A Critique of Yoruba Religio-cultural Belief in Reincarnation in Light of Hikmat al-Muta'āliya (Islamic Transcendent Philosophy)

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Abstract

Man's quest to understand life after death leads him to the concept of reincarnation. Reincarnation is the transmigration of human soul into another body. However, the African, especially the Yoruba concept of reincarnation is quite different from the Asian belief in certain aspects, and this is better explained in the three types of reincarnation common amongst them., viz: Ìpadàwáyé (ancestor's rebirth), Àkúdáàya (reappearance after death) and Àbíkú (born to die). Even though few African philosophers have critiqued African's reincarnation concept, but there persist unsatisfactory analysis and unanswered questions. This article, using descriptive-analytical method is unprecedented as it critiques Yorùbá's concept of reincarnation in light of Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy. Sadra's positions on the nature of Soul, substantial motion of the body and soul, etc., proved the impossibility of reincarnation of any form. Finally, this research also resolves other problems associated with Yorùbá's concept of reincarnation.

Keywords: *Reincarnation, Human Soul, Yorùbá, Substantial Motion, Transcendent Philosophy.*

Introduction

Existence is prima facie and self-evident. Even though African and Yoruba philosophy does not entail certain discussions like primacy of existence and posteriority of quiddity unlike Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy which by this, and other philosophical concepts had been able to solve difficult philosophical problems, it has tried to explain the mystery of existence. To the Yorubas, reincarnation is a part of existence which is filled with mysteries. However, the Yoruba religio-cultural belief in reincarnation has little or nothing to do with their understanding of immortality of soul or the hereafter compare to other religions and cultures especially of the Asian and Indian subcontinent whose believe in reincarnation was birthed by the concept of soul's immortality. Nearly all religions and cultures tend to believe in the duality of human being, composing of corporeal body and immaterial soul. The question of what happens to the soul after bodily death of human being led to the concept of soul's immortality.

Reincarnation, also called transmigration, or metempsychosis, belief in the rebirth of the soul in one or more successive existences, which may be human, animal, or, in some instances, vegetable (Encyclopedia Britannica 2006). In other words, Reincarnation, in the context of religion and spirituality, is the belief that a person's soul or spirit can be reborn into a new body after death. The understanding and interpretation of this concept varies as per the philosophy and cultural belief of its adherents. Molefi Kefe Asante, an African philosopher writes:

Reincarnation is generally accepted as a term that means a dead person returns to life in another being. It is thought that, among some cultures, this means a return to life as an animal, whereas it has been said that Africans, who believe in the concept of reincarnation, see it as the return of a living human being (Molefi A. 2009: 565).

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The Yoruba's understanding and interpretation of àtúnwáyé (reincarnation) is expressed in the three types of reincarnation common in their religio-cultural beliefs. These types are ìpadàwáyé (ancestor's rebirth), Àkúdáàya (reappearance after death) and Àbíkú (die again).

From Islamic theological viewpoint, the Yoruba concept of Àkúdáàya (reappearance after death) seems plausible compare to other types and kinds of this phenomenon. In the Qur'ān, there are lots of verses that posited and supported this theory. Quran 2: 55 - 56, 243, 259; 5: 110; 3:49 are few examples of reappearance (of individuals) after death. Also, in Shi'i theology, there is a concept called al-Raj'ah (the Return) which is also a phenomenon of reappearance or return after death even though it is exclusive to certain individuals and time. Likewise, the Sunni theology supports bodily resurrection on the day of judgment. These are no doubt phenomenon of reincarnation, even though both the Shi'i and Sunni theologians refused to acknowledge it as such. Philosophically, the aforementioned views involved transmigration of soul into either the same body or recreation of the previous body, which is a perfect definition and understanding of reincarnation.

Generally, the schools of Islamic philosophy, of which Mulla Sadra's Hikma al-Muta'āliya (transcendent philosophy) is a part, have rejected the concept of reincarnation in all forms and types, except what is termed *Tanasukh al-Malakuti* (Celestial Reincarnation) in Sadra's philosophy which has nothing to do with what the usual terrestrial reincarnation entails. This means that Àkúdáàya, Raj'ah and physical resurrection are logically impossible to happen.

What are the Philosophical arguments of Sadra's transcendent philosophy in its rejection of reincarnation? If the concept is rejected, then how do we reconcile people's experiential narratives and claims with regards to reincarnation? This article using descriptive-analytical method examines this agelong Yoruba religio-cultural concept via Mulla Sadra's philosophical approaches.

Theoretical Foundation and Research Background

Modern African and Yoruba scholars and intellectuals have approached the concept of reincarnation in a more academic manner. While some are in support and have tried to offer basic evidence(s) for it, others continue to critique the concept as they have probed it from scientific and rational perspectives. Yet, some aspects are left unanswered aside some of the arguments being weak.

In favor of Yoruba concept of reincarnation, Akin-Otiko (2016) in his article titled *The Reality of Reincarnation and The Traditional Yoruba Response based on Odù Ifá* has cited a verse in Ifá Corpus, an acclaimed religious and spiritual scripture of the Yoruba Traditional Religion (YTR) to establish two fundamental understanding of reincarnation amongst the Yorubas. While the article tried to respond to the scientific and logical criticisms of reincarnation, its main response (in defense) was "act and will of God" and "respect for a group of people's personal experiences". This approach is more apologetic than being academic aside the fact that it opens a subjective pathway for anyone or group to claim any belief. Likewise, Ọsanyinbi O. *et al* (2016) in their article titled *An Evaluation of the Akurẹ Yorùbá Traditional Belief in Reincarnation* have based their findings and arguments on preservation of the belief in reincarnation amongst the Yorubas (based on personal experience and oral traditions) amidst the influence of Christian, Islamic beliefs and Western civilization. They argued that despite these "foreign influences", the Yorubas continued to upheld this belief and pass it down to generations. Again, this approach offers nothing to rationally substantiate and affirm the concept of reincarnation. The fact that majority of people believe in a dogma is not a prove of its veracity.

Onyewuenyi I. (1996) offered his argument from semantic and ontological perspective as he rejected the use of the word "reincarnation". In his paper *African Belief in Reincarnation A Philosophical Reappraisal*, he argued against partial reincarnation, for example, as seen in a type of Yoruba concept of ancestor's rebirth. While the semantic approach of Onyewuenyi is birthed from Bantu philosophy of ontological hierarchy in explaining "soul rebirth", the nature and philosophical concept of soul was not established to see whether it can be rebirth after separation from the corporeal body.

Lastly, Selome K. et al (2021) in their paper titled *Metaphysical Expansion of Abiku (Die Again) Among the Yorubas*, offered philosophical arguments like physical and memory identities to reject certain aspects of reincarnation. However, the conclusion is to seek answers to the spiritual and mystical aspects of reincarnation that are left unanswered.

Even though, papers have been written from Islamic perspective to discredit the concept of reincarnation (despite the fact that, as highlighted earlier, few Qur'anic verses and beliefs allude to *transmigration of soul to the same or another body after death*), the approach is however theological, based on subjective interpretation of Islamic scriptures. This could be argued to be polemic in nature. If Islam can offer its understanding theologically, why can't the Yoruba Traditional Religion offers theirs as well based on their theology?! For example, Okanmibale Y. (2012) in his paper titled *The Myth or Reality of Reincarnation From The Perspective of Islam*, while rejecting reincarnation, he has drawn a conclusion that reincarnation is a handiwork of certain djinns who have the power to transform into human and assume the form of the dead person. Aside the fact that certain concepts like nature of soul, bodily resurrection etc are philosophically flawed in his presentations, the philosophical question is: can Jinn transform and live as human?

