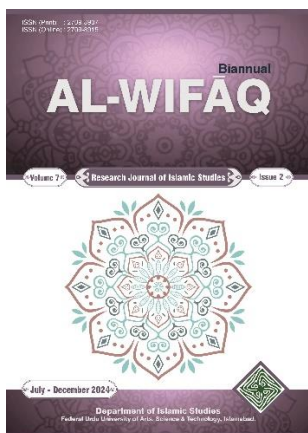




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Authors

¹ Mubin Olatoye Raji

Affiliations

¹ Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

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Yoruba Muslim Clerics' Contributions to Healthcare Delivery in Lagos State, Nigeria

Mubin Olatoye Raji

Department of Religions, History and Heritage Studies

Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

mubin.raji@kwasu.edu.ng

molaraji74@gmail.com

+2348029082191

+2348104612579

ABSTRACT

Islām as a complete way of life lays emphasis on the promotion of health so much so that it makes adequate provisions for both preventive and curative health care. In order to be able to appreciate the healing/health system of Islam, it is essential to examine the two main sources of Islam, viz, Qur'ān and Sunnah. The Glorious Qur'ān contains highly effective healing and curative properties for various ailments. The Sunnah of the Prophet is also replete with remedies for various ailments and maladies. Muslim scholars have carried out quite a good number of studies on the healing qualities of Islam vis-à-vis spiritual, psychological and physical ailments. This study, utilising a qualitative approach, focuses on the contributions of Yoruba Muslim clerics to healthcare delivery in Lagos State, south-west Nigeria. The Study highlights physical ailments such as cough, erectile dysfunction in men, barrenness and blindness as prominent cases attended to by the Muslim clerics. It also examines methods adopted by them to remedy those cases. The study, however, finds that the practice of written exorcism (hantu) serves as a major feature of their healing methods. Sometimes, the written exorcism is mixed with different items and substances, a feature which this study verifies whether it is permissible or not under the Sharī'ah of Islām.

KEYWORDS:

Healthcare, Lagos State, Yoruba Muslim Clerics, Healing System, Exorcism.

1.0 Introduction

Health is a significant factor of man's existence on earth. Therefore, for him to excel in all aspects of life, he needs to be at his optimum physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual levels. Islām as a complete way of life emphasizes on the issue of health and that informs why the Sharī'ah of Islām has as its main objective the promotion of well-being of all mankind. Islām makes adequate provision for both preventive and curative health care. The Qur'ān since the time of its revelation has been a source of healing employed by the Prophet (SAW) and his companions, this is known as Ruqya. It is on

record that the Prophet (SAW) on different occasions had treated mental disorder arising from demonic attack by the use of ruqya. We are also aware of the event in which some of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) healed a non-Muslim chieftain of a scorpion sting by the use of Sūratu'l-Fātiḥah.

The above serving as a basis for Qur'anic healing system, affords the Muslims world over; especially the Yoruba Muslim clerics acting in the capacity of spiritual healers, the opportunity to derive all sorts of metaphysical cures from the Qur'ān. As a result, they attend to various cases of ailments and diseases that are both human and spiritually induced. In order to achieve healing, they make use of Qur'anic portions which they recite in prayer sessions and scribble on flat materials like black wooden slate and wash them for drinking. They also employ some other methods of healing and also introduce some alien features in their way of treatment. Against this backdrop, this paper is set out to x-ray the contributions of the Yoruba Muslim clerics to health care delivery in Lagos State. The paper also examines the various methods employed to achieve healing, and by and large, some cases of ailments and their treatments are analysed.

2. 1 Health and Well-Being in the Framework of Islām

Health is considered to be the normal state of the human body, which puts him in a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. In other words, being healthy is not merely an absence of disease, ailment or deformity. Islām as a complete way of life lays emphasis on promotion of health so much so that it makes adequate provisions for both preventive and curative health care (Rahman, 1987).

