LIVED EXPERIENCES
OF BORANA MUSLIMS
: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE
AYYAANA SPIRIT POSSESSION CULT*

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■ ABSTRACT

Contemporary Islamic studies tend to incline towards the ideologies that originate from the official texts, the Qur'an, and hadith. These have essentially overlooked the lived experiences of the ordinary Muslims as they go about their daily lives. A pertinent question arises thus: Are these lived experiences compliant with the official precepts? This paper seeks to answer this question by examining the lived experiences of Borana Muslims in Marsabit County, Kenya, as they participate in possession séances. These are examined in light of the official tenets concerning the spirit world as understood and taught by the Muslim teachers in the county. The findings of this study reveal that the ayyaana possession cult is a creative amalgamation of elements from three spheres: Sufism, Islam, and Borana traditions. This implies that the Borana Muslims' lived experiences do not comply with the official tenets as stipulated in the Qur'an and hadith.

Keywords: Lived Experiences, Cognitive Anthropology, Borana Muslims, *Ayyaana* Possession cult, Islam, Sufism

Ⅰ. INTRODUCTION

This paper employs an anthropological perspective in studying the lived experiences of Borana Muslims as they participate in the *ayyaana*[1] possession cult in Marsabit County, in the northern part of Kenya. The focus on such lived realities stems from the need to understand people in a realistic way in their daily lives as Muslims. Conventional Islamic studies tend to be skewed towards ideological issues more than the lived experiences of Muslims. Paula Saukko highlights the need to do justice to the realities of people under study.[2] Caleb Kim concurs with this, advocating the need to study Muslims as the "object of studies" instead of concentrating merely on non-human issues, as some classical Islamic studies tend to do.[3] This particular study joins the ranks of those supporting a concerted effort to understand Muslims' lived experiences. It is also significant in contributing knowledge about the spirit world among Muslims. It seeks to inform practitioners interested in understanding Borana Muslims more, particularly concerning the experiences of

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1   *Ayyaana* is a Borana word that has a threefold meaning. First, *ayyaana* refers to the days in a traditional calendar used by Borana people. Secondly, *ayyaana* is used as an aspect of good fortune. Thirdly, ayyaana is the generic name given to traditional spirits that are appeased by a group of Borana Muslims in Marsabit County. This paper deals with the third usage of *ayyaana* as possessive spirits among the Borana Muslims.

2   Paula Saukko, *Doing Research in Cultural Studies: An Introduction to Classical and New Methodological Approaches* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 3.

3   Caleb Chul-Soo Kim, *Islam Among the Swahili in East Africa*, 2nd ed. (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2016), 2.

Muslims who participate in the *ayyaana* possession cult.[4]

1. Some Background and Motivation for the Study

I developed the idea of exploring a spirit possession séance as I interacted with ordinary Muslims. As a non-Muslim, I was intrigued and fascinated by the constant explanations or reasons provided to explain sicknesses, untimely deaths, barrenness, etc. For example, Ali Shehe (pseudonym), was once an energetic teacher, but is now a *marata* (insane man), walking barefoot and spending the day conversing with himself. When I inquired what caused his condition, I was told that he was "hit by an evil jinni" that was envious of his progress. When my family was deployed to another mission setting, I encountered similar explanations given for the calamities that befell people. My friends would elucidate that so-and-so had been "caught by *ayyaana*" (*ayyaana kaba* in Borana), hence their illness. Apparently, after such a diagnosis, there would be the sound of drums beating in the village throughout the night, meant to appease the agitated spirits that had caused the illnesses.

The unmistakable belief in the spirit world (*ghaib* in Arabic) is prominent in Muslim communities in Africa. Umar Abd-Allah asserts that the belief in the ghaib is paramount for every Muslim, but it should be positioned within the context of *tawhid*

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4   The term "cult" refers to the system of veneration and devotion directed towards spirits and practitioners involved in the ritual practices.

(Oneness of God).[5] This caveat made me wonder if the drum beating was in line with what the Muslim teachers taught in the Islamic classes (*madrassa*). So began my quest for explanations, resulting in this paper as part of my empirical study to understand the "unseen face of Islam," as Bill Musk calls it, with a specific attention towards the Borana Muslims.[6]

2. Locating Borana Muslims

Borana[7] Muslims are found in the vast Marsabit County[8] in the northern region of Kenya. The majority trace their descent from Ethiopia, where they are part of the larger Oromo ethnic group.[9] Around the sixteenth century, they started migrating southwards from Ethiopia into the Northern Frontier District of present-day Kenya.[10] They speak *afan* Borana, which is a dialect

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5   F. Abd-Allah Umar, "The Perceptible and the Unseen: The Qur'anic Conception of Man's Relationship to God and Realities Beyond Human Perception," in *Mormons and Muslims: Spiritual Foundations and Modern Manifestations*, Ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Provo, UT: Religions Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2002), 210.

6   Bill A. Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims,* 1st ed. (MARC Evangelical Missionary Alliance, 1989).

7   Scholars spell this word differently: Boran, *Borana*, Booran. I prefer Borana, pronounced "boran." The last vowel a is also silent in *afan Borana*.

8   Marsabit County is home to a number of pastoral groups: Borana, Samburu, Rendille, Gabra, Turkana, Garre, Ajuran, Sakuye, and Degodia. Most parts of the county are arid or semi-arid, apart from some areas around Mount Marsabit and Hurri Hills.

9   The history of Borana Oromo migration into Kenya is provided by a number of scholars (see Arero, 2002; Aguilar, 1993 & 1998; Fratkin & Roth, 2005; Schlee, 1989).

10 Leus Tom and Salvadori Cynthia, *Aadaa Boraanaa: A Dictionary of Borana Culture* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Shama Books, 2006), vii.

of *afan* Oromo.

The larger Borana community in Kenya is subdivided geographically into Marsabit and Waso Borana. The latter reside further south in Isiolo County, and most of them are Muslims as a result of their proximity to the Somali people. The Marsabit Borana are found mainly in the Saku and Moyale sub-counties of Marsabit County. They are comprised of about 60 percent of Muslims and 40 percent of Christians and traditionalists. The Marsabit Borana Muslims are the focus of this study. The Waso Borana Muslims have already been examined, primarily in their involvement in *ayyaana* possession.

The objective of this study is to understand Borana Muslims within their lived experiences as they participate in the *ayyaana* possession cult. The overall question asked in this research is whether these lived experiences correspond with the official requirements found in the Islamic texts regarding the spirit world. Specifically, three research questions were formulated to guide this study. The first question seeks to examine the contents of knowledge about the spirit world that the Muslim teachers in Marsabit County have been teaching the Borana Muslims. The second research question seeks to discover the cultural model of *ayyaana* possession from Borana Muslims who participate in the possession cult. The third enquiry is analytical and compares the lived experiences of Borana Muslims, as presented by the cultural model of *ayyaana*, against the Islamic teachings on

the spirit world offered by the Muslim teachers.