Having highlighted the defects and missing links of past papers and research works, the present paper offers criticism from Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy as it argued using Sadrian philosophical concepts to prove impossibility of reincarnation.

The Yorubas, Culture, Religion, Concept of a Person and Reincarnation

The Yorubas

The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa with a staggering population of over 48 - 50 million around the world. Majority of the Yorubas of about 42 million are located in the southwestern Nigeria which constitute states like Ọ̀yọ́, Òṣun, Ògùn, Ondo, Èkìtì, Kwara and Lagos. Most Yoruba people speak the Yoruba language, which is the Niger-Congo language with the largest number of native or L1 speakers. As a result of colonial rule which redesigned African Map, parts of Yorubaland ruled by the Ọ̀yọ́ Empire is presently located in Benin and Togo with sizable population of more than 2 million. There are also communities of the Yorubas in the Diaspora, originally as a result of transatlantic slave trade and immigration. Yoruba ethnic communities can be found in Brazil, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, United States of America, Canada etc., with an estimated total population of 5 million (Ogundayo, B. 2009). According to Asiwaju A., a leading historian, "there is perhaps no other single African people who have commanded so much attention as the Yoruba" (Asiwaju, n.d).

Culture and Religion

The Yorubas are distinct in their culture of dressing, beautification, greetings, food preparation, family unification etc. However, a part of the Yorubas cultural identity has been taken as one of their religious practices, and that is ancestors' veneration. According to Abimbola, "Yoruba religion is formed of diverse traditions and has no single founder. Yoruba religious beliefs are part of *itan* (history), the total complex of songs, histories, stories, mythologies, and other cultural concepts that make up the Yoruba society" (Abimbola, 2005).

The Yorubas believe in Olódùmarè, the Supreme God, as the Creator of the universe. However, according to Yoruba mythology, the administration of the world is given by Olódùmarè to the Òrìṣàs (Falola T. 2006). The Òrìṣàs are divine entities or gods sent to the earth in human form. Some were primarily human beings but later became Òrìṣà after their demise. Notable Òrìṣàs are Obatala or Orisanla (god of creation), Ogun, (god of Iron, war and victory), Ṣango (god of thunder, lightning, fire and justice), Eṣu Elegbara (a trickster, the sole messenger of the pantheon, and who conveys the wish of men to the gods) and Orunmila (god of the Oracle). It is expedient to mention that Yoruba culture, folklore and religion gave birth to their philosophy and thought system.

The Concept of Reincarnation

The Yorubas' veneration and worship of the Òrìṣàs and their ancestors explain a part of the basis of their belief and concept of reincarnation. However, to understand reincarnation in Yoruba thought system, we must first learn about the Yoruba concept of human being.

Concept of a Person

In the Yoruba philosophy and thought system, a human being is an entity that comprises of Ara (body), ẹmí (soul), orí (head) and ọkàn (heart). Ara (body) includes all the internal organs that perform various bodily functions, and it is the physical or corporeal aspect of human being. Ẹmí (soul) is non-corporeal aspect of man, while the ọkàn (heart) is a physical representation of ẹmí (soul). The Orí in Yoruba philosophy is the guardian angel or destiny of man.

The ara is the first creation of the human person; it is a creation of Orisanla (the Yorùbá god of creation) appointed by Olódùmaré (God of Heaven) with the responsibility of moulding human beings out of earth. ... (Abimbola, 1970).

According to the Yoruba thought system, once Orisanla has finished its task of moulding, Olódùmarè will then bestowed the ẹmí (soul) to the lifeless body.

This phase marks the beginning of the non-physical concept of a person. Olódùmaré comes on board to perform his part, which requires activating the lifeless body shaped by the Orisanla by breathing ẹmí (soul) into lifeless body. The ẹmí is the life force from an immortal king (Oba Aiku) and it is the spiritual aspect of a person. (Adekanye E. 2020)

Nature of Soul: Immateriality and Immortality

Yoruba thought system argued that since the ara (body) is made out of earth, it is therefore perishable after undergoing decomposition. On the contrary, "Makinde (1983, p.40) argues that immortality means Àìkú and the ẹmí (soul) is immortal. The creator of emi is Olódùmaré (God). As a result, emi (soul) is immortal, his breath into the lifeless body makes the body a living soul. It is the breath of this eternal king in the human body that represents his image in man. Ẹmí (soul) is consequently part of the 'divine breath' which Olódùmaré puts into every person to make him a being. The èmí is personal, and in communion with, and inseparable from, the universal emi (Olódùmaré)" (Adekanye E., 2020).

The Yoruba philosophers do not only consider ẹmí (soul) as the active element of life which activate the body by providing it with life and existence, it also guarantees consciousness.

On the nature of ẹmí (Soul), Segun Gbadegesin (1991) replied to two philosophical issues associated with soul's immateriality and immortality in relation with material body. He writes:

Two claims have been made about the nature of ẹmí: that it is spiritual and that it has an independent existence (Gbadegesin S. 1991:35).

What he meant by "spiritual" here is immateriality, non-corporeality. Meaning that soul is an entity that is not bound by matter, time and space. Segun Gbadegesin continues:

Both claims are subjected to philosophical dispute. First, it has been contested that ẹmí cannot be spiritual while it at the same time occupies space by being embodied. Second, the question of independent existence is disputed on the ground that it is not an entity but a force and as such cannot have an independent existence (Gbadegesin S. 1991:35 – 36).

In response to the first argument, he noted that since èmí (soul) is understood to be a portion of Olódùmaré's divine breath, and he is understood to be spiritual, then it is inconsistent to argue that ẹ̀mí is not spiritual. "Unless we deny the spirituality of Olódùmaré, we cannot deny, without inconsistency, the spirituality nature of ẹ̀mí" (Ibid).

However, the question of how a spirit can be embodied still persist. To this, Gbadegesin's response is that:

First, we may understand the reference to ẹ̀mí as spiritual as in fact reference to an invisible entity ... (which) is only invisible to the ordinary eyes and may contain quasi-physical attributes which make the idea of its occupation of space coherent. ... A second approach is to brush off the apparent inconsistency. On this showing, one may just understand ẹ̀mí as the spiritual entity which, in virtue of this, has the capacity to change forms, unlike a material entity. So, it could assume a physical nature when there is need for it and revert to spiritual nature thereafter (Gbadegesin S. 1991:35).

Lastly, Gbadegesin's response to the other issue i.e the question of independent existence of soul outside the bodily frame:

The arguments here is that ẹ̀mí is not an entity, rather *it is a force injected into the body* by Olódùmarè. Therefore, it can have no independent existence.

Gbadegesin's response is that since Olódùmarè, the bestower of soul, exist independently, it is not out of place to conclude that soul, a portion of Olódùmaré's divine breath, can have independent existence outside the body. He argued further that, "if it is the ẹ̀mí that is thought of as activating the human body, there also appears to be no problem conceiving its consciousness outside the body" (Ibid).

