

YORÙBÁ:

Journal of Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria



Egbé Onímò-Èdè Yorùbá

ÈGBÉ ONÍMÒ-ÈDÈ YORÙBÁ



Vol. 12, No. 1
January, 2023
ISSN: 1595-1324

Since 1973

The Journal of Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria Vol.12 No 1

Yorùbá:
Journal of the Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria

(ÈGBÉ ONÍMÒ-ÈDÈ YORÙBÁ)

Volume-12, Number-1

January, 2023

ISSN 1595-1324

- Frequency:** Twice a year (January and June)
- Published by:** The Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria (YSAN)
c/o Department of Linguistics and African Languages
University of Ibadan
Website: <http://www.ysan.org>
- Scope:** Yorùbá Language, Literary, Cultural, Philosophy, Religious
Scientific, Communication and Historical studies

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An Overview of the Impact of Arab Civilization on Yorùbá Culture in Nigeria

¹ Busari Kehinde Kamorudeen

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Abstract

Nigeria was a land where idol worship marked the religious life of the inhabitants. With the advent of Islam which came with its civilization, Nigerians' faith, rituals, rites, practices and customs changed and impacted the Nigerian culture. Invariably, the contact of the Arabs with the people of Yorubaland in Nigeria brought about a new era in their beliefs. The Arabs who were mainly Muslims and with the focus to spread Islam preached assiduously against the syncretic religious practices of the Yoruba in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. There is no gainsaying the fact that every religion has its own unique identity characterized by traditions, values and norms that make it stand out. Over the centuries, we have observed that the southwestern Nigeria culture is gradually fading away as we adopt Arab civilization and this persists as days go by. The Arab civilization has influenced the Yoruba culture in different domains. Some of the impacts are noticeable in our education, language, borrowing, social activities, entertainment, traditional settings, marriage, naming, burial and funeral rites and widowhood. This paper employs historical method which attempts to examine how Arab civilization influenced Yoruba culture in the aforementioned domains including religion and devotional rites. It is our hope that some aspects of Yoruba Culture that are not inimical to Islamic teachings would be preserved to avoid becoming moribund.

Keywords: Arab, Culture, Civilization, Impact, Nigeria, Yoruba.

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Introduction

Definitions of Culture differ and in African culture, culture is often defined to denote dance and music. This is evident in Nigeria where an official reception of government dignitaries or their foreign counterparts is regarded as underdone if there is no traditional dancing. It has to be stated here that culture is more than music and dancing as it is an embodiment of the people's way of life, the entirety of their human experiences in connection to their environment and their total pattern of living. Hence, it includes their religious beliefs and philosophies, their languages and literature, their folklore and superstitions, their rules of social and legal systems, their goals and aspirations, their socio economic and political organizations. Meanwhile, the core aspect of African culture is religion. O.U Kalu (1989) asserts that religion dominates the roots of the culture areas of Nigeria. Little or no difference existed between the sacred and the profane dimensions of life. Hence, all activities and means of governance and survival were covered with religious ritual, symbolism and language. B. H Kato (1976) adds more weight to Kalu's assertion about religion by observing that it is in the religious area that Africa has experienced the greatest changes and that religion is the only most important factor of traditional African life. He further posits that religion is the heart of African culture since every aspect of Africa's life is given meaning and direction by religion. While every expression of culture, including religion, the value expectations, the mystical aspects and even the formal and outward appearances may change with time and circumstance, the disposition of religion or the conviction in the divine in African culture opposes change. One of the major factors for source of inspiration is the stimulus for people activities and world view. The reason being that religion involves the entirety of human life, from cradle to grave, from the visible to the invisible world around and beyond human life. Definitely, this understanding implied that the individual's religious life was not disconnected from all that made up the individual's personality, one's physical concerns and existence were intermingled with one's spiritual life. Beginning from prior to birth and proceeding till even after death in the custom of passage through the life cycle, marriage, bearing children, sickness, health, morality, education, seasonal changes socio-political and economic activities, Africans, Nigerians inclusive, are usually immersed in religious rites and from them obtained his sense of unity with universe.

