

The Influence of Islam on Zulu Indigenous Worldview.

A Proposal submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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By

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Abstract

This thesis builds on and contributes to work in the field of studies in religion and culture. Although several studies have examined Islam and Muslims in this country predominantly draw from the experiences and historical context of the Asian Muslim population or Asian diaspora. The purpose of the thesis is to investigate the impact of Islam on the Zulu beliefs and practises within the Zulu Muslim community, to determine if the arrival of Islam has eroded Zulu beliefs and practises. The data for this mixed methods study were obtained through a literature analysis and questionnaires administered to a group of Zulu Muslim participants. The study involved a thorough evaluation of materials related to the similarities and differences between Islam and the indigenous Zulu religion.

The theological reflection investigates the use of the Quran and Sunnah by Zulu Muslim communities as a means of analysing and filtering non-Islamic Zulu practises and beliefs. It also explores the influence of the notions of Arabisation and Islamisation within the Zulu Muslim community, shedding light on their significance in the process of Zulu Muslims embracing Islam. The study also examines the concept of God in Islam and Zulu Indigenous Religion, as well as the anthropomorphism of Allah and uMlenzemunye or uMvelinqangi, to determine whether the two religions worship the same Supreme Being. This study sought to provide a succinct explanation of the role of ancestral spirits as a central belief upon which everything stands or falls, and to determine if the practise of veneration or worship of ancestors is compatible with Islam. It examines the fate of the deceased from both the Islamic and indigenous Zulu worldviews. I found that the majority of Zulu Muslims involved in this study adhere to the principles of Islam, which is evident in their manner of greeting, praying, dressing, and behaving as devoted servants of Allah. The Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal firmly believe that Islam is the ultimate truth, which guides their decisions on which Zulu customs and practices to uphold or abandon as devout Muslims.

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KEY WORDS

Zulu Muslims, Arabisation, Islamisation, Zulu indigenous religion, Barzakh; uMlenzemunye, Zulu beliefs and practises, indigenisation, anthropomorphism.



ABBREVIATIONS

AIR	African Indigenous Religion
ZIR	Zulu Indigenous Religion
AICs	African Independent Churches
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
ML	Mulukmahomed Lappa
NMC	Natal Muslim Council
DCC	Durban City Council
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
ANC	African National Congress
NP	Natal Party
ICSA	Islamic Council of South Africa
MYM	Muslim Youth Movement
IPCI	Islamic Propagation Centre International
UDM	University of Durban-Westville
SAHMS	South African Hindu Maha Sabha
PAC	Pan Africanist Party
CM	Child Marriage
ZIT	Zulu Indigenous Tradition
NLEs	Negative Life Events



Declaration of Originality

1. The author, Simesihle Eric Ngubane, comprehends what plagiarism is according to the policy of the University of Pretoria.
2. I declare that all sources that I have employed and cited have been properly acknowledged employing complete references.
3. I have not used work previously produced by any student or any other person to hand it in as my own.
4. I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work to pass it off as his or her own work.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SE Ngubane', written on a light-colored background.

SE Ngubane

August 2023



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CHAPTER 1

Background of the Study

1.0 Introduction

In South Africa, numerous religions emerged because of post-apartheid emancipation. The expansion of religions in South Africa was obscure during apartheid due to an ideology that viewed other religions as inferior to the state religion. The divisive ideology led to non-whites and whites being precluded from understanding each other's religion(s), due to the segregation, such as the Group Areas Act, that was an integral part of the apartheid regime. Even though non-whites and whites could meet at some point in town and elsewhere, they were mostly acquaintances rather than close friends, as their meeting was mostly about the business of the day (Wilson 1972:3-5).

The census conducted in 2013 by the General Household Survey on religious affiliation revealed that, due to freedom of religion provided by post-apartheid laws, there were Zulu people who joined the Islamic faith, which has been fluctuating among the African population (Schoeman 2017). A previous survey conducted in 1921 revealed that the African Muslim population numbered around 1,896 or 0.047% among an African population of about 4 million. In the year 1936, the African Muslim population declined to 1,440 or 0.022% out of the total population of 6.5 million. In 1980 the African Muslim population was estimated to be about 12,499 or 0.057% out of the total population of 22 million. In 1992 African Muslim population was estimated to be about 18,000 or 0.075% out of the total population of 25 million. In the past two decades, the stats of Africans who convert to Islam in KwaZulu-Natal have not dramatically changed (circa 2000-2020), however, there is a numerical increase that can be observed. Moreover, according to Haron (1992:1-5), the numerical value has been seeing a rapid upward trajectory in recent periods, and given their significant influence, it cannot be disregarded. There is documented evidence indicating the active dissemination of Islam throughout both black and white communities, with records dating back to the 1950s, and maybe much earlier based on limited available information. This was echoed in the very first meeting held in Johannesburg by the South African Black Muslim in mid-2019 (Mudimbe & Kavwahireh 2021).

This study is significant because the influence of Islam on Zulu Muslim converts has not been adequately addressed as well as the challenges in promoting Zulu beliefs and practices within the Islamic religion. The researcher attempts to explore the influence of Islam on Zulu beliefs and practices, especially those that were observed by Zulu Muslim converts. It also highlights the need to take Zulu Indigenous Religion seriously in its contextual perspective to understand the meaning and value of ZIR (Zulu Indigenous Religion). Limited research has been conducted on the influence of Islam on the Ngoni community, resulting in a dearth of knowledge regarding the perspectives of Zulu Muslims on the intersection of Zulu cultural identity and adherence to the Islamic faith.

1.1 The Religiosity of Zulu Indigenous Practices

Some scholars assert that Zulu Indigenous practices are to be understood as cultural (cf. Becken 1983; Robinson 1993b; Dzobo 1985) or social phenomenon, although such an argument radically ignores the religious aspect of Zulu indigenous practices. On the other hand, Mbiti (1969) acknowledged that African Indigenous practices are inherently religious, and some rituals play a role as an intermediary (e.g., ancestor rituals). Similarly, Zulu beliefs and practices are components of the Zulu Indigenous Religion and culminate as a religion that one can embrace similarly to that of the Islamic faith as per the arguments presented by other scholars (Setiloane 1996, Berentsen 1985, Ma 2004:55, Okoye 1997).

Divination among the Zulu people plays an integral role in the health and well-being of the community. Witch doctors (*izinyanga*), diviners (*izangoma*), tribal leaders, chiefs, and household leaders assume roles as mediators between the living and the ancestral spirits who escalate their issues to God. Thorpe (1991:29) correctly states that religious rituals are not merely weekend or one-day events but permeate every aspect of life. Life among the Zulu people consists of rituals for both misfortunes as well as celebrations. The Zulu indigenous worldview is pervaded by the ancestral spirits or the unseen realm. Zulu indigenous religion is not regarded as a religion that an individual can convert into but is born into. In the Zulu indigenous worldview, the people become religious by birth.

1.2 The Quran presented to Zulu people in Arabic culture

Inherent in the ideology of apartheid was the idea that the adherents of African Traditional Religions, be relegated to an 'empire of Satan' (Shorter 1991:82). African Traditional Religions were delegitimised, and Christianity as a religion was the only legitimised religion which was also a state religion during Apartheid. The demise of Apartheid provided freedom for the people to decide which religion was suitable for them. The history of South Africa bears the scars of a system where religion was made to appear as inconsiderate to Zulu Indigenous Religion (ZIR). The Zulu were treated as people who were unable to know God without being tutored about the philosophical idea of God. There was no consideration of a genuine interaction between Islam and ZIR because Muslims had a hostile understanding of ZIR (Ariarajah 1976:3–4). The Muslim missionaries frivolously treated ZIR with contempt and in their quest, had a relentless war to annihilate ZIR. Muslim missionaries polemicised against Christianity as most of the Zulu people were Christians who were adherents of African Independent Churches, Roman Catholic Church, or Protestant Churches (Deedat 1993). The Islamic missionaries saw Africans as "kaffir" (in Arabic means unbeliever); they condemned ancestral veneration, initiation rites, and other traditional religious practices. Unfortunately, in some form, the attitudes of the Muslim missionaries have survived until today as a guide for unrestrained feelings of superiority. The Zulu converts to Islam had to abandon their customary clothing and observe the Muslim dress code as that of Arab men. The Zulu women according to Islamic law were required to cover their bodies completely. This meant they should pray five times a day in the direction of Mecca and were sometimes given Arabic names. They were supposed to learn the Arabic language to recite the Quran, as it was maintained among Muslims that there would be no perfect translation of the Quran. Some of the chapters of the Quran were translated into the Zulu language by Muslim missionaries to convert the Zulu people to Islam. Some of the Zulu converts were even sent to the Middle East and Asia to be trained in educational institutions to become Shaykhs¹ to alter their Zulu culture to an Arab culture that is compatible with Islam (Haron 1998).

¹ According to Oxford Islamic Studies online web page, Shaykh refers to someone who has attained a position as a Quranic scholar, and possess a spiritual learning, jurists, and lead prayers in the mosque and preach. <http://www.oxfordislamstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2183>

The notion that is imperative to understand, according to Du Toit (1998:36– 60), is that “re-encountering Africa is impossible without taking the challenge of African Indigenous Religion and their spirituality very seriously.” The Muslim missionaries were replacing African traditions and customs with their own as they sought to spread Islam in South Africa. According to Muslims, the Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal should not be taken seriously as they were regarded as unbelievers (kaffir). Mbiti (1969:233) when addressing the failure of Christianity, which Islam also did not avoid, correctly notes that “Mission Christianity failed to penetrate African religiosity.”

1.3 The Zulu worldview undervalued

There is a need for Zulu Indigenous Religion to contribute to the broad understanding of the phenomenon of religion (Beyers 2010). The Zulu nation should be able to continue to provide their insights about what is religion without employing Eastern or Western epistemologies as if they are solely viable methods. There are decades of Muslim aggressive interaction with ZIR (Zulu Indigenous Religion) that has been witnessed especially around the South Coast areas in KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of Islam as a missionary religion was to convert Africans from their indigenous beliefs to those of the Islamic faith (Ospal 2004:553-550). Muslims, in their mission to convert adherents of ZIR to Islam, are struggling to convert people, while Christianity on the other hand is struggling to urge those who claim to have converted to Christianity to cease practicing ZIR. Therefore, regardless of the intense engagement of Muslim missionaries proselytising Africans in South Africa, it remains plausible that some of the *AmaZulu*² who converted to Islam still participate in ZIR’s beliefs and practices (Bascom & Herskovits 1959:3). Bearing in mind the zeal and zest of Islam in proselytising, the objective of this research is to explore the Zulu Muslim converts views on Zulu Traditional beliefs and practices.

To simply denounce the Zulu beliefs and practices is inappropriate and most likely to be counterproductive. The Zulu beliefs and practices are outward manifestations of individuals or communal core customs and values that constitute what it means to be a Zulu person. Therefore, to examine the influence of Islam in KwaZulu-Natal (the home of the Zulu nation) one must study the available material and speak to the Zulu

² Zulu people are referred to as *AmaZulu* which can also be understood as people of heaven depending on the context. The word *AmaZulu* can literary mean heavens.

Muslim community, such as those who converted to Islam as they are the people knowledgeable about Zulu beliefs and practices and the conversion to Islam. The focus on Zulu beliefs and practices will be about addressing the understanding of God and man's relationship to God, rites of passage and rituals, the sacred and the profane, customs and traditions. The Zulu indigenous religion can provide a worldview regarding cosmological, ontological, and thus epistemological and methodological connections to justify what for the Zulu people is true. By researching the indigenous beliefs, traditions, customs and practices, a result may emerge of where the Zulu worldview is present, juxtaposed with what it was before the influences of Islam. Nonetheless, the researcher will not focus on the influences that other religion(s) had on Zulu beliefs and practices. Therefore, the focus will be on the Zulu converts to Islam as well as the authentic Zulu beliefs and practices even before the arrival of Christianity.

1.4 Adherents of Zulu Indigenous Religion Use of the Quran

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Muslims in their effort to reach out to a broader range of Zulu native speakers, translated parts of Arabic in the Quran into Zulu in the late 1980s. The translated Quran was called *I-Kur'an Eyingcwele* (Holy Quran). The Muslims who were engaged in *dawah* work around KwaZulu-Natal had observed that most converts were opportunists as they received educational offers and handouts, they were "Muslims by day and Zionist by night" (Kaarsholm 2011:117). The influence of the Quranic narratives in the life of Zulu Muslims can be observed in their use of the Quranic verses in the amulets, to enhance their spiritual potency (Chiorazzi 2015:1-3). The use of talismans or amulets for divine protection has been part of the Islamic culture since the time of Muhammad (Hammed 2022:213-215). He addresses the use of handwritten amulets during the early Islamic era, which are still valuable spiritual objects among some of the Zulu Muslims. Budge (1961:13-14) in Hammed (2022:2014), state that:

To us an 'amulet' is an object which is endowed with magical powers, and which of its own accord uses these powers ceaselessly on behalf of the person who carries it [...], to protect him and his belongings from the attacks of evil spirits or the Evil Eye. [...] The object of the talisman is quite different from that of the amulet. The amulet is supposed to exercise its protective powers on behalf of an individual or thing continually, whereas the talisman is only intended to

perform one specific task. [...] But the thin line which divides the amulet from the talisman has rarely been observed [...]. And the experts do not agree on the subject.

1.5 Zulu Indigenous Religion Domesticated Islam

The pluralistic nature of Zulu Indigenous Religion is the main reason why it is successful in the diaspora. Zulu spirituality has always maintained an attitude towards other religions that enables them to adapt to change and to be inclusive. Zulu spirituality can absorb the views, practices, and wisdom of other religions more than Islam. The primary reason why Zulu spirituality is easily influenced and amended as a result of other religious views, wisdom, and practices is that it is not bound by any written text (Chiorazzi 2015). While Islam has always been overtly resistant to adopting Zulu beliefs and practices because their written texts are fully codified, Zulu Indigenous Religion, in most parts, accommodated other religious ideas. The accommodative nature of ZIR can be observed in Zulu amulets that might have a verse from the Quran written inside. The traditional Zulu healer or leader who made that amulet may believe in the efficacy that other religions provide and thus see no conflict between other faiths and traditional Zulu spirituality. The traditional healer sees the other religion as a complement and adding to the spiritual potency thus causing the amulets to be more effective. The Zulu Indigenous Religion focuses on what is pragmatic, that is, it is all about getting tangible results.

The thread of ZIR does exist in most African Independent Churches, even though it is not under the name of African Traditional Religions. As mentioned above, the Zulu converts to Islam did become 'Muslims by day and Zionist by night' (Kaarsholm 2011:117). African Indigenous Religion continued to exist under the cloak or in a secondary way within the AICs (such as Zion Christian Church and Nazareth Baptist Church) especially when individuals were confronted by hardships. The hardships that AIC's members encounter may vary from the death of a loved one to sickness, trauma, lack, and unemployment among other things. What is anticipated is that more people will revert to ZIR as a means of looking for comfort and quick fixes after challenging situations. The people will likely find themselves not only reverting to indigenous

beliefs and practices but also to churches that are led by false prophets³ who prey on the gullible people and those who are desperate for solutions to their problems. Mercado (2005:104) posits that the influence of AIR is still strong, especially in times of crisis. There are many Africans who profess to be Muslims who do not claim to be members of AIR but participate in indigenous religious practices and rituals. This testifies to the resilience of ZIR and the ability to domesticate Islam in modern KwaZulu-Natal (Kaarsholm 2011:117-119).

1.6 Islam and Zulu Tradition

According to Adam Mncanywa (interviewed by Kaarsholm at the Islamic community centre, 23 August 2006), gatherings for virginity testing should be done by elderly women within families. He posits that such practices are not to be treated as public traditional festivals. Although *Umkhosi woMhlanga* (royal reed dance) is normally held once a year during the early month of September in Nongoma at KwaNyokeni Palace, the Zulu converts to Islam are prohibited from attending events where girls display their breasts as they are expected to completely cover themselves according to the Islamic law. The Zulu values and customs were not appreciated by Muslim missionaries and that resulted in *AmaZulu* accepting a version of Islam that meant almost the total annihilation of the Zulu tradition that was not compatible with Islam. Muslim girls and boys are prohibited from attending events that are meant for those who are at the stage of adulthood, where they are expected to wear tribal garb and are encouraged to engage in flirtatious and love play bantering (Haron 1998).

According to Mncanywa in Kaarsholm's (2011:125) paper, the Zulu beliefs and practices were distorted by Zionists and *sangomas* who introduced angels as ancestral spirits causing the departure from the pure African understanding of a highest being (*uMvelingqangi*). He believed that the angels of fertility and rain (*Nomkhubulwana*), death (*Noluhamba*), revelation (*Zambulo*), and destruction (*Kubhubha*), can all be observed during the life of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. Mncanywa's engagement with the Zulu was an attempt to prove that

³ The false prophets operate through manipulation and control of their victims, especially to keep them unaware that they are manipulated to serve only the interests of the leader. This is followed by unusual practices that persist in these churches because the leaders deify themselves in the eyes of their members.

Islam, as a monotheistic religion, is reconcilable with Zulu culture, provided that the convert to Islam denounces the superstitions that are believed by the Zionists and *sangomas* (Kaarsholm 2011:125). Nonetheless, Zulu converts to Islam ascribed to the notion that no one should feel coerced to leave his/her involvement in the beliefs and practices of AIR. Therefore, it should be a personal choice.

1.7 Islam *dawah* work in KZN

Christianity and Islam competed in their mission to have as many converts as possible. Therefore, the adherents of AIR in KwaZulu-Natal become the target of both religions. Muslims in KZN argue that Zulus as rational beings should accept the Quran narratives as a logically superior representation to that of the Bible (Kaarsholm 2011:110). The *dawah* work around KwaZulu-Natal will be explored in depth to examine the history of Islam and their missionary movement in KZN as well as assist in gathering information on how Islam influenced the Zulu Muslim people.

1.8 Problem Statement

The available historical documents will reveal whether the Zulu indigenous beliefs were altered by the arrival of Islam, and if they were altered, to what extent? The information is collected through literature reviews, questionnaires, and observational research. This research analyses the authentic indigenous beliefs and practices that were handed over from generation to generation before the arrival of Islam to ascertain how, where and which areas of Zulu beliefs and practices were changed or altered through the influence of Islam.

Islam and the Zulu religion must be willing to learn about each other because these religions co-existed in history and presently. Whereas there are many good reasons for people adhering to one religion to learn about other religions that co-exist in the same space and time, it can be debated whether any religion should agree to learn “from” another religion. I suspect most adherents of one religion would deny the validity of any other religion and would therefore be opposed to learning “from” any other religion. This at least applies to the Abrahamic religions that employ different collections of religious books (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). However, the appreciation of each other’s religion will lead to the discovery of what each religion believes to be true (Hospital 1973). This research would therefore include a comparative study of the Zulu beliefs before the arrival of Islam and the arrival of Islam

to determine whether Islam influenced Zulu beliefs and practices. The review of the literature on the study has shown that the Muslim missionaries were ignorant about the Zulu beliefs and practices, which is directly seen from the derogative terms used against the Zulu people. The attitude of Muslim missionaries towards Zulu beliefs and practices led to a foreign type of Islamic faith that was devoid of being contextual to the Zulu people.

1.9 Research Gap

In the 21st century, there has been a growing awareness in many theological schools that Islam and AIR must be taken seriously on their terms. In the research that seeks to identify Zulu beliefs and practices, there are possibilities to discover information that was overlooked in the past, and the indigenous people in KZN can determine how these beliefs and practices were altered as a result of the arrival of Islam. It is imperative to examine what were the Zulu beliefs and practices before the arrival of Islam because that will assist in understanding and appreciating the Zulu worldview. Furthermore, in the post-apartheid era in South Africa, there is a need to emphasise the importance of religious freedom, and each religion must be taken seriously including the truth claims it presents. There is a need for African indigenous thought, with its richness and complexity, to be employed as a system of belief and thought that can contribute to the global understanding of religions, rather than as a mere belief system to be compared with Abrahamic religions. The attitude towards the Zulu Indigenous Religion cannot remain as that of the Muslim missionaries, hence this research will involve the Zulu people and consider their voices and concerns on the subject under study. The researcher's preliminary research on this topic affirms the notion that Zulu traditional beliefs and practices have been eroded to a certain extent due to the influence of Islam on some of the Zulu societies. Therefore, this research attempts to discover how, when and what of the authentic Zulu beliefs and practices, that were in existence, were syncretised. Hopefully, this will affirm whether the arrival of Islam led to Zulu beliefs and practices to undergo a metamorphosis. If so, can the changes be observed?

1.10 Limitations and Scope of the Study

Despite employing a mixed methods approach, the study's conclusions cannot be extrapolated due to the limited sample size. The available literature and participants

who participated in this research provided information that is deemed reasonable. The limitation of this research is the scant availability of sources on Zulu Muslim converts/reverts to Islam, which includes independent sources that can assist in building a case for the research topic. The findings of this study are derived from a survey carried out in specific regions of KwaZulu-Natal, characterised by a significant population of Zulu individuals who identify as Muslims. Data was gathered during the Covid-19 pandemic and the season of Ramadan fasting, which had an impact on the ability to collect data in person in certain instances. In addition, a small number of Zulu Muslims preferred to avoid face-to-face contact during Ramadan, which consequently restricted the available methods of inquiry that could not be carried out over the phone. However, the majority of the participants were easily accessible either before or after Friday prayer to respond to questionnaires and address any additional inquiries. This enabled the author to mitigate the limitations of the research design of the study. Again, the researcher will evaluate the influence of Islam on the beliefs and practices of Zulus who have converted to Islam, and not the impact of Islam on ZIR (in other words on all Zulus, and especially the majority who have not accepted Islam). The first objective is achievable, while the latter would be extremely difficult to achieve, and would take years of extensive qualitative and quantitative research to provide preliminary results. An additional limitation associated with the disadvantages of survey questionnaires is sometimes the low rate of return questionnaire scripts (Patton, 2002). Nevertheless, in the context of this investigation, 80% of the questionnaire scripts were successfully retrieved and 97% of them were deemed suitable for analysis, indicating a high level of reliability for this research.

1.11 Research Questions

The study will be engaged with the following primary question and their secondary questions:

1.11.1 Primary Question

What are the indigenous Zulu beliefs and practices that were influenced by Islam among the Zulu Muslim community, to the extent that, indigenous Zulu beliefs and practices have been subsumed?

1.11.2 Secondary Questions

1. If Islam influenced Zulu indigenous beliefs and practices, to what extent did it exert its influence?
2. Did the Zulu religion manage to domesticate Islam in KwaZulu-Natal?
3. What allows the Zulu indigenous religion to be accommodated if it is so?
4. What will society lose if the worldview of the Zulu indigenous religion is compromised through the influence of Islam?
5. What is the state of the Zulu indigenous religion today?

1.12 Objectives

Our objectives therefore are:

1. The objective is to demonstrate the specific influence of Islam on the beliefs and behaviours of Zulus who have undergone conversion, rather than examining the broader impact of Islam on Zulu Indigenous Religion as a whole.
2. To demonstrate how Zulu Muslims have established a cohesive feeling of community among Zulu Muslims within their Islamic society.
3. To explore the ongoing indigenisation of Islam among the Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.13 Literature Review

The relevant literature for this research was reviewed to explore the data collected as per the topic under study. The literature review included articles, books, and journals focusing on the influence of Islam on the Zulu worldviews as well as the authentic Zulu beliefs and practices. The Indian traders from North India their main goal was to trade and as soon as they arrived in KwaZulu-Natal, they started trading through the shops that they opened in the towns nearby coal mines, rural towns, Zulu tribal areas, and in some of the white developed shopping centres (Naude 1985). Although, it took very long for Muslims to convert Zulu people to Islam through their *dawah* projects, one of the reasons for their failure was because the Zulus viewed Islam as an Indian religion, especially during the time of racial segregation propelled by the apartheid regime.

Kaarsholm (2011:117) states that Mncanywa, a Christian convert to Islam believes that Islam has to reintroduce the type of respect that the African culture used to instil when they were growing up, which in most part has been observed by the members of the Nazareth Baptist Church (Shembe). According to Adam Mncanywa, an

interviewee in Kaarsholm (2011:117), he claims to be the first Zulu person in Amaoti to adopt Islam in 1977. Since his conversion, he states that his congregation has 40 Zulu people who have also converted to Islam. According to Kaarsholm (2011:117) Mncanywa, Islam was exclusively for the Malawians and Indians in Phoenix, and none of them were willing to share their faith with the Zulus. This was the weakness of Islam that led to its foreignness in KwaZulu-Natal. He further posited that the Zulu people were 'Muslims by day and Zionist by night' as the *dawah* projects propelled Zulu Muslims to maintain a status of being beggars dependent on what they were given as handouts. According to Kaarsholm (2011:116), Adam Mncanywa strongly emphasised that to be a Muslim entails that one must break away from the tradition, although it should not be the result of coercion. Therefore, to break with tradition must be a gradual process of enlightenment and persuasion.

In KwaZulu-Natal, during the 1970s there were few Muslims around Kwamashu and only a single Muslim family around Inanda. During the early years of the 1970s, there was a growing number of Muslims around Ntuzuma, Kwamashu, and Inanda, although they were not aware of each other. According to Micheal Mumisa (2002:286),

Shaikh Abbas Phiri, a Malawian who had come to South Africa to work in the coal mines, was responsible for the emergence of sustained proselytising, or *dawah* work, and thus the spreading of Islam, first in Inanda and then in Ntuzuma and Kwamashu areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

The Zulu Muslim converts were once members of Zionist churches which for the most part consisted of Zulu traditional beliefs in witchcraft, healing, and spirits. The Muslim missionaries were not equipped enough to deal with such challenges, therefore they only hoped that the Zulu converts would soon forget about the Zulu beliefs and practices as they continually offered them food parcels, literature to read in Zulu, education, and money to buy school uniforms.

Haron (1998) posits that the Zulu people believe that spirits or ancestors act as mediators between God and mankind, although, it was not so from the beginning because their belief system changed because of an evolutionary process that caused Zulu people to replace God with the ancestral spirits. Jenkinson (1969) in his work he concurs with Bishop Callaway, that the Zulus were "degenerated people fallen from a higher state," as they underwent an evolutionary process of neglecting the Creator (*uNkulunkulu*) since He became an "unknown God." This is the reason Muslim missionaries in KwaZulu-Natal claimed that it was through *dawah projects* that the

Creator was once again revered among the Zulu people. It is expected that the Zulu people who embrace Islam must adhere to the doctrine of the 'oneness of God' (*Tawhid*) and redirect their belief in ancestral spirits to Allah alone. The emphasis was upon the doctrine of *Tawhid* (oneness of God) which does not allow mediators of any form between God and mankind (Haron 1998).

Furthermore, Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal in their efforts to bring about harmony between Islam and Zulu beliefs and practices promoted the notion of transnational discourse. This means that they permit the following traditions that can be practised by all Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal (Kaarsholm 2007):

- a) Bride price (*lobola*).
- b) Virginity testing (this must be done within the families by elderly women, not in large gatherings like the Zulu royal reed dance).
- c) Polygamy (a man is allowed to have a maximum of four wives).
- d) Circumcision (Muslim boys must be circumcised before they reach the age of ten years or during the seventh day after birth).

Nonetheless, since there is little information that could be retrieved on this topic, therefore, it must be stated that to balance the information on the influence of Islam on Zulu beliefs and practices, questionnaires will be conducted to supplement the information gathered through literature.

1.14 Methodology

The basic approach to this research finds its foundation within a comparative study of what the Zulu beliefs and practices were before Islam and its contemporary practices, and as such to identify the areas where Islam influenced these practices. Thus, in pursuit of this objective, this research opted for the following methodological approach: as explained below.

1.15 Theological reflection

Theological reflection seeks to explore the ideas, beliefs, and practices from the perspective of those who adhere to Quranic narratives. The theological reflection enables the researcher to present a clear picture of how the arrival of the Islamic Quran influenced the Zulu people who converted to Islam. The theological reflection further assists in addressing whether the teachings of the Quran are compatible with the Zulu

Muslim's prior experiential aspect of religious practices and beliefs that are shared and valued by the Zulu community.

1.16 Historical and Descriptive

The historical approach will be employed to explore the historiography of the study of *AmaZulu* and their beliefs and practices throughout the centuries, even before the arrival of Islam and other religion(s) that may have influenced Zulu worldviews in the later stage. The historical approach will enable the researcher to investigate the authentic Zulu beliefs and practices even before the arrival of other religion(s). On the other hand, the researcher will examine the influence of Islam on Zulu beliefs and practices.

Furthermore, the historical approach will be employed to distinguish between the authentic Zulu worldview from those that are influenced by other religion(s); hence, the researcher will examine the earliest stages of the Zulu beliefs and practices as well as the influence of Islam on the Zulu beliefs and practices. The nature of this research will also be descriptive, as it endeavours to provide a clear picture of how the arrival of Islam influenced the Zulu people.

1.17 Combining quantitative and qualitative research

Information will be gathered via qualitative and quantitative approaches. The relevant information will be obtained through questionnaires and literature on the Zulu Indigenous Religion and the Zulu Muslim converts. In describing what is qualitative research. Kvale (1996:67) says that "quality refers to what kind, to the essential character of something." On the other hand, in defining quantitative research Berg (1995:3) says that "Quantity refers to what, how, when and where of a thing – its essence and ambience." Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative methods of research will be employed in support of each other in the study of the influence of Islam on Zulu beliefs and practices. The qualitative research approach will provide the researcher with rich information that will be collected through the historiography of the Zulu beliefs and practices. Therefore, the role of the quantitative research approach pertains to examining the influence of Islam on Zulu Indigenous Religion through questionnaires.

1.18 Questionnaire instrument

The questionnaires can assist in determining the demographic makeup of societies and various attitudes, values, and beliefs that are held by these societies (Ammerman et al: 1998:217). The questionnaire method will be suitable for this study because it will help to explore more opinions of Zulu people on the study of Zulu beliefs and practices. The questionnaire will further assess the views of the Zulu participants concerning the influence of Islam on Zulu beliefs and practices. Nevertheless, the historiography of the Zulu beliefs and practices will assist in differentiating between authentic Zulu worldview and influenced Zulu worldview. The questionnaires developed in IsiZulu will be employed in assessing the views of the adherents of Islam on the influence of Islam on Zulu beliefs and practices.

1.19.1 Interview instrument

The interview method collects information utilising semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The unstructured interviews are analysed in the qualitative research, while semi-structured interviews are analysed in the quantitative data collection methods.

In the unstructured interviews, the researcher encourages interviewees to talk freely about Zulu beliefs and practices concerning the area of research, and the information gathered in the interview is later tested through semi-structured interviews or questionnaires. These interviews are employed in exploratory research to seek more information and new insights about the research area.

The semi-structured interviews are designed to explore and provide further information to enhance the data collection of the research area. The interviews allow the researcher to be in control in asking questions that are not directly observed and provide historical information (Oso and Onen 2009:90). Therefore, the strength of the interviews is attested by Ammerman *et al* (1998: 208) stating that,

- a) Interviewing allows the researcher or study team to hear individual stories, diverse perspectives, and minority voices they might not encounter otherwise.
- b) Interviewing allows access to unobservable such as attitudes, personal feelings, and individual interpretations.

1.20 Statistics

The researcher has employed descriptive statistics as it better “describes or characterises data by summarising them into more understandable terms without

losing of distorting much of the information” (Munro and Connell, 2005:4). Descriptive statistics was perceived as the best suitable means of presenting data through its use of “frequencies, summary tables, measures of central tendency, and charts” (Munro and Connell, 2005).

1.21 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to provide the background of the research area while stressing the influence of Islam on Zulu beliefs and practices. The chapter dealt with research components such as the problem statement, research gap, limitation of the study, research questions, definition of terms, and objectives of the research area. The chapter reviewed different research methods that sought to strengthen the comparative approach to this research such as literary research, quantitative research approach, qualitative research approach, and theological reflection. The aim is to address how Islam has influenced Zulu beliefs and practices by comparing the original beliefs and practices of the Zulu people before Islam with the current practices.

CHAPTER 2

A Historical Survey of Zulu Indigenous Religion in KZN

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will examine the Zulu beliefs and practices before the influx of other religions to attain authentic Zulu indigenous beliefs and practices. The researcher will utilise historical documents on the Zulu Indigenous Religion and custodians of the Zulu religious system, such as the diviners, to find out what the Zulu people believed and practised before the arrival of Islam and any other religion(s). It will be futile to examine the origins of the Zulu religion without revisiting the events that occurred during the early nineteenth century. An immense social chaos and warfare occurred during the 1820s when the Zulu clan, which was previously obscure, became a force to be reckoned with; the Zulu clan had gained political prominence in southeast Africa. During the 19th century, the second and third decades had intense forced migrations because of the Zulu and other Nguni series of wars. The constant wars between the Zulu and other Nguni were known as *Mfecane*, the “crushing” of opposition in Africa that occurred in the wake of King Shaka Zulu (c. 1787-1828) and his aggressive state-building. The *Mfecane* caused a change in the political, social, and demographic configuration of central and southern Africa and parts of eastern Africa. Shaka is depicted as a tyrannical ruler in conventional accounts but a legitimate heir to the throne of the Zulu kingdom. In the 1820s and 1830s, the British propagandists portrayed Shaka Zulu as the only ruler of the Zulu region that was depopulated as a result of the continuous African warfare that was employed to usher in diplomatic relations, treaties, and trade agreements, even if they were not honoured, that conceded the plots of land for European settlement (Thorpe 1991:32-40).

During the early nineteenth century, traders, missionaries, and travellers submitted a report alleging that there was no Zulu indigenous religion. Nonetheless, during the early 1850s, the Zulu people were credited with an established indigenous religion that largely involved the worship/veneration of ancestral spirits (Hexham 1987:285-290). The missionary reports posited that uNkulunkulu was believed to be either the Zulu God or the original ancestor and assumed a supreme role. Colenso was an Anglican Bishop during the mid-1850s who believed that uNkulunkulu and uMvelinqangi were

names used by Zulu people when referring to the same God. Colenso greatly disagreed with Henry Callaway's view that the Zulu people had no perception of God equivalent to the God worshipped by Christians. However, Callaway insisted that the Zulu people perceived uNkulunkulu as the first Zulu ancestor. The relationship between the Zulu God and ancestral spirits will be discussed in detail in this chapter (Chidester *et al.* 1997:213).

This study discusses the known Zulu rituals, including communal rituals related to monarchy, agricultural fertility, warfare, and rites of passage. It explores the significance of these rituals to the Zulu communities. Henry Callaway's (1870) work on the Zulu religious system in 1868-1870s will be utilised as he addressed healing and divination practices. Axel-Ivar Berglund's work focuses on the examination of ancestral spirits, diviners, divinities, protection against malevolent forces, burial rites, sacrificial rituals, and healing methods (Berglund 1976). The researcher does not dwell much on disputes solely based on the notion that some authors or narrators were biased. This assists the researcher in avoiding the Baconian fallacy, which "consists in that the idea that a historian can operate without preconceived questions, hypothesis, paradigm, prejudices, presumptions, or general presuppositions of any kind" (Fischer 1970:04). Therefore, this chapter employs historical documents as means to extract the authentic Zulu beliefs and practices.

2.1 The origin of the Zulu nation

The formation of the Zulu nation was propelled by Shaka kaSenzangakhona, a king of the Zulu clan, as per popular historical accounts. Shaka merged other Nguni groups into his Zulu clan around 1810 and 1828, mainly by waging wars with them. Shaka established a Zulu kingdom through conquest, which caused him to claim a supreme sovereign among other tribes. In the year 1828, Shaka's brothers and one of the king's trusted headmen (*induna*) plotted to cause a palace revolt that led to the killing of Shaka. Despite the killing of Shaka, the fairly young Zulu nation survived and was fortified through *Inkatha*, that is, a national totem. The royal household lineage of the Zulu people is believed to be traced from the king Shaka kaSenzangakhona to Goodwill Zwelithini kaDinizulu, the late Zulu king (Morris 1965:63-89).

The Zulu people, even before the arrival of Europeans, lived in large families and clusters that were ruled by a chief who was from the same clan or lineage of the

people. The chief was responsible for the general welfare and maintaining order among the people he ruled. The chief served as a link between the people under him and other Nguni groups, also between his people and the ancestral spirits, and at times he was assisted by *isangoma* (traditional healer; plural-*izangoma*). All the chiefs that ruled over their people/clan had to adhere to the Zulu monarch. The chief of the clan had the authority to rule over his land, which sometimes had people join their community because of intermarriage. The chief's land was divided into homesteads, and the headman, whose position was not hereditarily determined, was responsible for reporting to the chief about the issues concerning his territory. Each clan had common beliefs and values that were shared among themselves, and a praise name or surname (*isibongo*) assumed a significant role in the integration of all human actions and created a sense of belonging.

The Zulu people religiously perceived that “all entities in the universe and ultimately in the cosmos are physical...that everything necessary for his [man's] physical well-being is ultimately controllable and available within his world” (Kunene 1981:14-15). Nonetheless, according to Kunene (1981:14-15), the Zulu people strongly believe that gods create a “reality that parallels human reality,” that is, every act of the gods in the world possesses a creative purpose. This is the attempt of the Zulu people to make sense of the role played by the ancestral spirits; though they are dead but remain actively involved on Earth as they are believed to exist beyond and outside this world. The ancestral spirits were utilised for their connection between their previous lives and the people left behind. The ancestral veneration has been the most integral cultural manifestation beginning from the formation of the Zulu nation. The Zulu people are expected to show the same affection and respect to the “living dead” as they did when they were alive. It was regarded as poignant when one fails to seek answers and advice from their ancestral spirits. Ngubane (1984) asserted that the ancestral spirits of the Zulu people are an inspiration, hope, and courage for those who are dealing with life and its challenges in this world.

As alluded to above, the Zulu nation was not as organised as it is recently before the beginning of the 19th century, when the formation of the Zulu nation took shape under the single polity propelled by Shaka's conquest and the arrival of the Europeans. The oral history and historical records collected during the early 19th century suggest that the Zulu people were aware of their rich practical cultural norms long before Shaka's

epoch. Dhlomo (1939:36-37) attested that Shaka's role in the formation of the Zulu nation was that:

He brought about great changes and wide repercussions. Life ceased to be hedonistic, peaceful, and safe. The policy of *laissez-faire* succumbed to one of tyranny. People became military-minded. Shaka's domestic and foreign policy, his great wars of conquest, and his studied ruthlessness transformed tribal life and gave it new patterns of behaviour, new channels of thought, and new political ideologies.

The Zulu people draw their beliefs and practices from their socio-cultural element that is rich historically to express who they are in their way. These beliefs and practices include dance, rituals, rites of passage, poetry, pride in and respect for their Zulu monarch as well as the role played by ancestral spirits in their daily lives. The Zulu conquest under Shaka did not merely include the conquest of the land but also involved political institutions, and economic power, captured the invisible spiritual power, and demonstrated power over the rival ancestral spirits. Shaka's objective was to achieve dominance over spiritual matters; he took control and centralised *umkhosi* (festival), rites of passage, rainmaking rituals, and state ship medicine. Shaka could not have avoided incorporating other Nguni groups without examining the 'invisible' spiritual perspective of power and the visible. Therefore, the leader was proven legitimate through his ancestral spirits' (*oNkulunkulu*) dominance, and people had a plethora of *oNkulunkulu*. It was paramount to examine whose *uNkulunkulu* (ancestor) takes superiority in the task of consolidating and building the state of the Zulu nation. Most civilizations in the past, regardless of their geographical location, had a religion associated with them. The formation of the Zulu nation cannot be stripped from its high view of the relationship between *amakhosi* (chiefs), the role played by significant women, and the deceased ancestral spirits in ritual and leadership. As Weir (2005:216) correctly states, "an essential component of establishing dominance involved making Zulu ancestor or *oNkulunkulu* relevant for consolidation, legitimacy, and dissemination of state ideology."

2.2 The Zulu mythological creation story

The commentators on Zulu religion have held diverse views about the authentic concept of God and the Zulu evolutionary view of God. The Zulu traditional creation myth account recorded by W.H.I. Bleek (1952:3) states that *uNkulunkulu* created

human beings (both black and white). The Zulu creation myth account was probably adopted from a traditional narrative to make sense of the colonial context. This myth posited that the blacks were created to live on the land, would go naked and carry spears as their weapon, while white people were created to live in the ocean, wear clothes, and use guns as their weapons. UNkulunkulu was believed to have originated from a massive swamp of reeds and was created in *Uhlanga*⁴ before he came to earth. UNkulunkulu *wadabuka ohlangeni* (he broke off from *Uhlanga*), so the Zulu people believed they probably possessed some interconnectedness with an eternal or pre-existent spiritual being. UNkulunkulu has been perceived as a pre-existent spiritual being because he existed before the creation of other creatures. He remains a necessary being to whom the Zulu people owe him for their existence (Bleek 1952:3-4).

Nevertheless, Berglund (1976:36) shares the same stance as other commentators concerning uMvelinqangi as the creator of life. In their praises, the Zulu people would refer to uMvelinqangi as uMninimandla-onke (the almighty) and uSomandla (the source of all power or the Father of all power). The Zulu people believed that in the beginning, people were living with uMvelinqangi, but there was a man among the people who was very fond of mischief. The mischievous man was caught riding the white ox, which belonged to uMvelinqangi, and because of his mischief, he was expelled from the sky to live on Earth forever. The navel cord (*Inkatha*) was tied around the waist of the mischievous man, and the hole from the sky was open for the man to be lowered as per the command of Mvelinqangi. When the man reached his destination on Earth, he employed the reed (*uhlanga*) to cut the cord that connected the sky to Earth and began to live on Earth. UMvelinqangi observed the man on the next moon (day) through the hole in the sky, and he was lying beneath a banana tree; the man appeared to be very thin and weak. As a result, uMvelinqangi saw the necessity of providing the man with a wife to keep him company and lessen his loneliness. The man was joined by a maiden lowered from the sky. When the maiden got to earth, the man subsequently used the reed to cut the cord around the woman's waist. It was undoubtedly that they were happy to be together, and as a result, uMvelinqangi decided to close the hole in the sky to preclude people from looking up

⁴ *Umhlanga* is known as the bed of reeds. *Uhlanga* and *umhlanga* should not be confound because *umhlanga* is a location where The Zulu people broke off from *Uhlanga*.

into heaven, as well as to provide the people of the Earth with some privacy. Therefore, the people on Earth were called the Zulu people, which could be translated as “the people of the sky,” because the sky was their origin. It is more plausible that the Zulu people did refer to uMvelinqangi (the first to exist) as the one responsible for creating man, although the Zulu religion does not focus much on the concept of the gods (Kunene xxxvi).

In his work, Katesa Schlosser (1997:49) states that,

the Zulu prophet Laduma Madela provided his perspective regarding uMvelinqangi. Laduma Madela posited that “uMvelinqangi and his family came out of the ground like a mushroom in the beginning. The family consists of OkaMjukujukwana, Sitha (his wife), his elder son who can make himself unseen, ZwiLakho (also known as Nowa), his younger son who is associated with the cliff, and uNomkhubulwana, his daughter who is responsible for assuring good harvests (Schlosser 1997:49).

A different account by Callaway (1868-70) notes that before the arrival of missionaries, when the Zulu people were asked, “What formed the stone?” their response was uMvelinqangi made the stones. The Zulu people believed their origin was succinctly exhausted by the notion that they came out of a bed of reeds. When children asked about “what made the sun?” the elders would say, “uMvelinqangi made the sun.” The children would ask such questions when they were little because they assumed that older people knew everything about things that exist on Earth. Although the elders were not that knowledgeable, the children did not want to contradict or debate them because neither did they know anything significant about the cosmos.

2.3 The role of ancestral spirits in Zulu religion

The cultural practices among the Zulu people are usually interconnected with their religious beliefs; therefore, the beliefs remain influenced by culture. It is culturally acknowledged that a junior in the Zulu culture is not allowed to approach their seniors directly. For example, *Inkosi* (chief) is not supposed to be directly approached, but it is only through the stewards or herdsmen (*izinceku noma izinduna*) that someone can approach the chief. It is crucial to the Zulu people that the way of life should not be changed but must remain the same for all generations. Even the young man within the household will not directly approach their father, especially when they want to talk about serious matters. The mother’s role in the household is to mediate between her

son and the father. Therefore, uMvelinqangi is also not approached directly but through the ancestral spirits who are believed to be in the spirit world. The Zulu people did not pray directly to uMvelinqangi as the ancestral spirits intermediate between the living and uMvelinqangi.

The role of ancestral spirits in the life of the Zulu people was vital as it provided a bridge in the chasm between uMvelinqangi and the Zulu people. The ancestral spirits were consulted regularly through an animal slaughter and ritual performances. The life of the Zulu people was not complete without any form of interaction with the ancestral spirits. The role played by the ancestral spirits among the Zulu people is, in fact, limitless as per the Zulu religion. The ancestral spirits (*amadlozi*) appear to be distinct from *amathongo*, a concept employed to refer to both the general body of ancestral spirits no longer known by living and those that are known (*amadlozi*). Callaway (1868-70) posited that *amathongo* were ancestral spirits who had died and become *ithongo*, a snake known as *Inyandezulu*.⁵ When a person was ill, they were taken to a witch doctor (*inyanga*⁶), and he/she would enquire from *amathongo* regarding the cause of the illness, and a cow would be slaughtered as per the request of *amathongo*. The meat of the bullock that was slaughtered would be put together in a hut that allowed *amathongo* to eat, and the people did not eat the meat on the day of the slaughtered bullock. The boys slept on the hut to look after the meat, and the hut door was closed so people could eat the slaughtered bullock the following day. In the morning, the meat was boiled, people would assemble to eat meat, and men ate the head. The bullock breast was given to married women and all their family members. When the meat was consumed, the bones were collected and burned by the owner of the slaughtered bullock. This was done to have nothing left for the wizards to apply for the bad medicines on the leftovers with the intent to bewitch the person whom the bullock was slaughtered for and regress to being sick again.

The Zulu people believed that ancestral spirits represent the unseen realm not affected by death. The Zulu people believe that human beings do not merely possess a physical body but are endowed with *umoya* (an essential spiritual force), as well as develop

⁵ A giant harmless snake that is green and normal crawls on trees. It often enters inside the native huts.

⁶ *Inyanga*: was most likely to be a male person who employed traditional medicines in a manner that is usually non-clairvoyant compared to that of an *isangoma*.

isithunzi (force of character, personality, or shadow) that can live beyond death as an ancestral spirit (Vilakazi 1962; Du Toit 1966). The relationship between the Zulu people with ancestral spirits depends on the living performing the necessary rituals and doing what is expected from them. The vital medium of communication with the ancestral spirits is animal sacrifice, and other forms of ritual speech are essential to maintaining the communication and connection between the living and the ancestral spirits (Magwaza 1993; Lambert 1993; Heusch 1985:38-64). McAllister's (1988:50) points of departure concerning the speeches of the Zulu people during the traditional events is that they serve to highlight the following meaning:

1. The audience and the ancestral spirits must know the event's nature and reason for holding it. A reason is officially and formally announced.
2. A detailed address using reciting lineage praises of the person for whom the ceremony is held with the ancestral spirits.
3. Emphasis on being receptive and responsive toward the ancestral spirits e.g., the host being attentive to the wishes of the ancestral spirits.
4. Responsibility of the leader in the household e.g., to talk and/or introduce a particular person to recite lineage praises.

