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IMPLICATIONS OF ISRĀ'ILIYYĀT'S NARRATIONS ON THE CONTEMPORARY YORUBA MUSLIMS

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Abstrak

(Isrā'īliyyāt) are stories and traditions of Jewish and Christian origin that entered early Islamic writings, particularly Qur'ānic exegesis and historical narratives which have become widespread tools of Da'wah among Yoruba Muslim preachers. Their uncritical adoption has led to doctrinal confusion, the propagation of fabricated Hadīth, and distorted interpretations of the Qur'ān. These narratives have also reinforced superstitious beliefs, misconceptions about the infallibility of prophets, and blasphemous views regarding the Prophet's Companions, thereby weakening the ('Aqīdah) creed of many Yoruba Muslims. This paper examines the implications of Isrā'īliyyāt narrations on the belief system, theology, and religious practices of contemporary Yoruba Muslims. The study employs analytical and historical methods to trace the origin of (Isrā'iliyyāt), and examine its implications among Yoruba Muslims. The paper finds out that the narrations have shaped Yoruba Muslims' theological perceptions and superstitious beliefs like reincarnation (akúdáyà) and stillbirth (àbíkú) have persisted as a result of (Isrā'īliyyāt-influenced preaching. The paper argues that Islam, as a comprehensive and revealed religion, rejects falsehood, fabrication, and superstition, and that Qur'ānic exegesis must be based strictly on authentic sources and sound scholarly principles. The paper recommends that Yoruba Muslim preachers and scholars undergo proper training in Qur'ānic sciences, Hadīth, jurisprudence, and the Arabic language to ensure accurate interpretation. The paper concludes that curbing the spread of (Isrā'īliyyāt) requires renewed scholarly commitment, intellectual discipline, and adherence to authentic Islamic epistemology, so as to preserve the purity of Islamic teachings among Yoruba Muslims.

Keywords: *isrā'iliyyāt; jewish; christian; yoruba; muslim.*

INTRODUCTION

Yoruba Muslims today rely heavily on *Isrā'iliyyāt* for *Daʿwah* (Islamic propagation) and public preaching. Many preachers in Southwestern Nigeria use these narrations at *tafsīr* sessions, *Mawlūd an-Nabī* celebrations, *Fidau* prayers, and *Asalatu* meetings. Yoruba Muslims have taken *Isrā'iliyyāt*-based explanations of Qur'an and prophetic traditions without critical inquiry. As a result of the extensive distribution of such narratives, the community has experienced intellectual

stagnation, doctrinal confusion, and theological misrepresentation. *Isrā'iliyyāt* refers to the incorporation of Judaic and Christian materials into Islamic literature by early converts from the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*). Those converts passed along inherited stories about prophets and ancient peoples, which were later, incorporated into Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and historical texts.[1] Over time, the line between legitimate Islamic knowledge and foreign religious traditions grew blurred, particularly among later exegetes who failed to use the methodological rigor shown by previous scholars.

Isrā'iliyyāt has acquired its own cultural manifestation in Yoruba society. Yoruba Muslims, who originate from a culture rich in oral tradition, mythology, and symbolic storytelling, typically engage in colorful narratives that excite imagination and collective enthusiasm. This cultural propensity has made them amenable to *Isrā'iliyyāt* tales that portray prophets' lives or interpret cosmic occurrences using anthropomorphic imagery. As a result, Islamic revelation has been blended with speculative, sometimes heretical narratives. Furthermore, many preachers lack adequate expertise in the sciences of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth,* and Arabic linguistics and other disciplines required to authenticate religious reports. Some have unintentionally preached incorrect interpretations of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, resulting in widespread misconceptions among their followers.

For example, fabricated or weak narrations are often presented as authentic, while symbolic or metaphorical verses are misinterpreted literally. This situation not only undermines intellectual growth but also weakens the integrity of Islamic belief (*'aqīdah*).