Good health is a gift from Allāh and at the same time keeping the body in good health is a trust. Islām encourages man to keep his body physically fit and prevent diseases. There are some activities endorsed by the Qur'ān that essentially put the body in the best state to withstand diseases and ailments. Such activities according to Elkadi (1985) include Ṣalāt, which improves the physical condition of the musculo-skeletal and cardiovascular systems, in addition to controlling anxiety, depression, and other emotional problems; fasting, which helps in the alleviation of several peptic and metabolic disorders; ablution and bathing (ghusl), which help in the reduction of occurrence of transmission of infections; breast-feeding, which is proved to be the best and most suitable method of nutrition for the developing newborn baby and many other activities.

The Qur'ān has also provided some hints in forms of guidance to achieve good health and well-being. This includes provision of legislation prohibiting matters which are hazardous to health and enjoining matters which promote health. In this regard, prohibitions of kufr (infidelity) and the lack of recognition of Allāh as the ultimate source of guidance are probably the most important legislation. The prohibition of certain foods, drinks and some activities tend to ensure physical balance and well-being of man. Alcohol

consumption is now considered to be one of the major causes of the incidence of several cancers and inflammatory conditions of the alimentary tract, liver cirrhosis, pancreatic, heart and muscle damage. Eating the flesh of swine is injurious to health as it carries with it a deadly parasite known as trichina (Qaradawi, 1985). Excessive eating leads to obesity, which carries a higher risk of cancer, coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, stroke and variety of metabolic and endocrine disorders. Sexual promiscuity leads to a high incidence of venereal diseases, several types of cancers, infertility and a variety of inflammatory conditions (Elkadi, (1985). Such other matters which prove to be impure, bad or harmful are considered to be in this category. For example, cigarette smoking causes cancer of the lung and alimentary tract, bronchitis, emphysema, peptic ulcer conditions and atherosclerosis with all its serious complications (Elkadi, 1985).

2.2 Ailment in the Context of the Qur'ān

Since human beings are not robot or machine, they are bound to fall sick from time to time. In other words, ailment is associated with human nature and it does not necessarily result from offending Allāh but rather a natural phenomenon. Ailment causes disequilibrium and the only way to remove this state of condition so that the body may come back to its natural state of health is medication and healing.

The Qur'ān describes ailment as a disabling condition that prevents a person from carrying out physical acts of worship, such as Ṣalāt (Q5:6) fasting (Q2:184) and Hajj (pilgrimage to Makah). Ailment is also described as distress that can hamper physical and social well-being (Q2:83).

2.2.1 Qur'ān Classification of Ailment

The Qur'ān classifies ailment into two:

- i. Ailment of the heart which often times lead to transgression from the right way. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

In the heart is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allah increase their disease...? (Q2:10).

Under this category, the Qur'ān mentions diseases such as hypocrisy (nifāq-Q2:8-10), heedless to remembrance of Allāh (ghaflah-Q18:22), pride (kibr-Q40:50); hatred (ghid-Q3:18), ill-feeling (ghill-Q7:43).

It should be noted that remedies for this type of ailment cannot be achieved at the hands of either orthodox or traditional healers, but through the guidance of the message of Allāh (al-Qur'ān) as manifested in his teaching to acquire the pleasure of Allāh (Al-Jawziyyah, 2008).

- ii. Ailment of the body which involves diseases that affect different system of the body. The Qur'ān mentions such diseases as blindness

(A'mā-Q2:17); deafness (sum-Q3:39); dumbness (bukm-Q16:76); lameness (A'raj-Q48:17) and leprosy (bara'-Q3:49). Apart from these, the body may be afflicted with various diseases like stomach ache, headache, cough, small pox, yellow fever, ulcer e.tc.

3.1 Treatment from the Islāmic Perspective

It is believed in Islām that every ailment has a remedy. Therefore, Muslims are encouraged to seek treatment for any ailment they are afflicted with. The Prophet (SAW) sought treatment for his ailment and also commanded his followers to do so. This is accordance with one of his traditions that states:

إن الله عز وجل أنزل الداء والدواء، وجعل لكل داء دواءً، فتداؤوا ولا تداؤوا بحرام

Verily Allāh has sent down the disease and the cure, and for every disease there is a cure. So seek treatment but do not seek treatment with that which is forbidden (Sunan Abu Daud, Ḥadīth 3874).