2.4 The ritual of *Ukubuyisa*

Ukubuyisa was a ritual about returning the deceased's spirit to their home and persisting in affirming the spiritual reality. The deceased's spirit was entrusted to protect those left behind. The descendants were responsible for conducting the ritual of the deceased parent after a year or two had passed. The male head of the household, other descendants, or the mother was responsible for performing the ritual. However, in some regions, the restrictions were different from others. The ceremony of *ukubuyisa* was only performed for the head of the family or the leader of the tribe, who was brought back as an ancestor whose role was to punish, bless, and protect the descendants. Some Zulu people did the same ceremony for the household's mother (Nxumalo 1981:65-78).

A special animal was chosen by family members to be used for the ceremony. The animal had to be large enough to appease the deceased person because a lean or small animal might provoke the deceased. The ceremony date and time were announced for all men to assemble as the animal had to be slaughtered in the cattle

kraal. The old male among the relatives would recite praise poems (*izibongo*) of the deceased, including those of his father and their forefathers. When he was reciting the *izibongo* of the deceased, he pleaded for the spirit of the dead to return to take care of the descendants still living on earth. The animal chosen for the ceremony was slaughtered.

2.5 The burial rites

The following notes are extracted from the narrations in Callaway's (1870:144-8) work on the burial rites. When it occurs that a person dies among the Zulu people, the deceased tomb is covered on top with the branches. A deceased person's family member had to keep guard over the tomb continually. When it was the son who died, his father had to watch over the branches continually until at a stage where the branches were rotten because it was only at that stage when it was believed that nothing could disturb the remains as the branches are rotten. When the person who watched over the tomb saw a snake on it, he would utter these words on his return, "O, I have seen him today basking in the sun on the top of the tomb." When the snake did not come to visit home, nor did the deceased appear through a dream, the household sacrificed a beast or goat to bring the spirit home. When he did not appear in a dream while a snake visited at home after an animal was slaughtered, the household was anxious and asked, "how did this person die? We cannot see him; his *ithongo* is darkened." The Zulu people would immediately consult *inyanga* (doctor) who specialises with *ubulawo*⁷, and the deceased person whom *inyanga* was

⁷ *Ubulawo*: is a different type of medicine that is employed in removing the causes of darkness and dislike or misfortune. It is also employed to bright brightness out of darkness as well as cleansing. *Ubulawo* has two usage and depending on the context it consists of two meanings. The first type of *ubulawo* is *ubulawo obumnyama* (black) 'washes away' and it is employed to take away darkness or the evil that cause a man to be disliked. The second type of *ubulawo* is *ubulawo obumhlophe* (white) that is employed to 'wipe' and make the deceased "white" and makes him to be "bright," and also makes one a "beauty," that is, to become *ithongo* can be an object of admiration and love. Both *ubulawo* that is white and black are roots of the plants. *Ubulawo obumnyama* (black) was use first. The roots are mixed with water after being bruised, as well as "churned." After the churning process has produced a great deal of froth that is observed then the people had to use it for a period of about a month by drinking it and also washing the body with it. When the person uses it for the first time it had to be at the place

consulted for, had to be a man who has a very large household; this is not done for a mere man. Upon the arrival of an *Inyanga*, *ubulawo* was mixed by *inyanga*, and a goat is slaughtered because it makes a noise and cries when slaughtered, while the sheep are not slaughtered because it is believed to cause a dark *ithongo*, and the sheep is seen as a foolish animal that does not make a noise. This is the reason why the Zulu people did not use the sheep as a sacrifice for *amathongo*. The goat was sacrificed to *Ithongo*; when the goat was poked with a needle (*ngosungulo*) and made a loud noise, they greatly rejoiced and said, "Cry, beast of so and so, who said this and that" (they referred to the deeds of the deceased). So, then they said, "We say come back home; we want to see you today. We are troubled when we do not see you; we say, what is our shortcoming that you suspect us with? Now all your cattle are here; if you want meat, you say it, and we will slaughter, and no one will object."

Then the doctor of *ubulawo* while stirring at it, said, "You shall see *ithongo* today and speak to him; even though he did not appear for a long period, today he shall appear

where there was abundance of aloe plant, then a large fire of aloe was kindled and *ubulawo* to drink was prepared in large quantities. *Ubulawo* that was drunk is ejected from stomach or vomited out directly to the fire in order to quench it, while the fire consumed the object that was vomited out which may have caused the "badness." On the following occasions the medicine is cast out in pathways for others to walk over it, and "*insila*" (dirt/filth) may be taken away by others as they pass through the pathways. When *ubulawo obumnyama* was used properly during the given period, then *ubulawo obumhlophe* was used in the same manner. Its roots were bruised and mixed with water. After it is churned and the froth was above the mouth of the pot, it is allowed to subside down and the froth was put on the bead, then it was sprinkled all over the body; and *ubulawo* that was in the pot was drunk. Both the white and black *ubulawo* had emetic type of effect. *Ubulawo* that was drunk from the pot was vomited out of the stomach in the cattle kraal. The kraal place was selected because *ubulawo obumhlophe* is a "blessing." When *ubulawo obumhlophe* is used by a man who was rejected by his damsel, in his medicine he was supposed to add something that belongs to the damsel which must have been worn next to her skin, beads were most preferable, while churning *ubulawo* he gives praise to *amathongo*, as well as pray or ask for success.

There are special occasions where the medicine could be used such as when a man seeks to be highly favoured by a great man or his chief; or when man was rejected; or when a man was summoned to come to the chief in order to attend to a case brought against him. Nonetheless, *ubulawo obumhlophe* was solely employed in the ceremony of bringing home *Ithongo*.

clear to you.” When the doctor was done, he placed *ubulawo emsamu* (the upper or front part inside the hut). This is how *ithongo* in a Zulu religious system is brought back home. It must be through the means of animal sacrifice and *ubulawo*.

2.6 The Zulu Mythological Perception of God

The Zulu traditional view of God has been unable to escape considerable controversies. It is a daunting exercise to separate myths from the real stories that were shared among the Zulu people, although this can be highly expected even when studying other religions (s), even religions with a codified text. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the mid-1850s, Callaway (1870:31), who was engaged in missionary work around Zululand, posited that the Zulu people perceived God as the creator of all life (*Uhlanga*), who is the first Zulu ancestor or the Great-Great-One. Callaway pointed out that the God of the Zulu people was not the same as that of the Christian missionaries. In most missionary accounts, uNkulunkulu, whether perceived as the original ancestor or Zulu God, attains a supreme role. According to Weir (2005:216):

The term uNkulunkulu (or its plural form oNkulunkulu) itself was nothing more than a generic name for particular significant ancestral spirits – family, chiefly of ‘national’, praises to ancestral spirits went back several generations, and once their names had fallen into disuse or been forgotten the generic name was also applied – or perhaps in some cases the term uNkulunkulu was employed in accordance with name avoidance practices.

UNkulunkulu is viewed by the Zulu people as the primal fact in which beyond that entity knowledge cannot reach; hence the name denotes that without *uNkulunkulu*, there will be no knowledge or existence of life and matter (Chidester *et al.* 1997:271). During the 1870s, Callaway (1870:54) argued that *uNkulunkulu* was probably not of Zulu origin as Gardiner was responsible for coining it. Gardiner (1966:171) had identified *uMvelinqangi* as the ‘First Appearer’, and uNkulunkulu as the ‘Great-Great’ and the secondary heavenly entity he called ‘*Nomkhubulwane*’. During the mid-1830s, Gardiner (1966:170) asked the Zulu people about who created the rivers, mountains, sun, moon, and rivers; their response was ‘*Inkosi yaphezulu*’ (the Lord of heavens);

they were not aware of anything more than that. Gardiner's (1966:170-1) dialogue with *Umkolwan*⁸ from the Ngwane people led him to conclude that:

every tradition had worn out, and they presented the awful spectacle of immortal beings without the knowledge or acknowledgement of a Creator... They had no idea of a day of future retribution, nor did they know anything of an evil spirit. [Gardiner (1836) 1966: 170-1]

UMvelinqangi ("he who exists in the very beginning of creation") is known as the sky god and is often conflated with uNkulunkulu as most accounts of Zulu indigenous religion tend to conflate the two titles. Jenkinson (1884:32), in his work, wrote a statement that the Zulus were degenerated people fallen from a higher state, as they underwent an evolutionary process of neglecting the Creator (*uMvelinqangi*), since "He becomes as an unknown God." On the other hand, Callaway (1868: 41-43) argued that *uMvelinqangi* was perceived as the god of thunder and earthquake, who was also known as *Unsondo*, uNkulunkulu was his father, and *uNomkhubulwana* was the mother of *uMvelinqangi*. The name *nomkhubulwana* is also known as a shapeshifter, someone or thing that can change form into any animal of choice (Callaway 1868:41-43). This view demonstrates that some people had a contradictory concept about a supreme being, whether *uMvelinqangi* or *uNkulunkulu*. Most Zulu narratives refer to *uMvelinqangi* as the first to exist before all creation and the creator of man. It is almost impossible to trace the etymological usage of the word uNkulunkulu among the Zulu people because several different and sometimes contradictory etymologies have been proposed in the past. The word has evolved drastically during the history of the Zulu people's religious views, as the majority believe that uNkulunkulu is the creator, also known as *uMvelinqangi* (see chapter five).

It is Bryant (1920:44-50) who concedes that the Zulu people had no concept of an entity that assumed the position of a Supreme Being. Nevertheless, he points out that uNkulunkulu was seen as the source of all creation. The Zulu religion has its origins centred around the concept of *uNkulunkulu* as the "Great-Great One". *uNkulunkulu* is perceived as the one who created human beings then went away and forgot them, "and so they, in like manner, forget God." Hartland (1901) concurred with the notion that uNkulunkulu was perceived as a primal man who is responsible for the existence

⁸ *Umkolwani* is the name of the person who had a conversation with Gardiner about the belief that the Ngwane people held regarding their about evil spirit and other subjects.

of human beings. He further appealed to philological discourse in his attempt to analyse the term uNkulunkulu and admitted that the term was used to refer to the oldest ancestor known in the clan's genealogy. Every family clan has its uNkulunkulu who was to be remembered or known as the great-great-grandfather. Hartland findings led him to subscribe to the notion that the Zulu people had no perception of a particular universal Supreme Being among themselves.

Nonetheless, in the work of Chidester, Kwenda, Petty, Tobler, and Wratten (1997:228) Cathrein (1915-1916) refuted Hartland's claim that uNkulunkulu was merely about a family that remembers a great-great-grandfather, which was a superficial analysis according to Cathrein (1915-1916:307-22) because "etymologies do not necessarily tell us what a word means at a particular point in time." Based on the etymologies argument Cathrein (1915:307-22) argued against the notion that among the Zulus, there was no belief in a high creator deity; uNkulunkulu remains merely as a great and ancient ancestor.

The beginning of the 19th century indicates that there was a shift that took place in the Zulu religion. UNkulunkulu was initially believed to be the creator god, even though their belief were not without contradiction, neither was it clear what the word meant to the people. During the early days of the Zulu religion, uNkulunkulu was merely believed to be the "first" ancestor/man. The Lord of the Heavens⁹ assumed a high role above uNkulunkulu, although was never the object of worship. Among the Zulu people, the two entities were well-known, even though the paradigm shift cannot be pinpointed when it took place. Therefore, it is plausible to posit that it's impossible to determine the name of the original high deity. It was believed that uNkulunkulu is not involved in the daily lifestyle of Zulu religious practices. This is the reason why the Zulu people turned to ancestral spirits for guidance and help (Chidester *et al.* 1997:228).

⁹The lord of heavens is an entity that was understood as the lord of sky (*Inkosi yaPhezulu*) among the Zulu people, and sometimes was conflated with uMvelinqangi. *Inkosi yaPhezulu* is a particular deity that seems impossible to determine his role and original name based on the literature that is available. Although, Hexham (1981:34) posited that "the lord of heavens" is a term that was developed as the result of the arrival of the Christian missionaries. However, his view seems to fail under scrutiny, that is, when the "lord of heavens" was conflated with uMvelinqangi and somehow connected to the origin of the Zulu nation long before the arrival of Christian missionaries.

On the other hand, uNkulunkulu (“the great-great one”), according to some Zulu people during the early 1850-1860s, assumed the highest role as a god and was the creator of mankind. UNkulunkulu is given another name as a supreme being; the term uSomandla means the source of all existence. Irvin Hexham (1981:34) argued, as mentioned above, “There is no evidence of belief in a heavenly deity or sky god in Zulu religion before the advent of Europeans.” Although other scholars, such as John Mbiti (1969), Isaac Schapera (1937), Hammood-Tooke (1978:134-49), Axel-Ivar Berglund (1989:34), and many more, disapproved of Irvin Hexham’s concluding remarks. They posited that Hexham’s concluding remarks failed to notice how Zulu people viewed uNkulunkulu as a deity more than just an “archetypal ancestor and creator.”

2.6.1 Wanger’s views on the Zulu name of God

Wanger (1923:658) was a specialist in the philological discourse and dealt with the traditional names that were used when referring to God among the Zulu-speaking people. In his work, he provided an incisive critique regarding the shortcomings of the early missionaries and scientists who came to South Africa and relegated the indigenous Zulu people to heathens, superstitious, barbarous savages, and fetish-worshippers. The Zulu people were identified as people who did not know anything about the true God; however, narrators such as Colenso and Callaway were more sensitive and empathetic toward the Zulu people. The early scientists and missionaries did not have philological and linguistic training. Nevertheless, Wanger (1923:668) carefully examined the interpretations and pronunciations of the word “uNkulunkulu,” he focused more on its usages in referring to both the ancestors and the “most ancient being/god.” Among the Zulu people, *nkulu* or *khulu* from the word uNkulunkulu could be interpreted as “old” or “great”. It is plausible, at least according to Wanger (1926:351-85), that the Zulu people knew both the Creator (uNkulunkulu) and the first ancestor (*unkulunkulu*), who created the foundation for the Zulu ancestral worship and what he called “paganism.” The Zulu tradition demonstrates that the Zulu people knew the Creator in a greater extent than to what was acknowledged by some narrators (Wanger 1926:365-80).

2.7 The narration of Dlamini concerning the beliefs held by the Ngwane people

According to Dlamini (1939:01), the Zulu people *namaNgwana* had their god called *uMvelinqangi* even before the arrival of Christian missionaries. In Swaziland,

uMvelinqangi was known as *uMulenze-munye* and is the creator of everything that exists. The Zulu people would frequently slaughter cows and give them away with Zulu home-brewed alcohol, and in return, *uMvelinqangi* would bless them with the abundance of crops, heal them, and grant them more than 100 years to live on earth. Dlamini (1939:01) notes that because of their obedience to *Mvelinqangi* epilepsy was not known, and hailstorms did not occur on earth, but some discarded their belief in *uMvelinqangi* and were suffering as a result.

UMvelinqangi was often seen by boys who were still virgins as they would take care of cows and were called *abafana bokwelusa izinkomo* (boys who tend cattle). The boys embarked on a 19-kilometre journey as they cared for the cattle. The boys believed that *uMvelinqangi* appeared more often when there was cloud and fog where they would see *uMvelinqangi* walking with one leg. The boys would communicate with the elders and tell them when they arrived home that they saw a one-legged figure on the mountain. The elders understood that it was *uMvelinqangi*, and upon that realisation, four or six cows were slaughtered, and a homebrewed beer was given away. A huge festival called *unomdede* was prepared, and home-brewed alcohol was carried by elderly women to the mountain. When they ascended the mountain, it was unclear what they were saying except the words '*uMnini mandla Onke*' (the Almighty). *UMvelinqangi* was able to placate the Zulu people with delicious things and give them the rain they needed in its season. *UMvelinqangi* provided the Zulu people with crops and healed them from their sickness. Dlamini (1939:01) points out that uNkulunkulu in the past was known as *uMvelinqangi* among the Zulu people, but the Ngwane people knew him as *uMlezemunye*, since he appeared as a one-legged man. The homebrewed alcohol often caused *uMvelinqangi* to descend with the cloud on the mountain. The cows would be slaughtered while the people chanted and did the Zulu dance. This was an attempt to bring order to the Zulu world when the Zulu children were infected with an aggressive flu.

The married woman brought food such as *amabele ommbila* (corn cereals), chicken, and many more palatable foods. The traditional homebrewed alcohol was always necessary for every ritual performed among the Zulu people. The children infected with the flu were carried by their mothers to the river with sand. Upon their arrival, they would dig holes of about two feet in the sand and place them inside the holes, with only the head appearing outside the hole. The women left their children in the holes

for an hour and ran away to their homes standing lamenting and saying, ‘*maye ngabantwana bethu*’ (woe to our children). They returned after an hour to take their children after hiding them from the flu with the hope that they were now cured, and this traditional practice was known as *uNomkhubulwana*. The meat and traditional homebrewed alcohol prepared for *Nomkhubulwana*,¹⁰ whose appearance cannot be perceived and who also plays an integral role in the Zulu pantheon as *inkosazana* (fertility goddess).

After the traditional practice of *Nomkhubulwana* was complete, it was attested that the severity of the flu causing children not to sleep was cured by *Nomkhubulwana*. *UNomkhubulwana* brought harmony and life to the children because she could hear the cries of the distressed children. Before the day of *uNomkhubulwana* the young girls would keep each other aware that the following day, they would be responsible for cattle tending; therefore, early in the morning, they took out the cows from the kraal and subsequently would take and wear boy's clothing. When the boys saw that the cows were not in the kraal, they realised it was the day for *uNomkhubulwana*. On that day, only women and young girls participated in *Nomkhubulwana* rituals, and the boys told their fathers, who were already aware of the occasion. As briefly explained above, the children were taken to the river where *Nomkhubulwana* healed and made the children grow very well (Dlamini 1939:02).

Undoubtedly the Zulu people's belief system viewed *uMvelinqangi* as an entity to be revered as the god who was the first to exist. Although *uMvelinqangi* was perceived as a male it had “a female element represented by *uNomkhubulwana*” (Thorpe 1991:37). Dlamini's (1939:2) transcript alluded to the point that has been echoed by other commentators regarding *uNomkhubulwana*, who is known as the queen or princess of heaven (*Inkosazana yezulu*), she is said to be very beautiful. However, *uNomkhubulwana* remained not to be visible, but there are things believed to be her manifestation of glory, such as mist, rain, and rainbow. The rituals or customs connected to *uNomkhubulwana* were all performed only by women, such as sowing, harvesting, weaning children, and brewing beer. As mentioned above, *uNomdede* was an annual festival connected to an agricultural rite for *uNomkhubulwana*. The

¹⁰ *Nomkhubulwana* is a term that is interchangeable that can refer to *Nomdede* (*Nomkhubulwana*) is an annual festival to celebrate the Virgin Queen, who is also known by the Zulu people as *Nomkhubulwana*.

agricultural rites dedicated to *uNomkhubulwana* guaranteed a good harvesting season of the year. The rites were performed on a mountainside during springtime because a mist covered the mountain. The young girls had to prepare the soil by hoeing and sowing plants in a small garden for the *uNomkhubulwana*. The beer was poured into the garden as a means for libation of the garden soil as it was brewed for that special occasion. Although, the worship of *uNomkhubulwana* was not necessarily in connection with ancestral veneration. *UNomkhubulwana* received the plea of the Zulu people during the times when there were floods or droughts (Berglund 1976:64-74; Pettersson 1985:184-185; Thorpe 1991:37).

Msimang (1991:15-17), in his book, grants that the Zulu people were aware of or at least had some knowledge about uNkulunkulu. The Zulu people recognised uNkulunkulu as *ithongo elikhulu* (the great-great ancestor) among other ancestral spirits. Although some said, "It is he who created human beings," while others said, "he did not create human beings only but also was the first to exist." The people who broke off from *ohlangezi* (reed) are the ones who believe that uNkulunkulu broke off (*wadabuka*) from *ohlangezi*, and as a result, he was called uMvelinqangi, which means to exist first or 'first to exist'. After uMvelinqangi, the "queen of heaven" (*uNomkhubulwana*) came into existence, thereafter, *okhulukhulu* (great-great ancestral spirits) of the nation began to exist. uMvelinqangi is the one who created all living and non-living things, such as the rain, animals, fruit trees, and all the trees for medicine that is used to treat the ill.

Inkosazana yasemazulwini (queen of heaven) did not create anything but possess the power of giving either rain or drought, famine, or abundance, and all are within her prerogative to exercise. The Zulu people were mindful of the belief that it is important to appease both *uMvelinqangi* and *uNomkhubulwana*; hence they were both worshipped. The way they were worshipped was to keep the traditional beliefs and practices to avoid going against the will of *uMvelinqangi* and *uNomkhubulwana*. The failure of the Zulu people to keep the tradition and other shortcomings like not performing necessary rituals would bring calamities such as famine, drought, floods, and other disasters. The Zulu people took their cattle to the mountain, where they offered a burnt sacrifice to *uMvelinqangi* for forgiveness. When the calamities did not occur in a way that affected the whole community, the worship of *uMvelinqangi* was unnecessary because each family could address issues through their ancestral spirits.

The older male (firstborn) in the household, who is knowledgeable about the ancestral spirits, was responsible for communicating with the ancestral spirits for the ancestral spirits to make their request known to *uMvelinqangi*. The Zulu people pleaded with the ancestral spirits because they believed they were in the presence of *uMvelinqangi* on the earth below. It is a place where he is known by the name of *nguMlenzemunye* or *nguLunyawolunye*, the great-great ancestor. There is nothing too difficult for him as *ithongo elikhulu* (the great ancestor), and therefore, he can be on the top of the mountain or above the sky as a propeller of thunderstorms and bring rain. In the segment below, the terms that are frequently employed in the discourse of Zulu indigenous religion and herein will be briefly explained and defined because they are significant as core tenets.

2.8 Ithongo or Idlozi

The words *ithongo* or *idlozi* are both employed interchangeably among the Zulu people. *Idlozi* (ancestor) is the spirit of a person who died long ago. A person does not die and instantly becomes an ancestral spirit. When a dead person is buried, his/her spirit descends to the water below the earth. The person stays in that place until *ihlambo* (cleansing/washing) is done; a cow would be slaughtered to allow a person to ascend from the water (the Zulu people believe the ancestral spirits live underwater). The Zulu people would customarily say a person is sort of assisted to ascend. This was followed by another cow that was slaughtered after months when *ihlambo* was done; this ceremony was called *ukubuyisa* (cf. the note below on *ukubuyisa*). The ancestral spirit was expected to come home after the completion of the mourning period, and *ihlambo* was performed. When the spirit of the dead arrives at home, the living believe they will be defended against witchcraft, diseases, enemies, poverty, and many more calamities. This is what is believed to make the deceased person *idlozi/ithongo*. Henceforth, the ancestral spirit would continue to be an integral part of the household, and whenever there is an occasion planned by the household, the ancestor(s) had to be made aware, and the family was expected to make their request known to the ancestor(s).

2.9 Isithunzi

A shadow (*isithunzi*) is the spirit of a dead person who was not invited to return home as an ancestor by means of *ihlambo* and *ukubuyisa*. The 'shadow' was responsible

for causing chaos in the household; as a result, diseases would become rampant because the 'shadow' came home and did not feel welcomed. The witch doctor (*Inyanga*) was invited by the household to help prevent the 'shadow' from entering the premises and causing havoc. The shadow could be the result of a person whose death was unprepared for, and which may have led to a failure of the household to perform ceremonies that are necessary for burial as per the Zulu religious practice. The cause of death could have been the reason why the spirit (*umoya*) of the deceased became a shadow as the result of bad medicine concoctions that was used to kill a person through witchcraft. The witches might sometimes confuse *abathunywa* (sent ones). The body of the deceased had to be guarded from the witches, and the soil of the grave site had to be fenced to prevent witches from using its soil to harm those who were left behind. It was also important that every member of the household had to participate in the ceremony of cleansing (*ukugeza*) themselves from the tragedy of death and plead with the deceased to be a benevolent ancestor.

2.10 *Izithutha*

The ancestral spirits are sometimes called *izithutha* (foolish/unreliable) as a form of respect given to them. They were called *izithutha* (idiot/unreasonable) because they were expected to be responsible for guiding and taking care of their households, but on the contrary, they sometimes viciously caused calamities and death within their households. The Zulu people began to ask, "As they are killing us, whom do they think will worship them? Where will they stay if they demolish their household? Will they stay in the mountains and eat grass just like grasshoppers?" They were then called *izithutha* for this reason.

2.11 *Amakhosi*

The deceased person, who was very knowledgeable about Zulu traditional medicine and who was a diviner, had become an *idlozi* that sometimes picked one of the descendants to work through them. The plural term *amakhosi* (kings) is employed because the ancestral spirit is no longer alone but has counterparts, that is, ancestral spirits working with the chosen descendant. The traditional healer or diviner (*isangoma*) does the will of the *amakhosi*. To put it more succinctly, the person becomes a vessel to be used by *amakhosi*. However, the person was still expected to be initiated into the ancestral spirit and taught how to concoct and use traditional

medicine by someone who was already a diviner before he/she could be useful to *amakhosi*. If a person refuses to become a vessel for *amakhosi*, she/he will suffer severe sickness and sometimes die. The Zulu people believe that one cannot go against the will of the ancestral spirits; hence they are called *amakhosi* because the mantra is “what they say goes”.

2.12 Veneration of Ancestral Spirits

The word ‘veneration’ is employed to demonstrate the form of respect that is given to the ancestral spirits by the Zulu people. The ancestral spirits were offered food as a sign of respect and recognition in the Zulu belief system. The special food for the ancestral spirits was Zulu traditional beer that was placed *emsamu* (the front platform or a place in the hut used for communicating with the ancestral spirits) until it was fermented and was drunk by the elderly woman or someone who is an adult in the household. The Zulu people reported to the ancestral spirits before doing any ceremony and when the household was about to move into a new place. The cow was slaughtered when the ceremony was more significant, like a traditional wedding (*imikhosi yokuganana*). On the other hand, when it was a small ceremony for the household and did not involve a lot of people, then a goat was slaughtered. The colour of the goat was crucial for a specific ritual, while the cow’s colour was not that important for the rituals. A white goat was slaughtered for thanksgiving to the ancestral spirits, as well as when they were asking for the well-being and success of the household. The Zulu people will always see it fit to give thanks for the growth of the daughters in the household or the boy child who was able to kill a dangerous leopard, snake, or any other dangerous animal. A black goat was often slaughtered for the ancestral spirits during times of unbearable sicknesses that overwhelmed the people and also when there were a lot of misfortunes that occurred (Samuelson 1912).

A cow was slaughtered within the kraal, a place that was known as a slaughtering sanctuary. On the other hand, a goat could be slaughtered in the kraal and also in the hut or a place/room that was dedicated to the ancestral spirits. The father of the household would dedicate a room (*indlunkulu*) or a hut for his deceased father as he held a prominent role in his son’s house and an ancestral spirit that is in charge in all of his son’s households. The mother of the son, who was now the father in his household, had to build a room for his mother, too. The feminine (female) ancestral

spirits are believed to be very alert as they can quickly perceive when bad things are about to occur and stop them from occurring. The masculine (male) ancestral spirits are known to be responsible for addressing or dealing decisively with the evildoers. Nevertheless, the person who communicates with the ancestral spirits must be the head of the family, especially when the matter involves the entire family. Furthermore, the firstborn son can communicate with the ancestral spirits or simply ask the older males (fathers with their household, to be more precise) who belong to the family or an elderly woman (*isalukazi*). The person to communicate with the ancestral spirits has to deliver a clear and accurate request or message to the ancestral spirits. The person must also know the names of the ancestral spirits for his/her message to be heard by them. It is important to know the background or the name of the ancestral spirit that was very caring while on earth and reminds him/her to reflect those virtues as an ancestral spirit. When there was mayhem in the household caused by the ancestral spirits, a person who communicated with the ancestral spirits had to talk to someone known to be short-tempered while living on earth, he had to ask why is that ancestor causing disruption in the household when he was supposed to protect and care for the household. The Zulu people would ask the ancestral spirits about their potency against the enemy as a request for ancestral spirits to fight against the enemies. The person who communicated with the ancestral spirits was at the gate of the kraal behind him/her facing the hut or a room (*endlunkulu*) that was dedicated to the ancestral spirits. When the ceremony is performed for a sick person, he/she has to sleep *endlunkulu*, but a married person has to leave *endlunkulu* during the night and sleep in her room. This was done because the Zulus believed that the ancestral spirits do not stay with the daughters-in-law or the women who are married to their sons.

The Zulu people believe that the person has to communicate with the ancestral spirits that are known to them, and those ancestral spirits will take the message to *okhulukhulu* (the great-great ancestral spirits) of the clan until the message reaches uMvelinqangi. The father of the household must be the first ancestral spirit to be consulted or invoked. When the person who communicates with the ancestral spirits

was 'not from the left'¹¹ (*engengowasekhohlo*), she did not often communicate with those from the left unless there was an ancestral spirit that was known while on earth for caring and kindness to the household. When the person was 'from the left' (*engowasekhohlo*) would freely consult those from the left, but not forgetting *labo basendlunkulu* (the main place/home where the family matters are resolved and a place for ancestral spirits at headquarters. The deceased husbands, who are ancestors, were known to be hard to deal with, it was as if their hearts were of stone, and that caused the household to be fearful that their consultation could be in vain; hence they also communicated with female ancestral spirits as leverage. The person would first consult his/her mother if she was considered to be in the realm of the ancestral spirits (*amadlozi*) and will be able to pass the message to her foremothers, and they will, in turn, pass it to others. This might differ from region to region; however, this is how the Zulu people consulted their living death in any specified situation, such as thanksgiving, poverty, sickness, and so on. When the goat or cow blood was shed for the ancestral spirits, the person whom the ritual was about had to be sprinkled with bile (*inyongo*). The person who consulted the ancestral spirits was likely the brother of the person whom the ceremony was provided for. He was often the one who performed the rituals, like pouring the bile into some parts of the body to resolve the person's issues. *Inyongo* droplets were poured into the room that belonged to the father of the household, and some of the drops were poured on the thumbs and index fingers, they would let it drop to the feet and rub it on the feet with thumbs. The gallbladder of a goat, when emptied, the air was blown into it and shut for air not to escape, then tied on the head of the person whom the ceremony was performed for. The goat skin was cut around the leg, and the person had to wear it as a wristband. When the gallbladder was old, the traditional healers (*Izangoma*) instructed that the gallbladders should be burned *endlunkulu* and the ashes were to be hidden and not thrown haphazardly.

¹¹ *Ongengowasokhohlo* is the person who was not from the left as per the gender of the person. Males were from the right (*esokunene/esokudla*) while females were from the left. Therefore, this seems to apply even to those who are now beyond the physical world. The females from the left were not allowed to tread upon the right-hand side of the males, especially *umakoti* (bride) as there was a chasm that separated patriarchy from the females in the hut or rondavel. Those from the left were also not allowed to enter inside the kraal.

2.13 The fireplace or hearth (*iziko*)

Iziko is believed to be a sacred place by The Zulu people. The pots that are used for cooking were deliberately not cleaned properly; therefore, pieces and bits of food were left in the pots for the ancestral spirits, who are believed to lick and eat the pieces and bits of food at night. The pots with the pieces and bits of the food were left near to *iziko* because the Zulu people believed that the ancestral spirits would eat the food and also warm themselves. The Zulu people believe that if it occurs that a woman leaves the pots clean without any tiny food leftovers for the ancestral spirits, thereby incurs the punishment of the ancestral spirits that might manifest in a poor harvest of crops (Berglund 1976:103).

2.14 Doorway arch (*ikhothamo*)

Ikhothamo is a sacred place to the Zulu people because it is a place where ancestral spirits live. When the corpse is removed from the hut, the thatching is removed from the doorway as the deceased person is buried with it. There were two reasons why the Zulu people followed this procedure:

1. The only person who was responsible for taking care of the ancestral spirits has departed to the realm of the ancestral spirits. Therefore, the ancestral spirits were taken away to prevent witches (*abathakathi*) from abusing them.
2. The ritual affirms the belief that the ancestral spirits would accompany the deceased offspring to a new place. On the other hand, the ancestral spirits remained in the place of the hut to protect those who were left behind.

The eggshells, maize cobs, and pumpkin seeds were stuck on the doorway arch with other valuables to be blessed and seen by the ancestral spirits. This emanates from the Zulu religious belief that the stock, crops, and other valuables become abundant when the ancestral spirits are pleased with the household or clan.

2.15 Virginity

According to Ntuli (2023:1), “following the era of colonialism and imperialism, the traditional significance of women’s virginity diminished over time, with only occasional preservation in certain rural regions of South Africa. For unknown causes, both virginity-testing and its public occurrence had a noticeable resurgence between the 1980s and 1990s”. Virginity testing is a well-known traditional practice, as Mojapelo (2016) asserts that it “was reintroduced in the early 1990s, as mentioned by

Nomagugu Ngobese, a sangoma and the founder of the Nomkhubulwane Culture and Youth Development Organisation in Pietermaritzburg”. However, the Zulu people believe that the tradition of the virginity test is closely tied to their religious belief in ancestral spirits. The girls are supposed to keep themselves pure, as virginity is likened to a spring of life (blood) that is preserved. It is only in the context of marriage that the spring of life (blood) may gush out (breaking the hymen). Mbiti (1969:141) points out, “the door for members of the family in the loins to come forward and join both the living and the dead.” In other regions, the bride’s parents (especially the maternal part) receive a special gift as a form of thanksgiving for the good upbringing of the girl given to marriage. The girl who is given to marriage while she is a virgin becomes the pride of her parents, relatives as well and the family of the bridegroom. The practice of the virginity test is highly regarded in the Zulu religious system, which is observed even beyond the Zulu tribes in other African territories. Virginity is a symbol of purity of the body and a norm for a moral life.

2.16 The appearance of ancestral spirits

The Zulu religious scholarly accounts demonstrate that the ancestral spirits appeared to their people in various ways. In some cases, the ancestral spirits appeared to the Zulu people in the form of a black snake, and that meant *amathongo* were irritated. It was a relief for the Zulu people when the snake went into the kraal and not in the room/hut. When it happens that the snake enters the room, they believe that it is a warning sign from the ancestral spirits. The Zulu people were prone to insist that the warning was very serious, and people were at risk of encountering a rare cause of death like lightning, and people could die without any sickness due to the ancestor’s rage. The leader of the family, who was probably a male figure, had to choose a bullock to be slaughtered for the ancestral spirits. The appearance of a black snake was interpreted as a manifestation of the deceased father (*inyandezulu* itself) who fathered the father of the household. Nevertheless, the snake that was highly appreciated by the Zulu people was the green snake called *umhlwazi* or *ifulwa*. However, even the green snake's entry into the room was not good news except when it appeared at the front courtyard wall (*emthangaleni*). The Zulu people argued that it did not show reverence to the ancestral spirits to call them snakes; therefore, they considered them *izinyandezulu* to draw the distinction between the physical snakes in the animal kingdom from those that are the appearance of the ancestral spirits. The ancestral

snake was not scary, nor did it come across as frightening to those who saw it, and that was the reason why the Zulu people were encouraged to look at it because it was harmless. Upon the appearance of the snake, the people called it so and so as they speculated which ancestral spirit appeared in the form of a snake. The father of the household prayed (*akuthetha*¹²) to the ancestral spirit, while the boys brought back the goats, and *umnunzane* (Sir/the patriarchal leader of the household who was an ancestor) was given food. Traditional beer was always available as a favourite food for *amathongo*. The household had to avoid making noise because ancestral spirits were irritated by the noise, and as a result, *izishingili*¹³ could come with a serious warning or punishment. Furthermore, the female ancestral spirits appeared in the form of a small brown snake called *uMzingandlu*,¹⁴ and the household rejoiced to see the grandmother or great-grandmother visiting her grandchildren.

Second, the ancestral spirits made their appearance through the medium of dreams. The dreamer would see the ancestor in a dream appearing as the same person that he/she was while living on earth, even wearing the same clothes they used to wear and speaking with the same voice. In a case where the ancestor appeared to the descendant born after that ancestor's death, those who knew the ancestor when he/she was alive could normally determine who that ancestor was upon listening to the dream narrated to them. However, the Zulu people believe that ancestral spirits appeared only when a message had to be conveyed to the household. If a sorcerer

¹² *Ukuthetha*: in a literal sense means 'to scold'. This gives an impression of a very uncivilized relationship between the descendants and their own ancestral spirits. On the contrary, the word in its literal translation from English is no way close to the pragmatic sense of what is meant by the Zulu people. The word *Ukuthetha* in the Zulu worldview meant "praying" to the ancestral spirits rather than scolding at the ancestral spirits.

¹³ *Izishingili*: are ancestral spirits whose appearance is in the form of a black mamba and known to be the 'angry ancestral spirits'. The Zulu people consulted the diviner upon seeing the snake to find out what has gone wrong that has caused *izishingili* to appear to the descendants. The Zulu people debated among themselves as some were prone to insist that a black mamba was the appearance of the grandfather of the household (the father of the head of the household).

¹⁴ *UMzingandlu*: Is a brown small snake that represent the female ancestor who may visit her descendants and can also refer to a small species of brown snakes that are harmless which are often found near dwellings (the house snake).

performed witchcraft and caused the ancestral spirits to appear angry, it often resulted in the person experiencing nightmares. The Zulu traditional healer was invited by the household to remove the cause of nightmares; therefore, Zulu herbs were mixed in water for the person who experienced nightmares to drink and vomit out. Second, the person also had to use another Zulu herb to wash away those bad dreams, and sometimes the person was given medicine to chew. Nevertheless, some dreams are completely detached from any influence of the ancestral spirits, that is, those dreams that have nothing to do with the ancestral spirits.

There are instances where the ancestral spirits did not appear to their descendant in the form of a snake or dreams but through causing calamities that can manifest such as severe sickness, being severely burnt mysteriously, becoming a lunatic, and body aches, among someone in the household. This normally occurred when there was a serious mistake committed by the household, and an unpleasant consequence was known as *umkhokha*¹⁵ and perceived as a curse fit for those who are disobedient or alienated themselves from the ancestral spirits. *Umkhokha* can be perceived as a punishment for those who have disobeyed ancestral spirits. These ancestral spirits did not convey any messages or instructions but would rather announce their rage through disaster because they were neglected or disobeyed. The ancestral spirits also conveyed their presence through pain that normally occurred in some parts of the body, such as in the back, shoulders, and/or chest. However, this was not regarded as a curse because of the wrongs committed by someone but rather occurred to a person whose destiny was to be a diviner. The ancestral spirits were called *izithutha* because sometimes they attacked a person who did not disobey them. The ancestral spirits attacked a person on the ground that they perceived could settle their demands, or the person owned an animal that could be slaughtered to appease the wrath of the ancestral spirits.

Although some Zulu people believe that *amadlozi* exists, they fail to describe where the ancestral spirits go when they die. Therefore, when the Zulu people scrutinised this matter, they claimed that the ancestral spirits became snakes. This belief seems to be rooted in the notion that when a man dies, he turns into a snake known as *idlozi*,

¹⁵ *Umkhokha*: is understood by the Zulu people as to pay for their shortcomings and the ancestral spirits determine the severity of the consequences. Furthermore, *ukukhokha* which is the verb means “to pay”.

and the Zulu people worshipped *idlozi* by sacrificing animals because the animals belong to it. It is *idlozi* that gives the Zulu people the animal to sacrifice, and it is because of it that the animal lives; therefore, the animals must be sacrificed to it. The bullock was singled out from other bullocks, and the owner prayed to *amadlozi* saying, "There is your bullock, to you spirits of our people." The owner or head of the family prays to call grandmothers and grandfathers who are deceased, saying, "There is your food; I pray for a healthy body, that I may live comfortably; and you, so and so, treat me with mercy; son of so and so." The owner of the bullock mentioned by name the ancestral spirits, and the person who had to kill the bullock takes a spear and approaches it cautiously to stab it where the ox is normally stabbed, that is, at the side of the bullock. When the bullock bellows, the owner would say, "Cry, the ox of the ancestral spirits." The head of the family would call the names of the ancestral spirits again because he believed that they gave him health, and that was confirmed by the cry of the ox. The bullock is then skinned, and the owner takes a small portion of blood and cuts a slice of the caul. He then goes to a secret place to burn the blood and put it in a secret place, and the caul is placed on top of the incense (*impepho*) as it burns, hoping that it is a sweet aroma for the ancestral spirits. When that ritual was performed, the people who were present ate the meat of the ox.

The Zulu people also believe in *imiswazi* which is almost the same as *imikhokha/umkhokha* but the difference is that *imiswazi* are not the consequences of breaking the law. *Imiswazi* occurred due to doing something wrong out of ignorance or failing to keep promises. The person might sometimes harden his/her heart because of something bad that occurred (this normally happens when a person was victimised by someone); as a result, he/she would boastfully say those who are trying to do wrong things against him will not succeed. The person would wish bad things to befall those against him, and when his wish was actualised, he said, 'Those are his punishments'. *Imiswazi* sometimes manifested as curses from the ancestral spirits. *Umswazi* manifests as a curse often when the older woman is strated by someone, and as a result, would plead with her deceased husband that he must bring her to the ancestral world to relieve her from those who are causing strife in her life. The ancestral spirits punished those who cause strife in the life of an old woman, and this is *umswazi/ngumswazi*.

The ancestral spirits sometimes conveyed the message through certain events that indirectly delivered a message to the household. The bird, like an owl (*isikhova*) is

commonly believed to be the bird of witches that the ancestral spirits would send to warn the household about the possible death coming in the family. When an owl came to the dwellings of the people, that implied a bad omen pointing to a pending death that is most likely to occur in the family. The passing of the lightning bird (*uthekwane*) above the dwellings, while it gives a lamenting sound, was interpreted as a misfortune that was about to happen in the household; therefore, the elders knew that it was highly expected that the lightning could strike in their dwelling place. The Zulu people swiftly invited the witch doctor (*inyanga*) to come and use Zulu herbs to enforce their dwellings against the impending lightning. The Zulu people plead with the ancestral spirits to stop the lightning from striking at their dwelling place. However, when the lightning bird flew from the downside direction of the dwelling place while making a pleasant whistling noise was interpreted as good luck. The most desired good luck among the Zulu people was when a young man's request to be loved back by his potential wife was accepted.

On the other hand, *umvemve* (African Pied wagtail), known as the *Motacilla aguimp* among the scientific community, is the bird of ancestral spirits according to the Zulu belief system. When the voice of *umvemve* was heard during the peaceful times, it was interpreted as a message that meant a visitor was coming. In the times when there was unrest in the community, its voice was interpreted as a warning of a possible impending war, or it could have been enemies plotting to attack. Another bird known to carry the authority of the ancestral spirits was *umbangaqhwa*. *Umbangaqhwa* is the South African Cape Dikkop or Thick-Knee (*Burhinus capensis*), which means the causer of frost, *umbangaqhwa* causes strife and serves as a warning for war (Msimang 1975:24). Nonetheless, apart from the birds that are implicated with ancestral spirits are dogs that howl at night, *umkhulungwane* (to howl) is interpreted as bad omen that warns people about the possible death in the family. The people had to hit the howling dogs to make them stop making a howling noise.

It was held that *amadlozi* manifested by causing a bullock to be weak, and the effect was observed in it collapsing, which was interpreted as warnings and messages from the ancestral spirits. This meant to foretell that a certain disease was targeted towards the head of the household, the disease whose origin remains unknown, although the very disease could lead to the death of the leader of the household.

The Zulu people were compelled to do something like a ceremony upon the manifestations of the ancestral spirits. The people had to perform rituals that were

relevant to a specific situation to appease the ancestral spirits and ensure that ancestral spirits were on their side or would have favour towards the household. A Zulu ceremony, such as a wedding, had to be performed in line with the procedures outlined by its ancestral spirits and lineage for the ceremony to be performed properly on a particular custom. Therefore, the Zulu people were duty-bound to perform rituals out of apprehensiveness, although, on the other hand, they honour and love the ancestral spirits.

The negative appearance of the ancestral spirits through calamities exerted by the living seems to work out for the good. The disturbing dreams or sickness from sorcery and witchcraft cannot be conflated with those from the ancestral spirits. The manifestations of ancestral spirits might cause dreams that are disturbing and severe sickness, but all that occurs for good reason, that is, to warn and prepare the household for what is about to take place. Although the sickness that is caused by sorcery or witchcraft only seeks to kill, the ancestral spirits seek to draw attention to themselves for the household to cater to their needs. Failure to hearken to the warning or demand of the ancestral spirits would result in incurring the wrath of the ancestral spirits. This, then, coerces the descendants to recognise or consider the ancestral spirits. Therefore, on large ceremonies like weddings, the offspring will always report (*ukuthetha*) first to the ancestral spirits and request their blessings, protection, and so on. The Zulu people knew that a beast had to be slaughtered in every ceremony, and the gall of a slaughtered beast played an important role in a particular ritual. In the context of Zulu marriage, the gall appears to be more essential for the ritual than the flesh of the slaughtered beast.

2.17 The exclusive veneration of some ancestral spirits

The Zulu people did not pray to all the collective of *amadlozi*, but most of the time, the head of the household is venerated by the children of the household; because they did not know the names or surnames of those who passed way before them. Subsequently, the head of the household was known to them, and their prayer began with him, also they ended the prayer with him because he was well-known to them, as well as the love he displayed towards his children. The children of the deceased household believed that their father would continue to treat them with love and kindness, even though he was no longer physically with them. The children of the deceased would say, “We do not know whom he will look after if it is not us and only

us.” This view manifests even when they pray to many ancestral spirits to be a great fence around them for protection, but their father was regarded as closer to them than other ancestral spirits. The head of the household remains a great treasure to the household even when he is no longer with them in a physical realm. When they were praying, they made sure to commend their father for his kindness and his heroic deeds. And if there was trouble in the family, the firstborn son would laud his deceased father with the laud-giving to him when he fought against the enemies, while he lauds other ancestral spirits; he prayed as thus, “we may die. Who is it that you are protecting? We will all die, and then we will see where you will enter¹⁶. You will consume grasshoppers as you will never be invited to any house since you are eradicating your own.” When they gave thanks to *idlozi* they were encouraged and said, “He has heard our request, and he will heal our diseases.” The Zulu children had immense faith in *idlozi elinguyise wabo* (an ancestor who is their father). Nevertheless, in the case of the mother of the household who gave birth to the children when her husband was still alive, her ancestral spirits were normally addressed by her husband and her children. The married woman (*inkosikazi*) would normally attain the role of giving wise counsel to the household on ancestral matters. However, the father of the family retains his prominent role as the head of the household.

2.18 The encounter with *Idlozi* in the dreams

If the Zulu people saw *idlozi* appear in the form of a snake, it was shortly followed by the ancestral spirits appearing in dreams. When someone encounters dreams, he would say, “I am sick because of the dreams I have encountered.” And others would ask, “What was the dream about?” He responded to them by saying he dreamed of a man. When it was someone known to him, he says, “I saw my brother.” They normally ask, “What was his message.” His response was, “he was beating me in the dream and saying, ‘Have you not known that I exist?’” He answered him in the dream, saying, “If I know you, why am I seeing you? What must I do? I know that you are my brother.”

¹⁶ This suggests that *ithongo* will not have people to venerate/worship it, and there will be no hut that will accommodate *amathongo*. Therefore, for their (*amathongo*) own sake and that of the household they should not afflict and cause deaths in the family. When *amathongo* protects the household and cause no harm to them they will in return eat meat that is sacrificed to them.

