about these schools can be gained from their Websites.

⁹⁷³ The Prophet (SAW) commends a firewood seller, as long as the job is *halal*. Islam does not frown at any job as against the misconception in some quarters, among some Muslim clerics that the only job they can do is teaching and *Jalabi* (spiritual consultant).

- ❖ The findings also reveal that Muslim societies and Islamic organizations could accept the modern challenge of adopting more educational programmes into their programme of *da‘wah* activities like Qur’ānic schools, integrated modern schools, *Tawhīd* classes etc., in contrast with the usual conservativeness, where the activities of the associations are only concentrated on ceremonial preaching, in which lectures are only given whenever a Muslim occasion is held, in particular: naming, marriage, funeral and house warmings. Or where the attention of the members is only concentrated on supplication and *dhikr* (chanting of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh, subhāna llāh, etc*) *Aṣalatu* (blessing on Prophet Muḥammad). The session may become a form of merrymaking instead of a sober reflection which sensitises the members on their role and responsibilities to Allah.⁹⁷⁴ It is disheartening that nowadays this issue of syncretism causes division among members of Muslim associations and in some mosques; some people do not want to discuss this topic at all.

- ❖ Looking at the present economic problems in Nigeria, many youths are aimless without any reliable source of income. It therefore necessary for the Government to operate in a collaborative manner: the federal, state, and local government the need to create adequate jobs for the citizens; so that ‘the devil cannot find work for idle hands to do’. The Government should make funds available to those who want to go in for

⁹⁷⁴ I have personally attended some of their programmes in which what dominated the session was announcements, fundraising, birthdays, etc. It is rare to see anyone preaching about *Tawhīd* and the issue of syncretism among the Yoruba Muslims.

vocations, apprenticeships, and self-employment so that they can also have stable sources of living.

- ❖ Stakeholders in the education sector have to realise the indispensability of religious education in a society with crimes, superstitions, ignorance, extravagance and corruption. Religious education has the capability to design education that is balanced and relevant to human existence. Therefore, at the present time, it is more important than ever that it is taken seriously.⁹⁷⁵ Attention should not be concentrated on the promotion of secular education at the expense of religious education. Religious education could be made compulsory at all levels of our educational institutions in order to reduce vices in the society. The religious curriculum could be reviewed and overhauled with a view to making it responsive to modern challenges and to solving practical syncretic problems relating to Yoruba Muslims and similar problems facing the contemporary society.

- ❖ Efficient and practising religious teachers could be employed to teach religious education; and they could be adequately remunerated. The Government may also look for ways of integrating and approving some Arabic cum Islamic schools that meet the required standard to give

⁹⁷⁵Muslim Scholars have written on how the development of science and technology under a secularist-materialistic worldview without religion has led to grave consequences for humankind, 'The ethical, philosophical and religious dimensions of science and technology are neglected and humankind's physical comfort is confused with true happiness'. For more details, see M.A. Muhibbu-din, *Islam and Science: Historical Context and Modern Challenges*, 38th Inaugural Lecture, Lagos State University, 41.; M.A. Bidmos, *Utilizing the Potentials of Islamic Education in Nation Building*, Inaugural Lecture, University of Lagos, 10-13. In Washington, International Institute of Islamic Thought appears to be doing well in the area of islamization of knowledge and providing comprehensive Islamic perspective on issues of contemporary thought. For more details, see <http://www.iiituk.com/> accessed 11/12/10

recognised certificates which are accepted by the ministry of education. In this way, graduates of these schools can also further their education at Universities of their choice as opposed to the current situation where graduates of Modern Arabic do not have direct access to Universities or to teach in Government schools.

- ❖ At all levels of Government, attempts could be made to create a Ministry of Religious Affairs. If created the centre may be given the responsibilities of overseeing the issue of inter-religious dialogue, debate, resolving conflicts among different religionists, looking into the problems emanating from it, prosecuting religious charlatans and fraudsters. The ministry could also from time to time organize seminars, workshops, and conferences for teachers, lecturers, researchers, religious preachers, missionaries, *Imām*, Muslim clerics, *Amīrs*, *Amīrats* (Presidents of Muslim Organizations: male or female) in order to keep them informed of trends in religious circles. The Ministry could also embark on translation of books into three major Nigerian languages viz: Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo. The current negative accusations of terrorism against Islām will lessen as the centre will orientate and educate everybody about the fact that Islām has nothing to do with terrorism.

- ❖ Moreover, our committed Islāmic scholars could be more proactive in the production of books, pamphlets, and treatises, on the subject of syncretism and *Tawḥīd* among Yoruba Muslims. This could be useful to many Muslims who are literate. Another area of concern is that right

now a large proportion of books on *Tawhīd* are mostly from Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, mostly written in Arabic language. In other words, scholars that are enthusiastic in reforming the *Ummah* should embark on translation of these works into *English* and Yoruba language so that literate Muslims could have access to these materials.

- ❖ Patronages, endowments and scholarships from Governments, philanthropists, members of the Muslim communities and non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) could be channelled towards alleviating the problem of the poor Muslims to have access to education, health facilities and food. This will go a long way to reducing the problem of syncretism.
- ❖ The Government should also make health facilities accessible and affordable and make the people aware of the importance of healthy living. In case of any problems, trained medical doctors should be consulted instead of wasting money on spiritualists who cannot solve problems but only compound them. In addition, the Government should provide adequate infrastructure, social amenities and state-of-arts educational system at levels. Welfare should also be provided for the disabled, orphans and poor people
- ❖ Multi-National companies and Muslim countries' embassies could be encouraged to sponsor indigent students to further their education either within or outside the country. They may also sponsor research in Islamic

education in order to adapt the potentials of Islamic education to the national socio-economic development.

- ❖ There should be mass education of the Muslim faithful on Islamic religion both in theory and practice. The level of education and literacy among Muslims should be promoted. Translated copies of the Qur'ān and books of *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) into Yoruba language should be readily available among Yoruba Muslims.
- ❖ This study has pedagogical implications for parents, guardians, carers and Muslim teachers that the teaching of unity of Allah and Islamic etiquettes should commence very early in life.

6.2.2 Areas for Further Research

The scope of this study as stated in chapter one is limited to the Yoruba speaking people in Lagos State and particular reference to Epe. Its subject matter is syncretic beliefs and practices among them. Certain issues cannot be easily explained and led people to find salvation in all speculation and seek syncretic solutions. Very significant is the problem of the mysterious 'child born to die' (*abiku*) syndrome. Our findings during the course of this work reveal that it is a major problem confronting some Muslim parents among Yoruba Muslims. More often than not, parents are subjected to mental, social and economic problems, and they believe that giving birth to such children causes these problems. Rigorous research into the

nature of this mysterious problem and how it can be remedied will, contribute to knowledge as well as go a long way in preventing Muslims from reverting to paganism and apostasy. Similarly, other various superstitious beliefs and practices of the Yoruba should be examined thoroughly with a view to determining their positions in the light of Islamic *Tawhīd*.

Another area, we came across during the course of our work is the perceived efficacy of the diabolical power of witchcraft, which is very endemic among Yoruba Muslims. Research into this area is very relevant in our society with a view to producing work on its manifestation and diabolical activities as well as determining the veracity of their claims; designing practical solution in terms of (*ruqyah*) exorcism or deliverance by Muslim exorcists today. In Yoruba society, witchcraft is a common and widespread phenomenon. Therefore, research into the nature of this mysterious and potentially malevolent power and how those afflicted can be helped is essential.

Another line of research worth pursuing further is to study the origin and uses of talimans, incantations, charms (*nakali*) as it is popularly called among Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* with a view to determining their ‘veracity,’ or ‘Islamicity’ and defining its heresy in its confusion with Islamic exorcism (*ruqyah*).

GLOSSARY

Aafa: This is used in this work to denote the Yoruba Muslim cleric who attends to people's problem.

Adhkār: It is the plural form of *dhikr*, it is the remembrance of Allah through various formulas.

□**Ālim:** It is the Arabic word for a learned person. The plural is '*Ulamā*'

Amīr: The plural is *Umarā*'. These are the leaders of the Muslim organizations as used in this work. The female leader is *Amīrat*.

Bid'ah: It means innovation or heresy. Practise or action that does not have any authority from the Islamic sources of *Sharī'ah* (law).

Du'ā: Prayer or supplication to Allah to grant one's requests.

Hāj: The performance of pilgrimage to Makkah for the purpose of worship. Yoruba call any Muslim male that has performed this rite as *Al- hāj* while the female is called *Al- hājjah*

Hantu: (Khaṭṭ). This is written spiritual diagnosis prepared with black ink, called *tadaa* or *tadawa* and then written with a fountain pen referred to as *kallamu (qalam)* on black slate, called *walaa (lawh)* and washed with water to be drunk, bathed or rubbed on the body. The Yoruba call it *Hantu* while the Hausa call it *Hanturu* in a corrupt way.

Haydah: Menstruation. Technically, *Ghusl Haydah* is the ritual bath taken after the cessation of menstrual blood.

Ghusl Janābah: It is the ritual bath taken after sexual intercourse or bed wetting.

Jalābī: It is derived from *jalb* which literally means to attract. It is used among the Yoruba Muslims to refer to the Muslim clerics *Aafaa* who are consultants on various problems affecting the people.

maḥad: Arabic and Islamic Institute. It is also known as *Markaz*.

Nafath: To spit on paper or on the two palms.

Nāfilah: Voluntary prayer, which are not obligatory.

Nakali: as commonly pronounced by Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* is adulterated form of the word '*naql*' which literally means report, transcription, copy, tradition, transfer etc. it is specifically used by the Muslim *Aafaa* to refer to certain manuscripts

containing some secret reports which they call 'asiri' on how to use some prayer formulas to achieve certain ends. Perhaps because such reports exchange hands among Muslim *Aafaa*, they call it *naql*.

Ghusl Nifās: Ritual bath taken by a Muslim nursing mother after the cessation of birth blood.

Rātib: This is used to qualify mosques in which the five obligatory prayers are observed as different from *Jum'ah* mosques where only the Friday prayers are observed; sometimes in addition to the five daily prayers.

Riddāh: This means apostasy or renouncement of Islam.

Rawaniyyah: *Ruḥaniyyah* (spirit). These are the evil Jinn working with the diviners and magicians.

Ruqyah: Literally, it means incantation. But technically, it is exorcism or rites of delivery.

Saddu dh-dharia□**h:** This is a legal phraseology. It means blocking the way to evils.

Sāḥir: Magician or a sorcerer. The plural is *Saḥarah*.

Shirk: This is the act of association of partners with Allah. It is the most grievous sin in Islam which is unforgivable except the person repents.

Tadawah: This is referring to the black ink used by the Yoruba Muslim *Aafaa* in preparing *hanturu*.

Takada: This is the paper in which the *hanturu* is written; the paper is sometimes tied with thread or burnt to be licked or rubbed an incised part of the body for the purpose of talisman.

Tawakkul: This is putting one's absolute trust in Allah, regardless of the vicissitudes of life.

Ustadh: It is the Arabic word for teacher. He is also known as *Mallam* (*Muallim*).

Walimah: Marriage feasting, but it is also used by the Yoruba Muslims as the feasting or celebration that immediately follows the successful completion of the Qur'ān, which is technically known as *ḥadhaqah al-Qur'ān*.

Wa□**z** or **naṣīḥah:** It means preaching.

