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The Thoughts of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilorī (1917-1992) on Islam and Cultural Practices among Yoruba Muslims in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The practice of Islam in Yorubaland has posed severe challenges to many Muslims who find navigating between Islamic rules and Yoruba customary practices difficult. It has led many to shirk (polytheism), bidᶜah (heretical innovation), and takhlīṭ (syncretism), among others, with dangerous effects in Islam. Unfortunately, many Muslims are unaware of these but adopt a free attitude to Islam. Shaykh Adam is one of the foremost scholars whose views are sought and relied upon by Yoruba Muslims in their practice of Islam or by researchers who intend to assess the practice of Islam in Yorubaland. Thus, the crux of this paper is to examine his views on selected areas that are paramount to ᶜaqīdah (creed) and the general practice of Islam. Historical and exegetical methods are adopted to achieve the objectives of this paper. The former enabled the article to assess historical facts related to the personality the paper focused on, while the exegetical allowed the interpretation of relevant texts to the discourse. It is discovered that the interaction between Islam and culture in Yorubaland has necessitated both fine-tuning and abandonment of some customs. Social events like the naming ceremony, Islamic titles, and burial, among others, are fine-tuned. In contrast, magic, Ifa divination, bending or kneeling while greeting, and a host of others are condemned and to be abandoned. The paper, therefore, concluded that Shaykh Adam remains a prominent personality whose views are driven by scholarship to liberate Muslims from the shackle of ignorance and perdition.

Keywords: *Yorubaland, Takhlīṭ (syncretism), culture, ᶜAqīdah (creed)*

INTRODUCTION

Before the advent of Islam, the people of Africa, including the Yoruba, had lived for years with their culture. Thus, the acceptance of Islam has brought about some changes to their ways of doing things. Islam is a firm set of principles encompassing all aspects of life and culture that differ from what Africans are familiar with. Islam demands total submission from the Muslims (Qur'an 2:208). Therefore, creating a balance between Islam and the local culture has spurred scholars at different times to examine various cultural settings of a particular society in the light of Islamic codes. Three categories of results came from that place. The first consists of those that Islam would allow continuing because they align with its rulings or do not negatively affect it (Islam). The second will need modifications or fine-tuning to measure up to Islamic standards. The third category covers the ones Islam directs their complete abandonment due to their contravention of Islamic principles. In light of these, Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilorī examined some cultural practices vis-à-vis Islam to determine where to place each among the three categories of likely results. Therefore, this study intends to appraise Shaykh Adam's submissions

on the selected central cultural practices among Yoruba Muslims to determine their appropriateness and to present a synopsis of his thoughts on those practices to the Muslims. This will be part of the ongoing efforts by different scholars to make views of Shaykh Adam accessible to Muslims, especially English readers. This is important to guide Muslims against *Shirk* (polytheism), *takhlīṭ* (syncretism), and *bidᶜah* (heretical innovation) among other perilous practices that are inimical to their faith.

Islam and Culture: A Framework

Culture as an anthropological concept refers to the fully integrated pattern of human activity and is infinitely more expansive in its highest manifestations. It is one of the human phenomena that have received a wide range of attention from scholars of different backgrounds. Yusuf (1985) quotes Edward, who defined culture as a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, arts, law, morals, custom, and any other thing acquired by man as a member of a given society (David, 1972). Culture is therefore defined as the life of people of a particular time or locality. It defines everything about them. Thus culture is a creation of man. Culture is therefore regarded as a human identity that has both rigidity and flexibility as its characteristics. It is dynamic, systematic, and capable of modification, addition, or reduction, among other essential features of culture (Foreman, 1970).

Culture in Islam comes under the concept of *urf* (custom) or *ᶜādah* (culture). It is defined as the collective practice of many people in a given society or locality (Kamali, 2003). It forms one of the sources of Islamic law. Hence one finds Imam Malik in his *Muwatta*, relying on the culture of the people of Madinah as a source for his position where other superior sources are silent. The scholars of Islam have primarily acknowledged culture as a viable means of interpreting the Qur'an. An instance is the case of determination of the wife's maintenance from the husband, as could be deduced from Qur'an 65:7. Another example is seen in the upkeep of children by the father, which is premised on the custom or cultural practice of a given society, as could be inferred from Qur'an 2:233 (Kamali, 2003).