II. SOME LITERATURE ON SPIRIT POSSESSION AMONG MUSLIMS

The concept of *jinn* (spirits) and the phenomenon of possession among Muslims have attracted scholars from different fields, such as anthropology, sociology, religious studies, medical, and psychology. Both textual and empirical perspectives have been used to study the concept of jinn in Islamic contexts. Muslim and non-Muslim scholars agree that the texts admit the existence of jinn and the reality of possession among Muslims, even during the time of thet Prophet Muhammad. Mudhi al-Shimmari represents a crop of Muslim scholars who acknowledge the existence of jinn and the possibility that they can possess a person, occasionally causing insanity.[11] El-Zein's monograph offers an informative treatise that shows an ardent belief in the existence of jinn and their ability to enter the human body.[12] Other Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have also written about the Islamic belief in jinn and possession from a textual reference, including Ibn Taymiyyah, Bilal Philips, and

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11 Al-Shimmari Mudhi, "The Physical Reality of Jinn Possession According to Commentaries on the Quran (2:275)," in *Islam, Migration and Jinn, The Modern Muslim World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 65–76.

12 Amira El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and the Intelligent World of the Jinn* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

Caleb Kim. Philips translated Ibn Taymiyyah's treatise on jinn, which was written in the 14th century. Philips asserts that the translation was the first book written in English "exclusively on the topic of spirit-possession and exorcism in Islam."[13] Philips seems to have been intrigued by the topic and later wrote his doctoral dissertation on the exorcism of jinn in Islam, in which he refers to the Islamic texts extensively.[14]

Several scholars have gone beyond textual studies and have done empirical studies. Drieskens examines the lived experiences of Egyptian Muslims in Cairo, using a socio-cultural, anthropological perspective. Interestingly, she tries to be "faithful to the djinns," even though she herself does not expound on what that means.[15] Others have delved into the lived experiences of Muslims as they participate in jinn possession, such as Kim (2001, 2016) and Lebling (2010). They also admit that the phenomenon of jinn possession is real in the contemporary world of Muslims.

Scholars agree that the Qur'an and hadith associate jinn possession with Shaitan. Most of them quote Surah 2:275 as evidence for jinn possession in the Qur'an.[16] They assert that

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13   Ibn Taymeeyah and Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Ibn Taymeeyah's Essay on the Jinn* (Demons) (Cape Town: Shahid Esau, 1989).

14   Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, "Exorcism in Islam" (Ph.D Dissertation, Lampeter, University of Wales, 1993).

15   Barbara Drieskens, *Living with Djinns: Understanding and Dealing with the Invisible in Cairo* (London: Saqi, 2006), 13.

16   Surah 2:275 "Those who devour interest rise up like one stumbling from Satan's touch."

the phrase "Satan's touch" refers to possession, since the person "touched" by Satan is evidently in a state of insanity.[17] The hadith gives more accounts of jinn possession than the Qur'an does. Philips states that the most quoted statement about jinn possession in the hadith is: "Verily, Satan flows in the bloodstream of Adam's descendants."[18] There are also several accounts in the hadith that narrate how the Prophet Muhammad encountered jinn and dealt with victims of jinn possession. He perceived such possessive jinn as "enemies of Allah" and thus exorcised them instead of accommodating them.

Studies on jinn possession in different Islamic settings show an amalgamation of the official beliefs and practices, with particular cultural knowledge and rituals in dealing with jinn.[19] Most Muslim scholars disdain such additional practices and classify them as shirk or *kufr* and are forbidden (*harām*) in Islam. For example, Philips refutes the popular use of charms, amulets, and incantations to appease the jinn, referring to such practices as *shirk*.[20] Muslim scholars refer to these additional practices as bi'da (religious innovations), which are forbidden in Islam. However, they continue to attract the participation of ordinary Muslims and have caught the attention of both empirical and literary studies. Various authors have examined such practic-

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17 Bilal Abu Ameenah Philips, *The Exorcist Tradition in Islaam* (Sharjah, United Arab Emirates: Dar Al Fatah, 1997), 79.
18 Philips, "Exorcism in Islam," 81.
19 For instance, Kim, 2001; Drieskens, 2008; Dein et al., 2008.
20 Philips, "Exorcism in Islam," 116.

es among African Islamic communities (e.g., Boddy, 1989; I. M. Lewis, 1989; Kenyon, 1999; Linda Giles, 1999; Masquelier, 2001; McIntosh, 2004; and Larsen, 2008). These scholars have used different approaches in their study of contextual spirit possession. Kim's research on the therapeutic cult of jinn offers an interesting treatise that culminates in formation of a theory that he labels the "Domain of Total Synthesis."[21] Kim uses an anthropological approach to examine the phenomenon of jinn possession, specifically employing ethnographic data collection tools, interviews, and participant observation. I found his research procedure viable for the intricate study he delved into. Since it deals with the same phenomenon as in the present study, I have gleaned useful insights on how to perform research among Muslims, specifically on the phenomenon of spirit possession.

I also found Emma Cohen's book on the cognition of spirit possession in an Afro-Brazilian context to be quite helpful for my study. As mentioned above, I opted to take a cognitive anthropological perspective, in order to examine the deeper levels of cultural orientation of the Borana Muslims, that is, what makes them behave the way they do in terms of insisting on participating in *ayyaana* possession séances? To accomplish this, I needed a cognitive theory that would help explain what I observed and heard from my interlocutors. I read Emma Cohen's work

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21 Kim, *Islam Among the Swahili*, 68.

keenly, since she delves into the displacement versus fusion/os-cillatory theories of possession from a cognitive anthropological perspective. Cohen reiterates that the displacement theory of possession is more prevalent than the fusion theory. While the displacement theory states that a possessive spirit literally dis-places a man's spirit and controls his body functions,[22] the fu-sion theory asserts that a possessive spirit fuses with a possessed man's spirit. Three scholars critiqued Emma's book based on her methodological premise. Diana Santo, for instance, faults Cohen for not undertaking a phenomenological study, which would have elicited knowledge from the insiders. Thus, accord-ing to Santo, Cohen's report is "one-sided" and does not repre-sent the people well.[23]

I. M. Lewis advances his popular deprivation theory to ex-plain the composition of membership in the Husseiniya[24] cult among the Borana people in Isiolo, Kenya.[25] Several scholars have responded to Lewis' theory of deprivation. Gudrun Dahl

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22 Emma Cohen, *The Mind Possessed: The Cognition of Spirit Possession in an Af-ro-Brazilian Religious Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

23 Diana Espirito Santo et al., "An Author Meets Her Critics," *Religion and Society* 1, no. 1 (2010): 164.

24 The Husseiniya cult and the Sheikh Hussein cult are the same. Members of this cult esteem Sheikh Hussein. Its history can be found in various books, including: Ulrich Braukamper, *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia: Collected Essays* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2004); Paolo Tablino, *The Gabra: Camel Nomads of Northern Kenya* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999); Ton Leus and Cyn-thia Salvadori, *Aadaa Boraanaa: A Dictionary of Borana Culture* (Addis Ababa: Sha-ma Books, 2006).