After, he would ask him by saying, “What do you say when you slaughter a bullock since you do not mention me?” I replied, “I did mention you, and also thanked you and mentioned your praise names.” I said, “Tell me which bullock I slaughtered without lauding your names because I killed an ox and a barren cow, and during their slaughter, I lauded your names.” He responded by saying, “I love the meat.” I objected by saying, “No (*qha*), my brother (*mfowethu*), I do not have an ox; do you see any in the kraal?” He said, “Even if there is one ox, I am demanding it.” After that, he woke up with pain when breathing, and it was difficult to breathe; he tried to speak but failed because of short breath.

The dreamer was stubborn and did not agree to slaughter an ox. He became severely sick. He said, “Though I am sick, I am aware of the cause of sickness.” The people asked him, “If you see the cause of the sickness, why do you not get a cure? How can someone purposely allow a sickness to cause him harm and wish to die from it? The earth¹⁷(*umhlaba*) is angry at him and will probably kill or destroy him.” The man replied, “That is a lie, men, I am like this because of someone. I saw him while I was sleeping; he said, I love meat, and bombarded me with his tricks and told me that I do not call him when I slaughter a cow. I am astounded by the accusation because, in all the bullocks that were slaughtered, I mentioned his laud names. Even when I slaughter a goat, I mention him, and when I slaughter a sheep, I call on him. I am saying that what he has done is wrong; he should ask for meat if that is what he wants. He should just say, ‘My brother, I love meat,’ rather than accusing me of failing to call on him. I am vexed, I say; he seems to like to see me dead.” Those who saw the condition of his

¹⁷ *Umhlaba*: is known as ‘earth’ which is utilised by the Zulu people to refer to *Abaphansi* (Subterranean) or *Amadlozi* (ancestral spirits). In the Zulu belief system, the phrases such as ‘*ubizwa umhlaba*’ (when the person is threatened by death, they said, he is summoned by the ancestral spirits); ‘*uphethwe umhlaba*’ (a person is ruled by the ancestral spirits); ‘*ushawe umhlaba*’ (a person is smitten by the ancestral spirits); ‘*unomhlaba*’ or ‘*unethongo*’ (a person has been possessed by *Ithongo* and it is causing him the sickness). *Umhlaba* was employed by the Zulu people as to revere ancestral spirits:- *Idlozi*, *Ithongo*, *Amakhosi*, *Izithutha*. The Zulu people had the cattle that belong to *Umzimu*. *Umzimu* among the Zulu people is a term employed only in referring to the collective term of *Amadlozi*. The word *Umzimu* probably refers to some names of great ancestral spirits, whose names are forgotten and were formerly remembered as well as venerated for their known good deeds when they were still living on earth.

sickness said, “*Hawu!* Do you think this person understands what he is talking about? We are speaking to you; where is he at the moment so that we might talk to him? For we were present during the slaughtering of the cattle; you lauded him when you were lauding, you lauded him by his heroic names, and we heard you. And we say, if you, son of so and so, think this is your brother, or it is someone who died a long time ago and appeared to you, we should ask him, ‘Why does he say so? As so and so always laud your laud-giving names when killing the beasts or goats, and we heard you also.’”

The man who was sick replied, “Ehhe! He is boastful because of the claim to be my elder brother since I am the younger brother to him. I am dismayed when he is asking that I should slaughter all my cattle. When he died, did he not own his cattle?”

The people replied, “*hawu*, the person died, son of so and so. We say, as we are speaking to you, suggest that you should venerate that man even with a goat at least. But we also say it will be shameful if he does kill you without speaking courteously to you and making you understand. But you keep dreaming of your brother constantly and become sick. Why is it that you cannot dream of your brother and report to us that you woke up with your body refreshed and without pain? We wish you could dream and say, ‘I have dreamed of my elder brother telling me good news.’ But we can tell that when you see your brother in a dream, he always fights with you and causes you harm; as we can see that you are sick because you dreamed about your elder brother.”

The dreamer replied to them and said, “Ehhe, men (*madoda*), I will give him the meat that he likes so much as per what he says to me in the dreams. He is killing me for that meat of his; I say, why is it that he does not appear when I am sleeping and dream about him and address me pleasantly? Why does he fail to say, ‘My brother, I like this or that,’ and speak to me pleasantly so that it can be clear that I dreamed of my brother? He is wrong, I dream about him until sunrise and then wake up with a wound; I say he is a mischievous person; he likes to fight with people. But, men, we are accustomed to hearing you state, ‘This person was mischievous, and people did not speak to him; therefore, can his spirit (*idlozi*) be of any good?’ Is it possible for a person who is good and has been good before he died to become a bad person after his death, or can someone who was bad and died as mischief become a good ancestor (*ithongo*)? These notions are alike. We do not concur with the notion that someone who died mischievously and had no one talking to him will become a good ancestor. We concur that someone can be kind and loving while living among us but suddenly, after his death, become an angry and impatient ancestor. The person does not

necessarily maintain his righteousness which he was known for while he was living in the physical world. On the other hand, a mischievous or madman could die than become righteous and, as a result, become *Idlozi elihle* (good ancestor).”

They replied, “Ehhe, we certainly agree with you; this is true. Both scenarios can be possibly the same.” The sick man¹⁸ said, “I say then, my brother passed away, and his mischief used to commit while living with us is still intact even when he is dead; his *ithongo* is the same as he was while he walked upon the earth because no one could even speak to him. When someone attempted to speak to him, he was keen to fight with that person. Even when there was no dispute against him, my brother would fight, and he did not care to say, ‘I have done wrong because I was not supposed to fight with these people;’ he was committed to killing people for no good reason. Therefore, his *lthongo* is bad and wrathful, and when he is angry, he demands an animal. But I will offer the sacrificial animal that he demanded so much in my dreams and woke up with a sickness he caused in my body. I will give it to him. So, when I see him, there must be healing in my body, then tomorrow I will slaughter a cow for him; but if he does not leave me alone, I shall not give him anything, and I will say, ‘he is no longer my brother.’ If he is my actual brother, I have to breathe normally, and having short breath should come to an end, as I am experiencing short breath.”

The others replied, “Ehhe, you son of so and so; when you wake up tomorrow, and you are well, we will all see that this was caused by *ithongo* of your brother; but if you wake up sick, we will say, ‘it is just a sickness like other.’” The sunsets while the man complained about the pain; but when the cows were milked, he said, “give me food so that I may eat.” His wives asked, “how are you now?” He replied, “what did you hear me say?” They said, “we heard you say you want food.” He responded as thus, “I do not know my children, but I have a desire to eat food, even if a small portion of food to try and eat.” His wives offered him *amasi* (fermented milk) to eat. He replied to his wives that they, “should not put too much of crushed corn but rather a small portion for it not to be thick, so that it may allow me to drink it if my throat is still functional.” They did *amasi* as he instructed them and gave it to him. He was able to eat some of the food, although he was only able to eat little food and gave the rest to his children. He said, “can I now have the beer, I am thirsty.” They took the beer and gave him to

¹⁸ The sick man was probable narrating his own story rather than a hypothetical story of some sort.

drink. The wives had hope in their hearts upon witnessing their husbands learn to eat again. They rejoiced in their hearts because they had been afraid and said, “Since he did not eat food at all, that means the sickness is very severe.” They rejoiced in such a way that they did not speak but stared at each other in awe of what they just witnessed. He drunk his beer and asked for the snuff¹⁹ as well, he said, “my children, leave some of the snuff so that I may have some of it.” The children gave him some of the snuff, and he took some of it. The wives stared at each other as they were astonished upon seeing him taking a snuff which meant *lthongo* restrained him from

¹⁹ Snuff: Tobacco was smoked not only by Bantu-speaking people and it was grounded and mixed with burnt leaves of prickly pear to produce a snuff. Snuff is placed under the lip or sniffed/snorted up the nose. The use of snuff among the Pedi people was considered taboo for women who were within childbearing age. However, they were allowed to take it as a remedy to treat nosebleeds, and headaches. Tobacco was probably introduced by traders in the East and West of Africa and spread to Southern Africa, even before the arrival of the Europeans. The native Brazilians were the first people known to cultivate and use snuff. In Southern Africa, the Khoi (Hottentots) and San (Bushmen) rarely invested their time cultivating tobacco but relied on their trade with Bantu-speaking people. Tobacco cultivation was the work assigned to men, and old women sometimes did cultivate tobacco. Although young women were never allowed to cultivate tobacco because of their ritual impurity, such as childbearing, menstruation was believed to cause adverse results on the tobacco plant. Snuff plays a crucial role among the traditional Bantu-speaking people, such as cultivating the relationship between the living and their ancestral spirits who ensure the well-being or misfortune of their kinsman. Tobacco has often remained a prerequisite to appease or appeal to ancestral spirits. Among the Bantu-speaking people, ancestral spirits are known for demanding sorghum beer, tobacco, and meat to be well-disposed to their living kin. The snuff was placed at the back of the hut, and the living kin would later use it after ancestral spirits had used its essence. The snuff spilled was not picked and used because it was left for ancestral spirits, as it was believed that the ancestral spirits were the reason why it spilled. Moreover, the snuff was used by diviners to clear their heads to channel the ancestral spirits to possess and guide them during their divination. Using a snuff from someone who was a stranger was considered a dangerous act. A Man was discouraged from asking for a snuff from another man’s wife because sometimes snuff was mixed with magical charms that could harm him. Nonetheless, the snuff did not have its origins within the Zulu people of KwaZulu-Natal, but rather it was acquired from other groups and subsequently integrated into the practices of traditional healers, as mentioned previously (cf. Bosko 1981:23-32; Murray 1975; Shaw 1938 & 1974; Tyrrell & Jurgens 1983).

using a snuff. The wives disputed in their hearts, and they said, “What type of *Idlozi* that restrains a man from using a snuff?” They were afraid and said, “This sickness is not caused by *Ithongo*.”

After taking a snuff, he went and lay down and fell asleep. In the middle of the night, his brother appeared in the dream and said, “My brother, did you point out the cattle? Will you slaughter the cattle tomorrow?” The sleeper agreed, saying, “Ehhe, I will slaughter it. Why do you, my brother, say that I do not laud your names when I slaughter the cattle? When, in fact, I do laud your names because you were a hero and a fighter.”

His deceased brother replied, “Ehhe, I said that for a reason, I want meat. I am dead and I left you with a home; your home is now large.” He replied, “Ehhe, my brother, you left me behind with a large home, and before you died, did you not slaughter all the cattle?” He said, “*Cha* (no), I did not slaughter all the cattle.” He replied, “So, you of my father, you say, should I slaughter them all?” He said, “*Cha*, I did not tell you to slaughter all of them. I say, slaughter because I wish your home to be larger.” When he woke up from sleeping and felt that he was well, and the pain suddenly was no longer there. He rose and sat down; he shook his wife to wake her up as well, and said, “So and so, wake up, and kindle the fire in the fireplace (*iziko*).” She woke up and kindled the fire, She poured a small portion of snuff on the hand and used what remained, and she asked, “How are you?” He replied, “*Hawu*, be silent; I woke up to my body at ease; I was talking to my brother, and I woke up cured of the sickness.” He took some snuff and fell asleep as he lay down. *Ithongo* of his brother appeared to him again. He said to him, “*Hawu*, I have healed you. Slaughter the cattle tomorrow.” At dawn, he woke up, called his younger brothers to go into the kraal with him, and went inside. He said, “I called you because I am now healed.” He said to them, “Bring the bullock.” They brought the bullock to him. Then he said, “Bring the barren cow.” They were both brought to him, and when they arrived him in the upper part of the kraal and stood there. He gave thanks, saying:

Ehhe, feast, my people. Good ancestral spirits, let the children live, and their bodies be well. I say, why is it that even though you are my brother, you appear in my dreams repeatedly, and I am thereafter sick? *Ithongo* that is good seems in dreams bearing good news. I say, stop causing sickness in my body. You should come to me while I am sleeping, tell me news, say, ‘My brother, I wish to say this and that.’ But instead, you come and wish to kill me. I perceived that you died as a person who was

mischievous here on earth, but is it possible that you continue to be mischievous even after death? I used to consider that when *Ithongo* appeared to me, it would come in a pleasant manner and would convey good news to me. Why do you, as an elder brother responsible for taking care of this home and preventing evil from manifesting in the family, fail to act as a sound owner of this house?

He spoke these words to the beasts and gave thanks, saying, "Here are the cattle that I am offering to you, the red bullock and a barren white cow. Slaughter them. As for me, I say, address the matter to me kindly so that I may wake up with my body well. I say, all of *amadlozi* in your genealogy, come and gather around you as you love meat." He then said, "Slaughter them." One of his brothers took the spear and stabbed the barren cow then it fell to the ground. He also stabbed the bullock, and both bellowed; he killed them both. He told them to remove their skin. They skin them and then eat the meat in the kraal. All the men gathered to ask for heart and took it joint by joint; they ate meat and were satisfied. They gave thanks and said, "We thank you so and so. We pray for *Idlozi*, which is good. We shall see if your sacrifice has been denied by *Idlozi* that made you sick, and we will know it, your mischievous brother. We did not know that we would eat meat with you because of your severe sickness caused by him."

2.19 *Amadlozi* are felt in the shoulders.

The Zulu people believe that the shoulders are the most sensitive part of the traditional healers or doctors (*Izinyanga*). Everything the *inyanga* senses emanates from the shoulders. The shoulders are the place for *Amathongo* to the people who are *Izinyanga* (doctors). When a person is an *inyanga* he does not like to be touched in the shoulders because touching his shoulders feels like stabbing him with a spear and would instantly feel like there is a wound where he was touched. However, some people who are not *izinyanga* do not allow others to handle their shoulders because they feel like something bothers them when they are touched on their shoulders. When a person stands behind *inyanga* he/she is told to move away as *Inyanga* says, "Move away, you are breaking me; it is like you are sitting on top of me."

When the Zulu people say that a person does not have *Ithongo* in his body, they speak of something that they heard posited by others. Therefore, the Zulu people would also say that *Ithongo* must be sought-after, but if the sickness did not disappear, it was

understood that the person did not have *lthongo* in him, which could have been the cause of his illness.

2.20 The prevention of the spirit or *Idlozi* from causing the person to become *inyanga*

Inyanga is consulted when a person is sick. When the person dreamt about someone who passed away, and his body did not get well; he conveyed his dreams in the morning. He said, “*hawu*, I am suffering. When so and so appeared to me in my dreams during the night, my body did not get well. I do not know what I should do.”

When the dreams did cause the person sickness, an *Inyanga* was consulted to come and prevent the person from causing him harm. *Inyanga* said, “Look here; the day you dream about him, take this medicine and chew it, take the stone or firewood and spit on it after mixing your saliva with it. You should spit it on the stone or firewood, throw the object behind your back and never look back. If you look back, all of those dreams will come back.” He then did as *Inyanga* instructed him.

This is how the bad dreams were treated among the Zulu people. If the problem continued and the dreams haunted the man again, the *Inyanga* had to do something different to help that person from being haunted by visions. The *Inyanga* had to mix a specific medicine with other medicines to cause the person not to be seen by *Idlozi*. The person went far from home or to the ant heap as instructed by the *Inyanga*, and what he carried had to be left inside the ant heap, and he never looked back as he went back home.

This is how the Zulu people dealt with some of their dream-related issues. They said, “*Idlozi* that is exhaustive is the one that makes people sick when they see it and has to be stopped.” The other people frequently affected by these dreams were widows who were married to another man, such as the brother of the deceased husband or any other man. The spirit or *Idlozi* of the deceased husband followed the wife and did not leave her alone. When she is pregnant, and it occurs that *Idlozi* of her husband appears, it makes her sick and causes a miscarriage. *Idlozi* was then prevented because of how it acted toward its people on the earth.

If *Idlozi* of her husband troubled her while she was married to another man who was not the brother of her deceased husband, and if she left her children of the deceased husband behind, he followed her and said, “You left my children behind with who? Go

back to my children. If you disagree, I will kill you.” *Idlozi* of her husband had to be prevented swiftly from causing trouble and unrest to that woman.

The *idlozi* of her deceased husband might have never ceased to trouble her until she went back to the home of her deceased husband and took care of their children. She did not marry anyone again because of the persistence of her deceased husband in coercing her to go back and take care of their children. The people said the father of her children had brought her back home again. This is how *Izinyanga* attempted to prevent or constrain the spirits of the dead, and when they failed to avoid it, the women had no choice but to comply with *Idlozi*.

2.21 *Izinyanga nezangoma*

The Zulu people believe that *izinyanga nezangoma* are the pillars and protectors of their families and communities. It is well-known that the Zulu people had multiple regiments that fought wars to expand and protect the Zulu territories. Nonetheless, *izinyanga nezangoma* were mostly needed in matters of *amalumbo*, *imikhokha*, *imiswazi*, diseases, and many other things that caused unrest within the Zulu communities. This is where the potency of *izinyanga* becomes revealed or displayed. The Zulu warriors or regiments were not permitted to go to war without *izinyanga* performing a ritual that involved charms (*amakhubalo*) and traditional Zulu herbs such as *intelezi* ²⁰(various plants were called *intelezi*). The lives of the Zulu people were centred around *izanusu* (diviners), and when someone was suspicious of diviners and believed to be a witch, he/she was taken to kwaNkatha (a place of execution). The words of the diviners are themselves the law to the Zulu people, and no one can go beyond them. According to Msimang (1975:303), no king ruled elikaMjokwane without an *inyanga* that was trusted by the king to protect and administer healing. The Zulu people had *izinyanga nezangoma* to function as a society, especially as they were immensely vested in the veneration of ancestral spirits in their rituals and rites of passage.

2.22 Different types of *izinyanga*

The word ‘*inyanga*’ is used interchangeably as it refers to both the moon and to a person who is an expert in what he/she does as a form of work. *Inyanga* is a term that

²⁰ *Intelezi*: different types of plants are known as *intelezi*. It was believed to instil bravery and fearlessness to Zulu warriors or to any other users.

can refer to a person who is an expert in the work that they do, such as a bricklayer, welder, hairdresser, traditional healer, and so on. Nevertheless, this study is about *inyanga* which is known as the traditional healer (*umelaphi ngokwendabuko*).

Izinyanga are divided into two categories. Some use medicine to heal diseases, and they also use certain medicines to protect their patients from witches. On the other hand, there are *izinyanga* whose work is about divination, that is, the ability to trace the source of the sickness. In most cases, *izangoma* are known to be immensely vested in divination, and upon revealing the source of the problem, they often direct their patients to a traditional healer who might help them. When the diviners use the bones or speak out of their thoughts/heads, they are called *izangoma* or *izanusu*; however, if they have spirits like *abalozu* (whistlers) *namandiki* they are called *omangothobana*. These two types of *izinyanga* are both initiated similarly.

2.23 The diviner's initiation

The person who is about to be *inyanga* has to be a person who has strength or robustness. However, that person might complain as time progresses during the initiation process. The person began to complain a lot about a particular food and would say, "Do not offer me certain food because it causes my body to be sick when I eat it." The person avoided certain food and ate food that appealed to him; even that specific food, he did not eat much of it and continually complained. And he also said, "I dreamt of being carried away by water." The person has dreams about many things, and the body becomes muddled²¹, and a room or habitant of dreams. The person constantly had dreams about many things, and on waking, says to the people, "Today my body is muddled; I dreamt of many people killing me; I do not know how I escaped. And when I woke up, my body felt uneasy and incomplete." The person became very sick and went to a diviner to find out the cause of the sickness.

Izinyanga did not at once see that the consulting person had a problem. *Ezinyangani* it was hard for them to see, and they gave the wrong diagnosis; they made false

²¹ *Ukudungeka* or *ukudunga*: means to stir up the mud in the water and cause the water to be muddy; it is applied in a metaphorical sense in referring to muddling or confusion of mind by trouble, and when there is contention or disturbance in the family or village. The term was employed above to demonstrate the general derangement of the body by the disease or any other cause, such as bad dreams or a bad ancestral spirit.

statements until the person's cattle were all killed as per the command of *izinyanga*; they said, his ancestral spirits demand cattle, *idlozi* say, give it food.

The people did exactly as they were instructed by the *izinyanga* because people believed that the *izinyanga* knew what they were commanding them to do. This occurred until what the person owned became exhausted while the sickness did not go away, and he ended up not knowing what to do because all the cattle were slaughtered, and the relatives were helping the person with things that were his/her needs.

After some time, the *inyanga* came and objected to what was said by all of the *izinyanga*; he said, "I know that you come to me because everything has failed, and you do not have the guts to say there is *inyanga* that can help me. But I, my friends, perceive that my friends have gone astray. They did not eat the incense (*imphepho*²²). They were not initiated properly. Why were they defeated by the disease that is clear? I am saying that those diviners have troubled you. This disease has nothing to do with treating it with the shedding blood. In this person, I do not see anything else but only *ithongo* that is possessing him. There is nothing else. *Idlozi* is all over this person. Your people are all over this person. They are in two categories; some say, 'No, we do not want our child to be harmed. We do not want that.' As a result, he is not recovering. If this person is prevented from *idlozi*, it will be as if you are killing the person because he will not become *inyanga* and will never be the same person; he will remain the way he is now. If he is not sick, he will always complain and be foolish; he will fail to comprehend anything. I say you will be killing him with medicines. Leave this person alone and stall to see where this sickness leads him. Don't you see that the day he did not use medicine, he became prone to eating vegetable food? You

²² *Imphepho*: the "*helichrysum petiolare*" has two categories which are known as black and white. The white 'African sage' as they sometimes call it, is burnt as incense when sacrificing an animal to the ancestral spirits. *Izinyanga* use it as an emetic to prevent the return of dimness of the inner sight after the use of the black *imphepho*; *izinyanga* also eat *imphepho*. They put it under their heads at night in order to have truthful and clear dreams. They strongly believe to be true that the use of *imphepho emhlophe* (white) helps them to attain divine accuracy. Therefore, they conclude that to have "eaten *Imphepho*" makes *inyanga* to be trustworthy. The black *Imphepho* is actually employed as an emetic to remove all badness as well as the causes of dimness that a diviner might experience.

have to cease giving this person any medicine. He will not die of this disease because he shall give good tidings.”

The person was sick for two years without getting better or even longer. The person would sometimes leave the room for a few days, and people said, “he will get well.” On the contrary, the person in the following days was confined in the room, and the hair started to fall off. The body of the person's skin became dry because he did not like to use oil as a body lotion. The people were wondering about the progress of the sickness. The person's head began to manifest signs such as sneezing and yawning repeatedly. The people said, “No! truly this person will be possessed by the ancestral spirits.” The person was also very keen on constantly taking snuff. The people noticed that the person was given a good thing.

Subsequently, the person was sick again and collapsed then, people poured water on him, and for some time, everything was back to normal. The person would shed tears, and while others were sleeping at night, he was heard singing a new song, and people woke up and sang along with him. The people were deprived of sleep during the days of his initiation to become *inyanga* because the person who is initiated can hardly sleep at night as he is constantly using his mind. When he does sleep, he merely takes a nap and wakes up with many songs, and because of the high-pitched voice, even the neighbours join the household to sing with him. The person could sing the whole night, and people did not sleep. The people of his household clapped their hands for him until they were painful. At that time, the person was leaping inside the room like a frog; and the room was too small for his jumping around; then he started singing and shaking as though he was a reed in the water, and he was sweating heavily.

Cattle were killed and eaten during that time as a means to encourage the process of becoming a new person, that is *inyanga*. The slaughtering of the cattle is employed as a means to encourage or ensure that *idlozi* is on good terms with them and to cause his divination path to be very clear. After some time, another old diviner that was known by other people would be mentioned to him while he was sleeping during the night, who said, “Go to so and so, and there so and so will churn *ubulawu* that is for vomiting so that you may be initiated and thoroughly become an *inyanga*. Thereafter, the person becomes quiet and well for days upon consulting the old diviner, and *ubulawu* churned as well as used by him; he returns as a new person, cleansed, and a person was now *inyanga* (Callaway 1870:265).

However, if the person has familiar spirits, there was a voice that said to him, “You will not communicate with the people because the people will be told by us about the things that they are consulting us about.” The person constantly told people about the dreams and said, “There are people who are telling me that they will themselves speak to the people who come for enquiring.” What the person was told did come to pass when someone consulted and began to divine; the people made their presence known as they started to whistle ²³as a means of communicating, and *inyanga*, in return, responded as he would to man, that is, in his language. The *Inyanga* had a conversation where the familiar spirits and the *inyanga* were asking each other questions; if he did not understand what was conveyed by the familiar spirits, they could make him understand what they were seeing. The familiar spirits do not begin with revealing omens that occurred among the people but begin with speaking to their *inyanga* first; then, after they have informed the *inyanga* about what was about to occur, they begin to reveal the things concerning those who were consulting.

When a person was sick because of *idlozi*, but his people did not want him to become a diviner, they consulted a great traditional healer to prevent him from becoming a diviner. However, even if the person did not become a diviner in his life, nothing seemed to be fine as he was always sick. Even though the person was not divine, his wisdom was like that of the diviners. This demonstrates that the person was not wholistically freed or precluded from the diviner calling. It did not suffice that the person’s household were not in favour of him becoming a diviner as they said, “*Cha*, we do not like a man that is strong and able to do various activities to just stay at home and not work at all, but only does divination all day.” Therefore, they hindered him from doing the work of the diviners. Nonetheless, the person had some sort of a vision that revealed that “if this person becomes a diviner, he was going to be a great man and an accurate diviner.”

2.24 The cooperation of *inyanga* and the familiar spirits

The familiar spirit does not speak as a single spirit, but it speaks as a large group with different voices. The person who is a diviner has his distinct voice from those spirits and also enquires from the familiar spirits like the people who come to consult for his

²³ The familiar spirits voices were heard by the diviner, and they sounded in a high-pitched whistling tone; hence in isiZulu they are called *imilozi*.

divination. When the spirits did not respond to his inquiry, he was clueless about what the familiar spirits would say to those who were enquiring from him. His role was to take what was said by the people who came for his divination and convey it to the familiar spirits. The people could come for his divination, and *inyanga* said to them, “Oh, you have arrived while I am alone. I was left alone since the previous day. I don’t know where they went.” The people waited for them to come back. When they arrived, the people heard them greeting, saying, “*sanibonani-ke* (they acknowledged their presence).” The people responded, “*Sanibonani makhosi* (they also acknowledged the presence of *amakhosi*).” The person who was possessed by the spirits asked, “Have you arrived?” They agreed. It was hard for the people to understand if it was a deception because they heard many different voices speaking to a diviner and the diviner speaking with his voice.

2.25 The correlation of *izibhobo* and ancestral spirits

The Zulu people believe that when a person suffers from body aches, especially beneath the armpits in the side of his ribs implies that it is likely to be caused by ancestral spirits. *Inyanga*, which specialises in diseases such as *izibhobo*²⁴ and is well-known for curing them, was consulted by the household. The Zulu people are more prone to suggest that *izibhobo* is caused by ancestral spirits. Therefore, a person who was constantly suffering from *izibhobo* he/she was given medicine by *Inyanga* to treat the pain. *Inyanga*, in his divination, told the people that the sick person was possessed by his dead people, that is, the ancestral spirits. The *Inyanga* said, “There was a person in the lineage of the family who was an *inyanga*, and that person is in the body of the sick person; therefore, *amadlozi* wants this person to become *inyanga* and has to be initiated.” The family was instructed by the diviners to cease giving any medicine that was meant to treat *izibhobo* because such medication did not cure him. The diviners told the family that the medicine caused the disease to be severe. In this case, there was someone who died while he was *inyanga*; therefore, the diviners called him by name and told the sick person that he said that he wanted him to become an *inyanga*.

²⁴ *Izibhobo*: is understood as sharp pains that a person may feel on the side of the ribs, beneath the armpit.

It was expected that he would become an *inyanga* with the ability to reveal and remove things that are hidden by the sorcerers to harm the victims. He was supposed to be *inyanga yokumbulula*²⁵ because, in the family, there was *inyanga yokumbulula* who was also a sick person. When he was initiated and became an *inyanga* he was endowed with a white ancestral spirit (*idlozi elimhlophe*) and assumed the role of revealing and digging up herbs that were concocted by the sorcerers to bewitch their victims. The family was told that so and so (referring to the sick person) would come home in the morning with the medicine that would be revealed for him to dig up in the mountains. He will bring *ubulawu* for cleansing and churn it to drink and cleanse himself using *ubulawu*. The person would sometimes be commanded by the ancestral spirits to bring home *impepho* from around the swamp of reeds.

The person will be commanded to constantly slaughter animals because the ancestral spirits desire meat, especially from someone they want to make a diviner. Even though the person continually slaughtered animals he also received animals from people he helped by giving them treatment for diseases, digging up hidden sorcerers, bewitching herbs, and divining, among other things. In the case where people would die because of witchcraft, an *inyanga* would dig up the concocted bad medicine hidden by sorcerers. *Inyanga* would help people to vomit the sorcerer's poisonous medicine that they swallowed unknowingly.

2.26 The family dispute about the calling of a diviner

The families had different views in the case where one of them was possessed by *amadlozi* and was supposed to become an *inyanga*. Some families did not dispute among themselves concerning those whom the ancestral spirits wished to become a diviner. However, some of the households disputed among themselves whether someone was becoming an *inyanga* or a mere madman. The only way that people could be certain that a person was becoming a diviner was through hiding things for

²⁵ *Ukumbulula*: is a specific work that is done by diviners who have a gift to discover and dig up hidden medicines that are concocted by the sorcerers to harm their victims. The sorcerer would use the victim's belongings such as a piece of something worn by them, and sometimes hair or nails. The victim's belongings were added to a certain medicine and buried in a secret place. *Inyanga yokumbulula* would discover and remove this poison which to the Zulu people was believed to cause the victim to be subjected to diseases, suffering and ultimately death.

him to find; some would hide beads; others their bracelets; others their pots; others their spears; others their hats; and so on. The family members would hide all these things when the tested person was away from home and could not witness what they were doing. When the person came back home, *idlozi* had already made him aware while he was away on the mountain where his family had hidden things for him to find as a means to prove whether he was truly becoming a diviner or a madman. Upon his arrival home, the family denied that they had hidden anything when he asked if there were things that they had hidden for him to find. He adamantly told them that his ancestral spirit had made him aware of the dispute within the household concerning his calling to be an *inyanga*. When he collected all the things that were concealed for him to find, thereafter, the household perceived that he was a great diviner. The household was convinced that the ancestral spirits had told him about their dispute concerning his calling to become a diviner because he was able to find all of the things that were hidden. They gave him different presents such as a goat, bracelet, beads, and ornament made of beads, and the father of the household gave him a bullock while his brothers gave him goats as a sign of recognising that he was chosen by *amadlozi*.

2.27 The role of ancestor in marriage

The Zulu people attempted to find a correlation between the Supreme Being, ancestral spirits, and a married woman. The Supreme Being is perceived as the source of life, who is also a preserver of life. The Supreme Being, in turn, entrusted the ancestral spirits with a responsibility to be guardians who can pass life from uMvelinqangi to the living on earth. So, in the marriage context, the Zulu people believe that a married woman achieves a new position in life, that is, to be a keeper or bearer of life and the life transmitter.

The wedding in the context of Zulu religion had rituals to be performed by both the groom and the bride. The groom's and bride's families had to slaughter goats or beasts to report the wedding to *amadlozi*. The Zulu people believe that the slaughtering of the beast is important for its symbolic meaning, that is, the blood that is shed and the gall (*inyongo*), which were used in rituals. It was widely apprehended that the blood and gall were things that the ancestral spirits were fond of. The gall was applied using sprinkling and anointing the couple for whom the wedding ceremony was performed. The praying (*ukuthetha*) was made by the Zulu people in the explicit form of speech

and implicit in the expression of the sprinkling of the gall. Berglund (1975:10) discusses that the gallbladder was important to the Zulu people because the ancestral spirits were very fond of the appearance of the bladder. The gall was ideal for the ancestral spirits as it did not consist of any exit and had an entrance only. The gall is equivalent to a hut according to the ancestral spirits as it is dark, and they are fond of working in the darkness, for instance, at *umsamo*, and in the dreams. Berglund (1975:10) elucidated the notion that:

The gall is the place of the shade in an ox or cow and even in the bull. It is the place where the shades live in a beast. If the shade is not in the gall, then the beast becomes sick. Nothing will be able to cure it because the shades have left it.

The authors who studied the discourse of the ancestral spirits almost unanimously mentioned the importance of *inyongo*, especially in unifying the two families in the context of marriage. For Raum (1973:390) *inyongo* is an instrument and a symbol for striving toward unity. Vilakazi (1958:175) posits that the gallbladder serves as a sign that the person does belong to a specific kinship group, and that manifests through honouring and thanksgiving to the ancestral spirits.

The slaughtering of the beasts or goats was performed to ensure the communal acceptance of both the groom and the bride by *amadlozi* of the two families. The animal was slaughtered as a sign that *amadlozi* of both the bride and the groom were now in agreement to labour together for the betterment of their offspring. *Inyongo* is regarded as invaluable within the Zulu religious system; therefore, the Zulu people guarded it against sorcerers or strangers as they were not permitted to touch the gall lest it be misused or lost. The Zulu people fear that strangers could use the gall for witchcraft.

The reverence exerted towards the gall(bladder) is propelled by its vital role in reminding the Zulu people about their ancestral spirits to whom thanksgiving is directed and for their protection as well as the interest they display towards the welfare of the household. The head of the household took care of the bladder as the household's fate could depend on the gallbladder; hence it had to be protected from the sorcerers. The head of the household would cut the bladder and bury it inside the apse after observing that it has shrivelled.

After *lobola* (bride-price/bride-wealth) negotiations, the main negotiator (*umkhongi omkhulu*) from the groom's side was "given dignity" by the bride's people (the Zulu

people would argue that dignity is something that can be offered to someone). *Umkhongji* was given an inflated gallbladder that was extracted from a goat that was slaughtered for *umkhongi omkhulu* (the groom's main negotiator, *abakhongi* in plural form). The inflated gallbladder was tied on the wrist or on the hat where it was displayed for everyone to see that *umkhongi* could negotiate successfully and was received cordially. *Inyongo* was believed to possess the power of making a person important as it carried a very important symbolic role among the Zulu people. The reason to put a bladder on a person was meant to inform the ancestral spirits about what has occurred as well as to plead with them to look after that particular person. The gallbladder serves a role, as it were, to mark the person whom the ancestral spirits had to attend to amid others. It is an attempt and a sign of appealing to the ancestral spirits, a form of oral style of communication as the Zulu people did not see orality only to suggest the passing of information, but also can apply to activities such as putting on gallbladder (*ukufaka inyongo*).

The bride's father slaughtered a beast/goat known as *umncamo* ²⁶(derived from the verb *ukuncama*) for his daughter to eat before she embarks on her journey to get married, and marriage is figuratively likened to a journey. The gall was used by the father of the household to sprinkle and anoint his daughter the day before she leaves for her marriage or during the day, she goes off to live at the place of her in-laws. The gall had to be poured by the father on her left hand and foot, which was done while he addressed the ancestral spirits concerning his daughter's marriage. The ritual is geared towards invoking the blessings of the ancestral spirits upon the daughter. The betrothed daughter had to keep the gallbladder, whether on the wrist, hat or where it could be on display for people to see since it was given to her by her father as a sign of protection even at the groom's homestead. The ceremony of *umncamo* serves as a means to join the departing bride with her ancestral spirits, and the gall symbolises the presence of her ancestral spirits, whose role is also to help and protect her in-law's place. According to Berglund (1975:110), some informants at Zululand reported that the gallbladder for the Zulu people is not only valued as the symbol of a place where ancestral spirits dwell. First, Berglund posits that cattle are valued because they also give birth as humans do; for instance, cows give birth during the tenth lunar month.

²⁶ *Umncamo*: is a ceremony where the goat is slaughtered in order to ask the ancestral spirits to protect their daughter on her new journey.

The second reason is the resemblance that the Zulu people observe between the womb and the bladder, which seems to fortify the Zulu sentiments concerning prosperity and fertility. Some of the Zulu people believe that the ancestral spirits go with the bride to the new place of the in-laws, and the ancestral spirits reside inside her womb to cause fertility.

The gall was employed in the ritual as a means of incorporating or initiating someone new to the lineage of a particular family. This is observed from the use of the gall at the groom's place; a beast was slaughtered to welcome the bride to her new home of the in-laws. The slaughtering ritual ensures that the groom's ancestral spirits are invoked to look after their bride as she becomes a new kinship in the household. It is improper for the bride to be only possessed by her ancestral spirits as a new member and integrated into her groom's home. Therefore, the gallbladder is removed and taken to a place that is occupied by the bride and her assistants, and that is where the gall is poured over the bride. This is further postulated by Vilakazi (1958:175), that the rite serves to ensure a connection between the groom and the bride's ancestral spirits. Berglund (1975:118) mentioned that the ritual of putting on the gall "symbolises that the shades of the two parties involved agree to do their work in assisting the woman". The groom's household was pleading with the ancestral spirits to be favourable towards the bride and bless their bride with children. The gallbladder could be interpreted as a non-verbal form of communication and serves as a symbolic meaning of a new relationship, and brings the restriction that a man shall not ask to marry anyone from his own mother's people. Raum (1973:391) concisely states that the man was not allowed to marry from "his mother's family because she had been treated with the gall of the cattle of the man's kinship group. And since they have shared a gall; therefore, this process creates an interdict against intermarriage".

The role of the gall in the Zulu religious system cannot be downplayed, as demonstrated by other commentators above. The gall does not solely play a vital role in making communication possible but also things like desire, thought, and what people wish to have. There is a dichotomy in the use of the gall where it communicates the abstract reality, and put in concrete terms, *inyongo* becomes a reminder concerning the ancestral spirits whenever the Zulu people see it. The encoded message in the gall conveyed the wish of the Zulu people, that is, to be united.

The gall is the mode in which communication with the ancestral spirits is made possible, which is something that the Zulu people perceived as impossible without the

gall's role in bridging the chasm between the two worlds (the living and the dead). The gall seems to be proof that verbal communication is not the only valid form of interaction, but also, non-verbal communication possesses means of creating a valid interaction between the two worlds.

It is undoubtedly, as per the literature on this topic, that among the Zulu people, the existence and the presence of the ancestral spirits was an eminent belief. The ancestral spirits remain an integral part of life among the Zulu people, and the descendants must ensure their communion with *amadlozi*, and the failure to do so may provoke the ancestral spirits to cause catastrophic events. The Zulu people communicate with ancestral spirits in ceremonies such as *umemulo*, *umabo*, *umncamo*, etc. The communication in these ceremonies was possibly through the speeches that were made, songs that were sung, and dancing. The ancestral spirits are invoked and informed about any upcoming ceremony and invited to participate in the feasting. The Zulu people need to convey knowledge to the ancestral spirits because it is through their presence and blessings that the Zulu people can succeed. However, the knowledge should be communicated to both the guests (living) and, more succinctly, to the ancestral spirits. The Zulu people maintain that existence and the presence of the ancestral spirit also ensure a blessed and peaceful day.

All in all, on the first day, the wedding ceremony had several rituals that were performed, such as ritual speeches, dance, and traditional beer drinks served. On the second day, the beast or goat was sacrificed, and the bride integration rite was performed. The integration rite of the bride was geared towards integrating the bride into the ancestral spirits of the new descent group. Furthermore, the aggregation rites were mostly performed on the third day to safeguard the acceptance of the bride and obtain a role as a functional member of the father-in-law's household (Reader 1966).

2.28 Summary

The concept of uNkulunkulu among the Zulu people was eminently understood as the great ancestor or the most ancient ancestor. However, uNkulunkulu among the Zulu people was also perceived as a primal man who enabled human beings to come into existence. The knowledge about uNkulunkulu varies among the Zulu people and sometimes is contradictory. However, the Zulu people did not realise why it was important to make a coherent case for their belief in uNkulunkulu. Hence, the historical accounts seem to conflate because the Zulu people did not hold the same views about

uNkulunkulu, even though some of the views were more prominent among the communities. Some of the analyses on the Zulu understanding of the necessary supreme being responsible for their existence are superficial and cannot necessarily prove what the etymologies meant at a specific point in time. The Zulu religious system immensely revolves around the veneration of ancestral spirits, and they serve as mediators between man and uMvelinqangi or uNkulunkulu. The concept of uMvelinqangi among the Zulu people seems to be beyond what they could ascertain; therefore, they rely only on the ancestral spirits to link them and uNkulunkulu. However, it is essential to note that the belief in uNkulunkulu as the creator (deity) among the Zulu people has been unclear and corroded by contradictions in the standard narratives.

Moreover, during the early times before the influx of other religion(s) uNkulunkulu was perceived as the mere “first” man to exist. There was a high Lord of the heavens (*iNkosi yezulu/yaphezulu*) that was believed by the Zulu people who stood above uNkulunkulu; however, there was no veneration rendered to him. Perhaps, the contention is based on the interpretation of the word “uNkulunkulu” as it can be used when referring to the Zulu God and the first humans or the “most ancient”. Nevertheless, it is daunting to pinpoint the name of the high deity that was believed by the Zulu people as their focus was on *amadlozi*, rather than rendering any form of worship to the high Creator. The Zulu myths of origin and tradition have remained unaltered even if studied through the lens of modern methodologies.

CHAPTER 3

Intersectionality of Arabisation and Islamisation: An Overview

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the existing scholarly definitions of Arabisation and its implementation in the African Muslim world, while also speculating on its potential outcomes in the Zulu Muslim community. According to Mohamed Benrabah (2007:225), Arabisation refers to the language strategy that aims to completely replace French and encourage the use of Arabic as the exclusive language, hence replacing Arabic-French duality. The term “Arabisation” strictly pertains to the elevation of the Arabic language’s standing and its increased use in public communication domains that were previously dominated by the colonial language. The proponents of Arab nationalism encompass a wide range of perspectives, including secular Baathists, pan-Arabists, Islamic traditionalists, reformists, and fundamentalists²⁷ have attributed significant importance to the Arabic language as the core constituent not only for the Arab nation but for Muslims. The primary focus of all governing bodies has been to revitalise, rejuvenate, and restore the language, as they endeavour to establish a homogeneous national culture and establish a connection between the symbols of their contemporary development initiatives and the symbols of their Arab-Islamic heritage, as described by Anderson (1991) as an act of “imagining.”

The significance of Arabization in fostering national cohesion is particularly notable in countries where a colonial language exists, such as French in the Maghreb nations, is

²⁷ Considering the present discourse, I want to use the terminology “Islamist” in lieu of the phrase “fundamentalist.” There are other grounds for my rejection of the latter word. The present level of prominence, particularly in Western media, has led to a regrettable and erroneous correlation between Islam and extremism and aggression for the majority of individuals who do not adhere to the Islamic faith. Additionally, it is worth noting that the Arabic language does not possess a specific term corresponding to the concept of fundamentalism. The paradigm in question is rooted in Western ideology. The nouns frequently employed in Arabic to denote the concept of establishing an Islamic society are *salafivva* and *islamivva*. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the aforementioned phrase lacks usage among any faction of the Muslim community. In fact, a majority of individuals within this community not only disapprove of its usage, but also perceive it as an offensive language.

firmly established, and/or where strong regional languages and ethnic groups, such as Berber in Morocco and Algeria, Kurdish in Syria and Iraq, and African languages in Mauritania and Sudan. In these instances, the process of Arabisation assumes significant importance due to the following reasons: firstly, it facilitates the establishment of linguistic cohesion, enabling direct communication between state authorities and the general population; secondly, it contributes to the reinforcement of a centralised national culture while diminishing the significance of regional languages and cultures; and finally, it serves as a symbolic representation of national unity²⁸.

Supporters of Arabisation, regardless of their secular or religious orientation, argue for the imperative of redefining or reclaiming the “national identity” or “national personality” through a revival of cultural “authenticity.” The genuine national identity underwent suppression and distortion as a result of the cultural assimilation brought about by colonialism (Fanon, 1962; Memmi, 1967; Chinweizu, 1975). Furthermore, it remains vulnerable to the strong impact of Western concepts, visual representations, trends, music, and languages (Coffman 1992:8). Arabisation, as a process, aims to shield individuals from the distorting impacts on two distinct levels. At the social level, it facilitates the cultivation and demarcation of a distinct national sphere that is distinct from, and inherently superior to, the prevailing global culture, which is perceived as imposing and menacing. The exclusion of foreign languages from the public domain significantly diminishes the representation of non-Arabic films, music, cultural events, educators, and learners. The significance of foreign language proficiency as a factor in social selection diminishes, resulting in a decrease in the reproductive capacity of the elite class, who typically serve as the principal agents of Western cultural transmission within Arab communities. At the individual level, it is believed that the establishment of a person's connection to Arabic, especially through the educational

²⁸ In relation to the subject of symbolism, it is noteworthy to observe that within official Algerian papers, the term “Arabic” is consistently absent when referring to language. The term commonly used to denote this language is “the national language.” The term “Arabic” may be perceived as polarising, as not all Algerians identify as Arab. The term “national” fulfils a cohesive role by including all individuals within a certain country.

system, will form a crucial bond between the individual and the historical-cultural framework that underlies the language²⁹.

Despite the official discourse about the revitalisation of the “national language” and the recognition of the “mother tongue,” it is crucial to emphasise that Arabization pertains to a contemporary, standardised, written manifestation of Arabic that should be employed across the Arab globe, although it does not represent the native language of every Arab individual. Classical Arabic, as the language utilised in the Quran and other holy literature, has traditionally been confined to this specific sector. The expansion of this linguistic system to encompass other domains of society led to the emergence of what is commonly referred to as Modern Standard Arabic. This linguistic style is employed in all written materials, formal dialogues, educational settings, and the majority of radio and television broadcasts across the entirety of the Arab region. The term commonly employed by governments to denote this linguistic phenomenon is the “national language.” However, it should be noted that Classical Arabic is not often used as a means of ordinary communication within any given civilization. Many Arabs, especially those residing in the Maghreb region, perceive it as rigid and challenging to acquire without extensive and prolonged instruction.

Arabic-speaking individuals commonly utilise their respective national dialects, exhibiting significant variations across different countries. Communication between individuals from different regions, such as a Moroccan and an Iraqi, who possess just knowledge of their dialects, would encounter significant challenges even in basic interactions. Arabic dialects lack a standardised written form and are limited in their ability to facilitate complex discussions on abstract or technical subjects. Nevertheless, these languages encompass the dynamic aspects of everyday existence, actuality, familial relationships, early life experiences, comedic elements, and affective states. Despite their origins in classical Arabic, these languages have undergone significant changes over the centuries due to many factors, including foreign influences. As a result, they have diverged to the extent that they are no longer mutually intelligible. Individuals who have not had formal education in any Arab countries may face challenges in comprehending both classical and current Arabic. Given the current

²⁹ In his work published in 1991, Benedict Anderson highlights the significant influence that religious script-languages, such as Latin in Christendom and Arabic in the Ummah, have historically exerted on individuals' cognitive processes.

circumstances, it becomes evident that Arabisation plays a crucial role in the processes of modernization and nation-building. The language in question serves as a unifying force among Arabs worldwide, encompassing both written and increasingly spoken forms. Additionally, it maintains a significant connection with the language utilised in religious texts³⁰.