There are instances where the cultural practices of a particular place will run contrary to that of Islam, especially the areas that were conquered outside the Arabian peninsula. This paper is set to the discussion in light of Shaykh Adam's thoughts on some of these instances that will require the scholastic interpretation before determining what is in tandem with Islam.

A Glimpse of Shaykh Adam's Life

Shaykh Adam (d.1992) was a native of Ilorin but lived in Lagos, having travelled across Nigeria and beyond in search of knowledge. He was born in 1917/1340AH (Sambo, 1981). He was a reformer and one of the leading ideologues and intellectuals with much influence across Yorubaland. He gave Yoruba Muslims a sense of direction in the twin fields of Arabic and Islamic studies. One of his enduring legacies is *Markaz't-Taᶜlīm 'l-Arabi wa 'l-Islāmī* (Arabic and Islamic training centre), Agege, Lagos State, Nigeria, which he established in 1952 (Badamasi, 2012) and has churned out an army of graduates. He was a teacher, writer, preacher, and international figure. He played a significant role in forming the Muslim World League (MWL) in 1960 (Reichmutch, 2012) as a representative of southern Muslims in Nigeria. Balogun (2012).explains how he replicated the same when he engineered the formation of *Rābiṭatu 'l-Ai'mma Wa ᶜUlamā Fi Bilādi Yoruba* in 1962 (League of Imam and Alfas of Yorubaland). He was a public affairs analyst with thoughts across social, political, religious, and economic matters.

Yoruba, Cultural Practices and Islam

The Yoruba are the occupants of southwestern states in Nigeria, covering about six states. Namely, Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, and Lagos. They also form parts of some North Central States of Kwara and Kogi. They traced their origin to Ile-Ife (Osun State) and their political setting to Oyo (Oyo State). They have their religion and culture that defined their existence right from time, though a substantial number of them have accepted Islam today.

i.   Naming Ceremony

The birth of a new baby comes with different rites in Islam, which must be carried out accordingly. These include *adhān* and *iqāmah* (to be called on the two ears)*, tahnīk* (to eat a date and put it in the mouth of a newborn)*, ᶜaqīqah* (slaughtering of the animal), and *khitān*(circumcision*) among others (Ibn Qayyim, 1971). Before the advent of Islam, the naming of a newborn used to hold traditionally among the Yoruba, depending on the background and configuration of the family. This unique occasion takes place on the seventh day of birth ceremoniously. It used to be anchored by the family head or any elder as may be delegated. Depending on family heritage, the agenda includes using local items like honey, kola, and pepper to offer supplication for the new baby (Akinsipe, 2018). Many of these practices have gone into the dustbin of history as most Yoruba Muslims do not observe them again. They adopt Islamic prescriptions nowadays, in most cases.

Shaykh Adam (1971) notes that the naming ceremony is just an innovation by Yoruba Muslim scholars. It is to reassure the Yoruba Muslims of their faith and to entice non-Muslims to Islam. The tradition used to be a veritable avenue for Islamic propagation. Since people will gather to witness it, scholars take a grip of occasion to preach and educate people about Islam, especially concerning parenting or child upbringing and the like. The scholars also used the advantage of naming to gather money to promote Islamic causes and sometimes for their ends. Shaykh Adam, however, encourages moderation and prefers Allah's cause or *daʾwah* over personal gains.

Giving a name to the newborn is one of the day's important events. Yoruba draws names from five sources identified by Fakuade, Friday-Otun, and Adeosun (2019). *Amutorunwa*, *Abiso*, *Oriki* (Panegyrics), *OrukoAbiku,* and *Inagije*. Islamic names, however, are removed from the names and attributes of Allah, names of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or other prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, the companions of the Prophet, or any name that goes with the spirit of Islam. Shaykh Adam (1971) emphasises Islamic names over other considerations. He allows indigenous names with beautiful and Islamic-compliant meanings while rejecting those with idols, traditional beliefs, self-glorification, and faults, among others, for their purposes to contradict Islamic tenets (Adam, 1979). He condemns emphasising traditional names over Islamic ones as it is familiar to Yoruba Muslims. He argues that this is not only deceitful but also misleading. In the instance of the census, ascertaining the actual number of Muslims becomes cumbersome because many of them would have been counted by their names among the people of other faiths. Considering Nigeria's recent waves of cultural revivals, bearing an Islamic name depicts one's commitment and sincerity to the religion. Therefore, Yoruba Muslims need to bear their Islamic names at all times.