25 I. M. Lewis, *Religion in Context: Cults and Charisma*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cam-bridge University Press, 1996), 145.

uses a socio-cultural perspective and agrees with Lewis' depri-
vation theory that the Waso Borana who join the *ayyaana* cult
are mainly women and those of an economically deprived
class.[26] Mario Aguilar employs a socio-religious perspective to
examine the role of the eagle as a messenger of *Waaqa* (God)
in the *ayyaana* cult.[27] In another article, Aguilar constructs an
explanation of the theological and religious system of the Waso
Borana and still reflects the significance of the eagle in the
ayyaana cult. Like Dahl (1989), Aguilar seems to be influenced
by Lewis' deprivation theory in stating that the participants of
the cult are those who are denied access to the communal rit-
uals, as well as barren women who are perceived as outcasts.[28]

There are also scholars who have refuted Lewis' theory of
deprivation after conducting empirical studies in various con-
texts. Boddy, for instance, studied the zar spirits in Northern
Sudan and asserts that those who participate in spirit possession
séances are not necessarily deprived people. Boddy thus consid-
ers Lewis' theory as an androcentric interpretation of women.[29]
Giles also studied Swahili possessions on the Kenyan coast and

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26   Gudrun Dahl, Suffering Grass: Subsistence and Society of Waso Borana
(Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1979), 153.
27   Mario I. Aguilar, "The Eagle as Messenger, Pilgrim and Voice: Divinatory Processes
Among the Waso Boorana of Kenya," Journal of Religion in Africa 26, no. 1 (1996): 61.
28   Mario Aguilar Ignacio, "Current Religious Practices and Generational Patterns
among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tulla, Kenya" (Ph.D Dissertation, School of
Oriental and African Studies, London, University of London, 1993), 253.
29   Janice Boddy, "Spirits and Selves in Northern Sudan: The Cultural Therapeutics of
Possession and Trance," in A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion (Malden, MA:
Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 140.

shows that female practitioners who participate in the events are not marginalized in the society.[30] Wang'ombe also studied the *ayyaana* possession cult among Munyoyaya Muslim women in northeastern Kenya and discovered that even educated women participate in the possession cults.[31] Other research has been carried out regarding the *ayyaana* possession cults among Borana-speaking people like the Munyoyaya.

Halkano Wario's study of the *tabligh jama'at* [32] movement among Borana Muslims includes a section on the *warra gariba*, the followers of Sheikh Hussein of Bale. Wario states that the group is primarily a *tariqa* (Sufi order) that has a symbiotic relationship with the *ayyaana* cult.[33] He does not go into any analytical details about this claim, probably because this is not his central focus. Aguilar, mentioned above, has offered his comprehensive description of Borana customs, which include the activities that involve *ayyaana* spirits. Scholars have also explored the phenomenon as practiced in Ethiopia. Zitelman, for

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30 Linda L. Giles, "Possession Cults on the Swahili Coast: A Re-Examination of Theories of Marginality," Africa: Journal of the International African Institute 57, no. 2 (1987): 235.

31 Judy Wanjiru Wang'ombe, "A Missiological Study of the Phenomenon of Spirit Possession among the Munyoyaya Women in the Madogo Location, Tana River District in Kenya: A Response to I. M. Lewis Theory of Deprivation" (Nairobi, Kenya: NEGST, 2007).

32 The Tabligh jama'at movement is an Islamic missionary movement founded in India and has permeated various Islamic communities in Africa, including the Borana Muslims in Marsabit County.

33 Halkano Abdi Wario, "Networking the Nomads: A Study of Tablighi Jama'at among the Borana of Northern Kenya" (Ph.D Dissertation (Islamic studies), Germany, University of Bayreuth, 2012), 67.

instance, looks at the Oromo religion in Ethiopia and includes a discussion on *ayyaana* as a possible Sufi phenomenon.[34] The *ayyaana* cult has also been referred to as the Husseiniyya cult, after its founder, Sheikh Hussein, who was based in southern Ethiopia. The origin of the *ayyaana* cult could have prompted more Ethiopian scholarship to explore the cult in depth. Indeed, there is a paucity of literature from the Kenyan side, while the phenomenon of ayyaana possession continues to puzzle the church, especially in the northern parts of the country where it is prominent. The quest for more explanatory details concerning the *ayyaana* cult was a motivation that propelled this current study. I have not found a study that examines the cult's relation with Islam. This makes this study relevant in shedding greater light on the cult's significance among Borana Muslims.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Understanding the lived experiences of Borana Muslims as they participate in the ayyaana cult calls for a phenomenological orientation. Saukko consents to this in her discussion of methodologies to use in studies examining lived realities.[35] The term phenomenology has been periodically questioned whether it is

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34 Thomas Zitelmann, "Oromo Religion, Ayyaana and the Possibility of a Sufi Legacy," *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 12, no. 1 & 2 (2005): 80–99.

35 Saukko, *Doing Research in Cultural Studies*, 33.

a research tool or a philosophical theory. I prefer to use it as a research orientation that esteems the informants' perspective as valid, thus seeking to listen to their discourses. It is synonymous with describing their *emic* perspective before giving any analytical view (*etic* analysis). I take a cue from Michael Patton, who describes phenomenology as a study that explores how people make sense of their daily life experiences and then transform such experiences into both an individual consciousness, as well as shared cultural meaning.[36] It is expedient to study such cognitive elements using appropriate empirical methods that will elicit valid and credible data.