In summary, the Yoruba philosophers drawing their thoughts from Yoruba religio-cultural worldview are of the opinion that human being is an entity that comprises of Ara (body), ẹ̀mí (soul) and orí (inner or spiritual head that signifies destiny). The ara (body) goes into disintegration and decay after death, while ẹ̀mí lives on due to its immaterial and immortal nature, and it is capable of independent existence outside the body.

Reincarnation (Àtúnwáyé)

The default Yoruba's cultural and religious belief about life after death is that once a person dies, he goes to either the heaven (ọrùn rere) or hell (ọrùn àpáàdì) based on his or her deeds. However, there are few exceptions to this fundamental belief, and this is where the issue of reincarnation comes in.

The Yoruba concept of orí (destiny) is that whatever a person's destiny is before coming to the earth, he must fulfil it. However, if he dies untimely, he will reincarnate to fulfil other parts of his destiny. Hence, orí bíbọ (spiritual head veneration) is very important in Yoruba religio-cultural practices. There are three types of reincarnation in Yoruba thought system, and these are as follows:

Àkúdáàya (Reappearance after death)

In this type of reincarnation, the dead comes back to life and continues his existence usually in another place, away from his or her previous community and family. There are also rare cases of these "dead persons" coming back to their previous community and family. The greatest proof of this is people's reports and testimonies.

This type of reincarnation is not peculiar to the Yorubas; rather, it is common among African societies. There are undocumented cases of Àkúdáàya in various Yoruba cities. What is common to these cases is that the Àkúdáàya disappears as soon as s/he is sighted by anyone who knows him or her. There are reported instances where it is said that the Àkúdáàya married and bore children. This type of reincarnation is common amongst those who died untimely. The Babalawos (Ifá oracle priests) are of the theological

opinion that Òrunmìlà via Ifá divination system alluded to this type of reincarnation in one of its Odùs (chapters) called *Irosun Iwori*.

Ìpadàwáyé (ancestor's rebirth)

Here, it is believed that good ancestors either dwell in heaven and continue to live eternally or choose to reincarnate into their family to continue their good impacts. In this case, certain aspects of the ancestor are reincarnated in a new born. This is called *partial reincarnation* even though some African intellectuals have critiqued this phrase arguing that reincarnation cannot be partial. The child born after the death of an elder is usually regarded as the reincarnate of that person. Here, the purpose of ancestors' veneration and appealing to them is emphasised, and this involves certain rituals. Sometimes, after the birth of a new child, Ifá is consulted to know which ancestor has come back to life. The Yoruba names like Babatunde (the father has come back), Babajide (the father has risen), Iyabo (the mother is back), Yetunde (the mother has return), etc., reflects the belief in this this type of reincarnation.

Àbíkú (Born to die or predestined to die)

The last type of reincarnation in the Yoruba thought system is Àbíkú. The Àbíkús are children born multiple times either to the same or different parents. The case of the Àbíkú is expressed based upon the belief that they are terrestrial evil spirits of sworn cult who aimed to cause trouble and suffering to their chosen parents.

This is based upon the belief that there is a circle of wicked spirits who, of their own volition enter the wombs of pregnant women and are born only to die shortly after (Awolalu *et al*, 2005).

Issues Related to Reincarnation

Laceration or Identification Mark

It is said that after the death of an Àbíkú child, the corpse might be lacerated with a "mark of identification", and this mark is claimed to resurface on the body of a newborn child. Oluwole (1996) has taken this as a proof for Àbíkú phenomenon amongst the Yorubas, and extends the same argument to the ancestor's rebirth where unnatural or circumstantial body mark of ancestor is found on a newborn.

Transformation of Djinn

As mentioned earlier, some Muslim scholars and academics have postulated, based on people's experiences and reports on Àkúdáàya (reappearance after death), that certain djinn are at work as they transform into human using the dead's previous form.

Islamic Philosophy

Islamic philosophy has its root in Islamic traditions basically the Qur'an and narrations of the Prophet of Islam. The word *Hikmah* which literally means wisdom is used repeatedly in the Qu'ran, and this word is not only synonymous to *falsafah* (philosophy) but even broader. Ever before the Greek philosophy entered the Islamic world, Muslim scholars have had an advanced and robust intellectual exercise on theology known as *ilm al-Kalam* (which is part of Islamic philosophy), part of which is the subject of existence and especially proof and rational demonstration of God's existence. The contribution and effect of Greek philosophy to Islamic philosophy only develop the existing foundation of Islamic rational knowledge. The Greek philosophy especially the Aristotelian school had a robust impact in shaping the raw foundation of Islamic *Hikmah* whereby various early Muslim philosophers were of Aristotelian adherents (Hussein N., 2002).

Islamic Philosophy Schools

The emergence and evolution of Islamic philosophy has given birth to various schools which have made marvellous contributions in philosophy. These schools are:

- The Peripatetic School of Philosophy (Hikmat Masha) of Ibn Sina

- The Illuminative School of Philosophy (Hikmat al-Ishrāq) of Suhrawardī

- The Mystical School. Ibn Arabi is the notable figure of this school.

- The School of Kalam (Theology), and

- Hikmat al-Muta'āliya

Hikmat al-Muta'āliya (Islamic transcendent philosophy)

This school founded in the 16th century by Sadr al-Muta'ālihīn popularly known as Mulla Sadra combines the afore-mentioned schools. From the perspective of methodology, Mulla Sadr's school resembles the Ishrāq school in that it combines rational and intellectual reasoning with mystical revelation, but differs from it with regards to axioms and theorems. The school also settled various problems and unresolved disagreements between the aforementioned philosophy schools. Although Sadr al-Muta'allihin's school inherited from earlier philosophy school of thoughts, yet it uniquely stands and establishes its own independent philosophical system.

Sadr al-Muta'allihin had several books and treatises to his name, mainly on philosophy. Notable of these great works are *al-Asfar al-Arba'ah* (The four Journeys), *al-Shawahid al-Rububuyyah* (Divine proofs), *al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad* (The Beginning and the End) etc. One of Sadr al-Muta'allihin's novel works is the arrangement of the different levels of philosophical learning into four stages. This is described as the Mystics' stages of spiritual journey and development (Obudiyyat A. 2012: 35).

The first journey is concerned with the ontology or the doctrine of being. The second journey is concerned with substance (Jawhar) and accidents (A'arād). The third journey deals with God and his attributes and the fourth journey is about the soul of man and a discussion of man, his destiny, death and resurrection. It is on the issue of death and resurrection that Mulla Sadra discusses the issue of reincarnation by offering robust philosophical arguments against it. However, to fully grasp Sadra's arguments against reincarnation, it is imperative to understand some of the basic philosophical concepts of this school.

Mulla Sadra's Philosophical Concepts

- *Primacy of Existence and Posteriority of Quiddity*

The external existence of a thing can be viewed mentally into its "existence" and its "quiddity." If we ask the question of "is it (existing)?"; then, we are asking regarding the existence (Wujud). If the question is "what it is?"; then, that is quiddity (Māhiyyah). Also, what do "Primacy (Asīl) and Posteriority (I'tibār)" mean? "...The question should be: what is it in our minds that corresponds to what actually exists in the real world? Is it quiddity or is it existence? That concept, which the reality corresponds to, is prior. The one which reality does not immediately correspond to, although we consider it existent, is posterior" (Obudiyyat A. 2012).

