



POLYGYNY AMONG THE YORUBA MUSLIMS OF
SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL STUDY

BY

ADEYEMO LATEEF KAYODE

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic and
Other Civilizations

International Institute of Islamic Thought and
Civilization
International Islamic University Malaysia

APRIL 2012

ABSTRACT

This study examines the practice of polygyny among the Yoruba Muslims of South Western Nigeria with a view to ascertain how they perceive it, how it is being practised by them, the Islamicity or otherwise of such practice, its impacts on the Yoruba polygynious Muslim families, the influence of the local customs and tradition on the practice or the praxis, differential in the male/female perception of polygyny as well as the factors influencing the perception and practice among them. Polygyny is a controversial issue not only among non-Muslims but equally among Muslims. The thesis therefore, in addition to the basic focus earlier mentioned, examines the conflicting views held by Muslims about the permissibility of polygyny. The findings reveal that polygyny is allowed by Islam particularly under certain circumstances in order to safeguard society against the evils of promiscuity and its allied problems. The issue of justice forms the major bone of contention as Allah says that Muslims (men) would not be able to treat women equally, even if it is their ardent desire to do so. Attempt is therefore made to examine Islamic principles of justice and how it affect polygyny permitted by it (Islam) as well as how far are Yoruba Muslim polygynious men dispensing it. Being a phenomenological research, mixed method is adopted since it is generally accepted to be the most suitable one for this kind of inquiry. Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and questionnaire are used as media for data collection much as library collections, government gazettes and archival materials are used where and when necessary. Although, the practice is found to have been helpful most especially with regards to the care of widows, divorcees and those of over stayed distressed spinsters ridding the society of whoredom or promiscuity, yet it has not been without some shortcomings which include but are not limited to lack of proper understanding of Islam, poverty, juvenile delinquency, injustice, enmity and conflicts among wives. Recommendations on how to solve the identified shortcomings or problems are made while suggestions for further studies are equally given.

ملخص البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة في مميزات إعادة تعدد الزوجات بين مسلمي بلاد أوروبا في جنوب غرب نيجيريا بغية التأكد من فهمهم لها، وكيف يمارسونها من حيث إسلاميتها أو غيرها من الشرائع الأخرى. وتطرق الدراسة إلى آثار تلك العادة على أسر مسلمي قبيلة أوروبا، وعوامل التقاليد المحليّة التي تكمن فيها، والاختلاف الفكري بين تصور الرجال وموقف النساء على حقيقة تعدد الزوجات؛ بالإضافة إلى الدوافع التي تؤثر في نظرهم وكيفية ممارستها فيما بينهم. إنّ القضية الخلافية في عادة تعدد الزوجات ليست قضية منحصرة على غير المسلمين فحسب، بل هي أمرٌ جدليٌّ بين المسلمين أيضًا. علاوة على الهدف الأساسي لهذه الدراسة المذكور سابقاً، يهتم هذا البحث أيضاً بقضية الآراء الاختلافية الواقعة بين المسلمين في مشروعية تعدد الزوجات. وتُظهر نتائج البحث أنّ تعدد الزوجات مباحٌ في الإسلام خصوصاً إذا وُجدت دواعي المعينة من أجل حماية المجتمع من أضرار التشويش ومشاكله المصاحبة. تُشكّل قضية العدالة موضوعاً محورياً بناءً على تعجيزٍ من الله سبحانه وتعالى للرجال في عدم قدرتهم على العدل الكامل بين النساء وإن حرصوا. ونتيجةً لذلك، أثبتَ البحث جهداً علمياً في دراسة المبدأ الإسلامي على العدالة من حيث تأثيرها في قضية تعدد الزوجات المشروعة بشروطها ومدى تعامل الرجال المسلمين من أصحاب الزوجات المتعددة معها. والبحث إذاً هو دراسة الظواهر المتراكمة يعتمد على النهج المتمازج في البحث، على أنّ هذا هو النوع الأنسب لمثل هذه الدراسة. تُستخدَمُ المقابلة، والاستبانة، والمناقشة الجماعية الهادفة كوسائلٍ لجمع البيانات، ويتكوّن العملُ عن طريق جمع المعلومات المكتبية، ومن الجرائد الرسمية الحكومية، والأدوات السجّلية في المواقع والأوقات المناسبة. ورغم وجود وسائل الرعاية والعناية بالأرامل والمطلقات والعوانس حتى يُحمى المجتمع من الزنا والاختلاط، إلاّ أنّها غير خالية من النقائص التي تتمثل في عدم الفهم اللائق للإسلام، والفقر، والجنوح، والجور، والعداوة، والتراع بين الزوجات. وفي نهاية المطاف، يتقدم الباحث بتوصيات و حلول عملية واقتراحات لتجاوز النقائص والمشاكل التي تعرض لها ومقترحات لدراسات قادمة في هذا الشأن.