Saukko advocates a combination of methodologies in studying cultures. Such a blend is valid in examining the lived experiences, discourses, and texts within a particular cultural setting.[37] This current study uses a multi-disciplinary methodology with relevant methods for research. Appropriate research methodologies and methods were employed that would suit the anthropological nature of this study. I found Caleb Kim's Synthetic Triangular Approach (STA) relevant, since its underlying focus is studying Muslims as people within their lived experiences. STA as a methodological guideline allows a researcher the flexible creativity to customize the approach to suit the particular research. The advantage of STA is that it offers a grand oppor-

36 Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 104.
37 Saukko, *Doing Research in Cultural Studies*, 23.

tunity to "produce as accurate a phenomenological depiction of Muslim life as possible."[38] STA comprises three components that are used as guidelines in examining a phenomenon among Muslims. The first component (or Side 1 of the STA triangle) is the textual study of the phenomenon of possession and spirits in the Qur'an and hadith. Muslim teachers were interviewed as the gatekeepers of official Islam in Marsabit County. The aim was to answer the first research question that sought to find out the official Islamic teachings that are known and taught by the Muslim teachers about spirits and possession. A textual study of the Islamic texts cited by the Muslim teachers was carried out to understand the official position of Islam as interpreted in Marsabit County.

The second component (Side 2) of STA is the anthropological study of the phenomenon of *ayyaana* possession among Borana Muslims. In-depth ethnographic interviews were done with different categories of Borana Muslims who participate either directly or indirectly in the *ayyaana* possession cult. The interviewees who participate directly included the ayyaana practitioners who lead the cult sessions, as well as active participants, including patients, in the *ayyaana* cult. I was also able to interview eyewitnesses as indirect participants. Their experiences with ayyaana practitioners and patients were valuable since

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38   Caleb Chul-Soo Kim, "The STA (Synthetic Triangular Approach) in Islamic Studies and Ministries: A Missiological Attempt to Understand Muslims through the Concept of 'Ordinariness,'" *Asian Missions Advance* 28, no. 2 (Spring 2022): 3.

they lived with these direct participants and saw their struggles firsthand.

Apart from the interview sessions described above, I also used participant observation as an ethnographic tool.[39] I was able to observe several sessions that involved *ayyaana* and possession in both the Saku and Moyale sub-counties of Marsabit. I used these sessions to draw guiding questions for the interviews. I recorded the sessions on video and audio recorders, then analyzed them to understand the procedures and items used in the cultic activities.

The third component (Side 3) of STA is analytical. It uses an interdisciplinary cognitive outlook to analyze the findings of the textual study (Side 1) and the anthropological study (Side 2) to come up with an explanatory theory of Borana Muslims' participation in the *ayyaana* cult.

The resulting theory that emanates from analyzing the data collected is embedded within a cognitive anthropological theoretical framework. The reason behind selecting such a framework is because I wanted to know the underlying motivation that drives the ordinary Borana Muslims to persistently participate in the ayyaana possession cult.

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39 Participant observation was limited due to the nature of the activities involved in the possession sessions. Some anthropologists researching on the phenomenon of spirit possession have immersed into the practice and allowed themselves to be possessed by the spirits, in order to have a firsthand experience of the phenomenon.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this research reveal a disparity between the lived experiences of Borana Muslims who participate in *ayyaana* cult and what is specified in the official texts of Islam concerning the spirit world. The latter is derived from what is taught by the Muslim teachers in the Saku and Moyale sub-counties of the larger Marsabit County. The teachers interviewed serve in different mosques around the county. In Saku, there are eleven mosques with different names. Only one, Jamia mosque, allows *warra ayyaana* (people of *ayyaana*) to attend and worship with other Muslims. The rest incline towards Wahabbism and prohibits *warra ayyaana* from participating in the mosques.

1. Jinn and Possession in the Qur'an and Hadith

All the Muslim teachers I interviewed agreed that Allah created jinn from fire and that they live in a world of human beings. They see people, but people cannot see them. According to Amir, jinn are in the same category with man and angels.[40] These three are considered beings that God has exulted (*ametukuza*) above other creatures.

Jinn and human beings are called "brothers" in the hadith because they resemble each other in some respects. Both have

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40 Amir. Interview with the author. May 17, 2017.

intelligence and the ability to choose. They have opportunities to listen to the Qur'an and to decide whether or not to obey its injunctions. Some jinn heard the Prophet Muhammad reciting the Qur'an and believed it as the "guidance (*hidaya*)" that leads to the "right path" (Surah 72:1). Such are the good jinn that are considered "righteous" and are Muslim (Surah 72:11). According to Sheikh Ali, these Muslim jinn perform all the obligations required of Muslims, including going on pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca.[41] In contrast, there are "foolish" jinn who ascribe partners to Allah (Surah 72:4) and whose destiny is hellfire.

The hadith provides restrictions concerning jinn. The prophet Muhammad instructed Muslims against the use of bones when performing *istijida* (after defecation) because bones are food for jinn. Neither should people urinate in holes, which are believed to be their abode. Those who contravene such rules are prone to attacks by jinn.

There was a consensus among the teachers that jinn can "hit or catch" someone. These are the bad jinn that "enter people like spirits (*mapepo*)," explains Amir.[42] The people who are vulnerable to such attacks are those who are unclean in their hearts and body. If a jinn enters someone who is "clean" in the heart (*roho*) and in the body (*mwili*), it will not stay and exit very quickly (*haraka sana*). Conversely, a jinn that enters a person with a "bad heart" (*roho mbaya*) does not exit easily. A good jinn

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41 Sheikh Ali. Interview with the author. May 16, 2017.
42 Amir. Interview with the author. May 17, 2017.

seeks to "guide the person who does wrong," according to Amir. When it enters a wayward person, its reason for entering might be: "This person commits adultery, steals, yet he is a Muslim. I'll tell him to stop, and I will leave him." A good jinn might also say, "I do not have issues with him, but the way I see him, this friend of mine does wrong (*mabaya*)."

According to the examples (*sunna*) of the prophet Muhammad, Muslims are to exorcise jinn and not appease them. A popular method mentioned by all the sheikhs interviewed was to "burn" the jinn with the Qur'an. The sheikh first talks to the jinn and asks, "Will you come out or should I burn you?" Jinn are expected to hear and talk. Some refuse to respond while others cooperate and speak. Jinn are burnt with the Qur'an and they "feel pain." The burning involves reading specific *ayahs* from the Qur'an that are deemed powerful, in order to make the jinn feel very uncomfortable. Sheikh Guyo puts Qur'an *ayahs* in water, then gives them to patients to drink.

Some jinn are said to exit through the nose, while others from the nail, as Sheikh Ali mentioned. Regardless of where the jinni exits from, the crucial thing is for it to leave and not disturb the person. A patient is advised to seek further treatment from other sheikhs if the jinn do not cooperate. There are incidences where a jinni becomes very stubborn and refuses to exit the body of a person even after attempts to burn it with the Qur'an. The person either accepts the eventuality of death or seeks to

accommodate the jinn by appeasing it. The latter case is when the jinni is renamed as *ayyaana*.