ii.   Manners of Greeting

This is one of the areas of clashes between Islam and local culture in Yorubaland. Traditionally, a Yoruban greets parents, king, and elderly person in prostration or by lying flat on the floor (*Idobale*), while female greets by kneeling (*Ikunle*) (Fadipe, 1970). This is regarded as a mark of respect while

greeting in a standing posture is regarded as disrespectful. It is sometimes punishable by fine or reproach, especially if it is done to the king. Also, in some instances, one must remove one's footwear while greeting or entering a compound, especially that of a scholar.

In his usual character, Shaykh Adam criticises these practices when he writes:

> May Allah have mercy on my people as they are ignorant of the meaning of courtesy, thus abusing it from all ramifications. This is how naive they are concerning respect, thinking it is accorded through prostration and bending (while greeting). Also, they mandated the removal of footwear before entering a particular compound. Whoever disagrees with these is wrongly criticised. He is tagged as an infidel and turned into a staunch enemy with aggression what we know (and accept) as respect lies in *Sharīʿah*. It includes acceptance of truth from anyone and refraining from dragging clothes on the floor. It also includes respect for each other at a reasonable limit, without foolishness. In my opinion, proper courtesy is acts that place you above the blames of wise men and save you from all forms of indecency and cheating. Anything short of these is not a courtesy (Adam, 1979, p.161).

There is no specific mention of a particular manner of greeting that Islam recommends in this excerpt, as to either hugging, handshaking, or kissing as contained in many *aḥādīth* of the Prophet, especially the one reported by At-Tirmidhi (1998, No.2728). The excerpt only gives a broad guideline on greeting, ensuring the dignity of the one who greets and the respect of the one greeted.

However, Shaykh Adam condemns prostration while greeting, basing it on Q. 72:18. The *Masājid* mentioned in verse has been interpreted by Ibn Kathīr as referring to body parts for prostration to Allah, which must not be used to prostrate again to any creation of Allah (Ibn Kathir, 1999). This is further strengthened by Q.41:37, where Allah forbids the prostration of others other than Him. Shaykh Adam also aligns himself with Ibn Kathīr's submission that Angel's prostrations to Adam and Yusuf's parents to him had been abrogated and replaced with *Taslīm* by *Sharīʿah* of Prophet Muhammad (Ibn Kathir). The submissions of Shaykh Adam here reflect where he belongs between the two opposing recommendations of scholars on bending and kneeling as acceptable manners of greeting in Islam. For instance, Al-Qurṭūbī, while explaining the story of Adam submits that scholars differentiate between the prostration of greeting and the prostration of worship. He counts the angel's prostration of Adam as the former (Al-Qurtubi, 1964). Also, Qur'an 72:18 and 41:37 above may not be relevant to prostration if one considers an authentic narration from Ibn Abbās as reported by Imam Muslim, which stipulates seven body parts as the requirements for a technical prostration is acceptable in *Sharīʿah*. These include the face, two palms, two kneels, and two feet (Muslim, No. 491). Scholars have also raised the question of intention to justify that bending or kneeling while greeting goes with respect as commanded by the Prophet in one of his authentic reports (At-Tirmidhi, No.1920, Abu Dawud, No.4943). The intention is, therefore, to honour and not to worship.

It also reflects that Shaykh Adam was carried away by language, not actual practice, because *Sharīʿah* has different words for different acts. *Sujūd* is prostration, but kneeling and bending are technically called *Inḥinā'* as could be inferred from *ḥadīth* of At-Tirmidhi mentioned above. No one would accept or argue for *Sujūd* to a fellow creature, but everything is lumped together whenever scholars discuss manners of greeting. Ibn Manṣūr (1965) is responsible for this, but in the technical understanding which drives acceptability in *Sharīʿah*, bending cannot be taken as prostration. Various authentic reports contained how people on different occasions knelt for the Prophet. That of Umar, the

second Caliph, is an abiding reference to that effect (Al-Bukhari, No.93, 540 and 7924). Imam Muslim reported the same event under the sub-head: Chapter of Veneration to the Prophet. This means that bending or kneeling is respecting and not worshiping (Muslim, No.491 and 1855).