APPROVAL PAGE

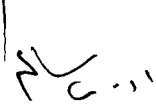
The thesis of Adeyemo Lateef Kayode has been approved by the following:



Mahmud Zuhdi Haj Abd Majid
Supervisor



Fatimah Hasnah Daud
Co-Supervisor



Idris Salim El-Hassan
Internal Examiner

Iysa Ade Bello
External Examiner



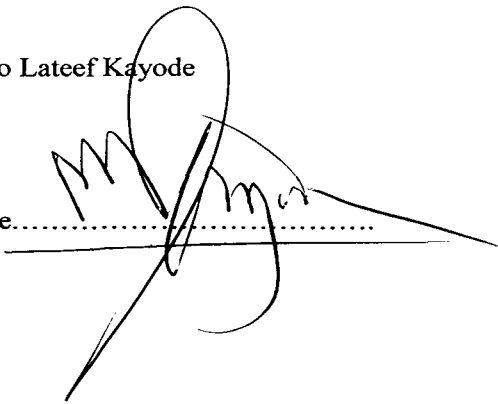
Ismaiel Hassanien Ahmed
Chairman

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Adeyemo Lateef Kayode

Signature.....

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom, written over a dotted line.

Date.....

21/04/12

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND
AFFIRMATION
OF FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

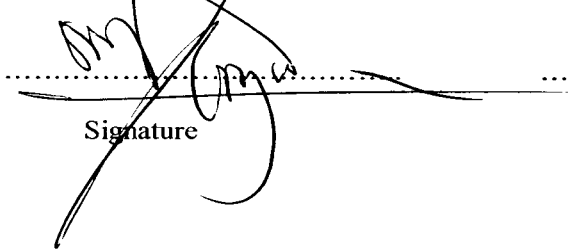
Copyright © 2012 by Adeyemo Lateef Kayode All rights reserved.

**POLYGYNY AMONG THE YORUBA MUSLIMS OF SOUTH WESTERN
NIGERIA: A CRITICAL STUDY**

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below.

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgment.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

Affirmed by Adeyemo Lateef Kayode


.....
Signature

21/04/12
.....
Date

To

My late father

CHIEF ABDUL AZEEZ ALABI ADEYEMO

Who breathed his last in the late hours of 18th January, 2011.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks, adorations and praises are due to Allah as befitting His Essence and Majesty, the Eternal besought of all, the Lord of incomparable Majesty. He created, cherishes and takes care of the universe. He honours human beings as His vicegerents and endowed them with enabling knowledge and understanding. Except for His favours, grace and benedictions this work could not have seen the light of the day. May His choicest peace, mercies and blessings continue cascading upon the noblest of His creations, Muhammad, son of Abdullah-the last of all Apostles and Messengers-as well as members of his household, his companions and those of his sincere followers until the Day of Reckoning.

It is natural that a work of this nature could not have been accomplished by a single person. Hence, my indebtedness to several people who had assisted in one way or the other and the need to show gratitude to those it is due. I am greatly indebted to my parents who struggled day and night to see their seed germinating, thriving and blossoming. My father, Chief Abdul Azeez Alabi Adeyemo who, as Allah wanted it, breathed his last on the 18th January, 2011 while I was trying to round up this study deserved a special appreciation. May Allah in His infinite mercy forgive his shortcomings, grant his gentle soul eternal rest and admit him into Paradise. My unalloyed appreciation equally goes to my mother Hajia Mrs. Nusiratu Abebi Ayanfunke Adeyemo (Nee Abubakr Egbaji) for her unflinching support, sacrifice and relentless efforts to get me educated. I cannot thank her enough. It is my ardent prayer therefore, that Allah grants her long life and prosperity, health and benedictions to reap the fruits of her hard labour. May He above all, make her an inmate of *al-jannah*.

My profound gratitude also goes to my venerable supervisor, Professor Dato' Dr. Mahmud Zuhdi Haj Abd Majid for his fatherly guidance, advice, suggestions, objective comments and constructive criticisms, all of which had indeed helped in no small measure in accomplishing this study. For his invaluable assistance and meritorious comments and suggestions, I pray to Allah to reward him abundantly, crown his efforts with resounding success both here and in the hereafter, and grant him solace and succour from His presence. My special thanks and appreciation also go to my co-supervisor Professor Dr. Fatimah Hasnah Daud of the Department of Sociology, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, for her time, attention and efforts to ensure that a robust and laudable work is done. I am glad to have worked with an indefatigable, versatile, erudite, sound and experienced scholar of her mettle. For her care, suggestions and criticisms all of which have given the work its present shape and standard, I shall ever remain grateful. Notwithstanding, whatever error is observed in this work are solely mine.

