

ART AND RITES OF PASSAGE AMONGST MUSLIMS IN

ASAWASE

By

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(BA Integrated Rural Art and Industry)

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN AFRICAN ART AND CULTURE

Faculty of Art

College of Art and Built Environment

June, 2015

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of Master of Philosophy in African Art and Culture degree and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains neither material previously published by another person, nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My special thanks go to Almighty Allah who gave me life, strength, knowledge and wisdom for the successful completion of this thesis. Secondly, this study has been supported in diverse ways over a long period of time by mentors, colleagues and lecturers. I therefore express my sincere gratitude to my principal supervisor, Dr. Eric Appau Asante whose objective criticisms and good directions have made the study a possibility.

I am also indebted to my second supervisor, Dr. (Mrs.) Nana Ama Pokuaa Arthur, for her unflinching assistance. I am also grateful to the following Muslim Scholars:

Sheikh Nuhu Abubakari Saiqick, Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Nazir, Sheikh Amin Mohammed Usman, Sheikh Haruna Nkansah and Sheikh Ibrahim Yussif for their encouragement, assistance, interest, commitment and dedication to this work by providing me with vital information about Islamic cultural practice.

I cannot bring this acknowledgement to an end without mentioning the Muslim brothers and sisters of Asawase, especially Hajia Hawa, who permitted the researcher to use her family member as a case study during the circumcision rite. This study could not have come into fruition without the assistance of some individuals who whole-heartedly offered me useful materials, suggestions and moral support. They include Sheikh Ibrahim Yussif and Miss Rita Yeboah who spent a lot of time reading through the thesis and offered valuable criticisms and suggestions for improvement.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate arts and rites of passage amongst Muslims in Asawase. In pursuing this goal, the study focused on describing the various rites of passage of the Muslims in the Asawase community, identifying and writing about the various art forms which are associated with the rites. The study obtained data from 120 respondents from a targeted population of 200 members of Asawase community through the use of interviews and observation. The purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting respondents for the study. The results indicated that, Muslims in the Asawase community use lots of arts in their rites of passages. The study revealed some verbal arts such as Adhan, Taweez and some aspects of performing arts such as rubbing a baby's tongue with honey, hair shaving, and Murza making; which are all important in their rites of passage. Among the challenges found in performing both the birth and marriage rites were financial burden and the issue of tribalism. To improve the situation in the birth and marriage rites, the researcher recommends that family heads and Islamic authorities must put in place measures that will deter families from going beyond certain reasonable expenditure levels and also follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet and the Qur'an. At the same time, proper education on some of these rites of passage among Muslims and how they are performed must be given to the Muslims in the communities in order to reduce the illiteracy and misconceptions about the teaching of Islamic birth and marriage rites.

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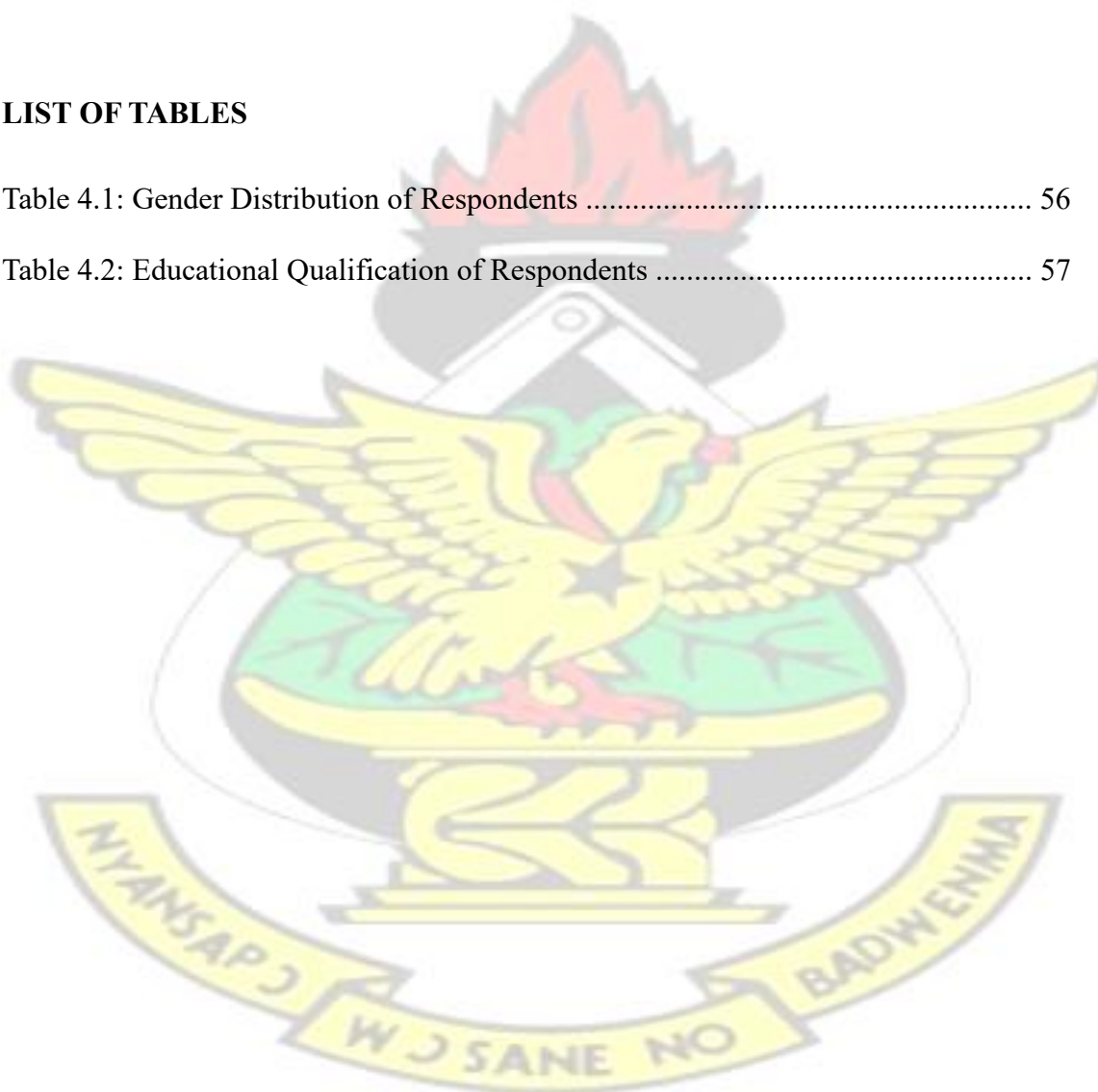
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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

The chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, delimitation, definition of terms, importance of the study and organization of the rest of the text.

1.1 Background to the Study

According to Akaa and Annger (1998), the word, Art, is derived from the Latin word „ars“, meaning „skill“, and it embraces all the creative disciplines such as literature, poetry, drama, music, dance and the visual art. He further defines art as “the beautiful expression of one’s creative imagination, feelings or thought in visual forms, so that it can be seen, felt, understood and appreciated Akaa (1991). Art can both be a process and a product. Art as a process involves the manipulation of a material to produce an end result which becomes the product. Art provides one the opportunity of conveying thoughts, opinions and moods whiles creating new things or solving artistic problems in an individual way (Wangboje, 1982).

According to Obiadi (1985), religion can be explained as a belief in God or gods. It comprises the doctrines and the processes of worshipping the gods or God. Rites of passage as part of religion of most African cultures welds people together and create love and unity among them.

The Rites of passage are the transitional rites performed to “remake” an individual, indicating the passage from one phase or stage in life to another and marking turning points in his or her life. In the cycle of life, there are among others the stages of birth, puberty, marriage, death and regeneration. These life stages represent important turning

points which are considered as “transition or crossing into a new stage of life” (Gennep, 1977).

Rites of passage as a tradition have definite religious elements. It is a way of expressing the aspirations of a community. Through them, societies hand on cultural values and opinions to the new generation for transmission to posterity. It is in and through this ritual action that the being of the community comes to manifest (Ekechukwu, 1988).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Arnold Van Gennep was the first scholar to use the term „rites of passage”. He identifies these transitional periods in the individual’s life as “crisis periods” as the individual goes through difficult changes that needs serious attention. He was cited by Opoku (1978) to have said that, at each of these “crisis periods”, there is always a social, physiological and spiritual change in the individual’s life. These changes are accompanied by social and religious rituals, which are both to demonstrate that the transition is symbolically to ensure that no breaks occur between the various stages.

According to Opoku (1978), Gennep points out that all these crisis periods are characterized by three important sequential rituals: separation, transition and reintegration.

In his research, Mbiti (1969) remarked that religion precedes a man before he is turned out into the world, accompanies him throughout the phases of his liveliness and follows him even after his physical release from the Earth. It is this religious engulfment of life in Africa that best explains the origin, meaning and end of these rites of passage.

It is clear that these passages of life are welcomed by Africans with religious ceremonies and rites. This is also an indication that the rites have deep religious implications. It

should, however, be pointed out that such religious rites accompanying these transitional periods vary from one ethnic group to another. “A turning point in the life of people”, according to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979:172),

“may not possess the same level of spiritual importance in the life of other masses”. Rites of passage as a life cycle are passages which every human being goes through. Various religions have assigned different rites to commemorate the transition and these employ a large spate of artistry. The rituals have been well researched into by many learners in various religions, but much is not known of Islamic rites of passage especially within the Ghanaian setting.

In the light of the aforementioned, this research documents the various rites of passage and the art forms that are associated with Islamic rites with Asawase as a focus.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To describe birth and marriage rites observed by the Muslim Community in Asawase.
- To identify and document the significance of the various art forms which are associated with birth and marriage rites.

1.4 Research Questions

- How do the Muslims at Asawase observe their birth and marriage rites?
- How significant are the art forms associated with birth and marriage rites?

1.5 Delimitation

This study covered the birth and marriage rites as well as the art forms that are used in celebrating them among Muslims. The art forms discussed were visual, performing and verbal art.

Geographically, the study covered the Asawase community in the Kumasi Metropolis.

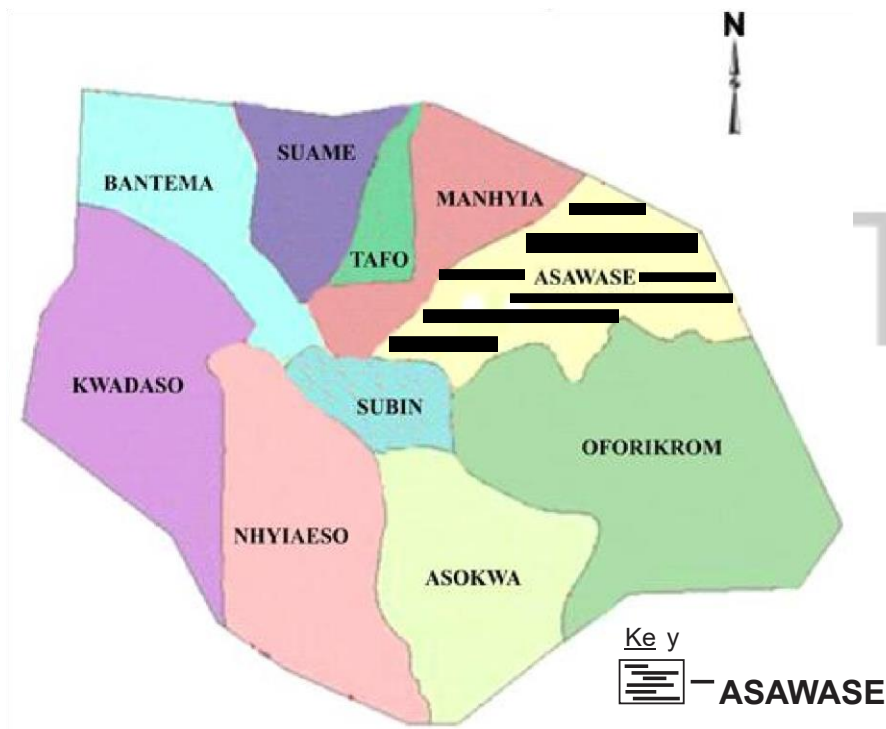


Figure 1.1: Map of the study Area - Asawase

1.6 Definition of Terms

- **Adhan:** The call to sallat (prayer) pronounced loudly to indicate that the time for praying is due.
- **Abuyan Amariya:** the bride's friends.
- **Aqiqah:** It is the sacrifice of one or two sheep on the occasion of birth of a birth as a token of gratitude to Allah.
- **Documentation:** This is an act or process of documents used to prove something or make something official.
- **Five Pillars:** The five pillars of Islam indicates its main values and practices. These are *kalimatul shahadah*, *Sallah*, *Zakat*, *Ramadan (fasting)* and *Hajj*.

- **Hadith:** The sayings, deeds and approvals accurately narrated from the Prophet (SAW) through verifiable chains of narrators.
- **Imam:** The person who leads others in the Salât (prayer) or the Muslim caliph (or ruler).
- **Iqaamat:** It is the wording of Adhan is reduced so that the wording that is repeated twice in the Adhan is said once in iqaamah, except the last phrase of Allahu Akbar, and the prayer is offered immediately after the iqaamah.
- **Islam:** Is a religion which focuses on human submission to the will of Allah (God) for peace and salvation.
- **Jahiliya:** Ignorance belonging to the period before the advent of the Prophet (SAW).
- **Le'le':** It is a vegetable powder mix with water and rub over the bride's body.
- **Mahr:** Bridal money given to the wife by the husband at the time of marriage.
- **Murza or Mosawa:** It is the traditional rubbing of *le'le'* on the bride's body.
- **Muslim:** A person who practices Islam and is submissive to Allah following the Prophet Mohammed's example and teachings.
- **Nikah:** Is a contract between man and woman who have decided to come together as husband and wife with the aim of producing children and taking responsibility of them.
- **Passage:** It is the process of time a person passes through.

- **Rites:** A ceremony performed by a particular group of people, often for religious reasons.
- **Ritual:** A series of actions that are always performed the same way from generation to generation, especially as part of a religious ceremony.
- **Sunnah:** The legal way or ways, order, acts of worship and statements of the Prophet (SAW) that have become models to be followed by Muslims in life.
- **Tahnik:** It is the Islamic customary process of chewing a piece of date and putting a part of its juice in the baby's mouth.
- **Taweez:** It is prayers that are said for a newborn to seek protection for the child.
- **Walimah:** The marriage feast.

1.7 Abbreviation

- **FGM:** Female Genital Mutilation.
- **FGC:** Female Genital Cutting.
- **HIV:** Human Immune Virus.
- **PBUH:** Peace Be Upon Him.
- **SAW:** Sallalah Alaihu Wasallam (God's blessing and peace be on him)

1.8 Importance of the Study

This study brings to light the cultural beauty of Islamic rites of passage which embodies various art forms that some Muslims themselves are not aware of.

It creates awareness of the art forms and their significance in the birth and marriage rites in the Muslim community which as a result reduce the wrong usage of these art forms by brides, families and the community at large.

It also serves as reference material for art historians, anthropologists, art critics, sociologists etc. The study can assist art historians who might research into Islamic art and rites of passage.

