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**CELEBRATING THE DEAD: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF JANAZAH
PRACTICE AMONG SELECTED MUSLIM ORGANIZATIONS IN OSUN STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

In the name of carrying out acts that are meritorious to the deceased, the janazah rites have been extended to include fida'u among different Muslim groups in Osun State and this has generated hot debates among Muslims in the geographical area. Different organizations therefore come up with their proceedings of activities during such programmes to the extent that funerals are being celebrated more than any other social programmes like naming and marriage. This paper therefore takes a look at the various fida'u programmes of some Muslim organizations with a view to considering their similarities and dissimilarities. It is discovered that the practices are greatly influenced by the traditional practices prevailing in the State before Islam; the level of poverty among the Muslim clerics and non-understanding of what constitutes sadaqah. There is the flawed thinking that preparation of food and public demonstration of extravagant spending would be of benefit for the deceased. An alternative means of carrying out sadaqah which is meritorious to the deceased is therefore proposed.

Introduction

Osun State is one of the states that were created on August 27th, 1991 by the then military President, Ibrahim Babangida. It was carved out of the former Oyo State. It derives its name from River Osun which flows through Osogbo, the State capital. The State is homogeneous comprising the Osuns, the Igbominas, the Ijesas and Ifes, all of the same Yoruba tribe speaking various Yoruba dialects. As such, the practices in the State are true representative of what operates in other south-western states of Nigeria. There is no doubt that the traditional practices of the people of the area have influenced certain Islamic practices of the Muslims in the State. This paper will therefore consider this with special and particular focus on funeral rites as practised by different societies in the area.

Traditional Funeral Practices

In the traditional society, death can either be good or bad depending on the nature and time it comes. Bad death is the one that comes through violence, diseases or when one dies young. A death is considered good when an octogenarian dies peacefully. As soon as one dies, arrangement is made to wash the corpse lest the deceased, according to belief, be deprived of admission into the abode of his ancestors, and if at all he were to reincarnate, the dirt will remain irremovable from his body. As such, if it is a woman, her hair is plaited, and if a man, his head is shaved. After this, his people dress him/her up in nice apparel before it is finally wrapped in white clothes. Then the dead body is laid in state and it is decorated with beautiful household materials.

In Ijesaland, a hen or cock is killed as an immediate rite for the deceased to ease his journey to the world beyond. The body is then laid in state for about two days. A yam meal is prepared for both the sympathisers and relatives around to eat. Part of the food is placed at the foot of the bier to allow the corpse to have its share of the food. Apart from the slaughtering of rams and fowls, the deceased relatives offer presents to the deceased. They fill up the coffin with materials and clothes before it is finally buried. At the burial arena, the rite of covenant is performed. This is done by splitting

the kolanuts and placing certain articles including food and condiments beside the body of the deceased. After this, the covering of the deceased with the earth follows, and this is rounded up by customary weeping and wailing.⁶⁹

Generally speaking, the Yorubas do not bury their dead in graveyards or cemeteries but in their compounds.⁷⁰ The grave is normally prepared in bedrooms, parlour or front passage of the house. It is about six feet deep extended in the bottom to create another room for the deceased inside the grave so that he should enjoy room and parlour inside the grave. The use of coffin is common among the well-to-do family. Some of the materials used by the deceased when alive are packed in the coffin so that they might be useful for him on his way home.

The third day called *Ita-Oku* is celebrated by carrying the corpse and parading it through the street. The corpse is usually lavishly decorated and it is placed on a bier for a virile man to carry round the town. All sons and daughters of the deceased actively participate in this exercise and this is aptly described by Agbetola who says:

During the funeral dance, the chief-mourner *omo-oloku* if male will be carried shoulder high round the important streets amidst drumming and sheers of relatives and friends. He puts coins on the forehead of drummers and singers If the *omo-oloku* is female, she will dress more gorgeously and

⁶⁹ M.O. Adeleye, "The Spread of Islam in Ijesaland (1860-1968)." (An unpublished Doctoral Thesis: University of Ibadan, 1988), 372 - 373.

⁷⁰ I.A. Seriki, "Islam among the Egba and Ijebu People (1841 - 1982)." (An unpublished Doctoral Thesis: University of Ibadan, 1986), 448 - 489.

with coral beads round the neck, wrists and her ankles.....⁷¹

The festivity runs for seven days after which it is suspended for repeating after some months. It is pertinent to mention that the advent of Islam in Yorubaland had greatly influenced the traditional funeral ceremony in the land. Conversely, elements of the traditional funeral practices are also observed alongside the Muslims' mode of funeral performance in the State. To appreciate this, it is pertinent to discuss the funeral rites as being practised by some Muslim organizations in the State.