My heartfelt appreciation is also due to Professor Dr. Ibrahim M. Zein, Professor and former Dean of Istac for his understanding, care and affection. In fact, his humility, knowledge and administrative acumen are a source of inspiration to those of us who are his students. May Allah in His infinite mercy continue exalting him to higher pedestal. To Professor Dr. Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, the current Dean of Istac goes my profound gratitude for giving the welfare of students the priority attention it deserves. He is indeed an icon of intellectual vibrancy and an academic of international repute per excellence. I shall continue to cherish the good days under his deanship. My heartfelt appreciation is indeed due to Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamal Hassan, the former Rector of IIUM who displayed the highest sense of humility, modesty and takes his students along the path of intellectual prowess and academic efficacy. To have received training under such a great, erudite and impeccable scholar is a rare opportunity I shall continue to cherish in my life. I shall ever remain grateful for his kindness and love.

Professor Dr Sayyid Ajmal M. Rasak Al-Aidrus deserves special appreciation and thanks. Besides drinking from the fountain of his knowledge and drawing from his experience, his concern for the welfare of all students has not gone unnoticed. His assistance in cash and kind has gone a long way in alleviating some of my financial problems. Gerontomanaic as he is, he was so kind to the extent of sending gift to my aged late father before his demise. It is therefore my prayer that Allah should continue guarding and guiding him aright, smooth his ways to perfect ease and grant him solace and succour from His presence. I owe Professor Dr. Mudathir Abdel Rahim, a Professor and a very distinguished academic fellow at Istac a great deal of indebtedness. He is a model of academic excellence to the core with wealth of experience and proven integrity. We are blessed to have passed under his and many others of his colleagues' tutelage. I wish him more years of fruitful and meritorious service to humanity.

Professor Drs Hassan Abdel-Rasig El-Nagar, Abdullahal-Ahsan (the Deputy Dean, Academic and Students' Affairs), Amir H. Zekrgoo, Abdullah Hassan Alwi and Cemil Akdogan are all wonderful intellectuals and dons of international repute. May the almighty Allah reward them all abundantly for their services to humanity. Also Professor Emeritus Dr Osman Bakar is a rare gem from whose knowledge we have benefitted immensely. May the almighty Allah preserve him in order to render more of the meritorious services to humanity. The duo of Associate Professor Doctors Ahmad Yousif and Baharuddin Ahmad have been very wonderful. Their care, concern and affection have made my stay in Malaysia less boring and quite interesting. Dr Yousif in particular used to keep my company and take me out in his car for relaxation occasionally in order to shake off the stress of a lonely emerging scholar. May the almighty Allah reward them supra abundantly. Al-Ustaz Shaykh (Dr.) Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady deserves my special unblemished appreciation. I have benefitted immensely from his profound knowledge and wealth of experience. He is indeed, a scholar too many. May Allah bless and reward him abundantly. I shall continue to cherish those good days we had together in the prestigious International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, International Islamic University Malaysia.

Dr Abdul Hakeem I. Mobolaji, Head of Department of Economics, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Fountain University, Osogbo, Nigeria has been of immense assistance not only to me but equally to my family in Nigeria. May the almighty Allah reward him beyond his expectations. To Dr. Ishaq Ajani Ogunwande, formerly Head of Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria as well as other friends, brothers and sisters too numerous to be mentioned, I am profoundly grateful. To all my brothers and sisters as well as friends in Edo State of Nigeria and beyond I am very much grateful. May Allah reward all of them abundantly. I should also thank Dr (Engr) Ibrahim Abdul Kareem for his love, care and concern as well as his assistance in kind and cash. I shall remain ever grateful.

I should not forget the laudable assistance rendered by a group of friends and well-wishers of my family who paid two years' rent of the accommodation occupy by my family while this study lasts. May Allah in His infinite mercy reward them abundantly and accommodate them in mansions (and palatial palaces) of the Garden of Eternal Bliss. I should not forget all my respondents/interviewees too, who supplied me with all necessary data, information and other needed materials. I am indeed very glad.

So many people have been very much helpful. From brother Bunyamin Ajayi (a.k.a. Baba pupa), Dr. Yahya Toyin Murtada, Alhaji M.O.A. Mustafa, Alhaji Abdur-Rahman Oseni, brothers Ishaq Adam, Musa Alongbija, Abdul Hakeem Olowolayemo, Mutiu Abdus-Salam and his wife, Abbas Ayodele Lasisi, to those of Alhaji Yunus Adesina, Bar. Tijani Fatai and Qasim Bakare, Dr. Tajudeen Shittu, Alhaji Abdul Hakeem Bashaar Fasasi, Alhaji Ahmad Faosiy Ogunbado, Engineer Abdul-Fattah Aboaba, Ustaz Abdul-Ghaniy Abiodun Raji, brothers Qamardeen Adeniyi, Muneerudeen Olodo Al-Shafi'i, Abdul Ghafar Fahm, Dr and