The Qur'ān explicitly warns against transmitting unverified information, stating:

"O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance and afterward become regretful for what you have done."

The above divine injunction underscores the necessity of critical verification in religious discourse. The unrestrained circulation of *Isrā'iliyyāt* among Yoruba Muslims therefore contradicts the Qur'ānic principle of epistemic responsibility and promotes religious error under the guise of spirituality. The implications of this phenomenon are multifaceted and these include: fostering of incorrect conceptions of prophethood, divine justice, and eschatology, discouragement of independent inquiry and reinforcement of dependence on charismatic but untrained preachers, and division of Muslim communities along sectarian and interpretation lines, as different versions of *Isrā'iliyyāt* are accepted or rejected based on personal allegiance rather than scholarly evidence.[2]

[1]Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *At-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, Vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1976), 181–189

[2]Umar Sulaiman Abdullah Al-Ashqar, *Ar-Rusl Wa Ar-Risālāt* (Jordan: Dar Al-Nafāes for Publishing and Distribution, 2012)

This research examines the origins, categories, and implications of *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives among Yoruba Muslims. It seeks to highlight how these tales have affected popular views, pinpoint areas where they differ from real Islamic teachings, and provide strategies for restoring doctrinal purity through good scholarship. The paper examines the historical and cultural roots of *Isrā'iliyyāt* and advocates for methodological rigor when studying Islamic literature.

METODE

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a combined analytical and historical methodological approach to investigate the origins, transmission, and contemporary implications of *Isrā'īliyyāt* among Yoruba Muslims. The historical method is employed to trace the origin, development, and transmission of *Isrā'īliyyāt* from the early Islamic period to their adoption in Yoruba Muslim preaching. This historical reconstruction enables a clearer understanding of how non-Islamic elements became normalized within contemporary Yoruba Islamic discourse. The analytical approach is used to critically evaluate the content, authenticity, and theological implications of *Isrā'īliyyāt* as propagated in Yoruba Muslim preaching. This analytical method provides a rigorous framework for distinguishing authentic Islamic teachings from fabricated or culturally syncretic materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept and Origin of Isrā'iliyyāt

The term *Isrā'iliyyāt* refers to narrations of Judaic or Christian origin that found their way into Islamic scholarly writings, particularly within Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), history (*tārīkh*), and prophetic stories (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*).[3] The word is derived from "Isrā'īl," another name for Prophet Ya'qūb, and collectively refers to the Children of Israel. Literally, *Isrā'iliyyāt* means "the reports or stories of the Israelites." Israelite narrations emerged when early Muslim converts from Judaism and Christianity shared elements of their previous scriptural traditions with Muslim audiences.[4] Notable among such transmitters were Ka'b al-Aḥbār, Wahb ibn Munabbih, and 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām. These converts often explained Qur'ānic verses by drawing upon biblical or post-biblical stories were familiar to them, especially in areas where the Qur'ān mentioned events briefly or alluded to ancient peoples without elaborate details. It is worthy of note that the early scholars approached *Isrā'iliyyāt* with caution and discernment.[5] This was based on its permissibility by the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). He was reported to have said:

[3] Muḥammad Abū Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt wa al-Mawḍū'āt fī Kutub al-Tafsīr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunnah, 1988), 22–27.
[4] Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, Vol. 13 (Riyadh: Dār al-'Āṣimah, 1995), 366.
[5] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Anbiyā', ḥadīth no. 3461

"Convey from me, even if it is one verse, and narrate from the Children of Israel, there is no harm. But whoever lies about me intentionally should take his seat in Hellfire."[6]

It is vividly indicated in the above ḥadīth that Muslims could transmit reports from Israelite only when they did not contradict Islamic revelation.