The above tradition justifies the necessity of treatment according to Islām, either through orthodox, traditional or Prophetic medicine as the case may be.

3.1.1 Classification of Treatment in Islām

In Islām, treatment with medicine is classified into two:

1. Preventive Measure

According to the Qur'ān, prevention is one of the fixed laws of Allāh in the universe. In a number of verses, Allāh calls on the believers to take preventive measures against entering the hell-fire and against his punishment (Q66:6). This measure is also applied to taking medicine as a means of treatment to forestall the occurrence of ailment. The concept of prevention does not contradict with the concept of qadar (pre- destination) (Ajibola, 2003).

The concept of prevention can be understood through three different levels: (a) Primary prevention which involves measures which aim at preventing the occurrence of any ailment or disease; (b) Secondary prevention which entails using measures to limit the impact of already occurred ailment. This is usually done by attempting to discover the ailment early and combating it with necessary treatment; and (c) Tertiary prevention which also aims at mitigating the long-term sequel and natures of disease. This measure involves activities that promote good health, such as balance diet, rest, recreation, medication, happy marriage and good family life. These are part of preventive medicine because they put the body in the best possible condition to be able to fight or overcome an occurrence of ailments (Ajibola, 2003).

2. Curative Measure

This measure is employed when an ailment has occurred in man. It

therefore becomes for an afflicted individual to seek for the right and appropriate healing methods against any form of ailments. The curative medicine may be invasive or non- invasive. Ajibola, (2003) submits that a non- invasive curative medicine approach is preferred to an invasive curative approach because it aims at helping the body to fight the disease or ailment at all cost.

4.0 Treatment of Physical Ailments by Yoruba Muslim Clerics: Modus Operandi

4.1 Brief Sketch of the Yoruba Muslim Clerics

The term Muslim cleric in Arabic is referred to as ‘ulamā’ (Muslim scholars). They are those who have acquired the requisite knowledge in the Arabic language, the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth and Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). However, to the Yoruba Muslims, the Muslim clerics are called Alfas or Aafas as the case may be, a nomenclature that has been adopted to refer to the category of Muslims who are knowledgeable in Qur’anic or Arabic education. Those who engage in missionary activities (da’wah) are sometimes, also given the title. The title is sometimes cheapened such that any practicing Muslim who may not necessarily be a scholar, teacher or preacher but because of his strict adherence to the teachings of Islām like keeping of beard and putting on turban is labeled an Alfa (a Muslim cleric) (Doi, 1984).

Also in this category of Muslim clerics are Traditional Muslim scholars who engage in spiritual consultancy as a vocation. Majority of those who get involved in this vocation are graduates of Arabic schools who are forced to take to spiritual consultancy for economic survival due to the fact the system which produced them did not provide any means of gainful employment for them. (Bello, 2009) Others are just ordinary Muslims with little or no knowledge of the Qur’ān who having laid their hands on some records of use of herbs and esoteric knowledge, organise themselves as spiritual consultants/healers and hide under the guise of Islām for people to consult them for possible solutions to their varying problems.

In the context of this study, our focus bothers on two categories of Muslim clerics who are acting in the capacity of spiritual consultants/healers with respect to the methods they employ in treating their patients. In the first category are those that mix between the Islamic and trado-herbal methods but are more Islamically inclined. In other words, they use more of Qur’anic portions as a method of treatment. There are in the second category those that mix between the two methods above but they are more in tune with trado-herbal methods of treatment. These categories of Muslim clerics attend to various cases of ailments and other forms of problems, such as mental problems deriving from demonic possession; barrenness, blindness, cough, fever, problems associated with women and children; trading, enhancement of luck and fortunes etc. The Muslim clerics are also consulted

for devilish issues of all kinds.