The disparity between contemporary Arabic and its dialects is substantial; nonetheless, governmental entities have often overlooked this distinction and treated them as equivalent. The acquisition of Modern Standard Arabic is crucial for facilitating the transition of the contemporary sector from a European language and for enabling effective inter-Arab contact. Although there is validity to the assertion that the two variants of Arabic exhibit a close relationship, it is unlikely that contemporary Arabic has made significant inroads into the personal aspects of Arab society, and this trend is expected to persist. Even after achieving proficiency, it continues to be an artificial language utilised to supplant the many domains of contemporary endeavours previously conducted in a European language, including religious contexts. This language lacks a group of individuals who are natural speakers and hence requires ongoing maintenance and enrichment of its vocabulary by many linguistic academies and Arabisation centres. According to the renowned Arabist, Jacques Berque, the language in question embodies cosmopolitanism, the socio-economic class of the *petite bourgeoisie*, and the impact of foreign cultural influences. According to Grandguillaume (1983:25), the text lacks both the expressive qualities of dialect and the profoundness found in classical Arabic.

According to Taleb Ibrahim, the term “Arabisation” can be defined as the process of transforming anything into an Arab form or character, particularly when applied to elements that were not originally Arab in nature³¹. In his concise analysis, Benrabah

³⁰ The establishment of a strong connection between individuals is becoming more solidified as a result of the use of Modern Arabic in religious education and sermons delivered within mosques. The current emergence of Islam and Islamic doctrine, together with its integration into all aspects of society, economy, and politics, has significantly bolstered the recognition of Modern Arabic as the language associated with Islam. The utilisation of Classical Arabic is primarily confined to liturgical contexts.

³¹ Taleb Ibrahim, Khaoula. *Les Algériens et Leur(s) Langue(s)*. Algiers: Les Éditions El Hikma, 1995, in

outlines the regime's objective of Arabisation, which aimed to coincide with a 'Cultural Revolution' aimed at revitalising Arab-Islamic culture and identity. The intention was to return to what ideological proponents perceived as the fundamental nature of Algeria as an Arabic-speaking nation, while also establishing a connection between Algeria and the broader Arab (revolutionary) world. This world was seen as a cultural counterbalance to the imperialist West, with France at its helm³². Within this particular framework, the Arabic language was designated as the principal medium through which a certain set of principles aimed at moulding Algerians into recognised constituents of the developing Arab, Islamic, and national socialist entity were to be conveyed. Undoubtedly, the process of Arabisation in Algeria served as a significant symbolic act, representing the country's decisive departure from its colonial history. Arabic has been held in high regard as a sacred language and of great importance among African Muslims, particularly the Zulu Muslims, who have adopted the use of Arabic in various aspects of their religious and linguistic practises, including prayer, greetings, instruction, and sometimes everyday discussions.

The present chapter posits that the Quran extensively relies on context to facilitate comprehension, interpretation, and translation into alternative languages. This argument posits that the majority of English translations of the Quran, as well as comments in English, Arabic, and other languages, have not adequately considered the contextual aspects, resulting in a compromised comprehension of the text. Hence, within the Zulu Muslim community, Arabic is seen as incomparable to any other language, and it is believed that the Quran cannot be accurately translated. The prompt implementation of Arabic as the exclusive language of teaching is regarded as a fundamental element of their strategy to establish an authentically Islamic practice and values among the Zulu Muslims while eliminating the Western values and conduct from their society and cultivating a robust and autonomous Islamic culture.

³² According to Benrabah, this particular era may be characterised as a period when the Arabic language was prominently utilised in both educational and governmental contexts. See Mohamed Benrabah, "Language-in-Education Planning in Algeria: Historical Development and Current Issues," *Language Policy* 6 (2007): 225.

3.1 Arabisation as Islamisation

In several scholarly works, the term “Islamisation” is commonly understood to be equivalent to the process of adopting or embracing the Islamic faith. Within the realm of academic discourse, it is crucial to acknowledge that Islamisation encompasses a far wider and more comprehensive process. One recent definition characterises Islamisation as the political integration during the Late Antiquity of a significant portion of the Middle East into Islamic governance. This process spanned several centuries and involved the conversion to Islam, the adoption of the Arabic language, and the preference for Muslim personal names over Arab, Persian, or biblical names (Bear 2014:27). According to this view, the process of converting to Islam is considered only one component of a broader phenomenon that encompasses not only political transformation but also the adoption of Arab culture and assimilation. In a scholarly analysis of the Ottoman environment across the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, Krstić (2011:27) defines Islamisation as the transformative process by which the Islamic religious heritage assumed a significant role inside the Ottoman state. The primary focus lies not on the conversion to Islam, but rather on the implementation of Islamic standards within a wider framework encompassing politics, society, and culture. In this context, the term “Islamisation” may be understood as the expansion of Islamic institutions, such as the implementation of Islamic law and the growth of urban areas, inside already established Muslim communities (Gomez-Rivas 2015:20-73).

The term “Islamisation” is also employed by various scholars to denote the manifestation of Islamic culture in a particular region, as evidenced by the establishment of mosques and other distinctively Muslim structures, such as madrasas. Additionally, it encompasses the assimilation, translation, or modification of Arabic religious texts, including the Quran, its exegetical tradition, and the hadith. According to Halevi (2004:121-124), it is paradoxical that certain indicators of Islamisation may contradict a rigid conservative understanding of Islam. According to Halevi (2004:123), the use of tombstones bearing Quranic verses can serve as a valuable means of determining the timeframe during which Islam expanded in the seventh and eighth centuries. However, it is worth noting that early Muslim academics expressed disapproval towards the practice of employing such graves, as they perceived them to be a departure from Islamic traditions. It should be acknowledged that Islamisation is frequently interconnected with additional phenomena of cultural and linguistic transformation, namely Arabisation. Additionally, in subsequent eras of

Islamic development, the emergence of various vernacular languages and the corresponding formation of ethnic identities, such as Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and Malay, have been closely linked to this process. Unsurprisingly, throughout the context of Egypt, it is noteworthy that Arabic completely supplanted the indigenous language, Coptic, with the oral usage of the latter gradually diminishing, likely by the fourteenth century. Similarly, throughout North Africa, Arabic appears to have swiftly displaced Latin as the predominant written language, although its prevalence in spoken discourse may have varied. However, it is important to note that Arabisation was not an unavoidable outcome. In the case of Iran, the process of Islamisation did not lead to the elimination of the Persian language. Instead, it resulted in the emergence of a new form of Persian, which was written using the Arabic script and incorporated a considerable amount of Arabic vocabulary (Peacock 2017:3-4).

Moreover, the establishment of God's dominion was a primary goal of the process of Islamization, which also made use of the notion of jihad. Jihad, as mandated by the Quran, was frequently used by rulers as a legal need to legitimise their military campaigns, even in instances where the conflicts included fellow Muslims. During the Abbasid era, periodic military campaigns were conducted in Byzantine Anatolia. However, it is important to note that these expeditions primarily served as raiding missions, which were justified under the concept of jihad. The primary objectives of these campaigns did not involve territorial acquisition or the conversion of the Christian inhabitants residing in the targeted regions. Even in cases where these campaigns achieved more enduring benefits, the objective of conversion was not pursued or achieved, as evidenced by the continued presence of sizable Christian populations in the Balkans, regions that came under Ottoman control through campaigns justified as jihad. Similarly, the overwhelming non-Muslim population in India further illustrates this point. The lack of jihad as a significant role in the process of conversion is evident in contemporary scholarly discourse. Indeed, numerous Muslim exegetes have placed significant emphasis on the concept of the "greater jihad," which pertains to the internal struggle against one's self. However, it is important to note that the notion of jihad as warfare against non-Muslims was also deemed a legal obligation under normative texts. Nevertheless, there existed some divergence of opinion regarding whether this obligation was exclusively defensive or encompassed offensive actions as well. However, it should be noted that the ultimate goal of jihad, in theory, was to expand Islamic governance over the entire Dār al-Ḥarb, which refers to the non-Muslim world,

and integrate it into the Dār al-Islām, or the Islamic world. This integration would entail the implementation of God's law. It is important to clarify that this objective did not necessarily involve the conversion of entire populations or individuals, as non-Muslims were recognised within Islam as *dhimīs*³³, also known as *ahl al-dhimma*, which translates to “protected peoples” (Lassner 2012:175-92; Glenn 2007:2018-219).

Arab nations exhibit several resemblances in their language planning strategies, akin to those observed in other developing nations. However, a distinctive characteristic distinguishes them: the Arabic language serves as a vessel for a significant civilizational and religious heritage and is regarded by its speakers as the medium through which divine revelation is conveyed. The rich historical legacy of this culture, characterised by its remarkable contributions to literature and science, facilitates the process of modifying the language to suit the requirements of contemporary communication. Moreover, this adaptation is imbued with intense emotions and symbolic significance. My argument asserts that the Arabic language is inseparable from the Islamic cultural and religious legacy. The historical relationship between Arabic and Islam is deeply interconnected since they are closely associated with the Arab consciousness due to a strong conviction in the sacredness and divine nature of the language designated by God for communication with humanity. The Arab Islamic movement in colonial Algeria placed significant emphasis on the instruction of classical Arabic as the exclusive method for inculcating Islamic principles and countering Western influences. According to Yefsah (1990:366), a 1936 exhortation by Mubarek El Mili, one of the leaders of the movement, addresses the Algerian community and says “O Algerian community! Come back to your religion and to your language. Your happiness comes from your religion, and this happiness will only be possible through a perfect mastery of your language.”

³³ *Dhimīs* are Non-Muslims who lived in Islamic states and enjoyed the protection of the law were referred to as dhimmis in the past. The term refers to the state's obligation under sharia to protect the individual's life, property, and freedom of religion in exchange for loyalty to the state and payment of the jizya tax. This is in contrast to the zakat, which is an obligatory alms payment made by the Muslim subjects. The word literally means “protected person.” If a Dhimmi paid the poll tax and was otherwise treated equally according to the rules governing property, contracts, and obligations, then they were excused from some responsibilities that were only applicable to Muslims.

The strategy of Arabization is primarily a cultural endeavour, focusing on the promotion and preservation of a fictional Arab-Islamic civilisation rather than the culture of a specific nation. Despite the abundance of allusions to the “Algerian nation” and the “Algerian people,” it is noteworthy that official Algerian publications about cultural affairs always exclude any mention of “Algerian culture,” instead consistently evoking the supra-national Arab-Islamic religious symbol. Within this particular tradition, it is observed that language, religion, and culture are interconnected and interdependent components of a unified system. Consequently, every discussion about one of these elements inherently involves the simultaneous consideration of the other two. This assertion holds across the Arab world. It is crucial to acknowledge that Arabization and Islamization, which involve the revitalization and heightened emphasis on Islamic culture and symbolism, are strategies that complement and mutually reinforce each other in Arab states.

According to Sanson (1985:86), the Algerian setting is characterised by a policy that combines Arabization and Arabism, which is fundamentally rooted in religious factors. Within the Algerian communal consciousness, there exists a strong association between Islam and the Arabic language. According to the 1986 National Charter, Arabic is recognised as “the language of the Quran” and hence serves as the primary language of Islam. Simultaneously, Arabic serves as the linguistic medium through which a tradition, history, culture, and civilization find their expression. Being a Muslim entails having a distinct connection to the Arabic language, encompassing not just the language used in the Quran but also the many varieties of Arabic that have served as vehicles for the spreading of Islam around the globe.

It should be noted that the objectives of Arabisation initiatives have not consistently aimed at the promotion of Islamic culture and religion. Secular revolutionary governments, such as Nasse’s dictatorship in Egypt, the Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq, and the FLN regime in Algeria, have prioritised the process of Arabisation while downplaying the religious aspect. However, it is worth noting that according to Merad (1981a) and Dessouki (1987), even these political systems attempt to validate key elements of their ideology, such as social justice, egalitarianism, communal solidarity, and the sanctity of human life, by drawing on Islamic principles. The proponents emphasise the historical and cultural dimensions of Islamic culture as the foundation of Arab society, however, they tend to maintain a steadfast focus on these allusions within a historical context. These governments, characterised by their modern,

secular, and Western orientation towards national development, have placed significant emphasis on the revolutionary significance of Arabisation as a means to counter imperialism and foster national independence and unity.

Interestingly, some of the sentiments mentioned above are shared among Zulu Muslims who believe that the primary objective of the Islamic revival is deliberately not focused on proselytising non-Muslims to adopt Islam. The new Zulu converts to Islam undergo a series of lectures on the Islamic creed, and the aim is to foster a more profound understanding of Islamic principles and cultivate a greater sense of Islamic identity among Zulu Muslims. Additionally, it sought to subject the practise of true Islam among all Muslims and equip them for the *dawah* project. The Islamic objective among Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal is to train converts to obtain a deeper understanding of Islam and to fully embrace Islamic identity. The Muslim world has the desire to implement Islamic law because they are convinced that Islam is meant for all mankind and therefore all people and nations should embrace Islam or accept subordinate status (Barr & Govindasamy 2010:293-311). The Zulu Muslim Ulamas were adamant that Zulu Muslims are not a separate community from the Muslim world hence they highly esteem the teachings of other Ulamas around the globe.

3.2 Reconsidering Zulu Conversion Narratives to Islam

At this point, if one encounters challenges in identifying a more suitable term to depict the transition from one religious belief system to another, it is necessary to acknowledge that the term 'conversion' encompasses a vast array of experiences. These experiences span from a comprehensive alteration of a convert's life, involving a sincere renunciation of their previous faith and the adoption of an entirely new repertoire of social customs – encompassing attire, dietary habits, and even language – to what certain scholarly works have characterised as 'adhesion' or 'syncretism'. In the latter case, existing religious and social practises are not entirely forsaken, but rather supplemented by new ones³⁴. Scholars occasionally disregard the latter form of

³⁴ Devin DeWeese, *Islamisation and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 26 (original emphasis). See also Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 177–80.

conversion, perceiving it as less genuine and potentially driven by practical motives. However, focusing on the internal intellectual dimensions of the conversion process risks succumbing to the tendency to apply assumptions derived from the Christian context. Devin DeWeese (1994:26) has pointed out that:

The Islamic perspective posits that adherence to formal and external expressions of Muslim religious duties, as prescribed by God and demonstrated by the Prophet, can potentially facilitate the transmission of divine grace. This transmission is crucial in redirecting the individual's soul towards God and instigating a transformative shift in their inner disposition. Consequently, from an Islamic standpoint, the notion of a purely superficial or external adoption of Islam is deemed non-existent.

Therefore, it may be argued that all forms of conversion, regardless of their superficial or formulaic nature, are considered real. Hence, the phrase 'conversion' remains applicable within the framework of Islam, despite the absence of a precise vocabulary counterpart in classical Arabic. However, it is important to acknowledge that its usage does not always denote a complete and immediate renunciation of prior practises and beliefs. From a theological standpoint, the act of embracing Islam is characterised by a straightforward procedure, wherein the individual is just required to affirm the *shahada* (the fundamental conviction that 'there is no deity but God, and Muhammad is His Messenger') on three occasions while being seen by properly qualified witnesses. Nevertheless, there were instances where the process saw a noticeable transition towards a more structured and regulated approach.

The term "convert," etymologically derived from the notion of "turning around" or "turning over," encompasses more than just an abrupt religious transformation. It encompasses a comprehensive renunciation of a prior cultural identity and a purposeful embrace of a different one. According to Eaton (2017:382), several Sufi groups advocated a fourfold progression in the mystical development of Islam, including the phases of Islamic law (*sharia*), spiritual path (*ṭarīqa*), true knowledge (*mu'ārafa*), and true truth (*ḥaqīqa*) (). These orders primarily aimed to steer their followers towards surpassing the initial phase of mere adherence to sharia, therefore facilitating their spiritual growth and enlightenment. The principal objective of their mission was to facilitate the progression of those who were already adherents of Islam towards the advanced levels of their spiritual journey, rather than focusing on converting new individuals to the faith. Therefore, the hypothesis that the process of

Islamisation was primarily driven by social freedom, such as the peaceful preaching practises of Sufis, or by governmental and military pressure, is insufficient in providing a comprehensive explanation. The nomenclature choices made by the parents indicate a progressive assimilation within an Islamic cultural framework. According to Bulliet (1979:49)³⁵, the act of parents choosing names for their children can be attributed to a primary goal of either showcasing or concealing their affiliation with a certain social group. Parents typically exhibit reluctance to bestow names onto their offspring which has the potential to subject them to social exclusion. In essence, the process of naming numerous parents may be regarded as a reflection, often subconsciously, of their perception of the societal context in which they find themselves at a given moment.

The depth of dedication to the newly adopted faith among the Zulus and the impact of religious syncretism on their self-identification as Muslims continue to be subjects of ongoing scholarly discussion. However, notwithstanding the inherent subjectivity involved in evaluating the extent of “Islamisation,” it is evident that, as DeWeese (1994:26) suggests, the agents or “vectors” of Islamisation and the conditions that enable religious transformation were influenced by several causes. The available information indicates that certain groups are through a process of conversion and adopting Islam, while others continue to adhere to traditional Zulu rituals and beliefs. The Zulu Muslims who embraced Islam were motivated by their activism and dissatisfaction with a repressive government, strategically leveraging their conversion (or lack thereof) for political advantage when deemed suitable. This does not imply that their conversions lacked sincerity, but rather that they assumed prominent roles as the public representatives of specific influential factions within the Zulu Muslim realms.

At the start of his *dawah*, the Prophet embarked on the initial phase of propagating Islam by cultivating individuals who would serve as exemplars of the faith, akin to living embodiments of the Quran traversing the terrestrial realm. Wherever they travelled

³⁵ See R. W. Bulliet, ‘Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of Muslim Society in Iran’, in N. Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1979), p. 43.

globally, they exemplified a distinctive illustration of an exceptional cultural lifestyle. When folks witnessed the embodiment of this distinctive way of life in sincere and devout individuals, they wholeheartedly embraced this religious faith and converted to Islam in large numbers. The devout adherent of Islam firmly believes that confidence in the divine will and predestination of Allah is a fundamental tenet. Regardless of the circumstances that befall an individual, it is believed that they are predetermined by Allah and so cannot be prevented. The individual's embrace of the divine will and decree will result in a significant recompense bestowed upon them by Allah, who will acknowledge their status as a prosperous and dutiful adherent. Individuals who possess a profound sense of devotion and reverence for Allah are less likely to succumb to complacency. Those individuals who disregard the precepts and guidance of Allah are the ones who will deviate from the right path. The devout Muslim's innermost being is consistently driven to engage in acts of repentance and actively pursue pardon.

Furthermore, they find immense joy in adhering to divine instructions, as well as in experiencing the satisfaction derived from pleasing Allah. The primary focus of a Zulu Muslim individual should be on satisfaction and devotion to Allah. When examining the Islamic perspective on disobedience towards parents, a shift away from the directives emphasising compassion and respect towards parents reveals teachings that are intended to prompt reflection and rectification of behaviour in the rebellious kid. The act of defying one's parents may be compared to the concept of shirk, whereas demonstrating compassion and respect towards them is associated with the belief in Allah. The act of defying one's parents is seen as a grave transgression, which devout Muslims are apprehensive of doing due to its potential to lower their spiritual merits. This transgression is widely acknowledged as one of the most severe crimes within the Islamic faith. Narrated Abu Bakra:

Allah's Messenger said thrice, "Shall I not inform you of the biggest of the great sins?" We said, "Yes, O Allah's Messenger" He said, "To join partners in worship with Allah: to be undutiful to one's parents." The Prophet sat up after he had been reclining and added, "And I warn you against giving forged statement and a false witness; I warn you against giving a forged statement

and a false witness.” The Prophet kept on saying that warning till we thought that he would not stop³⁶.

To provide equitable treatment and mitigate any imbalances, Islamic teachings about filial relationships address the roles of both the mother and the father separately. As seen, when the individual approached to offer *bay'ah*³⁷ and commit to engaging in jihad, the Prophet said, “Do you have any surviving parents?”³⁸ This suggests that adherents of the Islamic faith are obligated to provide equitable treatment to both of their parents. In the same vein, Asma' was instructed to maintain communication with and provide assistance to her mother who adhered to polytheistic beliefs.

The diligent adherent of Islam ensures that he does not overlook the importance of alleviating the uniformity of everyday existence alongside his spouse, therefore including occasional moments of light-heartedness and amusement into their daily routine. By doing so, he emulates the actions of the Prophet, whose entire life serves as a paramount exemplar for individuals. Despite being consistently occupied with the formidable endeavour of establishing the fundamental principles of Islam and constructing the Muslim community. Despite his involvement in leading the Ummah, commanding the army in the war, and attending to various other responsibilities, he managed to prioritise his role as an exemplary husband to his wives. He consistently treated them with utmost care, displaying a pleasant demeanour and employing mild humour. The Zulu Ulama's emphasis on moral education signifies its alignment with the core principles of Islamic education since the primary and overarching objective of Islamic education is the cultivation of moral virtues and the nurturing of the human

³⁶ Narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari 5976, Book 78, Hadith 7, USC-MSA web (English) reference: Vol. 8, Book 73, Hadith 7

³⁷ The term *bay'ah* is a concept within Islamic language that refers to the act of taking an oath of allegiance to a leader. The practise in question has been historically attributed to the Islamic prophet Muhammad. The act of *Bay'ah*, in certain instances, involves the formalisation of a written agreement wherein representatives of the tribe pledge their allegiance to a leader, contingent upon the leader fulfilling specific obligations towards his constituents. This agreement establishes a mutual understanding that as long as the leader upholds these obligations, the subjects will keep their loyalty to him. The practise of *Bay'ah* continues to be observed in nations like as Saudi Arabia and Sudan. In the context of Morocco, the practise of *bay'ah* has significant importance as it serves as a fundamental pillar of the monarchy.

³⁸ In Sahih Muslim, Book : 32, Number 6186:

soul. Hence, every lesson must serve as a manifestation of moral instruction, irrespective of the subject matter, as ethical principles form the fundamental basis of Islamic education and its essence. Islamic education, in essence, starts from an internal perspective within the person, to foster a harmonious relationship between the Zulu Muslim and God, grounded in their emotional disposition. He demonstrates a devout commitment to his faith, perceiving the presence of God in his actions. Consequently, he does not rely on external guidance to navigate his path, since he possesses an inherent internal compass. Consequently, the individual refrains from engaging in theft not out of apprehension towards legal consequences such as imprisonment or arrest, nor out of concern for betraying their nation, but rather due to a profound reverence for higher power and a conscientious refusal to partake in any form of transgression, regardless of its magnitude.

3.3 Indigenisation of Islam

In this particular context, indigenisation refers to the imperative of presenting the Quran and Sunnah in a manner that is both pertinent and detached from the cultural milieu in which it is disseminated. This strategy aims to enable those who adhere to a particular faith to refrain from conforming to the norms and values of a foreign culture, to be recognised as a faithful practitioner of Islam. The indigenisation strategy offers advantages by fostering a sense of familiarity among individuals in terms of worship practises, music, dancing, and attire, thus creating a cultural environment that promotes a sense of belonging. This technique aims to discourage the indigenous Zulu population from entering the masjid and experiencing a sense of being in Saudi Arabia or Mecca. In this context, indigenisation refers to the process of incorporating Islam into a varied culture and language, such as in South Africa.

A group of Zulu Ulamas advocate for a “cultural approach” and assert that “indigenous Islam,” which refers to Islam practised in Zulu cultural traditions, is as valid as orthodox Islam. The Zulu Muslims are cautious in their efforts to indigenise Islam, ensuring that they do not distort the religion through syncretistic practices. The Zulu Muslims firmly rejected the transnational Arabising trends and emphasised that their identity is rooted in locally developed traditions of Islamic education and observance. The Zulu proponents of Islam do not suggest that this is a form of Islam that originated in KwaZulu-Natal without any foreign influences. Instead, it acknowledges that Islam initially assumed a structured and systematised shape within Arab-speaking

communities. However, as it expanded to other regions, it assimilated local characteristics to engage with other cultural frameworks. The fundamental tenets and ceremonial activities exhibit minimal divergence, however, they are ingrained within more extensive local customs that can significantly differ across different locations. There is no inherent justification to regard Arab culture as a preferable conduit for Islamic ideals. According to the idea, other cultures are equally valid conduits of Islam. The presence of Islam in KwaZulu-Natal is the outcome of long-term engagement between the dissemination of Islamic teachings and the indigenous cultures of the region. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that Islamic propagation was also manifested in diverse cultural forms. The borrowing process was discerning, as only novel components that were coherent within the framework of Zulu culture were assimilated. Furthermore, numerous of these borrowed parts were imbued with a unique modification. The mosque located in Langaville, Brakpan, incorporates African art design, distinguishing it as a unique Muslim place of worship that evokes a sense of proximity rather than a distant location.



Figure 1: MUSJID AL-YASEEN in Langaville, Brakpan.

3.4 Summary

Further research is required to fully understand the impact of this internal avenue of Islamisation. However, it has expanded the range of potential avenues for obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of the process of Islamisation within African soil. The decision to embrace Islam does not inherently necessitate the abandonment of one's cultural identity. However, the devout adherent of Islam consistently demonstrates a state of contentment in embracing the divine will and decree of Allah. Such an individual willingly pursues to please Allah, even if it entails the potential disapproval or rejection by others. In turn, Allah safeguards and shields them from any harm that may arise from such disapproval. However, individuals who prioritize

pleasing others over pleasing Allah run the risk of being forsaken by Allah and left to the mercy of the people. The Zulu Muslims exhibit a prevalent mindset that motivates them to adhere to Allah's designated language (Arabic) and, to some extent, Arabo-Islamic culture. The concept of intentional cultivation of cultural diversity by the messenger of Allah is well recognised, with the endorsement of this idea within the Islamic tradition. The application of the Quran and the *Sunnah* provides a direct method for assessing cultural practices to identify parts that may be incongruent with the principles and values of Islam. The integration of one's unique cultural identity with the Islamic faith has a beneficial impact on the general well-being of an individual who has just embraced the practice of Islam.

CHAPTER 4

The advent of Islam in KZN and its impact on the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious status.

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will largely be concerned with the arrival of Islam in KZN and partially deal with Muslims' involvement in the social and political sphere. The emphasis will be on the history of Islam and Muslim socio-economical as well as political struggle for liberation. The researcher will expand on how Islam arrived in KwaZulu-Natal, and this will include a brief account of how Islam immersed itself in localised religious debates that were largely influenced by the writings and speeches of Ahmed Deedat (Sadouni 2007b).

This study posits to examine the changes, challenges, and choices that Indian Muslims had to embrace while attempting to practice and spread the religion of Islam during the colonial era. The researcher will also write about the negotiations that took place between Muslims and non-Muslim Africans, Whites, and Indians concerning the impact caused by the changing economic and political status and how it affected religious beliefs and practices.

4.1 The Arrival of Islam in KwaZulu-Natal

The British colonial regime was the reason for the arrival of Islam in KwaZulu-Natal during the 19th century. However, in the Cape (which is now known as Cape Town) expression of diverse Islamic beliefs and practices was evident during the 17th and 18th centuries as a result of the residential integration and geographical origin. This phenomenon was also evident in KwaZulu-Natal as Muslims came from diverse regions. The arrival of Islam especially in Cape Town can be ironically attributed to Dutch colonialism during the 17th century. The Dutch Reformed Church from the outset was the only tolerated church denomination and retained its status as the official state religious practice (Botha 1962:180). Some of the Muslim community in KwaZulu-Natal are the descendants of traders, indentured labourers, soldiers, and slaves that were primarily from East Africa and South and North India (Dangor 1997). The British colonial regime had a shortage of labour workers in the agricultural sector in KwaZulu-Natal, therefore to compensate for the shortage of labourers the Indian indentured labourers were brought to KwaZulu-Natal in November of 1860. The indentured Indian

labourers represented their distinct culture and religious views. The majority of the Indian indentured labourers were Hindus with the minority being Muslims and Christians. Nonetheless, since 1869 there was another group of Indian traders who paid for their passage and preferred to be called Arabs, as they wanted to claim an identity that was different from the despised Indian indentured labourers. The Indian traders from North India had a main goal which was to trade as soon as they arrived in KwaZulu-Natal. They started trading through the shops that they opened in the towns near coal mines, rural towns, Zulu tribal areas, and some of the white-developed shopping centres (Naudè 1985).

The Indian Muslims, who were pioneer traders or indentured workers, arrived in KwaZulu-Natal from 1860 to 1911. Indian Muslims were not visible in the studies done on the discourse of sociological or historical analyses, their presence was vaguely accounted for in monographs, and they were found in a few works of theological debates. The Indian Muslims could not feature in sociological and historical analysis records because all Indians under the apartheid regime had to be studied as those who belonged to the oppressed community, irrespective of whether some of the Indian Muslims were pioneer traders (Kuper 1960; Meer 1969).

The migration of indentured Indians lasted between the years 1860 and 1911 which caused an intake of about 152, 641 Indians to live in KwaZulu-Natal. The number of Muslims among the indentured Indians was about 7-10 per cent of the population (10,000-15000 of the total number of Indians). In the work of Arkin (1981:36) the estimated population of Indian Muslims was not more than 5% of approximately 108,000 of the total number of indentured workers between 1860 and 1911. The population of Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal (previously known as Natal) could have not increased had they not experienced an influx of Muslim Indian 'traders' who started to arrive in KwaZulu-Natal around 1870. The Indian Muslims who volitionally travelled to KwaZulu-Natal were allowed until the laws regarding the Immigration Act prohibited any entries for Indian passengers during the year 1891 (Arkin 1981:36).

The indentured Muslims did not have similar upbringings but were characterised by diverse religious traditions, languages, ethnicity, caste, and culture because migrants were recruited from different parts of India. The indentured Muslims were probably recruited from the south of India, especially Malabar and Hyderabad. It seems unlikely based on the economic and social status that there was very much difference between indentured Muslims and other indentured Indians who were non-Muslims because

indentured Indian Muslims formed part of the general Indian labourers that developed KwaZulu-Natal. There is evidence that some of the indentured Muslims were placed and settled in Hindu communities. This geographical location of indentured Indian Muslims affected their views on the issues of religion as they interacted with the Hindu community. Kramer (2000:57) elucidates why Indian Muslim traditions and beliefs are not timeless and uniform. He proposes that the historians must not treat Islam as a:

distinct and homogeneous entity that is essentially defined by normative texts, i.e., the Quran as a divine word and the Sunna, as the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. For the unreformed orientalist, Muslims are sufficiently defined by their being Muslim. Little does it matter whether they live in Kuala Lumpur, Cairo or Karachi. They are overdetermined by Islam... Scholars now insist on the openness of historical processes that are neither linear nor homogeneous, focusing on countervailing forces to megatrends such as industrialisation, modernisation or globalisation. They highlight intra-cultural variation rather than uniformity, intra-societal conflict rather than harmony, fragmentation rather than coherence.

Kramer (2000:57-8) probes the crux in which one can deduce that Muslims also wrestled with the ills and made close friends with people of other religions. Muslims sometimes celebrated Hindu festivals which was an act condemned by the traditional Ulama. Several Muslims attended the festival of Diwali in the year 1911 and among them were M.C Anglia, Dawad Mahomed, and Ismail Gora. Dawad Mahomed thought of the festival of Diwali as “happy gatherings” and unity between Muslims and Hindus “an excellent thing” (*Indian opinion* 21 October 1911). Omar Jhaveri, was closely involved in local politics as a Muslim and during the dinner that was held to bid him farewell before his departure to India because of his ill-health, he had attendees who were Muslim, Christian, and Hindu elites. A noteworthy point is that, as stated by Vahed (2000:74), A Christopher delivered a speech discussing Mr Jhaveri, in which he expressed the belief that Jhaveri, “bore testimony to his (Mr Jhaveri’s) catholicity of spirit in the community life of the Indian in his country, making no distinction against any of his countrymen on the grounds of religion and working for the upliftment of them all” (*Indian opinion* 2 September 1914).

During the mid-1870s Gujarat traders from the west coast of India migrated to KwaZulu-Natal volitionally and paid for their travelling expenses. The traders were mostly Muslims, even though the exact number cannot be certain, the Wragg

Commission, however, estimated them to be about one thousand during 1887. On the other hand, Maureen Swan (1985:2) stated that the number of Indian traders can be estimated to have been around two thousand from 1890 to 1910.

As per a census of 1904, the number of Indians who were Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal was about 9,992 (9.901%) of 100,918, and 72% of the population were males. The majority of Muslim traders were constantly conflated with 'Arabs' due to the Middle Eastern type of dress code. The Indian Muslim traders emphasised a distinction between them and other groups such as Arabs and indentured Indians to obtain equality with whites as per Queen Victoria's 1858 Proclamation which granted equality to those who were British subjects (Bhana & Brain 1990:65). Richard Alexander (1885) posited that the Arabs only associated themselves with Indians under the condition that they had to trade with them.

The Muslim traders in Natal did not pay attention to building a broader Muslim community. They were mostly concerned with the protection of their political and economic rights and forging some type of class alliance with counterparts like Hindu traders. The Indian traders gradually became a threat due to their dominance in the local trade and that provoked white people to be hostile (Wragg Commission). Natal's self-government was achieved based on the 1893 laws that were passed to control Indian permission to trade and took away the right for Indians to vote during the local/municipal elections. The 1893 laws imposed a serious regulation of Indian migration or entry into the province of Natal. In reaction to the restriction imposed on Indian traders caused them to form a party called Natal Indian Congress in August of 1894. The Natal Indian Congress (NIC) strategy was primarily recognisable as constitutional and had strong control of Indian politics. The six presidents from the inception of the party in 1894 and 1913 were prominent merchants who identified as Muslim (Bhana 1997:12).

The NIC served as a means for the Indian elite to safeguard their political and economic interests as they felt pressured by the apartheid regime. Surti and Memon³⁹ egregiously disagreed based on religious matters but worked together in their

³⁹ Surti's identified as Sunnis from the branch of Hanafi and were heavily influenced by the reform movement in the nineteenth century. In 1899 the Surti's were reported to be "rapidly shedding remnants of Hindu practices as a result of the activity of missionaries" (*Gazetteer* 1899:61). While Memons' origin is believed to be from Baghdad and Sayad Kadiri is the person

political affairs because of their shared class interests. In social and political spheres Muslim traders did mingle with Hindu counterparts instead of associating with the Muslim working class. This is evident as Muslims would attend the festivals of Diwali that were hosted by middle-class Hindus. During the year 1907 Hindu traders arranged a Diwali festival that was hosted at a place which belonged to Abdul Latif, a Muslim, which was also attended by people who were non-Hindus such as Dada Osman and Sheth Rustomjee (*Indian Opinion* 16 November 1911).

The attitude of Muslim traders limited their relationship with indentured Muslims to be mainly about economic gains, and as a result, caused the *African Chronicle*⁴⁰ to scold traders for “hugging to themselves the delusion that their fate is not bound up with the ordinary labourer... many of traders were indifferent to the sufferings of the labouring class.”

Similar tendencies were displayed among the working class who shared a historical background with indentured workers whether Muslims or Hindus become visible. Muslims and Hindus were the majority group that was recruited to work on farms. They were recruited from the same regions of India, shared the same local traditions in India, spoke the same languages, and shared the same backgrounds as peasants, artisans, tenant farmers, and farm workers. The behaviour of the Muslim working class in Natal did not differ from that of the Hindu counterparts. Indian Immigrants and Magistrates' Reports in Protector files⁴¹ demonstrate with literal examples where Muslims were found guilty of assault, rape, theft, and other criminal activities. The reports of Muslims committing illegal activities succinctly demonstrate that indentured Muslims and traders came to Natal for different reasons, from different economic and social backgrounds. They diversely developed themselves within the local apartheid

responsible for their existence. Sayad Kadiri is regarded as the fifth offspring from the lineage of Abdul Kadir Jailani. Memons believe that Sayad Kadiri in 1421 had an encounter where he was ordered in a miraculous dream to travel to Sindh and lead the people of Sindh to Islam, and his message caused a blessing which has made them to be successful in their trading business (*Gazetteer* 1899:50ff).

⁴⁰ *African Chronicle*, 14 October 1914.

⁴¹ A Protector was appointed to address issues pertaining to Indian Immigrants, but indentured Indians later contested the office of the Protector because they believed it was powerless office as the protector was employed by white people.

regime, which fundamentally affected their understanding of the world as well as their practice of Islam. It is not far-fetched to assume at this point that one of the reasons why the early spread of Islam among the Zulu people was hindered was because of the rural/urban dichotomy and the failure of Arabs and Indian Muslims to relate with the Zulu people (see chapter 4). Indian Muslim society was dominated by elites in Natal and fragmented by the cleavages according to class, language, variance in time of migration, and districts of origin. The differences in the belief, and practice of Islam were not superficial even in definitions concerning the “true” Islam. The Islamic identities remained in tension because of the problem of proclaiming a transcendental Islamic identity, that is, objectively pointing to the true Islam identity without any pushback from other Muslims (Vahed 2000:75).

The Indian Muslims had a concoction of identities which made it impossible to assert a definition that can be considered as transcendental Islamic identity. Indian Muslims had reduced or interpreted Islamic identity to relate to their class, language, religion, and ethnicity. The most crucial identity for them within the political sphere was their race rather than religious affiliation because race was the focal point of the apartheid regime. It would be unfair to indict Indians in Natal for embracing “Indianness” to repel white supremacist rule. However, that might have caused Indian Muslims to perceive themselves as the opposition party against whites and the Zulu people of Natal (Bhana 1997). The formation of the Indian community is a complex historical construction fashioned by disparate and dispossessed people. There was a constant struggle between Indians, Whites, and Africans in Natal. Even the economic privilege that Indian traders thought they could safeguard their interests against all odds was neutralised by racist policies. The racist policies were put in place and led to the relegation of traders into the same condition as workers in terms of their classification as Indians. Therefore, this form of hostility led to a political makeover that forced a “made-in-Natal” consciousness. This was pointed out by Imam Bawazeer on his departure to the shores of India in 1915:

We are all Indians in the eyes of the Europeans in this country. We have never drawn distinctions between Mahomedans and Hindus in public matters. Mahomedans, like the Hindus, look upon India as our Motherland, and so is it a matter of fact, and when it is a matter of serving India, we must set aside any differences and be united (Indian Opinion 3 December 1915).

It is worth noting how Gujarat Muslims were willing to associate themselves with Gujarat Hindus compared to the indentured Indian Muslims. The Muslim traders lived as those who belonged to a 'high class.' George Mutukistna, who was a free Indian, testified before the Wragg Commission suggesting that the caste system was "kept up by Indian merchants, who think themselves better because they are rich and think that, by observing caste distinctions, they can set themselves apart from the Natal Indian people" (Wragg Commission 1885:393). Muslim traders were more endogamous and desisted from intermarrying with indentured Muslims background who were notoriously called "Calcutteas", Calcutta which was one of the ports that were used for the indentured Indians' departure to Natal.

4.2 Islam and Rituals Syncretism

It is demonstrably true that Islam during the 17th and 18th centuries had early expressions that revealed syncretism in the practices and rituals adopted by Muslims. The rites of passage performed by Muslims reveal how Islam expresses the influence of other cultures and religions. Muslims carried their newborn infants on a tray which was decorated with flowers and a crow-foot similar to insignia on the infant's forehead. This was a ceremony associated with Hindus and well-known among them as *doopmal*, a practice adopted by Muslims (Davids 1978:12).

Muslims have a formal ceremony for naming their newborn babies that occurs in the mosque seven days after birth where the *imam* would name the infants. This practice of the *imam* naming the infants in the mosque is not unique to Islam but was adopted. There is no dispute that the origin of the name-giving ceremony is found in the rite of baptism among South African Christians (Mayson 1861:24).

In the 19th and during the early 20th century Muslims were possibly influenced by African Gamuzi rite as Muslims gave a special rule for female circumcision. This is not to deny the fact that Muslims practised male circumcision, which has been universally practised among all Muslims (Shell 1983:15).

When a Muslim child completes Islamic primary education, a ceremony called *tamat* is held to celebrate their completion of the Quran. The child as a 'graduate' had to put on an Arabian attire and the girls and boys of his age accompanied him during the march to the mosque, all were dressed for the ceremony. Upon the arrival at the mosque the child was tested based on the knowledge he acquired from the elementary Islamic principles and the ability to recite the Quran and the *imam* was invited to

facilitate and adjudicate the examination. When the ceremony celebration was complete it was followed by a feast that occurred at the home of a graduate (Davids 1980:35-46). This type of ceremony is similar to the Christian confirmation rite for children.

The early Muslim marriage ceremonies reveal a distinct influence of Christian practices. Early Muslims adopted marriage procedures that were possibly performed by Christians such as placing a mirror behind the bride and placing a veil over her head, and a crown on top of her head. In the 19th century, there was a report about a Muslim bride who attended a marriage (*nikah*) ceremony that occurred at the mosque, much in the manner of the Christian marriage that is officiated in the church building (Shell 1983:26-27).

4.3 Understanding the Condition of Indentured Indians and Islam

The Indian indentured labourers signed a five-year contract as an agreement to work for their allocated employer. Writers such as Henning (1993) and Swan (1985) addressed the horrific conditions that Indian indentured labourers were subjected to. According to Swan (1985:26), an assertion can be made that “there is a solid weight of evidence in the Protector’s files to suggest that overwork, malnourishment, and squalid living conditions formed the pattern of daily life for most agricultural workers.” Indian indentured Muslims had to wait for long periods first at the depot in India and then again in Natal, as immigrants were inspected, making it impossible for them to practice their daily rituals and rules that are part of their Islamic religion (Buijs 1992:7). Thus, the indentured Muslims continued to display an Islamic awareness even when the condition was not favourable for the practising Muslims.

The indentured Muslims valued the Muharram festival as a religious activity commemorating the death of Imam Hussain who was known as a martyr. Imam Hussain died on the battlefield and was understood to be the grandson of Muhammad (the prophet of Islam), and his martyrdom commemoration was observed during the first month in the Islamic calendar, which is the tenth month of Muharram. On the other hand, the indentured Indians who were Hindus also participated in large numbers. In 1910 an Annual Report was written by Deputy Protector Dunning who noted that the commemoration festival was “always attended by Hindu indentured workers although is it a Mohammedan occasion of mourning.” All indentured Indians were granted a three-day annual leave that they were entitled to according to law.

The preparation for the Muharram festival began two weeks before the actual dates because bamboo and the collection of other materials had to be prepared to build tazia⁴². Groups of people had to pull tazia by hand during the processions as they were singing songs in remembrance of Hussain, dancing wildly while beating on drums and carrying fighting sticks. During the festival of Muharram, there was a visible presence of the police because during the festival people often ended up fighting. Although there was strong disapproval for the Muharram festival from the middle-class Indians and the local state, it remained an integral part of Muslim indentured labourers and their descendants. This festival served as an opportunity to develop and express their identity within the local community. It played a vital role in bringing together indentured Indians and fostered a broad common identity, “Indianness”, in a similar sense as observed in both Whites and Africans (Vahed 2000:75).

4.4 Economic and Social Status of Indentured Indians

The economic status posed challenges for indentured Indian Muslims to practice many of the rituals required in the Islamic religion. The wide dispersion of indentured Indian Muslims made it difficult for them to establish mosques and other necessary structures for institutional Islam. Furthermore, the oppressive conditions associated with long hours of hard labour and meagre wages made it difficult to practice things like praying, fasting, or keeping the Eid festivals. The Protector files recorded 115 marriages between Hindus and Muslims between the years 1872 and 1887 (Wragg Commission 261). Hindus and Muslims were allocated work on the same plantations, lived in the same housing, encountered the same challenges, and dealt with the same systems that were both socially and economically oppressive. Islam experienced early growth due to the conversion of indentured labourers who viewed Islam as claiming a distinct identity in the face of economic and social exclusion by the Reformed Protestant Church. The indentured Indian labourers after they embraced Islam seem to have gained social support among other Muslims, although they preserved some of the customs and traditions that they practiced before their new identity or faith (Shell 1983:32).

⁴² Tazia: a replica of the tomb of Imam Hussain constructed in wood and covered in coloured paper and gold and silver tinsel. It was carried during the processions of the Shi’ite festival of Muharram.

The Muslims in Natal had to develop under conditions that caused two inescapable separate trajectories, that is, Indians believed that they had a duty to oppose both Whites and Africans. The Protector files and Resident Magistrates repeatedly report Muslims committing criminal acts and other acts that are considered sinful in Islam such as rape, adultery, desertion, and so on. Nevertheless, it is impossible to construct a narrative with certainty on what the indentured Muslim experience was like in Natal because of the obscure and unavailable oral history or contemporary records (Vahed 2000:71).

4.5 Urbanisation, Poverty and Community: Pre-apartheid South Africa, 1910-1948

In four decades important developments within the Indian world took place after 1910. Indians in Natal experienced rapid urbanisation, widespread poverty, formation of social welfare and education institutions that were established by Indian traders as means to safeguard their working-class counterparts. These developments brought by the Indian traders increased hostility between them and the state. The 1936 Population Census revealed that most Indians were Hindus and did not identify as Muslims. The total number of 81% of Indians in Natal were Hindu and about 14% of Indian Muslims lived in Natal according to the Population Census in 1936. Hindu Indians in Durban were about 70,272 (79.64%) and Muslims were roughly 13,009 (14.74%) out of 88,226 population of Indians in 1946 (SAIRR 1946). It is worth noting the possibility that people could have difficulty perceiving any distinction between the Muslim experience from that of an Indian because Muslims existed in Natal as Indians and that served as the primary identity for Indians in the public space.

The sources regarding the arrival of Islam reveal that Muslims experienced unfavourable conditions for them to establish any meaningful *dawah* projects during the early stage. The African labourer's availability rendered the need for Indians in mining, farming and the public sector superfluous. In July of 1911 indentured emigration was banned by the Indian Legislative Council, Employers decided to make use of African labour and the significant number of Indians in the Natal mining sector decreased. The number of Indians also decreased in the railways, in general farming, and on the sugar estates as per the rise of work allocated to African labourers. This prompted an urban ward migration as a result of the superfluous Indian labour. In the Durban area, the number of Indians gradually increased from 17,015 in 1911 to

123,165 in the year 1949. The Indians in Durban experienced an increase from 23% to 33% according to the Housing Survey (1952:35). Low pay and the issue of unemployment resulted in widespread poverty among Indians. The depression that occurred during 1929-1933 had a major role in causing extensive poverty as well as the White Labour Policy which exacerbated the situation. These events caused a drop in Indian employment within the municipality and in the industry. The overwhelming number of Muslims were descendants of indentured Indians, and as a result, they had to live in disadvantageous situations in the urban milieu.

It is evident how widespread poverty had permeated the everyday life of Indians in Durban. The survey conducted in 1941 revealed that in Clairwood about 36% of Indian families had debts, and 38% could barely manage to live through the month, while a minority of 26% could save their hard-earned money (Sykes 1941:54).

In 1943-1944 the University of Natal discovered that the Indian population of about 70.6% were living below what is deemed as the poverty datum line and 40% of Indians were destitute. Furthermore, the clothing industry conducted 6 years of study and informed the general public in 1944 that 90% of Indians were challenged by malnutrition (*Daily News* 8 June 1944). The poverty among Indians of Natal could be evident even in the diseases that afflicted them. A Medical Officer of Health, G.H. Gunn reported in 1935 outlining the cause of higher diseases and death rates among Indians was a result of "low standard of living conditions which poverty imposes upon those sections of the population; slum housing, overcrowding and defective nutrition combine to create a favourable climate for the spread of disease" (*Indian Opinion* 31 January 1936).

During the period of extensive poverty among Muslims, the government officials used their resources when they were repatriating Indians in Natal. In 1927 a conference took place in a round-table discussion between Indian and Imperial governments, within the South African context intending to introduce a system that could allow voluntary repatriation. An Agent had to be chosen by the Indian government to act as an overseer for the process of upliftment of those who remained behind (Pachai 1971:108).