The three prominent tribes in Nigeria are Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. There are myths and mystics which surround the origin of the Yoruba and Hausa. Yoruba trace their origin to Ile-Ife in Osun State Nigeria. Another sources trace their origin to Makkah and Upper Egypt quoting the second millennium B.C. as the period of their migration to Ile-Ife (J.S.

Coleman, 1958). Abubakar also documented a number of myths as regards the point of departure of the Yoruba (R.D. Abubakre, 2004). Among the myths are the view of Adeyemi that Oduduwa migrated from Madinah and that of Muhammed Bello who opined that the immigrants were evicted from Iraq as progenies of the family of Kan'an (R.D. Abubakre, 2004). It seems that Johnson muddle up the origin of Yoruba as he asserts initially that Oduduwa, the progeny of the Yoruba was an immigrant from Makkah but this assertion was late debunked by him;

The Yorubas are certainly not of the Arabian family and could not have come from Mecca... That is to say the Mecca universally known in history.... And no such account as above are found in the record of Arabian writers of any king of Mecca, an account of such importance could hardly have passed unnoticed by their historians (S. Johnson, 1976)

However, Johnson tried to correct the belief of considering all things from the East as being from Mecca and so affirmed that the Yoruba departed from the East though the actual town remains unidentified.

He submits:

The Yoruba came originally from the East there cannot be any slightest doubt as their habits, manners and customs etc. all go to approve with them, the East is Mecca and Mecca is the East... everything that comes from Mecca and hence, it is natural to represent themselves as having hailed from that city (S. Johnson, 1976).

Abubakre however censured Johnson of insincerity as his initial submission that Oduduwa was expelled from Makkah was meant to show his loyalty to the Oyo imperial rule to legitimate the assistance by the Oyo Yoruba to the Fulani Jihad and that he was religiously influenced to have tried to trace the origin of his people to Christian East (R.D. Abubakre, 2004). Al-Ilori submits that the Yoruba were from the Arabs from the lineage of Ya'rab ibn Qahtan who was the founder of the earliest Arab Kingdom or another Ya'rab from the progeny of the first Ya'rab. The word Yoruba was therefore invented from the word "Ya'rab (R.D. Abubakre 2004).

The Hausa States which occupy the control and north western areas of Nigeria were those living at the same time in the Ancient Ghana Empire on the upper Niger and of Kanem Empire East of the sandy Lake Chad under the Sefawa dynasty (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008). The King of Baghdad, Abu Yazid, son of Abdullah was believed to have been the legendary ancestor of the Hausa ruling dynasties. He was said to have migrated to Bornu Kanem after some disagreements that occurred between him and his father in about 8th or 9th century (R.I. Adebayo, 2013). When he Arrived Kanem, he married the daughter of the

King but later left Kanem to Daura as a refugee on his alleged assassination attempt by the King who felt inferior by his popularity in the area. While he had settled in Daura, he demonstrated valiance by killing a big snake which had for a long time hindered the people from having an access to drinking water. In recognition of the communal service, the Queen of Daura married him and gave birth to a son named Bawo who later ascended the throne after the death of his father. Bawo later born seven children who became King of the early Hausa states: Daura, Biram, Katsina, Zaria (Zauzau), Rano, Kano and Gobir. The Islamization of the area later gave birth to the emergence of Seven other states, namely: Zamfara, Ilorin, Yauri, Nupe Kwaraofa, Gwari and Kebbi (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008).

Aside from the opinion on the departure of the Yoruba and Hausa, the natives also had opportunities of being in close association with the Arabs. Meanwhile the Arabs had arrived at the continent of Africa prior to the flight of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) to Madinah. The early Muslims fled to Abyssinia (Ethopia) from the hostilities of the Makkans against the religion of Islam (M.H. Haykal, 1982.) Also, one of the factors which facilitated the close contact of Nigerians with the Arabs was the trans-Sahara trade route from Egypt to Sudan across the Sahara Desert and Lake Chad, Bornu, Hausa and Nope lands of Nigeria. (S. U Balogun, 1998). Islam as a religion had easy penetration into Nigeria through the trade routes. The religion started to spread rapidly like wild fire in Nigeria which resulted to the influence of Arab civilization in the geographical zone, consequently, Arab civilization becomes an equivalent of Islamic civilization. Similarly, the Nigerian cultural values have certain unforgettable influence on civilization introduced by the Arabs.

