

The Jinn, Women Vulnerabilities and the Act of Healings in The Hausa Communities Of 21st Century

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Abstract: Prior studies indicate the Hausas belief on the existence of jinn as well as their spiritual effects on humanity. Yet, researches on the relationship between various women's vulnerabilities and jinn are lacking. That is, especially, as women are mostly the victims of jinn. Hence, a significant percentage of women's vulnerabilities have to do with jinn. These include physical, medical, psychological and, sometimes, even social tribulations. However, the most prominent acts of healings among the Hausas are the *girka* cult and the *ruqya* (exorcism). Of the two, the former is the most primitive and has a history dated to the history of the Hausas. Whereas, the later is regarded as the modern and advanced act of healing, especially when it comes to issues of jinn. However, this paper reviews the phenomenon of jinn and their effects on women in the Hausa communities. It also revisits the arts of healings as well as the sudden change from the primitive healing process of *girka* to the modern *exorcism*. Finally, the paper presents some suggestions as panacea to the jinn-related women vulnerabilities. One of such is personal measures of protection; another is conducting a scientific check-up(s) as to know if an illness is medical or jinn-related, so that appropriate measure will be taken.

Keywords: Jinn, Women Vulnerabilities, Hausas, Hausa Community, *Girka*, *Exorcism*

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I. INTRODUCTION

A number of literatures have the view that, there is cure to all sicknesses (Al-Jauziyah, 1999). There has been no sickness without its cure, only that, it sometimes takes a series of researches that demands extra effort and devotion. The Hausas specifically, believed that, a cure to sickness must have existed before the sickness itself. Traditionally however, the Hausas regard specific individuals as healers. They include; craftsmen (*the mafarauta/maharbaor* hunters, *the makeraor* blacksmiths, the *masuntaor* fishermen, *the manomaor* farmers, and *the majemadyers* among others); magicians (*the Bokan Gida* or the settled magician, *the Magorior* the male itinerant magician, *the 'Yarmaiganye* or female itinerant magician and *the bokasukutum/dodo* or the partial magician etc); as well as unique individuals (*the 'yanbiyuor* twins, *maikaton kai* or macrocephaly) (Bunza, 1989; Gobir, 2012).

On the other hand, jinn are believed to be unseen creatures. This brought about the debate as to whether the phenomenon of jinn is real or fiction. Kreidly, (2006) argued that, not seeing jinn does not mean that they do not exist. Many things, which we believed in their existence are never sighted by mankind. Instances include the electric current, which flows through electric wares and even the air we breathe, to mention but few. Therefore, somethings could just be identified through their manifestations in or on other things. Such is the case of jinn as their manifestation is noticeable in different things of which humanity is one. Zarabozo, (2002) testified that, the jinn are a world of their own, different from that of the humans or the angels. They do, however, possessed some characteristics in common with humans, such as the ability to think and reflect.

Further, Kriedly, (ND) disclosed that, sorcery could serve as means to cast a spell on an individual(s). This may include one or more of either; spell of separation, love, madness, laziness, nightmares, hallucination, suspicion, illness, bleeding or breaking up a marriage to mention but few. Certainly, these are all more to do with women especially in polygamous homes where one of the wives holds envy against others to a very high degree. This and other factors indeed positioned women vulnerabilities to jinn more alarming. Many other scholars such as Bunza, (1990); Khalil, (1992); Bunza, (1995); Zarabozo, (2002); Abdullahi, (2008) and Gobir, (2010) confirmed some factor driving jinni or jinn towards an individual, in which women are mostly the victims. Therefore, this work is geared towards studying women vulnerabilities in respect to jinn, as well as consider the process(es) of tackling such issues in the primitive Hausa time and in the 21st century Hausa communities.

II. THE HAUSAS' BELIEF ON SPIRITUAL EFFECTS OF JINN

Scholarly literatures such as Greenberg, (1946); Bunza, (1989); Ibrahim, (1982); Bunza, (2008) and Gobir, (2018) among other, testified the Hausas belief in jinn as well as their supernatural influence on the humanity. Bunza, (2006: 39) holds that, Hausas consider jinn as creatures similar to humans in form, structure, activities, culture, behavior, language, politics and more. The Hausas strongly believed in supernatural interference in the natural community affairs, behaviors as well as culture (Jayeola-Omoyeni, *et al*, 2015). An evident of this is traceable in their (Hausas') customs and literature both before and after the advent of Islam. For instance, Dan'anace in his song titled *Shago* says:

Ban hanabori a yanka 'yankajiba,
Amma kowaggaaljani bai kwana!