2. *Ayyaana* in the Thought Patterns of Ordinary Borana Muslims

The ordinary Borana Muslims accepts the reality of *ayyaana* as part and parcel of their life. Their cognition tends to dictate how they behave and thus, it is helpful to illustrate their thought patterns in terms of the *ayyaana*. The word "*ayyaana*" evokes different schemas in the minds of Borana Muslims, depending on the collective understanding into which they have been enculturated. For the traditional Borana, they think of the traditional calendar that is still in use for deciphering appropriate times for important ceremonies like weddings and burials. A traditional Borana might also understand *ayyaana* as good fortune. In an interview with the author, Boru explained that some Borana people still refer to *ayyaana dansa* (good *ayyaana*), implying that someone has had some good fortune.

The schema of *ayyaana* as a spirit seems to be more prevalent as people encounter issues in life that need explanations. Unlike Muslim teachers, the *warra ayyaana*[43] do not perceive *ayyaana* as jinn, even though both are placed in the category

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43 *Warra ayyaana* (people of *ayyaana*) is the name given to the Borana Muslims who participate in the *ayyaana* cult. I will use this phrase frequently to differentiate them from the Borana Muslims who do not participate in the cult but still believe in the existence of *ayyaana*.

of unseen beings.[44] According to the warra *ayyaana* (people of *ayyaana*), jinn are in a lower position, since they act as "messengers" of *ayyaana*. Most of the interviewees said that ayyaana were released by God to make the Borana people more ardent in religion. According to an interview with Nurea, some people say that it is a "punishment for those who are arrogant and . . . it turns some back to prayers (*maombi*)."

There are different types of *ayyaana* with different names. Each interviewee gave different names, with common ones being: odha, haj risa, ruhani, and janni. Ascribing names to different types of *ayyaana* is important because the practitioners have to identify which one is "on" someone and thus make demands accordingly. *Ayyaana* have feelings and can get annoyed. When angered, they cause sickness and even death. They can also hear and speak to declare their grievances. Consequently, a relevant question that the *warra ayyaana* ask as Muslims is how they should live with *ayyaana*, which are part of their world and capable of causing trouble if ignored. Domestication seems to be the accepted solution.

3. Domestication of *Ayyaana* by Warra *Ayyaana*

The *warra ayyaana* do not speak of domestication when referring to the way they deal with ayyaana; rather, domestication

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44 The Borana language does not have a word for "spirits." The biblical Holy Spirit is referred to as *Afur Qulqulo*.

is inferred from the experiences they recounted. The analogy that comes to mind is a wild cat on the loose, needing to be tamed lest it causes havoc. Likewise, *ayyaana* are on the loose and can "catch" anyone among the Borana Muslims to make them more religious. When it catches someone, sickness results until the practitioner tames it by asking what its demands are. This taming occurs in a ritual context that involves drumming and vigorous clapping of hands. The sessions are referred to as *adhara* in the Borana language.

Once a diagnosis is made, a practitioner is sought, one who will take his bi-pointed ule (stick) and go to the house of the patient on a specified day and time. On arriving, he starts preparing a sacred space inside a hut where an adhara will take place. He does this by strewing grass on the floor and burning incense (*lubadini*). Meanwhile, the practitioner selects meat from specific parts of the sacrificed sheep as required by *ayyaana*.

The session begins when the practitioner sits facing the patient in the middle of the hut. All participants enter the hut without shoes. The sweet aroma from the burning incense is sustained by putting live charcoal in a small, ritual container called *idhina*. This is one of the ways of providing an environment that helps elicit *ayyaana* to speak. Another way is through *hadhara*—singing, drumming, and clapping of hands. The songs continue until the practitioner observes changes in the patient, who may start to make unusual noises. These noises seem to indicate

that the *ayyaana* is ready to speak, at which point the practitioner stops the music and asks the ayyaana to identify itself. It is then asked to state its demands and how they should be met. A second *hadhara* session is organized to give the *ayyaana* its demands (*darara*). A similar *adhara* session is performed with vigorous clapping and singing.

4. *Darga* as a Sacred Communal Place for *Warra Ayyaana*

During my participant observation sessions, I visited two *dargas*[45] in the Saku and Moyale sub-counties, respectively. Removal of shoes before entering was an indication that this was a sacred place. One *darga* was under the leadership of a relatively young Borana woman, who doubled as a traditional medicine woman (*ch'iressa*) and an ayyaana practitioner.[46] The second one I visited was under Abbo Galma, an old man who was sick at the time of my visit.[47] His darga was on top of a hill overlooking a Marsabit town. There was a row of mud houses, and the middle one looked like a mosque, with mats on the floor, and served as a place for *adhara* sessions. He also administered traditional medicine as a ch'iress. His patients came from diverse

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45 *Darga* is the name given to Sufi shrines. Borana Muslims have adapted it to mean sacred places of meeting for *adhara* ritual sessions by the *warra ayyaana*. Each *darga* is named after its leader (e.g., darga Chuluqe, darga Galma, *darga* Jillo).

46 She hid her identity as an *ayyaana* practitioner and only said that she was a *ch'iressa*. It was her colleague, another practitioner, who mentioned that she was also involved in the *ayyaana* cult.

47 Unfortunately, Abbo Galma did not recover from the ailment.

backgrounds, including those who were mentally insane.

A *darga* is a place designated for various activities. The *warra ayyaana* meet regularly to hold *adhara* sessions that include salawat prayers, singing, drumming, and vigorous clapping. The songs are usually in praise of the Prophet Muhammad and Sheikh Hussein, and some songs are also in the form of prayers. The leaders of the *dargas* lead the participants in a time of prayer in which the people interpose with "*Ameen*" after every sentence. The contents of the prayers vary from political success for prospective government leaders to peace (*nagaya*) in the country and Africa. Apart from prayers, *dargas* are also places of celebration. The *warra ayyaana* gather annually for saara celebrations held in May. They slaughter sheep or goats and eat together in a celebratory mood.

Dargas also serve as places of healing for various ailments. Depending on the severity of one's disease, patients stay there for several days, receiving traditional medicine and attending adhara sessions. During my visit to the two *dargas*, I met schizophrenic patients who seemed to be relaxed. A main feature of dargas is that they are places where such people are allowed to spend their day without disturbing others, and they also participate in the *adhara* sessions held in the evenings.

The *dargas* display different outlooks with an inclination towards *aada Borana* (Borana customs) or Islam. *Darga* Chuluqe has an outdoor place that has four gates, each designated for

the different Borana clans. Patients who recover after Chuluqe's treatment enter through their respective gates to bring gifts to her. *Darga* Galma, on the other hand, has a more Islamic outlook. The indoor area for the *adhara* sessions has posters with Arabic words hanging on the walls, together with a picture of the *ka'ba* in Mecca.