The infiltration of *Isrā'iliyyāt* necessitated the classical scholars to develop different attitudes towards these narrations. Imām al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H.), in his monumental *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān,* incorporated some *Isrā'īliyyāt* reports, often presenting multiple interpretations and leaving readers to discern between authentic and doubtful accounts. Al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427 A.H.) and al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 A.H.) also included such narrations, though with varying degrees of caution. Conversely, other scholars adopted a stricter stance. However, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 A.H.) and his student Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 A.H.) explicitly warned against the uncritical acceptance of *Isrā'īliyyāt*.[7] While Ibn Kathīr, in the introduction to his *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, categorized *Isrā'īliyyāt* into three types:

1. Reports confirmed by the Qur'ān or Sunnah, which may be accepted;
2. Reports contradicted by the Qur'ān or Sunnah, which must be rejected; and
3. Reports that neither confirm nor contradict Islamic sources, which may be mentioned cautiously without assertion of truth.[8]

This tripartite classification remains the standard scholarly approach to *Isrā'īliyyāt* in traditional Islamic studies.

Scholars Perspectives on Isrā'īliyyāt

The proliferation of unverified religious materials in sermons, media, and informal teaching promoted modern Muslim scholars to continue to revisit the question of *Isrā'īliyyāt*. Scholars such as Muḥammad Abū Shuhbah conducted a systematic study of invented and Judaic narratives in classical Qur'anic interpretations. He also argued that though the aim of early scholars was to enrich Qur'ānic explanation, but their leniency toward *Isrā'īliyyāt* inadvertently led to distortion of Islamic theology.[9] Likewise, Ramzī Naʿnāḥ observed the persistence of *Isrā'īliyyāt* as a major challenge to authentic Qur'ānic interpretation. He further emphasized that there should need for a revival of critical methodology (*manhaj naqdī*) among modern scholars in order to cleanse *tafsīr* literature of foreign interpolations.[10] While Al-Dhahabī' provided a comprehensive historical overview of *Isrā'īliyyāt* in early Quranic exegesis, with a note that the usage of *Isrā'īliyyāt*

[6]Ahmad Najibul Firdaus & Abd. Kholid, "Exploring Israiliyyat in Classical Exegesis: A Comparative Study of Tafsir al-Tabari and al-Tha'labi," *Journal Intellectual Sufism Research (JISR)*, Vol. 7 No. 1 (2024).
[7]Shuhbah, *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt wa al-Mawḍūʿāt fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*
[8]Ramzī Naʿnāḥ, A*l-Isrā'īliyyāt wa Āthāruhā fī Kutub al-Tafsīr*. Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2001
[9]Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī. *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn,* Vol. 1, (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1976)
[10]Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurʾān* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], trans. Adil Salahi (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2003); Manna' al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥith fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʿārif, 2000).

reflected both the curiosity of scholars curiosity and inadequacy of critical filtering of early historiography.[11]

Nevertheless, some of contemporary scholars such as Sayyid Quṭb and Mannaʿ al-Qaṭṭān further elaborated that Islam, as a complete and self-sufficient revelation and it does not requires any foreign narrations or legends for comprehension of its messages. Thus, the use of *Isrā'īliyyāt* in explanation of Quranic verses is seen not only as a theological threat to the purity of Islamic belief but also as a methodological weakness.[12]

Categories of Isrā'iliyyāt

1. **Narrations Confirmed by Islamic Sources**

The *Isrā'iliyyāt* reports that correspond with the Qur'ān and authentic ḥadīth are considered acceptable as supplementary explanations of events already established by revelation. For example, the Qur'ānic account of the Flood of Prophet Nūḥ (Noah) aligns with certain Israelite traditions that emphasize divine punishment for moral corruption. However, such narrations are cited for illustration rather than proof, since the Qur'ān and Sunnah remain the ultimate authorities.