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1899 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a native of Qadian in the Punjab (India). With the efforts and activities of its founder and his successors, the Movement was able to establish a few mosques in England and Germany. After his death however, the Movement got divided into two – that of Qadian under the supervision of Ahmad's son and the second had its centre at Lahore.⁷²

The Ahmadiyya Movement was introduced to Nigeria in 1916 by some young and educated Nigerian Muslims who in one way or the other had had contact with Khawaja Kamaldin of the Lahore Group and later with the headquarters in India. However, the history of the Movement in Nigeria was full of hub-bob and hullabaloo which eventually led to court cases and schism. For instance, between 1935 and 1939, there were Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya Qadian and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Nigeria. In 1974, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam also split into two groups, vis-à-vis Anwarul-Islam Movement and the other Ahmadiyya Movement. The strains and

⁷¹ A.S. Agbetola, "Islam in Ondo State of Nigeria (1850 – 1960 A.D)." (An unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1983), 42 – 43.

⁷² H. Lammens, *Islam: Beliefs and Institutions* (tr, E. Dension Ross), (Holland: Frank Cass and Company Ltd, 1968), 188 – 189.

stresses in the movement also made Boonyamin Gbajablamila to spearhead the founding of the Young Ansar-Ud-Deen Society known today as Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria.⁷³

It should be noted that the Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi relations in Nigeria were not all that cordial. The disagreement between them are attributed to the founder's prophetic claims, the sect's Christology, their interpretation of *jihad*, and the sect's 'separatist, holier-than-thou attitude towards other Muslims.'⁷⁴ For these reasons and others, some educated men who previously attached themselves to Ahmadiyya in Nigeria withdrew their membership of the Movement and started to kick against their doctrinal principles. Popular among them are Professor I.A.B Balogun, Alhaji Imam Captain A.B. Yusuf and Prof. D.O.S. Noibi. Also in 1974, the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs clearly declared the Ahmadis non-Muslims a sequel to a similar verdict passed against the sect by the World Muslim League.⁷⁵

In Osun State, Alfa Muibi popularly known as "Fabulous" is regarded as the brain behind the introduction of Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in Osogbo, the State capital. Alfa Muibi was a native of Ijebu and on his arrival at Osogbo in 1970, he met one Alfa M.S. Bello who assisted him in his evangelistic mission. In Ede, the Ahmadiyya became known in 1967 through the activities of Mallam M.A. Aminu of Oku's compound, Ede, though one man named Murtala of Oke Egun area was said to have been the secret pioneer of the mission in the town. Professor Abdul-Hamid Fakeye, Alhaji Ibrahim Akin Fakeye, Brother Azeez Adeniran and late Yusuf Jimoh were said to have brought the Ahmadiyya Movement to Ila-Orangun. The movement

⁷³ S.A. Agbetola, 408-409.

⁷⁴ D.O.S. Noibi, *Islamic Perspectives*, (Ijebu-Ode: Shebiotimo Publications, 1988), 79.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 78 -80.

was formally launched in the town in April 27th 1984 with Brother Tajudeen Abdul-Azeez, a native of Ibadan, as the first Chief Imam.⁷⁶

Like other Muslims, the Ahmadis waste no time in arranging for the burial of any of their deceased member. While observing *janazah* (Islamic ritual prayer for the dead) prayer, they strictly observe the lining up of the congregation in an odd number of lines. After the first *takbir*, the Imam recites what they call *thana'* (praising) as follows:

*Sub-hanaka Allahuma wabi-hamdika, watabaraka
ismuka wata'ala jadduka, walailaha ghayruka.*

Meaning: Glory be to You oh Lord and all Praise be to you.

Blessed is Your Name and Supreme is Your Assiduity,
and there is no other god beside You.

This is then followed by the recital of *Suratul-Fatihah* (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) in a soft voice audible to oneself. After this, the Imam says the second *takbir* and this is quickly followed by *As-Salat 'ala Nabi* (seeking of peace and mercy on the Prophet). Normally, *as-salat ibrahimiyyah* is regarded as the most appropriate by the Ahmadis. The third *takbir* is followed by intercessory prayer for the deceased after which the fourth *takbir* is said and this is immediately followed by saying *As-Salam alaykum* (peace be unto you).