5. Perception of Muslim Teachers in Marsabit County concerning *Ayyaana* and *Warra Ayyaana*

Muslim teachers categorize ayyaana in the domain of jinn. Allah created all jinn. There are good and bad jinn. *Ayyaana* falls under the sub-category of bad jinn or bad spirits (*pepo mbaya*). According to Muslim teachers, these jinn demand *faaru* (songs). The followers thus gather in *dargas* and sing until the *ayyaana* is gratified. This is interpreted as "praising" *ayyaana* and therefore denounced as *shirk*. Jinn are created beings and should not be praised or worshipped. Instead, they are required to worship (*abudu*) and submit to Allah, as human beings should. Being bad jinn, they cannot believe and hence worship as the righteous jinn do.

Sheikh Ibrahim, an Imam in one of the mosques in a Marsabit town, says that the *warra ayyaana* "call themselves Muslims, but according to the faith of the real Islam (*imani yetu kabisa ya Islamu*), they are not Muslims." All the other sheikhs

interviewed echoed this sentiment, refuting the claims of the *warra ayyaana's* self-identification as Muslims. They were notably repudiated as Sunni Muslims. Two of the sheikhs interviewed claimed that the *warra ayyaana* were Shiites because of their tendencies to visit graves. The rest of the sheikhs did not support this claim, however, since they affirmed a minimal presence of Shia Muslims in the county.

The enigma of the *warra ayyaana* is evident, according to Sheikh Ibrahim, who states that they "do not want to come up in the open." They tend to camouflage themselves with the other Sunni Muslims. In Moyale, they are allowed to attend the ordinary mosques, as they do not have their own mosques. On the other hand, in Saku, they are only permitted to go to the Jamia mosque, which has a more liberal stance, especially in Marsabit.

According to Sheikh Abdu, the *warra ayyaana* esteem Sheikh Hussein and place him on a higher pedestal than they do with Prophet Muhammad. The *faru* (songs) heap praises to both and there is a tendency to "raise the prophet and Sheikh Hussein above the name of the Almighty God." Again, this is not allowed in the Qur'an because these two were human beings created by God. Furthermore, veneration is implied when the *warra ayyaana* go for pilgrimage to Bale in Ethiopia.

Table 1: Islamic Requirements versus the
Lived Experiences of *Warra Ayyaana*

Islamic requirements	*Warra ayyaana* beliefs and practices
Prayer	Some pray and some do not do their prayer
Do not appease spirits	Pacify *ayyaana*
Do not beat drums	Beat drums (*dibe*)
Offer sacrifices in the right way (*Id ul adha*)	Offer sacrifices in the wrong way to *ayyaana*
Do not drink blood	Drink blood
Pilgrimage to Mecca	Pilgrimage to Bale and Anajilla
No gender mixing in places of worship	Men and women mix during *hadhara* sessions

Table 1 above contrasts the beliefs and practices by the *warra ayyaana's* beliefs and practices with the Islamic requirements. It is apparent that the *warra ayyaana* do not conform to the official requirements of Islam. The Muslim teachers in Marsabit attribute this to a lack of knowledge, especially from their own leaders who claim to be sheikhs as well. In an interview with the author, Sheikh Khalid emphatically stated that "their sheikhs do not have Qur'anic knowledge." When asked if they assist the *warra ayyaana* on going to the "right path," they gave the following remarks:

Statement 1:

Amir: (In response to a question of whether they have tried to help the *warra ayyaana*) Yes. They refuse because they

say there is something that they will lack. There are benefits [*faida*]. Those people of *ayyaana*, there are some moments that they slaughter, there is a time they sing, so there is a time they do all these. Slaughtering these animals then they eat and there is food, so now if they leave they will miss all these things like food.

Statement 2:

Sheikh I: Us, in all our *hutba* [sermon] every Friday, we denounce *ayyaana*.

Statement 3:

Sheikh A: Today there are more efforts to teach other local Muslims than before . . . . We teach [about spirits] in the madrasa and also give *mawaidha* [advice] about spirits . . . . We teach that the Qur'an and hadith mention spirits. There is no ayyaana in the Qur'an.

Statement 4:

Sheikh G: By preaching in the mosques, talking against *ayyaana*, and telling them not to attend the ayyaana sessions.

It can be inferred from the above statements that Muslim leaders in Marsabit are aware of the need to teach the *warra ayyaana* about the traditional beliefs and practices about *ayyaana*. They have tried to instruct them by denouncing the *ayyaana* and any practices involving them. Yet, the *warra ayyaana* re-

main adamant and continue to engage in the ayyaana cult. A common reason for this given by the Muslim leaders is the economic gain amassed by the *warra ayyaana*. The practitioners of the *ayyaana* cult echoed a similar assertion and added other benefits they have accrued:[48]

Statement 1:

A. G. (woman practitioner): It [*ayyaana*] has brought wealth, no harm. It has made me a doctor. I have nine children and a lot of cattle while having it. This is *qileess Rabbi* [wind of the Lord] that he has brought to me . . . . The greatest profit is that it made me to be a prophet.

Statement 2:

N. (woman practitioner): This thing does not take money, let no one deceive you . . . . Since I was born, I have known it [*ayyaana*], and I like it. I do not see any wrong.

Statement 3:

N: *Ayyaana* comes like a helper. My father was laid off, but *ayyaana* helped, and he was restored to work after one month. *Ayyaana* helped to return him back, so when he was reinstated, he came back to perform the ritual.

Evidently, the *warra ayyaan*a perceive the cult as beneficial, unlike the Muslim teachers, who have labeled the *ayyaana* cult

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48   From interviews by the author when collecting data in 2016, in Marsabit, Kenya.

as *shirk* and the *warra ayyaana* as people who follow the wrong path. This is also a clear indication of the disparity between the lived experiences of the w*arra ayyaana*, who are part of the Borana Muslims, and the official tenets of Islam as taught by the Muslim teachers.

V. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS: LIVED EXPE-RIENCES VERSUS OFFICIAL TENETS ABOUT THE SPIRIT WORLD

The literature reviewed in this paper concerning ordinary Muslims' interaction with the spirit world shows how various scholars have attempted to explain the disparity between the lived experiences and official requirements of Islam. Kim's (2001) theory of total synthesis of *dini* (religion), *mila* (local traditions), and other popular Islamic practices corresponds well with the kind of Islam practiced by the Borana Muslims in Marsabit County. I similarly perceive an integration of some elements from three different religious traditions: Borana customs (*aada Borana*), Islam, and Sufi tradition. However, this amalgamation is not completely the same as Kim's theory of total synthesis suggests for local Swahili Islam.