4.2 Methods of Treatment

The Muslim clerics acting in the capacity of spiritual healers adopt various methods of treatment for their clients' ailments and such other problems that confront them. These methods are classified into permissible and non-permissible treatments under the Sharī'ah of Islām

4.2.1 Permissible Methods of Treatment

4.2.1.1 Recitation of Qur'ānic Verses as Supplication

This involves organising prayer sessions during which certain portions of the Qur'ān are recited repeatedly for a number of times. This idea is borne out of their belief that the Glorious Qur'ān contains healing qualities. In this regard, the *Āyātu'sh-shifā'* (healing verses) in the Qur'ān are considered firstly in the treatment of various ailments. Thereafter, such other portions of the Qur'ān which they believe are related to certain ailments are also recited. The recitation of the Qur'ān is sometimes interposed with chanting and rendition of the beautiful names of Allāh. This, in a way, is meant to reinforce the appeal and emotional outburst of the supplicant. The process of the prayer entails that the afflicted or the patient is seated in a circle surrounded by a number Muslim clerics, precisely seven and the portions of the Qur'ān are recited in a loud voice. The leader of the team, who is normally the main healer, will firstly rub either the chest or any other parts of the patient with pronouncement of some words as intention before the commencement of the prayer. Sometimes a container of water is placed before the patient and he is made to drink it after the prayer session. At times, the patient may also be asked to sit on a mortar depending on the kind of ailment, carrying a copy of the Qur'ān on his head while certain portions of the Qur'ān are recited on him in a number of times.

In addition, some prophetic prayers that have healing values are recited in addition to the Qur'anic portions. In another dimension, some special prayers formulated from the Qur'ān are recited upon the sick. These prayer includes, *Rihul Aḥmar*, *Shumūsul Ijābah*, *Ijābu'l-Qahr*.

4.2.1.2 Writing of the Qur'anic Portions as Hantu

The Yoruba Muslim clerics for the purpose of treatment of certain ailments also scribble Qur'anic portions on the black wooden slate known as *walaa* or any other flat materials as the case may be. The scribbling is done with ink specially prepared from a local tree called *Ori* and wash with clean water mixed with honey for drinking and sometimes for bathing. Oftentimes, the washings are mixed with some local items such as leaves of plants, barks, tree, roots which have been pounded into powdery substance. These items are technically called *Gaari Tira*. Some fresh leaves of plants are also squeezed in a bowl while the juice is used to wash certain written portions

of the Qur'ān and then given to the patient to either drink or bath. The above process which is known among the Yoruba Muslim clerics as hantu serves as a prominent feature of treatment. Hantu is adulterated form of the Arabic word *khatt* which literally means writing.

4.2.1.3 Use of Herbs and Shrubs and other Permissible Materials.

Many of the Muslim clerics, especially those that are traditionally inclined in their treatment use herbs and shrubs in the treatment of ailments that are physical in nature. They do not see anything bad in using parts of plants, leaves, roots or barks, since they constitute major aspects of Allah's provisions for man on earth. In using herbs and shrubs they merge different types of leaves and roots together, pound them inside local pots and at time squeeze the leaves. When this process is completed, they become useful for the cure of various ailments. Another dimension is to make use of the residue of the finished products from the herbs mix them with local black soap (Ose Dudu) which is used for bathing by the patient.

4.2.1.4 Animal Sacrifice (Adh- Dhabh)

Another method of treatment is the slaughtering of animal, firstly, as an item needed in treating certain ailments and secondly as offering to Allāh following the completion of certain special prayers for their patient whose ailments is suspected to be spiritual. This is because of their belief that some physical ailments have spiritual undertone. Some parts of the animal are used to prepare concoction known as Aseje, while other parts are distributed as *ṣadaqah* (charity) to neighbours and the needy.