2. **Narrations Contradicted by Islamic Texts**

This category includes reports that directly in contrary with Qur'ānic teachings or sound prophetic traditions. Such reports are strictly rejected because they attack the infallibility of prophets, alter moral truths, or attribute anthropomorphic qualities to Allah. Examples include claims that Prophet Dāwūd committed adultery or that Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon) worshipped idols in his later years.[13] Such stories which are exported from biblical texts, are incompatible with Islamic doctrine and are considered fabrications (*mawḍūʿāt*).

3. **Narrations Neither Confirmed nor Denied**

The report that is neither conflict with nor receive direct support from Islamic sources. Scholars tolerate mentioning them without verification, provided they are presented cautiously and not asserted as truth. According to Ibn Taymiyyah such narrations may serve to enrich storytelling but should not be used as a foundation for belief or law.[14] The Prophet's guidance concerning these reports was: "*Do not affirm them and do not deny them*."

The above classifications serve as foundations upon which contemporary Muslim scholars should lay their critical engagement with historical or scriptural materials of non-Islamic origin.

[11] al-Dhahabī. *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*
[12]Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*.
[13]*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, ḥadīth no. 4485
[14]Muhammad Sani Umar, "Islamic Knowledge and the Role of the Alfas in Yoruba Land", in *The Transmission of Islamic Knowledge in Africa*, ed. Scott Reese, Brill, 2004.

Transmission of Isrā'iliyyāt into Yoruba Muslim Discourse

Isrā'iliyyāt entered Yoruba Muslims' religious discourse through Arabic commentaries of Islamic literature translated into Yoruba and oral transmission during public preaching. It should be noted that many propagators relied heavily on traditional *tafsīr* works such as *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* without the ability to distinguish between verified and fabricated narrations. Their adoption of embellished biblical-like tales was as a result of lack of formal training in Qur'ānic sciences and the cultural preference for storytelling.[15] Invariably, what was initially meant as illustrative material has, eventually evolved into a primary source of religious knowledge among the masses. Certain *Isrā'iliyyāt* stories have been held as divine truth by many Yoruba Muslims because of lack of knowledge of their dubious origins. It should be stated that, it has led to widespread misinterpretation of Qur'ānic events and has subtly influenced theological beliefs in ways inconsistent with authentic Islamic teachings.

Implications of Isrā'iliyyāt on Yoruba Muslims

1. **Theological Implications of *Isrā'iliyyāt* on Yoruba Muslims**

The interpolation of *Isrā'iliyyāt* narratives into Yoruba Muslim preaching and scholarship has had significant theological implications. These narrations, though originally introduced as illustrative materials, have over time shaped popular belief systems and religious perceptions among the Yoruba Muslim community. The result of theological implications can be examined as follows:

2. **Distortion of Islamic Belief (*ʿAqīdah*)**

Distortion of Islamic Belief (*ʿAqīdah*) is the first major theological implication of *Isrā'iliyyāt* on Yoruba Muslims. Many *Isrā'iliyyāt* narrations describe Allah in anthropomorphic terms, with depiction of Him as "resting," "repenting," or "regretting" actions. These expressions are borrowed from the Bible and in conflict with Qur'ānic teachings that affirm Allah's transcendence beyond human qualities. Allah says in Qur'ān 42:11 that read thus:

"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."

It is worth noting that some Yoruba Muslims have accepted these narratives as a result of oral dissemination, causing significant theological difficulties. Some preachers use *Isrā'iliyyāt* stories to explain divine justice, creation, or angelic deeds, despite the fact that they may violate *tawḥīd al-asmāʾ wa-ṣ-ṣifāt* (the oneness of Allah's names and characteristics). The introduction of *Isrā'iliyyāt* has humanized prophets, portraying them as morally imperfect rather than divinely guided messengers. Yoruba religious storytelling frequently includes stories about Prophet Dāwūd committing adultery or Prophet Lūṭ (Lot) engaging in incest, which are based on biblical sources. Narrations that undercut prophetic infallibility (*ʿiṣmah*) contradict the Islamic concept of moral purity among prophets.