Dr. Mrs Oladosu, Drs Abideen Adewale and Abdul Jaleel Kehinde Shittu, brother Abubakr Folorunso, Ustaz Bunyamin Adewale Bello, Alhaji Ibrahim Abubakr Yusuf Eleyinla have all played one role or the other towards the successful completion of this programme. Brothers Imran Adeleke and Isa Adekunle Moshaku and his family, Ismail Abdul Fattah, Abdul Wasiu Arolu, Abdul Hakeem Olaniyi, Monsur Adedotun Zakariyyah, Ismail Abdul Quadri, Tajudeen Lawal and Abdul Majeed Abdul Quadri deserve my sincere appreciation. Dr. Mrs Ghaniyat Adejoke Adesina-Uthman, Hajia Rashidat Funke Olarenwaju, Hajia Madinat Abike Mustapha, Olowonjaye family in Malaysia and host of others too numerous to be mentioned have been instrumental in this success story. I am extremely grateful to each and every one of them. To all my colleagues at Istac, I am profoundly grateful.

I am also grateful to the authorities of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria for granting me the training leave to study abroad. To my colleagues in the Department of Philosophy and Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Nigeria I am extremely grateful for their understanding, friendship and solidarity. Dr. Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria also deserves a special appreciation for making available relevant materials in my area of study as well as his concern, care and affection. He is a friend indeed. To all my siblings, I am extremely grateful. My friends and brothers in Mushin, Lagos State, have also done wonderfully well. I should be glad for the assistance of Brother Abdul Wasiu Taiwo and members of his family, Pharmacist Luqman Miftau, Dr. Sakirudeen Ajani, Ustaz Yunus Abdul Fattah and host of others too numerous to be mentioned. They all deserve my special thanks.

I should not forget to thank the Malaysian authorities for granting me the permission to enter and pursue my studies in the country and for providing the necessary facilities and enabling environment. Long live Nigeria, long live Malaysia. *Malaysia Boleh! Ajose wa ko ni baje o.* The authorities of the International Islamic University Malaysia (my patron) deserve my profound appreciation. I shall ever remain grateful for their kindness. I should not forget to thank Associate Professor Dr Idris Salim El-Hassan, my post viva advisor for his laudable advice, objective suggestions and constructive criticisms all of which had helped to improve the work. May the almighty God grant all his heart desires and smooth his ways to perfect ease.

Last but by no means the least are my wife Hajia Mrs. F.B. Oduola-Adeyemo (NRN) and children Zaynab, Maryam, Muhammad and ‘Umar who were always ready to give me the needed hope and courage, taking time to call and asking me when am I coming back. They have all endured my long absence giving me in spite of that, moral and emotional support to carry on with the struggle. Thanks for being there. May the almighty Allah grant us all long life and prosperity. To all those whose names could not be mentioned here; it is not because you are not important but for the shortage of space. It is my fervent prayer therefore, that Allah Who knows you all and Who is equally the best to reward to grant your heart desires not only here but also in the Hereafter.

My attempt in this work as an emerging scholar and academic whose job description is teaching, research and community development is to study this social phenomenon with a view to ascertain the situation of things in order to make suggestions for improvement for the greater glory of our society. If this objective is met, to Allah be the glory. May He forgive my shortcomings and accept this humble contribution as an act of *‘Ibadah*. I wish all my readers happy reading and safe intellectual journey.

TRANSLITERATION

ء	'	خ	kh	قن	Sh	غ	gh	ن	n
ب	B	د	d	ص	ṣ	ف	f	هـ	h
ت	T	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	q	و	w
ث	Th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	k	ي	y
ج	J	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	l		
ح	h	س	s	ع	ʿ	م	m		