Arabic sources

- ‘Abdullah, M.S., *Al-Qurān al-Karīm wabil-Hāmish; Zubdat Tafsīr min Fath al-Qadīr*, (3rd ed.), Kuwait: Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs, 1988.
- ‘Abdullah, S., ‘*Aqīdah as-Shaykh Muḥammad bn ‘Abd al-Wahāb As-Salafīyyah wa Atharuāh fīl-‘Ālam al-Islām*, Madīnah: Islamic University Madīnah, 1416/1996.
- Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, (1st ed.), Damascus, Syria: Dāru al- Hadīth, 1969/70.
- Al-Falāti, *As-Sayf al-Qāt ‘i li-Nizā*, Riyādh: Shirkat at-Tiba‘ah al-‘Arabīyyah As-Sa‘ūdiyyat, 1404.
- Hamid, K.M., *Dam ‘atun ‘ala Tawḥīd: Ḥaqīqah –l-Qubūriyyah wa Ath āruhā fī Wāqi ‘ l-Ummah*, Riyādh: Al-Muntada Al-Islamic Trust (2002), 48-49;
- Al- Ḥanbaliyyu, I.R., *J āmi ‘al- ‘Ulūm wal Ḥukm: fī Sharḥ Khamsīn Ḥadīth min Jawāmi ‘ al-Kalam*, Cairo: Dar al-Fajr Lilturath, 2002.
- Al-Khāmis, M.A., ‘*Itiqād Ahl-Sunnah*, Riyādh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowment, Propagation and Guidance, 2002.
- Al-Asqalānī, I.H., *Fath al-Bāri*, (vols. 3&4) Cairo: Dār ar-Rayyan li- l Turāth, 1998.
- Al-Imām Shamsudeen, A.A., *Kitāb al-Kabāir*, Beirut: Ayyib li-atba‘at wa Nashr, 1405AH.
- Ar-Rahil, I., *Mawqif Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jāma ‘ah min Ahli al-Ahwa wal-Bid‘ah*, (vol, 7.), Madīnah: Maktabat al-Ghuraba al-Athariyya, 1415/ 1995.
- As-Shaykh, S.R., *Fath al-Mājid; Sharḥ Kitāb Tawḥeed*, Makkat: Maktabat Nizar Mustafā al-Baz, 2004.
- Badr, R. M., *Fiqh al- ‘Adiyah wal –Adhkār; A ‘amal al-Yawm wa-laylah*, Kuwait: Endowment House, 2003.
- Bāli, W.A., *aṣ-sārim al-Battār fī-Taṣṣad lil-Saḥarah, al- Ashrār*, (10th ed.), Cairo: Maktabat al-Habina, 2000.
- _____, *Wiqāyah al-Insān mina al-Jinn wa sh-Shāyatīn*, Cairo: Dār al-Bashīr, 1409AH/1989 CE.

- Bāz, A.A., *Risālah fī Ḥukm as-Sihr wal –Kuhānah*, Madinah: Islamic University Madinah, 1409/1998.
- Bello, S. M., *Infāq al Maysūr*, Beirut: Dār-al-Fikr, n.d.
- Bukhāri, I., *Ṣaḥīḥ al –Bukhāri*, Riyādh: Dāru as-Sallām, 1998.
- Duwaysh, A.A., *Fatawā lal-Jānnah a-Dāimah lil-Buḥuth Al- ‘Ilmiyyah wal- Iftā’*, Dār an-Nahy, 1411/1991.
- Fūdi. I. U., *Iḥyāu Sunnat wa Ikhmād al-Bid‘at*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1382/1961.
- Futūh, K.A., *Dam ‘at ala Tawḥīd; Ḥaḳīqat al-Qubūriyyat wa Athāruhā fī Wāqi‘ al-Ummah*, (3rd ed.) London: Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust, 2002.
- Ghazālī, M., ‘*Aqīdah al-Muslim*, (4th ed.), Cairo: Dār Tawfiq, An-Namūdhjiyyat, 1984.
- Ghūmī, A. M., *Al- ‘Aqīdah Aṣaḥīḥah bi-Muwāfaqah AS-sharī‘ah*, Beirut: Dār-al-‘Arabīyyat, no date.
- Hashmiyyah, M. A., *Shakhsīyyah al-Muslim*, Beirut: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1983.
- Ibn Kathīr, I., *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol, I, Riyādh: Maktabat Riyādh al- Ḥadīth, 1979
- Ibn Qayyim, A., *Zāad al-Ma‘āad fī Khayr al- ‘Ibād*, (vol.iv), Kuwait: Maktabat al-Manāri al-Islamiyyah, 1994.
- Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ Fatāwā*, (vols.1-2), Madīnah: King Fahd Publishing House, 1995.
- Ilorin, A. A., *Nasīm aṣ -Sabāh fī Akhbār al-Islām wa ‘Ulama ‘ Bilād Yorubā*, (3rd ed), Cairo: Maktabat Wahabat, 1990.
- _____, *Al-Islām wa Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah; Baḥth fī Muḥārabah at-Taqālīd al-Jāhiliyyah as-Shāi‘ah fī Ifrīqiyyah* Cairo: Madani Press, 1979.
- _____, *Al-Islām fī Nayjiriyyā wa Shaykh ‘Uthmān bn Fūdi al- Fulāni*, Beirut: Mamar Maktabat, 1965.
- _____, *Al-Islām fī Nayjiriyyā*, (3rd ed.), n.p, 1978.
- Jabariyyīn, A. A., *Tahadhīb Tashīl al- ‘Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah*, Riyādh: Maktabat Malk Fahd al-Wataniyyah, 1425/2005.

- Jazāir, A. J., *Minhāj al-Muslim*, Beirut: Daru al-Fikr, 1999.
- Jazir, A. R., *Al- Fiqh ala Madhāhib al-Arba'*, Istanbul, Turkey: Maktabat Al- Ḥaqīqah, 1978
- Khan, M., *Kitāb al- 'Aqīdat al-Islāmiyyah*, Damascus, Syria: Ministry of Endowment, 1990
- Munīr, A. M., *Tarīkh –a-Tarbiyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, Cairo: Maktab Al-Turāth, 1981.
- Nawāwī, Z. Y., *Al-Adhkār*, Beirut: Dār-al-Fikr, 1998.
- _____, *Riyād Aṣ-Salihīn*, Beirut: Dār-al-Fikr, 1990.
- _____, *Arba'īn al- Ḥadīth*, Beirut, 1990
- Qurṭubī, M.A., *Al-Jāmi 'li Ahkām al-Qurān*, (1st ed.), Bayrut: Lebanon: Dār al-Kitāb, al-'Arabiyyah, 1997
- Rahran, A. B. A., *Al-Inḥarāfāt al – 'Aqidiyyah wal- 'Ilmiyyah; fī Qarnayn Thālith 'Ashar wa Rābi' 'Ashar al-Hijriyyah wa Athāruhumā fī Ḥayāh al-Ummah*, Makkah: Dār at-Taybat, 1998.
- Ash-Shahāwī, M., *Al-Wiqāyah wal- 'Ilāj mina al-Jinn wa Shaytān*, Cairo: Al-Maktabat at-Tawfīqah, n. d.
- Sharīf, M. M., *Khulāṣah Nūru al-Yaqīn*, (1st ed.), Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978.
- 'Uthaymin, M. A., *Fatāwā Arkān al-Islām*, Riyādh: Dār-Tharayah, 1423/2003.
- Wahāb, M. A., *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, Riyādh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, 2001.
- Wahāf al-Qahataniyyu, S. A., *Ḥiṣnu al-Muslim; min Adhkār al-Kitāb wa Sunnah*, Riyādh: Dar Ibn al-Haythim, 2007.
- Wahid 'Abdu s-Sallam, B., *Wiqayāh al-Insān mina al-Jinn wa Sh-Shayātīn*, Cairo: Dar al-Bashir, 1409/1989.
- Zaynu, M. J., *Minhāj al-Furqah an –Najiyyah wa Tā'ifah al-Manṣūrah*, Makkat: At-tabba 'at al-'Aliyyat lilawalis, n.d

Zugloul. M. S., *Azahār ar-Rubāh fī Akhbār Bilād Yorubā*, Isolo:
Dār Da ‘awat wal-Irshād, 1987.

English Sources

- Abdul, M. O.A., *The Selected Traditions of Al-Nawawī, (Arabic, Transliteration, Translation and Commentary)*, Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1982.
- Abegunde, M. A. A., 'Aspects of the Physical Environment of Lagos' in: Adefuye, A. Babatunde and J. Oshuntokun (eds.), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, Lagos: Lantern Books, 1987, pp. 6-10.
- Abimbola, K., *Yoruba Culture: A Philosophical Account*, Birmingham: Iroko Academic Publishers, 2006.
- Adams, G. B. and White, J. D., 'Dissertation Research in Public Administration and Cognate Fields: An Assessment of Methods and Quality' in: *Public Administration Review*, 1994. pp. 556-667
- Adams, L. B., (ed.), *Eko Dynasty, Colonial Administration and the Lights of Islam in Lagos*, Lagos: Eko Islamic Foundation, 2004.
- Adediran, A., 'Yoruba Ethnic Groups or a Yoruba Ethnic Group? A Review of the Problem of Ethnic Identification in Africa' in: *Sao Paulo*, No, 7. 1984, pp. 57-75
- Adediran, B., 'Yorubaland up to the Emergence of the States' in Adediran, D. and Ogunremi, D. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Yoruba land*, Ibadan: Rex Charles Publication, 1998, pp. 79-90
- Adedokun, L. and Odumosu, T., 'Some Aspects of the Urban and Rural Areas of Lagos State' in: Arowolo, O.O., (ed.), *Some Aspects of the Living Conditions of the People of Lagos State*, Lagos: Lagos State University, Ojo, Faculty of Education, 1990, pp. 287-295
- Adefuye, A.O., *Lecture Modules on Philosophy and Logic*, Ijanikin: Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Press, 2005.
- Adekilekun, A.L., *Muslims and Islamic Law in Southern Nigeria (1899- 1999)*, Ede: Moyanjuola Publishers, 2001.
- Adekunle, A., 'Lagos from the Earliest Times to British Occupation' in Asaju, D. F. (ed.), *General Studies; Book of Readings*, (vol.2), Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2006, pp. 39-59

- Adetona, L. M., 'Ilmiyyah Schools in Post Independence Lagos' in: Akintola, I. L., (ed.), *Correlates of Islam*, Kaduna: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 2009, pp. 52-62
- _____, *The Abuse of Islamic Rites and Ceremonies in the Contemporary Nigerian Society*, Lagos: Al-Basit Production, 1995.
- Agbetola, A. S, and Dopamu, P. A., 'The Influence of Traditional Magic and Medicine on *Tira* Magical-Medicine in Yoruba Land and their Contemporary Relevance' in: *Senate Research*, 1990-1992, pp. 24-35
- Ahmed, A.S., *Islam under Siege; Living Dangerously in Post Honour World*, Chicago: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003.
- Ahmed, A. S. and Donnan, H. (eds.), *Islam, Globalization and Post Modernity*, London: Routledge, 1994.
- Ahmed, K., *Islam, its Meaning and Message*, Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1977.
- Ajala, A. A., 'Cultural Manifestation of Lagos State' in: Asaju, D. A. (ed.), *General Studies; Book of Readings*, (vol.2), Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2006, pp.76-91
- Ajayi, J.F.A., 'Samuel Crowther of Oyo' in: P.D, Curtin (ed.), *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of Slave Trade*, Madison, London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967, pp. 5-15.
- Ajetunmobi, R. O., 'Traditional Religions and Festivals' in: Ajetunmobi, R.O, and Junaid-Eko., N.O. (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, Ijanikin: Centre for Lagos Studies, 2006, pp.86-109
- Ajetunmobi, R. O., and Awofisayo, O.A., 'Early History and Development of Lagos State' in: Ajetunmobi, R.O. and Junaid-Eko, N.O. (eds.), *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, Lagos: Centre for Lagos Studies, 2006, pp.14-33
- Ajibola, D. A., *Islamic Remedies for All Diseases*, Ibadan: Al-Ameen Publishers, 2003.
- Akanni, A. A., 'Dangers in the Muslim Home: Cultural and Civilization Challenges to Islamic Marriages in South-Western Nigeria in: Akintola, A. L. (ed.), *Correlates of Islam*, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 2009, pp. 97-121

- Akintola, I. L., 'A General Introduction to Islam in Lagos State' in: Asaju, A.D. (ed.), *General Studies; Book of Readings*, (vol.2), Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2006, p.157-166
- _____, 'The Impact of Islam on Educational Life in Lagos State in: Obanya, P. A. I., and Odunbunmi, O. (eds.), *Selected Papers from a Conference on Educational Development in Lagos State*, Lagos State University, 1985, pp. 7-15
- Akintola, I. L. and Opeloye, M.O., 'The Growth and Influence of Islam on Badagry in: Ogunremi, G. O.,(ed.), *Badagry: A Study in the History and Culture of an Ancient City*, Ibadan: Rex Charles, 1994, pp.177-181
- Al-Albanee, M.N., *Tawassul (Seeking a Means of Nearness to Allah): Its Types and Rulings*, Birmingham: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distributions Ltd, 1996
- Alan, A., *International Encyclopaedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders*, New York: n.p., 1997.
- Ali, A. Y., *Modern English Translation of the Quran: Meanings and Commentary*, (1st ed.): Kansas City, USA: Manar Intl. Corp, 1998.
- Ali, M., *The Religion of Islam*, Delhi: Taj Company, 1986.
- Alison, B., *The Student's Guide to Preparing Dissertations and Theses*, London: Kogan Page, 1997.
- Animasahun, A. I., *The History of Muslim Community of Lagos*, Lagos: n.d.
- Animasahun, B. O., 'Evolution and Development of Local Government System in Lagos State 1899-2006' in Asaju, F. D. (ed.), *General Studies; Book of Readings*, (vol.2), Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2006, pp.114-125
- Ansari, M. H., *Sufism and Sharia: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhind's Effort to Reform Sufism*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1986.
- Atanda, J. A., *The New Oyo Empire: Indirect Rule and Change in Western Nigeria 1894-1934*, London: Longman, 1979.
- Atkinson, G. B. J., Bouma, G. D., and Dixon, B. R., *A Handbook Of Social Science Research: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide for Students*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Avoseh, T. O., *Short History of Epe*, Apapa: Adeolu Press, 1960.