I do not discourage killing chickens for bori-cult,
But who so ever sighted jinn shall die.

The above stanza shows the power, which the Hausas attributed to jinn, thus one could die by mere sighting them (jinn). However, some Hausa proverbs also indicate the belief of the Hausas on the powers of jinn. Below are few examples:

	Hausa Proverb	Literal Translation
1.	Aljaniba ka dakinkwana.	Jinn, you don't need a room to sleep.
2.	Aljanikafarkasama'u.	Jinn, your leg on the sky.
3.	Gaba da gabanta, aljaniya taka wuta!	Every boss has a master.
4.	Kida a ruwamai ta da haukar dodo.	Drumming in water, a stimulus to monsters' madness.

(Yunusa, 1989; Malumfashi&Nahuce, 2014)

In fact, the Hausas believed that, supernatural displays are possible with the intervention of jinn. This is why, different Hausa traditional craftsmen such as *makera*(blacksmiths), *wanzanmai*(barbers), *manoma*(farmer), *masunta*(fisher men) and *fatauci*(itinerant traders) to mention but few, resolve to associations with jinn for various supernaturally amazing displays during periodic ceremonies of such craft-sects (Emeka *et al*, 2010; Gummi, 2014; Usman, 2014; Muhammad, 2015). The supernatural practices among the Hausas includes; the *bori-cult*, witchcraft, spirit worship, sorcery and trances among others (Hunwick, 1975; George &Amusan, 2009; Emeka *et al*, 2010; Usman, 2014; Abubakar; 2017).

In conclusion therefore, the Hausas consider jinn; nondescript, immortal and invisible entities. This is because they do not possess material body through which they could be seen but they may incarnate into any material thing in order to make themselves visible for a particular reason. They are therefore, considered powers, which are almost abstract, as shades. Perhaps, they are immaterial and incorporeal beings, which take on human shapes. As immaterial and incorporeal beings however, it is possible for them to assume various dimensions whenever they wish to be seen (Emeka *et al*, 2010; Bala, 2015).

III. WOMEN VULNERABILITIES AND JINN

There are various women sicknesses, which are caused by jinn (Abdullahi, 1999; Gobir, 2012). Therefore, cure or protection to such conditions, being them supernatural, requires certain practices different from cases of other natural situations. Jinn attack women more than they attack men. This must have to do with the fact that, there are reasons for jinn to attack humans, and that women are mostly victims of such circumstances. Three of such reasons are briefly discussed below:

i. Human Intervention

There are situations in which a person bewitched or cast a spell on an individual or individuals. This is usually done by the help of a magician. It happens as a result of envy or thirst for revenge. Females remain majority of the victims in this regard. This is for the fact that, envy is more prevalent among them, especially in polygamous homes. At instance where a wife envies the other(s), she may resolve to visiting a magician to harm them (Abdullahi, 2008; Gobir, 2012).

ii. Offending Jinn

Jinn are believed to be living within, but not limited to, human environments. Hence, they are not seen by humans, they get offended when they are matched on, poured water at (especially hot water) or thrown at. Notwithstanding, the person that may have done so would not know, as he/she has no sight of them. Nevertheless, the jinn(s) in question could afterward retaliate by harming the individual. However, majority of the victims in this regard are females. This is because, they mostly are in charge of the household keeping, such as cooking, sweeping etc. In these cases, they might mistakenly offend a jinni or jinn by pouring water, sweeping over or matching on the same (Gobir, 2010).

iii. Love

There are moments when a jinni falls in love with an individual, thereby distancing the person from having affairs with human opposite sex. It usually, though not limited to, happens to females. Hence, they (victims) become disinterested from having any affairs with men. In marital homes, having sexual relation with such a wife becomes problematic (Bunza, 1990; Khalil, 1992; Bunza, 1995; Zaraboza, 2002; Gobir, 2012). In other words, therefore, jinn have feelings similar to mankind. There are many factors driving jinn's attention onto a woman. They include; exposure of nudity and excessive loneliness to mention but few.

