

A CRITICAL STUDY OF HERETICAL ELEMENTS IN THE OBSERVANCE OF *ASHURA* AMONG EPE MUSLIMS OF SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

Toyib B. I. (PhD)

Arabic Department, Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu
Email: bitoyib@gmail.com

and

Manzoor A. Lawal

Department of Islamic Studies, Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu
Email: lawalmonzoor63@gmail.com

Abstract

Ashura, an Islamic festival observed on the 10th day of Muharram of Islamic lunar year is very popular among the Yoruba Muslims of Epe; a coastal town in Lagos State, Nigeria. Commonly known as Kayokayo in Yoruba parlance, its observance stimulates the interest of the authors at subjecting it to academic research in this paper. The objective is to assess the level of compliance of the Muslims in the town with the basic Shariah principles guiding its practice and its implications in Islam. The study makes a panoramic survey of Epe land, origin of Ashura and the Shariah rules guiding its observance. To study this event, observation and interview methods were employed. Findings revealed deviation of Epe Muslims from the Shar'iah provisions on the methods of its observance. The heresies if continued unchecked may appear as the norm rather than the exception. The paper recommends, among others, that the Muslim leaders in the town should intensify efforts at changing their approach to da'wah. Otherwise, it will be better to change its nomenclature to reflect pure un-Islamic Yoruba tradition and not to relate it to Islam.

Keywords: *Ashura, heretical elements, observance, Epe people, South-western Nigeria*

Introduction

Celebration of festivals holds an important position in Islam. This is why like other aspects of life, there are some laid down principles guiding their celebrations. Apart from these principles are the historical background of their origin and their mutual benefits to the growth and development of the religion. An attestation to the presence of these principles is contained in *Suratul Haj* chapter 22 verse 67 where Allah states

For every nation, We have made *Mansak* which they must follow Two of these festivals are *Idul-Adha* and *Idul-Fitr*. *Idul-Adha*; an annual festival is to commemorate the historic event of Prophet Ibrahim's attempt at sacrificing his son, Ismail before the divine intervention of Allah who provided a ram as a ransom. *Idul-Fitr* on the other hand, is organised to mark the end of Ramadan fasting and the beginning of another month of *Hijrah* calendar; Shawwal. Concerning the two festivals, Prophet

Muhammad (SAAS) is reported to have said every nation has its festivals and these (i.e. Idul-Fitr and Idul-Adha) are your festivals (Al-Munajjid, 2011:3)

Notwithstanding its controversial status, *Idul-Mawlud* is another festival of immense popularity among Muslims in many parts of the world. This is to celebrate the birth of the Prophet whose messages were the reasons for our submissions as Muslims. Among other festivals duly indentified and recognised by Muslims is Ashura which forms the basis for the present study. *Ashura*; (literally defined as a day of remembrance) is a significant aspect of Islam that has its root in the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) prior to the institution of Ramadan fasting. While there are divergent views over its origin, opinion is unanimous that *Ashura* is observed by fasting on the 10th day of Muharram of every lunar year. Islam as a religion of law provides the guidance for *Ashura* observance as is always the case with every other aspects of human life. A critical look at this guidance provides the catalyst for a panoramic survey of *Ashura* practice among Yoruba Muslims of Epe; a coastal town in Lagos State of South-western Nigeria. The purpose is to know whether the practice of *Ashura* as popularly known among the Yoruba as *Kayokayo* still follows this template. The choice of Epe is informed by the fact that the town remains the most popular among the few towns in Yoruba land where *Ashura* still enjoys an unfettered patronage. To bring the study into proper perspective, a background definition of what heresy

connotes is apposite. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000), heresy means a belief or an opinion that is against the principle of a particular religion. It is also a belief or an opinion that disagrees strongly with what most people believe. A heretic is a proponent of such customs or beliefs. Irrespective of the different ways it is used within a Christian, Jewish or Islāmic context, heretical still is subject not merely to punishments such as excommunication but even to death penalty (Walker and Glaser, 2007:62)