Immediately the deceased is taken into the grave, the officiating minister and other members who could read the Qur'an recite *surat-Yasin* at the graveyard before it is filled up with sand. This is closely followed by a short sermon delivered by the officiating minister who also offers prayers for the deceased and his surviving family. To an Ahmadi, third, seventh or any other special day as prayer day in the name of *fida'u* for the deceased, was initially not given prominence, as it was considered a primitive idea borrowed

⁷⁶ Interviewing Brother Tajudeen Abdul-Aziz, the first Chief Imam of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Ila-Orangun branch on February 20th 1994.

from pre-Islamic people of Yorubaland. However, on the basis of the fact that prayers can be offered to a deceased member, the movement has adopted *fida'u* programme for any deceased member on the third or seventh day of his death. The following proceedings of the *fida'u* programme are strictly adhered to:

<i>Astaghfrullah</i>	10 times
<i>Allahuma soli 'ala Muhammadin wasalim</i>	10 times
<i>Al-hamdu lillah</i>	10 times
<i>La-laha illa- Allahu</i>	111 times
<i>Ya Huwa, Ya man La Huwa illa Huwa</i>	
<i>Ya Man Laillaha illa Huwa</i>	10 times
<i>Farau Warainahu wajannat Na'im</i>	10 times
<i>Bima Ghafarali Rabbi waja'alani</i>	
<i>minal Mukramin</i>	10 times
The whole Qur'an	Once
<i>Dalailul Khayrat</i>	Once
Last Ten surahs of the Qur'an	Once
<i>Khutbah</i>	Once ⁷⁷

Preparation of food by the bereaved, as well as merry making after the death of an old person is highly detested by the Ahmadis, as this was not practised during the lifetime of the Prophet. They equally condemn the idea of collecting money during any special prayer organised in honour of a deceased as being practised by some *Alfas*.⁷⁸ That notwithstanding, where

⁷⁷ This programme was strictly adhered to during the *fida'u* for the national missionary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Nigeria, Late Alhaji Liadi Akanbi Oloyede which was held at Sholanke Street, Akoka, Lagos on Monday 9th March, 2009. This researcher attended both the *Janazah* and *Fida'u* programmes of the late sage conducted by the Ahmadiyya Movement.

⁷⁸ Interviewing Chief Imam Habibullah Ibrahim, the Vice Chairman Mission Board of the Ahmadiyya Movement on March 9th 2009.

the people volunteer to donate money for the work done, such money is used for the development of the movement.

The Ahmadis are noted for their principle of isolation. They do not offer prayers for non-members, nor do they allow non-members to be buried in their graveyards. It was said that Ahmad Ghulam himself did not offer funeral prayers for his son who did not believe in him. He (Ahmad) was also said to have declared praying at the death of Muslim children unlawful "just as it is not lawful (to pray) for Hindu and Christian children, as the religion of a child is the religion of his parents and he is their follower."⁷⁹ This principle has however been waved by some of the Ahmadiyya Imams who believe that since a Muslim who is guilty of heinous sins cannot be denied *janazah* prayer, then, they could also pray for a deceased non-member Muslim as well.⁸⁰

Furthermore, a non-Ahmadi *Imam* is not allowed to perform burial services for a deceased Ahmadi, and before this can be allowed, it will be after a member has been thoroughly searched for in the town and its vicinity and there is no Ahmadi around. Preferably too, a deceased Ahmadi can be carried to another town where an Ahmadi Imam can perform *janazah* prayers for him.⁸¹

Ansar-Ud-Deen Society

Ansar-Ud-Deen Society first came into existence in 1880 by a faction of orthodox Muslims of Lagos who were not satisfied with how Islam was being practised in the coastal region. It was then led by Alfa Nalla, the Lagos Imam and a native of Ilorin. As a result of the sudden death of Nalla in 1903, the society was broken into two – the Lemomu party led by Imam Ibrahim,

⁷⁹ E.E. Zaheer, *Qadiyanat: An Analytical Survey*; (Pakistan: Idara Tarjuman Al-Sunnah, 1984), 47-49.

⁸⁰ Interviewing Brother Tajudeen Abdul-Aziz.

⁸¹ *Ibid*

the successor of Nalla and the Jama'at party. Due to this disunity among Muslims by then, some Muslim elites, spearheaded by Booniyamin Gbajabiamila, held a meeting on 9th November 1923 where the idea of establishing the Young Ansar-Ud-Deen Society was mooted. The society was later inaugurated in December 1923 under the first president Alufa Lawal Baruwa.⁸² The Society later changed her name to Ansar-Ud-Deen Society in 1959.⁸³ Lagos therefore became the source from where the Society spread all over the country. The society was introduced to Osogbo the Osun State capital, in 1940 by late Alhaji I.S. Mogaji from Ibadan branch of the society and was formally inaugurated in 1946 with Alhaji Mogaji as the Chief Imam of the Society and late Sule Akanbi Jagun as the first Chairman. In 1979, the youth wing of the Society called Ansarud-Deen Youth Association of Nigeria (ADYAN) was inaugurated at Osogbo.⁸⁴

It is interesting to note that the society makes no distinction between them and non-members in the matter of attending to the needs of the sick as well as in praying for the dead. If any of them dies, the Chief Imam of the Society can pray for him and it makes no difference if a non-member *Imam* prays for their members too. Their attendance of funeral of non-member is however based on their relationship with such a deceased.⁸⁵

⁸² A. Odularu, "The Ansar-Ud-Deen Society in Lagos and Western Nigeria." (A Long Essay: University of Ibadan, 1967). 1-9.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 9-10. See also I.A.B. Balogun, *Islam Versus Ahmadiyya in Nigeria*, n.d, n.p. 2.