Gobir, (2012: 205) outlined some prominent jinn-caused women vulnerabilities thus:

- i. Barrenness: This is a situation, in which a married woman remains barren subject to jinn's intervention.
- ii. Abnormal mensuration: This is a situation where woman/lady bleeds in form of mensuration, but far beyond the expected natural manner.
- iii. *Namijin dare* or 'night husband': Is a situation where a lady/woman regularly dreams to be having sexual relations with someone. It is beyond the natural situation; hence it involves jinni or jinn, that the woman/lady becomes sexually satisfied ever after such dreams thereby becoming disinterested from having affairs with human opposite sexes.
- iv. *Wabi*¹: A jinni or jinn can be the cause of regular and unnatural deaths of a woman's children in infancy.
- v. *KumburinMahaifa*: Jinni or jinn do cause swelling of uterus. This has been investigated to be done by the means of which jinni or jinn place a piece of meat in the uterus.
- vi. Spinster: Some aged women are unmarried despite they wish to; hence the intervention of jinn disallows them.

However, the aforementioned vulnerabilities are unique to women. Others, which are universal to both men and women include:

- i. Husband's Impotence: In situations where a jinni or jinn are in love with a woman, they might transform her husband impotent whenever the husbands intends having sexual affairs with her. This is also the case in some polygamous homes where a wife casts a spell making the husband impotent whenever he is with any of the wives rather than herself.
- ii. Madness: This is synonymous to insanity. Is the situation in which an individual (female in this regard) runs insane.
- iii. Cancer: Even though there is a natural cancer, it is sometimes caused by jinni or jinn.
- iv. Paralysis: This is a temporary or permanent loss of muscles' function. The natural form of this sickness is usually caused by stress or spinal code injury. However, jinn are capable of causing the same type of sickness.
- v. Leprosy: It is a disease that causes discoloration and lump of the skin. Jinn are capable of causing the sickness.
- vi. Nonfunctional Blindness: This is unnatural blindness. The form and shapes of the eyes remain normal. An individual could blink and perform other functions of with the eyes such as turning them etc. Yet, one loses sight as a result of jinn's intervention.
- vii. Abnormal Teeth and or Head Pains: The teeth and or head pains caused by jinn is usually continuous and seemingly incurable than that of natural situations.
- viii. Abnormal Rashes: The rashes caused by jinn are also usually continuous and seemingly incurable than mere rashes of natural situations.

IV. GIRKA, THE PRIMITIVE ACT OF HEALING

Jaba, (1986) defined *bori* (the bori-cult) as an act of worshiping jinn. This is similar opinion with Besmer, (1973) who opined that, bori-cultists worship jinn the way Muslims worship Allah for certain benefits. The views of Umar (1982) as quoted by Gobir, (2002) is also the same, hence he added that, bori-cultists believed in super natural beings, who is mightier and could not be reached unless via jinn.

In the olden days, Hausas hold bori-cult as the major way of curing sicknesses, especially those that have to do with supernatural(s) (Bunza, 1989). The term used to denote the practice of curing jinn-related sicknesses is *girka*, the girka-cult. The process of girka-cult needs items such as; mats, calabash, new pot, chickens, money and cotton among others, which will all be provided by the patient. On the other hand, the *ubangirka* (head of girka-cult) or *uwargirka* (head of girka-cult) as in the case of female, will provide items such as; roots and backs of trees, groundnut cake, cola-nuts, dates, sugar, coal etc. (Gobir, 2002: 90).

Girka-cult is a long process that takes minimum of three days and up to, but not limited to, two weeks for the seek person to be cured. The process involved four main steps as noted by Gobir, (2002) thus:

¹ A mother's repeated loss of children in infancy (Bargery, ND)

- i. *RanarBincike*(Investigation Day): This is the day, when head of girka-cult will get to know the real problem of the patient at hand. It is usually done by asking jinn(s), who will provide the head of girka-cult with adequate information on the patient's sickness.
- ii. *RanarZubi* (Start-up Day): After the investigation, the head of girka-cult will distribute cola-nuts to all members of bori-cult nearby, as well as other people who might be interested to witness the event. The event is usually scheduled on Wednesdays. Gobir, (2002) holds that, the preference of the day might be subject of Hausas belief that, it (Wednesday) is a lucky day; hence the Hausa proverb: "*Larabaranarsamu*" meaning; "Wednesday, a day of gain." Head of girka-cult kick-up the event by down or after sun set for the belief that jinn are usually out by that time.
- iii. *RanarSaraBaki* (Harmonization Day): This is the third segment of the girka-cultism. It is the day when appropriate jinn will be chosen and made to stay with the victim. The selected jinn are believed to be best pitting for the victim and that, there will be harmonious co-existence amongst the jinn themselves on one hand, as well as between the jinn and the victim on the other.
- iv. *RanarFita* (The Back-out Day): This is the last segment of the girka-cult processes. On the day, the victim would be bathed accordingly. Animal(s) would be sacrificed to please jinn. The victim would be taught manners of the jinn harmonized in him/her, the dress they like, the food they prepare, their communications etc. At the end, the victim would be taken back to his parents by the head of girka-cult who would address the parents as:

"*Kunbaniciwo, munbakulafiya.*"

(You handed me sickness, we handed you health).