3. Misinterpretation of Qur'ānic Themes

Misinterpretation of Qur'ānic themes might result from uncritical reliance on *Isrā'iliyyāt*. Some Yoruba preachers interpret Qur'anic stories via a biblical perspective, rather than real *tafsīr* traditions. For example, discourses on the account of Ādam may include unnecessary details like as the belief that *Shaytan* convinced Ḥawwāʾ, who subsequently seduced Adam. This idea is not found in the Qur'ān but is founded in Genesis myths. Prophet Yūsuf serves as another example. Popular Yoruba sermons often embellish the Qur'ānic account with non-Islamic aspects like Zulaikha's envy or physical attractiveness, which are not found in authentic Islamic sources.[16] These narrative additions may appear innocuous, but they eventually alter theological imagination and erode the believer's allegiance to real revelation.

In Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), preachers may emphasis oral tales over appropriate textual interpretation, resulting in distortions. The focus switches from *tafsīr bi al-maʾthūr* (interpretation based on transmitted information) to *tafsīr bi ar-raʾy* (interpretation by opinion), often lacking scholarly qualification. Consequently, the message of the Qur'ān is hidden by mythological and dramatic storytelling that favors entertainment over enlightenment. It is worthy of note that some orientalists and Muslim storytellers have presented the Prophet Muhammad's marriage to Zaynab as a contentious deed motivated by passion. According to authentic *tafsīr*, this union was divinely ordered to break a pre-Islamic taboo against marrying divorced women of adopted sons. This event affirmed the idea of religious equality and signaled the end of ignorance-based adoption legislation.[17]

It should be noted that Yoruba society's indigenous beliefs, including Sango, Ògún, and Egungun worship, as well as metaphysical ideas like Àbíkú (spirit child) and Akúdàayà (reincarnation), have historically affected how religion is viewed culturally. These features have subtly re-emerged in Muslim discourse, typically through oral preaching and naive usage of classical tafsīr literature. When such stories from folklore or Judaism are presented as part of Qur'anic exegesis, a merger of myth and revelation occurs, compromising doctrinal clarity.[18]

This syncretic trend is especially seen in the spread of reincarnation-like ideas by preachers influenced by cultural mysticism and pseudo-Sufi ideology. Islam rejects the concept of soul transmigration and instead emphasizes the Ākhirah (Hereafter), corporeal resurrection, and divine judgment as the only post-death realities (Q. 99:6-8). Yoruba Muslims' unthinking adoption of exaggerated narratives not only demonstrates a lack of formal instruction in Qur'anic sciences, but also

[16]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1987), 445.
[17]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Taʾwīl al-Qurʾān*, Vol. 12 (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1961), 219–222.
[18]Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Abu Shuhbah, " Isrāiliyyāt Wa Al-Maodūāt Fi Kutub At-Tafsīr", Cairo: Sunnah Library, Salafi House for Publishing, 4th Edition, 1408 A.H

poses a theological danger to the integrity of ᶜ*Aqīdah* (Islamic faith), especially when storytelling is preferred over textual rigor.[19]

4. **Stagnation of Intellectual Inquiry**

Isrā'iliyyāt's popularity among Yoruba Muslims has led to a fall in critical research and theological thought. Many preachers rely largely on traditional comments, not discriminating between true and invented narratives. This dependence has resulted in intellectual inertia, in which inherited interpretations are repeated uncritically from generation to generation. As a result, young Yoruba Muslims frequently regard religious knowledge as fixed and unquestionable, rather than as a dynamic pursuit grounded in facts and logic. This approach discourages inquiry into primary Islamic texts, such as the Qur'an and Sunnah, and limits participation with contemporary scholarship.[20]

Isrā'iliyyāt's influence reinforces fatalistic and superstitious views. Some preachers, for example, use Israelite stories of divine wrath to explain local misfortunes, perpetuating the notion that disasters are punishments rather than opportunities for spiritual transformation. The Qur'ānic message emphasizes ethical self-improvement and community responsibility, yet this worldview undermines it. The widespread usage of *Isrā'iliyyāt* in Yoruba Muslim discourse confuses theological understanding and hinders intellectual and spiritual regeneration within the community.[21]