1.9 Organization of the Rest of the Text

The study consists of five chapters. The first chapter comprises of the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study and the organization of the study.

Chapter Two deals with review of related literature on concepts and theories relevant to the study. The sub topics that are reviewed include; Art and Religion, Theories in Art and Religion, Rites of passage in Africa, Rites of passage in Ghana, The life cycle of man in the perspective of Islam and Art and Islamic practices.

In Chapter Three, the methodology adopted to conduct the study is discussed. This chapter deals with the research design, instruments and data collection tools. Chapter Four deals with data presentation, discussions and analysis.

Chapter Five gives summary of findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter is concerned with reviewing related literature on art and rites of passage amongst Muslims. It provides data about aspects of previous works undertaken by other researchers that relate to this study. The sub-topics reviewed include, Art and Religion, Theories in Art and Religion, Rites of passage in Africa, Rites of passage in Ghana, the life cycle of man in the perspective of Islam and Art and Islamic practice.

2.1 Art and Religion

Art has been part of human existence since creation. According to Bowden (2010), art is a human spirit embedded skillfully in formal expression of man's life. The Arts can never be removed or separated from the experiences of daily life. Shusterman (2008) asserts that art emerged in ancient times from myth, magic, and religion, and it has long sustained its compelling power through its sacred appearance. Artworks have been used for worshipping in shrines, mosques and churches and have influenced man's culture.

According to Benedict (2013), it seems that a complete definition of religion has not been possible because it is so complex and varied in nature. The best people have done has been to recognize its traits and even these emphasizes have been made by different scholars. Religion was first defined by Taylor (1871) as the belief in supernatural beings. Durkheim (1915) also defined religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things. The etymology of the term religion which Latin is "religare" highlights the role of gathering, tying, and binding together and has long been recognized by sociologists as providing the social means of unity in traditional societies (Shusterman, 2008). Benedict (2013), Bowden (2010) expresses that religion is a socially constructed or an institutionalized structure of belief and practice whose

most fundamental assumptions are regarded as sacred and therefore beyond scrutiny or question. The word religion can be defined as belief in the existence of supernatural ruling powers, the creator and controller of the universe who has given to man a spiritual nature, which continues to exist after the death of the body (Azeez, 2010). Religion involves groups and organizations. It addresses the main issue yet it cannot be defined with precision.

Art performs different functions at funerals, initiations and festivals in different parts of Africa. Whatever form (drawing, paintings, carvings and casting) a work of art takes in Africa, its religious function covers mainly rituals, ancestral worship, worship of deities and rites of passage. Art and religion sometimes exhibit similar features and meanings, their attribute at times do overlap thus the relationship between art and religion could be regarded as the same (Azeez, 2010).

Most art created during the middle ages and into the Byzantine period reflected purely religious themes, the portrayal of which was often not naturalistic. Human figures were flat and long, exhibiting no sense of weight, and settings were super-natural with golden backgrounds and halos on religious figures. Beginning in the late middle ages with Giotto and being perfected as the Renaissance progressed, paintings and sculpture were marked by classical influence, called humanism. Themes, especially of religious subjects became increasingly realistic and naturalistic (Brown, n.d). As was seen by the large number of indulgences being bought from the Catholic Church and of course by the numerous religious works created during the Renaissance, religion became increasingly important even compared to the religiously dominated society of the Middle Ages and the Byzantine era. More people were now becoming educated and taking an active stance on and concern for their personal salvation through faith.

In the Renaissance, pagan classical texts were considered for the purpose of illustrating the importance of education and moral philosophy even though these works were not based on Christian ideas. The church could no longer take advantage of widespread ignorance as much as it had before because more people were becoming educated. The Reformation further allowed and inspired the common people of Europe to question and strengthen their inner spiritual faith. In October 1517, the professor and former monk Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses about the abuses of the Catholic Church; his criticisms, especially of the selling of indulgences, quickly sparked the Protestant Reformation. Various Protestant groups, such as Luther's followers and the Anabaptists, began to focus, very true to humanist values, on an inward spirituality and a personal interpretation of faith as they sought to reform or to break away from the Roman Catholic Church.

Art was greatly affected and had an effect on this Reformation, as evidenced by the heavy symbolism and opinion in paintings by artists like Albrecht Durer. Albrecht Durer, an early supporter of Martin Luther, argued that salvation came through grace and faith alone based on the direct teachings of the Bible; Durer opposed the buying of indulgences as the means to clear one's sins through the church establishment.

2.2 Rites of Passage in Africa

According to Golomski (2012) rites of passage are coordinated ritual events marking significant junctures and transitions across the social lives of individuals and groups. The rhetoric, symbolism and actions involved in rites of passage are meant to effect changes in the social status of people undergoing the rites. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) also explains that anthropologist Arnold van Gennep coined the term rite of passage in his seminal study of 1909 and 1960 as patterns of behaviour and customs

that various cultures engaged in during times of major life transitions. Genep (1960) described rites of passage as community-created and community-directed experiences that transmit cultural values and knowledge to an individual.

The rite of passage process is not only to guide individual's transition to a new status, but equally important, it creates public events that celebrate the transition and reaffirms these community values, which inform and guide expectations for behaviours essential for the survival of community values (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). The historical record shows that rites of passage have been present in various manifestations in all cultures for thousands of years. This can suggest the strong "evolutionary validity" of these processes, which have remained an important part of community and cultural health promotion during the major transitions of birth, marriage and death (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010).

"A modern day rite of passage is achieved when parents and the community create and participate in experiences which are perceived to be transformative by the youth and, in fact, offer them an increased status within the community and facilitate their healthy transition through adolescence" (Blumenkrantz, 1996, p. 21). According to Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010), Genep (1909 and 1960) identified three common features in the various phenomena of rites of passage as separation, transition (liminality) and incorporation. Separation is referred to as a change from the normal routine of daily life.

Historically, in the case of the youth, rites of passage was often a natural marker, that is the onset of puberty. Within the family and community, this was interpreted as a significant signal that tells a child, "From this point, you must be on a journey to adulthood". "You must leave this place of childhood behind, separate from childish

things and move into adulthood for the health and benefit of yourself, your family and community”. During this time of transition there will be a great deal of uncertainty and mystery that causes much anxiety. It is a place of liminality where social status becomes lost or unclear while the initiate undergoes precise training in values and ethics that inform and guide behaviour. There are periods of extreme stress or “ordeals” that help to compel the child to experience the full range of human emotions and potentials. From these compelling experiences, embodied in a community sanctioned rite of passage, the child grows and matures and moves into the third phase which is incorporation. It is at this point that the initiates incorporate these lessons into their lives. They serve to guide and inform them of the community’s expectations for living well and affirm them as emerging adults ready to be integrated into the healthy functioning of a community (Blumenkrantz and Goldstein, 2010).

Ampim (2003) and Golomski (2012) discuss the five major African initiation rites which are fundamental to human growth and development. He purports that these rites were originally established by African ancestors while they were living in order to link the individual to the community and the community to the broader and more potent spiritual world. Initiation rites are natural and necessary part of a community. The five rites are birth, adulthood, marriage, eldership, and ancestorship. These rites are critical to individual and community development, and it should not be taken for granted that people automatically grow and develop into responsible, communityoriented adults. The details of the rites vary among the different societies in Africa. These rites, nevertheless, are basic components of the society as they help guide an individual from one stage into the next stage of life and development, that is, from birth to death and beyond (Ampim, 2003).

A rite is a fundamental act or set of rituals performed according to prescribed social rules and customs. Each of these rites is a key component that forms part of the traditional African culture. Some societies have more elaborate and extensive ceremonies than others, but these five themes are the thread that links families and villages in traditional indigenous Ghana and provide the necessary structure for individual growth and development. These major rites discussed by Ampim (2003) and Golomski (2012) are discussed below:

2.2.1 Birth Rite

The rite of birth is the first major African initiation rites and it involves initiating the infant into the world through a ritual called naming ceremony. Nearly all African cultures hold that the infant has come from the spirit world with important information and that he/she is bringing unique talents and gifts to offer to the community. The infant, in fact, is believed to have been commissioned to come to the world and accomplish a particular mission or project, and often has a great message to deliver (Ampim, 2003). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the family and community to discover the infant's unique mission through consultations with a diviner and to have rituals and a birth chart done. This would enable the community and family guide the new member through his/her life path as far as the mission is concerned. The infant's name is given after the determination of the mission and it is a reflection of the infant's personality or the life mission itself. In completing this rite, the elders give thanks to ancestral lineages, local deities or God for influencing reproductive success (Ampim, 2003 & Golomski, 2012).

2.2.2 Adulthood Rite

The rite of adulthood is the second major initiation rite and nowadays it is the most popular among the set of rites. Most people today assume that “rites of passage” only refers to initiation into adulthood, and they are often not aware that adulthood rites are also forms part of rites within a larger system. Adulthood rites are usually done at the onset of puberty age between 12-13 years in many cultures and they are to ensure the shaping of productive, community-oriented responsible adults. There is nothing automatic about youth being productive members of society, nor is there anything particularly difficult about transitioning from a child to an adult. This transition to adulthood is exceedingly difficult in Western societies because there are no systems of adulthood rites to systematically guide and direct the young person through this important stage in his or her life cycle. Golomski (2012) highlighted that in Western culture, adulthood is seen as a status achieved at the age of 18 and 21, or simply when the person graduates from high school. Unfortunately, in most cases, there is no fundamental guidance or transformation from child to an adult that is required or expected. This “leave it for chance” approach to adulthood development is the root of most teenage and youth “adult” confusion, chaos, and uncertainty. When the youth reach a certain age, somehow they are expected to magically transform into an “adult”, even though they often receive very little guidance (Golomski, 2012). On the other hand, African societies systematically initiate boys and girls. They often take the young initiates out of the community, and away from the concerns of everyday life, to teach them all the ways of adulthood including the rules and taboos of the society; moral instruction and social responsibility and further clarification of his or her mission or calling in life. The symbolism and intergenerational control of sexuality is prominent in many initiation rites (Ampim, 2003 & Golomski, 2012).

2.2.3 Marriage Rite

The rite of marriage is the third major initiation rite and it represents not only the joining of two families, but also the joining of the two missions of the new couple. In other words, marriage rites are performed for not only the coming together of male and female to procreate and perpetuate life and the coming together of families but it is also an institution that helps both the husband and wife to best fulfill their mission and objectives in life. Unfortunately in Western society, a vast number of marriages fail as they are often based upon the couple “falling in love” and thereby entering the relationship in an unbalanced state. Individuals often “fall in love” quick and “fall out of love” just as quickly, as soon as they recover from the emotional “love at first sight” syndrome. African society does not emphasize individual looks and lust as the primary motivation for marriage but rather the basic focus is on building families and communities. A person is not generally considered an adult until they have married and had had children (Ampim, 2003).

2.2.4 Eldership Rite

The rite of eldership is the fourth major initiation rite and it is an important component of the initiation system, because it is the elders who represent tradition and the wisdom of the past. In African culture, there is a fundamental distinction between an “elder” and “older” person. An older person has simply lived a longer life than most people, but he is not considered one who deserves high praise and respect. This is because the older person’s life has not been a positive example for the community. An older person could be a thief or drunkard, an evil person, or could be someone who never married and had children. These examples would certainly prevent a person from being considered as a respected elder. An elder, on the other hand, is someone who is given

the highest status in the African setting because she or he has lived a life of purpose, and there is nothing more respected than living a purposeful life. One is recognised as an elder when he/she has gone through all the three rites and traditions of the community and is considered a living model for others to emulate (Ampim, 2003).

2.2.5 Ancestorship Rite

The last of the five major rites is the rite of ancestorship which is passing over into the spirit world. This final initiation rite is an extension of the eldership because the status that a person has in life is the same status that they bring with them when they pass on. There is virtually no African society that believes that when a person dies, he/she ends all ties and communication with the living. Rather, African philosophy from one culture to another agrees that the spirit of the deceased is still with the living community, and that a distinction must be made in the status of the various spirits, as there are distinctions made in the status of the living.

One of the most important distinctions is the difference between an older person who dies and who is seen as nothing more than a “dead relative” and a respected elder who passes on and is respected as an honoured “ancestor”. The dead relative who dies without honour is someone who is not remembered as a great person or someone who should be followed or emulated. On the other hand, a respected elder who passes on becomes a respected ancestor and is given the highest honour and are often called upon in matters of uncertainty to help influence a favourable outcome (Ampim, 2003).

2.3 Rites of Passage in Ghana

The life of a human being is a development process that involves several stages from conception to death with each stage having significant effects on the individual and the

society. The rites are observed when the individual attains the age of puberty and is referred to as „puberty rites“. They ensure a safe passage from one stage of life (childhood) to another (adulthood). During this transition period, initiates are taught how to perform their roles as responsible adults.

Rites of passage may involve incisions on the body, tests of physical endurance, genital cutting among others. For females, the emphasis is usually on fertility. According to Salm and Falola (2002), rites of passage are necessary for ensuring the propagation of a lineage. They also “help determine family organizations, domestic hierarchies and future lineage relationships”. They express how the individual who goes through the rite of passage gains a definite place in the lineage as a matured person and also a status as a member of the tribe or group. Cultural identity formation here is therefore of major importance. It also includes education on issues such as sex, marriage and family life while domestic skills are particularly stressed in the case of females as it is a major criterion for marriage (Salm, 2002; Gyekye, 2003).

Rites of passage have coordinated ritual events marking significant junctures and transitions across the social lives of individuals and groups. The rhetoric, symbolism and actions involved in rites of passage are meant to effect changes in the social status of initiates undergoing the rites. Ritual outcomes are meant to benefit the initiates and the society as a whole. Because they mark and signify maturational processes, rites of passage can also include ceremonial events involving humans' periodic communion with movement through nature, the seasons, time, and the cosmos.

Broadly, the symbolism and semantics of rites involve binaries of death and rebirth, male and female, and chaos and order.

Throughout history, people have developed rituals to address such life transitions as birth, adolescence, marriage, sickness, retirement and death. These rituals are called rites of passage. Considering them from a historical, communal, or personal perspective, however, is incomplete. It must be seen within the larger perspective of life. Important life transitions, like birth, marriage, sickness, healing, death, and burial, are more than mere events. They are transition times in life and need to be ritualized by rites of passage which connect them to a deeper source of energy or power. Rites of passage are important moments for the community and the individual. They provide opportunities to increase or decrease responsibilities in a group (becoming a head nurse, returning to the classroom to teach, or retiring). At each significant life change, one's energies and responsibilities shift focus. Ritualizing transitional times help people begin or move on. Rites of passage require ritual separation from a former life, acknowledgment of a profound happening, and integrated into the next stage in community life.

In the Ghanaian traditional society, rites and ceremonies are performed to initiate adolescence into adulthood. These rites are called puberty or initiation rites. They enable a person to become a full member of the community and take part in all of its activities. Most Ghanaian communities do not have initiation rites for boys. In such communities, boys learn about adulthood from their fathers and other close relatives. Most initiation and puberty rites are for girls (Ampim, 2003). The significant life changes or transitions in Ghana are categorized into four, namely; birth, puberty, marriage and death rites. There are about ten ethnic groups in Ghana with several languages and dialects. The ethnic diversity is a reflection of the variety of cultural norms evident in the country. The largest ethnic group-Akan, making up about 50% of

the total population observe similar cultural practices of „rites of passage“ including birth, puberty, marriage and death.