The policy did not accomplish much as per the reluctant response of Indians to voluntarily repatriate. The response of the government on the social ills had nothing to offer in terms of improving the conditions of Indians. This was left in the hands of the private agencies managed by Indians. The Indian Muslim community had traders

who held prominent positions in a broad number of organisations in ethnic lines. For example, Haji Dawood Mohamed held a secretary position in the NIC party, trustee of the West Street Mosque, a member of the 1917 Floods Committee, as well as a member of the Rice Advisory Committee that was formed during the First World War rice shortages. When Haji Dawood Mohamed passed away, Muslims and Hindus decided to close their businesses for the day as a sign of respect. In a Hindu newspaper, the obituary was written by someone who succinctly stated that “his heart ever pulsated for the welfare of the entire Indian community. He was a truly and thoroughly patriotic man... his genuine ardent patriotic zeal to lift his compatriots ever commenced him to the community” (*Dharma Vir* 29 August 1919).

When Lakhi M.E. who was a Muslim trader who died in 1941 and was known for his intense involvement in community engagement, Sorabjee Rustomjee wrote a eulogy where he noted that “he knew no communalism. He was first and foremost an Indian and always an Indian...” There was a vast concourse of Parsee, Muslim, Christian, and Hindu Indians that followed his funeral and demonstrated the respect that Indians had for him (*Leader* 25 October 1941).

In 1903 M.A. Motala arrived in Natal from India and established a small business as a retailer, he later was among one of the richest traders before he died in 1957. M.A. Motala was heavily involved in projects that were geared towards elevating and promoting Indian well-being. He founded a school in 1922 for those children whose parents were workers of the Durban Corporation. In the year 1939 Motala founded M.A. Motala Boys Hostel close to Pinetown for Indian boys aged around twelve to eighteen who were regarded as delinquent. In the list of contributors to the Sastri College project, Motala was ranked as the second person among those who contributed the most. In 1945 he offered his land to the organisation that was known as the Natal Indian Blind Society to build a Home and Vocational Training Centre (Mahida 1993:68).

Advocate R.K. Khan was born in the area of Bombay in 1874 and was later enrolled for his studies in England, and in 1895 Gandhi brought him to South Africa. A hospital known as R.K. Khan was established through Khan’s philanthropic gesture, which became one of the health centres that treated many patients per year at their clinics located in Somerset Road, Sea Coe Lake, and Clairwood at the beginning of the mid-1930s. An approximate number of 43,917 Indians were offered free treatment in 1943 (*Leader* 6 February 1943).

Ambulance Corps allowed Khan to act as its leader during the Anglo-Boer war, he became a joint secretary with the NIC for several years until the time of his death in 1932. Khan had become a president of the Orient Club, a generous giver to most educational projects, and was a trustee in educational as well as of the Charity Trusts. He bequeathed a large sum of £40,000 to be dispensed to Indians and for building hospitals (*Indian Opinion* 14 October 1932).

Clinics were upgraded into full-functional hospitals, and one hospital was opened in Chatsworth in 1969, it consisted of facilities to train nurses and doctors, and venues to conduct medical research. M.L. Sultan was a Muslim who was born in Malabar which is South of India in 1973, he became significant because of his critical role in the education space. Sultan similarly came to Natal as other indentured workers in 1890. He was allocated work as a railway porter as an employee for Natal Government Railways. After he served his time as an indenture in 1895 his journey took him to Transvaal where he was later employed as a waiter. When Sultan's wife deceased in 1933, he decided to establish an Educational Trust and Mariam Bee Charitable in memory of his wife, A large sum of £100,000 was donated to promote education in spirituality, cultural, and economic activities within the Indian community in Natal 'irrespective of creed, religion, or caste' (*Leader* 27 August 1949).

Mulukmahomed Lappa (M.L.) Sultan in January of 1942 donated £17,500 which assisted in the development of the first tangible technical education within the Indian community. Sultan doubled his donation for the same course before he died in 1953. M.L Sultan Technical College played a vital educational role among Indians and was ranked as one of the largest Technikons in Southern Africa (Mahida 1993:81).

From the Muslim's perspective, there was no confusion about whether they were to prioritise religious training over secular education, as it was evident that religious education was a priority. All Muslims were supposed to receive formal religious training beginning at a young age at madrassahs connected to mosques. Durban Anjuman Islam School is an example of a school that was linked to the West Street Mosque which opened its doors in 1909 (*Indian Opinion* 5 February 1910). It was only a minority among Indians in Natal who had access to secular education. According to Bawa (1976), the first annual report of the Islamic council madrassahs around Durban taught Arabic, Gujarati, and Urdu as additional subjects to the central teachings on the tenets of Islam. The Stanger Madrassah enrolled 124 pupils and appointed three educators to teach them languages. In 1930, a small number of about 30.9% of

children in Indian homes attended school (Henning 1995:38). A.M. Moolla and A.I. Kajee were leaders who attempted to merge both secular and religious education in the periods of 1940s and 1950s as they opened the South Coast Madrassah State Aided School, Anjuman Islam State Aided School, Ahmedia State Aided Indian School, and Orient Islamic High School. This reveals how Muslim organisations and institutions were confined within the localised areas to care for Indians' parochial needs.

4.6 The Role Played by Muslim Organisations

Muslim organisations were intensely occupied by the need to elevate Indian Muslims from unfavourable living conditions. In April of 1943, the first Muslim organisation was formed, which was known as the Natal Muslim Council (NMC) and Advocate Ibrahim Bawa was the reason behind its formation. Advocate Ibrahim was born in 1915 in India and arrived in South Africa when he was only four years old. Bawa was enrolled at Wits University and completed his BA degree in 1938, which was very rare among the Indian community during that period. Subsequently, in 1941 Bawa's qualifications led him to England intending to serve as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn. Upon his return to Durban Bawa said that "he was struck by the lack of common vision and properly trained hafiz and ulama among Muslims," As a result he was committed to forming a specific organisation that would coherently deal with the needs of Muslims. Bawa collaborated with A.I. Kajee, who was a prominent and moderate Indian politician in the periods of the 1930s and 1940s. Bawa had travelled throughout the province of Natal in support of someone willing to speak with one voice for the Muslim community. Natal Muslim Council had become an umbrella for 22 organisations. The first meeting of the Executive Committee was formed and chaired by Bawa, comprising A.I. Kajee as the president, A.M. Moolla, M.A. Motala, E.I. Haffejee as well as A.B. Moosa as vice-presidents. The meeting only consisted of one Mawlana (a learned Indian Muslim scholar) on the committee and that was Mohammed Bashir Siddiqui. The people who attended the meeting were traders who participated in community and sports organisations. The focus of the Council was on culture, secular and Islamic education, propagation, finance, and social welfare (Interview 20 January 1999).

Natal Muslim Council consisted of two groups as it was dominated by professionals and traders, therefore, these two groups remained the voice for Muslims and demonstrated the lack of power concerning ulama (Muslim scholars trained in both

Islam and Islamic law). Muslim leaders occupied themselves with a gamut of activities from social welfare and sports to education. Mr. G.M.R., who was an informant as a regular attendee at West Street Mosque during the 1920s, notes that the decisions affecting Muslims were made by a prominent trader named E.M. Paruk. In the year 1949, a decision by the Durban City Council (DCC) led to the prohibition of slaughtering any animal in private areas during the Eid festival, which was a practised tradition by Muslims around Durban since 1860. The objection against Durban City Council by Muslims to what they considered as a plain attack on their religious freedoms, was ironically handled by trader elites and not by the relevant religious clergy. The division concerning this issue among Indian Muslims revealed their political interests. The people who preferred to sit down with DCC and negotiate were A.M. Molla and moderate traders. On the other hand, A.I. Meer and NIC which was known to be ANC-aligned called for a strike of the abattoir. They also instructed Muslims to offer their money to Muslims in India or Saudi Arabia to slaughter animals in the interim until the DCC revoked its prohibition to slaughter animals (*Indian Views* 5 October 1949).

The Durban City Council only overturned its position in 1953, this issue revealed that the leadership was held by the traders and not at the hands of the traditional ulama. The assumption that the ulama in their thinking were orthodox can be predicated on the little information that is known about them. This is precisely demonstrated by the ulama's attitude towards the reports of new moon sighting which determined that the day for Eid had come. On the 4th of November 1934, the verdict of the thirteen leaders⁴³ of ulama in Durban was unanimous on their stance that they held in not accepting any report of a new moon sighting via telegram, wireless message, or telephone. The new moon sighting reports had to be reported personally by the people who witnessed the event in question (*Indian Views* 7 November 1934).

⁴³ The thirteen Mawlans were Ahmed Mukhtar Siddiqui of Durban; Abdul Rehman Ansari, Pietermaritzburg; Abdus Samad of Durban; Mohamed Yousuf of mzinto; Sayyed-up-Haq of Verulam; Mahomed Abdul Kadir Afriki of Durban; Sayed Serfuddin of Durban; Abdul Karrim of South Coast junction; Hazrath-ud-Deen of Stanger; Abdul Vahed Punjabi of Durban; Sayed Abdul Kadir of Durban; Sulaman Mohammed Kafletvi of Durban and Mohamed Abdul Aleem Siddiqui of Durban.

The ulama who were formally trained held positions that offered little if no power at all, as they occupied positions on mosque committees as individual employees. The Indian immigration prohibition imposed by the government of South Africa in 1914 made it difficult to import religious educators. South African government made an exception only for a maximum of ten 'Exempted Educated Entrants' every year. The mosque committees would apply to the Immigration Department for permission to grant religious educators to come to South Africa. Successful applicants were permitted to come to South Africa for a probationary duration of 12 months which could be annually renewable. The Department of Immigration had to confirm that a person was permitted to travel to South Africa before they departed from India. In November 1917 Ahmed Mohammed Vahed and Moobin-ul-Hak travelled to Natal from India before their permission was confirmed by Immigration Department. G.W. Dick who was a Principal Immigration Officer in Natal did not allow them into South Africa, as a result, they were stranded in the area of Delagoa Bay. The permission for applicants was only granted based on the evidence that a suitable candidate for the job could not be found locally or nationally. Stanger Madrassah, as an example, advertised a post in an Indian newspaper that circulated in Natal for the replacement of Moulvi Matiola Amanulla after his death, but no person applied for the advertised position⁴⁴.

On the other hand, when West Street Mosque was looking for someone to educate Muslims and be their spiritual leader, they appointed Shaykh Saith Nagar from the Cape in May 1919. These India-educated ulama heavily relied on their employers concerning the renewal of their annual permission at the Immigration Department. In June 1917 West Street Mosque trustees had to appeal to the Minister of Interior for the renewal of the visiting pass of Tajammal Hoosen⁴⁵. The challenges for India-educated ulama were the inability to articulate a coherent argument due to their minimal command of English and could not to protect or protest for their interests to be met, hence, they were profusely dependent on their employers.

The religion of Islam in Natal was not taken seriously as a way of life by most Muslims because they were very broad-minded and tolerant even in their practice of Islam. Muslims were accused of embracing many practices that were associated with folk Islam adherents. This was the state of Islam in Natal as the majority of Muslims in

⁴⁴ SAR, BNS 902 N1675, 8 May 1926, Stanger Madrassah to Principal Immigration Officer.

⁴⁵ SAR, BNS 902 21/N461. 18 June 1917. E.M. Paruk to Minister of Interior.

Durban participated in festivals that were outrightly rejected as anti-Islamic by the traditional Ulama. Muharram festival was attended by Muslims and those who did not partake attended as observers. The Muharram was considered to be a festival contrary to the teachings of Islam, while Muslims had turned Muharram into a vital Islamic practice. In October of 1949, Essop Khan sent an application letter to hundreds of Muslims who would annually send their applications to organise the festival. Essop Khan sent a typical request to be permitted to host the festival of Muharram from the 18th to the 23rd of October. During the festival, Muslims like Essop Khan participated in the night street processions until 11:00 pm, A ceremony known as fire walking occurred at Khan's premises in Sea Cow Lake and the last procession led them to the Umgeni River location⁴⁶. The condemnation of Muslims who participated in the festival of Muharram was not initially from the traditional Ulama who vehemently considered such a festival as contrary to Islam. The elite traders and educated Muslims took a stand and conveyed that they were embarrassed by what they called raucous processions. Chief Constable Graham interviewed seven traders (known as the upper-class Indian persons) in July 1949, who expressed that the Muharram processions were 'definitely against the Mahommedan religion' and they were more than willing to help the police to stop this practice⁴⁷. Natal Muslim Council and E.I. Haffejee wrote a letter after the interview with Graham that stated:

To our utter dismay and concern, we note that some people instead of mourning the event rejoice. Pagodas are brightly decorated and conveyed through the streets of Durban. Usually, music, the beating of tom-toms and tiger dancing accompany the procession, and this generally initiates drunkenness, fighting and rowdiness. Most of the participants in these celebrations are Africans, Coloureds, Hindus, and Muslims of the ignorant type... We strongly feel that the Islamic religion is being ridiculed and the Muslim community disgraced

⁴⁶ NAR. 3IDBN. 4/1/4/1093, D.E. Khan to Town Clerk, 3rd October 1949

⁴⁷ NAR, 3IDBN, 4/1/4/28 I. Sergeant Graham to Chief Constable, 7 November 1949. The seven were A.M. Moolla of Lockhat Brothers; M.A. Lockhat of Commercial Road; A.E. shaikh of 339 Pine Street; S. M. Lockhat of Lockhat Brothers; I.A. Kajee of 37 Albert Street; E.I. Haffejee of the Natal Muslim Council and the Mawlana (High Priest) of the Grey Street Mosque.

before the eyes of others. We now appeal to you to refuse to issue these permits and thus do away with this religious farce⁴⁸.

Despite the attempts to end the festival of Muharram by trader elites and educated Muslims, Muharram persistently remained an integral part of most Muslims. This festival of Muharram would draw many Muslims until the 1970s when economic mobility, education, and the reform-minded ulama concerted crusade caused a decrease in Muslim participation in the Muharram festival. Even though most of the Muslim community had embraced reformed-minded ulama Islamic teachings, for the most part, that did not deter them from living in harmony with Hindus. Harry Sewlall recalled how Muslims and Hindus lived together, he stated that:

...what was remarkable was the camaraderie that existed between Muslims and Hindus, who lived cheek-by-jowl with one another. I was not aware of any differences between us. In my family, we referred to our elderly Muslim neighbours as '*mausi*' (aunt) and '*mausa*' (uncle) (*Sunday Times Extra* 12 December 1999).

Perhaps, what caused the Muslim community not to be intolerant of other religion(s) was the Muslim leaders who overlooked religious discrepancies. This attitude was demonstrated during the meeting for Indian Independence Day, a Muslim named A.I. Kajee admitted that they:

...were not assembled as Hindus, Christians, and Muslims but as Indians. The religious politics of India have not been imported into South Africa. Indians in this country must be Indians alone and not Mussulmans and Hindus (*Leader* 30 January 1943).

Muslims would annually celebrate Jinnah's birthday as Kajee (A.I.) recognised Jinnah as a prominent "leader of the entire Muslim world" during his 1946 celebration. Muslims would send funds to Jinnah as they celebrated his birthday as a means to help him accomplish his desire to create Pakistan. In a 1946 celebration, Jinnah conveyed his gratitude for the help he received and stressed that "as far as South Africa is concerned it will be treated as an all-Indian problem and I will help the Indians as Indians and not as Hindus or Muslims" (*Leader* 5 January 1946).

⁴⁸ NAR, 3/IDBN, 4/1/4/28 I, Natal Muslim Council to Chief Constable. 10 July 1949. The letter was signed by E. Haffejee, c.A. Kajee. C. Asmal, H. Badah and A. Motala.

While the creation of Pakistan was celebrated by Muslims in Natal, Hindus and Muslims celebrated together the independence of India. During the year 1947, the unity in diversity was on display for everyone to observe as both Muslims and Hindus celebrated Indian Independence in Durban. The NIC hosted a meeting for Indian Independence celebrations and flags of both Pakistan and India were flown side-by-side and photographs of Jinnah and other major leaders were taken (*Leader* 2 September 1949).

In the 1910-1950 period, many Indians from the working class decided to leave agricultural work to join the manufacturing sector that was rapidly growing in Durban. This drastic move by the agricultural workers resulted in the obscured economic gap between traders and working-class Indians. Even though the multitude of sectarian and regional identities co-existed that did not change how they were all seen as “Indians” through the lens of Whites and Africans. Beginning in the 1930s the state had begun to focus on segregating Indians. The Indian's fight over the land during 1946-1948 culminated and protracted an inert resistance campaign (Bugwandeem 1991). This caused a serious disconnect between the state (Whites) and Indians. While the tension between Africans and Indians was intensifying in the 1940s and manifested in riots that occurred between Indians and Africans, subsequently a little altercation between a group of African youth and an Indian man on the 13th of January 1949. In a short period of three days, 1087 people were injured during the riots and 142 people died. The little incident turned into a deadly confrontation between Indians and Africans as a result of the competition between them for scarce resources in housing, trade, and transport (Edwards & Nuttall 1990). Vahed (2000:83-4), noted that,

Tension with Africans on the one hand, and the purely Indian political parties formed to fight wholly Indian struggles, brought Indian Muslims and Hindus together in the public sphere and helped to foster Indianness. This racial identity was cemented after the National Party (NP) came to power in 1948.

The Indian traders who arrived in Natal during the 1870s were prevented from competing with white established businesses and had to establish their shops at the periphery of North-Western on the swampy land. When White and Indian business places were impinged, the white people employed the Dealer's License Act of 1897 to restrict any further expansion of Indian businesses (Davies 1963:23).

The segregation in residential areas was implemented according to the racial groups in most parts of Durban. In 1951 White and Indian residential segregation was about

91% in Durban (Davies 1963:37). Segregation through the Group Areas Act was consolidated during 1948. During 1950 and 1978, there were 140,000 Indians who were moved from their premises where they had built their own homes and relocated to new premises. Phoenix and Chatsworth are two townships that the segregated Indians could occupy as a result of the implementation of segregation. On the other hand, some of the areas such as La Mercy, Westville, and Reservoir Hills were made accessible to the middle-class people (Butler Adam & Venter 1984:18). Indians' segregation in Natal made it possible for Muslims to construct madrassahs, community halls, mosques, and for Muslims to practice their religion in a value-friendly area.

Indian Muslims embraced education as it played a crucial role in transforming their community. In 1950 literacy levels were reported to be very low. The majority of children within the Muslim community were enrolled in secular government schools. Indian education shifted after 1965 when the Department of Indian Affairs had the power to implement free and compulsory education from 1970. The school facilities were rapidly constructed and that made it possible for all children to have access to education by 1983. This was evident in the number of Indian children who were enrolled in school. This was reflected in the rapid increase in the number of candidates who were able to write their final year examination at the secondary school level which was recorded at 2,623 in 1968 to 10,449 in 1984 (Naidoo 1989:116).

Furthermore, this led to the expansion of the established M L Sultan Technical College and the opening of the University of Durban-Westville in 1963. The Indian community did not hesitate to use their opportunity to get an education and that could be observed in the number of Indians who considered English as their home language which increased from 6% in 1951 to an astounding 93% during 1996. Education had to be available to the masses as it was crucial in reshaping the perceptions of religion and beneficial for self-empowerment. Education provided Muslims with an opportunity to read and study the printed word and challenged the traditional ulama's special position. This caused a paradigm shift in terms of religion 'taken-for-granted' to the new outlook of Islam that had to be perceived as a self-contained system and consist of distinct values from any other systems. Muslims' direct access to Islamic materials cultivated debates among them and led to the formulation of statements about their belief that were easy to understand to demystify sectarian discrepancies. Islam had drastically become a subject that was supposed to be explained as well as understood,

and not to be assumed. The exposure of the Muslim community to Islamic materials brought discrepancies among them to the surface (Eickelman 1992).

4.7 Muslim Religious Fervour Revival

The Islamic religion in Natal experienced a gradual change regarding how Muslims understood and practised their religion. Muslim revival of religious fervour was evident among all Muslim society and Muslim sectors in Durban which was reflected in the majority of Muslims who embraced Islam more systematically into their lives. They propagated or/and contested for the hegemony of their version of the Islamic faith, and re-established a necessity for the relationship between community, society, and faith. The resurgence that occurred among younger adherents of Islam was propelled by the ideas of thinkers such as Muhammad Iqbal and Sayyad Qutb. Both Sayyad Qutb (d. 1996) and Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) in their effort attempted to merge Islamic education with secular modern education as a means to engage Western thought and culture. The Arabic Study Circle was a forerunner of the later movements which informally began to operate during the 1950s and was recognised as a formal body in 1954 and Dr Daud Saleh Mall was appointed as president. The members of the social Circle mainly comprised Gujarati traders' descendants who were able to afford local and international secular education. Moreover, these individuals were able to embark on a pilgrimage trip to the Middle East (Mecca) for Hajj and had the privilege to meet Muslims from all over the world. The study of the Arabic language was promoted by the Circle so that individuals could read the Quran and make educated interpretations without any dependence on the ulama's analysis. The Arabic Study Circle initiated annual speech contests among school children, established an Islamic library, trained individuals to be madrassah teachers, and introduced Arabic in the school curriculum in 1975. In 1963 they introduced Arabic and later in 1974 Islamic Studies were introduced as part of the academic disciplines at the University of Durban-Westville, and young students were sent abroad to learn and expose themselves to new ideas. Joseph Perdue was invited as a Muslim thinker who was a dynamic non-ulama, an English convert to Islam, he had to live in Durban and conduct lectures. The Circle received serious criticism from the traditional ulama for these actions (Mahida 1993:71-74).

The Circle did not hesitate to promote religious tolerance and would organise and host regular seminars on Christianity, Judaism, African Faiths, and Hinduism. The speakers

that were invited included luminaries such as Professor van Selms who was from the Department of Semitic Studies at the University of Pretoria, and Isaac Swift who was a Rabbi, who was a chief Rabbi of South Africa. The Circle also invited the South African writer known as Alan Stewart Paton (Bhayat 1992:8-20).

Arabic Study Circle was certainly not the only organisation with a broad perspective on matters but several organisations. There were attempts by Durban and District Muslim Association to close the gap between non-Muslims and Muslims, as well as Whites and Indians. This initiative was led by Ismail E.H. who was a trader and overwhelmingly involved himself in soccer administration. A similar attitude to that of the Circle can be observed in E.H. Ismail as he invited Vernon Essery, who was a Mayor of Durban to be a speaker in the annual celebration to honour the birthday of the Prophet on the 31st of October 1955. He also invited other speakers such as Professor Leo Kuper of the Natal University and M.B. Naidoo, a vice-principal of Sastri College. Ismail addressed the attendees after garlanding the mayor, he said, “desire is to live in peace and to share our heritage with our fellow subjects who sympathise with these” (*Indian Views* 23 November 1955).

Furthermore, there was an organisation comprised of young Muslims who felt the need to discuss matters that affected the Muslim community and society. Iqbal Study Group members were very critical of the rich Muslims and the traditional ulama. The Iqbal Study Group was named after a respected Muslim thinker known as Sir Mohamed Iqbal. During the 1965 Iqbal Day celebrations, Abdullah Deedat, one of the speakers uttered a statement that shocked G.H. Bhabha, as Deedat mentioned that “Maulanas are good for nothing. How can we expect our children to respect the Maulanas when such slanders are being hurled by mature men.” There was a complaint by Cassim Abdullah, who stated that “the day was a monotonous sing-song of hurling abuses at the rich and slurring the movies” (*Indian Views* 30 August 1965). While A.S.K. Joomal, the organiser of the event remained unrepentant. Joomal stated that Iqbal has pointed out that:

Many things against the ways, manners, preachings, and peculiar brand of the mullahs’ Islam, and also the brutal, ruthless manner in which the affluent class has always exploited the poor. If the speakers have quoted from the Doctor’s work on these topics thus showing the Doctor up as the defender of the poor and a crusader for “true” Islam, what crime did these speakers commit? (*Indian Views* 23 August 1965).

Some of the Muslim organisations remained quite conservative politically but would viciously critique Muslims who are not progressive in their thinking. Organisations like Iqbal Study Group, and Kemal Study Group were known for being conservative in issues relating to politics. On the other hand, there were organisations like the Muslim Students Association (1974) and the Muslim Youth Movement (1970) who actively fought and challenged the apartheid regime. These organisations and others of the same calibre would strive to model a type of Islam that is meaningful to Muslims in a pragmatic, coherent, systematic, and organised manner (Tayob 1995:108).

4.8 The Role of the Islamic Council of South Africa

The formation of ICOSA in November of 1975 was an attempt for Muslims to be united in South Africa not only in their local community. Islamic Council of South Africa (ICOSA) formation occurred during the visit of Abdul Muhsin Al-Shaykh from Saudi Arabia and Dr Inamullah Khan, a member of the World Muslim Congress. ICOSA was comprised of about 109 organisations and had the first office-bearers being Advocate A.B. Mahomed who was a President and his Vice-President Mawlana Ansari, as well as Advocate Bawa who held a Secretary General position (Bawa 1976). Transvaal Jamiat decided not to be part of the Islamic Council of South Africa because they believed that only the ulama must speak on behalf of Muslims and not professionals. As a means to placate the ulama in the Cape and Natal, ICOSA gave the ulama power to reject decisions made by the Judicial Committee. The members of the ICOSA were not unanimous and held many differences among them. Their differences became evident as educated Muslims did not condemn Muhammad Asad for translating the Quran into English but welcomed it, while the ulama condemned his deed. Muhammad Asad was a Muslim convert who held liberal views and his act to translate the Quran led to the Arabic Circle and MYM withdrawal from the Islamic Council of South Africa (Bawa 2000). The traditional ulama did not welcome some of the messages that were uttered by the members of the ICOSA. For example, the message of Bawa which was an appeal to the Indian Muslim community:

to increase their sensitivity to the situation and condition of the Black community... Quicken your conscience to help them in every way possible, be just in your dealings with them, build bridges of understanding... (Post 6 July 1983).

Bawa's appeal to Indian Muslims did not receive any reasonable attention among them because of the minimal contact between African Muslims and Indian Muslims. African Muslims were mainly employed as bhangies (callers to prayer) and cleaners in mosques. The different views on political matters also caused strife among the members of ICOSA. ICOSA objected to the separate parliaments that were formed by the government to serve Coloureds and Indians in 1983. While Sydenham Muslim Association and Juma Musjid Trust, whose respective chairpersons were Abdullah Khan and Aboobakr Ismail, both supported the proposals to withdraw from being part of the ICOSA (*Mercury* 7 June 1983). Even though ICOSA continued to exist it had become an empty shell beginning from the mid-1980s because of the tensions. Nonetheless, ICOSA constantly enjoyed minimal support from Indian Muslims during the times when Muslims had to be involved with institutions that were controlled by the traditional ulama (Vahed 2000:91).

4.9 The Role of Islamic Propagation Centre in Natal

The relationship between Muslims and Hindus experienced challenges because of the *dawah* activities done by Ahmed Deedat and the Islamic Propagation Centre International. It was founded in 1957 by Ahmad Deedat and Gulam Vanker as a reaction to the missionary work being done by the Anglican diocese and the Dutch Reformed Church among Muslims (Haron 2006: 278.). Deedat asserted that Christian missionaries were claiming that Islam was a dangerous religion for South Africa, Muslims were worshipers of Muhammad, Muslims were anti-Christ and so on (Mahida 1993:80).

The Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI), which has its headquarters in Durban, is the other organisation that has developed into a significant institutionalised contact zone for those who have converted to Islam. The organisation bases its theological and proselytism outreach on comparing Islam and Christianity, arguing in favour of Islam by specifically criticising the Bible. While the MYM attempted to appeal to those who had been politicised as a result of Marxism, the IPCI became particularly appealing to Christians who were interested in Islam as an alternative order and who possessed a strong sense of belief and spirituality. It became a port of call for persons from Black African townships who were on their way to embracing Islam during the time of apartheid, and notably during the time of the uprisings. Umar Moleleki's translation of a portion of the Quran into isiZulu was a significant factor in this (Gebauer

& Hussein De Arajo 2016:25). In addition to this, Ahmad Deedat became a captivating figure, and his talks were widely disseminated via the use of audio cassettes and video tapes. His work had a political influence on the people who lived in Black African slums since it was founded on deconstructing the theological underpinnings of Christianity. As a result, it called into question the religiously grounded rituals and routines of the self as well as the positionality of the person. The message that Deedat sent had a polemical tone and was directed at discrediting the religion that upheld and legitimised apartheid, namely Christianity (Tayob 1999a: 96 for more reference). Not only did the IPCI literature, which was mostly generated by Deedat himself, demolish Christianity, but it also gave a reality in which Islam may be found everywhere. For instance, it drew parallels between the Zulu idea of a monotheistic deity and the language used for that god in isiZulu and Islamic theology. Even though the general message of the IPCI was more accessible to the politically active youth of the Black African townships, as evidenced by the fact that Deedat's speeches on tapes and cassettes gained almost as much prominence as those delivered by Malcolm X, the centre had a structural problem: its main office was located in Durban within the area of the Grey Street masjid. This prevented the centre from reaching out to the Muslim community. Therefore, even though IPCI affiliates operated for some time from the MYM offices located in the townships, their outreach in terms of proselytising was quite restricted. Muslims and Hindus had initially rallied behind Ahmed Deedat in his criticism of Christian missionaries. Hindus rallied behind Deedat because Christianity was largely perceived as a white religion and any form of attack directed at white people was more than welcome during the apartheid regime. Hindus also had a secondary reason to support Deedat relentless critique of Christian missionaries which was based on deep concern and fear among Hindu leaders as they perceived that most Hindus would convert to Christianity. For example, the headlines in a newspaper that acknowledged that "Conversions worry SA Hindus," as well as "Christian exploitation of Hindus could lead to religious war", became a common trend (*Sunday Times* 2 May 1982). Hindus supported the denigration of the Christian faith by Ahmed Deedat until IPCI produced a video that was made public in 1986 regarding the conversion "From Hinduism to Islam." P.D. Persadh who was a General Secretary of a Hindu organisation called South African Hindu Maha Sabha, said that he "viewed the present conflict with dismay... Surely Islamic teachings are not intended to ridicule and build enmity" (*Post* p' May 1986). South African Hindu Maha Sabha (SAHMS) appealed to

the IPCI in an attempt to ask for the video to be taken down, and when that was unsuccessful the Hindu leaders in their efforts attempted to ask the government to ban the video which was also unsuccessful. The video was also critiqued by many Muslims. Bawa of ICOSA asserted that he “deplored attempts by any group to degrade the religious practices of any other community” (*Tribune* 20 April 1986).

Despite Bawa’s efforts to ensure the IPCI video that had already created conflict between Hindus and Muslims, the tension did not cease. For example, in 1986 there was a meeting held at UDW (University of Durban-Westville) that ended up with Hindu students “heckling and booing at Muslims in the audience, who then walked out” (*Post* 18 May 1986). The Hindus in Avoca (a suburb of Durban) circulated pamphlets among the community as a call to boycott Mr Hassen who was a Muslim pharmacy owner (*Tribune* 11 May 1986). Muslims and Hindus did not achieve the harmonious relationship they had before the release of the IPCI video.

4.10 Apartheid Regime and Muslims

NP (National Party) assumed a governing position in South Africa in 1948 and was resolute about entrenching racial identities. National Party constrained contact between the people who identified as Africans and Indians, White or Coloured in all walks of life. The ANC was a political party that was engaged with the NIC in a cross-race protest during the 1950s that ceased because the PAC and ANC were banned in 1960 (Bhana 1977). The irony was evident when the NIC involved itself in reinforcing racial identities and perpetuated the tyrannical idea of racial divisions (Vawda & Singh 1987).

In 1961 a change occurred regarding the legal position of Indians as they were given citizenship. A Department of Indian Affairs was formed, and the ruling party attempted to integrate the Indian community into the political sphere by deliberately forming Indian advisory bodies that were occupied by Indians. The nominated members of the South African Indian Council were inaugurated in 1968, whereas the Local Affairs Committees had to advise local authorities and municipalities concerning Indian matters. Indian Muslim community displayed a similar reaction to apartheid-like other Indians who suddenly changed from being an antagonistic opponent to actively submitting to the government. A.M. Moolla and A. Joosub were both Muslims who participated in the structures of apartheid while other Muslims such as Jerry Coovadia and Farouk Meer became part of the United Democratic Front that was formed to be

in opposition to the apartheid regime. In their attempts to oppose any ethnic structures within government the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) during the 1980s decided to be part of the United Democratic Front, a non-racial party⁴⁹. The non-racialism ideology that was adopted by NIC did not resonate or be adopted by the masses of the Indian population. The Indian racial exclusivity did not cease until Nelson Mandela was released from incarceration on 11 February 1990, which resulted in the unbanning of political organisations, and made room for multi-party negotiations. This finally led to the first South African democratically elected ruling party on 27 April 1994 (Vahed 2000:92).

It is worth noting how the environment and social structure can become a factor to influence an individual's temperaments. Although it can be regarded as intellectual suicide to generalise, it can be an educated guess to posit that the Muslims in Durban were not actively involved in politics compared to those from the Cape. The Muslims at the Cape were very politicised and displayed a radical expression of Islam during the apartheid regime while Indian Muslims in Durban were willing to co-operate with the regime. The Muslims in the Cape were influenced by the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Cape Muslims established the Pan-Africanist 'Qibla'⁵⁰ which was led by Imam Ahmed Cassiem and popularised the following slogan, "One solution, Islamic Revolution". The Qibla became the breeding ground for revolutionary fervour among the Muslim community in the Cape and made them a force to be feared by the armed forces and the police (Essack 1980:496).

4.11 The post-apartheid era and Islam

It is conceivable that the growing influence of the traditional ulama and Islamic institutions from the 1970s to the 1980s immensely contributed towards Islamic

⁴⁹ The United Democratic Front (UDF), based on the principles of the Freedom Charter, was launched on 20 August 1983 to protest against the tri-cameral dispensation. It included trade unions, religious bodies, student organisations, and civic associations. The formation of the UDF marked another attempt to reinstate the heritage of nonracialism. The NIC's vigorous anti-election programme included mass and local rallies as well as house-to-house visits. This resulted in low voter registration and turnout.

⁵⁰ Qibla: is also spelled as kiblah or qiblah. It is known as the direction to the Muslims sacred shrine of the Ka'ba or Kaaba in Mecca, which Muslims must face when performing their prayer from different areas in the world.

practices. Nevertheless, the post-apartheid era did not favour many of the teachings that were held by the traditional ulama and institutional Islam. The Islamic worldview was challenged by the new ANC government as it legalised prostitution, abortion, pornography, and many other deeds that are forbidden (haram). Moreover, the Muslim community was largely disadvantaged by the African Renaissance agenda and affirmative action policies. The change of the government which was the result of the fall of apartheid caused many Muslims to abandon and change their behaviour in various ways. It can be safely argued that the fall of apartheid was something to be celebrated, but it also resulted in most Muslims forsaking and arbitrarily changing Islamic practices. There was a staggering increase in Muslim women who pursued the public space position compared to their predecessors of the previous generation. The Muslim women had regular appearances in areas where practices that were contrary to Islam were the norm, for example, the beach and holiday resorts. The 1996 census revealed that about 7900 (32%) out of 24,824 population of Muslims within the formal employment in Durban areas were females. The census did not include Muslim women in any informal work such as dressmaking, babysitting, religious education, and cooking. Although the census succinctly demonstrates the staggering increase of Muslim women in formal employment in comparison to the 1980s period, which had relatively few women in such spaces. This trend to re-establish gender norms appeared to be a reversal of the similar movement during the 1970s and 1980s when Muslim women after they obtained education would hunt for employment. On the other hand, there was a staggering increase among Muslim women who covered their faces, which remained a contested requirement within the local Islamic tradition⁵¹ as it consisted of different views concerning the veil. The Ulama viewed the veil as an essential component in their effort to prevent transgression related to gender norms (Vahed 2000:93).

⁵¹ The Jamiat, for example, ruled that “due to the immorality of the times... it is compulsory for a female to cover her face which is the focus of her beauty. This would accord a woman a 'degree of respect, honour and dignity and of being in charge of her body.’” The Sunni Jamiat, on the other hand, whose support base is amongst working-class Muslims, does not compel women to cover their faces.

4.12 Muslims and the Secular State

The new secular state made it possible for different races to interact with one another and this probably made it possible for the Muslim community to choose between various foods. Food consumption regulation among Muslims became one of the pressing matters. The Muslims had to learn new ways in terms of how they should deal with the challenges and opportunities in the new secular state. The number of Muslims who annually travelled to Saudi Arabia for the Islamic pilgrimage had increased to 8,758 during 1998 from 4,000 in the early 1990s. This demonstrates that the new secular democracy provided Muslims with new opportunities and challenges. Muslims during apartheid were given identities associated with their current situation such as the indentured labourers who were known as Indians regardless of their place of origin. During the apartheid government, different identifications (language, race, religion, class, etc.) were only acknowledged according to their specific context, but race remained the essential identification of individuals. In Natal, the changes during the mid-1980s were noticeable until the ANC assumed its power in 1994. The ruling of the ANC which adopted secular ideology as its foundation posed challenges to Muslims. The new secular democracy of the ANC rid itself of any responsibility to monitor the behaviour of individuals. Therefore, the responsibility to deal with issues such as abortion, prostitution, and education was largely reduced to individual duties and not to the state. The Muslim community were concerned about the new secular democracy as it threatened to allow deeds that were deemed immoral according to the Islamic teaching. Vahed (2000:93-94) notes that:

There has been a concerted and successful effort to root out television from Muslim homes; Muslims are marrying younger and eliminating lavish ceremonies; there is a return to 'authentic' dress among many men who have given up insurance and medical aid and have turned to Islamic banks as the Al-Baraka Bank; there is a dramatic growth in Muslim and Islamic schools; while standardisation of the syllabus has meant that madrasahs are disseminating a rigorous knowledge of Islamic rituals, beliefs, practices and values to children from young age. The new Islamic lifestyle is behavioural in perspective.

The ulama had become synonymous with the truth and to critique them was paramount to the truth being critiqued. The Muslims almost completely attached themselves to their spiritual mentors (Shaykhs) to learn from them and for self-reformation. The post-apartheid Islam did not necessarily consist of any doctrine that

had proselytising notions to it. Post-apartheid Islam was largely grounded upon the idea of self-reformation whereas integration and meaningful contact with White, Coloured, and non-Indian African Muslims was largely non-existent. This could serve as one of the contributors to the lack of interaction between the Zulu people and Indian Muslims. Furthermore, Muslim professionals and intellectuals seemed to be more concerned about the state of post-apartheid Islam, but their opinion meant very little to nothing as the formally trained ulama remained as shapers of the Muslim community. Muslim professionals and intellectuals' views could only be heard outside of the mosques.

In the discipline of religious studies Islam and Muslim societies are often viewed as 'one global, timeless, and cultural system'. On the contrary, Muslims and Muslim societies are 'complex and sociologically diverse' (Roy 1996:vii). As the study shows, there have been multiple Islamic voices and multiple Islamic traditions among South African Indian Muslims. The Islamic tenets are continually redefined and re-interpreted as well as often contested within the ulama. The debates on how Muslims' lives should be regulated by the teachings of the Quran and hadith⁵² as well as what it entails to be a Muslim and what is Islam precisely about.

4.13 The downfall of the apartheid regime and its freedoms

With the downfall of apartheid and its oppressive laws no longer in use, non-whites had an opportunity to regain their dignity and pride. As a result of the dismantling of apartheid, new opportunities emerged for different racial groups. They were now able to migrate from rural areas to urban areas where they were nearer to their workplaces, where they could enrol their children in better schools, and have access to better amenities. This implies that all racial groups were now living together and gradually some became close friends and some engaged in mixed marriages. With the dismantling of apartheid, the walls of segregation that were built around races, religions, and cultures finally ended. The new era of democracy and freedom for all people gradually legislated equal opportunities for all people. Although, on the other

⁵² Hadith are collection of different documents about the sayings of Muhammad including his daily practice (the Sunna), and they play a vital role as guidance for practicing Muslims beside the guidance that is found in the Quran.

hand, crime, unemployment, poverty, and informal settlements escalated during the post-apartheid era.

The identities of South African Muslims who are Indians have been gradually changing since they arrived in 1860. The Zulu people largely believed that the dominant identity among the Muslims was 'Indian' in a context where race served as an integral part of defining people's existence. In post-apartheid South Africa Muslims began to adopt an Islamic identity which they perceived as one that supersedes descent, ancestry, and language. However, this drastic move of retreating to an Islamic identity among Indian Muslims was propelled by a broad socio-political context of Africans being the majority in South Africa, Muslim fears, and globalisation or a secular state. Muslims in their efforts erected boundaries around different points of contact such as contact between non-Muslims and Muslims, women and men, the state and Muslims, secularism and Islam, profane and sacred, and so on. Islam in Durban did attempt to create a new identity for the Muslim communities, but it was difficult because of the problems posed by the deep differences within the Islamic tradition. During the early 2000s it was not clear whether a homogeneous Islamic religion was emerging after the fall of apartheid, however, what was evident was the heightened tolerance for different perspectives held by others. For example, Barelwis and Deobandis would normally have violent altercations but that had greatly subsided. On the other hand, Sufi Islam was on the rise although they were able to find a middle ground among other Islamic traditions.

The early 2000s were known as the era that posed challenges within the Islamic religion. The chasm that existed between the intellectuals and Ulama hindered them from a constructive engagement. The dialogue between the Ulama and intellectuals often ended up in a polemical approach towards each other. The Ulama were not willing to engage in contextualising any socio-economic challenges that confronted Muslims. On the other hand, professionals and intellectuals lacked the proper theological knowledge to make educated comments on matters of theology. The intellectual Muslim scholar's influence was centred around the universities where they taught Islamic studies. There were no centres or institutes where Muslims could form and develop theoretical frameworks to deal with their problems. Moreover, the university-based Centres were closing in the University of Western Cape and Durban-Westville due to financial constraints. The University of Cape Town was soon to be the only university that had a functional Islamic Study Centre. Muslims tended to foster

some sort of reactive identity instead of working together to create an Islamic identity that is proactive. Ahmed (1988:11) was quick to point out that:

The intellectuals are bankrupt; the saints are invisible. We will find answers to the questions [about modern post-apartheid ideology]... only by inquiry and scholarship; and that side of Muslim civilization appears to be dead. The modern Muslim intellectual exists in a state of despair, torn between an ideal world he cannot order and a reality he cannot master.

He further notes that “ethnicity and nationalism create divisions in the community, destroying the notion of Muslim brotherhood” (Ahmed 1988:12). Furthermore, post-apartheid South Africa confronted the well-respected traditions of Muslims, while English-speaking Whites, Afrikaners, and other racial groups had to wrestle with the challenges posed by the secular government. Thornton (1996:138) argued that there was at some point “nostalgia for the certainties, however grim, that [apartheid government] offered.” The reconstruction of society by the post-apartheid government caused predicaments in issues of identity as they maintained an unrealistic ideology of a society devoid of any conflict. The reconstruction of society which was implemented in social aspects such as race relations, gender equity, access to power, transformation, and the Aids epidemic, caused a disintegration of the social fabric, and this affected Muslims as well as the society at large. Muslim community felt a sense of vulnerability because of the new South Africa that somehow favoured black identities. Muslims resorted to Islam as a source of strength, identity, and stability. A staggering number of Muslims relied on their “system of beliefs and practices that treat scriptural absolutism as the way to counter the pluralism and relativism engendered by modernity” (Gill 1989:23).

Among the Muslim community it became a necessity to enrol their children in an Islamic school to create the “ultimate shield against the terror of anomy” (Berger 1969:27). The number of Muslims who annually travelled to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage had increased. Muslims changed their dress codes, and they became more regular during religious meetings and observance of rituals.

4.14 Summary

The study has demonstrated that the arrival of Islam in KwaZulu-Natal can be attributed to indentured Indian Muslim workers and later followed by Muslim traders from Middle Eastern countries. Chapter 4 investigated and profiled how indentured

Indians who valued Islam were able to sustain their Islamic faith during the oppressive apartheid regime. With such a strong presence of apartheid, Indian Muslims began to view whites as their enemy and regarded the African people as their opponent as both Indians and Africans struggled for liberation which was mostly based on groupthink ideology. After the fall of apartheid Muslims received blows as the society was reconstructed and had to rigorously wrestle with the ideologies represented by a secular world which campaigned for the destruction and mutilation of religious traditions. The sacred and profane were gradually becoming a thing of the past as the government legalised prostitution, abortion, pornography, and many other deeds that are forbidden among the Abrahamic religion(s). In the face of the challenges imposed by a new secular South Africa Muslims found strength in Islam as it offered them a sense of belonging and stability.

CHAPTER 5

Islam religious transmission and transformation

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine whether Islam in the eyes of Zulu converts has managed to change and transform the worldview of the Zulu Muslims⁵³. The focal point of this chapter is to understand Zulu Muslim presence in KwaZulu-Natal beyond their conversion to Islam. Kwame Nkrumah (1964:93-94) underscores that the African people are deeply entrenched in their African Indigenous Religion, but they are also broadened by Christianity and Islam. The researcher will attempt to unveil whether Islam has broadened the worldview of the Zulu Muslims in comparison to the Zulu indigenous worldview, as well as address issues concerning identities.

This study will address the influence of Islam on the Zulu converts to Islam, and why the issues of identities are essential in these discussions. Identities in South Africa are understood to be essential and an integral part of language, ethnicity, social class, and gender. The researcher will make a case about why the Zulu people who are converted to Islam are not immune to the dilemmas presented by identity as it becomes continuously affirmed and reinforced in the Zulu cultural systems that surround them. Perhaps the necessary question to pose is to what extent does being Zulu Muslim affect the sense of self and belonging to their family, relatives, and friends in KwaZulu-Natal?

The author seeks to find an alternative way of reading the presence of Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal beyond a mere parochial emphasis on the Zulu conversion to Islam. The focus will be on the individual's personal views and self-understanding; therefore, the emphasis will not be on Islam per se but on Zulu Muslim's experience as members of the Islamic religion. Furthermore, the Zulu narratives of conversion to Islam need to be examined if they lend themselves to a scenario where ethnic coding indirectly relegates Zulu Muslim identity as less authentic and therefore, disqualifies such

⁵³ Zulu Muslim is the term employed in this research as a focus group and merely convenient term to distinguish the plurality of "identities" regarding the Muslim community in KwaZulu-Natal and therefore it is not employed as an overarching identity. It is also not employed in an essentialist manner, and neither is it meant to be used in a divisive way.

identities from being fully Islamic. Hence, this chapter employs the available data in an attempt to demystify the nuances regarding the issue of identity and Islam.

The topic of Zulu Muslim and Zulu indigenous religion in the current scholarship has not received any significant attention. The study of Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal remains marginal and limited even in published literature on Muslims and Islam in South Africa. Hence, the following chapter will include a reflection on the information gathered from questionnaires which were conducted to supplement the information gathered through the literature review in this chapter.

5.1 The Zulu Muslim Identity: Constructivism or Primordialism

Constructivist identity is predicated upon the notion that people can have multiple identities (Scarborough 2023:81). The constructivist approach posits that as people encounter change in life tend to be drawn to a particular identity and sometimes completely adopt a new identity. People have embraced multiple religious identities due to intermingling with other religions (s) and mass migration as per the modern transitory nature of people. The Zulu converts to Islam subscribe to a Muslim identity while attempting to maintain a collective identity, of being Zulu. A collective identity is an approach that seeks to describe the identities of a particular group during the pre-modern world, although this approach may fail to account for the modern world. In the modern context, many individuals may choose whether it is suitable for them to join a particular community. Therefore, constructivism is an approach that is antithetical to primordialism.