Socio-Religious Implications of *Isrā'iliyyāt* on Yoruba Muslims

Isrā'iliyyāt's impact on Yoruba Muslims has led to significant socio-religious ramifications, in addition to its doctrinal errors. These include fragmenting communal understanding, distorting *daᶜwah* (propagation) tactics, and misrepresenting Islamic morality and values in society. The durability of these effects demonstrates how unsubstantiated narratives can influence not only individual beliefs but also group religious behavior.

1. **Fragmentation of Religious Understanding**

Isrā'iliyyāt has a significant societal impact, including the fragmentation of Islamic knowledge among Yoruba Muslims. Preachers sometimes rely on disparate, sometimes contradicting narrative traditions, resulting in the formation of several interpretive camps within the society. Each preacher promotes his own version of the story as legitimate, causing doctrinal confusion and discord among believers.

This division is exacerbated by the lack of clear norms for religious discourse and interpretation in many local Islamic gatherings. In some circumstances, audiences develop emotional attachments to specific speakers or sects rather than the message of Islam itself. As a result, differences about the veracity of particular

[19]Jimoh, L. "Reincarnation: Re-Appraising the Belief of Yoruba Muslims within the Context of Islamic Orthodoxy." *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (2013).
[20]Jimoh, "Reincarnation: Re-Appraising the Belief of Yoruba Muslims within the Context.
[21]M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qurʾan: Themes and Style* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 144–146.

stories have led to mistrust, rivalry, and even verbal clashes within Yoruba Muslim organizations.[22] The fragmentation also has an impact on younger generations, who are exposed to opposing viewpoints via social media, radio, and television. Young Muslims often fail to discern between *Isrā'iliyyāt* and real Islamic teachings, leading to a loss of religious identity and ambiguity regarding doctrinal truth.

2. **Distortion of *Daʿwah* Methods**

Misconceptions about *daʾwah* methods have significant socio-religious implications. Many Yoruba preachers, driven by the need to reach a broad audience, turn to dramatic storytelling rather than true education. The employment of *Isrā'iliyyāt* in sermons enhances drama and emotional engagement, but may compromise doctrinal truth. Such methods emphasize rhetorical appeal over textual accuracy. Instead of serving as a guide, the preacher becomes an entertainer. Audiences may become emotionally attached to overblown stories, but remain unaware of the genuine meanings of Qur'ānic verses.

Isrā'iliyyāt-based sermons have been used to defend superstitious beliefs, fatalistic attitudes, and the view that tragedies are punishment for hidden sins.[23] This has evolved to fear-driven religiosity rather than a faith founded on understanding and hope (*rajaʾ*). Authentic *daʿwah*, which should promote introspection, compassion, and moral reform, is sometimes substituted by unthinking repetition of fictional tales that provide little spiritual growth. Furthermore, *Isrā'iliyyāt*-inspired preaching frequently overlooks societal issues. Instead of addressing critical modern challenges such as education, poverty, family ethics, and youth reform, some preachers emphasize on historical prophetic legends and miraculous happenings that are unrelated to current concerns.[24] The outcome is a *daʾwah* that is emotionally engaging but intellectually stale.