Areas of Impact of Arab Civilization on Nigerian Culture

In discussing the impact of Arab civilization on human culture generally, especially that of medieval Arab scientists, artists, educators, poets, musicians, and philosophers, one must consider the fact that their thought was guided and formed by many ancient cultures, i.e. Chinese, Indian, Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Canaanite and Byzantine. For instance, Arab Culture from time immemorial has bestowed on us three great religions. Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Perhaps, the greatest impact of Arabs on human civilization has been the phonetic alphabet. In all aspects of our daily activities, in offices, in our homes and universities, in religion, science, philosophy and the art we are greatly indebted to Arab creativity, scientific and insight perseverance (Philip K. Hitti, 1970).

Religious Impact

Islam, an Afro-Asiatic faith, has been known as a religion of great synthesis that has impacted local cultures in many ways for almost a millennium or more adding to the framework of these cultures. Islam was introduced to Africa through trade and migration. In West Africa, for example, Islam made its presence felt from North Africa by Berbers through trans-Sahara trade as early as the ninth century. Later, trade continued to develop among local African groups. The trade network was associated with the diffusion of Islamic studies and enabled the religion to reach the Sahel into the Savannah area. The process of interaction in the coastal trading communities between the Middle Eastern immigrants mainly South Arabians and the dominant African groups brought about a new urban ethos in which Islam blended with the indigenous local culture to produce what is known as Swahili Islam. The cross cultural trade in many parts of Africa fostered a pluralist structure in which the indigenous system, Islam and commerce supported the urban network. Therefore, a balance was established between local ritual prescriptions and those of worldwide Islam (Clark, Peter, 1982).

In Africa, Islam was primarily an urban religion that nurtured commitment to its religious system changing one's ethnic self-identity to Islamic self-identity. Islam, which for many centuries co-existed well with traditional African religion attempted to take over as the dominant religion without major angry argument. The reason being that Islam was more suitable in Africa with very lowest limit of prerequisite for new converts who were expected to have a Muslim name after pronouncing Kalimatu ash-shahaadah (testimony of faith). The nasty epithets such as fetishism, animism paganism, heathenism, Idolatry and polytheism to portray the west African people's religion have been denounced by Awolalu and Dopamu as being offensive, unpleasant and confusing (J.O. Awolalu / P.A. Dopamu, 1979). It is important to mention that these writers recognize the fact that the African people's religion embodies pantheon of the divinities which is a characteristic feature of polytheism and the use of charms, magic and amulets which is a common feature of heathenism. The religion is also connected to certain sacred animals, rivers, hills, stones, trees as well as element of ancestor worship which are the qualities of idolatry and polytheism (J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, 1979). Before the contacts of the Africans, Nigerians inclusive, with the Arabs and spread of Islam, potently believed in the existence of a supreme being bearing different names. This supreme being is so powerful that He could not be reached or moved closer to by ordinary men except through the deities as intermediaries who could be classified into deified and primordial divinities (J.O. Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, 1979). These divinities are regarded as the assistants of the supreme being and assisted him in the work of creation. According to their belief, they had existed on earth and lived an extra-ordinary life and therefore became exalted after death. After

their demise, they believed that they should offer sacrifices to them as a means of worshipping the supreme being through this the supreme being could be easily appeased and thereby grant them their requests.

To make a new era in the religious life of Nigerians, the contact of the Arabs with those who were mainly Muslims contributed immensely to the spread of Islam coupled with the preaching by the Arabs against the religious heresy of Nigerians. Islam was firstly introduced to the Hausa states from Kanem in the 12th century, but became well established in the 14th century through the activities of the Wangara scholars from Mali when King Yaji was on the throne (1349 – 1385). King Yaji's Successors were not disposed to the new religion and therefore returned to the traditional religious practices (P.B. Clarke, 1982). This sheds light on the reason why Ibn Batutah described the Hausa States as Pagans when he was travelling through Air and Takedda in 1353 C.E. (J.S. Trimingham, 1975). King Yakubu of Kano (1452 – 1463) was also instrumental to the flock of the Wangara and Fulani scholars into Kano. After the death of King Yakubu, more scholars visited Hausa states. Muhammad Al-Maghili came to Kano during the reign of Rimfa (1463 – 1499). The Sokoto Jihad of Uthman bn. Fodiyo in 1804 came later to rid the religion of the predominant syncretic practices in the land.