2.3.1 Birth Rites

According to Salm and Falola (2002), a name is a group of sounds/vibrations grouped together in a unique way. The power of the sounds/vibrations of a proper given name moves throughout the spirit of the African person when heard or spoken. The spirit responds to this power, stirring within the person an awareness of their unique purpose in life and of the potential they possess to carry out their purpose. As the purpose of one's life is given to him or her by The Supreme Being before birth, we recognize our unique purpose, our destiny in Creation, to be a divine purpose, a divine destiny. It is within this context that the naming ceremonies of African people must be viewed. The “*dinto*” (naming ceremony) of the Akan people of West Africa is expressive of these principles. In the Twi language of the Akan people, *din* (deen) means „name“ and *to* (toh) or *toa* means „to adjoin“. One interpretation of the *dinto* is the process through which the name is ritually joined to the spirit of the child.

At the birth of an Akan baby, he or she is kept indoors for eight days. The eighth day is the day of the naming ceremony, *dinto*. The first name given to a child is called the *kradin* (kra-deen“) or "soul name", and is determined by the day of the week that the child was born. This is because *Nyame* and *Nyamewaa*, the Great God and the Great Goddess respectively, whom together constitute the Supreme Being in Akan culture, named their eleven Children after the seven days of the week. The Children of The Supreme Being are the Goddesses and Gods, the Spirit-Forces operating throughout Nature and all of Creation. In Akan culture they are called “Abosom” (Deities). The various “Abosom” carry different spiritual qualities of their Parents, the MotherFather

Supreme Being (Nyamewaa-Nyame). This reality impacts the newborn, because the names of the days of the week in Akan culture indicate which “Obosom” (Spiritual Force) governs that particular day and therefore which spiritual qualities of the Great Father, Nyame (God), and the Great Mother, Nyamewaa (Goddess) are transferred to and carried by the *kra* (*okra*) or “soul” of the child born upon that day (Salm & Falola, 2002).

The child also receives its formal name or good/ideal name, „*din pa*”, on the eighth day. The formal name further defines the function of the child in the world as it relates to his or her specific Ancestral Clan and his or her potential for manifesting wisdom and influence. The „*din pa*” carries the vibrations that will empower the individual to properly incorporate the Divine Law and restore Divine balance throughout his or her life according to Ancestral protocol.

The naming ceremony begins and ends before sunrise. It is the father that has the responsibility of naming the child, thus the family come together in the early morning at the father's house. The Elders invoke Nyame (God), Nyamewaa (Goddess), and pour libation to Asaase Afua (Earth Mother/Goddess also called Asase Yaa) the Abosom (Divinities, Forces of Nature) and the Nananom Nsamanfo (Honoured Ancestral Spirits) to assist with the proper naming of the child. After the name is acquired, the infant is given to an Elder from the father's side of the family who announces the *kradin* and *din pa* to the family for the first time.

There are two cups ritually utilized during the ceremony. One cup contains water (*nsuo*) and the other strong drink (*nsa*). The Elder dips his index finger into the water and places it on the tongue of the infant saying, "When you say it is water (*nsuo*), it is water (*nsuo*)." He dips his index finger into the „*nsa*” and places it on the mouth of the infant

saying, "When you say it is „*nsa*“, it is „*nsa*“." This is repeated three times. This is done to instill within the infant a consciousness of morality, the necessity of always living in harmony with the truth for all of her/his life. Whether the consequences of truthfulness leave a pleasant taste in your mouth (water) or a difficult taste in your mouth (*nsa*), truthfulness nevertheless must be upheld.

The remainder of the water and *nsa* in the two cups is then mixed together and given to the parents so that they may participate in the ritual in unity with their child. The parents are here confirming the importance of the moral lesson taught to the child and at the same time vowing to reinforce this lesson throughout the life of the child. The stability of the family is directly related to the stability of the community, and the parents are making their vow before Nyame (God), Nyamewaa (Goddess), Asase Afua (Earth Mother), the Abosom etc. (Salm & Falola 2002).

The time has come for gifts to be presented to the newborn, after which the remainder of the *nsa* in the bottle is shared with members of the community. The full name of the newborn is spoken to each member of the community, and each member sips some of the *nsa* as a sign to show respect for the child and as a corporate gesture towards the newborn's health. A meal is then shared to all.

2.3.2 Puberty Rites

Puberty rites are the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Salm and Falola (2002) states that, "all traditional Ghanaian societies celebrate girls" transition to adulthood" and it is known as *otufo* among the Gas, *bragoro* among the Akans and *dipo* among the Krobos. Nukunya (2003) also mentions that a similar practice is found among the Ewes while it is different in the north of Ghana. However, Sackey (2001) states that puberty rites are held for both boys and girls in the Northern Region of Ghana unlike

the south where it is mainly for girls. In an article by the Ghana News Agency (2004), it is mentioned that in the Upper East Region, situated in Northern Ghana, female genital mutilation is actually practiced as a form of puberty rites. It is a fact that “Ghanaians today do not go through the same initiation rites as their elders” (Salm 2002) and this is mainly because such rites have gradually faded out with the exception of the Krobo Dipo which is now the most elaborate rite of passage in Ghana.

Richards (1982) points out that rites of passage may coincide with physical maturity or be held irrespective of biological changes. When they are held independently of sexual maturation, the emphasis becomes that of social maturity. She further terms puberty rites which precede marriage as nobility rites. It is common for Dipo to be termed a puberty rite as can be found in Anarfi (2003). It is generally the parents who decide when the rite should be performed for their daughters; puberty is usually not taken into consideration. The term rite of passage also depicts the transitory nature of Dipo. It was originally intended for young adult females who were of marriageable age. It was also not meant to coincide with the first menstruation unlike the Akan Bragoro. The Dipo custom was intended as a pre-marriage ceremony in which young women acquired vocational training, in most cases, several years before marriage Sackey (2001).

The ceremony „Dipo“ among the Krobos, a tribe in the Eastern Region of Ghana, is a very prominent event which has been carried out for years. The practice is held very strongly by the Krobos and it is ensured that every female in the tribe undergoes the rite. It is performed every year from February to June. Several girls partake in this event which lasts for a period of four days during which they spend most of their time in the Dipo house where the rite takes place.

The Dipo custom is a ritual in itself and also comprises a number of practices performed within it. Turner (1967) refers to ritual as “prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers.” For the Krobos these beliefs happen to relate to ancestors and deities who are often called upon for blessings and protection. This is prominent in the Dipo custom and is a means by which initiates are made increasingly away of the Krobo traditional belief systems. Wilson (1954) as cited in Turner (2009) states that;

Rituals reveal values at their deepest level; men express in ritual what moves them most, and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it is the values of the group that are revealed.

The performance of a ritual is a means by which people express their values and make a statement about who they are and their way of life. The conventional nature is expressed when Dipo is performed to be a reflection of the traditional Krobo way of life and is obligatory in the sense that it is expected of every female member in the society to go through the custom. The girls are simply taken to be initiated and they do not have a say in the issue. It expresses the Krobo way of defining womanhood. Shorter (1998) points out the fact that rituals are “symbols-in-action, with or without accompanying verbal symbols” thereby bringing out a major characteristic of rituals which is symbolism. Rituals are endowed with symbolism which all leads to their main purpose. A lot of meanings can be derived from the symbolic actions observed in the Dipo custom.

Dipo is an informal family life education for a true Krobo girl child in Ghana. It starts from the first week in April until the first week in June and is done to usher girls into

womanhood. It involves training through home management to motherhood in order to make an ideal woman. In the past, the birth of a male child was cherished a lot by the men because of their predominant occupation farming and hunting. The male child was expected to accompany the father to the farm, hunt and also get the property inheritance. Males were held in higher esteem than females and as such, some customs were performed for them and their mothers. They were given gifts and a cock was slaughtered for them after circumcision but nothing was done for the female child. The women got jealous and decided to put their heads together with *Nana Kloweki*, a female leader, to come out with something cultural which makes a girl of importance in the society.

They therefore decided to shape and mould the lifestyle of the girl-child in order to make her a proper and ideal Krobo woman fit for the Krobo home, family and society. Some standards were set the girls had to be virgins and about 27 years of age before Dipo was performed for them. It involved a one-year home training in confinement. During this confinement, the girls were taught housewifery by the old women and this involved; how to shine their pots, clean the drinking calabash, cooking, sweeping, and washing among others (Steegstra, 2009).

They were taught how to tend a farm, collect firewood for cooking in the home (they had to have a reserve of firewood in their homes as good women because they could have visitors at night), fetching of water, doing dishes and laundering clothes. They were sent to a riverside and taught how to wash their clothes and learnt personal hygiene in the process. The girls also took turns to do the cooking during the period of seclusion. Pounding of the traditional *fufu* was taught and also how to serve food to the extended members of their husband's family when they are married.

After going through this process, the blessing of the gods were sought for the girls and the „old lady“ gave the consent or approval that the girls have passed the training process and were ready for marriage. Some of the girls may have been betrothed before going through the rite. Their suitors were therefore expected to contribute to the performance of the rite for the girls. They also carried the girls from the shrine after the ultimate test of sitting on the sacred stone as a means of warding off other interested men. This also signified that they would one day carry the girl to their bed. The girls had their bodies exposed during the rite as a form of marketing to show the members (especially men) of the community that the girls were beautiful and ripe for marriage and therefore attract potential suitors. They were taken to the market place to dance also as a form of exposure to the outside world. It was common in those days, for girls to be married soon after Dipo was performed for them. As evidence of initiation, marks were made on the back of the palms and wrists of the initiates (Steegstra, 2009).

2.3.3 Marriage Rites

Marriage among the Akans is not merely between husband and wife, but between their families as well. Marriage is a melding of two families and its survival is ensured by both families. In the past, marriages were arranged in the higher levels of society to merge families influence, otherwise generally courting occurred prior to the act of marriage. Before Westernization and the advent of Judeo-Christian religions, „traditional marriage“ consisted of what is now known as „the engagement ceremony“. Currently, „the engagement ceremony“ is performed prior to a Christian and/or Muslim wedding (Lentz & Nugent, 2000).

There are several customs that one must adhere to when one wants to get married.

Even before a man asks a woman's hand in marriage (or in Akan, „a woman's head in marriage"), he must first introduce himself to the woman's family and state his intention to court and marry her. This ceremony is known as „*knocking*"; here the man together with some prominent/respectable members of his family (i.e. father, uncle, head of family, etc.) presents a drink offering (Schnapps is the preferred drink) to the woman's father while stating their intention. A date is set after this ceremony where the man's family returns to inquire about the bride price/dowry. The father's acceptance of the drink signifies an acknowledgement that the woman is spoken for and the couple has been officially recognized as „dating".

„Dating" is not only between the couple, but between their families as well. It is during this time that the woman's family makes inquiries about the man's family, their background, financial status, their treatment of women, the presence/absence of inheritable diseases in the family etc. If the woman's family is satisfied with this pseudo-background check, they keep the drinks and provide „*the list*" which consists of items that make up the dowry to the man's family. A date is then set to commemorate the marriage. On the other hand, if the woman's family is unsatisfied with the results of their investigations, (they find out that most men in the family are alcoholics or that family has a history of madness or that men die at a very early age in the family, etc.), they return the drinks and provide a suitable excuse as to why the marriage cannot be possible (Gyekye, 2003).

„*The list*" is at the discretion of each particular family. However, common amongst most are; alcoholic beverages, jewelry, cloth/clothing items that a woman needs to start a household- pots and pans, sewing machine, plates, bed sheets, cloth etc. and the famous „*akontasikan*" (brother-in-law-cutlass: this used to be a cutlass given to brother

of the bride to compensate him for the „*loss*“ of his sister, however currently it is some form of monetary compensation).

The marriage ceremony itself is held usually in the late morning, where members of both families and friends gather to witness the ceremony. It is usually held in the woman’s (bride’s) house, and her parents/family is responsible for provision of refreshments and housing of any guests that have travelled far. The ceremony begins with the spokesperson for the bride’s family („*okyeame*“) introducing him or herself, stating the purpose of the gathering and welcoming the groom’s family. A prayer is said to begin the ceremony (this can be „*pouring of libation*“, a Christian/Muslim prayer or both depending on the religious bent of the families).

Dialogue occurs mainly between the „*akyeames*“ from both families. The groom’s family presents their „gifts“ which are the items on „*the list*“, these items are inspected and accepted by the bride’s family. There is a lot of fanfare that occurs during these presentations, including detailed descriptions of an item and its significance. For example, the „*okyeame*“ from the groom’s family may describe a piece of cloth as follows: This cloth is real *Kente*, we went all the way to *Bonwire* (this is the birth place of *Kente* weaving) and commissioned a master artist to design this particular cloth to duplicate the loveliness, grace and beauty of the bride. The „*okyeame*“ may also haggle with the brother’s in law as to desired „*akontasikan*“. During all these proceedings, neither the bride nor the groom is present (Gyekye, 2003).

After the presentation of gifts, the „*okyeame*“ from the groom’s family inquires after the bride. Usually, the bride’s family sends her sisters or female cousins first and a playful banter occurs before the bride is finally ushered into the room amidst singing and dancing. The groom’s entrance follows the brides“ with both the bride and groom

present, the bride's father asks his daughter thrice whether she knows the groom and if she is willing to marry him. The bride must provide a verbal affirmative response to her father's question for the ceremony to proceed. (Since these events are usually planned in advance, this aspect has become merely ceremonial similar to the part in Christian marriages where the priests ask if anyone knows of any reason why the marriage should not occur therefore, an affirmative answer is expected and is mostly received. Once the bride confirms her willingness to be married, the two are joined by their hands and a representative from each family blesses the union. Following the blessing, are festivities, eating, drinking, dancing and drumming usually till daybreak (Gyekye, 2003).

2.3.4 Death Rites

According to Osei-Adu (2002), after the child naming ceremony through puberty, marriage, maturity, old age and death are set of rituals of social transformation which people undergo in Ghana. These rituals bind the people spiritually and culturally to each other in their communities.

According to Opoku (1978), death is an inevitable end of man. It is a journey which man must make in order to reach the life beyond and continue to live as an ancestor. The dead, therefore, do not remain in the grave, but become spirits and proceed to the spirit world, called *asamando* by the Akan. Because of the inevitability of death and belief in an active life after death, various societies or communities in Ghana have developed rituals to ease the pain of physical separation and to guide the dead into the spiritual world of the ancestors. The patterns and processes of grieving among members of various communities appear to be similar.

According to Platt and Persico (1992), four significant variables tend to influence the human response to grief. These are the social meaning of death, the relationship between the deceased and the survivors, the significance of the mode of death, and the nature of the support network available to the bereaved. The notion of the social meaning of death relates to various definitions that members of a society attach to the nature of death, the origin of death as a cultural concept, and the survivors' prior experiences. Relevant issues addressed in this area include a group's conception of the universe and humankind's place in it, as well as its relationship with nature and its religious beliefs.