3. **Misrepresentation of Islamic Morality and Social Values**

The pervasive use of *Isrā'iliyyāt* has skewed Islamic moral standards in Yoruba Muslim society. Stories that portray prophets as morally defective persons undermine the community's image of Islam's ethical purity. When prophets are accused of committing serious faults, regular followers may feel less driven to strive for moral greatness. Some *Isrā'iliyyāt* legends prioritize revenge, divine anger, and tribal favoritism over the Qur'ānic values of mercy, justice, and universal brotherhood. Misrepresentation has led to exclusivist views among certain Yoruba Muslims, who identify their religious identity based on ancestral myths rather than Qur'an ethics.[25] Moral stories from *Isrā'iliyyāt* might perpetuate patriarchal prejudices and superstitions. Exaggerated blame on Eve for Adam's fall has led to

[22]M. A. Abdu-Raheem, "The Role of Yoruba Muslim Preachers in Shaping Islamic Thought," *Journal of Islamic Studies in Africa* 12, no. 2 (2019): 45–47
[23]Abdu-Raheem, "The Role of Yoruba Muslim Preachers in Shaping Islamic Thought
[24]A. A. Aluko, *Religious Communication and Public Perception among Yoruba Muslims* (Ilorin: Al-Hikmah University Press, 2020), 66.
[25]Abubakar Abdulrahman, *Isrā'iliyyāt: A Source of Misguidance in Islamic Preaching* (Lagos: Islamic Heritage Centre, 2018), 55–57

unfavorable opinions about women's moral responsibility in some Yoruba Muslim communities.[26] The Qur'ān (7:22) clearly states that Adam and Eve shared responsibility for their actions: "*Then they both ate from it, and their private parts became apparent to them.*" *Isrā'iliyyāt's* naïve embrace of such narratives has transformed social perceptions toward gender, morality, and divine justice within Yoruba Muslim culture.

Educational and Intellectual Implications of Isrā'iliyyāt on Yoruba Muslims

The introduction of *Isrā'iliyyāt* into Yoruba Muslim study has had significant pedagogical and intellectual impact. These impacts can be seen in the organization of Islamic learning, the quality of Qur'anic interpretation, and the intellectual attitudes of both instructors and students in the community. *Isrā'iliyyāt* was originally established to improve comprehension of scripture stories, but it has inadvertently contributed to academic stagnation, poor religious literacy, and the erosion of critical reasoning in Islamic education.

1. **Weakness in Qur'anic Education and *Tafsīr* Studies.**

Isrā'iliyyāt has led to a deficiency in Qur'ānic instruction, which has significant educational implications. Yoruba Muslim schools and study circles often use traditional comments that utilize Israelite narrations without critical scrutiny. Teachers frequently distribute these information verbatim, leaving students unable to distinguish between legitimate Islamic sources and non-Islamic interpolations. *Tafsīr* becomes a storytelling process rather than an intellectual exercise based on *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān* (Qur'anic sciences). Students memorize narrations without considering their authenticity or methodological basis. Consequently, the objectives of Qur'ānic education, developing comprehension, reasoning, and moral application are undercut.

This style of rote learning develops intellectual dependence on out-of-date materials. Many students and preachers rely solely on inherited texts that combine authentic exegesis with *Isrā'iliyyāt*, rather than developing the ability to study original sources. As a result, a generation of religious intellectuals perpetuates errors rather than correct them.[27]

2. **Decline of Critical Scholarship**

Another key intellectual effect is the reduction in critical and analytical scholarship among Yoruba Muslim intellectuals. Historically, Islam promoted inquiry (*ijtihād*), verification (*taḥqīq*), and scholarly discourse. Uncritical acceptance of *Isrā'iliyyāt* has led to blind imitation (*taqlīd*), rather than research. Many researchers and preachers cite experts without investigating the sources or veracity of their accounts. This has resulted in the dominance of descriptive rather than analytical research, in which the goal of writing or preaching is to repeat inherited

[26]A. A. Aluko, *Religious Communication and Public Perception among Yoruba Muslims* (Ilorin: Al-Hikmah University Press, 2020), 66.
[27]M. M. Ali, *The Religion of Islam* (Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 2010), 422–423.

interpretations rather than re-evaluate them in light of current circumstances. The lack of methodological training in *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* (critique of hadith) and *ʿulūm al-tafsīr* (exegesis) exacerbates the issue. As a result, falsified and inadequate reports continue to surface in sermons, classroom instruction, and even published works.[28]