Equally, Shaykh Adam opposes putting one's footwear off while entering a compound or greeting an older adult or royals, stating that the only justification for such an act is where the footwear is dirty. He writes:

> As for the footwear, it alone touches the ground, prevents injury, and protects both feet from any harm. It is meaningless to subject people to injury (in the name of respect), especially when Allah says: And make not your own hands to cause your destruction (Q.2:195) (Adam, 1979, p. 166).

There is no doubt that Shaykh Adam is an advocate of according respect to whomever it is due, but it should not involve dehumanization or inflicting injury to oneself. It should be noted that the removal of footwear is not limited to Yoruba tradition. There is a similar practice in Japan where people must remove their footwear before entering a house. It differs from that of Yoruba with respect for elders, while that of Japan is limited to homes (Yusuf, 1985).

The discourse on removing footwear while greeting or entering a compound is premised on the story of Prophet Musa as narrated in the Qur'an. It would be recalled that when Musa was to meet Allah, he was directed to put off his footwear because he was in a sacred place (Q.20:12). Commenting on the verse, Al-Qurṭūbī, Ibn Kathīr and As-Shawkānī (1989) in their respective *tafāsir*, aggregate reasons for the instruction to him by Allah. These include honour, morals, purity, to earn the blessing of the holiness, and replication of practice in *Kaᶜbah*, just as it used to be customary practice when one greets or visits the king. People, therefore, imitate the practice while greeting elders and scholars or entering their places of domicile.

Shaykh Adam did not see any provision to justify the practice in *Sharīᶜah* hence his condemnation. Strengthening this submission is the response of the permanent committee of Saudi scholars when a similar question, bordering on putting off footwear while greeting, was posed to them. The committee states that it is wrong for anyone to attribute such to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet or *Sharīᶜah*. The story of Musa, which is often cited as an example, has been abrogated. Hence it is permissible to observe *Ṣalāt* with footwear (*Fatawa Lajnatud-Da'imah*, 2010).

iii. **Marriage Ceremony**

Marriage is an important event in human life that every culture holds in high esteem. The Prophet of Islam emphatically recommended marriage for Muslims to enhance a purposeful life. Hence, it is half of the religion (Al-Bani, 1985). Shaykh Adam observes ample opportunity for *da'wah* while holding a marriage ceremony, particularly during the *walīmat* (feast marking) and *nikāḥ* (marriage solemnization). However, he is against the Yoruba practice whereby marriage ceremonies last for days. He considers such an act an unnecessary and extravagant display of wealth (*isrāf*) (Adam). He suggests that a day should be enough for the *walīmat* and *nikāḥ* ceremonies. This was demonstrated during the wedding ceremony of his daughter, Rahmat, with Abdul-Wahhab Zubair at Agege in 1984 (Yusuf, 1985).

Shaykh Adam also advocates polygyny, but with physical and material capacities to sustain it. He argues that the reality is that women outnumber men. Therefore, polygyny is the only alternative to

address that (Adebayo, 2012). He, however, rejects the view from some quarters which allowed marrying up to nine (9) wives. This is locally called *istibdāl* (replacement) as it is taken from Q.4:20. He (Shaykh Adam) argues that it was either due to the ignorance of the proponents or deliberate misinterpretation of a clear Qur'anic injunction. He writes:

> We refuted their incorrect interpretation (of the Qur'anic message) due to the interpreters' lack of understanding of the Arabic language. Since it is unreasonable for a man to marry two, three, and four wives at a time (making twelve), we debunked their claim by stating that the increase above four was remarkable only for the messenger (of Allah). May the peace of Allah be upon him, with a Qur'anic backing stating: "*This is only for you and not for the believers. We know what we have appointed for them as to their wives*". Many believers among the people of Abeokuta repented, while the scholars in Ibadan still engage with those whose wives are more than four. But most people would not accept it (Adam, 1985, p. 127).

In addition to the above-mentioned religious grounds opposing the practice of marrying more than what is legally permissible, other socio-economic backgrounds must be considered. Suppose one fails to abide by the injunctions stated in the Qur'an. In that case, it may adversely affect a child's socialisation, upbringing, and training, as it can also alienate some wives from the mainstream of the matrimonial scene, mainly when there is a downward trend in the economic prosperity of the husband (Yusuf, 1985).

