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Reincarnation in Yorùbá Cosmology: Analysis of Akudàyà and Akúhàn from the Viewpoint of Selected Yorùbá Islamic Scholars

By

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Abstract

Reincarnation, one of the most controversial subjects manifests in Yorùbá cosmology through Akudàyà and Akúhàn among others. While many Islamic scholars have rejected reincarnation as heresy, akudàyà and akúhàn pose a different challenge as proofs abound in some of the mysterious happenings in Yorùbá land. Thus, this study examines Akudàyà and akúhàn as manifestations of reincarnation, discussed the subjects from an Islamic viewpoint and offers recommendations to promote Yorùbá Islamic scholars approach to the subjects.

The study adopted a descriptive discourse, using interview as the major research tool and reparatory grid technique that allowed the carefully selected respondents express their views and opinions freely. Content analysis of the results obtained was done for easy comprehension of the information.

The study found that akudàyà and akúhàn are mysteries that are prominent among Yorùbá people of Southwest Nigeria. The six (6) Yorùbá Islamic scholars interviewed in this study are divided about the causes and implications of such mysteries to the faith of Yorùbá Muslims as well as the right attitude to it. While four (4) of them fully rejected the notion as heretic, two (2) of them held that they are possibilities that are beyond human comprehension. Nevertheless, all the scholars agreed that Yorùbá Muslims should perceive akudàyà and akúhàn only as manifestations of the power of Allah and approach the mysteries as people who truly believe in Allah.

The study thus concluded that, for as long as the mysteries linger in the minds of people or their experiences, questions around them will be inevitable and inexcusable. Hence, Islamic scholars among the Yorùbá Muslims must continue to re-affirm the position of Islam on life after death and offer interpretations that would further promote better understanding of the teachings, especially in relation to the cultural realities and beliefs of the Yorùbá people as well as the right attitude to such cultural realities and beliefs.



Keywords: Reincarnation, *Àkudàáyà*, *Àkúhàn*, Yorùbá, Muslims.

Introduction

Reincarnation: a return to earthly life after death remains one of the most controversial subjects among people of faith. Its manifestations in Yorùbá cosmology include *Àkudàáyà* (living-dead) and *Àkúhàn* (reappearance after death) among others. Although, many Islamic scholars have rejected reincarnation as heresy, *Àkudàáyà* and *Àkúhàn* pose a different challenge as proofs abound in some of the mysterious happenings in Yorùbá land, Southwest Nigeria. Thus, this study examines *Àkudàáyà* and *Àkúhàn* as manifestations of reincarnation in Yorùbá cosmology and discusses the subjects from an Islamic viewpoint with a view to offering research-based recommendations to promote Yorùbá Islamic scholars approach to the subjects.

Àkudàáyà and *Àkúhàn* in Yorùbá Cosmology

Yorùbá tradition considers *Àkudàáyà* – the living-dead to be real. *Àkudàáyà* in Yorùbá traditions refers to the living-dead i.e. one who is believed to have died prematurely and reincarnated to continue living until the appointed time in his *Ayànmó* (destiny). The word *Àkudàáyà* itself emerges from three Yorùbá words i.e. *Àkú* – died, *dà* – becomes *áyé* – living or *Àkù* – died, *dà* – re-emerge or regenerate, which simply means: “to die and become a living being again” (Adewoyin, 2001).

Àkudàáyà occurs when someone mostly, a young man or woman at his or her prime dies (presumably prematurely and untimely) and later on, reappears in another place (where he was unknown) different from his/her initial abode to continue living just like a normal human being. Yorùbá tradition holds that *Àkudàáyà* maintains the same appearance and body physique but they are always susceptible to fear that some of the people who knew them before their initial life might find them again (Adewoyin, 2001; Adágbadá, 2019).

Although, many people might think that *Àkudàáyà* is a myth because it has not been scientifically proven, there had been several reported cases of people who lived outside their initial domain, married and sent their children, spouses, and property back home to initial families. That, according to Yorùbá belief is a major indicator of an *Àkudàáyà*. Mostly, Yorùbá people often suspect others who do not travel or lay claim to any town or people as their own after a long time of residing in a place without anyone knowing the roots of such individuals for such long periods as *Àkudàáyà*.