Short Vowels	
اَ	a
اِ	i
اُ	u

Long Vowels	
اَ + َ	ā
اِ + ِ	ī
اُ + ُ	ū

TABLE OF CONTENT

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page	vi
Declaration Page	v
Copyright Page	vi
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgement	viii
Transliteration	xi
List of Tables	xiv
List of Figures	xvi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 General Introduction to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	13
1.3 Objectives of the Study	15
1.4 Research Questions	15
1.5 Significance of the Study	16
1.6 Methodology of the Study	16
1.6.1 Population of the Area of Study	19
1.6.2 Method of Data Collection	22
1.7 Scope and limitation of the Study	23
1.8 Clarification of Terms	24
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	29
2.1 Origin and Culture of Yoruba People	29
2.2 Advent and Growth of Islam in Yorubaland	32
2.3 Polygyny in Islam	36
2.4 The Practice of Polygyny among the Yoruba Muslims	42
CHAPTER THREE: ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW AND THE CONCEPT OF POLYGYNY IN ISLAM	53
3.1 Islamic Worldview	53
3.1.1 Al-Tawhid	54
3.1.2 Al-Risalah/Al-Nubuwah	59
3.1.3 Al-Khilafah/’Ubudiyyah	62
3.1.4 Al-Ihsan/Righteousness	66
3.2 The Institution of Polygyny in Islam	69
3.2.1 Reason for Revelation of the Relevant Verses	71
3.2. 2 Opinion of Exegetes	72
3.3 Maqasid al-Shari’ah and Polygyny	95
3.4 Polygyny and the Concept of <i>Adl</i> or Justice	101
CHAPTER FOUR: POLYGYNY AMONG THE YORUBA PEOPLE PRIOR TO THE ADVENT ISLAM	109
4.1 Introduction	109
4.2 Topography and Meteorological Condition of Yorubaland	111
4.3 Historical Origin of the Yorubas	113
4.4 Political System of the Yorubas	127

4.5 Socio-Cultural Milieu of the Yorubas Prior to the Coming of Islam	131
4.5.1 Social Life of the Yorubas	136
4.5.2 Traditional Marriage System in Yorubaland	145
4.6 Polygyny among the Yorubas	161
CHAPTER FIVE: THE ADVENT OF ISLAM IN YORUBALAND.....	167
5.1 Introduction.....	167
5.2 The Coming of Islam to Yorubaland	168
5.3 Factors that Facilitated the Spread of Islam in Yorubaland	175
5.4 The Attitude of the Yoruba People to the New Religion	178
5.5 Challenges Faced by Islam and the Muslims	179
CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	183
6.1 Introduction.....	183
6.2 Quantitative Data Collection and Respondents.....	183
6.3 Quantitative Data Results	187
6.4 Qualitative Data Collection and Respondents.....	197
6.5 Procedure	198
6.5.1 Internal and External Validity	199
6.6 Themes	210
6.6.1 Solutions to Social and Biological Problems	210
6.6.2 Lack of Proper Understanding of Islam	212
6.6.3 Relief for Distressed Women	215
6.6.4 Lower Educational Status	217
6.6.5 Moral Justice	218
6.6.6 Socio-Cultural Barriers	221
6.6.7 Family Discord and Disintegration.....	221
6.6.8 Juvenile Delinquency.....	224
6.6.9 Avoidance of Gap Marriage	225
6.6.10 Ideological Influence	226
6.7 Discussion of Findings	228
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION.....	240
7.1 Summary.....	240
7.2 Conclusion	244
7.3 Recommendation.....	250
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	252
APPENDICES	275
Appendix 1: Interview Questions	275
Appendix 2: Demography of Interviewees	277
Appendix 3: Verbatim Transcription of Interviewees	278
Appendix 4: Sample of Questionnaire.....	322

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.		Page No.
6.1	Frequency of Age of Respondents	184
6.2	Frequency of Respondents' Gender	184
6.3	Frequency of Academic Qualification of Respondents	185
6.4	Frequency of Respondents' Occupation	185
6.5	Frequency of Nature of Respondents' Family	186
6.6	Frequency of Number of Wives in the Family	186
6.7	Frequency of Number of Children in the Family	187
6.8a	Respondents' Percentage Score of each Item	188
6.8b	Percentage Score of Respondents to the Shortcomings of Current Practice of Polygyny among the Yoruba Muslims	190
6.9	Mean and Standard Deviation Scores according to Age Bracket	191
6.10	Mean and Standard Deviation Scores according to Gender	192
6.11	Mean and Standard Deviation Scores according to Academic Qualification	194
6.12	Mean and Standard Deviation Scores according to Respondents' Occupation	196
6.13	Central Research Question, Discourse Unit & the Emerging Themes One	202
6.14	Theme and Sub-Theme Two	203
6.15	Theme and Sub-Theme Three	204
6.16	Theme and Sub-Theme Four	205
6.17	Theme and Sub-Theme Five	206
6.18	Theme and Sub-Theme Six	207

6.19	Table 20: Theme and Sub-Theme Seven	208
6.20	Theme and Sub-Theme Eight	209
6.21	Sub-themes and themes (1)	212
6.22	Sub-themes and themes (2)	214
6.23	Sub-themes and themes (3)	216
6.24	Sub-themes and themes (4)	218
6.25	Sub-themes and themes (5)	220
6.26	Sub-themes and themes (6)	223
6.27	Sub-themes and themes (7)	225
6.28	Sub-themes and themes (8)	227

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.		Page No.
1	Map of Nigeria showing Ethnic Groups	21
2	Map of Yorubaland	21

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This is a general introduction to the study. It elucidates the basic axioms and postulates upon which the thesis is based as well as the main thrust of the research. The statements of problem are enumerated while research questions, aims and objectives as well as scope and limitations of the study are discussed. Besides, clarification/definition of terms and or concepts is made in order to prepare the ground for a clearer understanding of the issues at stake. Finally, the significance of the study, method and methodology adopted as well as plan and synopsis of the study are all addressed in this chapter. Grix¹ clarifies the terms method and methodology and states categorically the differences between the two. This is going to be looked into later in this chapter.