Questions about the relationship between the deceased and survivors seek an understanding of the positions occupied by the deceased and the bereaved family in their community. Types and extent of social, economic, political, and religious relationships that prevailed between the deceased and survivors are also relevant. The third factor (the significance of the mode of death) entails comprehension of the manner of death experienced by the deceased and the social meaning that a group attaches to that form of death. For example, a group's response to suicide or death from retaliatory sorcery may be different from how the group responds to death from an illness or from old age or to death attributed to the work of witchcraft. Finally, according to Platt and Persico (1992), the nature of the social support network available to survivors includes the social definitions associated with the role of the bereaved and the expectations for family and community members to share in supportive behaviour to aid the grieving individuals.

In relation to the primary burial, funerals may serve as conduits for the physical removal of the body. In the past, as is often the case at present, elderly members were secretly buried at designated places other than the public cemeteries. In those instances, public

mourning by bereaved lineage members provided convenient avenues to distract public attention from the disposal of the corpse. Perhaps the most important aspect of the public mourning or funeral celebration is to secure the happiness of the departed on its journey to the spirit world.

Sarpong (1974) says death is proper to us; only we do not yet possess it. An unripe fruit develops towards ripeness. Death provokes thoughts of darkness and light, weakness and strength, evil and good, sorrow and joy, non-existence and life, war and peace, defect and victory, vice and virtue, ignorance and knowledge, in short, confusion. To a Ghanaian, death is regarded as the occasion when a deceased person sets out on a journey to the underworld or spirits world to which his ancestors have already gone, a place where he must settle any account he has with those who have gone before him. His journey is arduous and unavoidable. One, who sets foot on it, cannot and should not come back, except as a respected ancestor spirit Adu – Gyamfi (2010).

According to Amponsah (1974), the death of someone is not announced immediately. It is kept secret until the washing and preparation of the corpse is done. If relatives wail immediately, other relatives and sympathizers would come there and this would prevent them from preparing the corpse to be laid in state. The chief of the village has to be informed immediately otherwise the funeral wail should not be done or under a fine of GH¢0.93; *asanu ne nsanu*. The death of a chief or king is not announced immediately, it is kept secret for about a week or two. The funeral rites of a chief take a lot of preparation unlike ordinary person leaving in the community depending on the status of the decease.

2.4 The life Cycle of Man in the Perspective of Islam

2.4.1 Birth

Abd-El-Maeboud (2009) requires that interest in human development has always been widespread largely because of curiosity about the subject and a desire to improve the quality of human life. Muslims believe that God is the Creator of life and life is a gift from Him. Since every person started as a fetus, Islam confers respect and protection for the fetus until it apportioned time.

Various legal rulings were decreed by Islam to safeguard the wellbeing and healthy development of the fetus. It made it an obligatory duty on the father to provide for the pregnancy and answer its financial needs even if divorce or separation or other circumstances have detached the relations with its mother (Abd-El-Maeboud, 2009). It is for the sake and welfare of the fetus that the pregnant woman is exempted from the obligatory fast of the month of Ramadan (Abd-El-Maeboud, 2009). He adds that, if a woman commits a crime of which the punishment is death and is proven to be pregnant, then the execution of the punishment shall be postponed until she gives birth to her baby and completes its breast feeding until weaned (Abd-El-Maeboud, 2009). This is a straight forward acknowledgement of the right to life of the fetus, being applied even if the pregnancy was illegitimate, emphasizing that the fetus conceived out-of-wedlock also has the right to live. The fetus has the right to be related to its father without confusion of paternity. If its mother is a divorcee or a widow then she should not marry until the fetus is born so as to keep the genealogy clear (Quran 65:6). If a man dies while his wife is pregnant, then the rules of inheritance recognize the fetus as an inheritor if born alive. Islam prescribes punitive measures for assaults on the fetus resulting in miscarriage (Maeboud, 2009).

In the second part of the verse addressing human life cycle as a species (Quran 22:5) in the Qur'an states that: "and we cause whom we will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term (intra-uterine life); then do we bring you out as babies (infancy and childhood); then foster you that you may reach your age of full strength (adulthood); and some of you are called to die, and some are sent back to the feeblest old age, or aging before death" (Maeboud, 2009).

Maeboud, (2009) continues by explaining that Islam acknowledges some form of dualism, which is, recognizing that the body and soul subsist together and meet to form a full human person. The inspiration of the soul comes after '*sawwa*' (fashioning man in due proportion) in many verses of the Qur'an (15:39; 32:9; 38:72). Moreover, in Hadith after Ibn-Massoud, the Prophet Mohammad says: "The creation of each one of you in his mother's abdomen is collected in forty days, then he becomes an '*alaghah*' for the same (duration), then a '*mudghah*' for the same. Then, Allah sends an angel, being ordered to write four things: his provision (sustenance), his age, his deeds and whether he will eventually be wretched or blessed.

Then the soul (spirit) is breathed (blown) into him". In another Hadith narrated by Huzaifa Ibn Osaïd, the Prophet said: "When the '*nutfah*' enters the womb and stays there for forty nights, God sends an angel that gives it a form and creates its hearing, sight, skin, bone and flesh. Then the angel asks: O' God is it a male or a female? And God determines whatever He decides. He then asks what his livelihood is and God determines it. Both Hadiths are considered authentic according to the standards of the science of the Hadith. The spirit or soul, however, is something that we, human beings, cannot grasp or know the meaning of. All that man knows is that when it is breathed in, he gets the human life and when it departs, he is dead. It is a mystery about which God kept the truth to Himself, and we are told by God not to pursue the attempts to unravel

its secret. The blowing of the spirit is a metaphysical phenomenon beyond human comprehension at all times, and the Hadiths are taken as a matter of faith (Maeboud, 2009).

2.4.2 Puberty

Puberty is a natural phenomenon that occurs at varying ages in different individuals. Research in global human behaviour seems to indicate that girls and boys who are born and live in warmer parts of the world are more likely to reach puberty earlier, than their peers living in the colder regions and climates of the world. For example, those who live in the Middle Eastern Arab countries tend to reach puberty at an earlier age compared to those who live in Northern European countries. However, reaching the age of puberty should not be considered as the only criteria for deciding on an appropriate age for marriage. Other factors such as the overall maturity of a person, and his or her ability to discern between what is good or bad, such that his personal approval or disapproval in important decisions of life become valid, must also to be taken into consideration.

Like all other living beings, the human being too goes through a process of constant change and growth. This natural overall process can be seen distinctly through changes in height, weight, habits, skills, social, economic and emotional behaviour. All these patterns have been widely studied and discussed through psychology and other related sciences.

Ayatullah Khomeini (may Allah be pleased with him) has defined maturity as powerful presence of mind and intelligence in one's dealings, one's ability to safeguard one's possessions from being squandered away and one's prudence in spending in a judicious manner. For girls, maturity may be defined as follows: „A girl's ability to manage a

good life, her level of acceptance of the responsibility of motherhood and child-rearing, as well as her appropriateness in social behaviour“.

From the above definitions, we can see that although one may have reached the age of puberty and according to Islamic practical laws, Salat (prayer) and Sawm (fasting) are now obligatory on him/her, but if he/she is not socially active and economically productive, then he/she may be termed as an adolescent, but not as „mature“.

The prime age of marriage for girls, would also depend on their mental and psychological maturity. It may be possible that in some cases by the age of 14, a girl may be mature enough to shoulder the responsibility of family-life and motherhood, but a woman of 30 may not yet be mature enough to do so! Therefore, what is important in determining the ripe age for marriage is one“s own level of maturity and readiness, whether one has reached the legal age for marriage or not! It would be very naive to ignore geographical and regional conditions and norms, as well as the needs of the youth of the day, and such negligence could lead to many problems.

In the present world, with the greater intermingling between sexes, better nutrition, educational facilities and more awareness due to advanced mass media, children are reaching „maturity“ much earlier than ever before; and considering these factors, raising the legal age for marriage for boys and girls is quite unjustifiable.

It is interesting to note that at one point of time, the British Parliament had passed a law that had set the minimum legal age for marriage of boys at 21 years, whereas the minimum permissible age for being candidate for the post of Prime Minister was 18 years! When the people raised an objection to this absurd law, the Parliament responded by declaring that it was often more difficult to manage a wife than to manage a country.

Raising the legal age of marriage and not permitting young boys and girls who are dealing with strong sexual impulses, to have a healthy and safe outlet for their natural, youth-related tendencies, only leads to the spread of promiscuity and moral corruption in the society. If boys aren't allowed to form a family before the age of 18 or 20 years; or if girls are forced to face emotional and psychological pressures due to the same reasons, then they become very prone to social and psychological problems.

We can conclude that, a suitable age for marriage would be the time of physical and mental maturity in a person. Islam has specified the age of physical maturity but it has not specified the age of mental maturity. Rather, it has left it open to the discretion of the parents and children themselves.

2.4.3 Marriage

Abdullah one of the followers of the prophet (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that, "we were with the prophet (SAW) while we were young and had on wealth whatever. So Allah's Apostle said, "O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty"

[Bukhari, Book 62, Hadith 4]. From the above Hadith, it is clear that, marriage in Islam helps to protect oneself from immoral activities because human beings are prone to making mistakes. There is a very subtle message in this saying of the Prophet (PBUH). Just as there is proper timing for plucking fruits, there is a proper age for marriage for every girl. A girl who cannot understand and shoulder the responsibility of married-life is like a raw fruit that needs to remain on the tree (i.e. her father's home) until it ripens and sweetens. On the other hand, if a girl loses the freshness of youth while yet unmarried, then she is like an over ripe fruit that would further wither away, as the time passes.

Man, just like any other creation, possesses both a body and a soul (*ruh*) and is in need of several things each of which is essential for the safeguard of one's survival and well-being. For example, the hunger pains and desire for nourishment compel one to eat so as to build up energy to live another day; the feelings of dehydration make one drink water which is also essential for one's life. These and many other things facilitate man to live a prosperous and healthy life. Similarly, the sexual desires and the need to fulfill one's sexual requirements and passions play a key role in the protection of man, and continuation of the human race. Therefore, it is not sensible to defy this necessity or try to suppress it.

Since Man has been chosen as "the best of creations", Allah has laid down the foundation of marriage in order to allow this need of life to be fulfilled in a legitimate manner. As well, the guidelines are very much in accordance with the intellect since the laws are Divine and the specific conditions are befitting to the valuable souls of both men and women alike. Historically, the very first relationship that was established was that of marriage between a male and female not that of a mother/daughter relationship, nor a father/son relationship. Thus, it can be deduced that marriage is one of the most sacred bonds between a man and a woman. After

Adam (peace be upon him) was created, he felt lonely and complained to the Almighty about his solitude. Allah put Adam (peace be upon him) to sleep and then created Hawwah with the utmost beauty. He covered her with the robes of Paradise and brought her forth with other ornaments of beautification. At this time, He instructed Hawwah (peace be upon her) to sit near the head of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). When he awakened from his sleep and his eyes fell on Hawwah (peace be upon her), he was so passionate and captivated by her charm that he wanted to reach out and touch her. At this point, the Angels forbid him from doing so.

Adam (peace be upon him) asked them, „*Did Allah not create her for me?*“ The Angels replied, „*Yes*“ *but you have to approach her in the appropriate manner. First you must propose to her (by asking her guardian for permission to marry her), then you must grant her the Mahr (gift), followed by the recitation of the „Aqd (marriage contract)“* (Hudda, 2003).

Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) questioned, „*Who do I have to ask for permission to marry her?*“ The Angels replied, „*You must ask Allah*“. Then Adam (peace be upon him) asked, „*O. Allah! What will her Mahr be?*“ Allah replied, „*Teach her the rules of My religion and send blessings (Salawat) on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad*“ (Hudda, 2003).

From the above historical event, we can see that when a man wants to agree upon the Mahr with his wife, they should make an agreement that (as a part of the Mahr), he will teach her the rules and regulations of the religion of Allah. Therefore, from this narration, we see that the first relationship that was created by our Creator for humanity was that of marriage. We must know the finer points and overall rulings of this sacred foundation in order to have a fruitful and successful life in this world and more importantly, in the life hereafter.

The most common form of an Islamic marriage begins with a proposal known as an *ijab* or *rishta*. Although a formal proposal is not a requirement in traditional Islamic jurisprudence, it is commonly observed. Once accepted, the engaged couple have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with one another. In a chaperoned environment the fiancés can see each another, chat, socialize with family members, and determine if they are compatible.

Once the couples agree to pursue the marriage, the next step is to sign the Islamic marriage contract in an official ceremony frequently referred to as *nikah*. In traditional Islamic jurisprudence, the Islamic marriage contract solemnizes the physical connection between a man and woman, and serves as the foundation for their marriage. By signing the Islamic marriage contract, couples commit to nurturing an environment of love and mercy that is conducive to Islamic growth (Alkhateeb, 2004). Although the marriage contract falls under civil contract laws in traditional Islamic jurisprudence, it is considered to be a sacred covenant involving two consenting (*qubool*) parties making an agreement in the presence of two witnesses (alHibri, 2005). Most schools of thought in traditional Islamic jurisprudence require women to have a guardian (*wali*), based upon the rationale that male family members will protect the interests of the bride (al-Hibri 2005). For the other schools on Islamic jurisprudence, fathers were considered to be the primary „*walis*“ of their daughters, followed by grandfathers, brothers, or the next available male relative. In traditional Islamic jurisprudence, men proposing to women represented by *walis* must seek permission from the guardian to marry their daughter or female relative. The *wali* then asks the bride whether she consents to the marriage.

The marriage contract ceremony must include the consenting and competent couples (who are of marriageable age), the person solemnizing the marriage (typically an imam), and two witnesses. Although traditional Islamic jurisprudence required two female witnesses to each male witness based upon Qur’anic verse 2:282, contemporary scholars commonly argue that the rule no longer applies given the level of engagement that women have today with legal and business practices. Before signing the contract, the solemnizer asks the couple whether they consent and for the amount of the *mahr*.

Under traditional Islamic law, grooms must provide a *mahr*, or marital gift, for their wives (Qurʿan 4:20). There is no minimum or maximum amount specified for the *mahr*, and the gift can range from cash to gold to property. The *mahr* can be given at the onset of marriage, during the marriage, or divided into immediate and deferred portions, and is payable upon demand, divorce, or the husband's death. The *mahr* becomes the property of the bride, is hers to do with as she chooses, and can be an added source of support and protection. Traditional Islamic law requires men to financially provide for their wives in a manner to which they are accustomed to living so long as they are able. If the wife chooses to work during the marriage, the money she earns becomes part of her separate marital property, with no financial obligation incumbent upon her to financially support the family. In addition, household work and nursing any infants are duties of the woman (al-Hibri, 2005).