The Borana Muslims who engage in the ayyaana cult have come up with a localized Islam that partially borrows from the

three traditions. There is an aspect of borrowing and adding of the elements to suit their socio-religious environment. These elements are listed in the table below.

Table 2: Elements Borrowed and Supplemented in *Ayyaana* Cult

Tradition	Element borrowed	Element added
Islamic	1. Concept of jinn 2. Respect for the prophet Muhammad	1. *Ayyaana* 2. Veneration of Sheikh Hussein
Sufi	*Salawaat* (*dhikr*/chanting)	*Hadhara* for *ayyaana*
Borana	*Buna qala* (coffee "sacrificing" ceremony)	Coffee roasting (*jabana*) ceremony

Two prominent Islamic elements that have been borrowed by the *warra ayyaana* are the respect accorded to the prophet Muhammad and the concept of jinn. All Muslims give their allegiance to Muhammad as their prophet, and the *warra ayyaana* justify themselves as Muslims because they also acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammad. This is evident in the songs that they sing in praising him during the *hadhara* sessions. However, in addition to Muhammad, they revere Sheikh Hussein and mention his name more frequently in their songs. The Muslim leaders believe that the warra ayyaana esteem the sheikh higher than they do the prophet, which is unacceptable in Islam.

The *warra ayyaana* have also borrowed the concept of jinn

from Islam but added ayyaana to the category of these unseen beings. Kim states that the Islamic tradition offers ordinary Muslims a theoretical foundation for the belief in spirits and related practices.[49] Borana Muslims are therefore aware of the presence of jinn as taught by their teachers in madrasa. Yet, these are not as powerful and probably not as threatening as other unseen beings. I inferred this from my interviewees, who spoke of the *ayyaana* being superior to jinn. Since they could not deal with the *ayyaana* in the way the teachers direct, they had to find ways to domesticate them as part of their lives. Hence, the *adhara* sessions are prohibited by the Muslim teachers but accepted by the ordinary Borana Muslims.

Even though the *hadhara* sessions were against the teachings of the Muslim teachers, the sessions needed to have an Islamic outlook, since the *warra ayyaana* insist that they are Muslims. Sheikh Hussein was a respected Muslim leader of the Sufi group that bore his name, Husseiniyya. It was therefore appropriate for the *warra ayyaana* to borrow some Sufi elements like the *salawaat* (dhikr chanting) as a way to authenticate their identity as Muslims. Most of them would claim that they are not *warra ayyaana* and prefer to be called *warra garib*. The latter are the followers of a registered Sufi group who meet regularly for the salawaat sessions of prayer. The sessions still invoke *ayyaana*,

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49 Caleb Chul-Soo Kim, "Supernaturalism in Swahili Islam: With Special Reference to the Therapeutic Cults of Jinn Possession" (Ph.D Dissertation, USA, Fuller Graduate School, 2001), 97.

making *warra garib* synonymous with *warra ayyaana*. The songs used for the *salawaat* sessions are the same ones used for the *ayyaana* healing sessions.

Apart from borrowing from elements of Islam and Sufi traditions, the *warra ayyaana* have also borrowed elements from Borana culture. *Buna qala* (coffee "sacrificing" ceremony) is a prominent feature of their cultural practices. Aguilar provides a comprehensive discussion on the significance of this ceremony for the Waso Borana. He states that regular participation in this ceremony was "part of a constant ritualized way of remembering Waso Boorana traditions and historical roots," as well as their connecting with *Waaqa* and his blessings.[50] This also applies to the *warra ayyaana*, who proudly profess their identity as *Borana Gutu* (Borana proper). Every prayer and ritual session include coffee bean eating. *Buna qala* is performed during the day, as part of seeking Waaqa's blessings, while a coffee-eating session called *jabana* is performed during the evening *adhara* sessions. My interviewees who specialized in Borana culture were insistent in refuting that *jabana* was a non-Borana traditional practice.

1. *Warra Ayyaana* Lived Experience: A Case of Triple Identity?

The above discussion shows how the *warra ayyana* have

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50 Aguilar, "Current Religious Practices and Generational Patterns among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tulla, Kenya," 241.

borrowed elements from three traditions and come up with a unique identity that describes their lived experience as they participate in the *ayyaana* cult. The Muslim teachers vehemently disagree that the warra *ayyana* can identify themselves as Muslims. Indeed, their lived experiences indicate that they do not adhere to the Islamic regulations on the beliefs and practices involved in the spirit world. They may not be a full-fledged Sufi *tariqa* (order) like those with global recognition, but the government does acknowledge them as a registered Sufi group. Their Borana identities cannot be denied, since they can still identify themselves with certain Borana clans.

This Borana identity is crucial in maintaining the peace of Borana (*nagaya Borana*), which is a significant concept required for keeping the solidarity of Borana. It is a commonly said that one is first a Borana, then a Muslim or a Christian. The strong cohesion among the Borana people is evident and has paved the way for a peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians, thus accommodating the *warra ayyaana* in Marsabit County.

However, there remains the issue of the clarity of the *warra ayyaana's* identity. This can be classified as a triple identity, because the *warra ayyaana* have incorporated the Islamic, Sufi, and Borana identities. Therefore, they form a unique kind of Islam that may demand acceptance or more understanding, especially by the Muslim leaders in Marsabit. Their participation in the *ayyaana* cult seems to fill a need that may not be ade-

quately met within the three traditions. I agree with Kim's observation that there is a sense of insecurity that emanates from a "spiritual frustration" in communities that are predominantly supernaturalistic in worldview.[51] Borana Muslims live in fear of the unseen beings that are deemed to be beyond their control. This "spiritual frustration" leads them to seek solutions that are deemed viable to mitigate the situations within their daily living. So why do they not employ the solutions offered by the Muslim teachers on engaging with the spirit world?

2. Experiential Knowledge versus Abstract Knowledge

The incessant belief and practice of the *warra ayyaana* amidst disapproval of the Muslim teachers can best be understood by referring to the cognitive aspect of knowledge. The teachers claim that they offer appropriate instructions on the spirit world to the ordinary Borana Muslims. Then, why are these instructions not followed by the *warra ayyaana* as they participate in the *ayyaana* cult? I submit that this is a case of experiential knowledge versus abstract knowledge acquisition and transmission. There is both individual and collective attainment and transmission of knowledge about the ayyaana and relevant ritual practices. Such an analytical angle is guided by two interconnected disciplines, cognitive psychology and anthropology.