⁸⁴ Interviewing Alhaji Najim Deen Badamosi, the Chief Imam of Erin-Osun Ansar-Ud-Deen Branch on 26th January 2010.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

After the corpse has been properly washed, the funeral prayers are observed and the corpse is carried to the graveyard. The officiating minister then reads the following verse thrice before filling up the grave with sand:

*Minha khalaqnakum, wa fiha nu'idukum,
waminha nukhrijukum taratan 'ukhra.*

Meaning: From there you were created, and to it is your return
and from there you will be raised up once again.

The officiating minister then addresses the deceased to remember what he believed before he departed from the world (*Talqin al-Mayyit*); after which he leads others to recite *Surat-Yasin* for the soul of the deceased. The grave is finally filled up and this is followed by a short sermon for those in attendance.

The Ansar-Ud-Deen Society sees nothing bad in organising eighth day prayer for the soul of the deceased. To members of this society, *fida'u* is an attempt to bail out the deceased from his predicament. To do this, *Alfas* are invited and they can receive money for the job done by them. To them also, prayer is the only 'food' for the deceased and the argument is that if prayers cannot be of benefit to the deceased, then he should be buried without *janazah* prayers. Another argument put forward by them is based on the Qur'anic verse which reads:

It is not befitting for the Prophet and those
who believe that they should pray for
forgiveness for pagans, even though they be
of kin, after it is clear to them that they are
companions of the fire. (Qur'an 9: 113).

They argue that prayer is only *haram* for unbelievers since the Prophet and believers are asked not to pray for them and that this is not generally applicable to deceased Muslims.

It is not in the constitution of the Society that food should be prepared by the bereaved. Where this is done, it is regarded as an act of charity, the reward which will be recorded for the departed soul, and so, there is no reason why such food should not be consumed. To substantiate this, reference is made to Qur'an 9: 104 which reads:

Do they not know that it is Allah who accepts repentance from His servants and receives charities and that it is Allah who is verily the oft-Returning, Most Merciful?

During the eighth day prayer however, the following programme is strictly adhered to:

1. Opening Prayer
2. *Tasbih* (Glorification)
 - a. *Istighfar* (33 times)
 - b. *Ya Huwa, Ya man La Huwa illa Huwa, Ya man Lailaha illa Huwa* (33 times)
 - c. *Lailaha illa Allahu* (111 or 313 times)
 - d. *Allahuma salli 'ala Muhammadin wasallim* (33 times)
3. Sermon
4. Alms giving and Gloria
5. Reading of *Surat Yasin* and *Suratul-Mulk* (1 time)
6. Closing prayer.

The above is the *fida'u* programme for the deceased member of the society. Proceeds realised from such programme are not shared by members. Rather, 33% of it is given to members of the deceased's family, while the remaining amount goes to the society's purse. In case a non-member *alfa* participates in the programme, he too receives a share which is not fixed.

It should be noted that in the society the well to do, have their separate cemetery where deceased members are buried. Where they have cemetery, they forbid visitation for prayer for the deceased, instead, at the end of each *Hijrah* year, a special prayer is organised in honour of their deceased members. This day is called "*Ojo Oku*" (a special day for the dead). The programme for the day looks much like that of the *fida'u*.

The Bamidele Movement

Alhaji Abdul-Salam Bamidele Bada (d. 1969) was the founder of the Bamidele Movement. Although his father, Bada hailed from Uyin Ekiti, he settled in Ibadan and it was there that the Movement originated. It also has

branches in countries like Togo, Dahomey, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Cameroon.⁸⁶ Although members of the group refer to themselves as *Zumratul-Mumin*, they are known and called by different names. For instance, they are popularly referred to as Bamidele in Ibadan and its environs after the name of the founder, while at Ikirun, they are referred to as Faya Group. Generally speaking, the Movement is easily discerned by the turbans on their heads, shaving of head, growing of beards, seclusion of their wives and chanting of songs at any of their outings.

Like other Muslims, the Bamidele kick against twiddling and wailing on the death of a Muslim. They emphasise that the corpse be buried the very day of its death. They forbid the use of coffin for Muslims except if the corpse is a woman or the graveyard is muddy.⁸⁷ After the burial, a short sermon is made and this is concluded with supplications backed up with donation of money from sympathisers and the bereaved to the *Mallams* who perform the burial rites.