Regarding the existence and quiddity of a being, philosophers are of different views with regards to their primacy and posteriority. These views are:

- Primacy of existence and quiddity,

- Posteriority of existence and quiddity

- Primacy of quiddity and posteriority of existence

- Primacy of existence and posteriority of quiddity

Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy holds the fourth view. That is, primacy of existence, and this "means that what actually exists and fills the world is existence. The reality that we have an epistemic relation to, and thus called human is indeed existence, rather than human, but we figuratively or virtually call it human" (Obudiyyat A., 2012: 37).

There are philosophical proofs to establish this position. These proofs are outside the scope of this research. However, it suffices to argue that even though one sees the quiddity of a thing at first glance, but this thing may or may not exist. If it exists, then something must have accompanied its quiddity to be seen in the real world; otherwise, it continues its neutrality to being or non-being. In the case of existence, it is absurd to say it is also neutral to existence or non-existence since it is the reality.

- *Gradation of Existence*

Having explained that reality is the *'asl* (fundamental) axiom and the fact that mind encounter reality in different things, then the question is: is reality a state of unity or multiplicity? If we argued that existence is one, then how is the external world "seems" multiple? The proponents of primacy of quiddity have no problem about multiplicity (kathrat) since by nature quiddities reflect multiplicity. To this important observation of whether reality is a state of unity or multiplicity, there are three views:

- Multiplicity of existence and existents (Kathrat al-wujūd wa mawjūd)

- Unity of existence and multiplicity of existents (Wahdat-ul-wujūd wa kathrat al-mawjūd)

- Unity in multiplicity cum multiplicity in unity (Wahdat-ul-wujūd 'inda kathrat wa kathrat 'inda wahdat).

Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy is of the third view. That is, existence is one and indivisible. However, the multiplicity and differences that are seen externally is gradations of existence (kathrat al-tashkiki) in the degree of perfection. In other words, degree of intensity and weakness. Mulla Sadra adopt this concept to postulate the principle of "gradational distinction in existence."

- *Substantial Motion (Harakat-ul-Jawhariyya)*

One of the most distinct features of Sadrian Philosophical concepts is the principle of Substantial Motion. It is novel in philosophical thought, and this allows the school to resolve many past philosophical problems. The concept of Substantial Motion simply proposes that substance (Jawhar) itself is changing and evolving. The basis of movement is in essence (Dhāt) and substance but its effects appear in the accidents (A'waridh).

In Aristotelian philosophy, it is known that things are made of substance (Jawhar) and accidents (A'waridh) i.e properties and attributes of substance. While the latter undergoes changes, the substance itself is fixed and unchanged. Ibn Sina has identified accidents that change as quality (Kayf), quantity (kam), place (makān) and position (wad').

In contrast, Mulla Sadra disagree and argued that both the substance and accidents are in constant motion, changing and evolving; in other words, renewing and moving towards existential perfection. One of the arguments for this is that everything is simply "being (Wujūd)", and substance, as a mode of being, is also moving. A good example of this phenomenon is seed that germinated to shrub and then full-grown tree with fruit. All these (seed, shrub, tree, and fruit) are not different substances. Rather, they are one substance

in an unfolded of being - an existential gradation. The seed becomes the fruit in a continuous motion. This is a constant motion of being moving towards increasing perfection. The seed constantly change and renewed in its very substance or being. However, this movement from one grade to the other does not meant that the previous grade is annihilated. Rather, it is an overlap of transition.

All the particles of the universe and the material world are a monolithic of motion, or in other words, the material bodies are a fluid entity, whose essence is constantly changing. And every moment is a new existence that is different from the previous existence, but because these transformations are connected together, it is considered one thing. Therefore, we are a new existence every moment, but these existences are connected and continuous and have a single form, or in other words: matter has four dimensions: length, width, depth and another dimension that we call "time" and this time is nothing but the amount of movement in essence. Based on this principle of substantial motion, Mulla Sadra postulates that creation happens at every instant.

- *Impossibility of the Restoration of the Destroyed (Istiḥāla I'āda al-Ma'adūm)*

This principle is not primarily a Mulla Sadra's; rather, it is a general philosophical concept adopted by Muslim philosophers before Mulla Sadra and after him as a counter to the Muslim theologians who viewed resurrection as restoration of the destroyed. When a man dies and buried, his body decayed over the years and becomes dust. Some theologians are of the view that in the hereafter, God will put back these particles of dust and restore the same man that died at time t_x. To the philosophers, restoration of the destroyed is impossible. A man who lived at time t_1 (over a span period of time), died at time t_2, and his body is destroyed (annihilated) cannot be brought back at time t_3 – with the same body of time t_1. Rather, what is possible is a new creation similar to the previous body. Philosopher like Ibn Sina consider this a self-evident axiom.

Alloying restoration of a destroyed object means that x in t_1 is x and is also x in t_3, while in t_2 it does not exist. So, x must be separated from x by time. This is absurd (Obudiyyat A., 2012: 66).

Another proof which negates restoration of the destroyed is the criterion of identity and individuality. This proof rests on the Mulla Sadra's primacy of existence: "…when something comes into being, it acquires an identity. So, as soon as an object ceases to exist, it loses its identity" (Obudiyyat A., 2012: 67).

- *Hikma al-Muta'ālliyya and The Concept of Soul*

Nature of Human Soul (Nafs)

Soul in Sadra's Philosophy is one simple but graded reality. This means that in its unity, there are diverse mental faculties or powers. However, the philosophical question that quickly comes to mind is that: is human soul spiritual or material from its beginning? Answering this question will pave way to whether the soul can exist independently or not.

There is a divide amongst the Muslim Philosophers with regards to the nature of Soul. Al-Farabi, the "Father of Islamic Neoplatonism," explains that soul at the beginning of its career is a faculty or power ingrained in the body. He believes that human soul is not a spiritual substance otherwise, it will have the capacity of existing independently. Al-Farabi therefore submits that when human soul which is material intellect, develops to an actualised intellect where it can think "immaterial forms", then it becomes "acquired intellect."

Ibn Sina argues that human soul is an immaterial spiritual substance capable of existing independently of the body, even though it is a potential intellect ('aql bil-quwa) at the beginning. To him, body to the soul is only a means for it to realised "actual intellect" ('aql bil-Fi'l). That is, body-soul is only a relational concept. Ibn Sina is of the theory of "Rūhaniyat-ul-Huduth Wa Rūhaniyat-ul-Baqā – spiritual origin and spiritual perpetuity" of the soul.

The position of Ibn Sina raised a philosophical question: if human soul is a separate substance (jawhar) at the beginning, which is capable of independent existence, why is it not an actual intellect and only a potential intellect since the condition of being an intellect in actuality is to be separated from matter? Ibn Sina was not able to resolve this critique convincingly.

The aforementioned positions are very important to put into consideration for us to appreciate Mulla Sadra's position.

- *Createdness of the Soul (Huduth Nafs)*

Mulla Sadra propounded the theory of "Jismaniyyat-ul-Huduth Wa Rūhaniyat-ul-Baqā – material origin and spiritual perpetuity". That is, human soul at the beginning is materially created, and its continuity is spiritual in nature. Aside the fact that soul is created materially at the beginning, *it also develops with the body simultaneously*. This simply implies that Mulla Sadra rejected Ibn Sina's position that Soul is spiritual at the beginning. This position is obvious due to unresolved critiques in Ibn Sina's position.