In addition to determining the *mahr*, Islamic law allows stipulations to be added to the marriage contract. The traditional Islamic schools of jurisprudence are diverse in their legal opinions regarding the types of stipulations that can be included in the Islamic marriage contract. As the legal rights of women in Muslim countries vary, typical stipulations tend to protect women's rights by bringing couples to an agreement regarding an equal right to initiate divorce, an agreement to remain monogamous, the right to education and work, equal division of domestic responsibilities, and living conditions. Stipulations regarding property tend to be absent in most Islamic marriage contracts as marital or community property does not exist under traditional Islamic law; rather, a single person holds each property title. All traditional jurists are in agreement that no stipulations can be added that contradict the basic requirements of marriage or forbid that which is legally permissible (al-Hibri, 2005). American Muslims are diverse in their responses to *shari'ah* and traditional Islamic jurisprudence regarding the

Islamic marriage contract. Some couples choose to sign basic Islamic marriage contracts that only include specification of the *mahr*, some expand the contract to cover a range of stipulations, and others ignore the Islamic marriage contract entirely by electing to just have a civil contract (Quraishi and Syeed-Miller 2004). A recent study on marriage and divorce among American Muslims found out that, they commonly turn to *shari''ah* to mark important passages during their lives, such as birth, marriage, divorce, and death (MacFarlane, 2011).

One of the recognized and indisputable commandments of Islam is that of marriage; the sacred union that takes place only between a man and a woman (MacFarlane 2011). In relation to this revered bond, there are many verses of the Noble Qur''an and countless hadith that encourage marriage for any single man or woman of any age or background. This is not only limited to the young brothers and sisters who have never been married and are looking for their life mate, but even those who have been through divorce have also been encouraged to re-marry and to complete their faith.

From the ocean of traditions and verses of the Qur''an on this topic, we quote the following:

“Marry the single people from among you and the righteous slaves and slave-girls. If you are poor, Allah will make you rich through His favour; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing” (Surah 24, Verse 32).

In this verse, Allah commands us (by Him using the imperative form of the verb) to marry the single, righteous man/woman from among us. Allah even gives us a guarantee that if we are poor or lack the proper funds, still we should not delay the marriage as Allah will take care of the couple and grant them bounties from His Grace and Mercy.

“And let those who cannot find someone to marry maintain chastity until Allah makes them rich through His favours...” (Surah 24, Verse 33)

In the continuation of Surah 24, in the above quoted verse, Allah commands the believers to remain chaste and faithful if they cannot find a suitable spouse to marry until Allah grants them bounties out of His favours. Thus, one must not resort to evil, sin or illicit sexual relationships because they cannot find a permanent spouse. One such avenue open to those who cannot afford to marry a woman in Nikah, as the Qurʾān has commanded us and the numerous hadith from the Prophet of Islam (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) and his 12th Infallible successors, the Aʿimmah (peace be upon all of them) have done is to perform the “Misyar” „and marry a man or woman in “temporary marriage” so as to be able to fulfill our natural desires in a legal and permitted means:

“...and besides these, it is lawful for you to marry other women if you pay them their dowry, maintain chastity and do not commit indecency. So those (women) whom you marry for an appointed time, you must give them their agreed upon dowries. There is no harm if you reach an understanding among yourselves about the dowry, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Wise”.

(Surah 4, Verse 24)

This is a commandment from Allah which was not only mentioned in the Qurʾān, but which He commanded his last and greatest Prophet (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny) to convey to the Ummah, which can never be made forbidden by anyone as that which Muhammad has made *halal* is *halal* until the Day of judgement and that which he has made haram will remain haram until the Day of judgement. In another verse of the Qurʾān, Allah compares the husband and wife to garments for one another:

“They (your wives) are a clothing (covering) for you and you too are a clothing (covering) for them...” (2:187)

In our day to day life, we see many uses of clothing. Not only does our dress act as a beautification for ourselves, but it also covers any defects that we may have on our physical body thus, if a person has a scar or burn mark on his body, the clothing will cover this from others around him and thus, they would not know that he has such a physical „defect“. The husband and wife are to play the same role in relation to each other. If the wife has spiritual defects or lacks something in her character, then the husband must cover these up and not expose her shortcomings to others. The wife too, must cover up and hide her husbands“ deficiencies and weaknesses and protect her mate. Not only has Allah commanded the believers not to make fun of one another and not to mock or ridicule others, but they are also supposed to protect the honour and integrity of each other.

2.4.4 Death

Shaw (2004) assert that, God decides whether or not a baby will be born alive and healthy, He decides the moment of death; „Life and death is in God“s hands.“ Muslim practice is to bury rather than cremate the dead. In the time between death and burial, the body and soul is especially vulnerable, and any bodily trauma is far more painful at this time than in life. Thus, post-mortems are not agreed to unless required by law, in which case in the UK the hospital will seek to return the corpse to the family for burial as soon as possible. For the same reason, Muslim burials should take place as soon after the death as possible, ideally in the ground where the person dies.

Preparation for a Muslim burial involves ritual washing of the body by close kin of the deceased or Muslim funerary services. Men wash a male corpse and women wash a female corpse. The body is then wrapped in white unstitched cloth in preparation for relatives and friends to pay their final respects before the burial. The body is then taken

for *jana`za*, the congregational funerary prayers, and to be laid in the ground, facing the *Ka`ba* in Mecca.

Women may participate in *jana`za* prayers if recited at home or at a mosque, but only men accompany the body to the burial ground. Afterwards, visitors usually come to the home of the deceased to offer condolences to the bereaved family. Funerals are usually attended by a wide range of people who travel from near and far to acknowledge the loss of one of their community.

Despite the Islamic recommendation that a person be interred quickly after death, it is important for relatives to view the deceased person and pay their final respects before burial. Moreover, relatives` prayers for the deceased are believed to accumulate blessing (*sawa`b*) to the deceased person`s account with God, which will be weighed up on the Day of Judgment. It is thought that relatives are more likely to remember the deceased person and pray for them if their grave is nearby. It has been customary since the early years, bodies are usually interred alongside graves of other members of their *bira`dari* (kinship group) in cemeteries located at the edges of migrants` villages of origin.

2.5 Art and Islamic Practices

According to Azeez (2010), Islamic art is associated with the religion of the Mohammedan conquerors of the Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, North Africa and Spain. Islamic Art forbid making of images or anything that could be used to represent God. This is as a result of their belief that there is only one Allah and Mohammed is his prophet. Representation of human beings was not allowed in Islamic religion. Most of their works were ornamental lacework known as arabesques. We may owe their subtle designs and rich colour schemes to Mohammed who directed

the mind of the artist away from the objects of the real world to his dream world of using lines, colours, geometric shapes, etc. in making art form (Azeez, 2010). Azeez (2010), explains that among the media in Islamic Art are textiles, carpets, mats, jewelries and silk brocade. Islamic art are based on free flow of lines having no beginning.

Forsgren and Benskin (2002) purport that the divine message (Quran) is visually manifested through the act of writing (calligraphy), which holds an especially honoured place in Islamic society. Importance of Koran to Islam gives importance to calligraphy and the art of bookmaking. Calligraphy is considered “Queen” of Islamic Arts as compared with large scale paintings in the West. Over time, calligraphy which literally, means “beautiful writing” developed into a complex art form and was valued not only because of the religious and secular messages it conveyed but also because of its decorative qualities. It appears on everything from stone buildings to ceramic vessels, from manuscripts to silk robes. Some inscriptions consist of blessings while others are quotations from the Koran alluding to the purpose of the decorated object. According to Forsgren and Benskin (2002), an important element of mosque architecture is the minaret, a tall tower from which the calls to prayer are often made. Some scholars believe that minarets were originally designed to be seen from a great distance so that they could guide travellers to the house of prayer. It has also been proposed that early minarets were built as watchtowers or monuments, and only later were they built in close proximity to the mosque and associated with the call to prayer. Islam prohibits any figural images in religious settings meant that mosques and other religious structures, only calligraphy as well as vegetal and geometric designs are accepted. The most ornamental decoration in a mosque is generally found around the prayer niche, or *mihrab*, which literally translates to a “place of struggle” where the

individual fights to overcome attachments to earthly things through prayer. The *mihrab* is situated on the qibla, or wall facing Mecca, as an indication of the direction Muslims should face during prayer. Often, the arch of the *mihrab* and the wall around it are decorated with coloured marble and elaborate tile.

Famous for their production of glass vessels, artists of the fourteenth-century Egypt and Syria created lamps to illuminate the interior of mosques and other religious establishments (Forsgren & Benskin, 2002). In addition, beautifully woven textiles in precious coloured silks began to emerge from China in the fourth century before the advent of Islam. Silk technology moved west along the Silk Road to Iran and Byzantium, where manufacturing centers, under Muslim rule, expanded and flourished with the trade and development of typical patterns inspired by arts of the Islamic world. Islamic calligraphy and designs derived from plants, geometry, and symbolic animal imagery were blended into beautiful, costly fabrics prized all around the Mediterranean, into Africa and Central Asia. Weavers could build their designs on graph paper, colouring in every other square for the simplest pattern, or using combinations of the over-under pattern to gradually form a complex, repeating pattern or picture. The need for speed in weaving brocades due to the high demand for these silks by consumers led to Jacquard looms with punch-card systems for pattern weaving. Wide rolls of punched paper ran through notches each time the weaver threw the shuttle, raising and lowering the individual threads to form the complex patterns, row by row (Forsgren & Benskin, 2002).

Forsgren and Benskin (2002) explain that fabrics played a special role in Islamic society, as they did in many other societies during the medieval and early modern periods. The well-known modesty of Islamic dress for both men and women

translated into multiple layers and various articles of clothing. Islamic society was a textile civilization, as it produced various types of fabrics, many of which are still known by names related to their origin, such as muslin (from Mosul), damask (from Damascus), and calico (from Calicut). At a time when fabric was woven, dyed, and decorated by hand, luxury fabrics out of the reach of ordinary people expressed power, authority, and esteem. Ceremonial robes expressed the wealth of an entire society and the ruler's authority over it, whereas a judge's or scholar's robe spoke of dignity and knowledge. Garments of honour were bestowed to welcome, to reward outstanding achievement, or to recognize status and to mark admittance into elite circles and service (Forsgren and Benskin, 2002).

Marcus (1992) as cited in Becker (2006) asserts that throughout Morocco, substances containing *baraka*, such as saffron or henna, are believed to infuse the body with positive healing energy and are applied during rite of passage ceremonies that typically include blood flow, such as male circumcision or the loss of female virginity during a wedding ceremony, as on the saffron-painted bride. Pollution categories in Islam are based on the idea that the inner and outer bodies are united into one, mutually inclusive elements that must be kept together. However, certain substances can cross from the outer physical body to the inner spiritual body and purify the inner body, especially those substances containing „baraka“ (Marcus, 1992). He believes it is not coincidental that Moroccan women chose to tattoo their bodies with substances containing „baraka“ to symbolically enhance their bodies after first menstruation, a crucial moment in the life cycle. Tattoos can be seen as a means of both augmenting women's beauty and of publicly marking their transition from childhood to womanhood, as a physical and ever-present symbol of their prestige as useful members of the society, who ensure the survival of the group through their ability to give birth. Particular tattoo motifs,

including a variety of geometric designs, generally varied from group to group in Morocco; however, tattoo designs also reflected personal style preferences.

In Iran, it was common for upper class women to have patterns tattooed on their chins. The designs were sometimes very elaborate, and resembled that of a bearded. Alongside the chin tattoos, it was common for women to tattoo their lips blue, as it was considered to embody beauty (Becker, 2006). Beliefs attached to tattoos in the Middle East often corresponded with thinking the wearer was instilled with magical power, these tattoos often were dots or small crosses. They usually adorned the hands, and feet, they believed that they either provided strength or protection. Tattooing is nevertheless common among the Berbers of North Africa, where small designs with symbolic meaning are used mainly by women.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents methodological processes used for this study as follows: research design, population for the study, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, types of data and the data analysis plan.

3.1 Research Design

The researcher adopted qualitative method of research in carrying out the study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), qualitative research is a systematic process of describing, analyzing and interpreting insights discovered in everyday life. Rubin and Babbie (2001), also explained qualitative research has the ability to provide the researcher a comprehensive perspective resulting in a deeper understanding. In line with the definitions, the method enabled the researcher to describe the various rites of

passages of the Muslim as well as the involvement of the art in the birth and marriage rites. It also provided the researcher the opportunity to obtain a more holistic picture of the findings of the research.

Fraenkel and Wallen (1990) assert that descriptive method of research describes a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible. The descriptive method of qualitative study was thus employed for the research. This method type gave the researcher the opportunity to record and describes in detail the Islamic birth/marriage rites and the art forms involved in these rites.

3.2 Library Research

The following libraries were visited by the researcher to search for information: the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology main Library, Islamic Propagation Centre for Research Library, Kumasi, and the College of Art and Social Sciences Library, KNUST, Kumasi. Various books, journals and articles on Islamic Art and cultural practices were read with focus and interest in the Performing, Visual and Verbal Arts. The journals consisted of magazines, newspapers and newsletters. In addition, unpublished theses from undergraduate and graduate students were read from the various libraries mentioned earlier. The bulk of the literature was found at the Islamic Propagation Centre for Research Library, Kumasi.

3.3 Population for the Study

According to Best (1995:13), population is „any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher“. Busha and Harter (1980), also explain population as „... any set of persons or objects that possessed at least one common characteristic“. The population for the study was made up of

Muslims living within Asawase community. The population was homogenous since it was made up of members of the same faith and common practices.

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population for the study was made up of Islamic scholars, Imams, Muslim old men and women, Muslim couples and artists. In all two hundred (200) respondents were targeted.

3.3.2 Accessible Population

The accessible population was one hundred and twenty (120). Out of this number, fifteen (15) were Islamic scholars which included Sheik Nuhu president and Sheik Ibrahim (secretary) all of Islamic Propagation Centre for research, Kumasi, Sheik Nazir lecturer at Institute of Languages, Kumasi, Sheik Haruna Nkansah (educationist and theologian specialized in Islamic marriage and property sharing) and Sheik Amin (teacher) at Ghana Muslim Mission School, Akwatia. Thirty (30) were Imams, twenty-five (25) couples, forty (40) Muslim older men and women aged of seventy years and above and ten (10) female artists.

3.4 Sampling

Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting respondents. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select people who have much knowledge about the study under research in order to seek detailed information. Moreover, simple random sampling gave the researcher the opportunity to select whoever has rightful information in relation to the study.

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

Judgmental or Purposive sampling, targeted key individuals who gave the researcher information required for the study. Cohen et al (2000), explain purposive sampling as when researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of typicality. This technique was used to select fifteen (15) Islamic scholars and thirty (30) Imams who are key leaders, knowledgeable, and can provide the relevant answers to the researcher's questions on the subject for discussion.

3.4.2 Simple Random Sampling

The researcher employed simple random sampling technique for the study. Simple Random technique is one of the techniques in which each and every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990). The simple random sampling technique was used to select twenty-five (25) couples, ten (10) artists and forty (40) Muslim older men and women from the age of seventy years and above in Asawase community. This technique gave an equal chance for respondents to be selected.

3.5 Data collection Instruments

The data collection instruments used for this research were observation and interviews.