Furthermore, the Bamidele strongly believe that nothing can be of help to the deceased than prayer. So on the third or eighth day of the burial, a special *fida'u* prayer is organised. At such occasion, they recite some chapters of the Holy Qur'an like *Surat Yasin* and *Surat al-Ikhlās*, after which *Dalail al-Khayrat* (Proofs of the Excellences) – a collection of prayers and praises of the Prophet, will be distributed among them for quick recitation.

Immediately after the recitation of the selected supplications, the officiating minister stands to give praise to Almighty Allah, seeks forgiveness for the deceased and prays for the well-being of the bereaved. If the deceased was old before his death, the officiating minister feels relaxed as he becomes as vocal as a magpie, while those in attendance are moved with the garrulous endowment of the *Mallam* and thus start donating money to him to pray for them and the deceased. The front pocket of the *Mallam* is widely

⁸⁶ A.R.I. Dol, *Islam in Nigeria*, (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Ltd. 1984), 284.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

opened for the 'celebrants' to drop money into in addition to the one they put on the table in front of him.

The Bamidele hold the view that any amount collected from funeral services is voluntarily donated by the donors and so should not be co-shared with the widows and orphans of the deceased. To them sharing of money realised from such programme between them and any family of the deceased is considered a means of advertising one's society or organization. That apart, the idea of preparation of food to entertain those who attend *fida'u* prayer is considered an act of voluntary charity, and since preparation of food during naming ceremony is not declared unlawful, then consumption of food prepared during funeral ceremony could not be considered unlawful as well.⁸⁸

The Lanase Movement

The Lanase Movement was founded by Shaykh Uthman Lanase who was born around 1890 to a Zaria based businessman but a native of Ibadan by name Ayodapo Yusuf. After receiving his education in the North, he returned to Ibadan in 1938. Amazed at the rate of syncretism of Muslims in the south-west, as well as the active involvement of some Muslim scholars and clerics in these attitudes, he started preaching vehemently against them and soon he attracted to himself flock of disciples.⁸⁹ The Lanase and the Bamidele Movements have many things in common. Like the Bamideles for instance, the Lanases lay emphasis on seclusion of women, growing of beards and wearing of turban. However, their own method of turban is a little bit different from that of the Bamidele. In their own, the turban is not as large as

⁸⁸ Interviewing Alfa Abdul-Hamid Kolawole, the Chief Imam of Zumratul-Mumin, Ila-Orangun branch on 6th February 2013.

⁸⁹ A.S. Raji, "The Contribution of Lanase Movement to the Development of Islam in Ibadan." (A Long Essay of Department of Religious Studies, Oyo State College of Education, Ila-Orangun, 1986), 10.

the Bamidele, and an edge of the turban is released down a bit instead of rolling it across the cheek as being done by the Bamidele.

The Lanase are incompatible with the Bamidele as far as funeral ceremony is concerned. The Lanase reject the idea of commercialising funeral of any deceased Muslim. They condemn the practice of some Muslim clerics who request for money before or after burial and only attend such *janazah* where they feel the officiating minister would not turn the *janazah* service to a money-ventured programme. To them, the ideas of preaching and seeking forgiveness for the deceased after the conclusion of the burial rites are nothing but a means of collecting money from sympathisers. The Lanase strongly uphold that Islam teaches treating the bereaved with sympathy and assisting them materially and monetarily, hence the preparation of food to sympathisers by the bereaved is against the spirit of Islam.

To guard against falling into un-Islamic practises in funeral services and turning it into ceremony, the Lanase oppose the idea of seventh day prayer for the deceased and the idea of staying for days with the bereaved. To them, the period of mourning should not be more than three days.⁹⁰

The Tijaniyya Brotherhood

The Tijaniyya is a Sufi order in Islam founded in the Maghrib in the eighteenth century by Shaykh Ahmad Tijani. Although, the actual date of the introduction of this order into Osun State could not be precisely given, it is believed that it came at the end of the nineteenth century from Ilorin where it spread to other parts of Yorubaland. Alhaji Muqaddam Olatunde who was regarded as the father of the brotherhood in Osogbo the State Capital, was initiated into the brotherhood from Ilorin, so also was Alfa Agbarere who brought it to Ikire in 1947.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Interviewing Alhaji Abdur-Razaq Muhammad Raji, the Proprietor of Institute of Islamic Studies, Oke Ola, Ila-Orangun on 8th March 2014.

⁹¹ Y.A. Quadri, "The Tijaniyyah in Nigeria: A Case Study." (An Unpublished Doctoral Thesis: University of Ibadan, 1981), 78-87.