It is pertinent to note here that, *Àkudàáyà* in Yorùbá is not often applicable to people who died at the ripe age (for example, 60 and above) just as *Àsèyinwáyé* (a return to earthly life through rebirth) is not associated to people who died “untimely” or young too. The concept of *Àkudàáyà*

is limited to only people who have not yet fulfilled their destiny – *Ayànmó* on earth according to Yorùbá beliefs; they die at their prime (Idowu, 1962; Adágbadá, 2019). Yorùbá call them *òkú-òfò* (calamitous death of a young person). Usually, Yorùbá refer to them as people who died awfully (*ikí gbígbóná*) especially through accidents or violence. This is why Adewoyin (2001:166) states:

Àwọn Yorùbá tun gbàgbó pè eni tí ó bá kú nígbà tí ojó rẹ l'áyé kò tìlú pé láti kí kíi lọ sí òrun tààrà, wón ní ní se ní wón mágá n tátàre tarè kiri tití ojó rẹ yóò fi pé ní ayé kí ó tó lè padà sí òrun. Irú àwọn tí wón bá fí ojó olójó lọ báyíí mágá n lọ gbé ní ilú mítiràn. Àwọn èdá báyíí ni à n pè ní Àkudàáyà tábí àkúhàn.

Translation:

Yorùbá believe that people who died before their divinely appointed time do not go to heaven (i.e. abode of the dead). Rather, they become wandering spirits until their divinely appointed time has reached. Such people are known as *Àkudàáyà* or *Àkúhàn* (Translation is mine).

Therefore, Yorùbá belief in *Àkudàáyà* premises on the belief in the obligation of every human to fulfil his or her destiny before death. Thus, Yorùbá concept of *Àkudàáyà* is a situation warranted by sudden interruption in the term of a living human. Although, Yorùbá believe in the divinity of destiny, they also hold that non-divine powerful forces can manipulate or interrupt it as shown above. However, when the manipulation or interruption of a

human destiny causes sudden death, Yorùbá believe that the soul of the deceased is bound to fulfil the destiny at another place. A bid to justify this constitutes what Yorùbá hold that the dead fulfils his or her destiny and the goods and children sent home alongside property is to reward the family he/she has left to wriggle in the sudden and painful agony of his/her exit or as fulfilment of his or her destiny and/or promises. It also supports the belief that there are malevolent spirits who sabotage human hopes and aspirations by inflicting death or other nefarious things on their targets.

While it is admissible that every other thing mentioned by Adewoyin (2001) above is in consonance with *Àkudàáyà* in Yorùbá culture, *Àkúhàn* (which is similar to a cameo appearance) is brief appearance of a dead person to someone who at the time was still oblivious to the news of his or her death (Egunjobi, 2020).

Ifaráhàn or *Àkúhàn* is a very brief appearance in which the dead appears to relatives or friends who are yet to learn of his/her death either to indirectly hint them about his/her demise or to pass a very important message for others through them. *Àkúhàn* does not seem to be a perfect synonym for *Àkudàáyà* because *Àkúhàn* is a mere brisk show-up to a person or persons who is/are yet to know that the *Àkúhàn* is dead. The dead in the category of *Àkúhàn* appears visibly and briskly like a ghost. Only after some time will it dawn on the person or persons who saw the *Àkúhàn* that it was the ghost



of a deceased that they saw. After the death of the person or persons is confirmed to the one to whom they appeared, such would know that the seemly trance is actually real life experience.

As *Akúhàn*, the dead has foreknowledge of whether or not the person to whom he/she appears has knowledge of his/her death before appearing to them. Some hold that immediately he/she (the dead i.e. *Akúhàn* in this case) knows that the person to whom he/she appears is aware of his/her death, he/she disappears and never to be seen physically again. Premised on the idea that the souls of unburied people hover around their houses until burial is done, others hold that *Akúhàn* may appear to anyone in real life whether they already knew of his/her death or not for as long as he/she has not been buried. Most Yorùbá people believe that dead people who reappear in real life after their burial are *Akúdàáyà*. Egunjobi (2020: 5) writes:

The *Akúdàáyà* continues his or her life from where it stopped like a normal person. He or she interacts with people, works or schools, enters sexual relationship, gets married and can have children. *Akúdàáyà* avoids the knowledge of himself or herself that the moment someone recognises him or her, he or she disappears.

Another major difference between *Akúdàáyà* and *Akúhàn* is that the former applies only to young people believed to have died through unnatural means and at an age considered young by culture. The

latter applies to anyone that appears soon after his or her death and before burial irrespective of his or her age at the time of death or cause of death. It is worthy of note that *Akúdàáyà* in Yorùbá traditions does not apply to people who died at the actual time and at the age decreed in their destiny even if they died young. Hence, Yorùbá belief in *Akúdàáyà* is not general for everyone who died young or through unnatural causes.

It is a widespread belief among Yorùbá people that, when an incidence of *Akúdàáyà* who sends his or her new family to his or her parents occurs, the parents will show the spouse and children to the grave of the *Akúdàáyà* (thus, revealing to them that the person that sent them home had been dead for some time). It is only then that the spouse and children of an *Akúdàáyà* will learn that, the man/woman is a living-dead. From that time onward, the person (the *Akúdàáyà*) will not appear to them in real life again. Yorùbá tradition holds that after the discovery of an *Akúdàáyà*, it would never be found again even if traced back to the place he or she had resettled.