Henceforth, the individual has automatically transformed into the sect of the bori-cult. He would dance to the drumming of the jinn harmonized in him whenever the drums are sounded. He will also be able to give medication and cure to sicknesses with the help of the jinn in him.

However, since the early years of the 21st century, bori-cult as well as the girka-cult has been diminishing to an extinction level. There were centers of bori-cult at Argungu, Gobir, Katsina, Kano, Zazzau and indeed other places within the Hausa society. Hence, those centers now exist no more, resulting from Islamic teachings against such practices as well as the emergence of the modern exorcism, which represents it (Gobir, 2002).

V. RUQYA (EXORCISM), THE MODERN ACT OF HEALING

Exorcisms is believed to have emanated in the Hausa-folk after the advent of Islam. Islam on the other hand came into the Hausa-folk around the 15th century. Notwithstanding, there exist opinions, which claim that, Islam has reached some Hausa communities much earlier than these ages. Whatever the case might be, evidence has proved that, Islam was in the Hausa-folk as far back as during the time of the royal king of Kano, Ali Yaji. That was 1349 to 1385 (Habibu, 2001; Birnin-Tudu, 2002; Sani & Abdullahi, 2016).

Ruqya is an Arabic word, which literally means *incantation*. Abdulla, (1999: 145) reported that, those incantations were used during the pre-Islamic period for various purposes. Islam later stopped their use, and are substituted by prayers from the holy Qur'an. Nonetheless, for the fact that these prayers stand in for the incantations, the term *ruqyas* maintained to refer to act. It is the prayers recited to a patient, whose sickness is observed to has relation with jinn (Bunza, 2000). There have been moves by Islamic scholars amongst the Hausas to call to the shunning of superstitions, magic and bori-cult, ever since the advent of Islam into the Hausa-folk. For instance, MudiSpikin in his poem '*GadarZare*' or the bridge of thread to literally translate, says:

Su ne nake son mu taru mu gane,
Camfi da kagerashinilimi ne,
Tsafi da borirashinhankali ne,
Aminci da sukohakikabatace.
There are what I wanted us to understand,
Superstition and rumor mongering are acts of ignorance,
Magic and bori-cult are insane,
Indeed, trusting them iswrongful.

Gobir, (2012) coated another instance from a poem titled *MakaminYaki da Sankarau*(weapon for the fight against meningitis). He writes:

Kula da 'yanborimasuDoguwa,
Don karsucemaka Inna ta lasheshi.
Wallahikaryanasukai ma, babuduk,
Wata Inna saiciyon da yad dame shi.
Be careful with bori-cultist, the claimers of *Doguwa*,

So they do not tell you that he is attacked by *Inna*.

By God, there assertion is a lie,

It is a sickness and has nothing to do with *Inna*.

Exorcism has now taken place of bori-cult and has spread to all corners of the Hausa society. In fact, there exist associations of exorcists in Hausa cities such as Kano, Sokoto and Zaria to mention but few. Moreover, exorcism is performed in almost all the Hausa towns and cities by individuals and groups. Also, there are different centers for Islamic medicine throughout the Hausa society, which offer medications and treat cases including that of jinn's possession. Few of them are:

- i. Danfodiyo Islamic Medicine Center – Kano
- ii. Natural Medicine Nigerian Limited – Zaria
- iii. Danfodiyo Islamic Medicine Center – Sokoto
- iv. Ibn-Sina Islamic Medicine Center – Sokoto

5.1 Steps in Exorcism

Three basic rules of exorcism are identified thus, an exorcist shall:

- i. bear in mind that the recitation on its own is not effective without the will of God.
- ii. recite only the words of God, his names and features.
- iii. make all recitations in Arabic or a language, which is understood (Zakariya, 1997: 8).