Lack of trade link with the Arab world and the geography of the area which was unfavourable for easy penetration of the Arab traders impeded the spread of Islam among the Yoruba (S.U. Balogun, 1998). The east of the Niger valley occupied by the Ibos also denied the Arabs from having contact with them as the environment was not convenient for foreigners. Yoruba gradually accepted the religion, Islam, because of the activities of Muslim clerics who embarked on preaching the beauties and benefits in the religion. Monotheism was embraced and polytheism was gradually becoming less attractive. Rituals to natural objects were treated as polytheism (Shirk), the most grievous sin in Islam (R.I. Adebayo, 2013).

Nevertheless, for the widely acceptance of Islam in Nigeria, the religion had to tolerate some traditional virtues and accommodate them because of their relevance to Islam. Those teachings that are equally appreciated by Islam like brotherhood, kindness, mutual love, orderliness, honesty generosity and sexual discipline were accommodate by Islam. The common practice of Polygamy in the traditional Nigerian system was amended by confining it to four at a time with a proviso of maintaining justice among them. Idul-Kabir, Idul-fitr, Hijrah Celebration and Maulud Nabiyy came to replace traditional festivals. The usual consultation of Ifa oracle by the Yoruba before embarking on any vital issue was substituted with consultation of Mallams for some objectives. There were

occasions where the Obas (Kings) in Yorubaland had to request formally from the Mallam to visit them in the palaces to interpret some dreams and assist spiritually on one problem or the other (R.I. Adebayo, n.d.) Abubakre compares Ifa oracle to the system used by Muslim clerics as follows:

It is curious to find that Arab system of geomancy agrees in toto with the Ifa formular the difference being in the verbal forms. There is another type of Arab divination which is purely mathematical calculation based on the letters of personal names of clients and those of their mothers.... A babalawo, Ifa priest uses Iyere Osun, dust from Iroko tree or palm knots or a string of flat pebbles to divine while the Alufaa, Muslim cleric uses sand in the type of divination which has a similarity with Ifa A babalawo cites from ese Ifa verses of Ifa to give interpretation for Ifa revelation while, an Alufaa consults his Arabic books for divination (R.D. Abubakre, 1993).

There are syncretic practices in Yorubaland that are noticed and recorded by Doi. For instance, the Bilqis Sungbo of Ijebu whose identity was disclosed as the Queen of Sheba and whose tomb has been turned to a centre of tourist of attraction where people congregate for spiritual blessings and cure. Another example is the case of Muhammad Jimoh, the Mahdi of Ijebu Ode who combined African Traditional religion, Islam and Christianity (A.R.I. Doi, 1984).

However, Shari'ah legal system was declared in some northern states in Nigeria due to the religious consciousness of the Hausa and its impact on the legal adjudication in their lives. On 27th October, 1999, there was a formal launching of the Shari'ah legal system in Zamfara state after the passing of an executive bill by the state house of Assembly and was later signed into law by the then Governor Sanni Yerimah in October 8, 1999 (Y.A. Quadri, 2000). This legal system was not strange to the Hausa as it formed part of their culture from time immemorial. This practice was confirmed by ibn Batutah as far back as 14th century and Henry Barth, an explorer was barred from bringing the Bible and alcohol to Northern Nigeria (E.A. Ayandele 1979). In 1900, the British came to Nigeria and Civil life was introduced to the people which restricted the Shari'ah in the northern Nigeria. Muslims consciousness has led to the establishment of independent Shari'ah panel in some South-western states of Nigeria as a result of the aspiration and desire to inculcate the teachings of their religion which they were accustomed to before the coming of the British.

The southern part of Nigeria had no direct link with the Arabs and vice versa until in the 19th century when some Hausas who were Muslims travelled to the region and settle there.