If the *Akúdàáyà* is neither married nor with children, he/she might send properties home for his/her siblings and parents like someone who takes care of his or family from afar. Yorùbá believe that if the family keeps the secret of the incarnate from others after finding out about it, the *Akúdàáyà* might continue to be of help to the family by sending gifts but

might never show up in person again (Adewoyin, 2001).

When the spouse of an *Akúdàáyà* pesters to know his or her family, the incarnate describes the town and family from which he or she hailed from to his or her spouse and children. Some would even take them close to the compound or a town away from his/her initial home before he/she takes an excuse and absconds or disappears forever. Yorùbá texts, oral traditions and Yorùbá Nollywood movies often propagate belief in *Akúdàáyà*. Some popular but unproven Yorùbá beliefs about *Akúdàáyà* include the belief that if the person who finds an *Akúdàáyà* pours handful of sand at the incarnate unexpectedly, such incarnate might be trapped and will not be able to disappear again. Although, the thought defies logic and lacks scientific backing, it is a common saying among people in Yorùbá land. Such incarnate would live among people he knew again. Nevertheless, this case is very rare because *Akúdàáyà* are believed to have power to foresee someone that knows him or her and would wish to do such to him or her (Adágbdá, 2020).

Akúdàáyà may also go to places distant from their initial home where according to Yorùbá traditions, they can use their real bodies buried in another faraway place because their new neighbours do not know that they had lived and died before. At their new places of living, they will live like every other human, marry, and give birth to children, own properties and in most cases become very rich

and influence the wealth of their spouses positively. While Yorùbá believe that *Akúdàáyà* is a living-dead, they hold that the spouses, children, and properties of *Akúdàáyà* are always real. If the *Akúdàáyà* lived long enough in his or her second life and evaded apprehension or discovery by others, he or she will have no need to reincarnate again (Opefeyitimi, 2019).

Yorùbá beliefs also hold that there are various kinds of *Akúdàáyà*, prominent among them are *Akúdàáyà Olóòrò* (standing corpse) and *Akúdàáyà Onídùbùlè* (laying corpse) as depicted in the movie, *Ayélojá* – a Yorùbá movie that starred Ibrahim Chatta. *Akúdàáyà Olóòrò* refers to every living human being. This is in reference to the Yorùbá belief that every human being is a returnee on earth and every human being is a living-dead or shall die. Hence, they say “*Ókú ñsukún ókú, akáṣo l’óri ñsukún ara wọn*” which literally means “the living-dead cries for the deceased, the corpse cries for the other corpse”. In addition, as depicted in the movie ‘*Ayélojá*’, *Akúdàáyà Onídùbùlè* refers to people who died without completing the terms stipulated in their destiny. Yorùbá believe that such people are denied entrance into *Àjulé-órun*(heaven or realm of the dead) because the times appointed for them in their destiny (*Àyànmó*) have not reached when they ‘died’. They may, however, be returned to earthly life in places far away from their initial homes and live according to their



destiny until death (Opefeyitimi, 2009).

Adágbadá (2019) in her review of the movie titled *Ayé Keji* also gives a very lucid explanation of the Yorùbá understanding on reincarnation as well as the relationship that exists between the physical and the spiritual realms. The scholar explains that Yorùbá believe that human's sojourn on earth is similar to going back and forth to and from a market place. Adágbadá (2019) argues that although, the concept of *Àkúdàáyà* appears more like a myth, events and mysterious occurrences that depict it continue to challenge human intellect and demand answers and the reality of reincarnation is undeniable.

Nevertheless, misconception about the notion of *Àkúdàáyà* challenges common sense as much as it does the orthodox beliefs of Islam. Akomolafe (2016: 51) considers the belief in *Àkúdàáyà* and others similar to it as "ill-thought-out metaphysics of life". He notes:

While we maintained that this illogically does not translate to the claim that the Yoruba (sic) are irrational, we noted that there exist some conflicting claims in cluster of beliefs upon which the belief in life after death was erected. The implication noted was that, if one of these beliefs (say, for instance, belief in *Orí* (destiny) collapsed; then other beliefs erected on it are likely to collapse. Hence, the paper demonstrated that contemporary Yoruba scholars should begin to develop a defence for some of the ill-

equipped and/or ill-thought-out metaphysics on life, death and, life after death, among other Yoruba beliefs".

Therefore, the concept of *Àkúdàáyà* continues to be challenged both from religious and philosophical points of view. Akomolafe (2016: 35) in an attempt to raise further questions on the concept of the living-dead writes: ...life stands in opposition to death. That is, something that is not alive is dead in the same way that something that is not dead is alive. The first striking point is that nothing can be both alive and dead at the same time. That is, it is either A is alive or A is dead; not both. Second, the distinction between time of life and death can be drawn. This connotes that life, in this physical world, is ephemeral. Hence, there is a change in life-form at death. In this respect, the distinction between life and death has come to be shown, over the years, through the cessation of breath, consciousness and irresponsiveness of the biological organs.