However, exorcism has some basic steps, which are as follows:

i. *Bincike da Tambayoyi* (Investigation and Questioning): Exorcists have two ways of confirming whether a victim is possessed by a jinni or jinn. First is studying the victim's physical actions, in case when such actions are involved, such as unnecessary laughter, cry, jacking etc. Second is by questioning the victim or those whom the victim is under their care. An exorcist might ask questions such as:

- a. Do you dream about animals?
- b. Do you have nightmares?
- c. Do you experience sleepless nights or parts of nights?
- d. Do you dream of making love with someone?
- e. Do you dream of being given a baby? (Muhammad, ND: 19-21; Wahid, 1988:18)

ii. *KaratunRukiya* (Exorcism Recitations): After the investigation, exorcist would lay his/her right hand on the victim (as both of them are seated) and recite closer to the ears of the victim. The recitation begins with *ta'awwiz*² and *basmala*³, after which the following chapters and verses would be recited:

- a. Qur'an 1 (Fatiha)
- b. Qur'an 2: 1-4, 163, 164, 256, 285 and 286 (Baqara)
- c. Qur'an 3: 18 (Al-Imrana)
- d. Qur'an 7:54 (A'araf)
- e. Qur'an 23:115-118 (Muminun)
- f. Qur'an 37:1-10 (Saffat)
- g. Qur'an 72:1-9 (Jinn)
- h. Qur'an 112 (Ikhlas)
- i. Qur'an 113 (Falaq)
- j. Qur'an 114 (Nas)

Notwithstanding, some exorcists add or reduce certain verses and or chapters. However, reciting the above verses once, or depending upon the situation, allows the exorcist to speak with the jinni or jinn present in the victim.

iii. *Magana da Aljani* (Speaking with Jinn): Here, the exorcist tactically speaks to the jinn. He/she asks the reasons of possessing the victim, whether the jinni is alone or in company, whether the jinn has been sent through *sihir* (sorcery) or comes on personal with, as well as other relevant questions.

iv. *SallamrAljani*(Jinn Dismissal): After the questioning, the exorcist demands the jinn to leave and that promise not to ever return to the victim. The jinn may leave in peace or, in case of stubborn types, the exorcist has to apply force and more pressure.

v. *AyoyinAzaba* (Punishing Verses): If the jinni proves stubborn, the exorcist employs special verses that serve as punishments. Sometimes, exorcist employs beating up of the jinn, which is done strategically to avoid dodging of the jinn, thereby harming the victim.

² A prayer believed by the Muslims capable of sending devil(s) away from a particular place at a particular moment.

³ Holy utterance by Muslim made prior to recitations of the Holy Qur'an (In the name of Allah the most Gracious the most Merciful)

VI. SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

At the end of the study, the followings are noted:

- i. Women are more vulnerable to jinn than men. Such vulnerability results them a lot of distress ranging from physical to psychological.
- ii. Primordially, the Hausas used bori-cult as the means of treating all jinn-related cases, at the end of which the victim is automatically converted into the bori-cult. It is the practice, which is substituted by the modern exorcism as a result of Islamic socialization on one hand, and modernity on the other.
- iii. The modern exorcism has taken the place of the primitive bori-cultism within the Hausa communities. All jinn-related cases are therefore treated by the exorcists under certain exorcism ethics.

VII. CONCLUSION

It has been the culture of the Hausas (just like other global communities) that, whenever there is a problem, be it physical or psychological, they do not rest until the issue is resolved. In this order, their struggles for cure to sicknesses continuous. Perhaps, modernity and socialization brings about developmental changes in the Hausas approaches to sicknesses. This is evident in the shift from use of the primitive bori-cult to the modern exorcism for curing jinn-related cases. The jinn-related cases are more common to women than men. This results from various factors including exposure of nudity and their (women's) feminist nature itself, thus making them more vulnerable to jinn.

VIII. SUGGESTION

- i. Since religion is now inseparable from culture, religious scholars should try harder in socializing the community as to precautions against jinn. This shall include campaigns for shunning all sorcery activities as well as personal precautions such as prayers and avoiding any activity, which might drive the attention of a jinni or jinn.
- ii. The government, traditional leaders as well as scholars shall try further to the total eradication of the bori-cult practices. This is especially due to its negative effects on the victim in question as well as its primitive and immature curing processes.
- iii. The government shall consider integrating exorcism, as departments, into the modern hospitals and psychiatrics to ensure easier and correct identification and treatment of jinn-related cases. Individual exorcism practitioners shall also be put under supervision to ensure that only experts are into exorcism practice, thereby minimizing negative backfires to a higher point of accuracy.
- iv. Medical check-ups shall be conducted to ensure that a sickness is not medical based, before employing exorcism measures.

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