Interestingly, Mulla Sadra accepts Aristotle's definition of soul as entelechy (i.e realization of potential) of the body. To say that soul is spiritual and independent of matter, it suggests the belief in the pre-existence of soul (qadam an-Nafs), a position held by Plotinus and Neo-Platonists. Mulla Sadra also reject Ibn Sina's idea that soul is a relational concept to the body. He argued that if human soul is an independent substance (i.e Mujarrad – immaterial, spiritual) at the beginning, it would be impossible to integrate the soul and body to form a physical "perfect" specie. Therefore, to Mulla Sadra, soul at start is in matter and its soulness cannot be understood as a relation even though it had an independent existence of its own and then came into relation with matter.

- *Harkat-ul-jawhariyah (Substantial Motion) and Soul*

According to this postulation, everything in nature, including substances (jawahir) and accidents (A'arād) are in motion towards their respective existential "perfection (kamāl)". Although soul-body relation is not like any ordinary matter-form relation since forms are ingrained in their matters that the two result into a composite of two separate entities existentially, even they may form a perfect unity. This suggests that form (sūrat) works directly in matter (mādda). In the case of soul, it works on its matter via intermediary of lower form or faculty. This makes the soul to rise from material form to a form that is capable of transcending. In other words, since soul emerges of matter, it cannot be stagnant as material substance, because, "emergence" requires that the "emergent" be of a higher level than that which it emerges out of or on the basis of' (Fazlur-Rahman, 1975).

Therefore, souls move from one form to another form. It is to be noted that Mulla Sadra defines soul as one simple but existentially graded reality, thus, the changes that take place is through superimposition of one form over the previous form, and not a process of one replacing the other. This substantial motion of the soul continues until it actualised to rational human soul. At this stage, human being is human in actuality (bil-Fi'l) but angel or devil "potentially (bil-quwwa).

- *End of Human Soul*

The Substantial Motion of the body-soul is short-lived when death comes on earth. As the body actualised its potentials (or it is "destroyed"), the soul's journey towards perfection continues. This divorce in which the body could no longer journey with the soul gives way to their separation. What becomes of human soul after death?

The "aim" of human soul is to achieve ultimate bliss by joining the Intellects ('Uqūl). This inherent inclination put the soul back to the "ascension ladder." However, all human souls cannot ascend at the same pace since each must pass through different stages. This understanding explains the Imaginal World (alam al-mithal) in between the intellectual realm (alam al-'Uqūl) on top and the material world (alam al-

Mādda) at the bottom. Ibn 'Arabi and Shaykh al-Ishraq from which Mulla Sadra borrowed the idea of imagination (khiyāl) argued that the reality of imagination is bipartite in which imaginative forms can be subjective (i.e attached to a person's mind) and objective (that is, independent of human mind). Only the Prophets and Saints are capable of bringing their imaginations into reality on this earth. However, when human souls reach the imaginal world (next world) where material bodies are absent, every human soul would be able to transform their imagination into imaginal body that become a new "abode" for respective souls. Here, the soul creates its own body that becomes "an objective image of her deeds and intentions in the previous life." This is what is meant by bodily resurrection, rather than the soul transmigrating into a new body – formed from the previous material body that has decayed and being "resurrected".

- *Impossibility of Reincarnation*

Muslim philosophers unanimously reject the possibility of reincarnation or transmigration of soul in any form, either into a new body, animal or inanimate body (i.e material object). Mulla Sadra posited the following arguments:

The soul … has an essential connection with the body; the compound of the two is a natural, unified compound; that simultaneously in each one there is a substantial, essential movement. The soul at the beginning of its creation is something potential in all that it has from the states, and so is [its] body; that every time it has other task from [its] essential tasks which correspond to the [body's] age of infanthood, childhood, youth, adulthood, old age, etc.; that both of them simultaneously emerge from potentiality to actuality.

The levels of potentiality and actuality in every soul are determined in correspondence with the levels of potentiality and actuality of its particular body which is with it as long as it has bodily connection.

Every soul emerges from potentiality to actuality in the period of its corporeal life; and according to the acts and deeds, good and evil, it has a kind of actuality and actualization in [its] existence, be that fortune or unfortunate. But once it becomes one of the species in actuality, its descending to the level of a pure potentiality another time is impossible, just as it is impossible for an animal to become sperm and blood-clot after it has reached the completion of [its] creation. That is because this is the [ascending] movement [of growth] in its essence and substance, so it is not possible for it to reverse, neither by compulsion, nor by nature, nor by will, nor by accident.

So if a disembodied soul connects to another body at its [level of] being fetus or something similar to it, it will entail the being of one to be potential [which is the physical body] and the other to be actual [which is the soul], so the thing which is actual has become potential [in order to connect with the potential], and that is absurd (Mulla Sadra, 2008).

Sadra has meticulously combined various philosophical concepts viz: body-soul complexity, substantial motion of body-soul, individual ipseities (huwiyyāt shakhsiyya), and the principle of *Impossibility of the Restoration of the Destroyed* to prove the impossibility of reincarnation.

Philosophical Criticism of Yoruba Religio-cultural Concept of Soul and Reincarnation

- *Misapprehension of the Nature of Soul*

On the soul's spirituality and independent existence in relation with material body, here are the summary of the Yoruba philosophical positions:

- Soul is spiritual, and its spirituality is derived from Olódùmaré's divine breath

- Soul is capable of independent existence outside the body (which prove its immortality).

Reason for this is that: "*since Olódùmarè, the bestower of soul, exist independently, it is not out of place to conclude that soul, a portion of Olódùmaré's divine breath, can have independent existence outside the body*" (Gbadegesin S., 2009).

Therefore, soul is a *force* (not a being) that enters the human body after being fashioned.

This position clearly indicates that the Yorubas believe the human soul to be pre-eternal.

Sadra's Philosophical Critique

- *Is Human Soul a Portion of God's Breath?*

The shortest answer to this question is NO. If human soul is a portion of God's breath, that makes God to be mentally divisible, and all divisible entities (whether material or mental) are composite; and composite entity is not only preceded by its parts but also depend on them for its existence. On the contrary, God is One, simple and indivisible. He is absolute perfection.

However, there is a verse in the Qur'ān which literally suggest the position of the human *soul being a portion of God's breath*. It reads:

When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him" (al-Hijr 15/29).

Should the phrase …*and breathed into him of My spirit* … be taken literal and in isolation, then the same philosophical critique will come up whereas Qur'ān clearly expressed God's indivisible nature when it says, "Say, He is Allah, One" (al-Ikhlas 112/1).

Tabatabai, a student of the Sadrian philosophy school and Qur'ān exegetist, explains the phrase as follows:

And His saying: "*and breathed into him of My spirit*." Blowing is the introduction of air into objects with the mouth or something else, and it refers to placing an imprint or an imperceptible command on something. What is meant by it in the verse is that the Almighty creates the human spirit with its bond and attachment to the body, and it does not include the entry of air into the body into which it is blown, as indicated by His saying, Glory be to Him: "*Then We made him a drop of sperm in a secure resting place, then We made the drop of seed a clot, then We made the clot a lump, then We made the lump of flesh with bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, then We produced from him another creation*" Al-Mu'minun: 14, and the Almighty also says: "Say, '*The Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will (duly) take your souls*'" (al-Sajdah 32/11).