Quadri In his work noticed two types of practices of *janazah* among the Tijanis. The first practice is where when a *murid* (adherent of the order) dies, the corpse would be shrouded with the *izar* (the white piece of cloth which the Tijanis spread during *wazifah*), and the second practice is the case where the corpse would be placed in the middle of all the *murids* present and they would all perform a *wazifah* (service of honour) and pray for him before they finally observe *salat Janazah* and bury him.⁹²

Due to certain reforms and modifications in the *janazah* practices of the *Tariqah*, these two practices have gone into state of oblivion. So, with the death of a *murid*, the *muqaddam* (spiritual leader of the order) together with some *murids* wash the corpse and shroud it with clean white piece of cloth after which *salat janazah* is performed and the corpse is finally buried. Immediately after the burial, six *murids* who can read the Qur'an are selected. Three of them stay at one end of the grave and the rest three occupy the other end. These people then recite *Surat al-Mulk* (Qur'an 67) congregationally. After the completion of the recitation, a short lecture is delivered to those in attendance and the congregation jointly recite the following to seek forgiveness for the departed soul:

<i>Lailaha illa Allah</i>	1000 times
<i>Istighfar</i> (seeking for forgiveness)	1000 times
<i>Ayatul-Kursiyy</i> (Qur'an 2: 255)	11 times
<i>Qul-Huwa Allahu</i> (Qur'an 112)	11 times
<i>Salatul-Fatih</i>	11 times ⁹³

On the third day or thereafter, a proper *fida'u* programme is organised in honour of the deceased *murid* and his family. All *murids* try to attend the programme because of their belief that other people will come to perform the same rite for them when it comes to their turn. They also believe

⁹² *Ibid.* 343.

⁹³ The present researcher has participated in funeral services of some deceased Tijaniyyah members.

that the reward of whatever they recite in the *fida'u* be granted to the Prophet Muhammad and this in turn will be a measure of seeking forgiveness for the deceased.⁹⁴ During the *fida'u*, the following recitations are made:

<i>Suratul-Fatihah</i>	1 time
<i>Suratul-Ikhlās</i>	11 times
<i>Ayatul-Kursiyy</i>	11 times
<i>Salatul-Fatih</i>	10 times
<i>Astaghfirullah</i>	70,000 times
<i>Lailaha illa Allah</i>	70,000 times

In case the deceased was a strong member of the *tariqah* during his life time, the whole Qur'an would be shared and read by those who can read, after which the book of *Dalail-al-Khayrat* would be distributed for reading among them. The officiating minister then gives or appoints someone to give a short sermon and then concludes the whole programme with *Rabbana* (closing prayer).⁹⁵

It should be mentioned that in the *fida'u* programme, the Tijanis receive no money at all. They don't equally take any food, even if the bereaved prepared it.⁹⁶

In conclusion, the rate at which the Tijaniyyah *murids* attend both the funeral service and the *fida'u* of their deceased members is highly commendable, as it promotes a sense of unity and cooperation among them especially during the period of adversity. There is no doubt that the bereaved will be relieved of the sudden calamity with this attitude of the order. The

⁹⁴ Interviewing Khalifat Ibrahim Idowu, the Khalifatul-Khulafa' of Tijaniyyah Order of Osun State on 7th January 2012. This assertion is also confirmed by Shaykh Zakariyyah Badamosi, a Tijaniyyah Muqaddam in Osogbo, interviewed on 9th March, 2014.

⁹⁵ Khalifah Ibrahim Idowu, *Ibid*.

⁹⁶ Y.A. Quadri, 345. This was observed during the *fida'u* organised by the Tijanis in honour of my father who died on September 24, 1991 and that of my grandfather who died on December 28, 1992.

refusal of the order to take money or food is a clear indication that their performance of these rites is neither motivated by any monetary nor material benefit. All they intend is to carry out these rites on behalf of the departed soul with the hope that he receives the reward with Allah and that should he be in the punishing hand of God, the supplications will assist in bailing him out.

The Nurudeen Islamic Mission

The Nurudeen Islamic Mission was founded by Alfa Isa Ariyo in 1979. It has its headquarters at Ila-Orangun, one of the ancient towns in Osun State. The Mission has its branches in towns like Ibadan, Offa, Shagamu, Lagos, Ire, Eripa and Ajaba to mention but a few. In Ila-Orangun, the Mission is popularly known as *Ijo Ma soku ma di Tira* – the Group which does not allow celebration of funeral and frowns at charms and amulets. This doctrine of the group is met with opposition by some people who feel that their funeral should be celebrated after their death. As such, some parents objected their children joining the group. However, many still join the group because of their belief in the efficacy of prayer.