The subject of the living-dead continues to raise psychological, mystical and philosophical questions that may not be fully understood by man but studies and research efforts will continue to further man's comprehension of the human nature and the myths and mysteries in existence.

Reincarnation from an Islamic Viewpoint

The most popular Arabic word for reincarnation is *At-Tanásukh* (التناسخ)

from the root Nasakha (نسخ) which literally means to replace. It can also be referred to as Al-Ma'ād (المعاد) and At-Taqammuş (التفصل) transmigration or transfiguration. Also closely related to reincarnation is the concept of Ar-Raj'ah (الرجعة) which means a "return" to earthly life or resurrection from death before the final resurrection of the Day of Judgement. Bulğen (2018: 128) writes:

The term 'tanásukh', derived from the Arabic word 'naskh', which literally means, "replacing something with another thing by repudiating it" and "transferring it from a place to another", can be defined as the rebirth of a living being in a different body after its death to complete the evolution of its soul.

As expressed above, Islam is a religion that has a very lucid explanation on the journey of the human soul and whatever happens to the human soul, when it/will happen(s) and how it/will happen(s) before life on earth and until the day of judgement. Although, the belief in reincarnation among Muslims can be found mostly with sub-sects of Shī'aism, Druze, Alawites, Sūfis and others, it remains a subject that continuously requires convincing explanation (Meyzami-Azad, 2017).

Islamic scholars have written a good number of Islamic/Arabic texts on the subject. Thus, the subject is not new to Islam and Muslims. As explained by Husayn (1991), one of the classical scholars of Islam, al-Mas'ūdiy (died 906AD) had noted in

his writings that the concept of reincarnation emerged from the Indian and Greek philosophies. Similarly, Abu al-Fathi Shahristānī discussed reincarnation in his famous work *al-milal wa anniḥal*. Al-Bīrūni, in his treatises on the Hindus, had also noted reincarnation and compared the Hindu's view of immortality with the views of the Greek philosophers, in particular Plato (Husayn, 1991).

The concept of reincarnation was said to have found its way into Muslim writings following the spread of Islam to the Indian and Persian continents where reincarnation constituted an important aspect of faith. Thus, the subject has appeared in Islamic theology ('Ilmal-Kalām) and Muslim/Islamic Philosophy (*Falsafatu al-Islāmiyyah*). Eschatological arguments on the subject of reincarnation can be found in the works of Bashar Ibn al-Mu'tamar al-Mu'taziliy (d. 825AD), Husayn ibn Mūsa (9th century) who authored *Kitābur-Radd 'alā Tanásukhi* and several others (Husayn, 1991). According to Husayn (1991), several classical works were written on reincarnation in Islam. However, many of the works are either currently unavailable in prints or were never published. Nevertheless, the works are proof that the eschatological argument on reincarnation among Muslims has lasted over a thousand (1000) years. Among the notable theological works are:

Kitābal-Buṭāni an-Naskh wa al-Maskh written in French by Abu Al-Qāsim An-Naqwiy;



Kitāb Ibtāl at-Tanāsukh by Shaykh Ali al-Hazūn (d. 1181);

Kitāb Ibtāl at-Tanāsukh by Mirza Hasan ibn al-Mawla ‘Abdur-Razaq (d. 1710);

Kitāb Ibtāl at-Tanāsukh by Shaykh Muhammad Riḍā at-Tahrānī;

Kitāb Ibtāl at-Tanāsukh by Mawlah Muhammad ‘Ali ibn Muhammad Ja’far (d. 1902); and

Kitāb Ibtāl at-Tanāsukh by Sayyid al-Ma’āsir Muhammad Hārūn (d. 1921).

The subject has equally appeared in many recent writings as a passage or as part of an eschatological study of Abrahamic religions. Among such is the Reincarnation in Abrahamic Religions by Meysami-Azad (2017), Yahya’s *Islam and Karma* (2013), Reincarnation in Buddhism: An Analysis from Islamic Perspective by Sheikha (2014) and so on. The notion of “reincarnation in Islam” also found a footing among sub-sects of Shi’ism such as the Ghullāt (extremists) amongst the Saba’iyyah, Kaysāniyyah, Bayāniyyah, Hattābiyyah, Jahāniyyah and Rāwandiyyah; Druze; ‘Alawiyyah; Mu’tazilah sub-sects such as al-Khābiṭiyyah (followers of Ahmad bn Khābiṭ) and al-Ḥadāthiyyah (followers of Faḍlu al-Ḥadāthī), Isma’iliyyah, Yazidiyyah, Bektāshīyyah, Hurufism and Ḥimāriyyah and Sūfi sub-sects (Ahmad, 1987; Makiyyu, 1991; Al-Harūt, 2007). The Mu’tazilites were also strong proponents of reincarnation. They consider it a means to the justice of Allah and His kindness. While there is no more

known Mu’tazili sect or figure today, the belief in reincarnation remains mostly supported by adherents of the Druze and ‘Alawiyyah sects (who believe that every individual must reincarnate repeatedly) and tiny factions of Shī'a and Sūfis and majority of Shī'a in the form of *Raj’ah*(Jarhom, 2014). Bulğen (2018: 129) puts the view of the majority of Muslims on reincarnation in the following words:

As regards the doctrine of *tanāsukh*, Islamic theologians rejected it in all its aspects on grounds of it being incompatible with the essentials of the Islamic religion, especially the Qur’ān, Sunnah and *Ijmā'* (consensus). As a result, anyone that endorsed *tanāsukh* was deemed an infidel.

Akintola (1990) also argues against the idea of reincarnation by classifying it as a heretic system of thought that some Shī'a and some other minor Muslim sects are trying to smuggle into the orthodox Islamic thought. Akintola (1990) leaning his argument on previous works written by authors who also opposed the idea of reincarnation and the orthodox teachings of Islam explains that no single soul comes to the world twice.

Thus, rather than roaming the world or continuously existing on earth after repeated deaths, Akintola (1990) alludes that all souls return to the original source of creation i.e. Allah. He also opines that although the human mind has the capacity to study and understand the cosmos extensively, humans will not be able

to have adequate understanding of the nature of the soul because it is a matter of the *Ghayb* – unseen, the total knowledge of which belongs only to Allah. Glorious Qur’ān 17:85 clearly states that the human intellect will not be capable to fully comprehend the nature of the human soul when it states “And they ask you about the Spirit. Say, “The Spirit is of the Command of my Lord; and in no way have you been brought of knowledge except a little”

In view of the above, intellectual discussions around the journey of the human soul from the state of nothingness (*‘Adm* – عدم) to its time on earth (*Wujūd* - وجود) and what comes after that constitutes only an infinitesimal percentage of the knowledge and truth about the human soul. Thus, the Sunni Muslim sect relies majorly on scriptural teachings and leaves no room for manipulations of the meanings of the verses of the Glorious Qur’ān, which may result to distortions and misguidance.

According to Jarhom (2014), some Shī'a sects also hold that the Shī'a Imams will reincarnate at an appointed time. However, study reveals that a vast majority of Sunni and Shī'i Muslims do not believe in the reincarnation of souls. It is worthy of note that the majority who reject the belief in rebirth or reincarnation in all of its manifestations among Sunni and Shī'i Muslims consider proponents of reincarnation heretics (Muhammad, 2015; Makiyyu, 1991; Al-Harūt, 2007).

Many Islamic scholars from the major communities of the Muslim

world (the Sunnis) have rejected the concept of reincarnation, transmigration, or rebirth more vehemently because they perceived it as a doctrine that contradicts Belief in the Last Day (i.e. Īmān bi al-Yawm al-akhir) and in the doctrine of the torment and reward in the grave. Al-Farābī, Ibn Sīnā and several other Muslim philosophers who have written on the concept of the human soul have also rejected the concept of reincarnation because they believed that it suggests unending existence of humankind on earth. Some Islamic scholars also hold that the belief in reincarnation among Muslims stemmed from influence of ancient Greek and Christian theosophical systems and inferential nature of some verses of the Glorious Qur’ān. Among such verses are Glorious Qur’ān 36: 77-79:

Doth not man see that it is We Who created him from sperm? Yet behold! He (stands forth) as an open adversary!

And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (Origin and) Creation: He says, "Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?"

Say, "He will give them life Who created them for the first time! For He is Well-versed in every kind of creation!"

Zamakhshari (2009) in the popular Tafsīr work *Al-Kashshāf* credited to him explains that Glorious Qur’ān 36: 77-79 reveals that Allah is angered by the thought of some parties among men that they shall not be raised for resurrection and judgement. He



explains that it is a denial of the humble beginning of man who was created from the state of nothingness and for the purpose of serving his Lord. He expatiates further that the meaning of bringing the dead back to life according to the verses is proof of the power of Allah to restore man into a new body after it has decayed.

Al-Baydāwī (2016) in his *Tafsīr Anwār at-Tanzil wa Asrār at-Ta'wil; Abī as-Su'ūd* (1971) in his *Tafsīr* titled *Tafsīr Abī as-Su'ūd al-Musammā irshād al-'Aqlas-Salīm ilā mazāyāāl-Kitāb al-Karīm*; Shaykh Zādo (1998) in his *Hāshiyatul Shaykh Zādo 'alā Tafsīr Qādī al-Baydāwī*; Muhammad-Al-Amīn (2014), the author of *Aqwā'u al-Bayān fī idāhi al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*; Muqātil (2003) in *Tafsīr Muqātil Ibn Suālymān* and several other exegetes understood and explained the verses as proof of the power of Allah to cause death upon man and restore him to life on the Day of Judgement.