While primordial identity is predicated upon the idea that individuals will acquire only one identity which is fixed in the present context as well as the future. Although primordial identity may not be compatible with the Zulu Muslim experience it contends that an individual's religious identity is determined biologically, that is, individuals are born into their identity. Some people believe that primordial identity is acquired gradually through childhood, education, and socialisation. Furthermore, primordialism asserts that at the time when an identity is given or realised, it reaches a state of immutability (Chandra 2001).

Primordialism is a fixed long-term religious identity and plays a vital role when one attempts to decipher the world or culture around them. Mass literacy has a significant role in fortifying religious identity. This is evident in the writings of Dawood Ngwane who was a Muslim convert, and a former Roman Catholic. The religious identity of

Dawood Ngwane as a Muslim was reinforced by the dawah projects that were largely influenced by Ahmed Deedat's polemic approach toward other religions. Van Evera (2001:20) perceived that "written identities also have a resilient quality that makes them almost impossible to stamp out." Nevertheless, primordial identity could apply to the Zulu people given that they are born in a Muslim family and have already forsaken any form of ancestral veneration/worship. In a primordial identity, one cannot adopt multiple identities as we have observed in the constructivist approach. It is contrary to the Islamic faith to posit that a person can identify as a Zulu person who worships the God of the Islamic faith as it is held that everyone is born a Muslim, even before they realise ethnic identity. Therefore, the Muslim identity has the power to stamp out any other possible identities or at least relegate other identities to the secondary status as per the given context.

People who hold to the view that their identity is immutable tend to be less willing to politically compromise when it comes to issues that violate the principles of their belief system. The individuals who compromise a primordial identity may be anathematised or perhaps become vehemently disliked or even disowned by the community. It is evident among the Zulu people that religious identity can be more complex in comparison to their ethnic identity. Primordialism has the power to cause ethnic identity to frequently assume a binary stance. Therefore, primordialism entails that the people in KwaZulu-Natal and even in the South African ethnic catalogue one is either a Zulu or not... Nonetheless, this would be vehemently rejected by constructivists as contenders of multiple ethnic identities, especially in a world that is globalised a transnational setting is often inevitable. Appiah and Gates (1995:06) correctly posited that "we need to attend more to the negotiation of identities by their possessors, recalling always that each identity, however central it is to our self-conceptions, may in some situations not be the one we need." It can be argued that identity must be considered fluid, that is, it constantly evolving and changing based on the individual's ontological framework. Cultural identity and religiosity will affect how people make sense of their world, especially their values and beliefs. Muslim identity can be regarded as static based on the guidelines found in the written texts (e.g., Quran and Sunnah) which safeguard from any deviation from what is considered to be truthful.

5.2 The Zulu Muslim Identity

There is a need for scholars to contribute towards the literature regarding how Zulu Muslims have made sense of their identity and of living among the adherents of the Zulu indigenous religion in KwaZulu-Natal. In this regard, there is also a need for a critical account of how Zulu converts have strived to make sense of their identity as Muslims beyond the moment of conversion. Conversion is often seen as “self-appraisal” by some of the Zulu Muslims who have embraced Islam without denouncing Zulu-ness or Zulu self and sought to syncretise the religion of Islam without it being an additional religious identity but as a crucial aspect to their sense of being and worldview (Sitoto 2018:168). The Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal often employ their own culture as a lens through which they see the world and employ it to judge and view other worldviews. We will attempt to examine how the Zulu Muslims view and judge the world around them including what they once considered as their culture or tradition. The Zulu Muslim identity can be measured through the four B’s such as believing, belonging, behaving, and bonding. Believing in a subset of beliefs involves a way people conceptualise how they relate to God or gods. The Zulu Muslims are expected to believe only in Allah (the Supreme Being) and that Muhammad is the last prophet of Allah. Therefore, ancestral veneration as observed in the Zulu indigenous religion cannot be compatible with Islam because a Muslim has to be the one who holistically submits to the orders and will of God. Believing in the Islamic God will always predicate that one has to overtly reject or desist any involvement in the rituals or rites of ancestral veneration.

Belonging in this context has to do with affiliation to a particular religious faith, a sect within a religion. The Zulu Muslims have to find a sense of belonging among themselves apart from their families and friends. The Zulu Muslims are integrated into the Islamic faith through the guidance of the Imams and the Ulama who may assist when there is a need. It is through understanding the Islamic perspective that a person realises that they belong to the Islamic faith and become a family to one another. This is evident as Zulu Muslims are often aware of each other’s whereabouts, and well-being.

Behaving is the subset of values that an individual who is a Muslim must live by. This is known as religious commitment and involves norms as well as emphasising what is forbidden and allowed for those within a particular religion. The Zulu Muslims with a high-level form of religiosity will often manifest in strict observance of their religious

commitments. According to Ngwane (2005:16), Islam informed his behaviour because the “belief in Allah is founded on a genuine, unshakable foundation, and who follow a religion without mysteries.” Religious values or teachings also inform the decisions that individuals have to make. Religious teachings in Muslim countries shape the judicial and legal system. For instance, the Islamic state is governed by Islamic law which is based on religious teachings.

The religious commitment not only informs belief, sense of belonging, and behaviour but also enhances the bond among Zulu Muslims. Bonding among Zulu Muslims manifests itself in spiritual practices and rituals. This includes religious ceremonies, prayer, pilgrimages, and worship. The interactions between Zulu Muslims at the masjid and the relationship that they have as Muslims enhance their bond. According to both Saroglou and Hoogendorn, the four B’s as presented above express “the social, cognitive, emotional, and moral element of religion, respectively” (Saroglou 2011; Hoogendoorn et al 2016).

The complexity of religious identity has caused some scholars in politics and religion to employ the term religiosity instead of religious identity. Wanat and Macaluso (1979) described the term religiosity succinctly as “the strength of a person’s attachment to organized religion.” Wanat and Macaluso (1979) further attempt to measure the religiosity level of individuals which they think is predicated upon “the frequency of attendance at the place of worship.” Individuals who go to the masjid whenever there is prayer are assumed to have a high level of religiosity, and those who rarely attend prayer at the masjid who are nominal Muslims have a lower level of religiosity (Macaluso & Wanato 1979:160). The measuring of religiosity does account for the availability of individuals because there might be those with high levels of religiosity but sometimes may not be able to attend to prayer at the Masjid, while they pray in their own space. Furthermore, some may always attend prayer at the Masjid because they play a crucial role during the processions at the Masjid such as Imams and those who call people to prayer. Kellstedt and Leege (1993) posit that employing Masjid attendance as the only means to measure the level of religiosity may not be an accurate expression or reflection of the four B’s discussed above. Using masjid attendance as the measuring tool for religiosity cannot be compatible, especially with the post-Covid lockdown era, which has indirectly elevated individual devotion. Perhaps the measuring tool that may accurately reflect the level of religiosity among the Zulu Muslims could be their avoidance of associating Allah with other deities

(*shirk*). The Zulu Muslims do not necessarily pay attention to their religiosity, but they are aware of their identity as Zulu people who have accepted the Islamic religion. The Zulu Muslims have managed to reconcile the fact that several cultural traditions need to be denounced according to the Quran and Sunnah. All Muslims are encouraged and charged to follow the Quran and Sunnah as guidelines that individuals must follow as practising Zulu Muslims.

5.3 The rejection of Islam in KZN by the native Zulu people

In the following segment, a brief explanation of Muslim dawah projects in KwaZulu-Natal will be addressed as well as a detailed account of the Zulu Muslim worldview. The Muslim population in KwaZulu-Natal continues to remain relatively small in comparison to other major religions. The Zulu people who are the minority within Islam in the areas around South Coast within KwaZulu-Natal draw their value and normative systems from the Islamic religion. There has been a minimal amount of interaction between Muslims and Zulu people during apartheid as they were fighting against the apartheid ideology. Moreover, the people who participated in dawah projects did not understand African Indigenous Religion and they frivolously treated AIR with contempt in their quest to spread Islam and had a relentless war to annihilate AIR. Muslim missionaries polemicised against Christianity as most of the Zulu people were Christians who were adherents of African Independent Churches, Roman Catholic Church, or Protestant Churches (Deedat 1993).

Interestingly, Muslim missionaries saw Africans as “kaffir” (in Arabic means unbeliever); they condemned ancestral veneration, initiation rites, and other traditional religious practices. Unfortunately, in some form, the attitudes of the Muslim missionaries have survived until today as a guide for unrestrained feelings of superiority. The notion that is imperative to understand, according to Du Toit (1998:36–60), is that “re-encountering Africa is impossible without taking the challenge of African Indigenous Religion and their spirituality very seriously.”

The Zulu converts to Islam had to abandon their customary clothing and observe the Islamic dress code as that of Arab men. Although in the current state Zulu Muslims in a very restricted manner attempt to combine both Zulu and Arab culture when it comes

to dress code. The Zulu women according to Islamic law were required to cover their bodies completely. Shaykh Abdul-Aziz Ibn Bazz⁵⁴ said,

... it is not permissible for them (men) to drag their clothes in the dirt and impurities, but it is permissible for women to drag their clothes to cover their feet. A man should raise his garment over his ankle, and he should not lower it, but women must lower their garments because their entire bodies are '*Awrah*' (private parts of the body that must be covered in public). Therefore, they must cover their feet by lowering their garment...

It is well attested that according to Islamic teachings, Zulu women must cover their bodies and must not wear Zulu traditional clothing because they expose the body. However, some of the Zulu Muslims wear Zulu attire with alterations to cover their entire bodies.

Furthermore, the Zulu Muslims had to adopt a new way of living and pray five times a day in the direction of Mecca and were often given Arabic names. They were supposed to learn the Arabic language to recite the Quran, as it is maintained among the Muslims that there will be no perfect translation of the Quran. Some of the chapters of the Quran were translated into the Zulu language by Muslim missionaries to convert the Zulu people to Islam. Moreover, the first print in July of 2015 a complete Quran (*I-Khur'aani Engcwele*) was translated into *IsiZulu* and was published by IDM (Islamic Dawah Movement of South Africa). Some of the Zulu converts were even sent to the Middle East, and Asia to be trained in educational institutions to become Shaykhs to alter the Zulu culture to an Arab culture that is compatible with Islam (Haron 1998).

It is worth noting that Phiri, a Malawian who had come to South Africa to work in the coal mines, was responsible for developing a sustained proselytising, or *dawah* work, and thus the spreading of Islam, first in Inanda and then in Ntuzuma and Kwamashu areas of KwaZulu-Natal. The Zulu Muslim converts who were once members of Zionist churches which for the most part influenced by both the Christian faith and Zulu traditional beliefs in witchcraft, healing, and spirits. The Muslim missionaries were not equipped enough to deal with such challenges, therefore they only hoped that the Zulu converts would soon forget about the Zulu beliefs and practices. The Zulu converts to Islam were continually offered food parcels, literature to read in *IsiZulu*, education, and money to buy school uniforms (Haron 1998).

⁵⁴ Majmoo 'al-Fataawa Ibn Baaz, Vol.:4; pp. 116-117.

5.4 The Quran presented to Africa in Arabic culture.

It was expected that a Zulu person who converted to Islam had to forsake all beliefs and practices associated with the African indigenous religion, especially those that are forbidden by the Quran and Sunnah. Haron (1998) posits that the Zulu people believe that spirits or ancestors act as mediators between God and mankind. He later proposes that it was not so from the beginning because their belief system changed as a result of an evolutionary process that propelled the Zulu people to replace God with ancestral spirits. This is the reason Muslim missionaries in KwaZulu-Natal claimed that it was through *dawah projects* that the Creator was once again revered among the Zulu people. The Zulu people who embraced Islam had to adhere to the doctrine of the 'oneness of God (*Tawhid*) and redirect their belief in ancestral spirits to Allah and his prophet Muhammad alone. The emphasis was upon the doctrine of *Tawhid* (oneness of God) which does not allow mediators of any form between God and mankind (Haron 1998).

Nevertheless, Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal in their efforts to bring about harmony between Islam and Zulu beliefs and practices promoted the notion of transnational or cross-cultural discourse. They permitted the following traditions to be practised by all Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal within the guidelines of the Quran and Sunnah (Kaarsholm 2007):

- a) Bride price (*lobola*).
- b) Virginity testing (this must be done within the families by elderly women, not in large gatherings like in the Zulu royal reed dance).
- c) Polygamy (a man is allowed to have a maximum of four wives).
- d) Circumcision (Muslim boys must be circumcised before they reach the age of ten years or during the seventh day after birth).

According to Adam Mncanywa (interviewed by Kaarsholm at an Islamic community centre, 23 August 2006), gatherings for virginity testing should be done by elderly women within families. He posits that such practices are not to be treated as public traditional festivals. Although, *Umkhosi woMhlanga* (royal reed dance) is frequently held once a year during the early month of September in Nongoma at KwaNyokeni Palace, however, Zulu Muslims are prohibited from attending events where girls display their breasts. Muslims are expected to completely cover themselves according to Islamic law. The Zulu values and customs were not appreciated by Muslim missionaries and that resulted in *AmaZulu* accepting a version of Islam that meant

almost the total annihilation of the Zulu beliefs and practices which were not compatible with Islam. Muslim girls and boys are prohibited from attending events that are meant for those who are at the stage of adulthood, where they are expected to wear tribal garb and are encouraged to engage in flirtatious and love play bantering (Haron 1998).

According to Mncanywa in Kaarsholm (2011:125), Zulu beliefs and practices were distorted by Zionists and *sangomas* who introduced angels as ancestral spirits causing the departure from the pure African understanding of the highest being (uMvelingqangi). He proposed that the angels of fertility and rain (*Nomkhubulwana*), death (*Noluhamba*), revelation (*Zambulo*), and destruction (*Kubhubha*), can all be observed during the life of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. Mncanywa's engagement with the Zulu was an attempt to prove that Islam, as a monotheistic religion, is reconcilable with Zulu culture, provided that the Zulus who convert to Islam denounce the superstitions that are believed by the Zionists and *sangomas* (Kaarsholm 2011:125). Nonetheless, Zulu converts to Islam ascribed to the notion that no one should feel coerced to leave his/her involvement in the beliefs and practices of AIR. Therefore, it has to be a personal choice if they decide to denounce their Zulu traditional beliefs and practices and not because of coercion.

The study has pointed out that at least until the early 2000s Muslim missionaries were replacing African traditions and customs with their own culture as they sought to spread Islam in South Africa. According to Muslims, the Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal should not be taken seriously because they were seen as unbelievers (kaffir). Mbiti (1969:233) when addressing the failure of Christianity, which Islam also did not avoid, correctly notes that "Mission Christianity failed to penetrate African religiosity." In the second segment of this chapter, the voices of Zulu converts will be acknowledged to examine how they view Islam.

5.5 The Zulu convert's understanding of Islam.

In the South African context, no identity is fundamental and common to all South Africans. Therefore, all identities among South Africans are mainly based on their language and ethnic group. Apartheid created a long-lasting damaging impact due to its racial segregation laws that led to minimal communication and contact between Zulu and Indian Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal. The Islamic faith continues to have its identities to be predicated upon language, region, and gender. In KwaZulu-Natal, the

Zulu people may be the majority but numerous numbers of Whites and Indians offer different foods, customs, religions, and dress. This is evident in the cultural expressions in the Masjids, Churches, and Temples that are around the city of Durban. The Islamic identity in KwaZulu-Natal continues to be influenced by cultural and social spheres apart from socio-economic status, language, religion, gender, region, and class. The differences in religious-cultural aspects caused significant boundaries among Whites, Zulu, and Indians. Muslim identity among the Zulu converts fashioned an intrinsic various expression in practice and belief which are different from non-Muslim Zulu people. Even among the Muslims in Durban, there are different strands of Muslim traditions such as Reformist, Tablighi/Deobandi tradition, and Barelwi. Therefore, it is not plausible to speak about a singular Muslim community, but it is correct to refer to Muslim communities in a plural form.

The Zulu Muslim's expressions of the Islamic religion have been largely influenced by individuals, revivalist movements, and institutions. There are major factors that have substantially contributed to the multiplicity of Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal such as Islamic literature that is written in English, lectures of Muslim scholars from abroad, and the writings of modern Muslim scholars and writers. The graduates who studied at institutions that are situated in Muslim countries substantially contribute to the perception of Zulu Muslims. The Zulu Muslims as a minority group in KwaZulu-Natal have to seek guidance, inspiration, and directions from other local Muslims or Muslims from abroad. Nonetheless, the expressions that the Zulu Muslims display as the result of the above factors may with the far-reaching exposure to modernist and secularist perspectives on Islam continue to pose a serious challenge to the reformist and traditional forms of Islam. The failure of the Zulu people to distinguish between what is halal and haram in the Islamic religion must be addressed to avoid the corruption of Islam. Adam Mncwanywa, a Zulu Muslim realised the intensive role played by the Zulu culture in the lifestyle of the people in KwaZulu-Natal. Mncanywa wrote small pamphlets (*Vukani Bangoni* and *Usiko Lweqiniso*) to engage nuanced cultural beliefs as a means to draw his people to Islam. He attempted to demonstrate in his writings that the historical Zulu culture must be realised in a monotheistic religion, that is, Islam. Islam is perfectly reconcilable with the African culture according to Mncanywa. He further points to the Zulu creator (*uMvelinqangi*), angels, death, destruction, and revelation in *Usiko Lweqiniso* (the true tradition/culture). Mncanywa asserts that the different roles that are played by the supreme being (*uMvelinqangi*) and other entities

such as the angels of fertility and rain (*uNomkhubulwana*), destruction (*uKubhubha*), death (*uNoluhamba*), as well as revelation (*uZambulo*). The angel of revelation (*Zambulo*) according to Mncanywa “brought revelations or messages to the Creator’s messengers like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad...” (Mncanywa n.d./d). However, it is evident, particularly in chapter two of this study that the origin of the word AmaZulu is predicated upon the premise that the Zulu people are people from/of the heaven (see chapter 2). The creation story of the Zulu people is contrary to the Islamic teaching since it claims that the Zulu people are literary from heaven; whereas the Islamic creed strictly refutes any claim of creatures co-existing with Allah because he transcends all of creation.

Furthermore, Bofelo in one of his writings addresses what he sees as the core message or principles of Islam when he states,

In many discourses on Islam, there is an emphasis on peace and justice the oneness and unity of humanity as its main precepts, and the belief in the oneness and unity of Allah as the foundation. However, what is often left out is the fact that peace justice and equality can only be of real substance if they are in themselves external manifestations of love, which I believe to be the Essence.⁵⁵

Muslims are aware that the Quran teaches that doing good deeds is a prerequisite to entering Allah’s Jannah (paradise) (Surah 21:47). The act of submitting to Allah’s will is the fountain from which doing good deeds is extracted. Muslims are to be guided by the message of the Quran and the Sunnah depending on which tradition one belongs. In the Zulu indigenous religious context to follow a written religious text(s) is unfamiliar and perhaps such a narrative is not possible given the tradition that heavily relies on oral tradition. The Zulu people may not be able to comprehend the necessity of following the teachings of the text because of their inclination towards the oral tradition. Among other aspects like the Zulu clan names and religious rituals, the Zulu oral tradition is preserved by traditional healers as custodians, who serve as mediators between the living and the dead. Nonetheless, in the Zulu Muslim community, it is expected for Zulu converts to live according to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.

⁵⁵ u See Mphutlane wa Bofelo, *The Way of Love: Poetry & Reflections inspired by Rumi and other Sufi Poets*, Durban, Self-Published, 2011.

In Islam, the true manifestation of love for others and oneself is predicated upon the notion of surrendering to the will of Allah. The Zulu converts have been attempting to connect their experience as Muslims and traditional roots and the rich cultural universe. The Zulu converts are trained to bear in mind that Islam also serves as a tool that provides them with the Zulu sense of self, unity, and equality with other Muslims worldwide. Eickelman (1978:45) correctly points out that the religious guidelines found in the scriptures are more crucial than what is regarded as the ritual command or guidelines. The guidelines of religious rituals and scriptures assume a vital role in the life of a Muslim and are well-known as cultural make-up. The scriptural command is more important than the religious rituals because the scripture must assume precedence over rituals as the guideline of how a Muslim ought to live. Nonetheless, religious rituals are not less important because they are important manifestations of the teachings from the Quran and Sunnah but must always reflect the message found in the scriptures (Bangstad 2004:40-41).

Furthermore, the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah also inform Muslim parents concerning what is permitted for their children during their enrolment in secular education institutions. Muslim parents are encouraged to teach their children to minimise interaction between them and non-Muslim children. When parents observe issues like gangsterism, drugs, and various criminal activities that occur at secular education institutions, they conclude that Islamic schools are better at shielding their children from corruption. Furthermore, Islamic schools also teach children about the religion of Islam. Some parents are convinced that Islamic schools offer a standard of education that is much higher when juxtaposed to public schools which are experiencing an influx of black South African children from townships. The parents argued that their children's behaviour will be determined by the company they keep around them. The non-Muslim children would influence their children to behave in a manner that is against the religion of Islam. The Muslim children who were enrolled at public schools did not allow their children to participate in balls, Fun Day, and other school events that were against the known principles of Islam. The non-Muslim children had a problem with Muslim children whom they perceived as antisocial peers. Some Muslim parents feared that the government's secular schools might become less tolerant of the needs of their children and deny their children permission to join the Friday prayer. Therefore, most of the parents decided to transfer their children to Muslim schools.

Mncanywa posits that the pure culture of the Zulu people has been corrupted by the harmful beliefs emanating from the diviners and Zionists, who are in error for believing that the angels are ancestral spirits which has brought far-reaching various forms of superstitions. Mncanywa also believes that the Zulu people who believe in the Zulu indigenous worldview:

... call upon the departed in supplication and wear *iziphandla* (skin amulets worn on the wrist as bangles). Nearly all those who practice this will say it is our culture and even go on to allege that it is the culture of the Zulu people in particular, implying that if you do not live by this code, you are either not a Zulu or a renegade. There are preachers and directors of this philosophy everywhere, and you never run short of advocates of this school of thought in buses, trains, taxis, shebeens, or on the street.

Mncanywa was a typical Zulu Muslim who believed that the Zulu veneration and the call upon the departed as a means for them to assist the living was the root cause of division, conflict, and tribalism. Adam Mncanywa asserts that consulting the ancestral spirits was unheard of during the period of the Ngoni people who were progenitors of Shaka Zulu. He believes that the ancient Ngoni (those who do no wrong) people lived in patriarchal societies, but the people were not classed according to how better they were in comparison to others. The leaders of the communities would frequently come together to convey and discuss their opinions and views, while the folktales were employed to instruct the young to be constructive and positive. The days of harmony did not last for long as they were gradually fading away as:

false stories were now told, 'people' started hating and killing one another, witchcraft proliferated, diseases and scourges took root, and 'people' started devouring one another. Alas, how the children of one man are being wiped out. Gone are families, communities, and respect. I would like to know, where are fathers and mothers? Where is the pride of granaries? Where are maidens and virgins and young men?... Where are human beings? Arise, you people who do no wrong, and re-establish what is rightfully yours, arise!

Mncanywa was persuaded by the notion of Islam being the bedrock of the Ngoni people and saw the necessity for the Ngoni people to claim their true identity which can only be obtained in the Islamic religion. He believes that as a result of the false stories circulated among the people, the authentic culture of *ubuntu* among Ngoni people was swept away by a culture that promoted tribal division and conflict:

Family customs such as *ukugcaba* [cutting of incisions in the skin, believed to ward off misfortune], cutting off a finger, and piercing of ears were things done by those who wanted to break away from the rest for some reason. It is these practices that people now call cultural customs... Today we are fragmented and thrown about. We call ourselves Zulus, Xhosas, Sothos, and so forth, and our cultures are diverse and dissimilar... we must refrain from saying, 'This is our culture,' because it is these family customary practices that keep us fragmented... We are captives, slaves, and zombies right in the land of our forefathers. We have no land to live on, water and firewood we have to buy... They sowed hatred among us to divide and rule us.

Twaib Ismael shared similar views as those of Adam Mncanywa when he addressed the issue of Zulu tradition. Twaib Ismael was married to a Zulu convert and had some knowledge about the Zulu traditional belief system. He strongly believed that as the Zulu converts attend the masjid where they will be exposed to developmentalist and modernist perspectives they may gradually adopt a new worldview and forsake their traditional belief systems which are not up to date. There are Zulu traditions which are backward according to Ismael such as virginity testing, which to him seems like reverting to wearing animal skins daily or living uncovered in the forest. In his interview on the 20th of August 2006, he asserted that traditional life was very hard, but this is a new generation, and we are not using the traditions... we must live in a garden, and not in the forest, and both the society, family, and the individual should be cultivated like a garden and a nursery. People must be educated... (Kaarsholm 2011:115-116).

It is widely believed among the Muslim community that a Zulu person who is convinced of Islam will have to denounce traditional beliefs, especially those that are forbidden by the Islamic faith. The process of breaking away from one's tradition has to be gradually propelled by enlightenment and persuasion rather than coercion. The cultural traditions such as lobola and others in the same vein must be monitored by the Muslim household. This will be applicable, particularly in the Muslim community where there is a trend of syncretism between Zulu cultural tradition and Islam. Muslim religious leaders are aware that one cannot expect the Zulu community to treat marriage with any respect if it does not involve negotiations between two families over lobola. However, it is expected among Muslim families that lobola should be at least

negotiated to a reasonable price and this is the responsibility of Muslim parents (Kaarsholm 2011:117).

A Zulu convert to Islam, Adam Mncanywa recognised that the foreignness of Islam to the Zulu cultural tradition remains the core reason why Islam is not winning many converts among the Zulu people. He groaned for the type of Islam that will endorse a creative amalgamation of the local Zulu cultural traditions and Islamic faith, rather than a form of Islam that seems to reduce Zulu Muslims to dependent recipients of handouts. He observed that many of the conversion stories of Zulu Muslims were the result of handouts and opportunities to study. True Islam for Adam has to involve an effective message that will bring transformation in the manner that the Zulu people live and conduct themselves. According to Adam, Islam has to find its roots among the Zulu people and must permeate the Zulu cultural tradition. He states that according to the Quran, a message of faith has to be communicated to the community in their vernacular languages. Therefore, how can a Muslim Indian or Arab communicate the message of Islam to the Zulu people? Although Adam Mncanywa employed a problematic text from the Quran to support his claim, nonetheless, the writer will not rebut such a statement but address what is predicated by the title of this thesis. The author will not seek to provide any rebuttal for or against Islam and the Zulu indigenous worldview but will narrow down the literature to the premises predicated by the research topic.

Adam Mncanywa believed that Islam must be domesticated and find its roots among the Zulu people. The Zulu people must be responsible for propagating the message of Islam among themselves. Therefore, creativity and innovative ways of fostering an organic relationship between the Zulu cultural traditions and Islam are required. Adam contends that the true understanding of both Zulu cultural traditions and Islam must be well-researched and contrasted. Adam had a lot of respect for the Shembe church because of how they managed to domesticate Christianity, that is, to read the scriptures through the lens of the Zulu traditional world. According to Adam, Islam has to employ the same perspective that was adopted by the Shembe church in terms of the respect it displays when it comes to the Zulu traditional world. He indirectly acknowledges that the Shembe church did not adopt a Western type of Christianity that was geared toward stripping Africans of their cultural traditions (Kaarsholm 2011:118).

5.6 The Zulu convert views of Zulu indigenous religion.

Different factors influence the views which are held by the Zulu converts such as the Quran, Sunnah, *Qiyas*, and *Ijima*. The majority of Zulu converts to Islam who were involved in dawah projects such as Adam Mncanywa and Dawood Ngwane strongly believe in “teaching people about their own African culture and teaching them about respect as well as what is right and wrong. Only when this leads people to ask about Islam, will the message of Islam be made known to them” (Ngwane 2003)? According to Ngwane (2003:48), the Islamic faith is not only a feasible religion when reconciled with the Zulu tradition, but Islam also offers a better perspective towards the restoration of the Zulu cultural values... most importantly Islam succinctly reveals that God is one and undivided, that is, not to consist of any parts or partners. It is an inaccurate perception to think of Islam as a religion that is for Indians and Arabs because the message of Islam is predicated upon the belief that everyone is born a Muslim regardless of race, gender, language, or skin colour (Ngwane 2003:52). Zulu converts believe that Islam is about submission to Allah and based on that notion Muslims should always choose Islam over Zulu traditional views. Therefore, the Zulu person who has embraced Islam is expected to fully submit to Allah and shun any form of Zulu culture that is contrary to the Islamic teachings.

5.7 Comparing the Two Worldviews

The Zulu indigenous worldview is based on the belief that a Supreme Being exist, and he is responsible for creating the entire cosmos. According to Haron (1998), the Supreme Being (*uMvelinqang*) was gradually replaced by Zulu beliefs in the ancestral spirits as their religious belief system was altered by an evolutionary process. Deviation from the original message is expected from a religion that heavily relies on oral tradition and not a written text per se. Due to the evolutionary process, the Zulu people eventually regarded ancestral spirits as guardians of morality, responsible for punishing those who are disobedient while on the other hand rewarding those who are obedient to their command. Nevertheless, Haron’s claim on the paradigm shift which occurred in the Zulu perception of the Supreme Being is somehow vague, and some studies have been done that decimate his argument. It has been well established that among the tribes that have never heard of a monotheistic Supreme Being tend towards polytheism and this is true among the Zulu people before the influx of other religions. The idea that the Zulu people were once worshipers of the Supreme Being seems to

be a late invention. The Africans had many gods and some of the gods that were revered by Africans have been lost or forgotten due to the influx of other religions and the lack of codification among the Africans in the past.

Furthermore, even during the formation of the Zulu nation, ancestral spirits were known to be mediators between those living on earth and the Supreme Being. This belief is not based on the chasm that could exist between man and God, but it is rather based on the cultural stance that one cannot directly approach a great person such as a king. A typical example of this may be found in the fact that even the young man within a household will not directly approach their father, especially when they want to talk about serious matters. In the household, the mother's role is to mediate between her son and the father. This instantiates why *uMvelinqangi* is also not approached directly but through the ancestral spirits who are believed to be in the spirit world. The Zulu people did not pray directly to *uMvelinqangi* but to ancestral spirits who served as intermediates between the living and *uMvelinqangi*. Perhaps, it is necessary at this point to ask whether a person can hold on to the Zulu indigenous religion and still be a Muslim. What does it mean to be a Muslim?

Amongst the Zulu people ancestral veneration is very important to the extent that some people believe that one cannot be a Zulu person and neglect communicating with the dead. On the other hand, a Zulu person who converts to the Islamic faith has to consider Islam not just as a mere religion but as a way of life. The religion of Islam is based on the claim that Muhammad is the last prophet of Deuteronomy 18:18 who came with a final revelation or message. According to Muslims the meaning of the term Islam means peace. It is peace granted to one's life because of their submission to the Supreme Being (Allah). Therefore, a Muslim is a person who submits to the will of Allah. A person who submits to the will of Allah is logically expected to also submit to the orders of Allah that are revealed in the Quran and the Sunnah. A Zulu person who desires to become a Muslim has to make a declaration of faith which is crucial for anyone to be considered a Muslim. However, this does not mean that the prophets in biblical narratives were not Muslims because they did not declare *shahadah* (declaration of faith). Muslims believe that all the prophets were Muslims because they submitted to the will and orders of God. Most Muslims would defend the view that everyone is born a Muslim, but along the way they become misguided, therefore, based on this view if someone decides to become a Muslim, he or she is called a 'revert' rather than a convert. It is plausible to assume at this point that if one was born

into a Zulu family and believed in the Zulu pantheon, but later in life embrace the Islamic faith that person has to rediscover his identity in Islam as a Muslim. The process of becoming a Muslim does not necessarily mean a person has to neglect or denounce anything connected to the Zulu culture but only traditions that are haram according to Islam. A Zulu Muslim cannot hold on to the Zulu indigenous religious system as they are based on ancestral veneration. A Zulu Muslim must understand the Islamic concept of the absolute oneness of God (*Tawhid*) which forbids intermediaries in any shape or form. The Zulu Muslims may continue to be respectful to their dead but must always bear in mind that worship or veneration is only due to Allah. The centre of worship in Islam is Allah who has no partners and intermediators. The Zulu belief system is very symmetrical to their culture, and this is evident in how culture influences religious rituals in all strata such as birth, marriage, and funeral. The Zulu marriage customs have components that are significantly compatible with Muslim marriage. Both Zulu and Muslim marriages share similarities in that they require the bride price (*lobola* [IsiZulu] or *mahr* [Arabic]). *Ilobolo* is normally paid in cattle rather than money but in a case where one does not own cattle, then cash is allowed depending on the negotiations. In the Muslim communities, the dowry is normally settled by cash payment.

Furthermore, the Muslim religion and Zulu traditional marriage institutions allow polygamous marriages. Muslim men are allowed to marry up to four wives while the Zulu men have no restriction on the number of wives they can take. However, the bride and bridegroom's families have to agree that the couples can marry for them to get married. Although senior wives can permit their husbands' choice to take another wife under customary law, Zulu Muslims indicated that because women are typically financially dependent on men, even though the customary law protects them in theory, they still submit to their husband's authority. Contrary to popular belief, males marrying two wives are more prevalent in many polygamous marriages in KwaZulu-Natal, even though there are no restrictions on the number of spouses that a Zulu man may take. Moreover, not only do the Zulu Muslims and non-Muslim Zulu traditionalists engage in polygamy, but both societies strongly frown upon polyandry.

Furthermore, the correlation between ZIT (Zulu Indigenous Tradition) and the Islam polygamy practise, when a polygamous Zulu man converts to Islam, he is free to continue having wives (as long as there are no more than four, as per the Islamic tradition). However, the rival Christian faith is an alternative religion that would call for

unwavering adherence to monogamy, which was frequently inconvenient to some Zulu men. This is the reason that some of the Zulu Muslims would view Islam in this situation as an ally of their culture. As a result, in some situations, some Zulus turned to Islam as a substitute for ZIT. Additionally, functioning Islamic women's experiences are comparable to those of Africans. The socioeconomic and political apparatus and institutions in Africa are dominated by men, who are also seen as natural leaders who are superior to and born to govern over women. Muslims share this viewpoint. Allah declares in the Quran:

And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses.

That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice] (Surah 4:3).

Furthermore, the similarities between Islam and Zulu indigenous tradition on early child marriage became a noticeable element. Among the Muslim community, some oppose the idea of child marriage while others embrace it as a continuation of the tradition within both Islam and Zulu culture. Below the researcher will discuss the empirical research findings on child marriage as well as Muslim defence for the practise.

5.7.1 Early child marriage in Islam and Zulu culture

According to Popoola (2020:60-66), the empirical research findings show that early marriages are common in Africa and that young girls who marry young often have less education and begin having children earlier than other women. Early child marriages have increased in Malawi, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Ghana, and the fusion of international and regional legislation has occasionally clashed with customary laws. Furthermore, she states that, according to empirical data, there are age inequalities under separate laws, such as customary laws and other marriage laws, that affect the minimum age of marriage for girls and boys in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. She correctly posited that gender norms, cultural customs, and religious beliefs encourage underage marriages. This is well attested in the work of Jibrail Bin Yusuf (2013:10), that both Islam and Zulu traditions are in favour of early marriage. Girls are seen as being more sexually mature than boys in various African civilisations and Islam. According to the prevailing cultural perspective, as soon as girls reach sexual maturity, they should be married to protect them from men taking advantage of

them. In these cultures' pre-secular educational era, this idea was favoured. The dilemma of women's socioeconomic security, secular education, and "enlightenment" have all had an impact on female sexual orientations today. Due to the issue with the application of these early child marriages, there are myriad of opinions against this practice.

5.7.2 Early Child Marriage Health Outcome

Since child marriage has been less common over time in many nations, different birth cohorts have different chances of becoming married before the age of 18. Over 12 million young women worldwide suffer the effects of child marriage each year. The practice's detrimental effects on reproductive health are acknowledged, but its effects on mental health are widely disregarded. Most of the scientific studies suggest that the numerous indications, including unwanted pregnancies, problems during pregnancy, premature births, low birth weight kids, fetal mortality, and marital violence, have conclusive data currently. Usually, the female is the one who is married off to an older male while still a minor. Numerous issues arise as a result, which have an impact on women's rights everywhere. Many girls have less access to education, healthcare, and basic freedom of will when they are married off at such a young age (Population Council, 2004). Usually, the female is the one who is married off to an older male while still a minor. Numerous problems develop as a result, which affect women's rights in the places where Muslims predominate. Many girls have less access to education, healthcare, and basic freedom of will when they are married off at such a young age (Bello and Erulkar, 2007:6-18). The literature on underage marriage indicated that (Raj 2010: 931–935; Louie *et al.* 2009:1191-1197; Burgess *et al.*2022:):

1. Early child marriage is associated with higher levels of psychiatric disorders.
2. Early child marriage is associated with higher levels of intimate partner violence.
3. Early child marriage is associated with higher levels of fetal mortality.
4. Early child marriage is associated with higher levels of suicide.
5. Early child marriage is associated with higher levels of divorce.
6. Early child marriage is associated with inadequate parenting skills.

Similar findings have been made in Uganda and South Africa, where one in ten girls have been married before (Gibbs *et al.* 2018:13; Dunkle *et al.* 2018:12; Cohen *et al.* 2020:1-6). Even after adjustment for drug or alcohol abuse, unemployment, age,

residency, and other negative life events (NLEs), early marriage raised the incidence of depression by 2.77 times. Early marriage was associated with a greater prevalence of adjustment disorder. In Al-Kloub *et al.* (2019:462-77), a study conducted in Jordan of 15 women between the ages of 15 and 37 showed that early marriage and motherhood increased the distress brought on by losing one's education, self-confidence, ability to make decisions, childhood, freedom of movement, and peer social networks. The study found that while early marriage had severe mental, social, and physical consequences, sexual abuse victims had a higher prevalence of psychiatric problems and more severe psychiatric symptoms (Soylu *et al.* 2014:1552-9).

CM (child marriage) is a problem that has been around for millennia, is complicated and has strong roots in gender inequity, tradition, and poverty. Despite national legislation, the practice is pervasive in rural communities where opportunities for females can be scarce. The exceptionally high prevalence of CM found in our study shows unequivocally that prior efforts were insufficient to sufficiently reduce the social ills associated with CM (Pandya & Bhanderi 2015:246-251). Most importantly, early marriage robs young girls of their childhood by depriving them of the opportunity to play with friends, attend school, and pursue their dreams of a career instead of burdening them with household duties, parenthood, and sexual relationships. It is undeniable that most of the peer-reviewed research overwhelmingly suggests that a girl's well-being is put in danger when they marry as children, losing their youth. Domestic violence is more prevalent in homes where girls who marry before turning 18 live and school attendance is lower (Pandey 2017:242-247; Pandya & Bhanderi 2015:246-251).

Again, early childbearing has been associated with increased rates of maternal and infant mortality, shortened educational prospects, and reduced future family income. In their review of the research on the effects of early childbearing (both within and outside of marriage), Zabin and Kiragu (1998:210-232) identified several negative health effects, including higher-than-average blood pressure, toxemia, anaemia, bleeding, difficult and obstructed labour, premature delivery, and death for the mother. Teenage mothers also have a higher risk of prematurity, stillbirth, and neonatal mortality as well as low birth weight, which can cause neurological issues, retardation, and even death. Perhaps, finding solutions or concepts of stability and changing these habits is crucial when it comes to the practice of child marriages in both traditions.

From there, proactive strategies can be considered, and solutions put into practice to address the problem and open a door for the advancement of all individuals. Perhaps, the adherents of both Islam and Zulu Indigenous Religion need to reconsider this issue and possibly abolish it.

5.7.3 The Islamic perspective on child marriages

The Islamic perspective must be considered to fully comprehend child marriage. According to the Islamic perspective, men and women should be married young if they have a sexual arousal urge; if not, they have to fast. This is due to the negative effects of fornication or adultery (*Zina*⁵⁶) on the offender, his family, and society at large. In the Quran, Allah declares:

⁵⁶ In the Quran, both fornication and adultery are referred to as *zina*. Adultery is a phrase employed to describe an illicit act of sexual interaction, specifically involving a married individual, whereas fornication pertains to a similar conduct involving an unmarried person. Adultery is considered a significant transgression within the Islamic faith, as it undermines the fundamental structure of Muslim society, which is built upon the legal institution of marriage. This institution establishes a contractual agreement between two individuals, who are mutually obligated to one other with clearly defined rights and responsibilities, including exclusive fidelity. One of the rights and responsibilities encompassed within the institution of marriage is the entitlement to exclusive sexual relations with one's spouse, which serves as a means to mitigate promiscuity and maintain social order. The Quran has several passages pertaining to the topic, with particular emphasis on Q 24:2, which establishes the prescribed *had* (to prevent or separate) penalty of 100 lashes for anyone engaged in acts of adultery. Certain reports of hadith further delineate that this penalty is specifically allocated for individuals who engage in extramarital relations without being married, but those who commit adultery while being married are to be subjected to capital punishment by stoning. According to a verse in the Quran (Q 4:15), it is stipulated that the punishment for adultery can only be carried out if there are four credible eyewitnesses who can authenticate the conduct. This requirement is emphasized due to the seriousness of making unfounded charges of adultery, which is considered to be a matter of significant gravity. According to a verse in the Quran (Q 24:4), individuals who make an accusation of adultery without the necessary substantiation of four witnesses are subject to a penalty of 80 lashes. Due to the rigorous evidentiary standards imposed, the implementation of penalty for adultery is infrequently carried out, despite attempts made by Muslim authorities to enforce it in certain contemporary Muslim nations.

The fornicator does not marry except a [female] fornicator or polytheist, and none marries her except a fornicator or a polytheist, and that has been made unlawful to the believers.

According to the Islamic perspective, it is logical that women should marry earlier than males because they are more likely than men to be subjected to early sexual exploitation. The Prophet made a point of stressing that women should be married while they are virgins to avoid being sexually exploited by men. The men are subject to the same demand. However, some Muslim parents willfully marry off their female offspring under the guise of carrying out a religious duty to avoid having to take care of them. When compared to Islam, certain Zulu traditional traditions are in a similar state. However, the motives or reasons to practise CM may vary regardless of the tradition in question. Furthermore, there are notable similarities between Islam and the Zulu traditional perspective on certain aspects such as premarital sex, children born outside of wedlock, mourning practices, and other related matters.

5.7.4 Islam and ZIR on premarital sex and child born out of wedlock

The Zulu Muslim men who have engaged in premarital sex and if that resulted in a child born out of wedlock, the child would be given the mother's surname instead of the father's family name. As per Islamic sharia, the child born out of wedlock is not permitted to inherit from his father. When a baby is born among the Zulu people some rituals are performed accompanied by animals sacrificed as means to placate the ancestral spirits. When a baby is born, the Islamic religion likewise observes a similar event. The Islamic institution known as '*aqiqa*'⁵⁷ is similar to that of the Zulu tradition

⁵⁷ *aqiqa*: One sheep shall be slaughtered for a girl and two sheep for a boy, each of which must meet the same requirements as a sheep for *udhiya* (sacrifice). The sheep should be killed on the seventh day, but if there is a delay, it may be killed at any time. Although it is best to kill the sheep as soon as possible, delaying it is not sinful. And as Allah is the Source of Might, may He bestow peace and blessings on our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and companions. The Prophet Muhammad described how it should be carried out, as may be seen in the following *Ahadith*:

1. Salman ibn 'Amir al-Dabbi said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "*Aqiqah* is to be offered for a (newly born) boy, so slaughter (an animal) for him, and remove all dirt from him." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5154)

except the sacrifice is only offered to Allah as a means to show their obedience and also serve as a sign of worship.

The women in the Zulu community are restricted after giving birth to a baby during the period when there is a constant flow of blood, and when her normal menstrual cycle starts all over again. During these timeframes, a Zulu woman would be considered impure and restricted from engaging in any sexual relations. Amongst the Muslim community, a similar practice is observed. Nonetheless, the Muslim community permits the new mother to be in contact with her husband and grant them free movement among the family. In some of the Zulu homesteads contact between the wife and husband is outrightly forbidden during the period in question.

5.7.5 Death and *Izilo* in Islam and ZIR

Muslim funeral traditions are intricate, but they are all designed to show the corpse the most respect possible given that it will shortly be offered to God. Family and close friends should be present when a Muslim is near to passing away. They should encourage the dying individual to repeat the “*shahada*,” which affirms that Allah is the only God, and offer them love and hope. When someone has passed away, people in attendance should say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return” (Surah 2:156). The Muslims are expected to cover the eyes and lower jaw of the

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2. ‘Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded them to sacrifice two similar sheep for a boy and one for a girl. (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi; he said, it is *hasan sahih*; Ibn Majah, 3163; Sahih al-Tirmidhi, 1221)
 3. Umm Karaz narrated that she asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about ‘*aqiqah* and he said: “For a boy two sheep and for a girl one, and it does not matter whether they are male or female.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1516; he said, it is *hasan sahih*; *al-Nasai*, 4217; Abu Dawud, 2835; Ibn Majah, 3162, without the last part; Sahih Abi Dawud, 246)
 4. Samurah ibn Jundub narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Every child is in pledge for his ‘*aqiqah*, which should be sacrificed for him on the seventh day and his head should be shaved and he should be given a name.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 1522, he said it is *hasan sahih*; Ibn Majah, 3165; Sahih Ibn Majah, 2563)

deceased and use a clean shroud to cover the corpse. Additionally, they ought to implore Allah to pardon the sins of the departed in their *dua*⁵⁸. Islamic law states that the body should be buried as soon as possible after death, hence funeral planning and arrangements must start right away. However, Muslims are not permitted to cremate their loved ones⁵⁹.

The family should get in touch with the nearest Islamic community organisation as soon as possible and should start to plan for the funeral service and burial. The Islamic community should help the family to find a suitable funeral home and work with the funeral home. The immediate family will congregate and accept visitors following the service and burial. The community is expected to feed the family during the first few days of the grieving period, which is typically three days. In Islam, expressing grief over a death is permissible. At the time of death, during the funeral, and the burial, crying and weeping are all acceptable forms of expression. However, it is forbidden to weep and scream, tear clothing, smash things, and display a loss of faith in Allah⁶⁰.

In traditional African religion, the deceased are typically interred in the country of their ancestors. In most African cultures, burial must take place in the deceased person's ancestral home country to be regarded as legitimate, honourable, significant, and acceptable. The oldest form of religion on the continent, African native religions hold

⁵⁸ Dua: Supplication or personal invocation, also known as “calling upon” Allah, as well as individual requests or prayers, as opposed to formal worship, or “*salat*,” in Islam.

⁵⁹ Cremation is a forbidden practise and considered as a filthy practise by Muslims. Muslims are not permitted to participate in the practise of cremation in any manner, including seeing it or expressing approbation for it. Funeral proceedings or rituals are commanded by divine law in Islam. Islam forbids Muslims from stepping, walking, or sitting on the grave of the deceased, therefore, how could Muslims commit a worse profanity of cremation. The prescribed technique is to bury the body of the deceased person.