The existence of life, particularly that of human beings on the planet earth is not by accident nor is it by a sheer serendipity much as the distinction of man into male and female is not without reason. So as Adeyemo argues²:

Since there cannot be a design without a designer, the Heaven and the earth with their perfect harmony could neither have evolved by themselves nor by a 'big bang' as we are made to understand. The truth about the universe uphold by Islam is that, Allah is its Architect, Creator and Cherisher. He created them not in vain but as a manifestation of His Power and Majesty for a purpose He assigned to each of its constituent parts. They, no doubt, constitute a significant pointer to His Existence, Essence and Unity.

¹ Jonathan Grix, *The foundation of research* (Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 30-33.

² Adeyemo, L.K., 'Islam: An Introductory Study', in *Readings in philosophy and religions*, edited by Oyelade, E.O. (Benin City: Tiredia Publishing Company in Conjunction with the Department of Philosophy and Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, 2006), p. 65.

Hence, it is meant to serve certain purpose assigned to each of its (earth) constituent parts by the Master Creator failing which will not only alter the proper functioning of the biodiversity or the ecosystem but equally spell doom for all the inhabitants of the earth including the flora and fauna. Often time, people forget that it is not because of under nourishment or rather mal-nutrition that cat is not as big as dog. Perhaps, we need to remind ourselves that there is destiny pre-ordained by Allah (God) for everything tailored towards the purpose it is meant to serve. So, everything including man-collectively and individually-is created to serve one purpose or the other and it is made in a way suitable for the purpose it is meant to serve. So, if these purposes are served and served appropriately, individually and collectively there is bound to be harmony in the cosmos which explains why it is referred to as a universe and not a multi-verse. However, the failure of one or more of these elements to function as expected or as designed by God is going to cause commotion and impede the proper functioning of the eco-system. Man is Allah's vicegerent on earth³ and so he needs to carry out the will of his Master⁴.

Thus, the need to have a correct understanding (*fahm/fiqh*) of the purpose to be served and how best to serve it appropriately; otherwise there is bound to be confusion which is going to be proportionate or commensurate to the level of deviation from the original purpose assigned by God. This is very vital in view of the fact that, it is our idea of life that shapes our attitude towards it. Therefore, the correctness of our idea about it is very paramount as it is going to bring about a correct attitude towards it, otherwise, man shall continue to live a down trodden life here and experience eternal

³ Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*:30

⁴ Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*:28

damnation in the next. Of all the creations (creatures) of God, *Jinns* and Men⁵ are the only ones endowed with intellect and ability to make choice or discriminate, particularly between good and bad, moral and immoral, right and wrong and between good and evil deeds. Hence, *Jinns* and Men are creations of responsibility. They are responsible for their actions and inactions with respect to the purpose of their creation. This equally accounts for why they are referred to as the creation of the highest honour⁶, who, despite this honour or favour may be reduced to the lowest of the low if they fail to live in accordance with the *fitra* (nature) with which they were created.

But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment. He will say: 'O my Lord! Why have Thou raised me up blind, while I had sight (before)?' Allah will say: 'Thus did thou, when Our Signs came unto thee, you disregarded them: so will thou, this day, be disregarded⁷.

And say: Work (righteousness): soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the believers: soon will ye be brought back to the Knower of what is hidden and what is open: then will He show you the truth of all that you did⁸.

Every soul shall be (held) in pledge [accountable] for its deeds⁹.

Man in particular is the creation of the highest honour, yet he is going to be reduced to the lowest of the low should he fail in his responsibilities. Behold, life becomes worthy of living when Men realize the purpose of their creation (existence) and strive to actualize it. To live is to serve: to serve Allah and humanity via Him for whatever purpose a man serves is what make or mar his life. Service to humanity endears a man to his/her fellow men and it is '*ibadah* as long as they fall within the ambit of *Shari'ah*-the Islamic law and are borne out of genuine motive. Service to Allah

⁵ Qur'an, *al Dhariyyah*:56. Please note that all Qur'annic quotations are as rendered or translated by Abdullahi Yusuf Ali except where otherwise stated.

⁶ Qur'an, *Tin*:1-7

⁷ Qur'an, *Taha*:124-6

⁸ Qur'an, *Tawbah*:105

⁹ Qur'an, *Mudathir*:38

equally endears him/her to Allah. There cannot be service without knowledge; particularly of the purpose one is to serve¹⁰. Of course, knowledge is a bottomless ocean, the more one knows, the more he discovers he still has to know. No wonder, the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an begins with reading, one that has to be commenced with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful¹¹.