- _____, *Iwe Itan Imale ni Ilu Agbadagiri*, Apapa: Adeolu Press, 1960.
- Awolalu. O. J., *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, London: Longman Group Ltd, 1979.
- Azar, S. Y., *The Prophetic Medicine: Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya*, (vol.1), Shomolu, Lagos: Al-Waseelat Publishers, n.d.
- Babalola, E.O., *The Advent and Growth of Islam in West Africa*, (revised ed.), Ekiti, Nigeria: Bamgboye and Co. Press, 1982.
- Babatunde, A. A. and Sandra, B., 'Lagos before 1603' in: Adefuye, A. Babatunde and Osuntokun, J. (eds.), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, Lagos: Lantern Books, 1987, pp.18-35
- Bali, W. A., *Aṣ-Sā-rim al-Battār fi-Tassad lil-Saḥarah, al-Ashrār*, (*The Cutting Edge; how to Face Evil Sorcerers*) translated by Kreidly, H., Beirut: Kitāb al-'Alamī lil-Nashr, 2006.
- Balogun, I. A. B., 'Religion and Cultural Identity in Nigeria' in Dopamu, P. A. and Odumuyiwa, E.A. (eds.), *Religion, Science and Culture*, NASR, 2003, p. 213-233
- _____, *The Life and Works of Uthman Dan Fodio (The Muslim Reformer of West Africa)*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau, 1975.
- Balogun, J.O., *Freedom from Clutches of Satan*, Anambra, Nigeria: Holy Ghost Outreach Ministries International, 1994
- Balogun, M. A., Bello, J.I., and Saula, S.A, *Islamic Antidote to the Problem of Corruption in Tertiary Institutions. A Paper Presented at the International Conference on Corruption in Academia and State of Education in Africa at Lagos: Ijanikin, 2009.*
- Balogun, S. A., 'History of Islam up to 1800' in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan: Heineman, 1980, pp.218-235
- Balyaeu, E.A., *Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages*, New York: Fredrick, A., Praeger Inc, Publishers, 1969

- Bashmeel, M.A., *Towards Understanding Tauheed: Reflections on Islamic Monotheism*, Ikeja, Nigeria: Hamzat International Islamic Publishing House, 2001.
- Benjamin, C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual and Community*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1976.
- Benjamin, W., *Encyclopadea of the Occult: the Esoteric and the Supernatural*, New York: Stain and Pay, 1980.
- Berger, J., *The Historical Imperatives: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, New York: Anchor Press, 1979
- Best, J.W and Khan, J.V., *Research in Education*, (6th ed), London: Prentice- Hall, 1989.
- Bidmos, M. A., *Utilizing the Potentials of Islamic Education in Nation Building*. An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lagos, Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 2008.
- Biobaku, S. A., *The Origin of the Yorubas*, Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1971.
- Blumer, H., 'What is wrong with Social Theory' *American Sociological Review*, 1954. pp. 53-65
- Blydeen, E. W., *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967.
- Brain, J. L., 'Ancestors as Elders in Africa - Further Thoughts' in Lessa, W. A. and Vogt, E. Z, (eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, (4th ed.), New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc, 1979, pp. 394-400
- Brandon, S.G.F (ed.), *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, London: Welden Felid and Nicolson, 1979
- Brenner, L., 'Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanami and Religion and Politics in Bornu' in: Willis, J.R, (ed.), *Studies in West Africa Islamic History*, (vol i), London: Frankcass & Company Ltd, 1979, pp.15- 30
- Brockelmann, C., *History of the Islamic People*, New York: Cornwell Press, 1947
- Bryman, A., *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

- _____, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, London: Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1988.
- Bullon, M., (ed.), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, (4th ed.), England: Pearson Educational Book Ltd, 2005.
- Burns, A., *History of Nigeria*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969
- Burton, R. F., *Wanderings in West Africa from Liverpool to Fernando Po*, (Vol.2). London: np, 1866.
- Cannon, W. B., 'Voodoo Death' in West Africa' in: Lessa, W. A. and Vogt, E. Z., *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, (4th ed.), New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc, 1979. pp. 67-80
- Cartledge, M., *Practical Theology: Charismatic Perspective*, Columbia: Paternoster Press, 2003.
- Catherine, S and Stevenson, A., (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, (11th ed.Revised), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Catherine, S and Stevenson, A., (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, (11th ed.Revised), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Charles, S. and Rosalid, S. (eds.), *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*, London: Routledge, 1994.
- Clapperton, H., and Denham, M., and the Late Doctor Oudney' *Narratives of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Year 1822, 1823 and 1824 (Extending Across the Great Desert to the Tenth Degree of Northern Latitude, and from Kouka in Bornu, to Sackatoo, the Capital of the Felatah empire) in two volumes*, (vol, ii), London: Darf Publishers Ltd, 1985
- Clapperton, H., *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa From the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*, London: John Murray, 1829.
- Clarke, P. B., *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development of Islam in West Africa from the 8th to the 20th Century*, London: Longman Group Ltd, 1982.

- Conrad, L. and Philips, E. M., 'Creating a Supportive Environment for Postgraduate Study in: Skerritt, O. and Zuber, O., (eds.), *Manual for Conducting Workshops on Postgraduate Supervision*, Brisbane: Tertiary Education Institute, University of Queensland, 1992, pp.153-163
- Cowan, J.M., *Arabic-English Dictionary; The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, India: Modern Language Services, 1976.
- Cresswell, J. W., *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, London: SAGE Publications, 1998.
- _____, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, (2nd ed.) New Jersey: Pearson Educational Inc, 2005.
- Dada ati Jeje, *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd, 1972.
- Dane, F.C., *Research Methods*, California: Brooks and Cole Publishing Company, 1990.
- Daves, M. B., *Doing a Successful Research Project: Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Denmole, H. O., 'The Crisis of the Lagos Muslim Community' in: Adefuye, A., Babatunde, A. and Jide, O. (eds.), *History of the People of Lagos State*, Ibadan: Lantern Books, 1987, pp. 280-105
- Denscombe, M., *The Good Research Guide for Small Scale Social Research Projects*, (3rd ed.), Berkshire: Open University Press, 2007.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, 1998.
- _____, 'The Fifth Moment' in: Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: SAGE, 1994, pp. 578- 579
- Dioka, L. C., *Lagos and its Environs*, Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 2001.
- Doi, A. R. I., *Islam in Nigeria*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1984.

- _____, *The Western Civilization, Islam and the Muslim Youth*, India: Muslim Publishing House, 1988.
- _____, *Non-Muslims under Shari 'ah (Islamic Law)*, London: Ta Ha Publishers Ltd, 1983.
- _____, *Shari 'ah: The Islamic Law*, London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1984
- Dopamu, P. A. (ed.), *African Culture, Modern Science and Religious Thought*, Ilorin: African Centre for Religions and Science, 2003.
- _____, *ESU, The Invisible Foe of Man: A Comparative Study Of Satan in Christianity, Islam and Yoruba Religion*, Ijebu-Ode, Shebiotimo Publications, 2000.
- _____, 'Health and Healing within the Traditional African Religious Context' in: *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 17, 1985, pp. 69-85
- _____, 'Traditional Medicine with Particular Reference to the Yoruba of Western Nigeria', in: Thomas-Emeagwali, G. (ed.), *African Systems of Science, Technology and Art: The Nigerian Experience*, London; Kanak House, 1993, pp 43-55
- _____, 'Yoruba Magic and Medicine and their relevance for Today', in: *Religions: Journal of the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions*, vol. 4, 1979, pp. 18- 35
- _____, and Agbetola, A.S., 'The Influence of Tradional Magic and Medicine on Tira Magical Medicine in Yoruba Land and their Contemporary Relevance,' in: *Senate Research*, 1990-1992, pp.8-20
- Dopamu, P.A., and Omosade, J.O., *West African Traditional Religion*, (Rev. ed.), Lagos: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 2005.
- Dosunmu, A. E. F., *Lagos: A Legacy of Honour (Dosunmu (1861)-Babangida (1991))*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd, 1992.
- Droogers, A., 'Syncretism: The Problem of Definition, the Definition of The Problem' in: Anton, W., Hendrick, M., Vroom, Jerald D. Gort and Rein F. (eds.), *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Inter-Disciplinary Approach*, Amsterdam: William, B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1989, pp, 5-6.

- Eades, J.S., *Changing Culture: The Yoruba Today*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Echeruo, M., *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of 19th Century Lagos Life*, London: Macmillan, 1997.
- Edward, P., *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001.
- Edward, P. A., 'Basic Concepts in Culture' in: Dopamu, P.A. (ed.), *African Culture, Modern Science and Religious Thought*, University African Centre for Religions and Science, Ilorin: University of Ilorin, 2003, pp. 194-196
- Edwards, A. and Talbot, R., *The Hard-Pressed Researcher: A Research Handbook for the Caring Professionals*, (2nd ed.), Essex: Pearson Educational Ltd, 1999.
- Eghareuba, J.U., *A Short History of Benin*, Ibadan: IUP, 1960.
- Eliade, M. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, (vol. 15), New York: Macmillan Publishing Ltd, n.d.
- Ellis, A.B., *The Yoruba –Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Languages*, Oosterhout, The Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1966.
- Evans- Pritchard, E. E., *Witchcraft Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937.
- Fabunmi, M. A., *Ife: the Genesis of Yoruba Race: an Anthology Of Historical Notes on Ife City*, Lagos: John West Publications, 1985.
- Fadipe, N. A., *The Sociology of the Yoruba*, Ibadan: University Press Ltd, 1970.
- Fafunwa, A. B., *History of Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan: NPS Educational Publishers Ltd, 1974.
- Fagborun, G. J., *The Yoruba Koine: its History and Linguistic Innovations*, Unterschleissheim; Newcastle, Lincom Europa, 1994.
- Al-Faruqi, I.R., Islam and other Faiths' in: Gauher, A. (ed.), *The Challenge of Islām*, London: Islamic Council of Europe. 1978, pp.10-22
- _____, *Islām*, Maryland, USA: Amana Publishers, Publication, 1984

- Fashole-Luke, E. E.W., 'Religion in Freetown' in: Fyfe, C. and Jones, E. (eds.), *Freetown: A Symposium*, Freetown, Sierra Leone University Press, 1969, pp. 130-145
- _____, 'Christianity and Islam in Freetown' in: *The Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*, vol. 9, no.1, 1967, pp. 3-15
- Fasinro, H. A. B., *Ahmadiyya (Achievements and Conflicts) as I see it*, Lagos: Irede Publishers, 1994.
- _____, *Political and Cultural Perspectives of Lagos*, Lagos: Academy Press Ltd, 2004.
- Ferguson, S.B and wright, D.F., (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988.
- Field, M. J., *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937.
- Flick, U., *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, London: SAGE Publications, 1998.
- Folami, T. A., *History of Lagos, Nigeria: the Shaping of an African City*, New York: Exposition Press, 1982.
- Forde, D.(ed.), *Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Western Africa, the Yoruba-Speaking peoples of South-Western Nigeria*, London: International African Institute, 1962
- Frazer, J.G., 'Sympathetic Magic' in: Lessa, W.A. and Vogt, E. Z., *Reader in Comparative Religion; an Anthropological Approach*, (4th ed.), New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc, 1979, pp. 338-350
- Freed, S.A. and Freed, R. S., 'Ghosts, Souls and Ancestors: Power of the Dead' in Lehman A.C. and Myers, J.E., *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, (3rd ed.) London, Mayfield Publishing Company, 1993, pp. 283-295.
- Fukuyama, F., *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992.
- Gbadamosi, T.G.O., *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841-1908*, Lagos: Longman Press, 1978.
- _____, 'Patterns and Developments in Lagos Religious History' in: Aderibigbe, A.B. (ed.), *Lagos: The Development of an African City*, Lagos: Longman, 1975, pp. 33-45

_____, The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in: *Nigeria Journal of the Historical Society*, vol. iv, 1967, pp.113-125

Ghannouchi, R., 'The Participation of Islamists in a Non-Islamic Government' in: A. Tamimi (ed.), *Power Sharing Islam*, London: Liberty for Muslim World publications, 1993, pp. 58-70

Gibb, H.A.R., *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūta*, New Delhi, India: Goodwords Books, 2001

Glasse, C., *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islām*, Accra: EPP Book Services, 2005.