Epe in History

Epe as presently constituted comprises the Ijebu Epe indigenes who are also the host to Eko-Epe immigrants from Lagos. While the exact date of the traditional settlement of Ijebu-Epe people is yet unknown, available historical evidence suggests its foundation was between 13th and 15th centuries by a band of migrant hunters led by Urakaloye (Epe History & Events, 2014, 3). Epe which was formerly a major port for the shipment of slaves and agricultural produce among others from Ijebu-Ode, later witnessed the arrival of about 1500 immigrants from Lagos in 1851 led by King Kosoko Esinlokun. Kosoko had arrived Epe shore from Lagos as a fall-out of kingship tussle between him and Oba Akintoye of Lagos (Balogun, 2009, 99). He and his entourage were said to have met a deserted town when they landed at Epe, perhaps because its inhabitants had fled their homes in anticipation of an imminent attack from the forces of Awujale (paramount ruler of Ijebu-Ode), whose emissary was killed in

the town prior to Kosoko's arrival. With Kosoko around, the fleeing residents started returning home as a result of Kosoko's intercession on their behalf in their face-off with the Awujale. Kosoko spent eleven years in Epe and returned to Lagos while some good number of his supporters decided to stay there and continue their daily businesses in Epe. This group of immigrants later formed what is today known as the Eko-Epe (Epe History & Events, 2014, 5)

Advent of Islam in Epe

Islam gained recognition as a formidable dispensation in Epe after Kosoko's arrival in the town in 1851; an indication that there were few Muslims present prior to his arrival. These few Muslims could not preach, teach or practise their religion in public as a result of Epe Ijebu's hostility to 'foreign' religion (Epe History & Events, 2014). With the arrival of Kosoko, there was a dramatic change in the *status quo*. Two factors were responsible for this. One, a large number of Kosoko's followers was practising Muslims many of whom were respectable men of sound Islamic knowledge. Two, they were warriors who had supported Kosoko on his claim to Obaship throne of Lagos. Balogun (2009) asserts that these 'Muslims were so loyal to him and stood by him at his hours of hardship...' Prominent among them were: Balogun Ajeniya, Oshodi Tapa, Balogun Agbaje, Disu Kujenya, Buraimoh Edu, Iyanda Oloko, Posu, Buraimoh Eleshin, Imam Audu and a host of others. These followers formed the pioneer Muslim community in Eko-Epe under the leadership of Mallam Idris Salu Gana as the Chief

Imam (Gbadamosi, 1978 & Gbadamosi and Ade-Ajayi, 1980). Even though not a Muslim, Kosoko's patronage of the Muslims and his total support for them set the stage for Eko-Epe Muslims to preach and practise their religion without let or hindrance (Balogun, 2009). Kosoko's support helped immensely in consolidating the religion in earnest. Mosques and schools for Muslim children were built in different parts of the town including the central mosque at Oke-Balogun. When the Chief Imām and few other Muslims returned to Lagos with Kosoko, the mantle of leadership of the remaining Muslims in Epe fell on Chief Imām Audu. Islam in Epe flourished so much during this period that the people in the community adopted Islam as a way of life by submitting to Islamic codes of conduct and settling legal matters in accordance with Maliki laws (Oyeweso, 1996). The highest regard accorded the Epe Muslims as a flourishing Islamic town accounted for why the town was known in Yoruba land as *Epe loni Qur'ān* (Epe the custodians of *Qur'ān*). The tempo of Islamic activities during the early period attracted more people to the new religion so much that today, not fewer than seventy percent of the people living in Epe are Muslims (Balogun, 2009).