3.5.1 Interviews

The researcher employed the structured and semi-structured interview guide to help him to solicit for information from his interviewees. Regarding structured interviews, Assimeng (1989:34) in a discussion on how to conduct research on religious systems, proposes that, structured interviews on lines of carefully prepared survey designs should be employed in such research works. The researcher took into consideration

Assimeng's proposal and worked along that conduit. Interviews conducted were mostly in Hausa, English and Twi. The structured interview guide helped the researcher to have control over the interviews. The structured interview adopted for the Islamic scholars and Imams while the semi-structured interview was used for the muslim elderly (men and women), artists and muslim couples selected.

Research interview could be defined as a face-to-face meeting between the interviewer and interviewee, or an oral presentation of an opinion or attitude scale. The researcher noticed that the interviews were more rewarding than any of the survey instruments. This could be attributed to the fact that the respondents were more prepared to express their sentiments verbally than asking them to write. This assertion by the researcher is also confirmed by Manford (1996:35) that interviews are suitable for some category of people, especially the semi-literate who prefer talking to writing. The interviews were personally done by the researcher with the help of an assistant who did the language interpretation. The researcher's assistant booked a date with the respondents and were informed of the purpose of the study before the interviews were conducted.

3.5.2 Observation

The focus of the research was observation of the various activities in Islamic birth and marriage rites. Nisbet (1977:15) has emphasized that observation is not a „natural gift“ but a highly skilled activity for which an extensive background knowledge and understanding are required and also the capacity for original thinking and the ability to spot significant events. Without observatory participation, the researcher would not have been able to ascertain the authenticity of the data gathered from the respondents or the interviewees. It also gave the researcher the opportunity to witness the various performances such as the recitation of Quranic verses (Taweez), which are said to seek

protection for the baby, circumcision, rubbing the tongue with sweet (Tahnik) which forms part of the performing art, marking of the bride (Murza), designing of the bride's body with drawings which is also an aspect of visual art and blessing of the marriage.

The researcher also came into contact with the act of performing „Adhan“ (call to prayer) which is done by father into the ears of a child which also forms part of Performing Arts in Asawase community. Most of the observations took place at the various homes and the ceremonial grounds. A digital camera was used to take photographs by the researcher to visually illustrate and throw more light on the text.

3.6 Types of Data

Primary and secondary data collections were employed in the study.

3.6.1 Primary Data

Primary data were obtained through interviews and observation. Islamic scholars, Imams, Muslim couples, Artist, Muslim older men and women were the respondents who gave the primary data in relation to the research topic. This will provide firsthand information on the arts and rites of passage in the Asawase community. The primary research consists of a collection of original primary data. It gave the researcher some insight into the issue by reviewing secondary research or by analyzing previously collected primary data. The data were collected in a form of recorded words through interviews and photograph from observed activities in the field.

3.6.2 Secondary Data

The study also made use of secondary data. Secondary data is any information collected by someone else other than the user. The sources of the secondary data included books,

internet search, articles and journals. It is a data that has already been collected and is readily available for use. The secondary data saves time as compared to primary data which has to be collected and analyzed before use.

3.7 Data Analysis Plan

The data collected from the field work were assembled according to the patterns and themes. It was also coded and edited, analyzed and interpreted. Conclusions were also drawn and recommendations made.



CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the study. It provides vivid description about Islamic birth and marriage rites as stated in the delimitation of the thesis. It presents information gathered from the field through the use of observation and interviews. These are analyzed to emphasize response from respondents using various forms of graphical representations. This chapter is also divided into subheadings throwing more light on the questions asked in the field in relation to the objectives of the study.

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

On demographic characteristics of respondents, questions were asked on gender, academic qualifications and number of years spent in the community.

4.1.1 Gender Distribution

From a sampled population of 120, 45 were males made up of Islamic scholars and Imams, 25 were marriage couples even though the interviews were basically centred on the females. 40 elderly Muslim men and women made up of 11 males and 29 females and 10 female artists respectively were interviewed. A total number of 56 males and 64 females were thus interviewed. Table 1 gives the distribution.

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Males	56	47
Females	64	53

Total	120	100
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Source: Field survey, 2014

From Table 1, it is realized that 56 respondents representing 47% of the total number were males while 64 representing 53% of the total number were females. This clearly shows that there were more female participants than males in this survey and it may be as a result of the sampling technique used in selecting respondents.

4.1.2 Educational Qualification

This was to find out the highest qualification of respondents. Responses were as follows:-

Out of the 120 respondents, 19, representing 15.8% held degrees. 25, representing 20.8% of respondents held diploma while 32, representing 26.7% had SSSCE certificates. 20 representing 16.7% of respondents had JHS certificates. 24, representing 20.0 % of respondents had no formal education as shown in Table 2.

Table 4.2: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Degree	19	15.8
Diploma	25	20.8
SSSCE	32	26.7
JHS	20	16.7
None	24	20.0
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2014

It was realized from Table 2 that only 44 respondents representing 36.6% had tertiary education certificates while 32, representing 26.7% had SSSCE certificates. 16.7% (20) of the respondents were JHS graduates while 24, representing 20% had no formal education.

4.1.3 Number of Years Spent at Asawase

This was to find out the number of years respondents had stayed in the community. Responses are as follows.

Out of 120 respondents, 23 forming 19.2% had spent less than 5 years; 37 representing 30.8% had spent between 6–10 years; 42 constituting 35.0% had spent between 11–15 years while 18 representing 15.0% had spent over 15 years in the Asawase community. Figure 1 illustrates further.

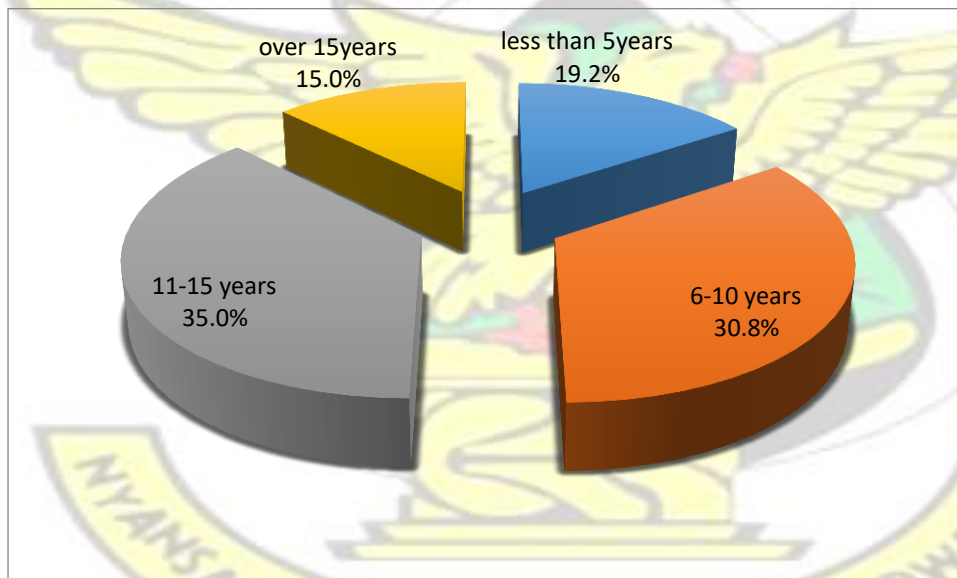


Figure 4.1: Number of Years Spent at Asawase Source:
Field survey, 2014

It is realized from Figure 4.1 that the majority, 35.0% of respondents had spent between 11-15 years while 19.2% had spent less than 5 years in the community. In a sense it can be said that almost all respondents had spent at least a year in the community.

4.2 Rites of passage of the Muslims in Asawase

In finding out about the various rites of passages of Muslims, all respondents said that birth, marriage and death rites are rites of passage of the Muslims community in Asawase. Respondents were also asked if they had gone through these rites. With the exception of death rites, all respondents agreed that they had gone through the rites at a point in their lives. In an answer to whether they do participate in the performance of such rites, all respondents said that they do whenever possible or every time such as an occasion comes. Respondents assigned the following reasons for their constant participation:- as a way of fulfilling societal obligation and also gaining basic knowledge with regard to the ceremonies as well as obeying the Holy Quran which mandates them to do so. The researcher, per the purpose of the study as stated in the delimitation seeks to vividly describe in details both birth and marriage rites of Muslims in Asawase.

4.2.1 Birth Rites – At Asawase

According to Islamic teachings, any ritual or religious events should be observed in conformity with the Qur'an (Holy Book) or the Sunnah and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W). To complete this Sunnah (birth rites), a child should be taken through a set of practices which are fundamental for every Muslim to follow. Although some of these practices can be carried out without necessarily going by the laid down procedures involved depending on one's capability and intentions. These practices include Adhan (the call to prayer), Tahnik, Taweez, male circumcision and Aqiqah (naming the child and slaughtering of sheep as a form of thanksgiving to Allah).

4.2.1.1 Adhan and Iqaamat

The first practice Muslims of Asawase observe when a baby is born is to call Adhan into the ears of the newly born. It is usually the father or a respected member of the local community who whispers the Adhan into the baby's right ear and Iqaamat in the left. The interviews, however, revealed that not all the Muslims in the community observe this particular practice. Upon visitations to the hospitals and Muslim homes, it was noticed that immediately after the birth of a Muslim baby, the father performs the Adhan and Iqaamat for it. There is a slight differences between Adhan and Iqaamat; the wording of Adhan is reduced so that the wording that is repeated twice in the Adhan is said once in Iqaamat, except the last phrase of *Allahu Akbar*. Adhan is said to call Muslims to come and pray whiles Iqaamat is recited immediately before prayers are observed. The recitations into the baby's ears are the name of Allah, the Creator and the Declaration of Faith - "There is no deity but Allah; Muhammad (S.A.W) is the Messenger of Allah". The researcher's interview with Imam Alhassan revealed that these fundamental pronouncements serve as the spindle around which the life of a Muslim rotates. The entire ceremony takes only a few minutes. This, the researcher witnessed following an earlier arrangement with Sister Hawa, a senior sister to the mother of a newly born at Asawase.

4.2.1.2 Tahnik

The second practice after a new baby is born, and also accepted by the Islamic scholars and all Imams is to give anything sweet for the baby to taste and this includes the pulp of soft dates, honey, the Holy water (Zamzam), etc. The researcher was able to observe this private practice, when his own brother's wife gave birth within the period this research was being organised. In this case, honey was used since it was common at that time. The father of the child poured a little on a saucer, raised his son to the chest

level on the left and finally dipped his finger into the honey and rubbed it on the tongue of the newly born child after Allah's name had been pronounced over it. This was done three days after the baby had been born. The practice, however, varies depending on the parents and the availability of the sweet.

This was affirmed when the researcher interviewed Sheik Nuhu, (20th December, 2014) who said that it was the practice of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.M).

4.2.1.3 Taweez

Taweez is a common practice of the Muslims in Asawase but the practice varies within the Muslim tribes in terms of the manner it is carried out. The Taweez is a black piece of string with a small pouch containing a documented prayer, which is tied around the baby's wrist or neck. According to Sheik Mohammed Ahmed Nazir and other Imams, this practice is particularly common among Muslims from the Indian subcontinent, who believe that it protects the baby from unhealthy life. The basic intention or motive behind this practice is to seek protection from Allah for the child. As a result of this information, the researcher organised interviews for Muslims of Asawase community on the performance of such rites within their rank. It was realised that they had different ways of practicing the *taweez*. Some of them simply recite some Qur'anic texts into the palm and rub it over the body of the newborn.

Some of the Qur'anic texts popularly recited include:

SURATUL IKHLAS (THE PURITY)

Bismillahi-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahiim, *Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad, Allahu samadi, Lam yalid, walam yuulad, Walamya kulahu kufiwan ahad.*

Qur'an chapter 112 v 1-5

Translation

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Say (O" Muhammad pbuh): He is Allah, the one, Allah – the self-sufficient Master (whom all creatures need), He begets not, nor was He Begotten, And there is none co-equal or comparable to Him.

SURATUL FALAQ (THE DAWN)

Bismillahi-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahiim, Qulauuzu bi Rabbil falaq, Miin sharri maa khalaq:

Wa miin sharri gaasiqin iza waqab. Wa miin sharri nafaathaati fil uqad.

Wa miin sharri haasidin iza hasad.

Qur'an: Chapter 113 v 1-5

Translation

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Say: "I seek refuge with (Allah), the Lord of daybreak, from the evil of what He has created,

And from the evil of the darkening night) as it comes with its darkness And

from the evil of those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knot, And

from the evil of the envier when he envies".

SURATUL NAAS (MANKIND)

Bismillahi-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahiim,

Qul a-uuzu bi Rabbin- NAAS. Malikin-NAAS, Ilaahin-NAAS. Min-sharril-

WaswaasilKhan-NAAS,-Allazii yuwas-wisu fiisuduurin-Naasi,-Minal-Jinnati Wan-Naas.

Translation

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, The King (or Ruler) of Mankind, The God (or Judge) of Mankind, - From the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper), - Among Jinns and among Mankind.

Hajia Jannatu Abdullai attested to the fact and added that it is done at any time, especially within the first seven days after the delivery.

4.2.1.4 Male Circumcision

The Muslims of Asawase community practice male circumcision as it is an important religious duty in Islam and recommended by Prophet Mohammed in his Sunnah for believers. Sheikh Amin in his account on this subject made it emphatically clear that Islam does not support female circumcision. On the field, it was discovered that Muslim parents do not conduct the circumcision themselves but rather contract the specialist, either local or exotic. The study shows clearly that out of the 120 respondents, 104 representing 87% prefer the local specialists called „Wanzam“ and 16 representing 13% also preferred the medical doctor. Reasons assigned to their preference for „wanzams“ over medical doctors was that the „Wanzams“ beside their expertise are basically Muslims. This also means that most of the circumcisions at Asawase take place in the various homes.

A „Wanzam“ by name Fuseini, before circumcising shaved the hair of the new born after he had covered the body of the baby with the exception of the head with a cloth. He placed the child on his lap and put a little water in a brass bowl. After praying over

it, he moistened the baby's hair with the water and with the aid of a blade shaved off all its hair. After that, the Wanzam removed the cloth and raised the child up and critically examined the body and the penis after which he placed the baby on a mat with a pillow on the floor. He then opened the baby's legs apart and stepped on them gently. This was to give him enough space and a clear view of the penis. He then held the tip of the penis (that is the foreskin) and pressed it inward. With a sharp blade, the foreskin was then cut off. Some wanzams prefer using the shaving knife (As'ka) while others because education and health conditions use a razor blade. The penis was then dressed with some medicine called black medicine (*Tuntum eduro*) which is spread over a folded cotton and wrapped carefully around the penis for a period of time after which it is removed and the wound is left to heal on its own. According to Fuseini, circumcision can be done at any point in time, but preferably from the 3rd to 8th day after the baby's birth.