Gmelch, G., 'Baseball Magic' in: Lehman A.C. and Myers, J.E., *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, (3rd ed.), London: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1993, pp 262-275

Goldziher, I., *Muslim Studies*, London: Aldine Transanction, 2006

Green, A.H & Weiss, B.G., *A Survey of Arab History*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1985

Guillaume, A., *The Life of Muḥammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allah*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987

Hall, D. and Hall, I., *Practical Social Research: Project Work in the Community*, London: Macmillan, 1996.

Ḥammudah A., *The Family Structure in Islam*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Burea, 1982

_____, *Islam in Focus*, Leicester: International Islamic Federation and Student Organization in Co-operation with the Islamic Foundation, 1978

Ḥāroūn, M. G., *Foundation Principles of Islamic Law*, Ikeja: The Quranic People Enterprise, 2005.

Ḥassan, I., *Tawheed and Shirk*, Riyad: International Islamic Publishing House, 1996.

Haykal, M.H., *The Life of Muḥammad*, (8th ed.), Indianapolis, American Trust, 1993

- Henninger, J. 'Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion' in: Swartz, M.C. (ed.), *Studies on Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 3-15
- Al-Hilal, M. T. and Khan, M.M., *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language*, Madinah: King Fahd Complex, 1419/1999.
- Hiskett, M., *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, London: Longman Group Ltd, 1984.
- Hitti, P.K., *History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present*, (10th ed.), London: Macmillan Press, 1970
- _____, *The Arabs: A Short History*, (5th ed.) London: Macmillan, 1968.
- Howard, K. and Sharp, J. A., *The Management of A Student Research Project*, Aldershot, Gower Publishing Company Ltd, 1982.
- Hughes, T. P. A., *A Dictionary of Islam*, Pakistan: Premier Book House, 1934.
- Hunwick, J. O. (ed.) *Sharia in Songhay: The Replies of Al-Maghili to The Questions of Askia Al-Hājj Muḥammad*, London: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- _____, *West Africa, Islām and the Arab World: Studies in Honour of Basil Davidson*, Princeton: Markins Wiener Publishers, 2006
- Ibn Taymiyyah, *Public Duties in Islam: The institution of the Hisbah*, Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1985
- Idowu, E. B., *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, London: SCM Press, 1973.
- _____, *Olodumare; God in Yoruba Belief*, (rev. and enlarged. ed.), Ikeja: Longman Nigeria Plc, 1996.
- _____, 'The Challenge of Witchcraft' in: *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. iv, no.1, 1970, pp. 16-31

- Igue, O. J. and Yai, O., 'The Yoruba Speaking People of Dahomey and Togo', in: *Yoruba*, vol. 1, 1973, pp. 16-31
- Jacobs, A. D., & Razaviel, L.C., *Introduction to Research in Education* (2nd ed.), London: Holt Finehart & Winston, 1979
- Jansen, J. J. J., *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Hurst and Company, 1997.
- Jimoh, S. L., *Kufr in Broader Perspectives*, Lagos: The Companion, 1995.
- _____, *Sharifdeen of Tanzania: An Infant Prodigy, Sharifdeen Khalifah of Tanzania*, Lagos: OACE Publishing Company, 1999.
- John, L. and Burton, Richard, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, London: n.p, 1832.
- Johnson, R. S., *History of the Yorubas: from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, London: Lowe and Brydon Ltd, 1921.
- Jordan, D. and Marc, S.J., *Culture: Anthropological Perspective*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1990.
- Jupp, V. and Sapsford, R. (eds.), *Data Collection and Analysis*, London: SAGE Publications, 1996.
- Kamal, M., *Heterodoxy in Islam: A philosophical Study*, Karachi, Pakistan: Royal Book Company, 1993
- Kaptein, N.J.G., *Muhammad's Birthday Festival: Early History in the Central Muslim Lands and Development in the Muslim West until the 10th/16th Century*, Laiden, Netherlands: np, 1993
- Kennedy, H., *The Great Arabs Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in*, London: Phoenix Publisher, 2007
- Kennedy, J., *Nubian Ceremonial Life: Studies in Islamic Syncretism and Cultural Change*, New York: The University of California Press, 1978.
- Kerlinger, F.N., *Foundations of Behavioural Research*, (3rd ed.), New York: Kinehart and Winston, 1986.

- Khan, M.M., *Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī, (Arabic-English)*, Riyadh: Maktabat Ar-Riyadh al-Haditha, 1981.
- Kucukcan, T., 'Some Reflections of the Wahabiyyah Movement' in: *Hamdard Islamicus*, vol.15, no.111, pp. 2-20
- Kumar, R., *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, (2nd ed.), London: SAGE Publications, 2005.
- Ladislav, H., *Religion and Custom in a Muslim Society: The Berti of Sudan*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Lawal, I. L., *Of a Tongue and Its Numerous Faces: The Story of Arabic in Nigeria*, Unpublished Inaugural Lecture, Lagos: Lagos State University, 2008.
- Lawal, K., 'Background to Urbanization: Lagos Society before 1900' in: Lawal, K. (ed.), *Urban Transition in Africa*, Ibadan: Educational Publishers, 1994, pp. 1-16
- _____, 'The Coastal Scene: The Yoruba of Lagos Society Before 1900' in: Adediran, B. and Ogunremi, D. (eds.), *Culture and Society in Yoruba land*, Ibadan: Rex Charles Publications, 1998, pp.79-96
- Lemu, B.A., *Islamic Studies for Senior Secondary Schools*, Isole, Lagos-Nigeria: Islamic Publication Bureau, 1989.
- Leo Frobenius, *The Voice of Africa: Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910-1912*, (vol.11), London: Hutchinson and Co, 1913
- Lesi, F.E., 'Abiku Syndrome: Your Health', in: *Federal Ministry Of Health Magazine*, vol.2, no. 5, 1969, pp. 24-25
- Levtzion, N., *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968
- _____, 'Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa: An Introductory Essay' in: Levtzion, N and Fisher, A.J.,(eds.), *Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa*, Colorado: Lyne rierner Publishers, 1987, pp.1-17.
- _____, 'Merchants versus Scholars and Clerics in West Africa: Differential and complementary roles' in: Levtzion, N and Fisher, H.J. (eds.), *Rural and Urban in Islam in West Africa*, 1987, pp. 21-36

- _____, *Islam in West Africa: Religious Society and Politics in 1800*, Hampshire, Britain: 1994
- Lewis, I. M., (ed.), *Islam in Tropical Africa*, (2nd ed.), London: International African Institute, 1966.
- Lings, M., *Ancient Beliefs and Modern Superstitions*, Pakistan: Suhail Academy Lahore, 1988
- Lofland, J. and Lofland, L.H., *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, (3rd ed.), Belmont: Wadsworth, 1984.
- Losi, J.B., *History of Lagos*, Lagos: African Education Press, 1991.
- _____, *Analyzing Social Situations*, (2nd ed.), Belmont: Wadsworth, 1984.
- Lucas, J. O., *The Religion of the Yoruba*, Lagos: CMS Bookshop, 1922.
- Malik, S.H.A., *The Impact of Arabic on Linguistic and Cultural Life of Yoruba People*, Ibadan: Group Publishers, 1995.
- Manlan, L.L.L & Morison, K., *Research Methods in Education*, (5th ed.) London: Routledge Falmer, 2003.
- Maroney, Eric, *Religious Syncretism*, London; CMS Press, 2006.
- Mbiti, J.S., *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1967.
- _____, *Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1975.
- Meek, C. K., *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*, n.p: Kegal Paul, 1931.
- Metuh, E. I., *God and Man in African Religion: A Case Study of the Igbo of Nigeria*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1981.
- Muhammad, U., *The Observance of Mawlūd an-Nabiyyi and Other Birthdays*, Jeddah: Abul Qasim Publishing House, 1994.
- Muhibbudeen M. A., *Islam and Science: Historical Context and Modern Challenges*, Unpublished Inaugural Lecture, Lagos: Lagos State University, 2009.

- Munajjid, M. S., *Unheeded Unlawful Things which People Should be Cautious of in Islam*, Riyadh: Daru-al-Khudayri, 1999.
- Nachmias, D. and Nachmias, S.C., *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, (5th ed.), London: Arnold, 1997.
- Al-Nadwi. .A.H.A, *Islam and the World*, Lucknow, India: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1967.
- _____, *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission*, London: The Islamic Foundation, 1983
- _____, *Western Civilization, Islam and Muslims*, Lucknow, India: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1979
- Nakosteen, M., *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education AD 800-1350 with an Introduction to Medieval Muslim Education*, Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1964
- Nawawi, A. A., *Riyād aṣ –Salihīn, (Garden of the Righteous)*, (1st ed.), (vol. 1-2.), Beirut, Ayyip lil-Tabaat wa Nashr, 1985.
- Nigel, P. and Prudence, J. A., *History of Pagan Europe*, London: Barnes and Noble, 1995.
- Noah, A.O.K. (ed.), *Fundamentals of General Studies*, Ibadan: Rex Charles Publications, 1995.
- _____, The Growth and Development of Education in Lagos State in Asaju, D.F., *General Studies: Book of Readings*, (vol.2), Lagos: Lagos State University, pp.132-133
- Noibi, D., *Globalization, Terrorism and the Muslim World*, A Paper Presented at the International Conference on Islam, Terrorism and Development in Africa, Ibadan: University of Ibadan, 2006.
- Nolen, B., *Data Analysis: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.
- Odewunmi, S. G., ‘Lagos State: Location, Extent and Constituents’ in: Dapo, F.A. (ed.), *General Studies: Book of Readings*, (vol.2), Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2006, pp. 1-18
- Odumosu, A. A., *Inferential Statistics: A Simplified Approach*, Lagos: Ola Aina Press, 2005.

- Oduyoye, M., *Planting of Christianity in Yoruba land*, Ibadan: Rex Charles Publications, 1969.
- _____, 'Festivals: The Cultivation of Nature and the Celebration of History' in Adegbola, A. (ed.) *Traditional Religions in West Africa*, Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1983, pp. 153-165
- Ogunbiyi, I. A., 'Nūr al- Bāb' - The Litmus Test of Pure Islam as Interpreted by Shaykh Uthman bn. Fudi, in: *Research Bulletin*, vols. 18 & 19, Ibadan: Centre for Arabic Documentation, University Of Ibadan, 1990-1991, pp. 12-33
- _____, 'Arabic Loan Words in Yoruba Language in the Light of Arabic/ Yoruba from Pre-Historical Times, in: *Sudan Arabic Journal Language Studies*, 1984, p.161-175
- Ojo, O. and Omotayo, A., 'The Physical Environment of Lagos State in: Arowolo, O. (ed.), *Some Aspects of the Living Conditions of the People of Lagos State*, Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 1990, pp.7-22
- Ologunro, S., 'Lagos Administration 1967-2005 in Asaju, D. F. (ed.), *General Studies: Book of Readings*, (vol.2.), Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2006, pp. 92-99
- Olukoju, A., 'The Politics of Free Trade Between Lagos and the Hinterland 1861-1907' in Adefuye, A., Babatunde, A. and Jide, O. (eds.), *History of the Peoples of Lagos State*, Ibadan: Lantern Books, 1987, pp.89-105
- Opeloye, M.O., 'Evolution of Religious Culture among the Yoruba' in: Adediran, B. and Ogunremi, D., (eds.), *Culture and Society in Yoruba land*, Ibadan: Rex Charles Publications, 1998, pp.139-148
- Opoku, K.A., 'Religious Themes in West Africa Festivals' in: *Dialogue and Alliance: A Journal of International Religious Foundation*, vol.4, no.1, 1990, pp. 71-85
- Opoku, K. S., *West African Traditional Religion*, Accra: Federal International Private Ltd, n.d.
- Osuntokun, J., 'Introduction of Christianity and Islam in Lagos State' in: Adefuye, A., Babatunde, A. and Jide, O. (eds.), *History of the Peoples Of Lagos State*, Ibadan: Lantern Books, 1987, pp. 126-142

- Owolabi, J. I., *Ijinle Ede ati Litireso Yoruba*, Lagos: Evans Brothers Ltd, 2000.
- Oxford word Power: Qamus Oksfud*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001
- Oyelade, T., 'Yoruba Muslims and Cultural Accommodation' in: Dopamu, P. A., and Odumuyiwa, E.A. (eds.), *Religion, Science and Culture, National Association of Science and Religion*, 2003, pp.197-115
- Oyeweso, S., *Journey from Epe: Biography of S.L. Edu*, Lagos: West African Book Publishers, 1996.
- _____, *Eminent Yoruba Muslims of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries*, Ibadan: Rex Charles, 1999.
- Parrinder, E.G., *African Traditional Religion*, (3rd ed.), London: Sheldon Press, 1974.
- _____, *West African Religion; A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Akan, Ewe, Yoruba, Ibo and Kindred Peoples*, (2nd ed.), London: Epworth Press, 1969.
- Pearson, J.O., 'Going Native in Reverse: The Insider as Researcher in British wicca' in: Arweck, E and Stringer, M.D, (eds.), *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002, pp.97-114
- Peek, P. M., *African Divination Systems: Ways of Knowing*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Peel, J. D. Y., *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Peterson, J., *Province of Freedom: A History of Sierra- Leone 1870-1878*, Evanston, n.p., 1969.
- Philips, A. A. B., *Funeral Rites in Islam*, Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1996.
- _____, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)*, Riyadh: Tawheed Publications, 1990.
- _____, *Ibn Taymeeyah's Essay on the Jinn (Demons (Abridged, Annotated and translated)*, Riyad: Tawheed Publications, 1989.