…And the adding of the Spirit to it (body), in His saying: "From My Spirit" signifies or meant reverence and honor in the meaning of "the Lām of Addition" which is used for "Possession" (Tabatabai, 1987).

In summary, "*and breathed into him of My spirit*" signifies soul's reverence and honour being exclusively of God's possession, and not a portion of God.

- *Soul's Spirituality and Independent Existence*

It has been proven that soul is not a portion of God. From Mulla Sadra's nature of soul, it is gathered that if soul is spiritual *ab initio*, that makes it a pure intellect which needs no material body. As noted earlier, the purpose of body for the soul is to actualised its potentials. Therefore, soul cannot be spiritual *ab initio*. Every human soul has body on which it develops alongside. That is why some souls are stronger than the other due to the stages of actualisation of their respective potentials. Hence, soul could only be material *ab initio* and via substantial motion ascends stages and becomes actual Intellect; thereby, maintains its spirituality and independent existence outside the body.

Segun Gbadegesin in responding to the philosophical criticism that if soul was a spiritual entity *ab initio*, it cannot be embodied suggested that:

"First, we may understand the reference to ẹ̀mí as spiritual as in fact reference to an invisible entity ... (which) is only invisible to the ordinary eyes and may contain quasi-physical attributes which make the idea of its occupation of space coherent ... " (Gbadegesin S., 1991).

Gbedegesin's response is flaw for two reasons. First, if soul is understood as spiritual entity with quasi-physical properties, then it will only move towards the actualisation of its material potentials. However, if it is understood as material entity *ab initio* with quasi-spiritual properties (i.e its potentials), then it moves upward until it becomes pure intellect. Interestingly, Gbedegesin also realised another danger in his response; thereby, he writes:

For this to be an adequate resolution of the issue, however, it has to be the case that the spiritual nature of the supreme deity is also understood in such a quasi-physical sense since, as we have noted, ẹ̀mí is a portion of Olódùmarè" (Gbadegesin S., 1991).

This suggestion further sinks his position. How can God be Absolute yet has quasi-physical properties?! Gbedegesin realised the inconsistencies, thereby, he concludes:

A second approach is to brush off the apparent inconsistency. On this showing, one may just understand ẹ̀mí as the spiritual entity which, in virtue of this, has the capacity to change forms, unlike a material entity. So, it could assume a physical nature when there is need for it and revert to spiritual nature thereafter" (Gbadegesin S., 1991).

Again, a pure spiritual entity cannot change forms. Changing of forms is a property of material entity. In the case of the soul, it cannot change forms since that will lead to the destruction of previous form. The fact that soul could actualised all its potentials and still keep them only suggest that there is no change of form; rather, there is transition from one stage to the other via superimposition. Indeed, the only solution to this quagmire is to accept Mulla Sadra's position that soul is material *ab initio* and via its potentials (quasi-spiritual properties), undergo substantial motion until its potentials are actualised where it becomes active intellect.

- *Is Human Soul Eternal (Qadīm) or Created (Hudūth)?*

Summary of the Yoruba's belief is as follows:

- Human soul is eternal since it is of God's portion

- Body is first created and upon its completion, soul, a form of force is injected into it.

Response: The human soul is created (Hudūth) as proven earlier. The Yoruba philosophers derived their eternality of soul from the fact that they believe it is a portion of God's breath which is also eternal. However, it has also being proven that soul is not a portion of God.

There are two groups with regards to this issue. First group of Philosophers are of the view that human soul is pre-eternal. Soul could not be essentially pre-eternal (Qadīm Dhāt), otherwise it would be God itself (and it could not be a portion of God as proven). It could also not be temporally eternal (Qadīm Zaman) since that will make it pure intellect that is in no need of body. The second group led by Sadra maintained that soul was a created substance (Jawhar) which developed alongside the body.

If it (soul) is existent prior to the bodies, then it is either one or multiple. If it is one then either it multiplies at the connection [with the body], or it does not multiple. If it does not multiply, then one soul is the soul for everybody. If that is the case then what one person learns, all the people come to learn that, and if one person is ignorant of [something], all the people are ignorant of that, and that is absurd. If it multiplies [at the attachment to the body], but [that is impossible] because that which has no matter cannot receive the division and partition (Mulla Sadra, 2008).

Therefore, soul could not be pre-eternal either as one or multiple, and it is therefore created alongside the body.

Impossibility of Yorubas' Three Types of Reincarnation

- *Critique of Àkúdáàya (Reappearance after death)*

First, death in Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy is separation between soul and corporeal body as the latter could no longer accommodate the Soul's evolutionary development. As argued earlier, creation of both the body and soul started at the same time and via Sadra's Substantial Motion, both move through various stages towards their respective ontological perfection. As the body grows older, weaker and deteriorates (which is its ontological perfection), the soul continues to actualize its potentials. The question is, if this is the case, then what about undeveloped souls? Mulla Sadra divides death to natural and sudden death (of whatever reasons). In both cases, the body could no longer accommodate the soul. Once the process of death is completed, it is irreversible.

Second, the proponents of Àkúdáàya are of the opinion that those who died untimely, and their body buried or something happened to their body (damaged, burnt, drowned, etc.) will have the chance as their souls come back to their exact same bodies and resume life activities to fulfil their "cut-short" unfulfilled destiny.

Putting previous philosophical arguments against the impossibility of reincarnation into consideration, the question is how is Àkúdáàya even possible? It may be argued and agreed that in the case of natural death, the matured or developed soul can no longer be supported by its body, then what about an undeveloped soul that separated from its body due to sudden death? A critical question is that why was the (purported Àkúdáàya) soul separated from its body in the first instance if it's still coming back to the same exact body via the process of reincarnation? If the separation of the soul and body happened due to damage of the body, then of what sense would the soul come back to the same damaged body? If the body has been buried which will make it further deteriorated, then how will the separated soul go back to it?

Third, if the soul is expected to transmigrate into another body that looks like the previous body, then it becomes double problem: - (a) two souls (the separated soul and the original soul of "another body") cannot be in one body, (b) a soul cannot be pushed out of its own body so that another soul can "enters". Even if it does happen (which cannot), there would be incompatibility between the "new soul" and the "new body" since the growth will be asymmetrical. Here, it is impossible for the soul to abandoned its upward movement and reverse its actuality to potentials in order to match the new body.

- *Critique of Ìpadàwáyé (ancestor's rebirth)*

Philosophically, the Yorubas believed that soul is a force injected into the body by Olódùmarè. This notion has been philosophically proven incorrect. The problem here is that ẹmí (soul) to the body has been understood to be an accident ('arad) to a substance (Jawhar), body in this case. Generally, in philosophy, Substance is a being that exist in itself (e.g body) while accident is a being that exist in other than itself (e.g color). Therefore, to the Yorubas, body is a substance or essence while soul is an accident that happened to the body.

On the contrary, Muslim philosophers which include Mulla Sadra understood substances and accidents to be of the categories of quiddity (Māhiyyat), and soul to them is a substance (Jawhar) and not accident ('arad). On this, several arguments are given but two suffices, and are as follows.

Based on the Existential Effects of the Soul

If a natural composite consists of two components and the substantiality of one of those components is certain, in order to determine the substantiality (Jawhariya) or accidentality ('aradhiya) of the other component, one can refer to the existential effects of that component. If the existential effects of the

uncertain component are more than the component whose substantiality is certain, then the latter component is necessarily a substance. In this case, the existential effects of the soul is more compared to the body. Therefore, soul is a substance, essence (Jawhar), and not accident ('arad) to the body.