⁶⁰ Zainab Quadri in Pulse.ng wrote about 10 Muslim burial traditions namely: what they do just after someone passes away, the mourning practice, the washing of the corpse, the shrouding of the corpse, the prayer during the funeral, the procedure of the funeral, the transportation of the body, Muslim burial traditions, the marking of the deceased tomb, and how they console the family and friends. For more details see Pusle.ng 10 Muslim funeral traditions. 07/27/2015. Accessed 17th August 2023. [In Islam 10 Muslim funeral traditions | Pulse Nigeria](#)

that life does not end with death but continues in another realm. African traditional adherents respect the period of transition following death when the deceased enters the afterlife and reunites with their ancestors. This is one of the reasons why many ceremonies and sacrifices will take place at this time. Although it is hard to generalise funeral practises based on African religion due to the continent's varied ethno-religious groups. Personal possessions are frequently buried with the deceased in some tribes to aid the departed in their journey. When someone dies in a house, all the windows are coated with ash, all the portraits in the house are turned around, and all mirrors, televisions, and other reflective things are covered. The beds are taken from the deceased's room, and the bereaved ladies sit on the floor, generally on a mattress. Most Africans believe that death is a spiritual occurrence rather than a physiological one (Umoh 2012:1-13).

In the African context, people in the community are expected to visit the grieving family for seven to thirteen days before the funeral, and various sacrifices are also undertaken during this time (Mbiti 1969:145-152). Many African burial rites begin with the sending away of the departed with a request that they do not cause trouble to the living, and they end with a plea for the protection of those alive by their ancestors (Parrinder 1962:89).

Furthermore, when the leader of the household passes away a mourning period (*izilo* [IsiZulu] or *iddah* [Arabic]) is initiated as a form of respect for the deceased husband. In the Zulu tradition, the wife of the deceased husband is expected to mourn up to six months to which avoidances or restrictions may apply on daily routine activities, dress, and sexual and social relations (Pauw 1974:101). Amongst the Zulu people, some things or occurrences are known to make one ritually impure such as death, sexual relations, birth, menstruation, and puberty. These natural events that occur in life do not only apply to the affected persons, but they also include those who have been in contact with them. The ritual impurity does not only make a person regarded as impure, but it also causes the decline of power (*amandla*), which is known as a life force that imbues and innately inheres in the living person. Furthermore, the Zulu people believe that a bewitched person can potentially spread a bad omen through unrestricted social contact with other people (Ngubane 1977:78).

On the other hand, in the Islamic faith, the mourning period is shorter than that of the Zulu tradition as Muslim widows are given a waiting period of about four months and ten days to mourn. The duration of the grieving period among Muslims can vary, with

some observing a customary time of 40 days. However, the length of this period may be significantly shorter depending on the level of religiosity of the bereaved family. Furthermore, the waiting or mourning period for a Muslim woman is specifically employed to determine whether a Muslim widow is pregnant or not, and this procedure was a useful method before the use of modern technology that can determine if someone is pregnant or not (Haron 1998). The similarities between the Islamic and Zulu traditions demonstrate a common shared value between the two traditions. However, the veneration of ancestral spirits among the Zulu people is a defeater for someone who truly wants to identify as a Zulu Muslim, in the sense that one cannot be truly Muslim and slaughter animals to venerate the ancestral spirits.

5.7.6 Zulu Muslim burial method

When it comes to handling the situation of death in the family, the Zulu Muslims would prefer to bury their loved ones in a cemetery which is strictly reserved for Muslims. The corpse of the deceased person would be washed and thereafter clad in a white sheet. When the person who passed away is a married man the widow has to observe the Islamic rites such as the waiting period before moving on to another relationship. Nonetheless, as alluded to above, Islam and Zulu culture do not have much difference concerning the mourning or waiting period, hence, that is why a Zulu woman would sometimes observe the mourning rules that are prescribed in the Zulu tradition. The cultural change process has managed to influence even the social structure of the Zulu Muslim society.

5.8 The influence of Islam among the Zulu people

In this segment, the focus will be on the influence of Islam on the Zulu indigenous worldview. However, the main focus will be geared toward individuals who identify as Zulu Muslims to ascertain whether Islam has affected their understanding of what it means to be a Zulu person. Among the two religions under consideration, Islam remains a missionary religion. The Islamic dawah was not only geared towards the Zulu religious belief systems but the emphasis was also exerted toward Christianity as it had many Zulu people who identified as Christians. Muslims also recognise that the tribal structures among the Zulu people are structured in such a way that the chief is a preeminent guide and spokesperson. This is the reason why among the Muslim dawah group there has been a focus on converting the Zulu chiefs as a means to

accelerate the process of converting many tribesmen to the Islamic faith. The dawah project in KwaZulu-Natal has prepared pamphlets in IsiZulu language and translated the Quran into IsiZulu. The efforts of the Dawah project have not succeeded in producing the expected results. The Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal still retain a level of respect and loyalty to the chiefs as well as their king. However, it is evident that due to the modern urbanisation process, the commitment to the tribal structure seems to decline as individuals' dependence upon the leadership of the chiefs or king has dwindled. Furthermore, Muslim educational institutions have been established as means to serve the needs of the Zulu Muslims, for instead, As-Salaam Educational Institute located in Braemar was constructed for African Muslims. Some of the Zulu people were sent to Asian and Middle Eastern educational institutions to be enrolled in Islamic education and become Shaykhs and serve in their communities. The graduates from Islamic educational institutions are expected to play a vital role in moulding the Zulu culture to fit the Islamic framework while ensuring that they safeguard against superfluous protests due to the impression that Islam is undermined by the Zulu culture. Among the Zulu Muslims, the high level of religiosity is regarded as a cause for someone to be a practising Muslim, that is, to live according to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah (Haron 1998).

The Zulu people who converted to Islam embraced a new form of religion that was based on beliefs unfamiliar to them, but they have become acquainted with what it means to be a Muslim. Amongst the Zulu Muslim community, some have learned to use certain oft-quoted phrases in Arabic such as *Inshaa Allah* (Allah willing – *uma uAllah evumile* [IsiZulu]). When something pleasant has happened in real-time the Zulu Muslim would say *ma sha` Allah* (it was the desire of Allah - *Kwenzeke intando kaAllah*). The basic Arabic phrases have enabled Zulu Muslims to be conscientised and ensured that *Tawhid* is not violated, and it also safeguards the importance of the Arabic language among Muslims. Many of the Zulu Muslims have enrolled for a course designed to teach the basic Arabic alphabet to enable them to recite the Quran and pronounce familiar phrases. This initiative has indirectly assisted the Zulu people to advance their literacy skills.

The Islamic practices appear to have permeated and influenced the Zulu name-giving ceremonies. Among the Zulu community, there is a resilient tradition of giving the children praiseworthy names. Zulu Muslim families would sometimes opt for Arabic names which are synonymous with Zulu names or choose a name with a meaning that

is complementary to these languages. The Zulu Muslims often choose to be identified by both Arabic and Zulu names, and this is a phenomenon that is on the rise. When a baby is born a ceremonial sacrifice is performed to express their submission and obedience to the Supreme Being (Allah) alone. The practising Zulu Muslims have departed from their Zulu traditional belief system which is based on allegiance to their ancestral spirits. Islam has been able to convince the Zulu Muslims that they ought to live according to the teachings found in the Quran and Sunnah.

In addition, when girls and boys reach adulthood they participate in a custom where they put on tribal garb and gather together in a crowd to do activities such as flirtatious bantering and love play. At these gatherings, young women would not cover their breasts like the young virgin women who attended the reed dance ceremony at Enyokeni Royal Palace. The young men and women who chose to embrace Islam would cease to participate in such gatherings because Islam has a strict prohibition against such activities. Consequently, this led young men and women to discard wearing customary clothing to display their naked breasts and begin to adopt the Islamic code of dress. The Zulu men would sometimes wear long dresses (*thobes* [Arabic]) which are normal clothing for Arabian men, and some of the Zulu Muslim men prefer to wear *thobes* to display their identity as Muslims. On the other hand, Zulu women would cover their bodies completely as per the instruction of Islamic law.

5.9 The overview of inculturation, acculturation, and enculturation in ZIR and Islam

In this segment, the researcher will examine and attempt to comprehend the interactions between Islam and indigenous Zulu ideas, institutions, and cultural practices. He will do so by using the concepts of inculturation⁶¹, acculturation⁶², and enculturation⁶³. To understand how Zulu culture, including religious, political, social,

⁶¹ Inculturation: is a well-known process for incorporating specific cultural values into another cultural setting.

⁶² Acculturation: in this process, the cultural values from a different group are assimilated or absorbed.

⁶³ Enculturation: is a process by which someone comes to accept the customs or values of someone else's culture.

and even linguistic values has either been accommodated by or has accommodated Islam, this thesis attempts to tease out various characteristics of both Islam and Zulu indigenous beliefs and practises. The various Zulu indigenous religions and Islam have coexisted for a very long time in KwaZulu-Natal. Islam is thought to get along well with several Zulu traditional beliefs and lifestyles.

Furthermore, in other cases, there has even been such a strong blending that it can often be difficult, if not impossible, to tell what is traditionally Zulu and what is the prerogative of Islam, such as the reception of strangers among Zulu Muslim homes. Islam has the potential to gradually replace local culture in certain Zulu Muslim-dominated societies, often with little or no opposition. Despite this, it should be remembered that not every society that Islam encountered on African territory fully embraced it. In the outskirts of Durban, many Zulu Muslim converts did not continue to follow their traditional ways upon their conversion to Islam. Nonetheless, a time of peaceful coexistence between Islam and the local culture may have occurred before it became the dominant religion in a certain area. Because of this, there was essentially no issue in the two cultures mixing. There was a peaceful coexistence between Islam and the local Zulu culture before it became the dominant religion in a given area. As a result, there was almost no problem in blending the two traditions among some of the Zulu Muslims.

5.9.1 Inculturation: Evaluation of the relationship between Islam and the Zulu indigenous worldview.

Pruitt (2007:19) states that several ideas, such as inculturation, contextualisation, and indigenisation, have been used to explain the process of the spread of religious doctrines across cultural boundaries. He further posits that inculturation is more accurate in describing the continuing synthesis or the interaction between that faith (Islam in this case) and the Zulu culture. Inculturation requires a prerequisite because it denotes the meeting of two different cultures, but does not characterise it, therefore acculturation is a prerequisite for inculturation. To put it another way, inculturation is a viable hypothesis for illuminating the dual process of Islam's influence on some of the Zulu indigenous beliefs and practices while also undergoing a specific indigenous metamorphosis (Arbuckle 1984:174). It is a known fact among the Zulu Muslims that many of the Zulu Muslims still identify as *AmaZulu* and uphold their Zulu culture and traditions despite practising Islam. Hiskett (1984:120-21) in Jibrail Bin Yusuf (2013:8), after he assessed the northern Ghanaian Gonja people posited that the:

Gonja society then developed into the following classes. First, were the *gbanya*, They had become Muslims through their association with the Dyula Muslims They continued to take part in the traditional Earth cult and consulted Earth priests as well as their advisors. ... The subjects of the *gbanya* were the *nyamase*, the commoners. They remained largely untouched by Islam, except that they took part in certain festivals that mixed Islam with the customs of the Earth cult. ... Islam in Gonja was, and still is, characterised by extensive mixing. A typical example is the *Damba*, a traditional festival that now takes place each year at the time of the *Maulud*, the Prophet's birthday. So much of the old Earth cult survives in it that it bears little semblance to the *Maulud* as this is celebrated in Sunni Islamic communities. Mixing also shows itself in the use of Islamic objects, especially those bearing Arabic writing which are used even in herbal and concoction shrines. Chiefs habitually refer both to shrine priests and Muslim imams, requiring the traditional ritual from the former and Muslim prayers from the latter. These practices have always been regarded with tolerance by the *sakpare* and the *dogtes*.

Nonetheless, this is contrary to the Zulu Muslim converts who have a strong desire to return or preserve Islam to its puritanical nature. In the context of Islam, inculturation means the presentation and re-expression of the Quran and Sunnah in culturally appropriate ways and language. Therefore, inculturation is a theory that is not compatible with or a true reflection of the relationship between Zulu Muslims and Islam in KwaZulu-Natal. Tihagale (2010:1), correctly states that:

Inculturation recognises that faith has its own life. It is not like a spirit imprisoned in a bottle or a particular culture though it is always expressed in one or another cultural form. Inculturation argues that faith can find a home in an African culture and indeed open up its new home to new challenges. Faith, because it has its own life and its norms, will necessarily transform the host culture so that it becomes of that culture and yet not of that culture.

The perception of Islam among Zulu Muslims is predicated upon the idea that all Zulu values and customs must be filtered through the Quran and the Sunnah. Therefore, the Zulu Muslim converts did not adapt the Islamic teachings and practises to their culture but yielded to the Islamic creed. This analysis does not necessarily exclude the subset of the Zulu Muslims who are constantly engaged in the adaptation of Islamic teaching and practises to Zulu culture.

5.9.2 Acculturation: Evaluation of the relationship between Islam and the Zulu indigenous worldview.

Redfield *et al* (1936:149) were the first to describe acculturation as a concept or theory which is “the phenomenon that occurs when groups of people from different cultures come into constant first-hand contact, resulting in modifications in the original culture patterns of one or both groups.” This process entails the changing of individuals’ views, values, and identities as a result of their encounters with different cultures. Acculturation is a theory or term which supports the absorption of another culture at the expense of one’s own. We must bear in mind that Zulu culture is a synthesis of human values, including beliefs, morality, expectations, abilities, and knowledge, which are incorporated into basic customs. In the Zulu Muslim community, the integration of Islam into Zulu customs and practises was not observed. Instead, there was a strong commitment to fostering enduring identities among Zulu Muslims by imparting knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah.

The Zulu Muslims learn new ways to adapt worship to the native talent. Some of the masjids in townships have not even approved of the notion, but for those who have, this research shines a spotlight on it. Certain mosques located in the suburbs of Durban have included Zulu songs into their religious practices, such as the inclusion of the song “*igama lika-Allah malibongwe*” (meaning “the name of Allah be praised/thanked”). Interestingly, this song has a resemblance to another well-known Zulu song called “*igama lika-Jesu malibongwe*” (meaning “the name of Jesus be praised/thanked”). The alteration of Zulu hymns or songs among Zulu Muslims demonstrates that they do not discard all prior knowledge but filter their previous knowledge and experience through the Islamic framework.

The Zulu Muslims like Mncanywa are emphatical that Allah did not reveal Islam to Muhammad for it to be the subject of theoretical debates or sacred phrases spoken by individuals seeking favours without grasping their importance. Allah revealed this religion to control the lives of the individual, the family, and society as a whole, to serve as a lighthouse guiding people out of darkness and into light. The Quranic verse says, “O People of the Scripture, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to conceal of the Scripture and overlooking much. There has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book” (Surah 5:15-16). The life of a devout Zulu Muslim is a life of guidance and embodiment of the Islamic teachings and an

individual who will provide a vivid and beautiful picture of Islam, in such a manner that when others see him and interact with him, their faith is strengthened.

5.10 The perception of God according to Muslims and Zulu Indigenous worldview

Dawood Ngwane in his book *Ubhaqa* quotes chapter 112 of the Quran which reads thus, “Say (O Prophet) God is one, God is eternal, he begets not nor is he begotten and there is nothing like unto him”. He employs this verse from the Quran to deduce that the ancient Zulu people would have provided the same description when referring to *uMvelinqangi*. It is evident throughout the works of Ngwane that he presupposes that the modern Zulu people have a distorted understanding of the Supreme Being, but it was not so in the beginning. Ngwane proposes that Zulu people should question beliefs inherited from their parents or the previous generations. He made the following statement by which he seeks to mandate the Zulu people to admit that:

We inherit our religion from our parents. Very few people question their parents' religion, and each generation passes their religion to the following generation without any thought as to whether it has any basis or, if it does, whether the basis can be supported by a reliable authority. That which our parents believed in we also believe in. If our parents believed in phantoms we believe in phantoms and do not realise that we believe in phantoms. If those phantoms were called God by our parents, we also call those phantoms God; and teach our children to worship those phantoms as that is the belief that was implanted in us in our childhood; a belief that has grown deep roots in our hearts. Phantom beliefs do have roots in people's hearts even where there are clear signs warning them about the futility of those beliefs. These phantom beliefs that have grown deep roots will have their phantom foundations or phantom bases, which will be held onto as though they were genuine, in spite of proof to the contrary (Ngwane 2003:13).

Ngwane argued for a position that is similar to what Haron had proposed in the above segment. The idea that the Zulu people worshipped the only true God as revealed in the Abrahamic religion(s) is misleading. The Zulu people have always had shrines or huts dedicated to the ancestral spirits even before the influx of other religions. The role of ancestral spirits in the Bantu or Zulu societies that existed aeons before Christianity or Islam is overwhelming. Furthermore, as previously mentioned it has been

conclusive that many tribes in a distant place who have never heard of a monotheistic Supreme Being tend towards polytheism and this is true even among the Zulu people before the influx of other religions. Eiselen (1924:84-94) proposed that the cultural practises of the Hamitic people residing in North Africa, particularly the Ethiopians, exerted an impact on the belief systems of the Zulu and Tshwana communities, specifically concerning their beliefs in *uNkulunkulu* or *Modimo*. We have yet to unearth any evidence of monotheism in Africa that was not the consequence of a long evolutionary process. As a result, we must adopt animism as the focal point for our investigation. The Zulu creation myth does provide us with enough evidence to deduce that the ancient Zulu people did not worship God in the same way as described in the doctrine of *Tawhid*. According to Gordon (1880), the religious system of the Zulu people involved the worship of ancestral spirits as well as the worship of serpents as ancestral spirits appeared in the form of certain kinds of snakes (see chapter two for details).

5.10.1 Anthropomorphism of Allah and *uMlenzemunye*

In the Islamic creed, the supremacy of Allah is unambiguous. The idea that the ability of Allah is beyond human understanding is predicated upon the notion of Him being completely perfect and unique in all of his attributes. Muslims believe that Allah created human beings to worship Him and Him alone as there is nothing worthy of worship except Him. He is the originator, the creator, and the sustainer of all that exists. On the other hand, the adherents of the Zulu indigenous religion believe in a Supreme Being but the nature of the Zulu aseity is not quite in a monotheistic nature as in Islam (see chapter 2 on Zulu creation story). Nonetheless, the Zulu people, specifically some of the Ngwane people, worshipped a deity known as *uMvelinqangi* before the introduction of Christian missionaries. Another significant aspect of Zulu Indigenous Religion is the concept of *ubunye buka Nkulunkulu* (the Oneness of God). Zulu monotheism posits a conceptualisation of God as an everlasting being responsible for both the creation and sustenance of all things. It is believed that the distinct nature and essence possessed by Him sets Him apart as a Creator apart from all other entities. The Zulu people posit that, in contrast to the other entities traditionally thought of as being created, God exists independently of any other causal factors. The Zulu people explicitly emphasise this concept by referring to God as *uZivelele*, denoting “The One who possesses inherent existence, self-sufficiency” (Thorpe 1991:34).

There is a sense in which the concept of God encompasses attributes such as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, and transcendence. God is believed to exist without a discernible beginning or end, possessing comprehensive knowledge and limitless power, but also exhibiting a sense of both remoteness and imminence. The monotheistic perspective of God is reinforced by the unified nomenclature that African individuals attribute to the diverse names they assign to the Supreme Being. The Zulu people demonstrate a lack of recognition towards any other entity possessing similar characteristics or equivalent standing as if there were a plurality of such entities. The concept of monotheism posits that there exists a singular deity, commonly referred to as God, who does not entertain the notion that several gods were involved in the creation of the cosmos, including the heavens, the earth, the sky, the mountains, the oceans, the light, the stars, and the moon. Additionally, this deity is believed to continue the act of creation by bringing forth new life in the form of newborns and exhibiting the ability to cure the infirmities (Ndlovu 2018:165).

In the Kingdom of Eswatini, *uZivelele* or *uMvelinqangi* were commonly referred to as *uMlenzemunye*, and are attributed with the role of being the originator of all entities inside the universe. The Zulu community engaged in the practice of slaughtering cows and distributing them alongside Zulu homemade beer. In exchange for this offering, *uMvelinqangi*, a divine entity, would bestow blessings upon them, including bountiful harvests, healing, and an extended lifespan beyond 100 years in this world.

According to Dlamini (1939:01), it is observed that due to their adherence to *Mvelinqangi*, the occurrence of epilepsy and hailstorms was non-existent in the land. However, many individuals renounced their faith in *uMvelinqangi*, leading to their subsequent affliction and suffering. According to Dlamini (1939:01), it is noted that among the Zulu people, *uNkulunkulu* was historically referred to as *uMvelinqangi*, while the Ngwane people recognised him as *uMlenzemunye* due to his manifestation as a one-legged individual. The consumption of homemade alcoholic beverages frequently led to *uMvelinqangi's* descent accompanied by the cloud formation on the mountain. During the process of slaughtering bovines, the people engaged in rhythmic chanting and performed the traditional Zulu dance. An endeavour was made to establish a sense of organisation within the Zulu society in response to the outbreak of a very virulent influenza virus among the Zulu youth. The Zulu people demonstrated a conscientiousness towards the concept that it is of significance to placate both *uMvelinqangi* and *uNomkhubulwana*, resulting in the veneration of both deities. How

they were venerated entailed the preservation of customary beliefs and rituals to align with the intentions of *uMvelinqangi* and *uNomkhubulwana*. The Zulu act of worship aimed towards several deities is considered a major shirk within the Islamic faith.

Interestingly, both the Zulu indigenous religion and the Islamic faith exhibit certain anthropomorphic characteristics in their respective conceptions of the Supreme Being. The concept of anthropomorphism holds significance within the realm of classical Islamic theology. This inquiry pertains to the extent to which God exhibits similarities to human beings in terms of his characteristics, behaviours, and feelings. Is God fundamentally distinct from and separate from his creation, or is there a connection between them? The matter was brought up in discussions concerning the content of the Quran and Sunnah, as well as in the endeavours undertaken by early adherents of Islam to differentiate their religious convictions from those of non-Islamic origins. This was particularly relevant with the ancient Near Eastern cultures of the Greeks, who frequently depicted their deities in human likeness, and the Christians, who maintained the belief that Jesus was the Son of God who became flesh and dwelled among man (incarnation). The issue may have been amplified by political struggles within the Muslim community during the eighth century (see Watt 1998:99).

Muslims were referred to as anthropomorphists because they held to the belief that God has human-like characteristics, and sought validation for their beliefs in certain passages of the Quran. These passages, such as “Grace is in God’s hand” (Q 3:73) and “His throne encompasses the heavens and earth” (Q 2:255), were seen by anthropomorphists as evidence supporting their perspective. The interlocutors posited that as a consequence, God must possess a tangible hand and a corporeal form that is capable of being positioned upon a throne. The hadith literature has anthropomorphic descriptions that are considerably more pronounced, including one that draws from the Bible, asserting that God created Adam “in his image.” However, their adversaries contended that these assertions should not be interpreted literally, but rather as rhetorical devices designed to aid laypeople in comprehending abstract theological ideas. To substantiate their perspectives, individuals who oppose anthropomorphism often use a verse from the Quran (Surah 42:11) which states that God is incomparable, suggesting that God does not possess any similarity to His creation, including human beings (Watt 1998:85-100; Abrahamov 1996).

The anthropomorphic conceptions of God emerged throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, influenced by prevailing religious piety. These ideas were expounded by

Sunni scholars who adhered to a literal interpretation of the Quran and hadith, as well as by adherents of radical Shiite teachings. The Mutazilites School and the Abbasid caliphs advocated for an extreme rationalist perspective on God, which rejected the notion of any substantial similarity between God and his creation. This viewpoint also endorsed anthropomorphism. The medium stance in this discourse was established by al-Ashari (873–935) and his adherents, who contended that the anthropomorphic portrayals of God derived from the Quran and hadith, should be acknowledged as genuine while emphasising that God retains a distinctiveness that is beyond our comprehension. The aforementioned concept has been the prevailing belief throughout the Sunni community up to the present time. However, it is worth noting that anthropomorphic interpretations of God persist in common Muslim beliefs, as well as in specific aspects of Sufism and speculative thinking. The Quranic Surah 42:11⁶⁴ and 112:4 do not preclude the notion that Allah has a body. According to the teachings of Muhammad in the Quran and Sunnah, Allah has a body, shape, and form. The ongoing discourse within the Muslim community revolves around the theological question of whether Allah possesses corporeal attributes, with differing perspectives presented by the Hanbali, Salafi, Athari, Ashari, and Maturidi schools of thought. Notably, the latter group, encompassing Ashari and Maturidi scholars, express objections to the notion of Allah possessing physical characteristics. Nonetheless, the hadith says:

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, “Allah created Adam in His **shape or form**, sixty cubits (about 30 meters) in height. When He created him, He said (to him), “Go and greet that group of angels sitting there, and listen to what they will say in reply to you, for that will be your greeting and the greeting of your

⁶⁴ In Surah 42:11 Allah says, “[He is] Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you from yourselves, mates, and among the cattle, mates; He multiplies you thereby. **There is nothing like unto Him**, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” The emphasis in the verse in bold and underlined sentence is meant to repel false understandings and prevent the pitfall of attributing to Allah the characteristics of creation. Again and again, the paradigm that is the entire foundation of understanding Allah and His attributes is, “**There is nothing like unto Him**.” (Edited by G.F. Haddad; Alexander Bain; Karim K. Tourk & Jennifer McLennan., *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine*. 2nd ed., Mountain View, CA: As-Sunna Foundation of America, Vol. 1, p. 103) (Bold and underline emphasis mine).

offspring.” Adam (went and) said, ‘*As-Salamu Alaikum* (Peace be upon you).’ They replied, ‘*AsSalamu-‘Alaika wa Rahmatullah* (Peace and Allah’s Mercy be on you) So they increased ‘*Wa Rahmatullah*’ The Prophet added ‘So whoever will enter Paradise, will be of the shape and picture of Adam Since then the creation of Adam’s (offspring) (i.e. stature of human beings is being diminished continuously) to the present time (Sahih al-Bukhari 6227, Book 79, Hadith 1)” (Bold emphasis mine).

Again, the narrative that follows discusses how Allah’s composition is unique among all of His creations. (Waleed K.S Al-Essa 1999:59):

Meaning they want to see Allah’s Face (because that is the greatest pleasure for the people of Paradise). The Quran and the Sunnah affirm that Allah has a face, two hands, fingers, and two eyes. Some people deny these attributes because they incorrectly suppose that by affirming them, they are humanising Allah. Such an argument is only valid for those who would say, for example, “Allah has hands like ours (?)” Such a statement is not allowed because it qualifies Allah’s attributes without evidence from the Quran or the Sunnah. It would also be in contradiction to the Quranic verse: “**There is nothing that is like Him, and He is The Ever-Hearing, The Ever-Seeing**” (Surah 42:11). Thus we must affirm the attributes that Allah, and/or his Messenger have affirmed; we must believe that these attributes befit the Magnificence and Glory of Allah; and we are not allowed to qualify these attributes unless Allah, and/or his Messenger have done so for us.

However, the scholars of the Quran and Sunnah persist in their pursuit of a thorough comprehension of the attributes of Allah, as the assertion of Allah’s composition may lead others to erroneously perceive Him as being similar to created beings:

All that has been revealed in Allah’s Book [the Quran] as regards the [*Sifat...*] Qualities of Allah..., the Most High,- like His Face, Eyes, Hands, Shins, (Legs), His Coming, His *Istawa* (rising over) His Throne and others; His Qualities or all that Allah’s Messenger... qualified Him in the true authentic Prophet’s Ahadith (narrations) as regards His Qualities like [*Nuzul...*] His Descent or His laughing and others etc. **The religious scholars of the Quran and the Sunna believe in these Qualities of Allah and they confirm that these are His Qualities, without *Ta’wil...* (interpreting their meanings into different things etc.) or *Tashbih...* (giving resemblance or similarity to any of the**

creatures) or *Ta'til...* (i.e. completely ignoring or denying them i.e. there is no Face, or Eyes or Hands, or Shins etc. for Allah). These Qualities befit or suit only Allah Alone, and **He does not resemble any of (His) creatures.** As Allah's Statements (in the Qur'an): (1) "**There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer**" (V.42:11). (2) There is none comparable unto Him (V.112:4) (Bold emphasis mine).⁶⁵

The notion that Allah is constituted of multiple parts such as multiple eyes (Q 52:48), two right hands, and one leg or shin,⁶⁶ has been maintained by Muhammad's early believers and continues to be taught by a significant percentage of Muslims in the contemporary period. Nonetheless, Salafi Muslims attempt to persuade their audience that their conviction in the existence of Allah's face, hands, and shins should not be misconstrued as an indication that their deity possesses a corporeal form or physical attributes. The Salafis in question bear the responsibility to substantiate how Allah's physical attributes are distinct from any created being, especially to preclude Zulu people who may equate Allah's countenance with that of a person. The matter under consideration relates to the claim that the indicated qualifier lacks significant merit and does not effectively refute the argument. Assuming that the physical features under consideration exhibit dissimilarities from any other human creation, it is important to note that this does not undermine the conviction held by adherents of Islam who perceive these qualities as authentic, concrete, and not merely symbolic. The Zulu community likely held an anthropomorphic perception of *uMlenzemunye*, which has a resemblance to the concept of Allah. As previously indicated, within the context of Zulu indigenous religion, individuals have had direct visual encounters with the divine, perceiving God through unaided vision. These encounters have been described as an appearance of *uMlenzemunye* possessing a single leg, however, other distinguishing features remain indistinct or ambiguous to the observers. Some of the Zulu people believe that *uMlenzemunye* appeared in the past, however, in Islam, it is widely

⁶⁵ This work is found in Al-Imam Zain-ud-Din Ahmad bin Abdul Lateef Az-Zubaidi, *The Translation of the Meanings of Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari Arabic-English*, Translated by: Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan [Maktaba Dar-us-Salam Publishers & Distributors, Riyadh Saudi Arabia], 1994, p. 842.

⁶⁶ The uncovered shin of Allah is mentioned in Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 93, Number 532s.

acknowledged that Allah's descent ceases at the lowest heaven, and it is affirmed by the Prophet's teachings that Allah does not descend to our world. The messenger of Allah said:

Allah descends every night to the lowest heaven when one-third of the first part of the night is over and says: I am the Lord; I am the Lord: who is there to supplicate Me so that I answer him? Who is there to beg of Me so that I grant him? Who is there to beg forgiveness from Me so that I forgive him? He continues like this till the day breaks (Sahih Muslim 758b, Book 6, Hadith 202, USC-MSA web (English) reference: Book 4, Hadith 1657) (bold emphasis mine).

There are myriad opinions on this topic but Muslims generally do not believe that Allah descends to the earth. Even though the Hebrew Bible substantiate that God appeared to the patriarchs as the angel of the LORD. The identification of the angel of the Lord as God is a recurring theme in the Old Testament (Gen.16:7-13; Gen. 18:1-15; Ex. 3:2-10; Judg. 6:14, 22; 13:9-18, 22). Nonetheless, the Quranic verse (7:143) did not explicitly state that Moses had a visual encounter with Allah in the mountains. In the Quran, Allah says:

When Moses came at the appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he asked, "My Lord! Reveal Yourself to me so I may see You." Allah answered, "You cannot see Me! But look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, only then will you see Me." When his Lord appeared on the mountain, He levelled it to dust and Moses collapsed unconscious. When he recovered, he cried, "Glory be to You! I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers."

Muslims believe that Allah does not physically descend to earth but rather only exposes part of His qualities through prophets and His actions such as creation as well as His 99 names. One could posit that Allah and *uMlenzemunye* are discernible Supreme beings), albeit exhibiting certain anthropomorphic resemblances. This topic of correlation between Allah and *uMlenzemunye* or *uMvelinqangi* may call for additional research. However, the intent is not to suggest that correlation is the same as causation based on the hint of similar resemblance between Allah and *uMvelinqangi*. In conclusion, the concept of God in Islam has received a great deal of focus, and as a result, a structure has been constructed to describe how this topic can be investigated following the many schools of thought. Therefore, according to the perspective of Zulu Muslims like Mncwanywa, Islam serves as an invitation for the

Zulu people to engage in the worship of *uMvelinqangi* in a manner that adheres to the prescribed principles and practices of the purest form of faith, religion, or way of life. On the other hand, the Zulu people have not focused a great deal of their emphasis on God throughout history, because their religion is predicated on the veneration of ancestral spirits (see chapter 2).

5.10.2 The perception of spirits in Zulu traditional religion and Islamic faith.

Traditionalists of the Zulu people believe that their ancestors have a life after death, but they are unaware of how God would punish or reward them in the hereafter for their actions in this life (Mbiti 1975a:259-262; 1985:161; Sundermeier 1990:154; Hammond-Tooke 1993:149). In the broader African context, there is a prevailing belief in a deity who assumes the role of a discerning arbiter, administering retribution to wrongdoers during their life on earth rather than in the hereafter. John Mbiti (1975a:259-262; 1985:161) also refers to a few instances that deviate from the established norm. The author examines the Yoruba people, who have the belief in a judgment in the hereafter that is impacted by their realisation of moral principles. Additionally, the community of Lodagaa, who are fearful that their ancestors will exact punishment on them in the afterlife for bad deeds committed in this world. On the other hand, the Lozi community, adhere to the concept that for a person to obtain eternal life or the company of their ancestors, they must first be able to establish their identity as a member of their tribe through the use of tribal marks on their arms.

Hence, based on current knowledge, it may be inferred that this particular designation of God remains largely unfamiliar within the context of traditional African beliefs, with only a few exceptions such as Koko, Akan, and Basa people. According to the cultural beliefs of the Koko and Basa peoples in Cameroon, individuals who are considered malevolent are believed to be destined to reside in a cold environment, while those who are deemed virtuous are destined to inhabit a realm characterised by abundant life and light. Given the assumption that those who repent are also destined for an intermediate state of existence, the uniqueness of their beliefs is questionable. The Akan people of Ghana are another notable exception because they believe that life in the hereafter consists of reward and punishment as per the bad and good deeds committed by individuals (Van Wyk 2006:703-4). The Zulu community lacked the notion of retribution in the hereafter, as certain individuals held the belief that those who exhibited unfavourable behaviour may undergo purification (a ritual performed by

the living) and thereafter return as benevolent ancestors to the living (see Chapter 2). Biko (2004:49), asserted that:

We believed – and this was consistent with our views of life – that all people who died had a special place next to God. We felt that communication with God could only be through these people. We never knew anything about hell – we do not believe that God can create people only to punish them eternally after a short period on earth ... It was the missionaries who confused our people with their religion. They ... preach a theology of the existence of hell, scaring our fathers and mothers with stories about burning in eternal flames and gnashing of teeth and grinding of bone. This cold cruel religion was strange to us but our forefathers (thus) were sufficiently scared of the unknown impending anger to believe that it was worth a try. Down went our cultural values!

Biko (2004:49) posits that, according to African traditional beliefs, ancestral spirits hold a significant position close to the Supreme Being, who is responsible for fulfilling the desires and requests of those living on earth. Although there is a greater predominance of imagery within Islamic teachings relative to this topic, the concept of the final judgment in Islam is not fundamentally distinct from that of Christianity. Rather, the two religions share a common origin but drastically differ in terms of the description of paradise (*Jannah*). The idea of the last judgment presents difficulties for Zulu Muslims in terms of developing a healthy relationship with the beliefs they have previously espoused. However, it is acknowledged by Muslims that the belief in the future judgement offers humanity the ultimate form of justice as ordained by Allah. Moreover, Allah exhibits the highest degree of fairness and justice. The individual acknowledges and bestows immeasurable benefits for any act of goodness, regardless of its magnitude. Allah is the One who guides humanity towards the attainment of justice and harmony. It is possible to make a distinction between Zulu Indigenous Religion (ZIR) and Islam; yet, the influence of Islam on Zulu Muslims appears to be welcomed by this group of Zulu Muslims.

5.10.3 Zulu indigenous religion and the Islamic *tawhid*, *al-barzakh* and *jinn*.

It can be reasonably deduced that the Zulu indigenous group actively participates in the ritualistic veneration or worship of the ancestral spirits. Refraining from employing the term “worship” and instead opting for the term “veneration” can be seen as an act of cultural arrogance and a failure to understand the criteria of worship, according to

the Islamic faith. The Islamic theological principle of *tawhid* unequivocally rejects the notion of intermediaries between the realms of the living and the deceased. Hence, within the Islamic faith, any form of relationship between the living and the deceased is strictly prohibited and regarded as a form of idolatry. Islam places great emphasis on the belief that Allah is devoid of any partners and is the sole entity deserving of adoration or veneration. Furthermore, syncretism of Islam and Zulu indigenous religions especially the notion of seeking aid from the ancestral spirits violates the doctrine of the “one-ness of Allah” and *al-barzakh*⁶⁷. In Islam, *al-barzakh* is the firmament that separates life and death. The Quranic verse says,

[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says, “My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.” No! It is only a word he is saying; and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected.

According to the Quranic text, *barzakh* refers to a physical barrier that confines the deceased to an unspecified location until their resurrection. As a result, Western academics have interpreted the *barzakh* as a barrier that prohibits the departed from returning to the realm of the living. The understanding of *barzakh* as a barrier is supported by the word's appearances in Q 25:53 and 55:19, where a *barzakh* is supposed to separate the two cosmic oceans of sweet and salt waters. As a result, it appears that the Quran assigns the *barzakh* the dual role of cosmological and eschatological division. Similarly, in the late antique exegesis of the classic parable of the wealthy man and Lazarus, the poor man contained in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 16:19-31) has the same motif as *barzakh*. The rhetorical aim is likewise prominent in Q 23:99-100, whose objective is not to convey a description of the dead's situation beyond the

⁶⁷ *Al-barzakh*: is an Islamic prediction about future events (eschatology) which alludes to the events that occur between limbo and purgatory according to the Christian eschaton, as well as the period between death and resurrection. This period is compared in the Quran to the firmament that divides salt and sweet water, two different seas in terms of density, exactly as the Atlantic and Mediterranean are separated by the Strait of Gibraltar. The exegetes evolved a complicated set of opinions concerning this inter-mediate condition, mostly as a consequence of conjecture about *barzakh*, a term used in Q 23:100 to indicate a barrier that stands behind the dead until the day of resurrection (see Tesie (2016) paper on “the *barzakh* and the Intermediate State of the Dead in the Quran.”

barzakh, but to warn that once death has come, repentance will be impossible (Tesei 2016:32-6).

Moreover, the Quran makes no mention of martyrs' (who are in Allah's paradise) power to intercede with Allah on behalf of the living. The Quranic narratives lack the account of the interceding ability among the martyrs, however, the Quranic verses against pagan Arabs (*Mushrikun*) were frequently accused of their belief that deities of Mecca should intercede with Allah on their behalf. The Quranic surah 10:8 says, "They serve, apart from God, what neither hurts nor profits them, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with God.'"

Furthermore, in Hawting's (1999:477) paper, he observes that it is the dependence that the *mushrikun* exhibit towards these deities which will ultimately result in their condemnation since their reliance on these intermediaries prevents them from adhering to Islamic monotheism. The Quran refutes this idea by rejecting the notion of intervention attributed to the secondary deities (Surah 32:4; 40:18), asserting instead that intercession is only possible with the permission of God (Surah 2:225; 10:3; 19:87; 34:23). The Syriac theologians acknowledge a distinct eschatological status for those who were martyred in the name of God (Revelation 6:9). In contrast, the Quran explicitly rejects the notion that these individuals possess any ability to intercede on behalf of the living. The Quran did not merely agree with the Christian viewpoints on martyrs; rather, it actively opposed such viewpoints in line with Islamic theological principles (Tesei 2016:50-51).

The Zulu Muslims are aware that disbelief is sometimes defined as the act of rejecting Islamic beliefs when an individual does not adhere to a belief that is expected of them. For instance, someone who consumes alcohol is engaging in a significant transgression. When an individual identifies as Muslim and acknowledges that engaging in certain actions is considered forbidden (*haram*) under their religious beliefs while being aware that such actions are sinful. If an individual has the opinion that consuming alcohol is permissible and afterwards alters their stance on its permissibility, knowing that drinking alcohol is forbidden, this would be considered an act of unbelief (*kufr*). According to Al-Bukhari, sins that are committed openly will not be forgiven in Islam:

Narrated Abu Huraira: I heard Allah's Messenger saying. "All the sins of my followers will be forgiven except those of the *Mujahirin* (those who commit a sin openly or disclose their sins to the people). An example of such disclosure is

that a person commits a sin at night and though Allah screens it from the public, then he comes in the morning, and says, 'O so-and-so, I did such-and-such (evil) deed yesterday,' though he spent his night screened by his Lord (none knowing about his sin) and in the morning he removes Allah's screen from himself" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6069, Book 78, Hadith 99, Vol. 8, Book 73, Hadith 95).

Therefore, according to Islamic teachings, it is wise for a person of faith to exercise discretion in concealing any transgressions they may commit. The Zulu Muslims must denounce acts associated with the *shirk* such as inquiring from the dead. The doctrine of *tawhid* and *barzakh* obliterate all hopes for the dead to play any role as intermediates between the living and Allah within the orthodox Islamic worldview. Every action performed by a Muslim has the potential to be seen as an act of worship, akin to religious rites, as long as the underlying goal is to carry out these actions only for the benefit of Allah.

The devout adherents of Islam may see a deficiency in their religious devotion if they fail to actively pursue the ultimate objective for which Allah created *jinn* and humans, namely, to establish and uphold the absolute sovereignty of Allah on Earth. This pursuit is the sole means through which humanity can engage in the worship of Allah. In the Quran Allah declared "I created the *jinn* and humankind only that they might worship Me" (Q 51:56). The profound recognition of being a slave of Allah (Muslim) is firmly ingrained into the innermost being of the Muslim individual, serving as the fundamental basis for all their actions, which are undertaken with the ultimate aim of attaining the pleasure of his God. The faithful Muslim must strive to live according to the rule of Allah and not be deterred from Islamic law by consulting the dead and seeking their intercession. The primary act of devotion that adherents of Islam may engage in is the earnest endeavour to institute the sovereignty of Allah in this world while adhering to the prescribed manner of living that God has ordained. This pursuit aims to ensure that Islam governs the lives of all human beings.

Moreover, Islam played a significant part in recognising the practice of divination by acknowledging the existence of unseen entities that may pose threats to humans. However, it also provided a solution in its unique manner. Through the process of assimilating into the cultural practices of their community, many Zulu Muslims hold the belief that divination is the exclusive means of accessing knowledge about the unseen realm. Consequently, they incorporate even passages from the Qur'an into this

spiritual endeavour. In the Zulu indigenous worldview, the practise of ancestor ritual serves as a means of establishing a formal separation between the living individuals and the spirits of their ancestors. This separation is achieved via the use of invocations and ritualistic actions, which play a crucial role in the act of worship. By functioning as a mediator, the ritual facilitates the connection between the living and the ancestor spirits, fulfilling a fundamental part of the worship practice. The Zulu people believe that sometimes spirits animate nature, and this occurs through the means of a pantheistic form of an Omnipresent Being. ZIR is a polytheistic guise, with a pantheon of spirits originating from distinct natural items such as snakes, water, trees and so forth (see Chapter 2). This belief system is well-known as animism. On the other hand, in Islam, the existence of *jinn* is indeed a reality. Nonetheless, the conventional Islamic perspective posits that these spiritual entities were created for the same objective as humans, namely, the act of rendering worship to Allah. The Muslim traditional perspective also has many classifications of the *jinn*. Muslims have the belief that certain *Jinn* entities exhibit qualities of justice and kindness, while others display hostility and malevolence towards human beings. The Quran says,

And among us are the righteous, and among us are [others] not so; we were [of] divided ways. Amongst us are some that submit their wills (to Allah), and some that swerve from justice. Now those who submit their wills - they have sought out (the path) of right conduct (Surah 72:11&14).

Hence, it is a prevailing idea among many African traditional communities and non-literate Muslims to affix artefacts with passages from the Quran around their waist, as a means of potentially safeguarding themselves from malevolent entities from both the *jinn* and human realms. This may be the historical basis for the connection between Muslim clerics and talismans, amulets, and charms, however, it should be noted that Muslims were not the original creators of these items. There is a prevalent belief among individuals that amulets used to protect against malevolent spirits consistently incorporate Arabic inscriptions or passages derived from the Quran. Based on my observations during my interactions with the Zulu Muslim community, it became apparent that a significant majority of individuals held a profound reverence for the phrase "*bismillah*," as prescribed by the teachings of Muhammad. Muhammad in the hadith:

It was narrated that 'Aishah said: The Messenger of Allah was eating food with six of his Companions when a Bedouin came and ate it all in two bites. The

Messenger of Allah said: 'If he had said *Bismillah*, it would have sufficed you (all). When any one of you eats food, let him say *Bismillah*, and if he forgets to say *Bismillah* at the beginning, let him say In the Name of Allah at the beginning and at the end (*Bismillah fi awwalihi wa akhirih*) (Sunan Ibn Majah 3264, Book 29, Hadith 14, Vol. 4).

Again, it is imperative to underscore that divination is strictly prohibited within the framework of orthodox Islam. According to the Quran 5:90, Allah states, "O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful." The Islamic perspective on divination posits that it attributes the quality of omniscience, including knowledge of the past, present, and future, to the practitioner of divination. The practise of divination is believed to foster animosity among familial bonds, leading to its characterisation as the activity of Satan, referred to as "*Amal-ish-shaytan*." Based on a prophetic tradition, those who seek guidance from diviners and place faith in the information they get will experience forty days during which their requests will be denied. Both the Qur'an and hadith discuss the existence of witchcraft and sorcery, emphasising the imperative for mankind to actively seek protection from these phenomena.

5.11 The Zulu Muslim women assert their Zulu-ness.

Among the Zulu Muslim community, there has been a burgeoning movement aimed at safeguarding the integrity of Zulu culture against potential encroachments from Indian or Arab cultural influences. The preceding sections have examined the contributions and experiences of Zulu Muslim individuals, specifically Adam Mncanywa and Dawood Ngwane. This section will also examine the experiences of Zulu Muslim women to ascertain the impact of Islam on their Zulu indigenous worldviews. In an online article titled, "There's a new movement of Black Muslims in South Africa asserting their African-ness within the context of their religion", Nelisiwe Msomi conveys her experience as a black Muslim woman. Nelisiwe was given the Arabic name Shahida as it has been a practice within the Islamic religion. She did not use her birth name (Nelisiwe) for a very long period of her life until perhaps she realised that her birth name serves as an affirmation of her existence as a Black or Zulu Muslim. The Zulu name for Nelisiwe is a bold assertion that Black Muslims exist in real-time and push back against black Muslim suppression.

Nelisiwe Msomi has been known as a champion for the rights of women in her Black Muslim community. The young Black African Muslim women's movement seeks to bring harmony between Islam and African traditions. The movement contends for Islam to be more inclusive when it comes to celebrating Zulu tradition or culture and cease to undermine it. The attempt is to synchronise the two and to ensure that their religious practice is not void of Zulu tradition which has been observed among her Muslim community. The dominant cultures among the Muslim community have been Arabian or Indian, while in the southern parts of South Africa Malay culture. Nelisiwe advocates for a religion of Islam that is not predicated upon other cultures at the expense of their own Zulu culture. Perhaps, according to the assertions conveyed by Nelisiwe, one can deduce that she does not think of Islam as a religion that can only be actualised through the process of Arabisation. It seems as if most Zulu Muslims have been able to hold on to their heritage as Zulu people without neglecting the importance of the Arabic language as Muslims. Nelisiwe asserts that:

Being Black, Muslim and woman means I have three battles to fight: racism, Islamophobia, and patriarchy. And I'm always navigating between my religion and culture; trying to find a balance between these identities and attempting to synchronise them... As a Zulu Muslim, I feel religion isn't in conflict with my culture but rather certain people who want to impose their culture onto us Black Muslims. We should be encouraged to practice our culture.