Origin of Ashura

There are divergent opinions on the origin of *Ashura* and each is supported either by the traditions of the Prophet, historical sources or both. According to Hadith recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari, *Ashura* was already known as a commemorative day during which some Makkah residents

including Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) tribe, the Quraysh, used to observe customary fasting. While the source of their observance of fasting on this day cannot be ascertained, it is confirmed that Prophet Muhammad also observed it even before he left Makkah for Madinah. Aisha (R.A.) had narrated that:

'*Ashura*' (i.e. the tenth day of Muharram) was a day on which the tribe of Quraish used to fast in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance. The Prophet also used to fast on this day. So when he migrated to Madinah, he fasted on it and ordered (the Muslims) to fast on it. When the fasting of Ramadan was enjoined, it became optional for the people to fast or not to fast on the day of *Ashura* (Al-Mundhiri, 2000).

Another Prophetic tradition narrated by Ibn 'Umar states that:

Fasting was observed on the day of *Ashura* (10th of Muharram) by the people of the Pre-Islamic period. But when (the order of obligatory fasting in) the month of Ramadan was revealed, the Prophet said, "It is up to one to fast on it (*Ashura*) or not."

Two different sources showed how the Prophet got involved in the observance of *Ashura* when he got to Madinah. The first source, also narrated by Aisha (R.A.) confirmed the earlier one and it says:

After the event of *Hijrah*, when Muhammad led his followers to Madinah, he found the Jews of that area likewise observing fasts on the day of *Ashura*. At

this, Muhammad affirmed the Islamic claim to the fast, and from then the Muslims have fasted on combinations of two or three consecutive days including the 10th of Muharram (e.g. 9th and 10th and 11th) (Az-Zubaidi, 1996).

In another account, a companion, Ibn Abbas, reported that:

Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) went to Madinah and found the Jews fasting on the tenth of Muharram. Muhammad inquired of them, "What is the significance of this day on which you fast?" They replied, "This is a good day, the day on which God rescued the children of Israel from their enemy. So, Moses fasted this day." Muhammad said, "We have more claim over Moses than you." Muhammad then fasted on that day and ordered Muslims too (Az-Zubaidi, 1996).

While the two sources seem to corroborate each other, Ibn Abbas narration seems to suggest that the Prophet may not have known how this came into being among the people of Makkah before he left. The narration of Aisha (R.A.) also confirmed that when fasting during the month of Ramadan became obligatory, the fast of *Ashura* was made optional. Yet another version linking the story of Prophet Musa (AS) with the issue of fasting to commemorate *Ashura* gained prominence in the Quran earlier cited and perhaps served as a veritable evidence for its adoption by Prophet Muhammad particularly when

he got to Madinah. It is the story of the bondage of the children of Israel and their subsequent deliverance from Egypt's Pharaoh as narrated in the Quran that:

We took the Children of Israel across the sea: Pharaoh and his hosts followed them in insolence and spite. At length, when overwhelmed with the flood, he said: "I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in: I am of those who submit (to God in Islam)." (It was said to him): "Ah now!- But a little while before, wast thou in rebellion!- and thou didst mischief (and violence)! "This day shall We save thee in the body, that thou mayest be a sign to those who come after thee! But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs!" We settled the Children of Israel in a beautiful dwelling-place, and provided for them sustenance of the best: it was after knowledge had been granted to them, that they fell into schisms amongst them, on the Day of judgement." (Surah Yunus 10:90-93)

The historical significance of this day among some Sunni Muslims (who refer to it as The Day of Atonement) can be figured out in a Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) by one of his companions, Ibn Abbas (R.A) who said Prophet Muhammad went to Madina and found the Jews fasting on the tenth of Muharram. Muhammad inquired of them, "This is a good day, the day on which God rescued the children of Israel from their enemy.

So, Moses fasted on that day". The Prophet said, "We have more claim over Moses than you." The Prophet then fasted on that day and ordered Muslims too. Based on this Hadith, Sunni Muslims have regarded fasting on the day of Ashura as recommended, though not obligatory, having been superseded by the Ramadan fast (Sahih Muslim, Hadith-2499). While the Prophet himself did not specifically declare *Ashura* as the day of celebration, the idea of celebration particularly from the Muslims in Epe may have emanated, one from the history of Prophet Nuh's Ark (referred to later in this paper) and possibly also from the controversial issue of Mauludin Nabiyy.