Yāsin (1994) in the *Tafsīr* work *Murwiyyāt al-Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal fit-Tafsīr* explains that the verses describe the power of Allah to create and recreate, as He likes. Al-Qushayrī (2007) in *Tafsīr Al-Qushayrī* while explaining the verses likens the thought that resurrection for judgement shall not occur or that life shall continue on earth through rebirth or reincarnation to a derailment of the purpose of the human intellect. This is because Islam clearly states that all souls shall remain in the *Barzakh* (interspace) until the Day of Resurrection (Yahya, 2013).

By that, Al-Qushayrī argues that the denial of resurrection on the Day of Judgement or the thought of other means of retribution is a denial of God Who bestows the intellect with which man is able to think and process his thoughts. Thus, many Islamic scholars perceived reincarnation as a contrast belief to the teachings entrenched in Islamic eschatology (Ahmad, 1987; Husayn, 1991; Al-Harūt, 2007). Nonetheless, the story of the man who was murdered among the people of Prophet Mūsā (AS) concerning whom Allah reveals Glorious Qur'ān 2: 66 - 73; Companions of the Cave (*Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*) and Glorious Qur'ān 18: 9-14 and 2: 259 as well as many others depict a return to earthly life after an initial death. Qur'ānic exegetes agree that they are proofs of the power of Allah to create life and death. Hence, the verses do not substantiate the belief in *Karma* and reincarnation through rebirths and transmigration as embedded in the Hindu and Yorùbá traditions and cultures. However, the verses undeniably establish a return to earthly life after death. Hence, the verses created the possibility of discussing reincarnation. They would also continue to spur Muslims into asking further questions about the subject matter especially in relation to the realities in their native cultures and traditions.

Analysis of Findings

Interview with the selected Yorùbá Islamic Scholars

Question One (1):

Is it true that some people die before their time?

All Yorùbá Islamic scholars interviewed in this section unanimously hold the view that no human being shall die unless his/her time has reached. The scholars cited several verses of the Glorious Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, among which are:

Say: "I have no power over any harm or profit to myself except as Allah wills. To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached, not an hour can they cause neither delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation)." (Glorious Qur'ān 10: 49).

The Hadith:

'Ubādah bn Ṣāmit said to his son: Son! You will not get the taste of the reality of faith until you know that what has come to you could not miss you, and that what has missed you could not come to you. I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAAS) say: The first thing Allah created was the pen. He said to it: Write. It asked: What should I write, my Lord? He said: Write what was decreed about everything till the Last Hour comes. Son! I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAAS) say: He who dies on something other than this does not belong to me (Al-Khattab: 2008, 213).

The scholars also unanimously affirmed that only Allah has the power to cause death or life. They dispelled the thought and beliefs that any other force, human or *Jinn* (demon) could kill or bring anyone to life again after death. They preached that Allah has

written and sealed all destinies fifty thousand (50,000) years before creation. Thus, the belief in destiny as an article of faith in Islam continuously reverberates from the Yorùbá Islamic scholars throughout the process of the interviews.

Ustadh (Hajj) Tijani Wahid popularly known as *Iwosan-irorun* (Chief Imam of ACADIP, Nigeria) when interviewed in office at Ṣe State succinctly stated that although Allah has destined all things, He also has the power and will to change the record as He desires. He explained that prayers, *Sadaqah* (alms giving) and special events like *Laylatul-Qadr* are factors that play prominent roles in destiny (including death and other forms of misfortune). The scholars also unanimously agree that human actions and *Jinn* can play prominent roles in the actualisation of destiny. Thus, the Yorùbá Islamic scholars interviewed in this work hold that humans and *Jinn* can be a cause (*Sabab*) in the death or misfortune of others but the will and power to cause death and life belongs solely with Allah.

Question Two (2):
How real is the concept of *Akúdàáyà*?

While two (2) of the Yorùbá Islamic scholars in this interview agreed that *Akúdàáyà* is real, four (4) disagreed. Nevertheless, those that agreed about the reality of *Akúdàáyà* also hold that *Akúdàáyà* may be a manifestation of the *Jinni* part of a human being or the actual person who died before. The scholars (Imām Nurudeen Ojulari Kashimawo and



Alfa Sulaiman) argued that although Allah has predestined all things, He (Allah) also endowed some humans with the power to manipulate the causes of life through connivance with *Jinn*.