Another practice that Shaykh Adam describes as bad innovation is the parents giving out their daughters in marriage as "gifts" without consultation with the daughters and the grooms. This is technically called *Wilāyatu 'l-Ijbār* (institution of coercion), approved by Imam Maliki and the Maliki *Madhhab* (Imam Malik, 1987). It should be stated that Nigeria is a Maliki school. To make the practice seamless, the parent would take some matrimonial responsibilities for the husband and not complain of financial embarrassment (Yusuf, 1985). Shaykh Adam then observes that such a marriage often hits the rock because love is not sowed but forced (to exist) between the couples (Adam, 134). Since Islam frowns at this type of marriage due to the absence of mutual agreement, which is an essential part of a valid marriage, Shaykh Adam advises that the practice is better dropped because it does not even depict Islam as a religion of freedom but of coercion which is contrary to the provisions of the Islamic law of marriage (Yusuf, 1985).

The position of Shaykh Adam reflects his non-alignment with popular Maliki *Madhhab* practices, such as the concept of *Al-Ijbar*, despite his being a Nigerian, where the *Madhhab* is primarily followed, along with other West African countries. This reflects his liberalism, flexibility, and dynamism, having studied the situation and discovered that it is not working here in Nigeria, and ditto for Yorubaland. His declaration of it as *bid'ah*, however, is unsubstantiated. The *Mawālik* that advocated it based it on the narration contained in *Al-Muwatta* (Imam Malik, 2004, No.1918), which directs that a virgin girl can be given out in marriage by her father without her consent. They also advanced the marriage of Ā'isha to the Prophet, where there is no record that Abubakar sought and got her approval before contracting her in marriage to the Prophet, as another solid ground for so doing (Al-Qurtubi, 2000). So, it cannot be an innovation.

iv.   Death and Funeral services

Death is one of the realities that man lives with. Every living soul will die. The Qur'an repeatedly repeats: "Every soul shall taste death." When someone dies, sympathisers continue visiting the family and condoning with them. In Yorubaland, an effort is made to accord the deceased a befitting

burial ceremony, mainly on the eighth day. It used to be an elaborate event where much money would be expended, especially when the dead is a person of substance in society. Sometimes, the occasion will be postponed to enable the bereaved to gather money for the events. Fadipe (1970) observes that Islam has positively influenced the Yoruba Muslims in burial matters. He states that Muslims do not cry or shed tears over a deceased because of a teaching in Islam which states that the dead shall be punished for the tears shed over him. This is very rare in African and Yoruba settings, including Christianity as a religion. He (Fadipe) continues to state that Muslims do not celebrate the dead ones but organise prayer for the repose of the soul of the deceased, where the officiating scholar will caution the family against extravagance and enjoin them to settle any debt that the deceased might have incurred, be it religious or otherwise.

Shaykh Adam condemns wailing and crying over the death of someone. He describes it, as contained in a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, as one of *Jāhiliyyah* practices (Adam, 1971). He also frowns at the practice of people gathering at the bereaved's house for days to mourn the deceased. He, however, approves *Ṣadaqah*, recitation of the Qur'an, and chanting of *Kalimatu al-Shahādah* for three or seven days after the burial. He acknowledges the existing controversies on these among scholars. He argues that prayers undoubtedly benefit the deceased, hence their institutionalisation among the Yoruba Muslims. He states further that there should be provision for food and drinks for the sympathisers. He quotes As-Sayuṭī to that effect. It reads:

> As for prayer for the deceased on the third and seventh days, among others, including mobilisation of the poor and the needy (for it), there is a piece of evidence and proof for that. Also, for the deceased's family to prepare food and mobilise people to read the Qur'an and the likes expected to benefit the deceased, there is nothing wrong with it. But if it is other than that, it is to be discouraged (Adam, 1971. p. 77).