Another dimension to this discourse which of course is vehemently opposed by the Sunnis as the reason for *Ashura* is the Shiite celebration of the event. They had attached much significance to the brutal execution of Hussein, the son of Khalif Ali and about seventy of his followers in the hands of Khalif Yazid bn Muawiyah at Karbala on the 10th of Muharram 860 CE. This significance was why they introduced a dimension to the celebration of *Ashurah* which has become a prominent festival in the lives of the Shites.

Some muslim scholars' view that the probable link of Prophet Musa/Pharaoh's story with *Ashura* could not have been an imitation in view of the position of Islam that traces the three religions to their common root as Abrahamic faith'. The Qur'an in Surah Al Nahl chapter 16 verse 123 reads "So We have

taught thee the inspired (Message), Follow the ways of Abraham the True in Faith, and he joined not gods with God.” It is perhaps as a result of the possibility of accusing the Prophet (SAW) of imitation that the Prophet himself made *Ashura* optional and had extended the fasting period to cover the ninth and the tenth day of Muharram. One of the Prophetic traditions related by Abdullah ibn Abbas reads:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas (*may Allah be pleased with them both*) said: “When the Messenger of Allah (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*) fasted on ‘*Ashura*’ and commanded the Muslims to fast as well, they said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, it is a day that is venerated by the Jews and Christians.’ The Messenger of Allah (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*) said, ‘If I live to see the next year, in shaa Allah, we will fast on the ninth day too.’ But it so happened that the Messenger of Allah (*peace and blessing of Allah be upon him*) passed away before the next year came.” (Reported by Muslim)

Popularly held view among the Muslims in Epe trace the history of the celebration to the arrival of Nuh’s Ark at Mount *Judiyy* which incidentally also occurred on the tenth of Muharram as the day of commemoration of *Ashura*. This was why they likened the arrival of Kosoko at the Epe lagoon on ship as an example of what happened to Prophet Nuh (interview with Imam Saadullah). This source is so weak to

rely upon as there is no report to authenticate the link of the Prophet with this story as is the case of Prophet Musa (AS). Notwithstanding the variation in the above narrations, one can clearly make some deductions. The first is that the Prophet (SAW) recognised the 10th of lunar month of Muharram each year as *Ashura* day. The other one is that the Prophet (SAW) usually commemorates that date by fasting and that this became optional when Ramadan fasting became an obligatory ritual worship.

Methods

Descriptive research of the survey type is adopted in this study. The Muslims in Epe of south-western Nigeria were the target population. Observation and unstructured interview methods were the two instruments used to obtain information. In this regard, the researchers made a 12 day visit to Epe for the research. During this period, the researchers were present to witness the programme in order to give an on-the-spot assessment of the programme. In the case of interview, two categories of people were selected using the purposive sampling method. The first category involved the Muslim spiritual title-holders which included the Chief Imam of the town and two of his subordinates. The second group consists of the direct descendants of the early immigrants who settled at Epe. Two of them were selected. Data collected from the interview which were basically in Yoruba language were transcribed and translated to English for the purpose of discussions.

Results and Discussions

On the field, observation shows that Muharram 1 (the first month in *hijra* calendar) is the first day for the commencement of *Ashura* programme in Epe. It is purposely meant to create awareness particularly among the youth that yet another *kayokayo* is around the corner. This awareness is created with songs and dances both by children and elders alike throughout the town. The second day is devoted to Qur'anic and quiz competitions among pupils of local *madrasahs* (schools) in virtually all the streets and the winners are awarded prizes. On the third day, the youth organise a beauty-pageant programme and the most beautiful girl equally awarded prize. The fourth day which is the fourth of *Muharram* is devoted to the organisation of football competition among various local Qur'anic schools. The fifth day is for annual open *da'wah* lectures where prominent Muslim scholars are invited to give talks on Islamic perceptions to contemporary issues. This is followed with special prayers organised for peace and tranquillity of the town on the sixth day. The seventh day is devoted to the presentation of *tira odun*: a typical Islamic method of predicting happenings of the New Year among Yoruba to the entire populace. This is done at the king's palace. It is also the day to seek God's abundance blessings for Epe sons and daughters both at home and abroad. The programme for the eighth day is visitation of the entire Muslims in the town to the tombs of their departed kings and forefathers. The procession is usually led by their *Oba* (king). There, they offer prayers for the repose of their souls by pouring