The scholars hold that such humans have the power to cut short a human's life through spells and magic, thereby forcing the soul to live on (on earth) without a body. This, according to them will make such a soul to wander and go to places far away from its initial family, adorn a new human body, which is exactly like the one that was buried and continue to live until the actual death destined by Allah catches up with him. The scholars refer to several verses of the Glorious Qur'an including Chapter 6: 2 that states:

He it is Who created you from clay, and then decreed a stated term (for you). And there is in His presence another determined term; yet ye doubt within yourselves!

One of the scholars also cited the cases of Mūsā cited in Qur'an 2: 67-73, Qur'an 2: 259, *Ashāb al-kahf* and others that a soul may die and return to earthly life. He however reiterated that death, its causes as well as a possible return to earthly life or judgement from the grave are all parts of the divine decree of Allah and He alone has the power to effect or erase a thing as He wills. He added that a human being will cease to exist soon as the time destined by Allah has reached but when it has not reached, life may still be interrupted by

powerful forces. He also claimed to have seen and heard cases of *Àkúdàáyà*.

However, other scholars in this interview hold that every human is confronted with questioning in the grave immediately after death. They argue that although humans and *Jinn* can be factors in death and life, they do not possess the power to cause death. The scholars largely hold that the death of individual signals the beginning of their journey into the next phase i.e. the *Barzakh*.

Imam Tijani Abdul-Wahid stated that *Àkúdàáyà* is a deception of *Shaytān* to mislead the Muslims into disbelieving in the questioning, punishment and reward of the grave and judgement day. He then quoted Qur'an 7: 16 and explained further that *Shaytān* will continue to seek ways to mislead humankind and turn the believers against Allah. He explains that *Àkúdàáyà* is only a manifestation of *Jinni* part of a human being i.e. *Qarīn* which continues to live after the death of its owner. He stated that the sudden disappearance of *Àkúdàáyà* when discovered is proof that the *Jinn* has achieved its objective of causing confusion for the believers. He emphasised that Islam has highlighted the journey of the human soul and Muslims should not seek any answer beyond what Islam teaches through the Qur'an and Sunnah. Ustadh Abdul-Fattah Adeyemi and Ustadh Abdus-Sami'i Hamzah share the same views with Imam Tijani.

Question Three (3):

What is the relationship between *Àkúdàáyà* and *Jinn*?

Two (2) scholars in this section hold that *Àkúdàáyà* is real and independent of a separate *Jinni*. One of the scholars, Alhaji Sulaiman (Balogun Musulimi Modakeke) holds that at death, every human soul returns to being a spiritual entity, which puts it in the category of *Jinn* i.e. invisible beings. He explains that when/if a human being dies before the actual time destined for him/her, the soul, which according to him has become a *Jinn* automatically struggles to find a new place and adorn a new body. He explains that, he believes in the reality of *Àkúdàáyà* as an entity independent of a *Qarīn* and provided many accounts of such incidences in Oṣun state and several other parts of the country. He narrated that such mysterious occurrences have been recorded at Alapata and Tokere, Oṣun State. He affirmed that he has had direct personal experiences of *Àkúhàn* and *Àkúdàáyà*. Imām Nurudeen Ojulari Kashimawo also claims to have direct experiences of *Àkúhàn* or *Àkúdàáyà*. Thus, their experiences coupled with their views of some verses of the Qur'an inform their belief in the existence of *Àkúdàáyà*.

The scholars, however, hold that humans cannot fully understand the nature of souls and spirits. They also emphasised the need to de-emphasise the existence of such things among Yorùbá Muslims as a way of protecting their understanding of Islam and against confusion/misunderstanding.

Question Five (4):

In your view as an Islamic exorcist, is it true that some souls are reborn into the human world as babies after their initial death?

The scholars in this category unanimously agreed that no human soul shall be born into the world twice except Alhaji Balogun who holds that it is possible. Alhaji Balogun gave an instance of one of his daughters (named Fasilah) who at age eight (8) told his mother (her grandmother) that she was her grandmother's dead mother who had been reborn as a child by her son. She (the young girl) then asked her grandmother (supposedly her own daughter) to warn her son (i.e. her father) against beating her.

Alhaji Balogun explained that when his mother explained to him, he called the young girl and told her that "whether you are my grand mom or great grand mom or not, I will train you as my own daughter because to me, that is who you are". He explained further that he would not have believed what his mother told him but the young girl began to tell stories that even her (grandmother i.e. the father's mother) could never tell, all of which he confirmed to be true. He said, since then, he emphasised the training of the girl and interacted with her only as his daughter, beat her when necessary, scolded her when necessary and gave her a fatherly love. He affirmed that the young girl has become a grown woman and happily married now. Thus, he re-emphasised that although, there are mysteries in world, they must not sway Yorùbá



Muslims from the true teachings of Islam. They must hold on to the teachings of Islam and dispel other beliefs even if they believe that they have convincing proofs. He emphasised that the only way to safeguard the faith of Yorùbá Muslims in the face of all the mysteries of Yorùbá land and the world is to firmly, hold onto the teachings of Islam in the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

The scholars stated that names like *Babátíndé*, *Iyabo* and others like them as common among the Yorùbá is only a way of honouring the memory of departed important members of the family. The names do not connote a return to earthly life for such souls. Yorùbá Muslims should not perceive them (the names) as proof of return to earthly life.