- _____, *The Exorcist Tradition in Islam*, United Arab Emirates: Dār Al Fattāh, 1997.
- Pickthall, M. M., *The Cultural Side of Islam*, India: Nusrat Ali Nasri Kitab Bhavan, 1981.
- Poston, L., *Islamic Da 'awah in the West: Muslim Missionaries Activity & the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992
- Puttick, E., *Women in New Religion; in Search of Community, Sexuality and Spiritual Power*, London: Macmillan, 1997
- Qadhi, A.Y., *Du'ā, The Weapon of the Believers: A Treatise on the Status and Etiquette of Du'ā in Islām*, Lagos: Hamzat International Islamic Publishing House, 2001.
- _____, *An Explanation of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdul- Wāḥḥāb's Four Principles of Shirk*, Birmingham: Al-Hidayah Publishing & Distribution, 2002
- _____, *An Explanation of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdul- Wāḥḥāb's Kashf al-Shubuhāt: A Critical Study of Shirk*, Birmingham: Al-Hidayah Publishing & Distribution, 2003
- Qadri, Y. A., 'The Yoruba Muslims of Nigeria and the Problem of Cultural Identity' in: Dopamu, P.A. and Odumuyiwa, E.A. (eds.), *Religion, science and Culture, National Association of Science and Religion*, 2001, pp. 240- 253
- Quarcoopome, T. N. A., *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: African University Press, 1987.
- Quaseem, M. A., *The Ethics of Al-Ghazālī: A Composite Ethics in Islam*, Selangor, Malaysia: National University of Malaysia, 1975.
- Rahner, K and Vargrimer, H., (eds.), *Concise Theological Dictionary*, (2nd ed.), London: Burn and Oates, 1965
- Ralph, R., 'Present World Conditions in Cultural Perspectives' in: Linton, R. (ed.), *Science of Man in World Crisis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1945.
- Ray, B. C., *African Religions; Symbols, Rituals and Community*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1976.
- Rippin, A., *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices in the Contemporary Period*, (vol.2), London: Routledge, 1993.

- Robert, J. M., *The Mythology of the Secret Societies*, New York: Scribner, 1972.
- Robert, T., *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Rosander, E.E., 'The Islamization of Tradition and Modernity' in: Westerlund, D & Rosander, E.E., (ed.), *African, Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, London: Hurst and Company, 1998, p.1
- Rose, D. and Sullivan, O., *Introducing Data Analysis for Social Scientists*, (2nd ed.), Buckingham: Buckingham University Press, 1996.
- Rosenthal, F., *The Classical Heritage of Islam*, New York: Routledge and Kogan Paul, 1992.
- Russel, J. B., 'Witchcraft' in: Lehman, A.C. and Myers, J. E. (eds.), *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion, An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, (3rd ed.), California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1993, pp.199-210
- Ryan, Patrick J., S. J., 'Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition; A Study of Clerical Piety', in: Bynum, C. and Rupp, G., (eds.), *Harvard Theological Review: Harvard Dissertation in Religion*, Missoula, Montana, USA: Scholars Press, 1978, pp. 104-125
- Saheed, A. R., 'Teaching and Learning in Early Islam: A Discourse on an Intellectual Tradition' in: Akintola, I.L. (ed.), *Correlates of Islam*, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd, 2009, p. 191
- Sambur, B., 'From the Dichotomy of Spiritualism/ Ritualism to The Dichotomy of Insider/Outsider' in: Arweck, E and Stringer, M.D, (eds.), *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the study of Ritual*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002, pp.21-34
- Sanni, H, A., 'The People of Lagos State' in Dapo, F. A. (ed.), *General Studies: Book of Readings*, Lagos: Lagos State University Press, 2006, pp.63-69
- Saqib, G. N., 'Modernization of Muslim Society and Education: Need for Practical Approach' in: Wasihullah Khan, (ed.), *Education and Society in the Muslim World*, Jeddah: Hodder and Stoughton and King Abdul Azeez University, 1987, pp. 530-541

- Sarwar, H.G. M.A., *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings*, (4th ed.), London: Muslim Educational Trust, 1989.
- _____, *Muhammad: The Holy Prophet*, Lahore, Pakistan: SH. Muhammad Ashraf, 1991
- Sayyid, B.S., *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1997.
- Shagari, S., *My Vision for Nigeria*, London: Frank Cass and Co, 1981.
- Shoshan, B., *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993.
- Simmelhag, V.L. and Stadon, J.E., 'The Superstition Experiment: A Re-Examination of Its Implications for the Principles of Adaptive Behaviour', in: *Psychological Review*, 1971, pp. 3-17
- Simpson, G.E., *Yoruba Religion and Medicine in Ibadan*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1980.
- Skinner, B.F., 'Superstition in the Pigeon', in: *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 1948, pp.168-172
- Smith, R. S., 'To the Palaver Islands: War and Diplomacy on the Lagos Lagoon', in: *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol.1, 1969, pp. 70-72
- Surty, Muhammad Ibrahim, H.I., *The Qur' ān and al- Shirk (Polytheism)*, (2nd ed.), Ta Ha Publishers, 1982.
- Talbot, P. A., *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria: A Sketch of their History, Ethnology and Languages*, (vol.ii), London: Oxford University Press, 1926.
- Taye, O., 'Cultural Festivals in Lagos State' in Ajetunmobi, R. O., and Junaid-Eko, N.(eds.), *Themes in Lagos and its Environs*, Ijanikin: Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, 2006, pp. 187-190
- Trimingham, J.S., *The Influence of Islām upon Africa*, London: Longman, 1968.
- _____, *Islām in West Africa*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- _____, *The Christian Church and Islām in West Africa*, London; CMS Press, 1955.

- Tylor, E. B., *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, (vol. i & ii), London: John Murray, 1903.
- Ulwan, A. N., *Child Education in Islām*, Dār-El- Sallam: As-Sallam Publishing, 2001.
- Al-‘Umarī, A. Ḍ., *Madīnan Society at the Time of the Prophet*, (2nd ed.) Herndon, USA: International Islamic Publishing House, 1995
- Ummul-Khayri, *The Fragile Vessels, (Rifqan bi- Qawārīr)*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau, 2004.
- Vroom, H. M., ‘Syncretism and Dialogue: A Philosophical Analysis’, in: Anton, W., Hendrik, M.V., Jerald, D. G., and Rein, F. (eds.), *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Amsterdam: William, B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, pp. 27-40
- Williams, H., *The Superstitions of Witchcraft*, London: Longman Green, 1865
- Zarabozo, M.J., (ed), *Fatāwā Regarding Women*, Madinah: Dar-Sallam, 2000

Theses

Adetona, L.M., *The Impact of Da 'awah on the Development of Islam in Lagos(1900-2005)*. An Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Lagos State University, 2006.

Jimoh, S.L., *Demonic –Possession Exorcism by Yoruba Muslim Aafas in Osun State of Nigeria: A Critical Examination*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Lagos State University, 2007.

Archival Materials

CMS, CA2/ 056, James Johnson to Secretary CMS, 6th March, 1876.

CMS CA2/ 056, James Johnson's Annual Letter of 1875.

CMS CA2/056, Secretary, CMS, 30 Jan, 1878.

Reports

Childs, H. and Gibbons, E.J. Epe Re-organization Report, 1934.

Childs, H. and Gibbons, E.J. A Report on the Administrative Reorganization of Epe District Native Treasury Area, 1939.

Colonial Reports - Annual Lagos Church Missions for 1895-1896.

The Lagos official Handbook, 1897-1898.

The Lagos Government Gazette, No 55 of November, 1901 and 17th January, 1903.

The Lagos Weekly Record, 3rd, May, 1891 and 17th July, 1894 .

Government Publications

Lagos State Council for Arts and Culture; Our Heritage. 1973.

Lagos State Ministry of Information and Culture, Focus on Lagos Island, Lagos, 1991.

Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos State, 2004.

State of Lagos Mega City and other Nigerian cities, Lagos State Report, Alausa, Ikeja. 1995

Welcome to Lagos State: Centre of Excellence, Lagos State Ministry of Information, Culture and Sports Publication, 1998.

Wilbul, S. and Associates, Lagos Plan for the Metropolitan Area, commissioned Project by Lagos State Government, Lagos, 1990.

Local Newspapers, Magazines and Electronic News Cited.

Daily Independent

New Nigeria

Newswatch Magazine

Nigeria Tribune

Tell Magazine

The Lagos Observer

The Lagos Times

The Nation

The Punch

Galaxy Television

Lagos Television

Muri International Television

Nigeria Television Authority

Appendix 1



Map of Nigeria showing different States and Cities.

Appendix II

Questionnaire

The researcher, Bro M.A. Balogun, is a postgraduate student of the University of Birmingham; U.K. will appreciate your willingness in responding to the questionnaire. Your responses will be strictly confidential and are meant purely for research purposes. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

SECTION A

Please put a tick () in the appropriate boxes below

(1) Your Gender; Female () Male ()

(2) Your ethnic background; Yoruba () Ibo () Hausa (). Others specify.....

(3) Your Local Government; Epe () Ikorodu () Badagry (). Others specify.....

(4) Are you a Muslim by birth () or by conviction ()?

(5) Your age; 12-20 () 21-30 () 30-40 () 41-50 () 51 years and above

()

(6) Your knowledge of *Tawhid* can be reasonably classified as excellent

() good () average ()

(7) What were some of your main former Traditional African Religious Beliefs and practices before you became a Muslim?.....

(8) In which of these major Yoruba festivals do you actively participate in up till now?

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Oro</i> festival () | <i>Kayokayo</i> festival () |
| <i>Kilajolu</i> festival () | Boat Regatta festival () |
| <i>Egungun</i> festival () | <i>Agemo</i> festival () |
| <i>Eyo</i> festival () | <i>Agere</i> festival () |

Other Yoruba festivals please specify.....

(9) Do you believe in the efficacy of the following?

- (i) Black magic; Yes () No ()
- (ii) Witchcraft; Yes () No ()
- (iii) Charms and Amulets (*Oogun*); Yes () No ()
- (iv) Oracles and divination; Yes () No ()
- (v) *Abiku* (child born to die); Yes () No ()
- (vi) Ancestor worship; Yes () No ()
- (vii) Yoruba Traditional festivals; Yes () No ()

SECTION B

(i). To be answered by specialists.

Please respond to the next section by indicating your degree of agreement with each option. Put a tick () under any of the following:

SA: if you strongly agree

A: if you merely agree

U: if you are undecided

D: if you only disagree

SD: if you strongly disagree

STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	D	SD
(1) Lack of knowledge of <i>Tawhid</i> is the major factor responsible for syncretism					
(2) Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State are prone to Syncretism because of their shallow knowledge of Islam					
(3) Traditional beliefs and practices have negative effect on Yoruba Muslim's inclination to syncretism.					

(4) Materialism is the major cause of syncretism					
(5) Mixing Islam with traditional culture is as a result of Islamic flexibility and adaptation to local culture.					
(6) Islam does not entirely frown upon practising traditional beliefs and practices.					
(7) The influence of western culture is also responsible for mixed Islam.					
(8) Muslim clerics are also compounding the problem of syncretism.					
(9) Lack of employment among the Muslims is largely responsible for mixed Islam.					
(10) Establishment of more <i>Marakiz</i> and Islamic organizations does not reduce the cankerworm of syncretism.					
(11) Creating more awareness about <i>Tawhid</i> can reduce the problem of syncretism among Yoruba Muslims in the state.					
(12) The parents and Muslim scholars have crucial roles to					

play in stamping out the problem of syncretism.					
(13) Early examples and models by parents and Guardians to their wards will go a long way to reducing the incidence of mixed Islam.					
(14)Syncretism affects the Muslim’s entire life.					
(15) One of the potent weapons to eradicate syncretism is fear of Allah.					

SECTION B

(ii). To be answered by general Muslims.