Only small number of Ibos accepted the religion before the 1967 civil war in Nigeria. The civil war hindered the spread of Islam which started as soon as colonial masters vacated Iboland in Nigeria. For this reason, many Ibo Muslims sought refuge in another lands and fled their hometowns and villages. This scenario led to change of their Muslim names to Christians'. Many Hausa, Nupe, Yoruba, Fulani Muslims who were residing in Iboland were ejected from their homes and were banished to their hometowns because of false propaganda that the war religiously predicated (C.N. Ubah, 1988).

Linguistic Impact

One inimitable impact of Arabic civilization on Nigerian culture is the development of writing traditional languages in Arabic characters. In essence, efforts to make learning easier and faster brought about localization and adaptation of Arabic letters with some necessary amendments (A.U. Adams, 2000). This is known as *Ajami* which has its roots in Spain under Arab occupation with many words borrowed from Arabic (A.U. Adamu, 2000). This system of writing became so popular in Hausaland to the extent of using it to write the denomination on Nigerian currency notes which is still in vogue.

The adoption of Arabic language as an Academic discipline in Nigerian tertiary institutions makes it easy for language diffusion. Some loan words from Arabic language are derived from Islam, while some came from the middle Eastern ancestors of the Yoruba (I.A. Ogunbiyi 1981). The following table contains some loan words from Arabic into Hausa and Yoruba languages:

<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Yoruba</i>	<i>Hausa</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Waqt	Wakati	Lokaci	Time
Al-Jannah	Alijanna	Alijana	Paradise
Al-Barakah	Alubarika	Albarika	Blessing
Iman	Imoni	Mani	Belief
Al-Jum'ah	Jimoh	Juma'a	Friday
Al-khamis	Alamisi	Alhamis	Thursday
Al-Asr	Alasare	Alasari	Afternoon Prayer

Few statements and proverbs in local languages have link with Muslims and Islam. Most of the statements are used to disparage Islam and defame its image. Some examples are given below:

- a. *Bawo lee se pin itan aja kan lemoomu* (how have you distributed the dog's thigh to reach the Imam 'a leader of Muslim congregation').
- b. *Eniti ko gbon laawe ngbo* (it is only an imbecile who feels the pang of hunger while fasting) i.e. he can hide somewhere to feed himself and come to the open with pretense.
- c. *Ko soro, ko soro, fila imole ku peeki* (things are not difficult and the Muslims' cap remains small) i.e. things continue to get worse because of the conviction of a Muslim that anything that happens is with the approval of God.
- d. *Ati kekere ni imole tii ko omo re laso* (it is from youthful age that a Muslim teaches his child how to murmur).

Muslim Scholars have made frantic efforts to translate the Qur'an into local language in Nigeria. At the first attempts, individual efforts were exerted toward this assignment but Saudi Government later took it upon itself to sponsor and fund the printing and publication of the local language versions of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, there is an observation of language interference in the pronunciation of some words and they are at times given a meaningless rendition. This is inevitable because Arabic language is the only language through which Salat (five daily prayers) is offered by Muslims. For example, the Arabic name *Ismail* is awfully pronounced in Yoruba as *Summaila* which is a total alteration of the name. Likewise, *Zahrah* which means a blossom or a flower is wrongly pronounced in Yoruba as *Saratu* which is no match to the correct form. *Aisha* is mistakenly pronounced in Yoruba as *Ayi* which is a total alteration of the name. *Rizqah Waslah*, *Fadilah*, *Abdul-Hamid*, *Zakariyyah*, *Murtada* and *Mubarak* are wrongly pronounced in Yoruba as *Risi*, *Wosila*, *Fali*, *Lamidi*, *Saka*, *Muri* and *Muba* respectively which have no origin in Arabic language.