3. **Influence on Religious Literacy and Pedagogical Practice**

The spread of *Isrā'iliyyāt* has led to lower religious literacy among Muslim communities. Yoruba Muslims typically view *Isrā'iliyyāt* legends as historical facts, relying on sermons and local study circles for their religious education. Listeners may struggle to distinguish between Qur'ānic revelation, prophetic traditions, and foreign interpolations if preachers do not define the validity or source of such accounts. In educational settings, this has resulted in pedagogical confusion. Qur'anic teachings that aim to enhance comprehension and contemplation sometimes become moralized narrative sessions. Teachers prioritize dramatic events, such as miraculous births, cosmic punishments, or speculative prophesies, over moral and legal principles from the Qur'an.[29]

The incorporation of *Isrā'iliyyāt* into instructional materials has hindered the utilization of contemporary research methods and comparative studies. Rather than requiring students to critically evaluate sources, many institutions have kept traditional curricula untouched for decades. This disconnect from academic renewal has stifled the intellectual development of Islamic studies in Yoruba educational institutions.

4. **Hindrance to Modern Islamic Scholarship**

The Yoruba Muslim scholarly community is at risk of intellectual isolation due to its over-reliance on *Isrā'iliyyāt*-infused books, despite global engagement with modern sciences, social reforms, and multidisciplinary research. While other regions produce contextual *tafsīr* to address political, economic, and ethical concerns, most of the local research stays confined to inherited tales. This intellectual deficit precludes Yoruba Muslim institutions from making important contributions to global Islamic discourse. It also diminishes their usefulness in tackling challenges like teenage radicalization, moral decay, and interfaith understanding. Scholars who fail to remove educational elements from *Isrā'iliyyāt* perpetuate a religious education system that lacks academic rigor despite good intentions.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the theological, socio-religious, and educational effects of *Isrā'iliyyāt*, which incorporates biblical and Judaic aspects into Islamic exegesis, on Yoruba Muslims. Narrations used by preachers to emphasize sermons have altered true Qur'an interpretations, weakening the intellectual underpinning of Islamic discourse. The research divided *Isrā'iliyyāt* into three categories: those

[28]Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1987), 12–15
[29]Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *At-Tafsīr wa al-Mufassirūn*, Vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1976), 189–191

affirmed by Islamic sources, those contradicted by Islamic texts, and those neither confirmed nor denied. While certain narrations coincide with Qur'ānic facts, many others mislead and generate confusion, compromising theological purity and fostering uncritical acceptance of folklore among Yoruba Muslims.

Theologically, the growth of *Isrā'iliyyāt* weakens the purity of revelation by combining divine truth with speculative narratives that contradict the principles of *tawḥīd*. Socio-religious tensions between traditional and modern-educated Muslim communities have weakened unity and credibility of *daʿwah* in the current period. The use of unauthenticated narrations hampers independent reasoning and verification, resulting in intellectual stagnation and reliance on hearsay instead of rigorous scholarship. This situation has far-reaching repercussions for religious education, since both professors and students increasingly rely on inherited resources that lack academic rigour or theological truth.

To address these issues, the paper suggests practical solutions for restoring authenticity, logic, and intellectual energy to Yoruba Muslim academia. The reorientation of *Daʿwah* technique involves organized instruction in Qur'ānic sciences, Hadīth authentication, and *tafsīr* principles, as well as the construction of standardized preaching guidelines stressing evidence-based sermons. It also suggests curriculum changes in Islamic educational institutions to eliminate untrustworthy narrations and incorporate modules on source criticism, critical thinking, and comparative religion. The revival of a research culture, the promotion of religious literacy among lay Muslims, and institutional collaboration among Islamic organizations such as MSSN, FOMWAN, and the League of Imams and Alfas are all critical to preserving doctrinal purity and ensuring consistent standards in teaching and preaching..

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