4.2.1.5 Aqiqah

On the 8th day, aqiqah (naming ceremony) is performed for the child. At dawn around 5:00am time of Fajir (Dawn prayer), the father of the newborn child in consultation with his wife submits the proposed name of the baby to the Imam together with some sweets (Hawks) and money. The Imam after the Fajir prayer prays over the name and makes pronouncement of the name to the Muslims Umar (people) gathered in the mosque. This is immediately followed by a short talk, basically on the meaning of the name after which people present seek blessings in prayer for the child. The researcher, however, observed that usually the child for whom the event is organised is not taken to the mosque during the event where the Imams make pronouncement of its name. The researcher also noted that Muslim couples choose names for their unborn babies be it a girl or boy and that pronouncement at the mosque is only to make people aware of the

baby's existence. The event is followed by the slaughtering of a sheep provided by the father as a sacrifice to Allah as thanks giving for the gift of the child. The slaughtered sheep is used for meals usually rice and shared amongst all who came to witness the occasion, and neighbours.

4.3 Marriage rites – At Asawase

Marriage is a civil contract in Islam as well as a religious imperative. Islamic marriage ceremonies often last for three days after consultation and agreements between the two families and importantly among the couples themselves. Most of marriage ceremonies in Asawase takes place from Friday to Sunday. Before the contract of a marriage, both parties (bride and groom) have to meet certain principles. According to Sheikh Nuru (20th December, 2014) a scholar, teachings of Islam makes it clear that no man or woman should be forced into marriage. That means that most importantly both the man and the woman have to agree to love and cherish each other in their life time as couples. Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Nazir in an interview (23rd December, 2014) explained the meaning of Nikah (Islamic marriage) as “two opposite sexes coming together to satisfy their sexual duties in a lawful way”. He further explained that marriage in Islam is also a union between two families who have consented to the marriage upon which a date is fixed for the ceremony. Before commencement of the ceremony, the groom's family would visit the bride's family thrice each time presenting a gift. The first visit is to seek the bride's hand in marriage while the second is to ascertain their acceptance or otherwise of the request upon which a date is fixed for the knocking rite if approval is given by the bride's family. The third visit, however, is meant for the payment of the “knocking fee” and presentation of the bride's dowry. According to the selected scholars and imams, payment of the bride price or dowry cements the marriage and makes it lawful. The subsequent ceremony

that is the wedding, ceremony or party is just to create public awareness. Prior to the outdoor ceremony, the groom buys presents for the bride towards the rite. These items referred to as the “Lééfé” include a mat, clothes, shoes amongst others and Lélé, a concoction made from leaves.

Most marriage ceremonies in Asawase are conducted as follows:-

On the eve of Friday around 8:00pm, the bride is decorated with lélé on both hands and feet up to the wrists and ankles respectively and covered with plastic and left for some time. This exercise is normally carried out by an old lady of the house. Hajia Hajar (30th December, 2014) asserts that putting the bride in lélé distinguishes her from the lot and also adds beauty to the body. Culturally, the bride is then kept indoors until the third day. During the period, she is prevented from eating from her parent's house and only her friends referred to as “*Abuyan Amariya*” meaning bride’s friend or servants are allowed to cook for her.

On the second day (Saturday), a beautician and also an artist comes around in the morning to design the body of the bride with some dye mixed with lélé. The designing of the bride’s body takes between 1 to 2 hours depending on the type of design.

The researcher was fortunate to witness some of such events.

Designs witnessed by the researcher were all floral and were found on the hands, feet, waist and around the necks of the bride. On the same Saturday around 4:30pm, there was a drama called “*Murza*” literally meaning rubbing. The bride was brought out of her room and placed in the middle of the house. Old women in the community gathered around the bride who at the time was only covered from the breast to knee with a piece of cloth and rubbed the bride’s body with a mixture of lélé and perfume after which she took her bath.

On the third and final day, the two families met at the mosque with the exception of the couple. The Imam invited two members each from the families basically the parents to confirm whether or not the groom had paid the necessary dowry referred to as the „Mahr“ to which the bride’s family answered in the affirmative. The Imam then proceeded to bless the marriage with Quran recitation. All these were done in a language acceptable to the people present except the pronouncement of blessings that was in Arabic language. The Imam then gave his last preaching after which the congregation went to their various homes. The walimah (party) took off after this. Couples from their individual homes converged at a chosen venue where the walimah was taking place with families and friends. The manner in which people of Asawase conduct their Walimah (wedding party) are in different forms. While some people prefer meeting at one place to make merry others prefer the gathering at the individual residence of the “Ango” (the groom) and “Amariya” (the bride’s).

4.4 Art Forms Associated with the Rites of Passage

Art is within the domain of cultural activity. It includes poetry, plays, novels, movies, dance, music, puppetry, etc. The researcher wanted to know from respondents whether there were any art forms associated with the various rites performed in the Asawase community. From a sampled population of 120, 89 representing 74% of respondents said there were while 31 constituting 26% also said there were not. This shows that majority were of the view that rites of passage are associated with art forms.

Interrogation, however, revealed that the minority who answered in the negative even though were aware of the practice but did not consider it as art forms. This was after the researcher had educated them on art forms. The researcher for the sake of clarity of the study decided to categorize these art forms into verbal, visual and performing.

4.4.1 Verbal Arts associated with Birth Rites of Muslims in Asawase

Verbal Arts are oral art forms and that includes prayer, incantations, recitations, poems etc.

When a child is born to a Muslim parent at Asawase, it is a customary right for the father, or any respected member of the community to whisper the Adhan and Iqaamah (a verbal art) into the baby's right ear. These words include the name of Allah and the

Declaration of Faith as: "There is no deity but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". The recitation into the ears of the new baby is a form of verbal art. Sheikh Alhassan asserts that, when a child is born Satan tries to find a place in the heart of the baby; that is why the Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W) recommends that Adhan should be said to ward off any form of demon from the newborn. The other selected Muslim scholars also confirmed to this. It was, however, emphasized that, even though the practice is not compulsory, the Holy Prophet strongly recommended it. *Allaahu Akbaru!*

Allaahu Akbaru! 4x, Ash- haduan laa ilaaha illa Laah! 2x

Ash-haduanna Muhommadan Rasuulu Laah 2x, Hayyaa lal Salaaat Hayyaa lal Salaaat

Hayyaa lal Falaah Hayyaa lal Falaah, Allaahu Akbaru! Allaahu Akbaru

Laa ilaaha illa Laah

Translation

Allah is Great! Allah is Great! I bear witness that there is no God except Allah!

I bear witness that Mohammed is a Messenger of Allah! (O believers), Come to prayer!

(O believers), Come and achieve success! Allah is Great! Allah is Great!

There is no god except Allah!

(Azodanloo, 1992)

This is usually recited in an artistic poetic manner.



Plate 4.1: Father performs Adhan for his newborn Source: Field survey, 2014.

Parents also recite Qur'anic texts (Taweez) to seek divine intervention for the child from demons and witchcraft. The recitation also forms part of verbal Art and some of them include; *Suratul Ikhlas*, *Suratul Falaq*, and *Suratul Naas*.

Suratul Ikhlas

Bismillahi-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahiim,

Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad,

Allahu samadi,

Lamyalid, walam yuulad,

Walam yakulahu kufuwan ahad.

Qur'an chapter 112 v 1-5

Translation

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Say (O" Muhammad (pbuh): He is Allah, the one, Allah – the self-sufficient Master (whom all creatures need), He begets not, nor was He Begotten, And there is none co-equal or comparable to Him.

Suratul Falaq

Bismillahi-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahiim,

Qulauuzu bi Rabbil falaq,

Miin sharri maa khalaq

Wa miin sharr igaasiqin izaa waqab.

Wa miin sharri nafaathaati fil uqad.

Wa miin sharri haasidin izaa hasad.

Quran: chapter. 113 v 1-5

Translation

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Say: " I seek refuge with (Allah), the Lord of daybreak, from the evil of what He has created,

And from the evil of the darkening night) as it comes with its darkness And from

the evil of those who practise witchcraft when they blow in the knot,

And from the evil of the envier when he envies”.

Suratul Naas

Bismillahi-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahiim, Qul

a-uuzu bi Rabbin- NAAS.

Malikin-NAAS,

Ilaahin-NAAS.

Min-sharril-Waswaasil-Khan-NAAS,- Allaziiyuwas-

wisufiisuduurin-Naasi,- Minal-Jinnati Wan-Naas.

Quran: Chapter. 114 v 1-6

Translation

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, The King (or Ruler) of Mankind, The God (or Judge) of Mankind, - From the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper), - Among Jinns and among Men.

Aside the artistic poetry nature of these recitations, there are also some elements of principles of design such as dominance, rhythm, repetition and rhymes when reciting and that brings the artistic value in them.

4.4.2 Performing Arts associated with Birth Rites of the Muslims in Asawase

(a) Tasting of Palm Date ritual

Soon after birth, and preferably before the infant is fed, a small piece of softened palm date is gently rubbed inside the mouth. Where dates are not easily available, substitutes

such as honey may be used. A respected member of the family often performs this in the hope that some of his/her positive attributes will be transmitted to the infant. This artistic ceremony is called Tahnik. Plates 2a and 2b illustrations the process.



Plate 4.2a: Performance of Tahnik



Plate 4.2b: Honey is rubbed on a Baby's Lips or Tongue. Source: Field survey, 2014.

(b) Hair Shaving ritual (Body Arts)

Aside reciting the Adhan and gently rubbing palm dates or honey on the baby's tongue. All the hair of the child is shaved artistically between the first and the eighth day when the child is named. The significance of this ceremony, according to Sheik Haruna personal communication (November, 23, 2013) is that the Holy Prophet (SAW) performed this ritual for his children and since Muslims follow the footsteps of the Prophet, it behooves on them to do same. Moreover, Sheik Nuhu in his interview with the researcher on June, 2013 mentioned that Muslims are of the belief that a new born child's hair carries some dirt and therefore needs to be shaved to allow the growth of fresh ones as shown in Plate 4. After the shaving the hair is weighted and its equivalent in cedis given to the poor and needy in the society and also to show gratitude to God.



Plate 4.3: Shaving a baby's hair

Source: Field Study 2014. Picture taken by researcher.

4.4.3 Circumcision (Body Art)

Male circumcision is an important religious duty in Islam and is required by believers to perform on their newborn sons. It reinforces human submission to God while others view the practice as an important preventive measure against infection. It is also done

to imitate Muhammad, who was circumcised. The contentious practice of female circumcision that is present in many parts of the world does not have any religious backing as compared to male circumcision. Muslim scholars and Imams interviewed shared the same assertion with Donohue & Esposito, (2000) that female circumcision is non-Islamic and is therefore not practiced by the Muslim community in Asawase.

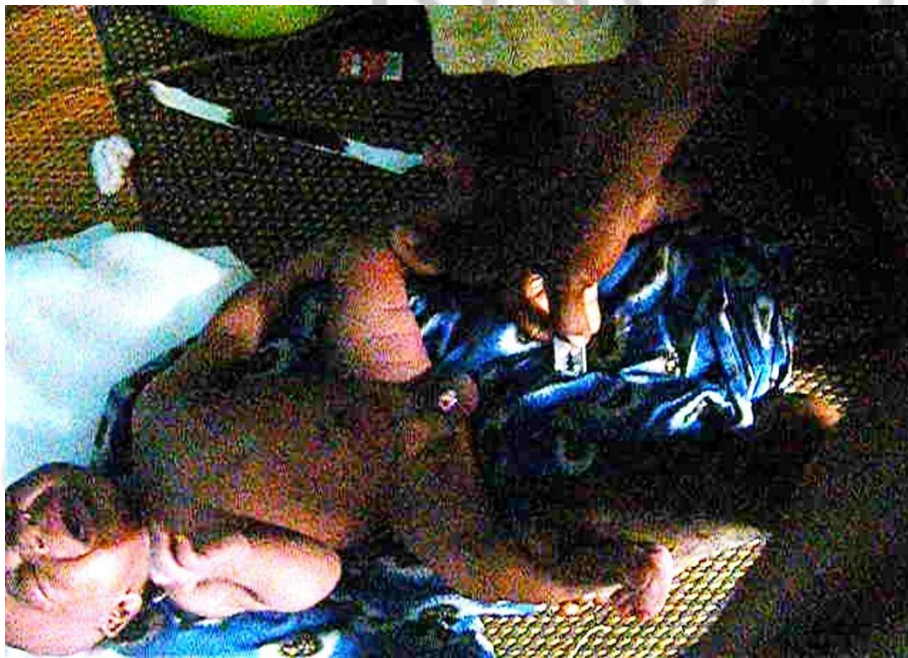


Plate 4:4: Circumcision of a male child by wanzam

Source: Field study 2014. Picture taken by researcher at Asawase.

The Wanzam makes use of some visual elements (tools and materials) that help him to carry on with his circumcision artistically. His main aim is to give the penis a pleasant look. These include; a brass bowl (Tassa), knife or blade. Fuseini, in an interview revealed that modernization, education and technology have had a major influence on the performance of their duties as wanzams. According to him, wanzams were using knives referred to as “as’ka” for circumcision, but due to the wide spread of HIV and other infectious diseases, razor blades which are disposed off immediately are used instead.

4.4.4 Visual Arts associated with Birth Rites of the Muslims in Asawase

The following plates illustrate some of the artifacts that the researcher took on the field of study which have been categorized to the Visual art section.

(a) The Wanzam's Knife



Plate 4.5: A Wanzam displaying the “as’ka” knife

Source: Field Study. Picture by researcher at Asawase, 2014.

The Wanzam's knife made with brass metal handle and steel silvered blade which is designed artistically with vertical lines at the edge of the blade.

(b) Brass Bowl



Plate 4.6: Brass bowl called “Tassa”

Source: Field Study. Picture taken by researcher at Asawase, 2014.

The brass bowl was aesthetically inscribed with Roman letters or alphabets and geometric star shapes inside it. The other bowl was artistically designed with Arabic writings. The inscriptions in the brass bowls according to Fuseini are prayers some of which are Qur’anic verses and other secret writings. The researcher tried to find out the meaning of these verses and secret writings but Fuseini refused to give an answer. The Wanzam stores water in the brass bowl during circumcising and shaving of a child’s hair.

4.5 Visual Arts associated with Marriage Rites of Muslims in Asawase

Visual Arts refer to art forms that can be seen and touched which includes drawings, paintings, sculpture, ceramics etc. The researcher at this point wanted to ascertain whether there were any art forms in the performance of marriage ceremonies within the selected study area. According to Sheikh Nuhu marriage in Islam is called „nikah“ which literally means union or agreement between a man and a woman who have decided to marry after the acceptance of a dowry.

Due to *nikah*, a lady who initially was taught to view sex as sinful outside wedlock, now not only becomes a lawful and willing partner for sexual relationship with her husband, but she, more importantly, becomes his soul-mate to share in each other's joys and sorrows. There are numerous benefits of *nikah* (spiritual, moral, physical, psychological, etc.). Other Muslim scholars in the Asawase community also shared the same views.

According to the scholars and imams, marriage in Islam is based on three main ideas or systems. The first is the acceptance or consensual agreement between the man and a woman. The second is the payment of the dowry, usually money, by the man to the woman's family. The amount of money paid is dependent on the man's wealth although the prophet had explained in his Hadith that the dowry could be a little amount. The third is the representative or religious leader who would pronounce or officiate the marriage ceremony. The pronouncer or officiator is usually the Imam. The representative during officiation would confer with the families by asking the family of the bride whether the man has paid the dowry. If paid, he asks the bride's family whether they had accepted and thereby given out their daughter to the man in marriage. The Imam asks for a witness who saw the transaction, and then asks the people present to also bear witness. Having had their approval, prayers are said to bless the marrying couple after which the marriage becomes official.