Educational Impact

There are seven points cardinal aims of the informal system of education in Nigeria. According to Fafunwa, the ultimate goal of this system was to nurture virtues that would make individuals useful to themselves and to their immediate environment (A.B. Fafunwa, 1974). Those who spearheaded the spread of Islam to Nigeria accompanied their mission with literacy in Arabic to the converts. They did this for the fact that the religion they embraced can only be well practiced with the mastery of Arabic language in carrying out some of the religious rituals. This elucidates the reason why the Qur'anic and Arabic schools sprang up in the locations where Islam was introduced (A. Abubakr, n.d.). Arabic language became the lingua franca in the northern region of Nigeria. The trio of Shaykhs

Uthman Dan Fodio Abdullah bn. Fodio, Muhammad Bello and Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilori, to mention just a few contributed immensely to Arabic literacy in Nigeria (R.I. Adebayo, 2013).

In Yorubaland, the Muslims were lackadaisical and unexcited to western education at its inception in the region. The Muslims could not be blamed for this. The attitude of the colonialists who introduced the system of education had given the Muslims the premonition that they had hidden agenda which was the propagation of their faith. The Muslims then, thought that should they allow their children to be trained by the missionaries, it simply means that they had played into their hands for easy conversion to their faith. As a reaction to the fear of evangelization by the colonialists, Muslims established Qur'anic schools for their children and Arabic education was given priority and placed it over the newly introduced western system of education. In view of this development, Clarke submits that:

Out of an estimated 12 million people in the Northern Nigeria in 1952, only about a quarter of a million had a basic competence in English, while in Kano, as I have mentioned only about 23,000, out of 3 million people were literate in English and of these 5% percent were from other parts of Nigeria (P.B. Clarke, 1982).

Though, Arab civilization has little or no impact in the eastern part of Nigeria few Muslims made efforts to embrace Islam. In Afikpo, the southern part of Ebonyi State, for example, Shaykh Ibrahim Nwagui made a remarkable effort by establishing a primary school and a Qur'anic school in Nawfia, a town in Njikoka local government area of Anambra state, where Islamic education was introduced to the Muslims. In the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the Muslim community introduced the establishment of an Islamic centre where Muslims were taught the Qur'an. Muhammad Ali Haq Nur and Maulay Hassan who were Sudanese and Moroccan respectively were employed as teachers and Saudi Government was paying their salary. Also, an Islamic centre was erected at Orlu in the South East of Imo state, Nigeria which was solely built by the former ambassador of the Hashmite Kingdom, H. E. Kamil al-Sharif (A.R.I. Doi, 1984).

Social Impact

There is no gainsaying the fact that Arab civilization had impacted the social rites, customs, means of entertainment, mode of dressing and the traditional rulers.

Marriage

Marriage is regarded as a significant and historical event in one's life. In the traditional society, major roles are played by the parents to search for a purposeful partner for their daughters and sons. In Yorubaland, consideration is given to marriage within the district for fear of far distance whereby their son or daughter will not be reachable. Before the impact of Arab civilization, the father had the final say on who to marry their daughter or who their son should marry. Even without a daughter's consent, a father had the right to betroth her to whoever he wished without her consent. To avoid wrong decision on marriage issue, Ifa should be consulted and the outcome should be duly followed. Unrestricted polygamous life was the order of the day as wives and children were regarded as wealth and a source of pride in the society. The more the number of one's children, the more prominent the social stratum in the society. A monogamous man is likened to a man with one wrapper and a wife also disliked being labelled a jealous woman. Islam accommodated some traditional practices in marriage and modified some. Virginity till the day of marriage, thorough investigation of the family background of the suitor or the wife to be and parental consent are in conformity with Islam. Special prayer request (Istikhaarah) is adopted in Islam instead of consultation of Ifa oracle in the traditional Nigerian society. Islam modified polygamy among Yoruba by restricting it to a maximum of four at a time with a proviso that justice will be maintained among them (Q4:3).