Please respond to the next section by indicating your degree of agreement with each option. Put a tick () under any of the following:

SA: if you strongly agree

A: if you merely agree

U: if you are undecided

D: if you only disagree

SD: if you strongly disagree

STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	D	SD
(1) Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State do not understand the meaning of Islam.					

(2) The impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State is very low					
(3) Some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State mix Islam with traditional beliefs and practices out of their own whims.					
(4) The origin of mixing Islam with traditional ignorance.					
(5) Western education and culture are the major reasons why some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State syncretise.					
(6) Inadequate knowledge of Islam is largely responsible for syncretism.					
(7) Effects of traditional religions are the major causes of syncretism.					
(8) The preponderance of Islamic Associations does not reduce the prevalence of syncretism.					
(9) Majority of Muslim Clerics does not serve as role models in this regard.					
(10) Poverty is a major cause of syncretism.					

(11) Nonchalance attitude is a major problem in eradicating syncretism.					
(12) More educational campaign on the importance of Tawhid can reduce the problem of syncretism.					
(13) Adequate employment can also reduce the problem of syncretism.					
(14) Establishment of more Islamic/Arabic schools can reduce this problem.					
(15) Muslim Clerics do not serve as good models in eradicating syncretism among the Yoruba Muslims.					

Appendix III

Interview (English) - (i)

(1) *Assalam alaykum*, Could you please tell me a bit about your (Muslim/Islamic) background.

(2) Could you please mention some of the traditional religious beliefs and practices in Lagos State prior to Islam?

(3) What do you think are the reasons why some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State still practise traditional religions all along with Islam?

(4) What are the likely reasons responsible for this?

(5) Could you mention some of the ways in which some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos state mix Islam with traditional beliefs and practices?

(6) Do you think western education also plays its role in this regard? Could you please explain this?

(7) Do you think Islam has made any positive impact on the Yoruba Muslims' spirituality in Lagos State?

(8) Could you please evaluate the role of Arabic schools and the *Muallim /Asatidha* in the pervasive problem looking at it from antecedent? Please.

(9) Could you please look at the negative impact of westernism on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

(10) Could you please give some of the negative effects of syncretism on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

(11) It seems as if the impact of *Tawhid* has not much been felt in this regard. What do you think is responsible for this?

(12) Could you please assess the impact of multitude of Islamic organizations on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State in this regard?

(13) Could you examine some of the various ways in which the problem of syncretism can be reduced?

(14) Do you think the problem of syncretism has become impossible to overcome?

(15) Are there any personal comments on this?

INTERVIEW II- SPECIALISTS

(1) *Assalam alaykum*, could you please tell me a bit about your background.

(2) From my observation, it seems as if mixing Islam with traditional beliefs and practices is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. What is your view about this?

(3) What do you think is responsible for this in Lagos State?

(4) Do you agree with the claim that the influence of traditional religions cannot be eradicated easily?...Yes/No...Explain?

(5) What is your assessment about the understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

(6) Do you agree with the fact inadequate knowledge of Islam does affect Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

(7) Could you mention some of the areas in which you think Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State might be syncretising?

(8) What do you think is the impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

(9) Do you agree with the fact that the Muslim Clerics (*Aafa*) are also contributing to this problem?

(10) Do you think that the role of our *Marakiz* (Arabic cum Islamic School) is being in this regard?

(11) What do you think are some of the negative impact of syncretism on the generality of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

(12) In some quarters, some people believe that ignorance and poverty are also part of major factors responsible for this persistent syncretism. Do you also share this assertion and why?

(13) From your own experience so far, what do you think are the major solutions to this problem?

(14) Could you please enumerate the role of the following categories of people in eradicating this phenomenon: Muslim clerics, *Imams*, *Mudiru*, and the presidents and missionaries of various Islamic organizations? Are there any personal comments on this?

(15) How do you assess the infiltration of western culture/value amidst the Yoruba Muslim?

Appendix IV

Interview (Yoruba)

(1) Assalam alaykum, e jowo e so die fun mi nipa ipinle yin, papa julo nipa esin Islam.

(2) E jowo se e le so fun wa nipa igbabgo ati Ise esin Ibile ki esin Islam to de si ipinle Eko.

(3) E jowo kinni idi re ti awon Musulimi Yoruba ni Ipinle Lagos nse amulumala esin; ka se esin maa esin Imale?

(4)Ki lee ro wipe o fa eleyi?

(5) E jowo se e le daruko awon orisirisi ona ti awon Yoruba musulumi ilu Eko nse amulumala esin.

(6) Nje elero wipe eko ode oni ni owo ninu isoro yii? Se ele salaye fun wa

(7) Nje elero wipe, esin Islam ni ilapa to ye koro lori awon Yoruba Muslimi ni ipinle Eko.

(8) E jowo , e je ki a fi oju shunuku wo ise ati ilapa awon ile kewu ati awon Aafa ti won nse lati ka idi isoro yin kuro nile.

(9) E je ka wo wo isoro ti eko ode oni ni lori awon Yoruba Muslimi ni ilu Eko

(10)Kinni awon isoro wo leri wipe amulumala esin ni lori awon Yoruba Muslimi ilu Eko.

(12) Kinni ilapa ti awon Egbe Islam ati Egbe awon Muslimi ni lori awon Muslimi ni ile Yoruba

(13) Ona wo lero wipe isoro yin le fi dikun?

(14) Nje elero wipe isoro yin o le ni iyanju.

(15) Nje eni imoran kan lati gba wa; nje eni afikun si eleyi?

(ii)

(1) Assalam alaykum, e jowo e so die fun mi nipa ipinle yin, papa julo nipa esin Islam.

(2) Ninu iwoye sii mi, O da bi wipe amulumala esin o je isoro gbogi to koju Islam. Ki le ro nipa eleyi?

- (3) Ki lee ro wipe o fa eleyi?
- (4) Nje eyin naa faramo ifenuko awon enyan wipe ilapa esin Ibile ko le se ka kuro boro?
- (5) Nje ero wipe awon Yoruba Muslimi gbo agboye imo Olohun loka koro?
- (6) Nje eyin naa nigbagbo wipe imo aabo ti awon Yoruba ni nipa esin Islamu ni ilapa lara won.
- (7) Awon ona wo lero wipe awon Yoruba Muslimi tin se amulumala esin?
- (8) Kinni ilapa Islam lori awon Muslimi ni ipinle Eko?
- (9) Nje ero wipe awon Aafa nda kun awon isoro yin?
- (10) Nje e ro wipe ile kewu ni ise kan pato ninu isoro yii?
- (11) Kinni awon isoro wo leri wipe amulumala esin ni lori awon Yoruba Muslimi ilu Eko
- (12) Laari awon kan, won ni gbagbo wipe aimokan ati osi wa ninu isoro to do ju ko amulumala ti o fi kuro nile. Nje eyin naa ni igbagbo ninu eleyi?
- (13) Ninu iwoye ti yin, ki lero to je ona abayo si isoro yi?

(14) Ki lero wipe o je ojuse awon enyan won yi ninu isoro amulumala; Aafa, Lemomu, Oludari ile –kewu, olori egbe ati awon Aafa egbe?t

(15) Ki leeri si asa ode oni ti awon Yoruba nmu maa esin imale ni ode oni?

Appendix V

Sample Interviews

IMAM (DR) L.O. JUMUAH, CHIEF IMAM, MUSLIM COMMUNITY CENTRAL MOSQUE, AOCOED, IJANIKIN.

Assalam alaykum sir, could you please tell me a bit about your Muslim/Islamic background.

Wa alaykum Sallam wa rahmatu llah. Thank you. I was brought up as a Muslim. I attended Arabic school in Ibadan, I have my first and second degree at Premier University; University of Ibadan. I bagged my Ph.D from University of Ilorin. I have been teaching Islamic Studies since 1971. Alhamdu lillah, my parents are Muslims and so I was brought in an Islamic environment.

From my observation, it seems as if mixing Islam with traditional beliefs and practices is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. What is your view about this?

Yes, is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. This is due largely to the background of Islam in Yoruba land. Yoruba people; our forefathers converted from traditional religions to Islam, the two religions were integrated, traditional religions along with Islam. They assume that it just gave Islam an edge over the other; i.e. traditional religion. Islam goes along with traditional religions.

What do you think is responsible for this in Lagos State?

Though they believe that there is God, who is their creator, but along with it, they still believe in the power of traditional religions, but the way and manner they practise Islam. The influence of Traditional religions still affects their methods of accepting Islam.

Do you agree with the claim that the influence of traditional religions cannot be eradicated easily?... Yes/ No...Explain.

I agree of course, base on the reasons I gave you before.

What is your assessment about the understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Though they believe in God, but along with it they believe in traditional religions. They still repose belief in the efficacy of traditional religions.

Do you agree with the fact inadequate knowledge of Islam does affect Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

I agree.

Could you mention some of the areas in which you think Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State might be syncretising?

A lot of areas: Marriage, naming ceremony, *eid*'s celebration, *Ojude Oba* etc.

What do you think is the impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

I think it only reduces some aspects of full scale practice of traditional religions, but not total elimination.

Do you agree with the fact that the Muslim Clerics (*Aafa*) are also contributing to this problem?

Majorly, because some Muslims see them as role models, most of the things these Muslim *Aafa* are doing, the ordinary Muslims are also doing it. The Muslim clerics are getting their bread and butter from them. This is where they get their sources of living.

Do you think that the role of our *Marakiz* (Arabic cum Islamic School) is being in this regard?

I think in some ways, but the impact is very minute. But nowadays, it has no impact, may be in future. They do not understand Islam very well. They themselves practise all these things. They do not have job; here lies their sources of living. That is the orientation they have because they grew up amidst these practices, and they see what their leaders are doing. The impact of their dawah is not felt. Therefore, the impact has not been proven

What do you think are some of the negative impact of syncretism on the generality of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Ideologically, it has become part of the system; they believe they also contribute their own quarter to Islam

In some quarters, some people believe that ignorance and poverty are also part of major factors responsible for this persistent syncretism. Do you also share this assertion and why?

Yes, of course, looking at the dismal economic problem of our country, many Graduates are jobless, let alone the Graduates of *Marakiz*, the state of our education system in Nigeria calls for sober reflection. Taking the two problems together the problem will remain persistent.

From your own experience so far, what do you think are the major solutions to this problem?

To reduce the phenomenon of syncretism, all hands must be on deck; forget the issue of eradication but let us talk about reduction; our scholars should preach with wisdom, understanding as the Quran depicts: ‘Call in the way of Your Lord, with wisdom and beautiful preaching... (Q) . Let the Government live up to their role; religious education should be given priority at levels of our educational system; this will go a long way in reducing this phenomenon.

Could you please enumerate the role of the following categories of people in eradicating this phenomenon: Muslim clerics, *Imams*, *Mudiru*, and the presidents and missionaries of various Islamic organizations? Are there any personal comments on this?

All hands must be on deck to stamp out this problem. There should be unity in our preaching. There should not be any contradiction what so ever. God will help us.

How do you assess the infiltration of western culture/value amidst the Yoruba Muslim?

It is one the problem that we have been discussing since. Based on the influence of western education and Christianity, the Yoruba Muslims have borrowed a lot these two forces. Take the way we do wedding and naming ceremonies today. Our people are not satisfied or understood this religion. We scholars we owe our society a lot of responsibilities, to educate them.

ALH. S.A. SAULA, LECTURER AT ADENIRAN OGUNSANYA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ISLAMIC STUDIES DEPARTMENT. LAGOS.

Assalam alaykum, could you please tell me a bit about your background.

My parents were committed Muslims. I attended Local Arabic School at Isolo, I equally attended Ansaru-deen College, Isolo in 1968. I learnt Arabic and Islamic studies simultaneously. These Muslim schools really had positive impact on me, my Islamic spiritualism. Our assemblies were conducted with morning and afternoon

devotion by Islamic studies and Muslim teachers. Alhamdu lillah I have been teaching Islamic studies since 1982. The way Islam is being practised now and 'yesterday' there is a huge difference. Muslims of yesterday were devout, pious, and conscious but now is no more there.

(2) From my observation, it seems as if mixing Islam with traditional beliefs and practices is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. What is your view about this?

Syncretism has been a major problem in Lagos today; I was born and bred in Lagos. Ikorodu where I reside now is a case study in this phenomenon. Though they go on Hajj, still they are staunch traditional worshippers. In fact, I see them as the worst practice of Islam.

What do you think is responsible for this in Lagos State?

Muslim clerics; they lack focus; albeit they preach against *Shirk*, but they still 'dine and wine' with the traditional chiefs at Odo- nla in Ikorodu; during eid they buy the most costly ram. Another reason is that, the Muslim clerics have shallow knowledge of Islam, their level of western education that will make them to secure job is not there. Another factor is that is the Christian one in which the Muslims are borrowing from Aladura Churches. Others include poverty, ignorance, lack of faith in Allah, love of materialism, lack of contentment etc.