4.2.2 Non-Permissible Methods of Treatment

While the above methods of treatment can be said to be permissible in Islām, owing to their nature and procedures, the fact remains that there are quite other methods of treatment employed by the Muslim clerics which are not only impermissible but punishable under the Sharī'ah because they run fowl of Islamic teachings and injunctions. Some of these include, but not limited to:

4.2.2.1 Distortion of Qur'anic Portions through Recitation and Writing as Hantu

This first entails the practice of manipulating Qur'anic portions as a means of treatment by reciting or writing them in the reverse sorting, commonly referred to in the local parlance as '*Atorikodi*'. In another manner, some portions of the Qur'ān are missed out entirely and some other gibberish incantations and bizarre construction are intermittently included to the portions of the Qur'ān. By gibberish incantations, it means strange words and phrases which are mostly not understandable, though written in Arabic scripts. Names of *jinn*s are prominent feature in this regard. As regards bizarre construction, they are said to be abbreviations formulated from Qur'anic wordings through

spiritual calculation. All these are used intermittently within selected Qur'ānic portions.

In some cases, Yoruba Muslim clerics also apply ḥarām substances to the written portions of the Qur'ān. This is normally carried out in a number of ways. Portions of the Qur'ān may be written on materials that are forbidden in Islām, or ḥarām substances serving as the ink for the written portion; and in most cases, ḥarām substances are mixed with the written portion or used as liquid content for washing the written portion. In fact, the most disheartening aspect is the practice of using human parts as items mixed or applied to written portions of the Qur'ān. The Yoruba Muslim clerics, especially those that are traditionally inclined, patronise people who work at burial grounds to exhume human bodies for them. Some of the parts of body they use are head, bone, heart, and tongue. It is their belief that following the above means will further boost the efficacy of the preparations for the ailments that has demonic influence.

4.2.2.2 Use of Charms and Amulets

Weaving Qur'ānic portions as amulets and talismans is another method employed by the Yoruba Muslim clerics. They refer to amulets (tamā'im) and talismans (talāsīm) as "Tira" containing inscriptions and incantations written in Arabic characters but might not be in the Arabic language. In most cases, Qur'ānic portions, Names and Attributes of Allāh form the content of what is written as amulets and talisman. Sometimes, names of jinns are mixed with the Qur'ānic portion. In the case of Qur'ānic portions, it is quite absurd that the Muslim clerics write them on materials which are unlawful or bound with skin or leather of unlawful animals. Also, when the talisman or amulet is ready, apart from being kept inside the pocket, under the pillow or tied to the neck of a sick person or a baby, it is also put or thrown into filthy places, like the toilets or dump sites.

4.2.2.3 Seeking the Assistance of the Jinn

Another method considered to be impermissible is that which the Muslim clerics solicit the assistance of jinn in casting out an ailment diagnosed to be spiritually induced. It is their belief that the jinn's assistance could be sought to render some services to man, especially where such services are extra-ordinary; and that they could also be called upon when one is in trouble. As such, they do not see anything wrong in employing the services of the jinns, even if such requires something in return. This kind of practice is known as al'Isti'ānah- (seeking assistance) and al-'Istigāthah - الإستغاثة (appeal for help) respectively.

We want to at this juncture, state that Islām abhors any form of treatment or healing processes that have any smack of polytheism (Shirk), hence all methods of treatment discussed above are strongly condemned in Islām.

5.1 Selected Cases of Ailments and their Treatment

Under this section, some cases of ailments which are usually attended to by Muslim clerics of Yoruba extraction are examined. This include, cough, blindness, erectile dysfunction and barrenness/infertility. However, emphasis is laid on treatment of infertility which also leads to treatment of pregnancy in women up to the point of delivery.

It needs to be stated that just like the modern medical practitioners, the Yoruba Muslim clerics would not start their treatment until a proper diagnosis of the ailment is carried out. This is to know the source of the ailment, whether it is derived from natural influence or spiritual. We have earlier mentioned that the Muslim clerics recognise the possibility of physical ailments having spiritual undertone and their belief is that Islām provides care for all cases of ailments. Their manners of diagnosis sometimes have semblances with the orthodox way. Questions are posed to a patient or his relatives on the duration of the ailment, symptoms, medications taken so far, traces of hereditary, response to medications, etc. From responses given, certain conclusions are drawn by the Muslim cleric which leads him to the next line of action. There are still some of them who use modern medical equipments, like stethoscope to diagnose their patients.