libations on the tombs. The clear sign of heresy manifested itself when it was discovered that dry gin is the major ingredient used to make these offerings.

On the ninth is the day of *tasua'*: the fasting of the 9th of *Muharram* in accordance with the Sharia principle. The following day, (i.e. 10th of *Muharram*) is the grand finale of the programme when fasting during the day is accompanied with special *iftar* (breaking of the fast in the evening). On this day, foods are prepared in large quantity in every Muslim household for the consumption of every Muslim who came to visit them. This habit creates an avenue particularly for Muslim youth in the town to get to any Muslim's house of their choice to eat to their satisfaction hence the Yoruba word *Kajehun kayo* (to eat and be filled) which later transformed to *Kayo Kayo*. A long list of programmes is lined up after *iftar* (breaking of the fast) on the last day. These include the symbolic boarding of a well decorated ship and causing it to berth at Epe Marina in remembrance of Kosoko's expedition from Lagos Island to Epe, and taking of *Al-Kawthar* spiritual bath at the lagoon to be led by the Olu of Epe (the monarch of Epe). This is followed with the display of Epe rich cultural heritage through the rendition of Islamic oriented and Yoruba local songs in virtually all the streets of the town. It is instructive to note that the procession to Epe Marina involves carrying along bunches of dry grasses called *etufu*. These grasses were lit to provide light for them on their way back as it is forbidden to put on electricity. Further to these were

masquerade-like displays by the youths which involved using banana leaves to cover themselves for the sake of fun. It also included the display of corn-comb fire-work in merriment and great felicitation around their neighbourhood in the night. Finally for the day was the carnival-like programme that was held at the Popo Oba Square where there was a colourful cultural display while a prominent Fuji musician was invited to entertain guests. The ugly part of the carnival programme that went on till early morning hours included consumption of alcoholic drinks, free-mix of males and females, and reported cases of sexual intercourse between people without marital bond as well as cases of rapes and social disturbances (interview with Balogun). It was observed that *Kayo-Kayo* in Epe has gained official recognition of the Lagos State government since the 1990's and had been playing substantial roles in its funding. The fiesta also attracted a lot of dignitaries both within the country and overseas.

Discussions

After the event, the researchers sought an audience with one Mr Ismail Ettu; a descendant of one of the early Muslim settlers in Eko-Epe who traces the origin of *Kayo kayo* in the town to the historic arrival of the founder, Chief Kosoko at the coast of the town in 1851. He asserts that on their way from Lagos, the Eko-Epe immigrants did not come with any traditional festival of African origin because many of them were Muslims. He says however that, on getting to Epe, they discovered that their host community, the Ijebu Epe people

already had several annual festivals which include *Okosi*, *Ebi* and *Agbo*. Having been conversant with the two popular Islamic festivals; the *Id ul Fitr* and *Idul Adha*, they believe there should be a unique festival that will not only be Islamic but will also be a reminder of their historical arrival at the coast of Epe in 1851. To him, the coincidence of their arrival at the coast of Epe on the 10th of *Muharram* with the actual date of *Ashura* observance is an opportunity to make the day memorable in Eko-Epe history of migration hence the introduction of *Kayokayo* (Interview with Sefiu Adu).