Do you agree with the claim that the influence of traditional religions cannot be eradicated easily?...Yes/No...Explain?

It cannot be eradicated easily because of our culture, it can only be minimized. They pass it from one generation to the other.

What is your assessment about the understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

I can say may be it is fair. There is no awareness, though there is establishment of Islamic organization; participation in traditional festival is still endermic. For instance, Isese Day, Ifa –Olokun Day, Oro etc. Though there is no proof to all these, but people repose strong faith in them.

Do you agree with the fact inadequate knowledge of Islam does affect Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Yes, of course

Could you mention some of the areas in which you think Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State might be syncretising?

A lot of areas; festivals, charms, divination, marriages etc.

What do you think is the impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

It has little impact on them; the impact is not felt much.

Do you agree with the fact that the Muslim Clerics (*Aafa*) are also contributing to this problem?

They are the real problem. A lot of them delve into syncretism in order to get 'power'. They are partners in syncretism (Ipese fun Aiye). Chief Imam is a diviner in Lagos, some are members of secret cults; participate in traditional festivals etc.

Do you think that the role of our *Marakiz* (Arabic cum Islamic School) is being felt in this regard?

Not felt, they are albatross

What do you think are some of the negative impact of syncretism on the generality of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

They are so many, lack of respect from other religionists, fraudsters, devilish activities etc.

In some quarters, some people believe that ignorance and poverty are also part of major factors responsible for this persistent syncretism. Do you also share this assertion and why?

Yes, of course; looking at the state of our economy and our political landscape.

From your own experience so far, what do you think are the major solutions to this problem?

Let every one go back to Allah; devotion, strong *Iman* (faith), imbibing worthwhile values, creation of more jobs, functional education, good morality inculcated at home, sensitization, creation of Islamic awareness, production of more Islamic books inculcating Islamic teachings, trust in Allah (*tawwakul*) should be more emphasised. Optimism.

Could you please enumerate the role of the following categories of people in eradicating this phenomenon: Muslim clerics, *Imams*, *Mudiru*, and the presidents and missionaries of various Islamic organizations? Are there any personal comments on this?

All hands must be on deck, there should be unity.

How do you assess the infiltration of western culture/value amidst the Yoruba Muslim?

Very rampant now but we must preach against its onslaught.

Thank you

Chief Imam Epe Central Mosque, Alh. Abd. Rasheed. Interview conducted in Yoruba.

(1) *Assalam alaykum*, could you please tell me a bit about your background.

I am a Muslim, I was brought up in an Islamic environment .I went to both traditional Arabic school and modern Arabic school, as you know Epe Ioni Quran; hardly you will see Epe indigenes who do not have the knowledge of Arabic and Islam. I became Imam some few years back. My parents were staunch Muslims; who were very strict about Islam.

From my observation, it seems as if mixing Islam with traditional beliefs and practices is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. What is your view about this?

That is how we met it. You cannot eradicate, Ijebu Epe were once idol worshippers when they became Muslims they found it difficult to do away with their old religions and up till now it is still rearing its ugly head among Yoruba Muslims in Epe.

What do you think is responsible for this in Lagos State?

Lack of fear of Allah, love of this world; lack of strong faith, poverty, lack of job, frustration, ignorance etc.

Do you agree with the claim that the influence of traditional religions cannot be eradicated easily?...Yes/No...Explain?

It cannot be eradicated; it can only be reduced if there is constant preaching against it, adequate job, unity among the *Aafa*; adequate salary for *Aafa* and *Imam*, re-orientation etc.

What is your assessment about the understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

The understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State to say the least is very poor. They just believe that God is one ; other aspects of *Tawhid* ,they do not know it.

Do you agree with the fact inadequate knowledge of Islam does affect Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Take Epe as a case study, though say Epe Ioni Quran, but today see what is happening among the so- called Oni Quran today. Some of the *Aafas* go to the extent of using parts of human body to make charms and amulets. A lot of terrible things are happening here among these people; which are categorically *shirk*, all in the name of making money. But many of them do not fathom the meaning of *Isla* as a complete submission to the will of Allah.

Could you mention some of the areas in which you think Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State might be syncretising?

There are uncountable ways in which the Yoruba Muslims in Epe here are syncretising; marriage, naming, funeral, the use of *Oogun* (charms). In fact, in various traditional festivals, you see Muslims celebrating some of these festivals with the pagan; one will find it difficult to differentiate between the Muslims and the idol worshippers.

What do you think is the impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

I can say in the areas of language, dressing, and some of their ceremonies to a large extent. For instance, Islam makes us to know that eating pork is unlawful.

Do you agree with the fact that the Muslim Clerics (*Aafa*) are also contributing to this problem?

In some areas of syncretism, the Muslim Yoruba Afa carry the largest burden, for instance, in the areas of Oogun, Nakali, marriage ceremonies, naming, funeral. They are the one that worsen this phenomenon

Do you think that the role of our *Marakiz* (Arabic cum Islamic School) is being in this regard?

I do not think that they are contributing meaningfully in terms of this problem you are talking about; many of them go to Arabic school to irk their living. The love of materialism has taken some of them out of Islam becoming disguised *Babalawo*.

What do you think are some of the negative impact of syncretism on the generality of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

They are not respected by other religious people, spiritually; any one that associates partners with Allah will be in hell fire. Sometimes, there is a mistake of identity.

In some quarters, some people believe that ignorance and poverty are also part of major factors responsible for this persistent syncretism. Do you also share this assertion and why?

Actually.

From your own experience so far, what do you think are the major solutions to this problem?

Fear of Allah in all what we are doing, provision of adequate job etc. Government should provide more jobs, health care centre etc. Rich Muslims should come to the aid of the down-trodden among the Muslims; they should sponsor indigent students to further their education.

Could you please enumerate the role of the following categories of people in eradicating this phenomenon: Muslim clerics, *Imams*, *Mudiru*, and the

presidents and missionaries of various Islamic organizations? Are there any personal comments on this?

They should come together to look for ways of solving this problem; by organizing seminars, workshops, conferences etc

How do you assess the infiltration of western culture/value amidst the Yoruba Muslim?

It is due to western education, sheer ignorance about Islam etc.

PROFESSOR MUHIBBUDEEN, HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY.OJO.LAGOS

Assalam alaykum, could you please tell me a bit about your background.

I was born into Islam, brought up in Islam, studied Islam, lived in Islam. I just found myself praying when I was young. I was very conscious of Islam since when I was young like that, no adulteration. Islam is my culture, academic up-bringing and practice of Islam. My parents were born and bred in Islam, my grandparents were non –Muslims, but they accepted Islam. I have been practising Islam all along. I cannot even say exactly when I started Islam; but it is from infancy. Alhamdu lillahi I have been teaching Islamic Studies since 1973 at all cadres of our educational system.

From my observation, it seems as if mixing Islam with traditional beliefs and practices is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. What is your view about this?

The Yoruba Muslims were influenced by deep rooted Yoruba culture that has permeated their collective lives. Africans are born to be religious. Traditional religions are parts of our life; there is no difference between mundane and religious life. Yoruba used to say everyday you consult Ifa. In short, Yoruba culture is ridden with indigenous religious activities. They practise Islam all along with traditional religion. They see it as foreign religion whereas Islam is a naturalistic religion; it conforms to human nature and it transcends all national boundary.

What do you think is responsible for this in Lagos State?

Africanness. Africans are in every thing religious, everything is tied to religion; what type of wife, work, business etc you want to venture into. The influence of these traditional religions cannot be automatically wiped out. They practise the two together all along the history of Islam in Yoruba land. Though, nowadays a lot of them are adjusting, the idolaters are now improving in their faith among the Muslims. The knowledge of Islam as spread to many people as against those days of early Islam. The way marriage is done, funeral ceremony, every aspect of life. *Istikhara* has replaced divination for instance. The world becoming a global village every Tom, Dick and Harry is now being conscious of Islam

Do you agree with the claim that the influence of traditional religions cannot be eradicated easily?...Yes/No...Explain?

Yes of course,as I explained earlier.

What is your assessment about the understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Though they accept Allah as one, majority of Muslims understand the supremacy of Allah, but some consciously or unconsciously still commit Shirk. Yoruba believe in the supremacy of *Eledumare*, but they believe there must be intermediaries. So, majority, do not understand *Tawhid* . A lot of them are ignorant about Islam; they associate partners with Allah, participating in Yoruba traditional festivals like *Egungun* festival, believing in chieftaincy titles, preparation of medicine that are magic, sorcery, they call on evil Jinns; these are their agents. Islam abhors all these things.

Do you agree with the fact inadequate knowledge of Islam does affect Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

I have said that earlier; it affects a lot of them .Many do not know the simple rules of *salat*; let alone the types of *Tawhid*..

Could you mention some of the areas in which you think Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State might be syncretising?

They participate in traditional festival, they do charms, they go to diviners etc.

What do you think is the impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

This is apparent in their language, Arabic, dressing etc.

Do you agree with the fact that the Muslim Clerics (*Aafa*) are also contributing to this problem?

At this juncture, there is nothing like clericalism in Islam, it belongs to Christian religion because there is no priesthood in Islam. You don't approach Allah through priesthood. Some people are Islamic dealers, they commercialise Islam; priests creating a trade. They compound the problem. They use Khat Raml (divination through sand) with the sixteen oracles; the business is to make money from ignorant Muslims; knowledge of the masses about Islam is low. Islam does not allow dealership. It is anti-Islam.

Do you think that the role of our *Marakiz* (Arabic cum Islamic School) is being in this regard?

Though many of their graduates end up teaching, organizing one Madrasat or the other. But the largest percentage among them are involved in this clericalism as a means of livelihood, Islamic mode of supplication, prophetic medicine, traditional healing. It is a result out of the fact that their syllabus is not integrated into

the formal system of education, not recognized by the Government. So, they contribute to this problem of syncretis.

What do you think are some of the negative impact of syncretism on the generality of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

The negative impact includes pollution of pure *Iman*, it weakens one's belief in the unity of Allah to be compromised. It makes a Muslim to violate the covenant of Allah thus becoming *A fasiq*, someone who flafrantly violates the *Hudud* of Allah. Taking oath with blood by some Muslim politiciaians. Promoting traditional religions at the expense of Islam; promoting firm faith in Allah. It also promotes disbelief, commercialization of religion. Mixing Islam with Christian elements diminishes the image of the Muslims

From your own experience so far, what do you think are the major solutions to this problem?

I will say mass education of the Muslim faithful by spreading Islamic religion with practice. People should be able to read the Quran and to be translated into Yoruba language. Our *Marakiz* syllabi should be integrated into the formal system. There is nothing like Islamic clericalism 'Islamic dealers'. No priesthood in Islam, Muslim community should come together to create awareness about this problem. Muslims should be given orientation about amassing worldly glamour like posh cars etc. Islamic organizations should rise up to this challenge. Government should create ministry of religious affairs in order to curb these excesses.

Thank you and maa sallam.

DR.R.O. AJETUNMOBI

***Assalam alaykum*, Could you please tell me a bit about your (Muslim/Islamic) background.**

I was born into Muslim's family, my forefather was Ahmadis, they later turned to Anwar islam and then to Ansar deen. I went to Ansarudden Primary I also went to local Quranic school. I was an Islamic studies teacher for some times. I studied Islamic Studies at Ansaru-deen College between 1979-1982. I went Ogun state College of Education.I have attende series of Isalmic Vacation Course(IVC), seminars, edited Muslim student Society Journals. I have Bachelor of Arts at university of Ibadan(Islamic History), patron of some Islamic organizations, Muslim title holder at Imeke under Badagry Local Government

Could you please mention some of the traditional religious beliefs and practices in Lagos State prior to Islam?

They are uncountable; belief in traditional religions, participation in traditional festivals, oro, witchcraft, tying of girdle, amulet all these were so rampant. In short, before the coming of Islam Yoruba were staunch idol worshippers with pantheon of idols.Each town has its own orisa which they worship, they do consult diviners before they can embark on anything.

What do you think are the reasons why some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State still practise traditional religions all along with Islam?

It is like accusation levelled by Uthman bn Fodio to the Kanem ruler a common factor syncretism has been very rampant. You will see learned Aafa, Imam, Shaykh believing in amulets, wearing of girdles. It is every where. Teachers of Islamic Studies do it, they are the most guilty. In fact they combine Islamic healing and the traditional methods. They used to invoke the power of the Jinn. In fact the Nupe people are the most dreaded in Lagos, if you rent house to them, they can kill the Landlord. I have patronised them before. Some of these Aafa do all these things because of economic reasons- a pseudo-livelihood; to get more customers. In fact some people are scared to rent apartment to the Aafa. It was one time rampant at Ibereko in Badagry. They were vying for Imamship in the mosque and they are using magic.