One, therefore, wonders if one recalls his submissions on marriage which he argued must not be more than a day but approving days for a funeral. One gets more perturbed that it should be vice versa because marriage is happiness, while a funeral is the opposite. One of the reasons that can be advanced for it is that marriage can lead to transgression, given the nature of man as described in the Qur'an 42:27. Another verse, among others, also counts over joyous as one of the detestable acts to Allah from man (Q.28:76). On the other hand, burial comes with sadness. Still, it is not the main reason for scholars' approval of days of events. The deceased needs prayer to aid his forgiveness and earn him ease and paradise. It should be mentioned that Shaykh Adam aligns with Sayuti's position and directs each to be carried out after his demise as contained in his will that he left behind (Sambo, Appendix).

v.   *Ifa* (Oracle Consultation) and *Khaṭṭ* (Sand cutting)

Ifa is the Yoruba traditional system of divination, and *Khaṭṭ,* on the other hand, is another system of divination prevalent among Muslims. The practitioners are called *Alfa* (a local name for Muslim clerics among the Yoruba). Before the advent of Islam in Yorubaland, people used to consult *Ifa* to unravel various mysteries about their lives. With the advent of Islam, people turned to *Alfa* for the same purpose, with the understanding that theirs is an Islamic way of discovering the hidden facts about life (Yusuf, 1985).

There exist some striking similarities between *Ifa* and *Khaṭṭ*. *Ifa* has sixteen (16) modus, while *Khaṭṭ* has the same number of houses with identical symbols. However, *Khaṭṭ* is traced to the prophet Idrīs (Al-Qurtubi, Vol.11, Adam, 1983), while *Ifa* is traced to Orunmila (a god in the Yoruba religion). It is also said that *Satih* (Abdul, 1970)*,* a prominent pagan Arabs diviner, was the originator of *Khaṭṭ*. If

a priest, in Yoruba concept, is a defense chief who can manipulate supernatural forces to one's advantage. With the coming of Islam, Muslims did not see any wrong in patronising them, thereby entrenching the practice among the Yoruba Muslims (Adam,1983).

Shaykh Adam counts the power of divination as one of the proofs of Prophethood and argues based on an accurate report from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (No.537)*,* which points out that *Khaṭṭ* belongs to one of the Prophets (Prophet Idrīs) and that whoever knows it should use it. Scholars have, however, stated that no one knows it precisely as the Prophet did. Hence it has gone into oblivion (An-Nawawi, 1999). He was categorical in stating that Islam forbids consultation of *Ifa* for its spiritual effects but is silent about *Khatt*. It would amount to one arrogating the knowledge of the unseen to a creature when the Qur'an is unequivocal in stating that only Allah, the Creator, knows the unseen (Yusuf, 1985). *Ifa* prescriptions often include sacrifices against Islamic tenets, vitiating the faith of whoever is involved. Shaykh Adam did not see anything wrong in someone's curiosity to know what is hidden about his life, especially when a significant decision is to be taken. Still, it should be done through *Ṣalātu 'l-Istikhārah,* which the Prophet prescribed, through which the reality of things shall be revealed to one through a dream (Yusuf, 1985).

vi.   Traditional Festivals

There are so many festivals in Yorubaland. The prominent among them are *Egungun* (masquerade) festivals and those that were slated to commemorate or honor some gods and goddesses, such as *Ogun* (god of iron) and Sango (god of thunder), among others (Yusuf, 1985). Despite the acceptance of Islam by many Yoruba Muslims, some of them still embrace and celebrate these gods and festivals. They used to drive away the women and children from them, while in some communities, some particular gods or festivities have some peculiarities. According to Adam (1983), an *Egungun*, for instance, adorned himself with clothes of different colours that covered every part of his body, and he was regarded as armor (someone from heaven).

Shaykh Adam stands against the festivals in Yoruba land before the coming of Islam. He, therefore, identifies two significant festivals as those of Islam and enjoins the Muslims to limit themselves to them. He writes:

> People of every traditional community have festivals, which are observed annually. During celebrations, new things are heralded…. It is during the celebration that cooperation and love are renewed. For this importance, Allah approved two festivals for the Muslims. Namely, *eidu 'l-Fitri* (which comes after the Ramadan fast) and *eidu 'l-Adha* (which comes on the tenth of *Dhul-Hijjah*, the twelfth month of the Islamic year (Adam, 1973, p. 20).