Apart from not celebrating funerals, the group does not accept money at any funeral programme. In case people donate money during funeral a programme, the Nurudeen Mission in turn donates such to the deceased family. Where other Muslim clerics who are non-members attend, a percentage of the proceeds from such programme is donated to the mosques of the clerics, and the rest goes to the bereaved.⁵⁷

The Group does not oppose the idea of eighth day prayer, but it prefers that of third day. If the deceased was a strong member of the society, a special prayer featuring the recitation of the whole Qur'an is organised. But where the society is ordinarily invited and the deceased was not a member,

⁵⁷ Interviewing Alhaji Abdul-Ganiyy Alatisé, the Chief Imam of Nurudeen Islamic Mission, Ila-Orangun on 28th March, 2014.

extracts of the Qur'an like *Suratul-Ikhlās*, *Suratul-Qadr* and *Ayatul-Kursiyy* are recited.

To the society, preparation of food during funeral ceremony is considered as the principle of 'to whom much is given, much is expected'. This is because the bereaved who prepares food will in turn expect those who come to 'celebrate' with him to reciprocate the gesture in cash, and once this is done, the purpose of the '*sadaqah*' is defeated.⁹⁸

Observation

From the discussion so far, it is clear that there is no much difference in the mode of *janazah* bath, shrouding and prayer among the groups considered. The bone of contention among them lie on what they perceive as the responsibility of the living on the deceased, vis-à-vis meritorious acts on behalf of the deceased, be it in the form of special prayer or charity. It is generally believed that a charity made on behalf of a deceased is beneficial to him hence attempts made to perform certain meritorious acts in honour of the deceased soul all in the name of *fida'u*. Oseni has dealt extensively into the definitions of the word *fida'u* and its usage in the Qur'an, and therefore concluded that referring to prayers for the dead as *fida'u* is anomalous, misleading and illegal, as an upright deceased Muslim does not need any ransom or funeral ceremonies before being admitted into Paradise.⁹⁹ Among some acts they regarded as acts of charity for the deceased are now considered.

Preparation of Food:

In Osun State, Muslims were of the habit of preparing food like pounded yam and yam flour on the eighth day of the funeral. Such food was

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Z.I. Oseni, *Funeral Rites Among Nigerian Muslims: Conformity Versus Syncretism*; (Auchi: Darun-Nur, 2008), 2-10 & 59.

used to be taken to nearby *ratibi* mosques to be consumed by children and interested adults. With the fading of this practice, preparation of corn cake becomes prominent not only on the eighth day but every Friday of the widow's waiting period.

The issue of preparation of food by the family of the deceased has generated a lot of argument among scholars. To some, it is an act of charity, as those who consume such food do not curse the deceased but pray for him. To those who objected to this practice, such an act has no basis in Islam and it is an act of turning funeral to merry-making. They see no sincerity in the previous crying and wailing which is shortly concluded with merry-making. Their argument is that the family of Ja'far son of Abu Talib who was martyred was ordered to be given food and that the family was not ordered to prepare food for people.

Preparation of food in honour of deceased soul is more than an act of charity among Muslims in Yorubaland. It has become a matter of compulsion to prepare food whenever one survives his old parents. Actually, this practice has its origin in Yoruba culture whereby a soul is believed to have been wandering about till proper burial ceremony involving merry-making, preparation of food and slaughtering cows is organised. It is no surprise therefore to see people crying and wailing not because of the departed soul but because of what to spend to celebrate the funeral. As such, they run helter-skelter to fulfill what they feel is compulsory for them at all cost. An experience of what transpires at a typical *fida'u* programme is vividly given by a scholar who writes:

During the merriment galore, some of the food both raw and cooked disappears sometimes to the chagrin of the bereaved organisers. Such disappearance is no surprise because it is a case of stealing. If the organiser does not have strong-willed people to supervise the cooking and distribution of the food, he would be disappointed by numerous cases of stealing. Some organisers

get photographers to video-record all the cooking and movement of food-stuff so as to expose the thieves who, in most cases, turn out to be members of their extended families.¹⁰⁰

Food preparation and slaughtering of cows and sheep in the name of *sadaqah* on behalf of the deceased Muslim is in most cases turned to merry-making and celebration. Oseni describes the practice as an "expression of joy over the demise of one's enemy," and which is characterised by extravagance, ostentation, vanity and lack of sobriety.¹⁰¹ The practice of preparation of food as a form of *sadaqah* on behalf of the deceased Muslim is an innovation in Islam. The wife of the Prophet, Khadijah ibn Khuwaylid died and the Prophet neither celebrated nor prepared food for people who came to console him.¹⁰² Likewise, some companions of the Prophet like Hamzat ibn Abdul-Mutalib, Mus'ab ibn Umir, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, Yazir ibn Amir and his mother Sumayyah were martyred and the Prophet never prepared any food for those who came to sympathise with him, nor did he ask the bereaved to prepare food in their honour.¹⁰³ In our view, the idea of preparation of food for the bereaved is reasonable, as this goes a long way in soothing the grief of the family, most especially when the sudden calamity has prevented them from preparing food.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* Pp. 10-11.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* Pp. 13-14.