Conclusion

This study has shown that many Islamic scholars from past to present consider reincarnation as heresy, hence, they rejected it. The rejection did not only stem from their perceptions of the teachings of Islam but also from their conviction that reincarnation is a belief, that has no reliable basis in Islam. Most of the Yorùbá Islamic scholars interviewed in this work also hold that such beliefs stem from the deceptions of *Shaytān* while two (2) of them held that reincarnation through its manifestations in *Àkudàáyà* and *Àkúhàn* in Yorùbá traditions are true and not contradictory of the teachings of Islam. They claimed that every human being is destined to die at an

appointed time. However, temporary or unnatural death may occur due to the evil machinations of dark forces. In such cases, the real death has not occurred, hence, the reappearance of the dead. Therefore, the general interpretation of reincarnation as it relates with *Karma* and metempsychosis cannot fully cover the meaning and implication of *Àkudàáyà* and *Àkúhàn* in Yorùbá cosmology. Hence, scholars of Islam among the Yorùbá Muslims must endeavour to re-affirm the position of Islam on life after death and offer interpretations that would promote better understanding of the teachings especially in relation to cultural realities and belief of the Yorùbá people.

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S/ N	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	DATE OF INTERVIEW	VENUE OF INTERVIEW
1.	Shaykh Imām Nurudeen Ojulari Kashimawo, founder and proprietor of Mahdul-Munīr Islamic Institution, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.	60 Plus	Proprietor, Imam, Cleric/Muslim Healer and Preacher.	22/1/2020	Kashimawo Residence, Mabalufon, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.
2.	Ustadh Sharifdeen Mahmud Muhammad Labeeb Adeboye	40 plus	Cleric and Muslim Healer	22/1/2020	Sagamu, Ogun State.
3.	Ustadh Abdus-Sami'i Hamzah	40 plus	Cleric and Muslim Healer	15/2/2020	Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun State.
4.	Alfa Sulaiman Akala Ola-Adua	70 plus	BalogunMusulumi of Modakeke, Ṷṣun State.	11/6/2020	Ola-Adua House, Oke-Otuba, Modakeke, Ṷṣun State.
5.	Ustadh (Hajj) Tijani Wahid A.K.A Iwosan-ir-Orun	50 plus	(Chief Imam of ACADIP, Nigeria, Ṷṣun State; Islamic Healer and Preacher.	13/6/2020	Opposite NNPC Fuel Station, Ondo Road, Modakeke, Ṷṣun State
6.	Ustadh Abdul-Fattah Adeyemi	42	Ondo West Local Government (Ondo Town)	28/7/2020	Ondo State

AN OVERVIEW ON THE AGENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SPREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN TARABA STATE

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Abstract

The study aimed to assess the historical antecedents and roles of agencies responsible for the introduction and propagation of Islam in Taraba State. The primary and secondary data for this study were derived principally through structured interview and analysis of documentary sources. The paper presents an in-depth account of the history of the introduction and spread of Islam in Taraba State and mentions the roles adopted and played by various Islamic bodies or organizations and individuals in the enterprise. The period of the introduction of Islam into what became Taraba State has been determined from the time of its arrival and penetration into Wukari, the establishment of Muri Sub-Emirate, establishment of Gashaka Sub-Emirate and the spread of Islam into Donga, the Chiefdom of Chamba. The paper reveals that, some Muslim rulers were identified to have played vital roles in the growth and development of da'wah in Taraba State. Tijaniyyah and Qadiriyyah Sufi Order, Muslim organizations and Muslim scholars/ individuals were identified to have also contributed greatly to the propagation and development of Islam and Islamic scholarship in the State.

Keywords: Overview, Agents, Responsible, Spread, Development, Islam

Introduction

Taraba State is heterogeneous consisting of several ethnic groups with divergent historical origins, cultural activities and religious belief systems. The belief systems of the people of the State can be classified as Traditional, Islam or Christianity. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that Islam preceded the coming of Christianity by about a century to most of the communities that

constitute the present-day Taraba State.

Muri Emirate was among the Emirates that emerged as a result of the Sokoto Jihad led by Shaykh Uthman bin Fodiyo in 1804. It was in 1817 that Muri Emirate was established after the campaign of the jihadist against the people and polities of the area, particularly the Kona. The activities of the Fulbe in term of administrative control over the vast area, which brought together heterogeneous