Based on Presential Knowledge ('Ilm Al-Hudhūri)

Another proof which specifically proves the substantiality of the human soul is based on the presential knowledge ('ilm al-Hudhūri) of man himself. The proponents of this argument are of the view that the presential knowledge of man in all situations and conditions - even in the hypothesis of a suspended man - indicates the existence of an independent essence or substance (i.e Jawhar) in the existence of a human being.

Therefore, the Yorubas' idea of Ìpadàwáyé which relies on accidentality of souls to the body is philosophically flawed.

Critique of Àbíkú (Born to die or predestined to die)

First, as described earlier, the Àbíkús are particular children born multiple times either to the same parents or others. First, it has been argued by modern African academics and scientists that this phenomenon is likely to be the effect of Rh-negative disease on perinatal mortality, while others suggested traits of Sickle cell anemia. It is a fact that child mortality rate is greater not only in the olden days but in areas with poor, inadequate or no medical accessibility unlike today. The question is: why is Àbíkú syndrome seemed to have been no more or drastically reduced at this age and time of modern medical development?!

Second, philosophically, like the previous reincarnation phenomenon, here, soul is also understood to be an accident to a body. It has already been proven that soul is a substance and not an accident.

Third, the idea that a soul (evil spirit) can enter the womb of a pregnant woman is also philosophically impossible. The fact that there is a development of an existing soul inside the womb of a pregnant woman makes Àbíkú phenomenon impossible. It has been proven earlier that body and soul are created at the same period and both via substantial motion develop in ascending progression from potentialities to actualities. For another soul to enter at this stage is philosophically impossible because two souls cannot coexist in a body, and an "external soul" cannot push out an existing soul in a kind of replacement process. Again, there will be asymmetric development between the existing body and the "new soul". Therefore, Àbíkú phenomenon like other types of Yoruba concepts of reincarnation are philosophically impossible.

Review of Issues Related to Reincarnation

Re: Laceration or Mark of Identification

First, there is no available document especially photo document of these deliberate marks and lacerations which could have afforded a closer analytical comparison with marks seen on the newborns.

Second, ontologically, there cannot be separate objects or entities that have all their properties in common (Robert A., 1999: 416). Therefore, at different time and place, two things cannot be the same even if they look much alike. In this case, aside the fact that there are differences in the age, body size and shape of the newborn and the dead, presumed Àbíkú child or ancestor, marks and lacerations carried by both cannot be the same either extrinsically or intrinsically.

Third, the argument made by Oluwole as a part of justifications to the belief of Africans in the reincarnation ((Oluwole, 1996) is based on no scientific or philosophical proof. Rather, it is only assumed based on the preexisting believe of Àbíkú and ancestor's rebirth.

Fourth, the use of the word "unnatural and circumstantial" mark found sometimes on the newborn babies is rather unscientific, the fact that many children were born with various birthmarks, some of which are

weird and scary, and at the same time, studies have shown that, even though birthmarks may not be hereditary but there are particular types of birthmarks (genetic predisposition) that can run in biological family history (Cleveland Clinic, 2024).

Re: Reports of Reincarnated Individuals

There are various reports on cases of reincarnation across African and Yoruba cities. Likewise, films, interviews and documentaries have been made to strengthen the belief in this phenomenon amongst the people. However, a careful look into some of these reports and interviews revealed misinformation or lack of in-depth investigation. For example, the case of a teenager in Lindi, a village in Mozambique, is reported by BBC Yoruba with the caption, "*Woman Shows Up Months After her Burial*". In this report, there is no investigation or correspondence whatsoever to affirm the authenticity of the event. However, the report in Mozambique where the incident took place takes another outlook. For example, *Rádio Moçambique* reported the case thus:

A girl from the village of Lindi, in Montepuez district, who was thought to be dead, is said to have "resurrected" … Eurélia Manuel Benjamim was presumed dead last November, and a burial service was held. She has now resurfaced in the community, and says that, during the period she was missing, she was actually working in a family member's 'machamba' (small-holding) (Rádio Moçambique, 2022).

It is obvious that the Mozambican girl did not die and reincarnated as erroneously reported by the BBC Yoruba, but the question is, if the girl did not die, then whose body was buried? In cases like this, one cannot rule out mistaken of identity especially if the dead body has been burnt or decayed beyond recognition.

Re: Can Djinn Transform to Human Being?

Those who postulate that djinn can transform into human in a reincarnation phenomenon argued based on certain hadith. For example, the hadith of Abu Hurairah in (*al-Bukhari,* no.3275) and a similar hadith with respect to Qur'anic verse 48 of Al-Anfal. In this hadith, it is reported that satan "appeared" to the polytheists in the form of Surāqah ibn Malik al-Mudlaji to deceive and lure them to their destruction in the battle of Badr.

First, whether certain Djinns are able to transform to human beings using the form of dead people, or not, has nothing to do with reincarnation – transmigration of soul of dead person either back to his own body or into the body of a newborn. If djinns are able to perform the feat ascribed to them, such phenomenon would be transformation of a specie to another specie which is impossible.

Second, the word used in the verse and hadith is "satan". This word is sometimes used in a specific term for Iblis (a djinn who disobeyed God) or in generic term for evil ones amongst the djinns and human beings (see: al-Baqarah 2/14, Al-An'ān 6/112). The question here is that, why did the word "satan" in the aforementioned hadith interpreted to mean djinn transforming to human being when an evil human being could also be called satan?

In the same hadith, Abu Hurayrah said that the person he saw, came to steal foodstuff and he was able to apprehend him on three occasions after lying to him. It is for a fact that djinn, let alone an evil djinn, do not need to appear as human being before he steals. Djinn are endowed with extraordinary physical powers like speed and ability to carry heavy things as seen in the case of '*Ifrīt* (a type of djinn) who offers to bring the throne of Bilkis to Prophet Sulayman before the latter could even stands up from his council (An-Naml 27/39).

However, do djinns eat exactly what human beings eat? Several hadiths (for example, Abi Dawud hadith 39, Muslim hadith 450) clearly state that djinns derive their sustenance and food from bones, dung and charcoals. Therefore, if "satan" in the hadith of Abu Hurairah is interpreted as djinn, then why would he

come to steal grains as food for his family? Obviously, the hadith using satan meant nothing but an evil human being, and not an evil djinn. All the characteristics stated indicate a human being and not a djinn.

Third, sura Al-Anfal verse 48 does not indicate transformation of shaytan (djinn) to human being. Several places in the Qur'an reveal that the act of Iblis and his evil troops is via whispering of evil suggestions into the mind of their target, and this is exactly what verse 48 of sura Al-Anfal indicates. Besides, why would Iblis transform to human being when he has servants from amongst men who can perform the same task? Some men with the use of magic are able to deceive people's eyes whereby they appear in other person's form. Qur'an describes magic itself as bewitchment of the eyes (Al-A'rāf 7/116). Therefore, a safe conclusion with regards to djinn transformation to human being in reincarnation imbroglio would be that it is the handiwork of evils amongst men, and not djinn as alluded by some Sunni scholars.