¹⁰² A.R.A Adiyatullah, "Funeral Ceremony: The Islamic Perspective." An unpublished lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan to mark the Jihad Week of the Muslim Students Society, n.d. 15.

¹⁰³ Abdullah B. Baz, Legal Pronouncement Nos 4504/4233; Riyadh, Unpublished work. 1408 A.H. 15.

Recitation of the Qur'an:

The recitation of the Holy Qur'an on behalf of the deceased with the intention that the reward to be obtained from there should be for the deceased is a common phenomenon among Muslims in Yorubaland. One has a soft spot for this practice in view of the fact that it is read in many traditions of the Prophet that the reward of fasting observed in honour of a deceased can reach the dead. Likewise, the reward of *hajj* performed on behalf of the deceased can still reach him. Since the debt owed by the dead can be queried and that the dead can be punished for this; since once this debt is paid on his behalf, the punishment will be stopped, then one can say that whatever good done on behalf of the dead will surely be of great benefit for him/her. However, it seems that the recitation of the Qur'an during such a programme is not done with the seriousness it deserves. This is because, those employed to read the Qur'an do so in a haste to proceed to the next programme of giving *sadaqah* to the *mallams* in form of money on behalf of the deceased.

Donation and Collection of Money by the Bereaved and Mallams:

The collection of wages by those employed to read the Qur'an has been bitterly opposed by some young and educated elites in Yorubaland. To them, the Qur'an should be read purposely for the sake of Allah and not for any financial or material purposes. Those who received money for reading the Qur'an see nothing wrong in doing this. To them, the companions of the Prophet did the same by collecting a flock of sheep for merely reciting *Suratul-Fatihah* to cure a man who was bitten by a snake; and that the Prophet sanctioned this act by saying: "Take it (the flock of sheep) and assign a share to me."¹⁰⁴ They further quoted another instance where a man was accused of taking wages for reciting Allah's Book to cure a man who was

¹⁰⁴ M.A. Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih al-Bukhari (Arabic – English)* vol. VII, (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1979), 424.

stung by a scorpion. The Prophet approved of this saying: "You are most entitled to take wages for doing a *ruqya*¹⁰⁵ with Allah's Book."¹⁰⁶

One cannot totally condemn the practice of our *Mallams* in receiving money for reading the Qur'an for a deceased, since this is their source of income. These *Mallams* have sacrificed their time reading the Qur'an apart from spending most of their lives in acquiring Islamic and Arabic knowledge. In addition, most of them do not have any other source of income, and they only depend on whatever they realise from such programmes. It is our belief that if every family can read the Qur'an that they need not the service of external people in its recitation, there is every probability that the practice of collecting money for recitation of the Qur'an would become a thing of the past.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the differences in the mode of carrying out acts of *sadaqah* on behalf of the deceased among different Muslim organizations in Osun State calls for immediate action among the Muslim clerics in general. The persistence of the 'celebrating' *janazah* in the name of *fida'u* is a clear demonstration of the fact that the Muslims have not yet liberated themselves from the shackles of traditional practice which upholds that unless certain rites are carried out by the members of the deceased family, he would not be admitted in to heaven. The commercialization of the act by some groups shows the level of poverty among the Muslim clerics who could not stop the practice for financial benefits accrued from it. The lengthy period used in carrying out the *fida'u* equally shows that Muslims are yet to understand the importance of optimum utilization of corporate time for useful project. As for the rich Muslims who have turned funeral to festivity, they fail to understand the Qur'anic injunction on moderation in spending of wealth even on worthwhile projects. In the final analysis, there is gross

¹⁰⁵ *Ruqya* means the recitation of some divine verses to cure a disease.

¹⁰⁶ M.A.Khan, p. 425.

demonstration of ignorance of many Muslims in understanding what could actually be done to be of benefit for the departed souls.

To ensure charity of recurrent benefits to the deceased, we recommend that the deceased family should pool resources together to dig wells or sink bore-holes for the use of the public; organise special educational foundation for deserved poor or special students; assist the less-privileged ones in the society, as well as construction of mosques among others. Our *Mallams* should try to search for alternative sources of income rather than relying solely on when the opportunity to have funeral programmes would come. A salary package should also be arranged by the Muslim community for the *imams* of central mosques and their deputies as well as the *Imam ratibis*. This could be done through establishing a mosque fund properly managed by competent hands.