Shaykh Adam, therefore, advises the Yoruba Muslims to shun all traditional festivals because they have no bearing on Islam. He argues that, no doubt, those festivals have religious implications which may invalidate the creed of Muslims who took part in them. Fadipe (1970) rightly observed that during the festivals, many Muslim converts could not join their relatives in the celebration due to its adverse effect on their religion-Islam (Fadipe).

Shaykh Adam refutes the argument from some quarters that those traditional festivals are mere social gatherings without religious involvement. He argues that they usually involve rituals. He cites the festival of Osun Osogbo where most of the women that participate, especially the barren ones, did

that with the belief that the Osun River would bless them with children (Yusuf, 1985). This, therefore will nullify their faith in Islam.

On his arrival at Agege from Abeokuta in 1958, Shaykh Adam fought a successful battle against idol worshippers of the area. He also prevented the Muslims in the area from participating in the Ogun festival. Many of them did not only shun the festivals but also replaced them with other Islamic-oriented ones that were locally coined, such as *Laylātu 'l-Qadri* (Night of Majesty) and *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy* (celebration of the birthday of the Prophet). Another primary reason for the rejection of the traditional festivals by Shaykh Adam is the involvement in many forbidden things in Islam, such as alcohol, dog meat, and pork (Yusuf, 1985).

vii.   Islamic Titles and Imamship in Yorubaland

Imamship is one of the Islamic titles or posts extensively discussed in Islamic jurisprudence books. This may not be unconnected to the centrality of *Ṣalāt* in Islam. Parts of the initiatives to mobilise and encourage Muslims to be religiously active across Yorubaland is the introduction of titles given to prominent and influential individual Muslims to enable them to commit their resources to promote Islam (Yusuf, 1985). The Lagos Muslims, for instance, as far back as the 19th century, have been conferring different titles on Muslims, such as *Baba Adini* (father of the religion). In 1982, *Sarikin Musulumi* of Nigeria, the leader of the Muslims in Nigeria, was introduced. In fact, for the first time in the history of Nigeria, Alhaji Shitta was the only Muslim who combined the two titles. He was simultaneously the Baba Adini of Lagos state and the Sariki Musulumi (Yusuf, 1985).

Shaykh Adam believed there was nothing wrong in conferring titles on deserving Muslims, just as the Prophet did for his first and second successors. Abūbakar and Umar, both of whom bagged *Aṣ-Ṣiddīq* (the truthful) and *Al-Farūq* (the separator between good and evil), respectively (Yusuf, 1985). However, he warns that the title holders should not consider it liberty to dabble into religious issues or assume religious authority. He explains that many of the holders got the title due to their commitment to the cause of Islam, especially with their wealth which should not justify their interference in mosque affairs. Shaykh Adam advocates for segmenting titles from national to state and local levels and sets the procedures. Therefore, a national title needs to be ratified by chief Imams of the states of the federation for validity and a sense of belonging. Ditto for state and local government levels. This will go a long way in institutionalising those titles, enhancing cohesion among Muslims, and awakening the sense of responsibility of the holders (Yusuf, 1985).

On the prevalent practice among Yoruba Muslims where the succession into the office of Imam is hereditary, Shaykh Adam is vehemently against it. He explains that the practice evolved from when Islam was first introduced into Yorubaland, where the concentration of knowledgeable people in a single family was noticed. But needs to be changed now because Islam has become a household religion in the land, and scholars are available across families (Yusuf, 1985). He buttressed this with Qur'an 2:102 and 3:74, indicating that Allah chooses whomever He wishes for any assignment. The Prophet is noted to have said the post of Imam should be given to whoever has the vast knowledge of the Qur'an (Muslim, No. 673). The provisions of these two primary sources do not limit appointment into the office of the Imam to a family. Also, Prophet never made Imamship hereditary. So, the most qualified should be appointed regardless of family or societal status.

He explained further that scholarship should be placed above other considerations because the office of the Imam is multitasking. It will also enable the occupant to be free from being a stooge to the power that be. Above all, he would be held in high esteem and able to discharge his duties diligently.

Shaykh Adam sees the position of Imam as very significant. It is for this reason that he created the League of Imam and Alfa in Yorubaland in 1962, a body that will dignify the lofty office of Imam and foster peace and unity among Yoruba Imams (Balogun, 2012). He explains that an Imam is a spiritual leader who presides over Muslims in society, especially in a town where the ruler is not a Muslim. The Imam leads Muslims five times daily and once weekly for *Jum^cat* prayer. He thus became a spokesman for the Muslim community whose view is sought and whose opinion is accepted (Adam, 1983).