Owing to their background as Muslim scholars, they also employ the use of a special prayer known as Istikhārah to determine the nature or degree of ailment suffers by a patient. The istikhārah is mostly done at night before going to bed; some of them who also are knowledgeable in Ḥisāb or 'ilm al-Falak use this means to diagnose their patients before embarking on the treatment. This knowledge is used to read the horoscope of the patient. There is also a method of diagnosis known as Khaṭṭ, Raml or Turābī where lines are made on sand to determine the source of the ailment and assurances to success in their treatment.

5.1.1 Treatment of Cough

Cough is described as an act of forcing air out of lung through the throat with a shout, low sound, often unwillingly. In other words, it is a rapid expulsion of air from the lungs, typically in order to clear the lung air ways of fluids mucus, or other materials. To determine the occurrence of cough in man, there used to be the symptoms of chest tightness, shortness of breath and fatigue (Chung and Pavord, 2008). The Muslim cleric having this in mind, first lay his palm on the chest of the patient and recite all the verses of healing (Āyatu'sh- Shifā') in the Qur'ān as first aid before embarking on the actual treatment. The patient is thereafter made to sit on a white cloth with inscription of some bizarre construction in form of Khātim; and the whole of Sūratu Yāsīn (Q36) and Āyatu'l Kusiyy (Q2:256) 66 times in addition to some other forms of prayer recited on his head. The next is to write the whole of the above portions of the Qur'ān 16 times, Verses 25-28 of Sūratu Tāhā,

(Q20), the juice of ginger, honey, olive oil and grinded alligator pepper are added to the hantu. This is given to the patient to drink. If the ailment is diagnosed to be spiritually induced, the patient in addition to the above process of treatment would be asked to purchase an animal to be slaughtered and offered as offering to Allāh and the flesh distributed among the poor.

5.1.2 Treatment of Blindness

Blindness is an ailment that is associated with the loss of useful sight or vision. It is also damage to any position of the eye, the optic nerve, or the area of the brain responsible for vision. Blindness can be termed temporary or permanent, in other words, blindness can be used interchangeably with words such as visually impaired, partially sighted, legally blind (<http://www.medicinenet.com>). In all of these cases, Muslim clerics believe there is a cure in the Qur'ān.

It needs to be stated that cases of blindness are attended to by very few Muslim clerics who are specialists in this regard. When a patient is diagnosed to have visual problem resulting from diseases, such as cataract and glaucoma, he is subjected to treatment, ranging from recitation of some portions of the Qur'ān such as the Āyatu'sh-shifā', writing of the portions as hantu and some other preparations. For instance, it is very common to recite the following verse of the Qur'ān in prayer session on behalf of one who has visual problem. The patient may also be prescribed the number of times such portions of the Qur'ān is to be recited, that is if the patient knows how to recite the Qur'ān.

فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

Now we have removed from you. Your covering and sharp is your sight this day (Q50:22).

The above verse is also written on a white iron slate 1,111 times, it is then washed with small quantity of Zamzam water mixed with juice of garlic, onion and other items and given to the patient to apply to the affected eyes regularly until he regains his sight. If however, the blindness is spiritually induced, the Muslim clerics use some special formulated prayers for treatment. The prayers may be recited on the patient or written in form of hantu for him to drink and apply to his eyes. A very common prayer in this regard is referred to as Riḥu'l-Aḥmara. The prayer which is a formulation of some verses of the Qur'ān, names and Attributes of Allāh is recited 7 times by seven clerics forming a circle around the patient who is made to lie down on his right side facing the Qiblah. At certain portions of the prayer, the name of the patient is mentioned. At the end of the prayer, the leader gathers his own spittle and those of other clerics in his two palms and rubs over the eyes/face of the patient. To ensure complete deliverance the process is repeated for a period of seven days.