Ettu's view is corroborated by those of Alhaj Sa'dallah Abiola Aileru, the Chief Imam of Eko-Epe and two of his subordinates who were also interviewed. These were Imam Sefiu Adu, a 65 year old retired civil servant and the first deputy Imam as well as Imam Abdur-Rahman Awesu, a clergy and the second deputy Imam. According to the Chief Imam being a predominantly Muslim contingent from Lagos, the Eko Epe had no other religion except Islam on their arrival in the town. This is why the date of *Ashura* (*Kayo Kayo*) observance was now fixed at *Muharram 10* of every year in recognition of the year that the ship of Kosoko and his entourage berthed at Epe coast after a seven day journey on the Atlantic Ocean.

The Imam further confirmed that the dual origin of the event informed the combination of Yoruba culture with Islamic principles. While agreeing that the event does not follow the basic *Shariah* rules of observation, he was of the opinion that the case was

not so in the initial period as *Kayo-Kayo* was a day or two day event without any elaborate fun-fare. As an internal arrangement then, major programmes included visitation to the tombs of the past kings and the founding fathers of Eko Epe where prayers were offered for the repose of their souls without involving alcohol as it is done today. The Imam confirms fasting on the 10th of *Muharram*, offering of prayers for Epe people, Qur'anic and quiz competitions as well as predicting what the new year will offer through the reading of *Tira-Odun* at the king's palace as earlier observed. It also included feasting across all the wards in Epe community. He asserts that developments over time saw the incorporation of more programmes to the existing ones. This makes it a week-long observance which include, according to the interview with Balogun (the *Olori Omokewu* of Ijebu-Epe), recitation of the Qur'an to seek God's abundant blessings for Epe sons and daughters and an annual open *da'wah* lectures where some reputable Muslim scholars are invited within and outside the country. Balogun says the centralisation of the programme at the First Epe Central Mosque, Oke-Balogun, Epe marks the beginning of more programmes that made the programme more secular in outlook. It also marks the introduction of some heretical elements like the beauty-pageants, children's party, and the symbolic boarding of a well decorated ship and the taking of *Al-Kawthar* spiritual bath. Further to these were Yoruba cultural displays and invitation of notable Fuji as well as Islamic-oriented musical stars in Yoruba land. Fuji artistes that were

usually invited in the past included late Dr Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, General Kollington Ayinla, Alhaj Wasiu Ayinde Anifowoshe, Dr Adewale Ayuba, Abass Akande Obesere, Wasiu Alabi Pasuma, King Dr Saheed Osupa and Alhaj Sulaimon Alao Malaika. Among the Islamic-oriented Musicians were Afaa Ishaq Abdus-Salaam and Alhaj Abdul-Azeez Abdus-Salam Ajiroba (Saoty Arewa).

While enumerating the cultural values of *Ashura* festival in Epe, Awesu, when interviewed, is of the opinion that it has, among other things, brought Epe into limelight by making it attractive to tourists. The people of Epe were able to showcase their rich cultural tradition to the world through many well-packaged cultural display. It was through this event that Alhaj Abdul-Azeez Abdus-Salam Ajiroba (Saoty Arewa), a notable and multi-talented Islamic-oriented musician of Yoruba origin and several others were discovered and subsequently promoted.

Looking at the programmes from Islamic point of view therefore, the heresies inherent which include beauty-pageants, taking of *Al-Kawthar* spiritual bath at the Lagoon shore, seeking the assistance of the spirit of the dead by pouring libation using schnapps, introduction of carnival and youth involvement and participation in *Eepo* and *Eyo* Masquerades among others are total deviation from the Islamic norms. Taking cognisance of Islam as a religion with its peculiar cultural norms, Ashura observance inclusive; any action that takes place during the

celebration of *Ashura* in Epe and is not in consonance with the dictates of the Islamic norms as entrenched in the Shar'iah shall be dubbed as 'deviant' in nature and therefore heretical. According to deviance theorists, 'while deviance is of many categories, one of them which obviously is the most prominent is crime. This occurs when someone violates a society's formal laws'. In Islam as in other aspects of human life, laws are part of a complex system of countless rules – formal, informal, written, implied, etc. – to which we are expected to conform and refusal which attracts punishment from Allah.