Shaykh Adam submits further that many of the problems confronting Muslims would have disappeared if the position of Imam was duly and properly utilised. Political and socio-economic issues will even be tackled collectively if the scope of the functions of an Imam is expanded in Yorubaland beyond *Nikah*, '*Aqīqah* (marriage and naming ceremonies, respectively), and burial matters. The scholar did not only use the central mosque as a worship centre but also as a centre for enlightenment where worshippers are kept abreast of societal issues so that they, as Muslims, would know where the interest of Islam would be adequately protected. He, therefore, calls for a redefinition of the functions of Imams in Yorubaland.

viii.   Days of the Week

There are certain inherited Yoruba traditional religious beliefs regarding days of the week which Muslims still reckon with today. Before an occasion or essential things are done, days of the week would be considered to know which suits it. Thus, Adeoye writes that Wednesday, which Yoruba called *Ojoru*, Friday (*OjoEti),* and Saturday (*OjoAbameta*), are considered unsuitable for important occasions such as making a journey and marriage, among others. On the contrary, Monday (*Ojo Aje),* Tuesday (*OjoIsegun*), *and* Thursday (*Ojobo*) are suitable for good deeds (Adeoye, 1979). All these are adhered to by Yoruba Muslims without finding the views of Islam about them. Or else they would have taken them less critically. For instance, Wednesday is suitable for essential occasions in Islam. Hence graduation ceremony from Qur'anic schools is usually held on that day (Yusuf, 1985).

Reacting to these, Shaykh Adam argues that Yoruba Muslims this not copy Yoruba culture but adopt a similar practice which was credited to Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, the fourth Caliph of the Prophet, wherein he advanced a view that assigned each day of the week and month with a particular act (Adam, 1983). He, however, remarks that these propositions are based on the Shi'ite belief system, whereas Yoruba Muslims are not members of the Shiite movement. Hence the practice should stop. He submits that days cannot be beneficial themselves, nor could they be harmful except by the permission of God. Since nothing distinguishes one day from another, except the climatic influences such as heat, cold, rain, winds, and storm, nothing can happen except with the permission of God.

Shaykh Adam declares this superstition and argues that Islam does not support superstitious beliefs. The supporters of this belief may have been proved correct in a few cases. Nevertheless, that will not justify its validity because one of the articles of faith in Islam is the belief in predestination. That is why the Prophet declares: *And know what misses could not have hit, and what strikes you could not have missed you* (Ahmad, No.22705). Moreover, since *Ṣalāt* is observed daily, all days are equal before Allah.

In the same way, since a man eats and drinks every day, he should also know that he can transact business and the critical occasion on any day. The danger of such a superstitious belief is that it may encourage laziness. Besides, it would be detrimental to the people's interest. For example, an applicant invited to an interview on one of the days said to be unsuitable would have himself blamed should he fail to participate in the interview accordingly.

CONCLUSION

Shaykh Adam remains a prominent personality whose views on Islam in Yorubaland, especially in the areas maintaining a balance between Islamic rules and local cultural practice, are germane, as they provide a sense of direction for the Muslim populace who may find themselves at the cross road, in the bid to abide by cultural dictates while observing the rules of Islam. Having recognised these, he diagnosed many critical areas pivotal to maintaining a sound creed of Islam. It is understood from his various submissions that some aspects of Yoruba culture align with Islam, though with some modifications. He declared the sermonising naming of a newborn baby as an innovation, though it promotes the cause of Islam. He also advocated a preference for Islamic names over others. *Ifa* divination, bending or kneeling while greeting, Yoruba festivals, and choice of days for activities with strange thoughts are condemned strongly. He condemned days of events for Marriage but approved them for funerals due to the peculiarities of each. He is, however, silent on *Khaṭṭ*, though emphasised *Istikhārah*. Islamic titles as standard in Yorubaland have justifications and can enhance national cohesion and integration, but he cautioned against their conferment on wrong people who do not deserve it. This is, therefore, a contribution to making the views and submissions of Shaykh on Islam popular among Muslims, especially the English readers and audience.

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