On Friday, the bride's hands and feet are smeared with *lélé*. The following plate (8 and 9) shows the process of applying the *lélé*.



Plate 4.7: Preparation of “Lélé”

Source: Field Survey, 2014



Plate 4.8: Tying of the feet with plastic and thread after application of lélé Source:

Picture by researcher at Asawase, 2014.

The artistic nature of this ritual comes about when powdered leaves dye is mixed and skillfully applied and tied around the bride’s feet and hands to change the colour of the feet and the hand in order to enhance the beauty of the body and also for

identification.

4.5.1.1 Body Art on the bride

Body Art is any art form that is found on the body which includes tattoos, scarifications, coiffure, wearing of beads etc. Some Muslim women in Asawase who are about to get married put various designs on their bodies, wear various kinds of beads and hair styles and head gears as well. These are all aspects of body art as found in figure 10 and 11. Another important thing worthy of mentioning is that Islam does not support drawings (figure drawing) on the body. The practice has come about due to modernization and social change and more so to beautify the woman for her husband. These designs are basically floral and geometric shapes. The pictures below show some of the drawings now associated with marriage rites.



Plate 4.9: Floral Designs on a Bride's Foot

Source: Field survey, 2014

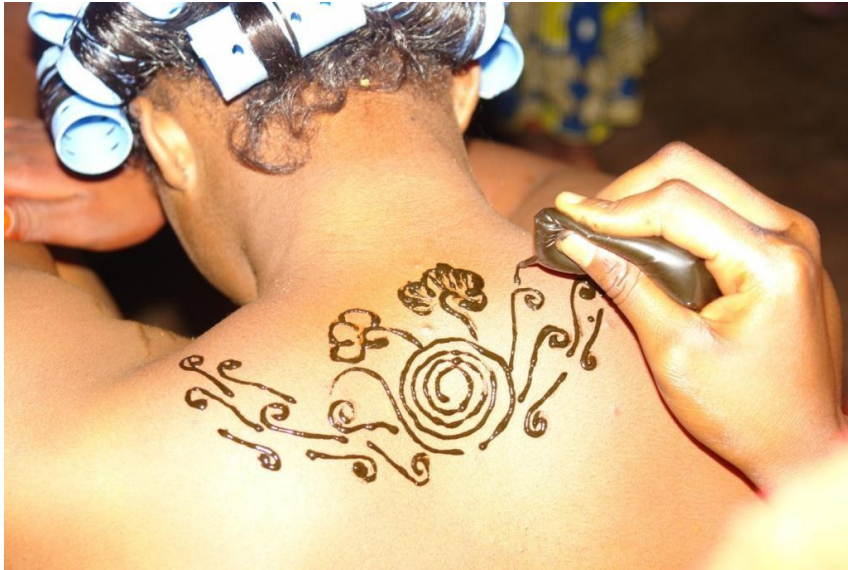


Plate 4.10: Embossment of Floral design on the back of a Woman to be married

Source: Field Survey, 2014

The research also reveals that Muslims bride in Asawase adorn themselves with beads with different colours to suit their costumes. The colours of the beads range from red, orange, yellow, violet, blue and white which signify prosperity, victory, richness etc. The bride also put on ornamental rings made of precious stones; gold, diamond, and metal (silver) which are all visual art forms.



Plate 4.11: Muslim Bride adorned with Beads on the Marriage day at Asawase.

Source: Field Survey, 2014. Picture taken by researcher.



Plate 4.12: Muslim Bride adorned in a beautiful headgear on her Wedding Day

Source: Field Survey, 2014. Picture taken by researcher during a marriage ceremony

Muslims are also well noted for their long dresses which are prescribed in the Holy Qur'an Chapter 33:59 which says:

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when out of doors): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Muslims in Asawase hold this verse with high esteem and do observe it by wearing the "Hijab" and "Albaaya" (Muslim female dress) and "Jalbab" (Muslim male dress).



Plate 4.13: Display of some of the Hijab

Source: Field Survey, 2014. Picture taken by researcher in Boutiques in Asawase.



Plate 4.14: Display of Some of the Jalbab.

Source: Field Survey, 2014. Picture taken by researcher from a stall in Asawase.

4.5.2 Performing Art associated with Marriage Rites of the Muslims in Asawase

On the second day, the old women in the society come around and perform a drama called “Murza” for the bride to be. The Murza is done to purify the bride to be and to enhance her beauty.



Plate 4.15: Performance of „Murza“ on a bride

Source: Field Survey, 2014. Picture taken by researcher.

This cultural practice is accompanied by traditional songs as found below:

Yenzu munasaa amarya lélé:

*Bissimillahe Arrahmani [munfaara da suunanallah] keey kikaache kinaasoo daa baa
ba ki sheebah.*

keey kikaache kinaasoo daa baa ba ki sheebah.

Keey kikaache kinaasoo daa baa ba ki sheebah.

Yawshe daa mugantaa shee da cheekii shee da gooyoh.

Yawshe daa mugantaa shee da cheekii shee da gooyoh.

Aaayirireee, Aaayirireee,

Translation

Now we are applying the bride with lélé:

We start in the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

You say you want him, they [his parent] wouldn't have given him to you.

You say you want him, they [his parent] wouldn't have given him to you.

You say you want him, they [his parent] wouldn't have given him to you.

When are we going to see you?

Only when pregnant and nursing your child.

Another song:

*Ayaayee yaayee lélé zoo kaache samaaree kooowa da yaarah, Lélé
kazookani naawah koowaa da yaraa.*

*Ayaayee yaayee lélé zoo kaache samaaree kooowa da yaarah, Lélé
kazookani naawah koowaa da yaraa.*

*Ayaayee yaayee lélé zoo kaache samaaree kooowa da yaarah, Lélé
kazookabani naawah koowaa da yaraa.*

Translation

Ayaayee yaayee lélé come and eat the young man everybody with child.

Lélé come give me my share, everybody with child.

Ayaayee yaayee lélé come and eat the young man everybody with child.

Lélé come give me my share, everybody with child.

Ayaayee yaayee lélé come and eat the young man everybody with child.

Lélé come give me my share, everybody with child.

Islamic marriages ceremony normally takes place at the mosque between the two families with an officiating minister in the absence of the intended couple. They remain in their various homes until the event in the mosque is over. After that, various gatherings are set up in different homes referred to as the „walimah“; the bride gathers with her family and friends, likewise the groom for merry making where they eat, drink and dance. It is at this gathering that the bride and groom are out-doored. On this occasion, many art forms and cultural performances are displayed. The „walimah“ according to the scholars does not form a necessary part of the marriage ceremony but rather it is done to climax the nikah as a social function. Usually the couple invite their friends; both Muslims and non-Muslims to their merry-making function. Music and dance are allowed, but the type of songs and dance steps should be in conformity with the standards of Islam. The following are some pictures of walimah.



Plate 4.16: Muslim Couple Dressed For the party (Walimah) Source: Field Survey, 2014. Picture taken by researcher

Special foods associated with the Muslim community are cooked and served to guests. Normally, foods that are served during these ceremonies in Asawase are that which are common to the people like *waache* (*shinkaafa da waache*) or Rice and beans, *tuo-*

nshinkaafa da mia-ngushya (Rice balls and groundnut soup), *tuo-zaafi* and non-alcoholic drinks.



Plate 4.17: Various kinds of foods displayed at an Islamic Wedding. Source: Field Survey, 2014



Plate 4.18: Queue of People waiting to be served at a Marriage feast
Source: Field Survey, 2014

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to round off the study with a summary of findings, to make conclusion and recommendations. The conclusions would be made from the analysis and objectives of the research.

5.1 Summary

The focus of the study was based on the art in rites of passage amongst Muslims in Asawase. Where the objectives included describing birth and marriage rites observed by Muslims community in Asawase and also to identify and document the significance of the various art forms which are associated with birth and marriage rites. Instruments used for the study were interviews and observations. Both primary and secondary data were used in conducting the research. Population for the study was the Muslim community in Asawase using the simple random and purposive sampling technique in selecting respondents. A total number of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents were used for the study The main findings of the study were:

1. The study reveals that, the various rites of passage of the Muslims in Asawase include birth and marriage rites. Muslims birth rite in Asawase goes through these set of rituals: Adhan, Tahnik, Taweez, Circumcision, and Aqiqah. Also their marriage rituals are as follows: Knocking, Paying of Mahr, Murza or Mosawa, Blessing of the marriage, and Walimah. It was clear that, some of the Muslims in Asawase do not have an in-depth knowledge on these rites as prescribed by Almighty Allah and his messenger, The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

2. The study also revealed that, Muslims in Asawase use various forms of Art (visual, verbal and performing arts) in their birth and marriage rites. Various art forms found in both birth and marriage rites are as follows:

BIRTH RITES

- Verbal arts: Recitation of Adhan (call to prayer or Declaration of faith) and Taweez (set of prayers).
- Performing arts: Tahnik (rubbing of sweet) and Aqiqah (sacrifice).
- Visual art: Male Circumcision.

MARRIAGE RITES

- Verbal art: Blessing of the marriage.
- Visual arts: floral body design, wearing beads, rings, head gear and costumes (Hijab and Jalbab).
- Performing arts: Murza, paying of mahr, knocking and walimah.

3. Some of significance of the Adhan (visual art) is the first recitation every Muslim newly born has to hear as a form of declaration of faith to Allah, Murza (performing art) and body drawing (visual art) serve as a form of identification and beautification for the bride respectively.

5.2 Conclusions

It is evident from the study that, Muslims in Asawase do celebrate both birth and marriage rites. It also clear to point out that Muslims in Asawase employ various art forms (i.e. visual, verbal and performing art) in association with the performance of these rites.

Despite the relevance of these rites, it was also realized that the ceremonies have had many challenges. Some Muslims in Asawase for lack of knowledge on the teachings of Islam make some mistakes in performing these rites. Such mistakes do come as a result of urbanization and westernization. Many people, especially the youth, leave their family home and travel to other cities with different cultural settings as well as the western countries in Europe and North America in search of greener pastures. Their long association with these alien cultures disorients their minds to look down on their own indigenous cultures. The resultant effect is that, they (the youth) disregard their religious beliefs, traditional values and sanctions whilst they embrace the western style of life which have had influence on the performance of these rites.

Some of the aspects of these art forms in the birth rite (Adhan and Tahnik), and marriage rite (mode of dance, type of secular music played, temporal body drawings (tattoos) etc.) are not proficiently performed due to lack of knowledge which goes against the teachings of Allah and His messenger. Interviews granted to the researcher by Islamic scholars and Imams confirm that Muslims in Asawase in their celebration of birth and marriage rites play some secular music and also dance together (i.e. male and female dancing together in public). Indeed such practice has become a great worry for Muslims leaders in Asawase even though they are doing their best through education to eradicate the practice. It was also discovered that, the drawings on the bride's body during marriage rite was non-Islamic.

This study has shown that, Muslims in Asawase spend much during marriage rites. Some Muslim parents sometimes request huge bride price and other expensive things like jewelries, clothing, footwear, etc. to be given to the bride and as a result, Muslim male youth in Asawase finds it difficult to marry due to financial problems and then took shelter in unapproved relationships.

In spite of all these challenges, rites of passage still play an important role in the culture of Muslims in the Asawase community and most people are willing to perform these rites to the best of their abilities.

5.3 Recommendations

From the study it was realized that rites of passage form an integral part of Muslims, especially those in Asawase. As an integral part of Muslim culture, there is the need to improve upon the rites compatible with Islamic culture. For that reason, the following recommendations are therefore made to make them attractive to the Muslim:-

1. The Ghana Muslim Student Association (GMSA) should organize seminars or public talks to educate youth in the Muslim communities the rightful way of performing birth and marriage rites in relation with the teachings of Almighty Allah and his messenger.
2. Imams could prepare a special sermon on Adhan and Tahnik to be delivered at the mosque service on Fridays (Jumah prayers) at least once in every month to educate Muslims on the relevance of these Adhan and Tahnik.
3. Muslims opinion leaders and Imams could educate Muslims on the rightful usage of these art forms (Performing, Visual and Verbal Art) so that their relative significance can be achieved as prescribed by Almighty Allah and His messenger (PBUH).

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide on topic:

TOPIC: ART AND RITES OF PASSAGE AMONGST MUSLIMS IN

ASAWASE

(A) Islamic birth rites

1. What is birth rite in the Islamic perspective? Is there any Islamic name given to birth rites?
2. What is the step by step procedure Muslims do when a child is newly born?
3. How do Muslims perform their Naming ceremony or birth rites?
4. How do Muslims choose names for their newly born child?
5. Is it compulsory for every Muslim to perform birth rite for their newly born child?
6. Do Muslims employ various Art forms in their birth rites?
7. Why do Muslims recite the Adhan (call to prayer) and Iqamah into the ears of the newly born child?
8. What is the significance of calling the Adhan into the ears of the newly born child?
9. How do Muslims perform Tahnik and what is the most significant is this drama (Tahnik) to the newly born child?
10. What is Taweez?
11. Is it Islamically good, for newly born children to wear it (Taweez) and what is its relevance to the newly born child? How is it done
12. Is it compulsory for Muslims to circumcise their newly born child?
13. How is it (circumcise) done and what are its relevance to the child and

Muslims as a whole?

14. What is Aqiqah?

15. How does Muslim perform the Aqiqah ritual and what is its significance to the newly born child? Is there any prayer attached to the sacrifice.

16. Why do Muslims shave the hairs of their newly born child?

17. What are reasons for shaving the newly born child?

(B) Islamic marriage rites

1. What is marriage in Islam? Is there any Islamic name for marriage rites?

2. How are Islamic marriages arranged or performed?

3. What is the view or the concept of marriage with regards to the Quran and the Sunnah the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)?

4. Is marriage mandatory or optional? At what age can one get married (male or female)

5. What happen if one doesn't get married intentionally? Any hadith to support the point

6. What are the criteria for selecting a partner in Islamic practice?

7. How many wives can a man marry in Islam and why?

8. Can one be forced to get married? And what is the position of Islam

9. What is the Islamic view of Art?

10. Do Muslims employ art forms in their marriage rites with regards to visual, verbal and performing Art?

11. Do Muslims offer prayers, sacrifices or rituals during marriage rites? Any example and why

12. Why do Muslims bride adorn themselves with designs (body art) on their body during their marriage rites? Is there any meanings or reasons why
13. What is the significance of these design or symbols (body art) that are made on the bride's body?
14. What is Mahr (Dowry)?
15. Is Mahr (dowry) compulsory or optional in Islamic marriage?
16. What is the significance of paying Mahr (dowry) in Islamic marriage?
17. What is Walimah?
18. How is Walimah performed? Is there any prayers, sacrifice, ritual or drama that performed during Walimah
19. What is the significance of these art forms?