Naming

Naming ceremony for a newly born child holds on the seventh day after the birth for a female child and ninth day for a male. The condition, time and nature of birth of the child are to be considered before bestowing a name on the child in Yorubaland. For instance, **Ige** is giving to a child born with breech or footing representation while the one born with membranes enraptures is called **Oke** and the one conceived without the mother starting the normal menstrual cycle after the early birth is named **Ilori**. In the traditional society, when a child is born – to – die child (**Abiku**), convincing names are given to such a child. **Durojaye** (stay to enjoy life), **Kosoko** (No hoe to dig grave again) or **Malomo** (don't leave us again) are examples of those persuasive names. Some names describe the belief of the people in reincarnation while some depict the idols or gods worshipped by the family (R.I. Adebayo, 1994). With the coming of Islam and its acceptance, Islamic names from the ninety-nine names of Allah, Prophets' names and other prominent Islamic personalities are given to the children born in Yorubaland. Some of those names are bastardized as mentioned before and are adulterated by their local dialects. Other

examples are *Yusuf*, *Maryam*, *Alimat* and *Khadijah* that are pronounced as Yesufu, Mori, Sadia and Kubura respectively. There are other names that are modified because of their pagan meanings in order to reflect Islamic meaning. For instance, Oyagbemi (I am favoured by the goddess of river) is amended to Kewugbemi (Qur'an has favoured me), Sangobunmi (the god of thunder bestow this on me) is changed to Oluwabunmi (God gave me) e. t. c.

Burial and Funeral Rites

It is a known fact that death is inevitable as every soul shall taste it (Q3:185). In Yorubaland, death can be good or bad depending on its nature and timing. Bad death comes through accidents, disease, violence or death of adolescents and youths. When one dies at a very ripe age between 90 and 99, the death is good. The death of a young person is considered as Ofo (not to be celebrated) while that of an old person is a matter of joy and therefore should be celebrated, particularly if such a deceased is surrounded by well – to – do children. That of a young person is regarded as calamitous and should be a feeling of sorrow and compassion from the neighbours (R. I. Adebayo, 2013). The corpse of an old person is thoroughly washed and wrapped in white clothes. He is then decorated with attractive materials and followed by farewell message from his people as follows:

Ti o ba dele ki o kile
Bi o ba dona ki o beere ona
Ma jokun, ma jekolo
Ohun tiwon banje lajule orun ni ki o maa bawon je.

Translation:

When you get home, greet the people there,
Ask of the appropriate route on your way,
Eat only what others are eating there.

In Yorubaland, corpses are buried in compounds and not in cemeteries or graveyards. At times, the graves are prepared right inside their bedrooms and parlous. Also, the front passages of the house are used. Coffin is also common among the rich people in the society. Certain secret rituals are performed before the announcement of the demise of a king and goddesses and gods are appeased. Born – to – die child (Abiku) is treated cruelly and he is burnt to ashes in order to prevent his coming back to the family and at times, he is buried in a faraway place like a forest (I. L. Akintola, 1981).

Traditional burial rites take another form with the advent of Islam as Islam enjoins quick burial of the corpse without wasting time. It also abhors wailing and crying over the corpse which was the practice among the Yoruba when a young man or woman dies. Islam also frowns at the celebration of the death of old age people. The religion has recommended washing and shrouding of the corpse before burial. Ta'ziyyah (mourning/condolence) is to be observed for three days after which the family of the deceased and the sympathizers are required to disperse and embark on their daily functions. Nigerian culture of organizing eight-day prayer (Fidau) for a deceased Muslim in Yorubaland still persist. The family of the deceased prepares food which is regarded as Sadaqah that will stand as reward for the dead (Saraa). Some sects in Yorubaland still approve third and eight day Fidau prayer for deceased Muslims where Surahs Yasin, Ikhlas, Mulk and a book on sending prayer to the soul of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) called Dalaailul – Khayraat is recited in congregation (R.I. Adebayo, 2013). Admonition will be given by one of the officiating ministers and the children of the deceased are called upon to spend money for the departed soul. Islamic societies such as Nurudeen and Islahudeen are not in support of this practice which is common among the Bamidele movement in Nigeria and they are referred to by other sects as society that celebrate the deceased (Ijo Sokusoku) (Islahudeen society, 1955).

Widowerhood

Three months are meant for widowhood in the traditional Nigerian society especially in Yorubaland. The surviving wife/wives of the deceased mourn(s) the death of the husband by remaining indoor throughout the period, wearing black dresses and should neither plait hair nor take bath. Any woman that assists the widow to plait her hair, it is a general belief that she too will experience the same fate. It is another widow that should assist in plaiting a widow's hair. On the eve of the three months' widowhood, the widow will be sleepless or else, spirit of her husband will be haunting her. On the last day of the mourning, she is expected to go to the grave of her husband to offer prayers and weep over there so that his spirit would continue to be her guide. Later, she would continue to weep around the compound during which no other woman should meet her on her way weeping or else she also will become a widow soon. She would then go home to take her bath and remove her clothe used for mourning, remove other materials as well and followed by making arrangement for the person to marry the widow from within the family of the deceased (R.I. Adebayo, 1994).