Conclusion

While the observance of Kayo-Kayo in Epe has spiritual, economic and cultural significance as well as promoting Islamic knowledge and tourism, it shows that Eko-Epe's version of Kayo-Kayo observance is centered mostly on commemoration of Kosoko and his supporters which can be seen as ancestral worship rather than following the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS). Although, Eko-Epe people were believed to be adherents of Islam in Lagos State, yet, the fruit of this claim is yet to manifest particularly in their present pattern of *Ashura* (Kayo-Kayo Festival) observance in Epe. The Prophet fasted and commanded the Muslims to do so on *Ashura* day before the advent of Ramadan fasting which subsequently made *Ashura* fasting optional. The one week observance has little Islamic coloration and much of Yoruba cultural exposition. One may be forced to conclude that, Islam as a religion that commands all that is

good and forbid evil, has little or no effect on the people of Epe as far as the observance of *Ashura* is concerned. It is the demonstration of the Africanity of Islam as opined by Dioka (2001) who claims among others, the 'Africanness' of Islām. This in his opinion cuts across marriage, polygamy, the extended family model, religious tolerance, open air preaching during *Ramaḍān* fasting (*proselytisation*), itinerant *mallams*, Islāmic associations, the use of charms to solve the problem facing the Muslims and to protect themselves against evil spirits and wicked people. The idea of Africanity of Islam is to say the least absurd as the religion itself is not limited by geography; rather it is a universal religion. Though the Shari'ah makes provision for '*adah*' (customs) as part of its component, this precludes some local customs that have its origin traced to syncretism or heresies.

References

- Ali, A.Y. (1975). *The Holy Qur'ān: Text, and Commentary*. London: Islāmic Foundation.
- Al-Mundhiri, A.Z.A. (2000): *Summarized Sahih Muslim Arabic-English*, Vol. I & II. Riyadh: Darussalam Publishers & Distributors.
- Az-Zubaidi, Z.A.A. (1996): *Sahih Al-Bukhari: Summarized Compilation*, Riyadh: Darussalam Publisher.
- Balogun, M. A. (2009). Syncretic beliefs and practices amongst Muslims in Lagos State Nigeria; With Special Reference to the Yoruba speaking people of Epe. A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

- Dioka, L. C., (2001). *Lagos and its Environs*, Lagos: First Academic Publishers
- Epe History & Events, (2014). A memorabilia in commemoration of Ashura among Epe Muslims
- Gbadamosi, T.G.O. (1978): *The Growth of Islām among the Yoruba (1841-1908)*. London: Longman Publishers.
- Hornby A.S, (2000) *Oxford advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. (6th Edition) Oxford University Press.
- Oyeweso, S., (1996) *Journey from Epe:: Biography of S.L. Edu*, Lagos: West African Book Publishers.
- Rundel, M. (2007) *Macmillian English Dictionary for Advance Learners. New Edition (2nd Edition)* Oxford, United Kingdom.

Interviews

1. Imam Sa'adallah Abiola Aileru (45 years) (clergy). Chief Imam first Epe Central Mosque. Oke Balogun interviewed at No 4 Imam Sa'adallah Abiola Aileru Street, Oloja Estate, Epe Lagos State.
2. Imam Sefiu Audu (65 years) Retired Civil Servant, Chief *Naibi Imam* of the first Epe Central Mosque. Oke Balogun interviewed at the mosque premises.
3. Imam Abdur-Rahman Awesu (45 years) (clergy) chief *Eketa Imam* of the first Epe Central Mosque, Oke Balogun interviewed at the mosque premises on.
4. Alhaji Ustadh Ishaq Abdus Salam Balogun (38 years) (clergy) *Olori Omokewu* Olohuntosin Central Mosque Ayetoro road Epe.
5. Mr. Ismail Etti (38 years) Civil Servant interviewed at Eleshin Compound Popo-Oba Epe.