The prayer is also written as hantu 41 times in addition to Āyatu'l Kursiy (Q2: 256), al-Mu'awwidhatayn (Q113 and 14). This is followed by a bizarre construction (khātim) specially formulated and attached to the prayer. Large amount of white onions are squeezed and the juice is used to wash the hantu. Part of it is mixed with other items and made into eye drops, while the other part is kept in a keg of water for drinking always. Some Muslim clerics go to the extent of appealing the spirit which they belief might have caused the illness. In this case, they propitiate the invading spirit by the means of sacrifice taking to a T-junction or crossroad called Orita Meta in the dead of the night.

5.1.3 Treatment of Erectile Dysfunction

This is an ailment otherwise known as impotence. It is a sexual dysfunction that is characterised by the inability of a man to develop or maintain an erection of the penis during sexual activity. A man having this ailment may cause him stress, affect his self confidence and contribute to relationship problems. Erectile dysfunction according to experts is caused by some health problems such as heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, alcoholism, etc. It therefore means that this ailment is linked to the above health challenges and such other sexual problems like ejaculatory dysfunction, premature or delayed ejaculation. All of these cases are attended to by the Yoruba Muslim clerics ([http:// www.mayoclinic.com.net](http://www.mayoclinic.com.net)).

For treatment of this ailment, the five chapters of the Qur'ān that begin with the word Qul, i.e. Sūratu'l-Jinn (Q72), Sūratu'l-Kāfirūn (Q109), Sūratu'l-Ikhlāṣ (Q112), Sūratu'l Falaq (Q113) and Sūratu'l n-Nās (Q114) are written in a black wooden slate with black ink called tadawa. It is then washed with Khal water mixed with onion juice and honey. It is taken by the affected person before going to bed for twenty seven days. If the ailment is chronic or has spiritual undertone, the aforementioned chapters of the Qur'ān are written in the reverse sorting on a black iron slate. It is then washed with the blood of a horse, while some other items are added to it. This preparation is done in the night around 1am. The affected person is made to rub it on his male genital every night in a period of twenty seven days.

5.1.4 Treatment of Barrenness/Infertility

Bareness is described as a state or condition of a woman unable to conceive or produce off springs. There are many reasons why women cannot conceive or have children of their own. These reasons are mostly traced to medical and sometimes spiritual. For example, some couples may be physiologically incompatible, that is, not a perfect match to complete fruition process even after using all available means to have children. Spiritually, a woman may be under curse either from human beings or a generational

curse ([http:// www.medicalnewstoday.com](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com)).

According to experts, the main cause of barrenness is infertility which may result from health problems with such as ovulation disorder, damage to fallopian tubes or uterus, or problems with cervix, poor egg quality, overactive and underactive thyroid gland and age. Infertility refers to an inability to conceive after having regular unprotected sex for over 12 years. Research reveals that slightly over half of all cases of infertility are a result of female conditions, while the rest are caused by either sperm disorders in men or unidentified factors ([http:// www.medicinenet.com](http://www.medicinenet.com)).

Having identified infertility as the main cause of barrenness, Muslim clerics attend to people with this problem, the women being regular callers. They provide treatment in different dimensions to all cases of Infertility. In most cases, they go spiritual in their treatment which therefore informs why they make use of the Qur'ān with the belief that it is the ultimate cure for every ailment. They also provide pre-natal and post-natal care for the pregnant women.

A woman with problem of infertility is firstly subjected to a rigorous prayer session to neutralize any possibility of a spell on her. The woman is made to sit on a mortar surrounded by seven Muslim clerics. A special prayer formulated out of Sūratu Yāsīn known as Faṭḥu'l Aqfāl is recited seven times in addition to some other chapters of the Qur'ān, such as Sūratu'l Kahf, Sūratu 'ṣ-Ṣaffat; after which a black she-goat is slaughtered right at the spot where the prayer is held. The heart of the animal is taken and kept in a local pot in addition to some other items. It is then buried for seven days. The other parts of the animal are distributed as ṣadaqah (charity) among the people.