With the advent of Islam in Yorubaland, these practices have been amended among Muslim widows. Iddah has replaced the period of widowhood and instead of three months, a widow has to spend four months and ten days according to the injunction of Allah in the Qur'an (Q2: 234). The Iddah lasts until the delivery of the child if the woman is pregnant (Q65:4). If information of the death of her husband did not reach her until the Iddah period terminates, she is not under obligation to serve any Iddah once more (S.A. Ali, 1984). All the prohibited practices such as not plaiting hair, no taking of bath are not in the rulings of Islam. It is thus encouraged to shun dressing gorgeously, using of perfume or make-up. She is allowed to go out for important assignments and return home appropriately. (A.R.I. Doi, 1984). To give an Islamic colouration to the conclusion of widowhood, some Muslims organize outing ceremony for widow whereby women would spend a whole night with her and in the morning special prayer is organized for the widow and the deceased while the widow prepare corn cake or local cake flour to be distributed within the community to serve as Sadaqah for the husband.

Entertainment

Muslims in Yorubaland participate in musical arts. There are people in Yorubaland that are engaged in music programs and performances such as Ewi, Sakara, Apala and Dadakuada which are spearheaded by Muslims. The "*Were*" is in form of Islamic art which was used to give awareness to people during the month of Ramadan for them to prepare for Sahūr (early morning meal). With this type of music, those who are sleeping will take up to start the preparation for the meal to be taken as Sahūr. Prominent among those who engaged in "*Were*" are: Alhaji Daud Epo Akara who was the pacesetter, Alhaji Sikiru Ayindele Barrister who developed it to Fuji Music (R.I. Adebayo, 2006). "*Waka*" is also used by Muslim scholars to praise Allah and admonish people. It is used for entertainment at social functions like Walimah graduation for the completion of the Holy Qur'an), Aqqeqah (Naming) and house warming ceremony. Many of the Musicians who are Muslims do not sing for Islam but there is Islamic colouration in their music. They often pass Islamic messages by using Islam terminologies but their music is not devoid of vulgar and ignoble utterances just like the poets of the Jahiliyyah period. There are Muslim singers in Yorubaland that are fond of using poetry to reach the grassroots by singing religious songs (R.I. Adebayo, 2006).

The Kings

The Kings are well respected in Yorubaland. They should not be greeted while standing but in prostration as a sign of humility and respect. Anyone who greets a king in Yorubaland while standing is indeed considered as an arrogant and rude person. Greeting an OBA (king) requires the removal of cap, headtie and footwear before prostration. With the adoption of Arab civilization in Yorubaland, this practice has been modified and a Muslim scholar who visits a traditional ruler in his palace is not required to remove his turban and does not need to prostrate before him. He bends and touch the ground with his palm as a mark of reverence for the traditional ruler.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have been able to examine the impact of Arab civilization in Yoruba culture in Nigeria, Historical links of the Arabs with the people of the region through the amendments of some of their cultures. The interplay between the Arab and Yoruba cultures shows some similarities in the cultural value of the Arabs and that of the Islamized people of Yorubaland. Some of the references to Hausa in this work are just to prove and make evident that Yoruba and Hausa tribes in Nigeria have a connection when we are discussing Islamization. The diffusion of Islam to Yorubaland through Hausaland still remain fresh in memory as historians postulated. Among the cultures of the Arabs and Yoruba, there are areas of accommodation as well as conflicts as revealed in this study. The areas of accommodation in the Yoruba cultural practices that are not antagonistic to Islamic teachings are to be regarded as a factor for their approval by the Yoruba and Hausa. This gesture, in our opinion, can probably serve as facilitator of peaceful co-existence between the tribes and could be effectively utilized as a means for stability and peace in our country.

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