By the Fig and the Olive, and the Mount of Sinai, and this City of Security-We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low-except such as believe and do righteous deeds: for they shall have a reward unfailing. Then what can, after this, contradict thee, as to the Judgment (to come)? Is Allah not the wisest of Judges?¹²

Notwithstanding the intellect endowed to man by Allah, he still requires Divine Guidance in order not to go or grope in darkness in respect of the right choice to be made for just as he is limited to time and space, so is his intellect. Man, as earlier observed is the creation of the highest honour, yet he has the tendency of condescending so low as to the lowest of the ebb. Be that as it may, it further corroborates the need for Divine Guidance from the Merciful Creator. It should be noted however, that Allah had continued to be sending down guidance (*al-hidayyah*) to man from the very beginning of his existence on the surface of the earth, yet he is prone to the evil machination or whispering of his avowed (arch)-enemy (Satan/*Iblis*) who is combat ready all the time to seduce him to his path of misguidance.

We said: 'Get ye down all from here: and if as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. 'But those who reject faith and belie Our Signs, they shall be companions of the Fire; they shall abide therein forever.'¹³

¹⁰No wonder, Allah says in a hadith *Qudshi* 'Know Me before you worship Me for if you do not know Me, how then would you be able to Worship Me. And this equally informs why the first revelation to the Prophet centres on learning.

¹¹ Qur'an, *al-'Alaq*:1-5.

¹² Qur'an, *al-Tin*:1-8, see also Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*:30.

¹³ Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*: 38-9.

Man should therefore be on the alert to avoid Satanic misguidance¹⁴ which although in most if not all the cases are attractive and have the promise of immediate benefits or enjoyment but a critical assessment of which always reveal dangers associated with them with attendant long lasting effects which transcend the realm of the mundane life. Man has been created in pair of male and female just like every other creature¹⁵ in order that they may live together and find respite, solace, succor and tranquility in each other in their travail through the vicissitude of life¹⁶. Besides, the need for continuity of life warrants pro-creation which is approved by Islam. This could only be done in Islam via the means of marriage¹⁷. Marriage is a sacred cum social contract. It is sacred as it is ordained by God. It is social not only because it involves two persons, families, sometimes tribes/races and nations but equally because although, ordained by Allah yet the interpretation, application and usage is by man. Until recently, all people of all time and climes across the globe were against and indeed considered as an abomination all such of perverted forms of sexual relations which have now become widespread even to the extent of receiving legal or constitutional backing in many countries around the world. This situation had forced many scholars to ask whether animals are wiser than men¹⁸.

Rather than pointing accusing finger at this dissoluteness, perverted culture, wanton conviviality and licentious way of life, polygyny which had been practised for ages in almost every culture and or civilization and which equally received Divine sanction from God is today an object of ridicule as it is considered as an anathema and

¹⁴Qur'an, *al-'Araf*:27 says: O ye children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as he got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where you cannot see them: We made the evil ones friends (only) to those without Faith.

¹⁵ Qur'an, *al- Yasin*:36.

¹⁶Qur'an, *al-Rum*:21.

¹⁷Qur'an, *al-Israi*:32; *al-Shuarau*:2-3, 4-10.

¹⁸Adeniyi, Isa (2000), *Zina: Islamic perspective on adultery and fornication*, Lagos: Salsabil Associates, p.18.

anti-social practice which infringes on women's rights as some feminists would want us to believe. Considering the higher objectives of *Shari'ah*-the Islamic law, the general (collective) interest of the society takes precedence over individual interest whenever and wherever the two come into conflict. Much shall be said on this later.

Laments Dr. Annie Besant¹⁹:

There is pretended monogamy in the West, but there is really polygamy without responsibility, the mistress is cast off when the man is weary of her and sinks gradually to be the 'Woman of the street' for the first lover has no responsibility for her future and she is hundred times worse than the sheltered wife and mother in the polygamous home. When we see thousand of miserable women, who crowd the streets of Western towns during the night, we must surely feel that it does not lie in Western mouths to reproach Islam for a woman to live in Islamic polygamy united to one man only, with the legitimate child in her arms, surrounded with respect than to be reduced; cast out on the streets perhaps with an illegitimate child outside the pale of law-unsheltered and uncared for, to become a victim of any passer-by, night after night, rendered incapable of womanhood, despised by all.

To an African, particularly the Yoruba people of South Western Nigeria in the 'hey days' of their civilization, polygyny is a mark of honour and an indication of one's social status and responsibility in the society²⁰, for the larger the family, the larger the farm and the respect one commands in the society.