In continuation of the treatment, Suratu'l Ikhlāṣ' (Q112) is written 666 times and washed with small amount of clean water; the washing is then used to cook the heart of the she-goat un-dug after the seventh day as concoction (Aseje). This is given to the woman to eat. In the same vein, Sūratu'l Ikhlāṣ is written 21 times on a white paper with the blood of a pig serving as ink. After some items have been added to it, it is then bound with the leather of the pig and worn always by the woman. It is expressed that the wisdom behind using pig's blood and leather has to do with the nature of this animal with such blessing of conception at the slightest opportunity when it is being mated. Its combination with the portion of the Qur'ān ('Al-'Ikhlāṣ) is as a result of the portion which expresses the fact that Allāh does not beget nor is He begotten.

For a comprehensive treatment, the husband of the woman is also taken through routine treatment that has to do with abnormal semen—no sperm, low sperm count. In this regard, the whole of Sūratu Tāhā is written in a black slate and washed with Zamzam water. The washing is then mixed with pure honey, black seed oil, olive oil and fresh cow milk. This is taken by the husband every night before bed time.

When the woman eventually conceives, the Muslim clerics resume treatment of the woman. It is their belief that a pregnant woman during the early stage of her pregnancy needs adequate care against health problems that can put the life of the embryo and that of the mother in danger. She also needs assistance to protect her from the evil machination of people who are not satisfied with her present condition.

5.1.4.1 Pre-Natal Treatment

This runs through the first month of pregnancy till time of delivery. Treatment at this stage serves as immunity against termination of the pregnancy. For this purpose, Sūratul'l-Falaq and Nās, (Q113 and 114), Āyatu'l Kursiyy (Q 2:253), and sometimes Sūratu'l Kahf (Q18) are favourite chapters of the Qur'ān recited and written as hantu to for the woman to drink always. In addition, a certain portion of the Qur'ān (Q8:30) is written on a white paper 7 times and bound with white and black thread to be worn always by the women until delivery period.

5.1.4.2 Treatment During Child Labour

Experience has shown that during the period of child labour, virtually all the pregnant women experience terrible pains and that sometimes lead to loosing the baby or death of the mother. Therefore, to avoid such unpleasant situation during child labour, Muslim clerics rise to duty. In the first instance, when the pregnancy has reached three months, verse 20 of Sūratu'Abasa (Q80:20) is written as hantu in large numbers and given to the woman to drink till the period of delivery. In the same vein, Sūratu'l-Fātiḥah (Q1), Al-Ikhlāṣ (Q112), Al-Falaq (Q113), An-Nās (Q114) and Al-Inshiqāq (Q84) in addition to the following prayer are written on a clean white paper, wrapped with a white thread and bound with a black leather. This will be worn as a necklace by the pregnant woman until the period of delivery.

يَا خَالِقَ النَّفْسِ مِنَ النَّفُوسِ خَلِّصْهَا فَأَلْقَتْ جَنِينَهَا اللَّهُمَّ خَلِّصْ فَلَانَةَ بِنْتَ فَلَانَةَ مِمَّا فِي بَطْنِهَا
من ولدها خلاصا في عافية إنك أرحم الراحمين

O Creator of the soul from the soul, liberate her and make her delivery safe. O 'Allāh' rescue (name of the woman) daughter of (name of her mother) from what is in her womb and make her strong during child labour. You are the best of all the Beneficent.

6.0 Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this paper to examine the contributions of Yoruba Muslim clerics acting in the capacity of spiritual healers to health care delivery in Lagos State. References have been made to various cases of ailments that people suffer and how the Muslim clerics have healed them with portions of the Qur'ān. The paper also revealed that a number of baffling ailments that cannot be treated by the orthodox physicians were and still

being treated by the Muslim clerics. Judging from this enormous contribution which the Muslim clerics have made on the health and well-being of people, it will be profitable for the government to seek partnership with the Muslim clerics who combine between herbal and spiritual treatment derivable from the Qur'ān. The partnership when effectively forged will improve and harness private sector partnership in the provision of health care services in Lagos State.

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