Fourth, the question of whether djinn can transform into other specie still persists?! Some scholars argued that the Angel (Jubril) who was sent to lady Maryam appears to her in form of man (Maryam 19/17), therefore, it is not far-fetched to say that djinn can also appear in form of man. This phenomenon is not a transformation. Rather, it is *tamthil – appear in likeness of*, as Qur'an puts it. Tabatabi explains beautifully as he writes:

The meaning of, *fa tamathala lahā basharan,* is that he [the Spirit] appeared and she saw him as human –in her sight he was manifest in a human form while in essence (*fi nafsihi*) he remained a Spirit and not a human (Al-Tabātabāī, H.,1997).

 In the exegesis of Al-Fātir, Tabatabi also writes:

And from this, it is clear that when the narrations describe the forms and shapes of the angels … they are speaking of how the angels appeared to the prophets and Imams, not of the angels' actual forms. That is, they do not actually have physical forms or bodies. Indeed, there is a difference between manifestation and transformation. When an angel manifests in the form of a human, it means that the angel appears as a human within the perception of the beholder, while outside of that perception, it has a different reality and externality, which is in an angelic form.

Unlike transformation, where if an angel takes on a human form, it becomes imagined and shaped as such, it becomes a real human, both within the perceiver's cognition and outside it. Such an angel exists both in the mind and externally, which is not possible (Al-Tabātabāī, H.,1997).

Therefore, this is no justification to prove the alleged djinn transformation to human being using the example of angels' manifestations in human form. However, just like the *tamthil* of the angel in the human form, it is likely that satan (Iblis) also *manifest* and *appear* in human form. Lastly, the nature of djinns as an incomplete immaterial entity makes it easier for them to be visible or invisible (Mulla Sadra, 1964; Mahdi Hadavi, 2006).

However, if djinns are able to transform to other visible shapes, that will be against their actual nature and such transformation cannot subsists to the extent that they will be able to marry a human being and procreate as some scholars claimed while explaining the myth of reincarnation as djinns' handiwork.

Reincarnation and Resurrection

There are different views regarding resurrection in the afterlife, and these include: physical, spiritual and physico-spiritual resurrection. Scholars whose view is materialistic believe in physical resurrection and physical afterlife, that is, they argued that God will recompose and restore every single elemental part of human body after its decomposition via death. Other scholars whose view is physico-spiritual also affirmed the previous argument and then add that, the separated soul will reconnect with the body. The last opinion, that is, spiritual resurrection is based upon the argument of incorporeality of soul and the principle that *something that has been destroyed cannot recur in its identity*. Besides, body at time t_1 (for example, during youthful age) is different from body at time t_2 (old age, for example). Therefore, which of the bodies will be

resurrected? Furthermore, a decayed body, if restored, is not the exact body during the transient life; rather, it is a like and similitude of it. Hence, the proponents of spiritual resurrection posited that resurrection and afterlife is spiritual since soul is the reality of man.

The fundamental criticism to the proponents of physical and physico-spiritual resurrection is that they have affirmed reincarnation in the afterlife, even though they may reject it in this transient earthly life. However, the philosophical critique of this opinion is that what is *impossible in essence (mumtan'i bil dhat)* cannot be possible at any circumstance. If reincarnation is impossible in this transient world, it cannot be possible in the afterlife; otherwise, it will be a contradiction by affirming the possibility of *impossible in essence (mumtan'i bil dhat)*. Also, to affirm the view of the proponents of physical and physico-spiritual resurrection indicates a contradiction with the Qur'anic presentation of the life in the hereafter as a completely new creation (*khalq jadid*). Otherwise, if the hereafter is physical or physico-spiritual, then there would be no difference in it with this physical world.

On the other hand, the proponents of spiritual resurrection will have to answer the issue of "undeveloped souls" since they also affirmed that soul need body to actualize its potentialities until it develops or connect with active intellect.

Mulla Sadra's Transcendent philosophy is able to solve these quagmires while preserving the core Islamic belief in "bodily resurrection" even though "body" here does not mean physical, material body. Fazlur Rahman, in explaining Mulla Sadra's position writes:

Sadra replies to all these difficulties on the basis of his doctrines of "substantial motion (Harkat-ul-jawhariyah)" and the World of Images ('Ālam al-Mithal – *imaginal world*). All undeveloped souls or souls which have done evil deeds in this life, since they cannot be free from the body and since material body cannot be resurrected once destroyed, will create a body of their own by exteriorizing their inner psychic habits and states – acquired in this life – in the form of a body in the World of Images, where all psychic states and dispositions are transformed into concrete images… (Rahman Fazlur, 1975).

Lastly, the proponents of reincarnation may argue that Mulla Sadra has contradicted himself by rejecting reincarnation; yet, proposed an imaginal subtle body for the soul in the Imaginal Realm ('Ālam al-Mithal, 'Ālam al-Barzakh). In response to this critique, Fazlur Rahman further writes:

Sadra replies that that body, being a symbolic expression of the soul's inner states, has no potentialities like the earthly body and possesses no existence of its own. It is a mere symbol of the soul and is related to the soul as a reflection or a shadow is related to that of which it is a reflection or a shadow… it has no independent status or nature of its own. The opponent then says that the statements of the Qur'an apparently say that the body in the hereafter will be the same earthly body and not a merely symbolic one.

Sadra admits that this is so but adds that that body will have the same form as this earthly body and not the matter of the earthly body. Even in this earthly body, its identity is preserved by its form not by its matter, which is continuously changing (Rahman Fazlur, 1975).

In short, this subtle, immaterial, imaginal body is a perfected form of material body created by the soul from within its essence. In dreams, soul is able to create this imaginal body to a lesser extent since its attachment to the material body continues to serve as obstacle. However, once, via death, the soul is free from the material obstacle (body), it is able to create its body in a more real and concrete manner in Imaginal World as explained earlier (Shir'dāghi M., 2014).

Conclusion

African, especially Yoruba concept of reincarnation is majorly based on the accidentality of soul when in reality soul is a substance and not an accident. While philosophical concepts of the nature of soul, its substantial motion and the principle of *Impossibility of the Restoration of the Destroyed* amongst other concepts seemed to have been neglected or unknown to the Yoruba proponents of reincarnation, it is easier for them

to assume the possibility of this phenomenon. However, since culture and religion are pass down to generations dogmatically without critical thinking, people hold this frail dogma and build various monumental imaginations around it.

Science via continuous breakthrough in human knowledge has been able to help dispel various myths surrounding reincarnation. However, the scope of science is limited to matter and has little or nothing to contribute in metaphysical issues. This is the gap that religions have bridged by helping to explain metaphysical concepts. However, a religion that does not accommodate philosophical and logical proofs will affirm mirage as a pool of water. This is the case with regards to Yoruba concept of reincarnation.

From the definition and nature of soul to its independent existence, the weak and illogical Yoruba religio-cultural positions affirmed the concept of reincarnation. Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy has been able to disclose the frailty and inconsistencies in Yoruba positions, and offered robust logical explanations which reveals the impossibility of reincarnation of any forms. Once the fundamental beliefs are logically dismantled, all the mythical positions and imaginative mystical experiences that are associated with reincarnation will disappear with time.

Lastly, with this novel introduction of Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy to a major African concept, it is hoped that African academics, intellectuals and philosophers will embrace it as an alternative source of knowledge to critique other African philosophical or religio-cultural concepts.

Acknowledgements

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