Observes J.E. Mcfarlane²¹:

Whether the question is considered socially, ethically or religiously, it can be demonstrated that polygamy is not contrary to the highest standard of civilization...the suggestion offers a practical remedy for the western problem of destitute females; the alternative is continued and increased prostitution, concubinage and distressing spinsterhood.

The physical and physiological differences between the two sexes, that is, the male and female, is not limited to their appearance alone but extend to their ability to work

¹⁹ Annie Besant Wood (1878), *Marriage, as it was, as it is, and as it should be: A plea for reform*, London: Freethought Publishing Company. This book was also published in 2009 by Kessinger Publishing Company, Montana and in 2010 by General Books, Tennessee.

²⁰ Doi, A.R.I (1980). *Islam in Nigeria*, Kaduna: Gaskiya Corporations, p. 85.

²¹ See Abu Umar al-Faruq (2005). *The making of a successful polygamy*, Lagos: Salsabil Associates, p.vi.

for long hours, take risks as well as their characteristic of bravery which also reflects in their sexual instinct and capability just to mention a few. Thus, every creature including man and woman, albeit creatures with similar destiny and related features; have been assigned different social responsibilities in the society one complementing the others. The assigned responsibility is what their respective strength and physiological make-up could accommodate and cope with. Thus, if they fail to play their respective complementary roles, or one trespasses into the confine or preserve of the other, society would suffer a great deal. Observed Mawdudi²²:

In this limitless universe He [God] has created countless number of things, but none of them is ugly and ill-shaped: everything has its own special beauty: everything is proportionate and symmetrical in its own way. Whatever He has made for a particular purpose, He has given it the most appropriate form and invested it with the most suitable qualities for it. No better and more appropriate structure could be conceived, for example, for the eye and the ear which have been made for seeing and hearing. The air has precisely the same qualities which it should have for the purpose for which it has been made, and water precisely the same qualities for the purpose for which it has been made. No one can point out any defect or flaw in the design of anything made by God²³; nor can anyone offer an alteration or modification in it.

The observation made by Nobel Laureate Dr. Alexis Carrel (1873-1944)²⁴ is apposite and germane to our discussion, he says:

The differences existing between man and woman do not come from the particular form of sexual organs, the presence of the uterus, from gestation, or from mode of education. They are of a more fundamental nature. They are caused by the very structure of the tissues and by the impregnation of the entire organism with specific chemical substances secreted by the ovary. Ignorance of these fundamental facts has led promoters of feminism to believe that both sexes should have the same education, the same powers and the same responsibilities. In reality woman differs profoundly from man. Every one of the cells of her body bears the mark of her sex. The same is true of her organs and, above all, of her nervous system. Physiological laws are as inexorable as those of the sidereal world. They cannot be replaced by human wishes. We are

²² Mawdudi, S.A.A. (2007), *The meaning of the Qur'an*, Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd, Vol.4 p. 45.

²³ Qur'an, *al-Mulk*:30.

²⁴ Alexis Carrel as quoted in Khan Maulana Wahiduddin (2001), *Woman between Islam and Western society*, Karachi: Hafiz and Sons Ltd. pp. 31-32.

obliged to accept them just as they are. Women should develop their aptitudes in accordance with their own nature, without trying to imitate the males. Their part in the progress of civilization is higher than that of men. They should not abandon their specific functions.

Sex is therefore described as part of the biological necessities of life, one if properly dispensed or harnessed will ensure happy, prosperous and peaceful life, otherwise, it may lead to avalanche of problems ranging from social, psychological, moral/religious, economical/financial, legal to medical and biological ones as could be seen from observations made in the quotations. Hence, a way of life or a religion like that of Islam in which adultery and or fornication are considered as not only a sin against God but equally as a culpable crime against humanity, severely punished with capital punishment²⁵ could not but allow polygyny. This becomes particularly imperative when and where women outnumber men, availability of widows and their orphan children owing to war or other natural disasters. In Yoruba tradition, adultery and fornication are considered as abominations much abhor as in Islam. It attracts capital punishment for which unlike in Islam no witnesses are required as 'remote control', that is, a charm²⁶ is used for immediate punishment of the male defaulter.

Allah says:

And among His Signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): Verily, in that are signs, for those who reflect²⁷.

Hence, marriage provides a legitimate avenue for the fulfillment of this necessity. This is one of the basic institutions that distinguish man from most of other creatures. Marriage is as old as man himself as Allah created not only humanbeings but every

²⁵ It should be noted that while adulterers and adultresses are to receive capital punishment, fornicators and fornicatrices are to be given hundred lashes each.

²⁶ The charm is called 'Magun' which literally translates to 'do not climb'. So, if anyone defies this norm and tries to commit adultery and or fornication, immediate justice would be done by the charm.

²⁷ Qur'an, *al-Rum*:20-21.