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51 Kim, "Supernaturalism in Swahili Islam," 97.

Cognitive psychology majorly deals with the processes in individual human minds, while cognitive anthropology seeks to discover what people in a cultural setting think collectively.[52] Individual Borana Muslims acquire knowledge through an experiential relationship with *ayyaana*. This was seen in the way they personified a*yyaana* as spiritual beings that were always involved in their daily lives, not to be ignored. Failure to give them attention resulted in suffering and even death. Such instances became an individual's source of spiritual frustration that was not being resolved through the teachings or instructions offered by the Muslim teachers in their various mosques or madrasas.

In the context of this spiritual frustration by individuals encountering *ayyaana,* the motivation to become part of the cult arises when an individual realizes that other also share this frustration. Common belief in *ayyaana* as a causative agent of suffering enables the *warra ayyaana* to gather together and formulate ways of dealing with *ayyaana*. This results in cultural knowledge about *ayyaana* that prevails over the knowledge and practical aspects taught by the Muslim teachers. This forms the cultural model of *ayyaana* as has been described in this paper. This model is then passed on to others who join the cult because it offers a practical understanding of daily life with regard to *ayyaana*, as well as a more pragmatic way of dealing with

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52 Norbert Ross and Douglas Medin, "Culture and Cognition: The Role of Cognitive Anthropology in Anthropology and the Cognitive Sciences," in *A Companion to Cognitive Anthropology* (West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011), 355–375.

ayyaana.

The cultural model of *ayyaana* thus organizes the experiences and knowledge of the *warra ayyaana* in a way that relegates the knowledge received from Muslim teachers to the periphery. The experiential knowledge of *ayyaana* thus becomes a core component that requires lesser cognitive efforts, a model in opposition to the abstract knowledge taught by the Muslim teachers.

VI. CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGAGING *WARRA AYYAANA*

In conclusion, I acknowledge that the warra ayyaana's supernaturalistic worldview is a reality that ought to be considered likewise if anyone wants to understand them. This study has shown how their lived experiences revolve around the cultic activities that are prohibited by their Muslim teachers. This inclination is due to a preference in experiential knowledge over abstract knowledge offered by the teachers of the official tenets. Their experiences with *ayyaana* are real and not theoretical; thus it is appropriate for them to seek pragmatic solutions in dealing with *ayyaana.* They have chosen to domesticate ayyaana by forming "peaceable" pacts. This association, however, is not easy for the *warra ayyaana.* Regular placation ceremonies

(*hadhara)* are becoming more expensive with the prevailing economic situation.

The frustration experienced by the warra ayyaana calls for an empathic understanding from anybody who wants to engage them. For the Muslim teachers, such understanding should be taken as an initial step, instead of the condemnatory attitude that accuses the *warra ayyaana* to be engaging in *shirk*. Then a significant question arises: Are the Muslim teachers able to give a permanent remedy, especially for the spiritual frustration experienced by the *warra ayyaana*? A permanent solution would be one that deals with *ayyaana* once and for all. The *warra ayyaana* do not perceive *ayyaana* as a bad jinn that can be "burnt" with the Qur'an, as the Muslim teachers instruct. The search for a permanent solution may thus attract the *warra ayyaana* when they hear that Jesus Christ has power and authority over demonic forces. The Bible is replete with incidences where he had authority to command evil spirits to leave a person and never return.

The biblical worldview portrays a supernaturalistic orientation that cannot be ignored or relegated only to the Hebrew culture or first century Christianity, which showed a lot of engagement with the spirit world. We excuse the pioneer missionaries who came to Africa and could not understand the people's engagement with the spirit world. Missionaries, especially from the Western hemisphere, were influenced by the socio-philo-

sophical movement of Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries. The proponents of this movement consigned anything that was not empirically or rationally verified to the periphery, which included all the supernatural forces and beings, even God. Thus, when pioneer missionaries could not fathom the African supernaturalistic worldview, they could not help people who were struggling with the spirit world that was real to them. Many Africans became "Christians" on Sundays but went to seek help from traditional practitioners, since they could not find help from churches. Such a two-tied Christianity should be avoided today, as more anthropological studies such as the present one bring to light the reality of African Muslim contexts that perceive the spirit world as real.

This study therefore offers useful information that seeks to inform Christians who are interested in understanding the world of Muslims, especially regarding the spirit world. More studies should be carried out in different Islamic contexts, in order to avail more information to a wider readership. There are many issues that this study did not delve into and thus would recommend that more anthropological investigations be carried out. The prominent participation of Borana women in the *ayyaana* cult should be examined closely, particularly in response to I. M. Lewis' deprivation theory. The place of children in the *ayyaana* cult could also be an interesting study to delve into. I mention children here because I witnessed a number of young girls and

boys who spent their nights at the *darga* (ceremonial place). I assumed that they were familiar with the *ayyaana* phenomenon, having grown up in a context where it was prevalent. It would be fascinating to examine their perception of *ayyaana* and how it affects their educational performance. Another interesting study that I would recommend is the relationship between the *ayyaana* cult and politics. I did my interviews during an election period, and I was informed that a number of aspiring politicians frequented ceremonial places for prayers. Do they believe that the prayers of the *warra ayyaana* are effective? These and many other questions indicate the need to carry out more enquiries about the spirit world, not only of Borana Muslims, but also of other African Muslims. The preference for undertaking such studies from an anthropological perspective cannot be under-rated, since it clearly brings out rich data that stimulates a more informed understanding of people.

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■한글초록

보라나 무슬림들의 삶의 경험들
: 아야나 정령숭배에 대한 현상학적 연구

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현대 이슬람 연구는 이슬람의 경전인 꾸란과 전승인 하디스에 기원한 이데올로기들에 경도되어 있는 경향을 보인다. 이러한 태도는 필연적으로 평범한 무슬림들의 일상적 경험을 간과하는 결과를 초래한다. 이러한 상황은 다음과 같은 질문을 제기한다: 무슬림들의 일상의 경험은 공식적 가르침과 일치하는가? 이러한 질문에 답하기 위하여 본고는 케냐의 마르사빗 지역의 보라나 무슬림들의 일상적 삶을 기반으로 그들을 사로잡고 있는 영적인 세계를 이해하는 것을 목적으로 한다. 문화인류학적인 접근방법을 포함한 다학문적 연구 방법을 통하여 저자는 보라나 무슬림들의 영적인 의례들이 수피즘과 정통이슬람, 그리고 케냐의 전통 종교라고 하는 세 영역을 포괄하고 있으며 그것이 반드시 정통 이슬람의 가르침과 일치 하는 것은 아님을 논구한다.