What are the likely reasons responsible for this?

A lot of people have shallow knowledge of Islam; they are not conversant with the exegesis of the Quran or even Theology. Historically, it is a long standing history. It is traditional religions that make them to survive. Psychologically, witchcraft, famine, diseases. Our people do not believe in prayer except amulet, symbol or emblem to be seen physically. The potency of the charm whether Sunnat or not people have much hope in this. Some people believe in prayer while some do not. Gradually, they mixed Islamic culture with traditional culture. Egungun is staged to entertain people because of the Lagos life. I don't believe in the assertion of

Tirmingham that Islam has no impact on Ypruba people. Islam does not totally eradicate Yoruba culture, culture dies very hard; even in the northern part of Nigeria, it has not been totally eradicated, after the death of Uthman dan Fodio, some Muslims reverted

Could you mention some of the ways in which some Yoruba Muslims in Lagos state mix Islam with traditional beliefs and practices?

I have mentioned these earlier on

Do you think western education also plays its role in this regard? Could you please explain this?

I think so in the areas of marriage, naming etc

Do you think Islam has made any positive impact on the Yoruba Muslims' spirituality in Lagos State?

Yes, in the areas of inheritance, western education, beautiful mosques, and local Quranic schools.

Could you please evaluate the role of Arabic schools and the *Muallim Asatidha* in the pervasive problem looking at it from antecedent? Please.

I have said in my introduction that they are the real problem to the society. They are the products of conservative scholars, they interpret the Quran parochially, they have little knowledge of Islamic History, sunnat etc. They give conflicting opinions about Islam. They do not attend seminars nor conferences. They copy their Shaykh without questioning. Some of them have weak faith

Could you please look at the negative impact of westernism on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

They include secularization of Muslim life, decreasing faith, commission of crimes, mixed schools, boy friend and girl friend syndrome, music, brain washing of the Muslims nude society etc

Could you please give some of the negative effects of syncretism on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Lack of trust among the Muslims, problem of identity, hypocrites, impatience, conflict in the society

It seems as if the impact of *Tawhid* has not much been felt in this regard. What do you think is responsible for this?

As I have said, ignorance is so rife among the Muslims today.

Could you please assess the impact of multitude of Islamic organizations on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State in this regard?

I see their impact in term of sensitizing the Muslims on the importance of western education, socialization, enlightenment. They also increase the faith of the Muslims in the 80's. They diverted the Muslim attention from listening to profane music of heartens to Muslim song and music.

Could you examine some of the various ways in which the problem of syncretism can be reduced?

Well, every hand must be on deck; the preacher, parents, teachers inculcating faith in the children early in life. Our personal relationship should be improved upon. There should be emphasis on the absolute tawakkul on Allah. Our Aafa should venture into business, good job. Government should create more jobs. Knowledge of Tawhid should be spread among the Muslims. Prayer (dua) already declining should be impressed upon. Aafa should know that he is accountable to Allah. They should go back to Quran and the sunnat of our noblest Prophet. Tell people what Allah says don't use your whims to explain the Quran.

Do you think the problem of syncretism has become impossible to overcome?

I think it can be reduced but not total eradication

Are there any personal comments on this?

We are in the era of decadence, materialism affects our religion and it causes a lot of innovation. Every innovation is an error. We should implore Allah to continue guiding us and we should be firm; nobody is perfect. There is human limitation to everything. Prayer is very essential.

ALH.MUHYIDEEN- OLORIOMOKEWU BADAGRY CENTRAL MOSQUE

(1) Assalam alaykum, could you please tell me a bit about your background.

Alhamdu lillah, I was born a Muslim into a Muslim home in Badagry, ahlu-l-Quran family. Islam was fortified by ahlu-l-Quran family, custodian of Islam. There were two chief Imams turbaned in our family. History of Islam in Badagry is age long. In fact around 1820-1821 from Oyo empire. Today Islam in Badagry has improved tremendously; there is avalanche of mosques, Imams, more Islamic scholars, knowledgeable people. There are four major cemeteries in Badagry today in order to avoid confrontation with the pagans. Innovation has been reduced, there is uniformity in the commencement of Ramadan fasting

(2) From my observation, it seems as if mixing Islam with traditional beliefs and practices is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. What is your view about this?

I think it is also one of them as you rightly said. There is weak Iman nowadays. My fear is the future graduates of Marakiz, because there is no ready job for them. They end up in misrepresenting Islam, there by becoming commercial Aafaa; their

founding fathers were not doing like this. They have additional vocation like weaving, cloth mending, and tailor. But seeing educated scholars becoming spiritualists, they will not be able to preach pristine Islam.

(3) What do you think is responsible for this in Lagos State?

They were using it then to preach and disseminate Islam. Later some Muslim scholars in Badagry went to politics at the detriment of Islamic propagation. They were uncontrollable inter-marriages between Muslims and non- Muslims. In 1993, there was a protest against the incumbent Imam for allowing a Chairman of local Government to enter the mosques with his shoes on. Police were invited to wade into this incident. This incident led to my involvement actively in Badagry Muslim community. There were some cultural values people found difficult to abandon and so they combine it with Islam; like 8th day Fidau, some superstitious beliefs; they need dua in contradiction to condolence. Scholars are nowadays engrossed in self enrichment. Aafa produce charms for politicians they reward some of them with Hajj. Some do go to fortune tellers instead of Istikhara. There is Ipaje masquerade, Abiku syndrome in Badagry

(4) Do you agree with the claim that the influence of traditional religions cannot be eradicated easily?...Yes/No...Explain?

Yes, of course.

(5) What is your assessment about the understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Very low and dismal.

(6) Do you agree with the fact that inadequate knowledge of Islam does affect Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

It affects a lot of Muslims even in Badagry here

(7) Could you mention some of the areas in which you think Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State might be syncretising?

Participation in traditional festivals, production of charms and amulets.

(8) What do you think is the impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

The impacts can be seen in the fact that today Badagry is being respected as an entity of Islam; the present king of Badagry Oba Akran cannot do anything without consulting with the Muslims. Politically they make reference to Islam and Muslims in Badagry. But very sadly this town is the worst in term of knowledge of Arabic and Islamic studies as a relevant institution. Hitherto, no single Madrasat in Badagry even up to Idadi. We only have mushroom Badagry Arabic schools after walimat, their Aafaa make huge money from the parents; no serious attention given to Arabic and Islamic studies. The impact is not felt at all in Badagry.

(9) Do you agree with the fact that the Muslim Clerics (*Aafa*) are also contributing to this problem?

Yes, of course no job. They produce charms; they get their money from some of these walimat, naming ceremony etc occasions.

(10) Do you think that the role of our *Marakiz* (Arabic cum Islamic School) is being in this regard?

Not at all in Bagagry, no Markaz, and the local Ile –Kewu only conduct walimat, makes their money, and the impact is not felt on the children.

(11) What do you think are some of the negative impact of syncretism on the generality of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Installation of religious leaders and Imams based on the right of inheritance without due regard to education; thinking that they can curb the problem of ignorance, knowledgeable people are not considered. There was a time in Badagry Central mosque, when the children of one deceased Imam wanted to bury their father in the mosque, citing the example of the Prophet; this incident almost divided the Badagry Muslim community, especially the Tijaniyyah Tariqah, they hang pictures where they worship. They retain Yoruba culture naming their child after the death of the

father as Yetunde, so permissive this Yoruba traditional religion. It really affects the image of Islam.

(12) In some quarters, some people believe that ignorance and poverty are also part of major factors responsible for this persistent syncretism. Do you also share this assertion and why?

Yes, of course.

(13) From your own experience so far, what do you think are the major solutions to this problem?

Modern, functional, undiluted Islamic institutions in which the ideals of Islam will be showcased. Graduates of Arabic schools should be given the opportunity to get means of sustenance; they should be given job and be well remunerated. They should be economically independent. Some norms or values like preservation of meat, kayokayo, celebration of laylatul Qadir, which has no basis, should stop henceforth. Muslim Student Society should intensify orientation of the Muslims about pristine Islam. There should be constant Islamic awareness. Islamic organizations like NASFAT, FATHU QUARIB, JEJEWIYYAH etc. We need to ask question to what extent do they educate the Muslims, no enlightenment; this is still affecting the level of awareness. We should do away with selfish enrichment. Proprietors of Private Arabic schools should intergrate their school's curriculum.

Alhamdu lillah today, there is hope, there is increased awareness, mantle of leadership has been prioritised on knowledge. We have been removing cultism among the Muslims.

(13) Could you please enumerate the role of the following categories of people in eradicating this phenomenon: Muslim clerics, *Imams*, *Mudiru*, and the presidents and missionaries of various Islamic organizations? Are there any personal comments on this?

Let all of them speak in one voice, to stamp out this nuisance

(14) How do you assess the infiltration of western culture/value amidst the Yoruba Muslim?

Western culture in a loose way, we also have Arab culture. If you attend a marriage ceremony in Badagry, man wearing suit; but here the women dressing is more important. To condemn birthday, there is record for it. Baba Adinni birthday in the mosque; let us read the Quran and prayer as a reception, and we give lecture. Anniversary of marriage anniversary is caused by ignorant about Islam.

Thank you.

**DR L.M.ADETONA, LECTURER ISLAMIC STUDIES
DEPARTMENT.LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY.OJO-LAGOS.**

Assalam alaykum, could you please tell me a bit about your background.

I was born a Muslim, into a Muslim family, my parents are Muslims. I attended Arabic school and western oriented school simultaneously. I practised Islam with conviction. Informally, I have been teaching in the University since 1985. I have been teaching Islamic Studies in Lagos state University since 1992. I taught at Zulhiat College of Arabic and Islamic Studies. To date I am still a classroom teacher teaching both undergraduate and post graduate. I once described the practice of Islam in Lagos State as part of their norms and culture; most of the Muslims in Lagos are by birth, not by conviction. Syncretism is still widely practised in Lagos State; they do not practise Islam wholeheartedly. We need more lecture on syncretism.

From my observation, it seems as if mixing Islam with traditional beliefs and practices is a major problem facing Islam in Lagos State. What is your view about this?

I don't see it as a major problem, I think it was in the past, There is a shift now, the reason is due to fear of the unknown among the Yoruba, they consult the priests, they practise sorcery.

What do you think is responsible for this in Lagos State?

The knowledge of Islam is not general among the Yoruba. They have spiritualists, the clerics. The Muslims are not wholeheartedly submitted to Islam; they use traditional methods to cure sundry ailments. Some of them patronise them in the supposed efficacy they have. Traditional influence cannot be easily wiped out. Common ground should be worked upon, like people seeking for providence. Islam finds way of praying for those looking for materialism

Do you agree with the claim that the influence of traditional religions cannot be eradicated easily?...Yes/No...Explain?

Yes, of course.

What is your assessment about the understanding of *Tawhid* among Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

Very low.

Could you mention some of the areas in which you think Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State might be syncretising?

Divination, magic, secret cultism, some of their members will be struggling to bury their members. Marriage, Muslim traditional rites, they syncretise in wedding ceremony

What do you think is the impact of Islam on Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

In the areas of marriage, consultation, language, dressing etc. I don't agree with Trimingham that Islam has no impact on the people of west Africa.

Do you agree with the fact that the Muslim Clerics (*Aafa*) are also contributing to this problem?

They are also contributing to the problem largely.

Do you think that the role of our *Marakiz* (Arabic cum Islamic School) is being in this regard?

I have said else where that this crop of Muslim graduates are liability to the Muslims community. The impact is not felt at all. Only few of them get Government job, their education and curriculum ought to be overhauled and integrated into modern education system like what is happening in Northam

What do you think are some of the negative impact of syncretism on the generality of Yoruba Muslims in Lagos State?

People of other faiths make mockery of them, Muslims are very weak in their faith.

In some quarters, some people believe that ignorance and poverty are also part of major factors responsible for this persistent syncretism. Do you also share this assertion and why?

Yes of course.

From your own experience so far, what do you think are the major solutions to this problem?

Though the problem is a generational problem which needs a constant campaign. It is a very dangerous problem and I think those guilty of this crime should be sanctioned; Government should create more job to our many unemployed graduates. Our preaching should emphasize trust in Allah.

How do you assess the infiltration of western culture/value amidst the Yoruba Muslim?

Western education has both positive and negative values, it leads to o emergence of *Marakiz* with their modern methods of teaching, and it leads to o creation of jobs. We should adopt positive reaction to western education in order to attain exalted position in the world.

Appendix VI

[Not available in the digital version of this thesis]