The process that took Nelisiwe Msomi many years was to grow spiritually as she embraced herself being both Muslim and Zulu. She recalls that her younger sister Zahara was criticised for publicly participating in their Zulu cultural event in an Islamic-oriented school. Nelisiwe said, "Zahara was criticised for wearing traditional beadwork on top of her hijab at an event, for which she was severely denounced by her school head." The black African women in the Muslim communities have seen the need to harmonise their own culture with religion. Tshepang Mamogale, who is a Muslim woman also notes that,

as much as Islam is a way of life and our religion, everyone has a culture. Egyptians have their own culture, and Indians do too. I'm an African Muslim, wear clothes that represent my faith and African-ness, and therefore believe in practising my culture, and lobola is a part of that.

These Black Muslim women contend for a new outlook of Islam that is more accommodative to African traditions. Tshepang Mamogale and Nelisiwe Msomi both

recognise that racism exists among Muslim communities. Tshepang recalls the unfortunate reality of racism among some of the Indian Muslim community. She states, “There’s a lot of racism that we experience as Black Muslims, to the point where some Indian people don’t greet us. And in Islam, it doesn’t matter what race you are, you have to pass the salaam, ‘as-salāmu ‘alaykum.’” The black Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal have experienced some form of discrimination from South African Indian Muslims. Fatima Moosa (2017) believes that the cause of racism in the Indian community originates from the caste system which was taught in India. Furthermore, she contended that the approach employed by the apartheid administration served as a facilitator by segregating individuals based on their racial categorization. Fatima believes that the presence of apartheid and the caste system may serve as underlying factors contributing to the manifestation of racism within the Indian Muslim community. She emphasizes the importance of Muslims transcending any type of prejudice towards fellow black Muslims and those of African descent. She states that:

As the myth of the rainbow nation crumbles, we appear ever so blind to our deep, deep racism. The community may have suffered under apartheid, but we did manage to escape some of the harshest punishments of the racist regime reserved for Black Africans. Today, some of us seem to be failing to interrogate the inequalities and injustices and the structural legacy of that oppressive system. It is this lack of reflexivity, and refusal to recognise this privilege that is most concerning (Moosa 2017).

Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal initially thought it was necessary to follow the traditions of the Indian Muslim community, but the majority of them have realised that being a Muslim has nothing to do with the food they adopted and other culturally based intricacies. Zulu Muslims would gather in a masjid and participate in activities such as singing Zulu hymns, dancing, and learning about Islam from a particular scholar.

5.12 Summary

There is, as far as I am aware, no *prima facie* evidence that Zulu Muslims were not taught what is shirk and how the Zulu indigenous worldview is tainted by it. This is why Islamic teachings are much more emphatic when it comes to instilling the concept of Tawhid among the Zulu Muslims. Although, the emphasis on Tawhid is not only for waging war against the traditional Zulu culture it also serves as a useful doctrine against other religion(s). The Zulu Muslims were not unanimous concerning the duality

of identity between *Zulu-ness* and *Muslimness*. After an intensive study on *Zulu-ness* and *Muslimness*, it becomes more evident that these identities are not fixed binaries. The attempt to distinguish between the *Zulu-ness* and *Muslimness* identities seems to be a terrain that is elusive and complex to obtain a neat answer or understanding. Furthermore, most of the interlocutors did not see a necessity to divorce their Zulu identity because of their religious identity. The Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal understand that the concept of identity is very fluid and ambiguous, which makes it difficult to fully comprehend. This is the reason why some Muslims prefer to be identified as strictly Muslims while others feel like there is no need to harmonise the Zulu Muslim identity or to see any dichotomy between being Zulu and Muslim. The contrast between Zulu Indigenous Religion (ZIR) and Islam is readily identifiable, although the influence of Islam on Zulu Muslims seems to be acknowledged by this community.

CHAPTER 6

The Impact of Islam on Zulu Muslim Converts

6.0 Introduction

Zulu people have been engaged in their indigenous system of knowledge religious practices and beliefs for centuries before the arrival of other religions and any other form of Western civilization. The Zulu religious beliefs and practices were undermined and soon to be replaced by a religion that possibly reflected a culture that was not their own. The Zulu people were confronted by religions that were somewhat indifferent to the preservation of Zulu indigenous practices and beliefs. Christianity and Islam arrived at different times in South Africa, and both had distinguishable reasons (see Chapter four). It is evident that the West remains the most influential worldview in South Africa and Zulu Muslims did not escape the adverse ripple effect of European views of Africa.

Ezenweke and Madu (2006) were quick to see that the European missionaries preached a message of Christianity that promoted Western culture over African culture and subsequently caused the African people to embrace 'skin-deep Christianity'. Asiegbu (2007:139) substantiated the assertion that "the resultant effects of decades of continued imperialism made enormous roads into the African psyche and defaced African worldview: not only did Africans lose their humanity, but they also imitated European cultural values and even exaggerated them." According to Madu (2004), this form of proselytising undervalues other cultural norms and inevitably leads to what he calls the "superficiality of faith". In this chapter, the researcher will explore the impact of Islam on Zulu people who have encountered Islam and evaluate if Islam avoided the pitfalls of uncontextualised religion. The researcher will explore the beliefs and practices of AIR and indicate how Islam may have influenced the beliefs and practices of Zulu Muslim converts. There are high syncretic tendencies among the adherents of ZIR (Zulu Indigenous Religion). Given this situation, it seems plausible to ask if it is possible to find any trace of Zulu beliefs and practices syncretised among the Zulu Muslims.

This chapter will include a reflection on the information gathered mostly from the questionnaires/interviews and complimentary literature reviews. Furthermore, this chapter seeks to bring balance to the information gathered in the study of the influence

of Islam on Zulu Muslims, therefore, literature will be employed to supplement or substantiate the information gathered through questionnaires.

6.1 Challenges

Muslims in South Africa are estimated to be 3 per cent of the total population in the country (Hassan 2021). Most Muslims belong to the Sunni tradition while those from the Shia tradition remain very few in numbers. The Zulu Muslims do not even constitute less than half of the estimated population of Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal. Hence, the main challenge was to find a targeted sample group who were keen to participate in the questionnaires of the study. The Zulu Muslims who are imams and shaykhs did not allow the researcher to engage with ordinary adherents because they did not want them to contradict the teachings of Allah and Muhammad. Some of the Zulu Muslims were initially not keen to participate but after several negotiations, some were persuaded. It was a serious challenge for others to engage with questionnaires because of their religious views. The comparison between the Zulu indigenous worldview and Islam was seen as an attack on what they consider sacred, that is, the Islamic religion. Some of the Zulu Muslims were simply appalled because they did not see anything special about the Zulu indigenous religion for it to be juxtaposed with the Islamic faith. This was the reason why others could not pay much attention when responding to the questions. Some did not answer the questions for fear that they would contradict the responses offered by the *ulamas* or the teachings of Muhammad and subsequently be punished by Allah in the afterlife.

6.1.1 Data presentation and analysis

In the below section data presentation and analysis will assist in extracting more details on Zulu Muslim's perception of the Zulu religious worldview. The questionnaires conducted were incorporated with other components such as method, participation, data presentation, and analysis, as well as discussion of findings.

6.2 Method

The researcher considered the scarcity of people who identify as Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal. A total number of 51 respondents, who are Zulu Muslims from KwaZulu-Natal, completed the questionnaires. However, the targeted number of 100 participants of Zulu Muslims could not be viable because most masjids did not have Zulu converts, in addition, some participants were not able to return the questionnaires

on the due date. The questionnaires were administered on different dates and locations after Friday prayers at various masjids. The participants were made aware that their views would be strictly confidential and had nothing to worry about concerning their identity. Some of the participants who could not sit down and respond to questionnaires at the masjid after prayer took them and were told to bring them back the following Friday. The questionnaires were formulated as a means to seek out responses that addressed mainly the following questions. (1) How to identify Muslim practices that are influential in the dawah projects towards the Zulu people? (2) Have Islamic customs, values, and practices caused Zulu people to perceive Islam as a transnational religion? (3) Is the Muslim image in KwaZulu-Natal Arabian or African? (4) Do you agree that mosque leaders should appoint and develop Zulu people as leaders to grow and spread Islam in KwaZulu-Natal?

6.3 The Subjects

The participants for the research are subjects who were all Zulu converts or “reverts” to the Islamic religion. During the period of responding to the questionnaire, participants showed some degree of calmness and displayed a vast knowledge concerning the Zulu religious worldview and Islamic teachings. The majority of the participants completed the surveys immediately after Friday prayer, although a few individuals took the questionnaires and returned them the next Friday (*Jumu’ah*). Additionally, the researcher was present in some of the masjid and observed the service activities. Participants had an opportunity to compare their Islamic practices with Zulu religious practices and were able to draw the line where the two worldviews synchronised and where they did not synchronise.

6.4 Data Analysis and Discussion

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) will be employed to analyse the collected data. The SPSS is used as a relevant computer software to code and score each response from all respondents. The number of 51 participants were used to score and determine the overall perceptions they have for each question to measure the central tendency. On the other hand, the standard deviation is employed to measure dispersion.

Table 1: Do you agree that Zulu beliefs and practices remain unchanged by the influx of Islam in KwaZulu-Natal?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	37	72.6
No	13	25.5
Neutral	1	1.9
Total	51	100.0

Participants were given clarity on whether the question was referring to the Zulu community at large or to a specific group of Zulu Muslims. The Zulu people in general still practice their traditional beliefs regardless of the influx of Islam in KZN. The score of 72.6 per cent suggests that Islam has not overtly changed the Zulu beliefs and practices because those that are not in conflict with Islam have been preserved. The Zulu Muslim participants strongly believe that there are aspects of Zulu culture that are found in their purest form in Islam. One of the participants succinctly said, “Zulu beliefs and practices must be denounced unless they are not in conflict with the teachings of Islam such as anything that involves invoking ancestral spirits.” On the other hand, some of the participants were able to point out that in Islam the beliefs and practices must conform with the Quran and Sunnah.

Furthermore, the non-Muslim Zulu people may amend their beliefs and practices when they seek to accommodate the views of other religions, while Islam will remain unchanged because it is based on the guidelines or principles written in a codified text (Quran). The Zulu people who convert or revert to Islam can alter their beliefs and practices as they see fit, but syncretism is *haram* according to the teachings of Islam. In a nutshell, the Zulu Muslims are expected to adhere to the Islamic creed and avoid deviating from the truth of the Quran and Sunnah. On the other hand, non-Muslim Zulu people are not bound by any holy scripture like the Quran, hence their religion or way of life is a mixed bag. Zulu people who do not convert or revert to Islam can change their beliefs and practices however they like but Islam has a strict religious boundary for Zulu Muslims.

Table 2: In the Zulu Muslim community are there any Zulu beliefs and practices that have been preserved?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	35	68.6
No	14	27.5
Neutral	2	3.9
Total	51	100

According to Table 2, a score of 35 people believe that the Zulu customs and values are preserved in Islam but in a manner that is not contrary to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. One of the participants asserted that *izidalwa* (created beings e.g., angels, human beings, and other created things) in Islam refers to angels and what is known to be *Nomkhubulwane* is regarded as the angel Michael. Zulu eating rituals are like those of Islam, but Islam has much more rigorous and detailed purification rituals known as *Wudu*⁶⁸. *Imbeleko* is one of the traditional practices which is performed in Islam where an animal is sacrificed to Allah and not to ancestral spirits as it is done in the Zulu indigenous worldview. Some of the Zulu Muslims believe their previously held Zulu beliefs and practices can be informed and reformed through the religion of Islam. Some beliefs and practices are shared by both Zulu Muslims and Zulu non-Muslims such as *ubuntu*, respect for elders, love for community and solidarity, the emphasis on mutual respect between parent-child relationships, and hospitality. Some

⁶⁸ *Wudu* is a ritualistic practice of cleansing some parts of the body and it is also known as ablution. This purification procedure is performed by every Muslim before prayer or worship in the masjid. In *Sahih Al-Bukhari* 140: Ibn Abbas performed ablution and washed his face (in the following way): He ladled out a handful of water, rinsed his mouth, and washed his nose with it by putting in water and then blowing it out. He then took another handful (of water) and did this (gesturing) joining both hands, and washed his face, took another handful of water, and washed his right forearm. He again took another handful of water and washed his left forearm, passed wet hands over his head and took another handful of water and poured it over his right foot (up to his ankles) and washed it thoroughly, and similarly took another handful of water and washed thoroughly his left foot (up to the ankles) and said, "I saw Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) performing ablution in this way" (Book 4, Hadith 6. USC-MSA web (English) reference: Vol. 1, Book 4, Hadith 142).

of the participants did not see the need for Islam to be culturally relevant to every targeted people group, because Islam is a complete way of life and, therefore, does not require other cultural views to make Islam relevant.

Furthermore, Rebekah Lee's (2001) works on understanding African women's conversion to Islam narratives that:

Nonotise, a Xhosa woman living in Philippi township in Cape Town, now answers to the Muslim name Rushda. She converted to Islam in 1990. Her ID still retains her former name, but the passport she acquired when she went to Mecca bears the name of her new identity. She keeps both official documents and uses both as needs require. When she received news that she was going to Mecca, something almost unheard of among recent African converts in Cape Town, she made some umqombothi [traditionally brewed beer] to pay respect to the ancestors, an act she chose not to tell her fellow Muslims at the mosque. When pressed to explain, she said, 'so then, I can't lose the Xhosa in me, already here. I have to pay respects to the Xhosas because I was born to people who were not Muslims and now, I have to give them what they want.'

The story of Nonotise is useful because it serves to demonstrate the very issues that the Zulu Muslim converts encounter among themselves. Similar to the concept of Nonotise discussed in Lee's paper, some Zulu Muslims maintain the belief that it is necessary to show reverence to their ancestors. While it is commonly acknowledged that the act of venerating ancestors is considered haram in Islam. The *Hajj* is a final pillar of the Islamic religion and remains extremely important among faithful Muslims, as well as shows the resilience that one has for the Islamic faith to embark on this pilgrimage. *Hajj* is expected to be performed by all adult Muslims as a pilgrimage that is meant to commemorate Abraham's obedience to sacrifice his son. *Hajj* is obligatory for both women and men Muslims who have good health conditions and are financially capable. There are Zulu Muslim converts who believe that they can preserve their previously held beliefs on ancestral spirits and "give them what they want" as is the case with Nonotise. One of the Muslim participants residing in UMzimkhulu village acknowledged that despite enrolling their children in an Islamic school, they maintain affiliation with the Nazareth Baptist Church (Shembe). Nevertheless, it is important to

note that Zulu imams and shaykhs who were included in the study expressed clear disapproval and condemnation of such actions⁶⁹.

Furthermore, *shirk* in Islam is equivalent to unbelief (*Kufr*) according to Islamic jurisprudence. Muslims who are guilty of committing *shirk* become outlaws and are excommunicated among the Muslim community. Moreover, the legal rights of those who are found guilty of *shirk* will be suspended unless they are willing to denounce all the beliefs and practices classified as *shirk*. The participants defined *shirk* as the polytheistic beliefs and practices which is seen as the departure from the worship of Allah alone. *Shirk* is assigning the divine attribute of Allah to other deities or anything else besides God. The act of *shirk* is predicated on attributing the source of power, blessing, protection, well-being, or harm, to anything besides Allah. The term “shirk” originates from Arabic and has the broad meaning “to share.” The Zulu imams and shaykhs are emphatic in their teaching and warning against *shirk* and people reverting to ancestral worship.

According to Islamic theology, a polytheist who passes away has no possibility of being saved, however, Allah may pardon people for any other wrongdoing besides *shirk*. The antithesis of a monotheistic (*Muwahhid*) believer is a polytheistic (*Mushrik*) believer and the two stand on opposite sides in Islam. Hence the main tenet of Islam is *tawhid*. It has a variety of features just like how there are several sorts of Shirk. Shirk is the theological term for the act of equating a lower person or entity with Allah. Most Zulu Muslims are aware that shirk, the practice of equating other people with Allah, is the worst sin one can do. The Quran contains many passages that support this. The fact that *shirk* can take several different forms is less clear. Worship of idols or ancestral spirits is merely one type. Shirk is frequently practised without many people realising it, even among Muslims. These types need to be recognised on a social and an individual level. Most of the Zulu Muslims are also aware of the three categories of *shirk* due to the time spent educating converts or reverts to Islam on this topic. There

⁶⁹ The introduction of an Islamic metanarrative at this juncture is unlikely to be a mere coincidence. This phenomenon should be interpreted as a conscious effort to enforce a sense of identity upon children, regardless of their religious affiliation. This becomes more pronounced when Islamic schools extend their analysis beyond the teaching of history and take into account the comprehensive influence of the Islamisation process on the whole educational experience of pupils enrolled in the Islamic schools.

are three categories of shirks such as major *shirk* (*Ash-Shirk al-Akbar*), inconspicuous *shirk* (*Ash-Shirk al-Khafi*), and minor *shirk* (*Ash-Shirk al-Asghar*). The major *shirk* has four serious aspects that manifest in someone who adheres to polytheistic beliefs, namely:

1. The invocation (*shirk-ad-Du'a*): is the deed of calling on or praying to deities other than Allah. Allah in the Quran says, "...when they embark on ships they invoke Allah, making their faith pure for him only, but when he brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share to their worship to others" (Surah 29:65).
2. Association of other partners with the worship of Allah (*shirk-ad-Niyyahwal-iradahwal-Qasd*): This type of *shirk* denotes intentions and resilience in religious acts or deeds that are not performed for Allah's sake but rather for the benefit of other gods or ancestral spirits.
3. Submitting to other authority other than Allah (*Shirk-ad-Ta'ah*): This element implies that it is against Allah's command to submit to any power besides Him. Allah in the Quranic verse says, "They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, son of Mary, as lords besides Allah,¹ even though they were commanded to worship none but One God. There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him. Glorified is He above what they associate 'with Him'!" (Surah 9:31).
4. Disbelief or unbelief (*Al-Kufr*): the disbelief in any of the Islamic tenets, including those regarding the existence of Allah, His angels, His messengers, His revelation in the Quran, and the resurrection day, as well as what He has ordained (*Al-Qaeda Qadar*). The Zulu Muslims believe that the major *kufr* entirely separates a person from the Islamic fold and necessitates individuals' eternity in hell.

The minor *shirk* in Islam are actions carried out purely for display or actions taken to obtain admiration and praise (Mustapha 2001:34-54). Allah in the Quran says, "I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So, whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone" (Surah 18:110).

The *shirk* of being inconspicuous (*Shirk al-Khafi*): This type of *shirk* is predicated upon the state of being internally unhappy with the predetermined situation that Allah has chosen for one, regretting that if you had done or not done this or that, or if you had

contacted so and so, one would have been in a better situation. The type of covert *shirk* is atoned for by repeating the following three times each day: “O Allah, I seek refuge in You lest I associate anything with You knowingly, and I seek Your forgiveness for what I know not⁷⁰” (Hisn al-Muslim, Hadith 203). Therefore, the Zulu Muslim community have to consider these teachings and prohibitions in their efforts to preserve Zulu beliefs and practices. The preservation of Zulu beliefs and practices must not upset the ability of Allah which is beyond human comprehension because He is believed to be completely perfect and unique in all of his attributes. Allah created human beings to worship Him alone, as there is nothing worthy of worship except Him. He is the originator, the Creator, and the sustainer of all that exists.

Table 3: Has the Islamic code of ethics enhanced the Zulu cultural code of ethics?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	27	52.9
No	19	37.3
Neutral	5	9.8
Total	51	100

As illustrated in Table 3, the Islamic code of ethics enhanced the Zulu cultural code of ethics according to Zulu Muslims. Through the 27 points, Zulu Muslims conveyed that the Islamic code of ethics was set by God and is grounded in the Quran and Sunnah. On the other hand, the Zulu code of ethics is culturally based and susceptible to change because culture is not static. Zulu Muslims are required according to Islamic teachings to follow Islamic law which was compiled as guidelines for faithful Muslims and to keep them away from deviating from the true form of Islam (Abdуроaf 2020:396). Nevertheless, Zulu Muslims were able to point out that both Islam and the Zulu code of ethics strive to bring justice, kindness, respect, and communal harmony, and provide the distinction between the sacred and profane amongst other things. The Zulu Muslim worldview does not only enforce a good code of ethics, but it also urges Muslims to submit to the will of Allah and not of man or the dead. The interlocutors of

⁷⁰ Reference: Ahmad 4/403. See also Al-Albani, Sahihul-Jami' As-Saghir 3/233 and Sahihut-Tarhib wat- Tarhib 1/19.

Islam and Zulu culture acknowledge the similarities between the two worldviews and other few aspects of Zulu culture that are not permitted in the Quran and Sunnah.

The study of the Zulu code of ethics necessitates a substantive exploration of the concept of *ubuntu*, which has significant prominence within the Zulu community and acts as a catalyst for interpersonal relationships among members of Zulu culture. *Ubuntu*, a term derived from the Zulu language, holds significant cultural and spiritual significance throughout African communities. The concept being referred to is a cohesive perspective or overarching ideology encapsulated in the Zulu proverb *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, which translates as "a person is a person through other persons" (Shutte, 1993:46). The term *Ubuntu* can be seen as denoting the concepts of "humanness," "kind nature," and "good moral behaviour" in a literal sense. *Ubuntu* is a prominent ethical and moral principle observed throughout Zulu culture, as well as being widely embraced throughout the African continent. This principle is deeply rooted in the cultural values, rituals, and taboos of these societies. God is commonly seen as the ultimate source of moral principles. According to Lucas (1971:53), moral transgressions that are devoid of *Ubuntu* encompass acts such as displaying disrespect or impoliteness towards older individuals, engaging in sexual misconduct such as incest, rape, intercourse with minors, adultery, or same-sex relations, committing murder, engaging in theft or robbery, spreading falsehoods, intentionally inflicting harm on others or their possessions, and practising sorcery and witchcraft. African societies employ various punitive measures to address such transgressions, which include imposing fines, ostracising the offender and their family, as well as resorting to physical violence such as beatings, stonings, or even fatal immolation. These actions are undertaken due to a perceived deviation from the principles of *Ubuntu*. In contrast, *Ubuntu*'s value system is manifested via a range of qualities, including kindness, friendliness, honesty, politeness, generosity, hospitality, diligence, compassion for the infirm or old parents, reverence for the aged and vulnerable, and safeguarding the well-being of children and women. Furthermore, women are perceived and treated as complete moral actors, leading to societal safeguards against mistreatment inflicted by males. The rationale for this assertion is that *Ubuntu* posits that those who are pregnant or elderly tend to possess diminished physical capacity, rendering them comparatively less capable of self-defence.

Moreover, *Ubuntu* holds immense significance within the African cultural context. African communities exemplify the concept of *Ubuntu* by engaging in many communal

endeavours, such as collaborating on the construction of a community dam, collectively partaking in significant events like funerals and weddings, engaging in cooperative agricultural practises like ploughing together (*ukulima*), engaging in communal cattle herding, fostering social cohesion via children playing together, and engaging in a multitude of other constructive communal activities. Engaging in anti-community behaviour concerning community-based activities might be considered morally wrong. Hence, the application of the *Ubuntu* philosophy can serve as a means to propagate Islam within the Zulu community, given its alignment with the principles and practises advocated in the Quran and the Sunnah. The researcher posits that the Islamic faith devoid of *Ubuntu* values is rendered obsolete, whereas the Islamic faith imbued with *Ubuntu* values represents the greatest aspiration for those who profess servitude to Allah.

A number of the participants were prepared to remark that Maulanas are necessary to underline that being a Muslim must not mean that Zulu people are expected to rid themselves of all their cultural code of ethics. This was a position that was taken by some of the interlocutors. Nonetheless, according to the 19 respondents who selected the response “No,” they provided evidence to support their claim that the Islamic code of ethics did not improve upon the Zulu code of ethics but rather replaced it with a faultless way of life revealed by Allah. This is because they now practise *Ubuntu* within the purest form of their religion, and all of their actions are done for the pleasure of Allah.

Table 4: Is the Zulu dress code allowed in the mosque?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	30	58.8
No	20	39.2
Neutral	1	2
Total	51	100

Most respondents did not see the Zulu-ness as something primitive even on matters of dress code. However, their stance on the Zulu dress code did not mean the approval of it against the importance of modesty or body covering in Islam. Zulu Muslim women are allowed to wear a modified traditional dress if it covers the whole body and does not involve wild animal skin such as cheetah, lion, etc. One of the interviewees

succinctly said that he does not think alteration of traditional clothing to fit the Islamic narrative is necessary as it nullifies the meaning of the traditional clothing, that is, it fails to maintain what is believed to be the ancient Zulu attire. The views on the value of Zulu attire among Zulu Muslims had been vastly different as some were in favour of the Zulu dress code with some considerations, while others vehemently rejected the notion of wearing Zulu attire in public spaces. The Zulu Muslim communities can be culturally relevant by discouraging outright rejection of cultural identity and encouraging indigenous Zulu people to value their own Zulu attire to the point of wearing them in the Masjid, even if it is allowed under some conditions.

The attire as stipulated in Islam should cover the whole body and must not involve wild animal skin such as cheetah, lion, and so forth. On the other hand, one must bear in mind that Muslims' views were not unanimous like any other religious organisation, there were discrepancies as some agreed that women could wear clothes with beads while others did not agree at all. Msomi posited that as a Zulu Muslim, she should be allowed to “wear clothes that represent her faith and African-ness, and therefore as a Zulu person she believes in practising her culture, and Zulu attire is part of that culture” (my alterations). One of the respondents was quick to point out that Muhamad forbade Muslims from wearing animal skins as he prohibited the unnecessary killing of animals for amusement or sport. Muslim men should be covered to below the knees while women must cover themselves to the ankle. An imam from the outskirts of Durban said that Muslims must wear *thobes* because it will help to identify other Muslims and show that “modesty is a branch of faith” (Sunan an-Nasa'i, In-book reference: Vol. 6, Book 47, Hadith 5009). Modesty is crucial in Islam and Muslim men and women must cover themselves according to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Men are also discouraged from wearing gold, wild animal skin, and red-coloured clothing (Khadem 2015:11-14).

Table 5: Is the idea of raising children in an Islamic culture compatible with that of the Zulu culture?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	26	51
No	25	49
Total	51	100

The respondents do not agree with each other concerning the question in Table 5. However, Zulu Muslims see Islam as an incompatible religion with the Zulu culture on the transcendental level. Some of the interlocutors such as Imam from Pietermaritzburg do agree with the proposition and have been able to point out in the past that, “Islam preaches family bonds, so I think it’s important for different cultures to be respected. As much as Islam is a way of life and our religion, everyone has a culture. Egyptians have their own culture, Indians do too.” The interlocutors believe that Islam will always dictate which Zulu cultural beliefs and practices can be preserved by Zulu Muslims. The emphasis must always be on Islamic teachings rather than on the Zulu culture when dealing with the compatibility between the two worldviews.

The Islamic teachings (the Quran and Sunnah) should be employed as the yardstick to measure and safeguard from any deviation from the revealed word of Allah. In the Islamic religion, parents should be role models of virtue for their children. Parents should nurture, educate, and train their children to be better Muslims. The Zulu and Islamic ways of life are both compatible in terms of being conservative but point to different directions regarding the motives behind the actions. There are similar principles in both worldviews like respect, and honouring parents, and elders, but the difference between the two worldviews is the reason behind the praxis. The good deeds done by Muslims serve to demonstrate their submission to Allah, while Zulu people practice their culture to follow the traditions of their forefathers and not necessarily to worship God or gods.

Table 6: Do you agree that the Islamic faith that was introduced in the community was transnational or accommodative to Zulu beliefs and practices?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	36	70.6
No	13	25.5
Neutral	2	3.9
Total	51	100

Most of the respondents in Table 6 think the version of Islam that they received was transnational in its praxis, that is, allowed them to rediscover who they are according to the Islamic faith. Sitoto’s (2003:3) works unveiled some of the views held by African

Muslims through their autobiographical narratives. The Zulu Muslims consider Islam as a relevant religion to them which also shapes their beliefs and practices that are grounded upon what they claim to be the purest form of religion. The respondents believed that Islam redefined the beliefs and practices held by the Zulu Muslims before their conversion to Islam and confronted them with the true revelation concerning Allah and his messengers (angels and servants the prophets). Nonetheless, Zulu Muslim participants deemed it to be futile to surrender to the impulse of seeing the distinction between Zulu and Muslim identities. They believed that both identities can be used interchangeably because the Zulu identity is based on their ethnic group, while the other is based on the revelation found in the Quran as it was sent down to Muhamad. One of Sitoto's (2003:5) interviewees had remarkably similar views as those in Table 6 respondents, he believed that:

His family is steeped in Christianity and does not practice traditional customs. These things were not done at home. In fact, they looked at them as backward practices and almost barbaric. Well as a grown-up person, you make choices. Islam is my personal discipline. But I must be honest, I am still struggling with my Muslim identity. A person must grow into the faith but does not branch off... However, now I'm no longer so defensive, I am comfortable with my Muslim identity.

The rhetoric of affirming both Zulu culture and Islam has been a dominant discourse among Zulu Muslims, but they are more than willing to denounce Zulu beliefs and practices that are not permitted in Islam. The Zulu Muslims are also willing to Islamise and reinterpret their previous beliefs and practices that they embraced before taking a *shahadah* and becoming Muslims. The Zulu Muslims have always employed Islamic teachings to filter the Zulu beliefs and practices to fit the standard narrative of Islam. Furthermore, it is important to have a comprehensive comprehension of the multifaceted notion of "culture." Indeed, on certain occasions, it tends to replace comprehensible procedures with less comprehensible ones. This suggests that the act of defining a term has the potential to introduce additional intricacies beyond those that currently exist. The term culture may be defined as the epitome of knowledge and expression that has been accumulated and acknowledged across the world. It encompasses the comprehensive narrative of the human intellect and its evolution over time. Nevertheless, the term "culture" refers to the comprehensive and interconnected set of human behaviours that are sometimes described as the "way of

life” of individuals. This observation suggests that humans occupy a central position within the realm of culture. This perspective supports an alternative conceptualisation of culture as “the man-made component of the human habitat.” Arabic names, sometimes referred to as Islamic names, have played a significant role in fostering and reinforcing Islamic cultural identity.

Table 7: Does worship in the mosque programmes accommodate Zulu-ness?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	30	58.8
No	19	37.3
Neutral	2	3.9
Total	51	100

Zulu Muslim community is an arena for fellowship and learning, therefore, the score of 58.8% attests to the fact that the Zulu Muslims value their cultural form of worship. Even though Zulu Muslims practically value their cultural forms of worship such as music *genre*, rhythm, and dance, they maintain that Islamic worship remains standard and universal. Therefore, Islamic worship cannot be modified to fit one’s cultural makeup. In Islam, other cultures are not dismissed but Islam defines what worship ought to be and how worship should be done.

According to Zulu Muslims, the purpose and concept of worship from the Islamic perspective is unparalleled to Zulu indigenous veneration/worship of God/gods. Worship in Islam plays a crucial role in both ritualistic and non-ritualistic deeds. In the Zulu indigenous worldview, the performance of worship or veneration is generally expressed in ritualistic activities such as invoking ancestral spirits, rites of passage, and many other forms of rituals. The non-ritualistic deeds like giving to the poor and loving one neighbour are not regarded as worship/veneration of the ancestral spirits or supreme beings. The worship in the Zulu indigenous homestead is arbitrary because it is often based on the individual’s perceptions and not on the written text like in Islam. The overarching significance of worship in the Islamic tradition must be practised according to the life of Muhammad who was instructed how Muslims ought to live.

Muslims hold the Mohammedan perspective in high regard because the religion of Islam was divinely ordained by Allah and is expected to be followed by all devout

Muslims. In Surah 16:36, Muhammad receives a revelation from Allah as the messenger who is sent to his people to bear witness about the creator of the cosmos. Worship in the Islamic religion permeates every aspect of life. This includes contributions to the well-being of others and all social activities. Muslims are expected to live with an awareness of good and bad deeds being recorded by Allah until the hereafter. Therefore, every Muslim should submit to Allah with an understanding that their life, prayer, sacrifice, and death itself belong to Allah who has no partner, that is, nothing is like Allah in creation and outside of creation. All Muslims must be like Muhammad who is an example to mankind by being “ordered to be among those who submit” and a messenger of Allah (Surah 6:162&163).

Zulu Muslims posited that in Islam the person who desires to become a Muslim must submit to the order of Allah and believe later. In consonant with this view, the Quran says:

The Bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” (49:14).

Islam encourages adherents to submit to the will of Allah and model their lifestyle according to the stipulations and teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. The idea stipulated in the above verse seeks to emphasise that Muslims must not believe in Islam because of the evidence but must submit until they are convinced to believe when faith has entered their hearts. One of the participants acknowledged that he became a Muslim because he was convinced by the alleged scientific miracles in the Quran which he later discovered that the claims were refuted, but he remained a Muslim because of other claims.

The concept of worship in Islam is rigorously based on submission to Allah and performing religious duties out of righteousness. The Quran states that:

It is not righteousness that you turn facing toward the East or the West, but righteousness is he who believes in Allah and the last day and the Angels and the book and the prophets, and gives his beloved money to his relatives and the orphans and the needy and for ransoming of the captives and who observes prayer and pays the poor-due; and those who fulfil their promises when they have made one, and the patient in—poverty and affliction and the steadfast in

time of war; it is those who have proved truthful and it is those who are the God-fearing (Surah 2:177).

The social activities mentioned above constitute a vital form of worship and the adherents of Islam are encouraged to practice all these deeds. The Zulu Muslims are taught that seeking knowledge is one of their religious duties. It was narrated that Muhammad told his companions that seeking knowledge for an hour is more beneficial than spending seventy years in prayer (Dike 1987:25). This does not devalue prayer in Islam but rather attempts to emphasise that prayer without knowledge is not effective.

Worship in Islam includes even deeds that can be seen as insignificant such as, “receiving your friend with a smile is a type of charity, helping a person to load his animal is a charity, and putting some water into your neighbour’s bucket is a charity” (Reo 1990:27). The Masjid is a place where worship is directed to Allah according to Allah’s commandment, and this aspect is inclusive of all things which are forbidden by Allah. Zulu Muslim worship is an act of obedience to God, therefore, worship in the Masjid is not about accommodating Zulu-ness but following what Allah commanded. Worship for Zulu Muslims is also understood as servitude because in Islam the essence of worship is to submit to Allah and Muhammad his messenger. It is a life that is holistically lived in servitude to Allah, and following his commands while avoiding all those things he forbids. The Zulu Muslims are aware of the necessity to execute all activities or deeds with the motive of pleasing Allah. This includes even the very mundane activities are also regarded as an act performed to please Allah, especially when it is done with the right conditions or good motives in the heart (Dave 1998). One of the Zulu participants succinctly said that Muslims are slaves of Allah and are all subjects to the commands of Allah as the whole of creation has been placed under his law, whether the creation likes it or not.

It is not debatable among Zulu Muslims that worship is only reserved for Allah and a rigid form of monotheism is held by many Muslims, therefore, Islam has no tolerance of any form of worship towards any other entity besides Allah. Obedience and love are virtues that must be directed towards Allah. Every act of veneration or worship, homage, and reverence must be solely directed toward Allah. The Zulu Muslims are taught to fear Allah, to love him, to be amazed by his Might, and to put their trust in Allah and obey him. The Islamic creed prevents Muslims from participating in deeds that are regarded as abominations and vices. According to Zulu Muslims, worship is

predicated upon the fact that the decree of Allah must never be disobeyed. Muhammad received a revelation from Allah which states that “We have prescribed certain rites of worship for every people” (Surah 22:34) (Muhib 2004:12).

Furthermore, according to Edet (2019:130), “All the individual’s activities are considered by God as acts of worship should lead the individual to seek Allah’s pleasure in his actions and always try to do them in the best possible manner, whether he is watched by his superiors or is alone. There is always the permanent Supervisor, who knows everything. That Supervisor in the Islamic tradition is called Allah.” In a nutshell, Islam is a complete religion, therefore, worship in the Masjid/Mosque cannot accommodate Zulu-ness because being Muslim is all about strict adherence to the Islamic creed.

Table 8: Should Muslims encourage marital purity and chastity as it is emphasised in the Zulu communities?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	41	80.4
No	7	13.7
Neutral	3	5.9
Total	51	100

Table 8 demonstrates that 41 responses affirm that chastity and marital purity have been perceived as one of the crucial aspects of life among Zulu Muslims. Marital purity and chastity are deeds that are encouraged and taught in the Islamic faith as prevention measures against immorality. Muslim women are told to remain indoors and to cover themselves to avoid any unnecessary temptation. In the traditional *ulama*’s circle chastity and marital purity are essential for both married and single individuals. The Imam in Pietermaritzburg, Nhlazatshe area, was adamant that Islam teaches Zulu Muslims must only engage in conjugal relations when they are married. There is a more robust message of sexual purity to encourage Muslims to follow the commands of Allah regarding sexual relations. It is in the context of Marriage where the sexual relationship is permitted, and sexual relationship is described in both the Quran and hadith as something that brings about strong love and closeness.

Educating the entire community about chastity and marital purity seems to be a necessity in Islam compared to Zulu culture, hence the *ulamas* and the Zulu Muslims

audience work hard to find realistic solutions according to Sharia principles. On the other hand, Zulu culture does not necessarily have anything binding to say for or against marital purity, and chastity is something that is primarily motivated by family honour rather than obeying the command of a supreme being. However, in Islam, everything is done to obey the commands of Allah and Muhammad, his final prophet. In a Zulu indigenous context marital purity and chastity are based on negotiations and compromise, hence culture is not static, while Islam is based on following a precise set of given rules on marital purity and chastity. I argue that most of the Zulu participants see Dawah of modesty as the key doctrine against the prevalent Western culture and perhaps also the Zulu reeds dance that glorifies the display of women's bodies.

The Quranic verses such as Surah 33:59 say, "O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks (jalabib) close round them (when they go abroad) ..." One can argue that Ibn Rushd in *Bidaya al-Mujtahid* was correct that this verse and others like Surah 25 and 33 "has been adduced as proof that no part of a woman's body should be evident to those who are not among the prohibited degrees of relationship (mahram) or her husband" (Sadatmoosavi 2013:9). Substantiated and conclusive Islamic literature reveals that the observance of modesty is a divine command which is intended to prevent sexual immorality while the observer experience Allah's rewards, both in this life and the hereafter in Allah's *Jannah* (paradise) (see, Sadatmoosavi 2013:10-11).

In a nutshell, Zulu Muslims encourage marital purity and chastity as it is emphasised in the Quran and the sunnah. On the other hand, Zulu teenagers' abstinence from sexual intercourse is inspired and predicated upon cultural customs and serves as an essential resource to claim their identity, status, and respectability (Bhana 2016). It is substantiated and evident that both in Islam and the Zulu indigenous worldview chastity is held with high esteem. Based on the Zulu Muslims and literature review one can correctly argue that marital purity and chastity are important in Islam and have no apparent myriad of opposing opinions. The respondents who said "No" to the question merely because of the affirmation that Islam has been for marital purity and chastity from its inception.

Table 9: Do you think Zulu Muslim women are given leadership roles more in Islam than in Zulu Indigenous Religion?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	30	58.8
No	16	31.4
Neutral	3	5.9
Spoiled	2	3.9
Total	51	100

One of the respondents mentioned a hadith that narrates the role of a woman as a “guardian of her husband’s home and His children” (Sahih al-Bukhari 7138 & Sahih Muslim 1829). Women in Islam are considered advisers to their husbands and have many other rights such as the right to ownership of property, to work, to divorce, and so forth. Islam urges men to treat women in a manner that is good and kind, as well as to honour them. Nevertheless, some of the Muslim women were quick to point out that they experience patriarchy as an inexpungible way of life within the Islamic religion. Orthodox Islam has been seen negatively by some Zulu Muslim women who think they are told that they should stay in the back row in the Masjid and their role is confined to their home. Zulu Muslim women mentioned that during the Friday prayer meeting, the sermon of the speaker was not audible in the room designated for women. According to the Zulu Muslim women who participated in the study, the inaudibility of the speakers in the women’s room defeats the purpose of attending the Friday prayers, which is to be spiritually revived.

The Zulu imam in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal was adamant that there is nothing in the Quran or in the sahih (authentic) Hadiths and Sunnah which may suggest that men are not equal to women. However, in Islam, some gender-assigned roles and laws apply to both women and men which Allah has ordained to be followed by the most faithful. The Quranic verse says that:

Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially. And righteous women are devoutly obedient and, when alone, protective of what Allah has entrusted them with. And if you sense ill-conduct from your women, advise them (first), (if they persist), do not share their beds, (but if they persist), then discipline them

(gently). But if they change their ways, do not be unjust to them. Surely Allah is Most High, All-Great (Surah 4:34).

In Islam, the Quran is the go-to book for guidance towards good leadership skills, and seeking knowledge is encouraged by Allah. It is evident among the Zulu Muslim community that a woman can assume a leadership role in their specific workplace, but a woman cannot lead the Friday Prayer or deliver the Friday sermon. When Shagarat Ad-Durr ascended to the throne and ruled in Islamic society during the Mamluk period in Egypt, women did not become imams or lead Prayer because a woman was enthroned (Ruggle 2020). In the traditional Muslim community, women are not allowed to lead Prayer and Zulu Muslims were able to provide reasons why Islam does not permit women to lead in the masjid.

Some of the reasons had to do with the way prayer is conducted in Islam such as the imam leading the prayer must be followed by those praying behind him, and they're supposed to follow his prayer movements such as prostrating, bowing, and so forth. Hence, if a woman was to lead Prayer most of the men's attention and complete submission to Allah may be disrupted by a woman whose physique can naturally trigger sexual instincts in Zulu men. In Islam, there are preventative guidelines that are meant to account for different aspects of life in building a Zulu man's character, whether spiritual or physical. Islam is a religion that does not perceive human beings as holy and therefore recognises that humans are naturally endowed with desires and instincts. Hence, the parameters through the laws exist to safeguard humans from succumbing to their instincts or desires. Islamic law clearly states that only men are permitted to call for prayer as well as to lead people during prayer in the masjid.

Furthermore, the Zulu Muslim women have designated rows for them behind men. It was reported by Abu Huraira that Muhammad said, "the best rows for men are the first rows, and the worst ones the last ones, and the best rows for women are the last ones, and the worst ones for them are the first ones" (Sahih Muslim 440a, Book 4, Hadith 147). Moaddel (2020:65-66) correctly states that many of the Islamic-governed countries or States adopt the orthodox view of Islam which manifests in their outright refusal to accept gender equality. Islamists tend to prevent women from attaining an equal footing in essential areas of governing positions or public life. Muslim fundamentalists instil the message of female obedience and highly favour polygamy (Moaddel 2020:65-66 &135).

Nonetheless, the Zulu Muslim community support the patriarchal values which are mostly pronounced in Islam and other Abrahamic religions. On the other hand, some devout Zulu Muslims believe that there is nothing wrong in adopting an Islamic feministic mindset and supporting gender equality campaigns as an important discourse. One must not think that those who support Islamic feminism negate the rulings concerning the fact that only men are designated to lead during Prayer and deliver sermons. The reason for women not to lead prayer and deliver sermons is predicated upon the revelation given to Muhammad. This is evident in the writings found in the authentic hadiths and the unanimity of Muslim scholars within orthodox Islam. The rejection of women's leadership in the masjid prayer is not propelled by any Zulu cultural norms but it is based on the rulings found in the Quran and Sunnah. The participants had myriad opinions on the question of whether Zulu Muslim women are given leadership roles more in Islam than in Zulu Indigenous Religion. Islam is a religion with principles for women to lead in a feminine manner such as teaching their children in the comfort of their home, which is ideal for Muslim women. The Zulu Muslims did not agree with those who described the teachings of Islam as the cause for misogynistic tendency (*Sahih Muslim*, Book4, Number 1034; *Sahih Muslim*, book 004, Number 1032; *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 9, Number 490; *Sahih Muslim*, book 008, Number 3367; *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 54, Number 460). The Quranic verse in Surah 2:223 says, "Your wives are a tilth unto you; so go to your tilth when or how you will." This verse was revealed to Muhammad because "Jews used to say, if one has sexual intercourse with his wife from the back, then she will deliver a squint-eyed child" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 6, book 60, number 51). Furthermore, in the work by Franz Rosenthal (1989:280-281), he translated the history of *Al-Tabari* which states that:

According to Yunus-Ibn Wahb-Ibn Zayd (commenting on God's word: "And he whispered"⁷¹): Satan whispered to Eve about the tree and succeeded in taking her to it; then he made it seem good to Adam. He continued. When Adam felt a need for her and called her, she said: No! unless you go there. When he went,

⁷¹ The Quranic verses in both 7:20 and 20:120 is a lemma that is not found in some Tabari manuscripts as well as the *Tafsir*, I, 188. Rosenthal (1989:281) mentioned that it was supplied as means to bring clarity in the context of the textual tradition of history (cf. Franz Rosenthal 1989:281).

she said again: No! unless you eat from this tree. He continued. They both ate from it, and their secret parts became apparent to them. He continued. Adam then went about in Paradise in flight. His Lord called out to him: Adam, is it from Me that you are fleeing? Adam replied: No, my Lord, but I feel shame before You. When God asked what had caused his trouble, he replied: Eve, my Lord. Whereupon God said: Now I must make her bleed once every month, as she made this tree bleed. I also must make her stupid, although I created her intelligent (*halimah*), and must make her suffer pregnancy and birth with difficulty, although I made it easy for her to be pregnant and give birth. Ibn Zayd continued: Were it not for the affliction that affected Eve, the women of this world would not menstruate, and they would be intelligent and, when pregnant, give birth easily.

Some of the Zulu Muslim women who have a high level of religiosity are open to the possibility of enjoying themselves under the strict keeping of the law while constantly negotiating and re-negotiating their role as women in Islam. Zulu Muslim women constantly attempt to emancipate themselves and seek a new way to interpret materials that can be outrightly seen as misogynistic or patriarchal.⁷² Among the Zulu Muslims, the patriarchal values are not radically questioned because Islam is often employed by the *ulamas* to promote a patriarchal form of Islam (Glas and Alexander 2020:483; Glas and Spierings 2019:289). It is imperative to bear in mind that over seventy per cent of Arab Muslims promote patriarchal values and subsequently endorse unequal treatment of women (Glas and Alexander 2020:450). Nonetheless, Zulu Muslims do not promote a rigid patriarchal version of Islam, hence women are allowed to lead and flourish in their career of choice. Therefore, it is not wholistically correct to assume that the Islamic religion is a patriarchal entity (Masoud *et al*

⁷² Q. 2:228; Q. 4:34; Q. 2:282; Q. 4:11; Q. 4:176; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, volume 3, Book 48, Number 826; *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, Q. 2.282; *Tanwîr al-Miqbâs min Tafsîr Ibn ‘Abbâs*, Q. 2:228; Q. 4:34; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, Number 301, see Volume 2, Book 24, Number 541; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 2, Book 18, Number 161; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 2, Book 18, Number 161; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 6, Book 60, Number 51; Surah 2:223; *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 6, Book 60, Number 51; *Sahih Muslim*, Book 008, Number 3367; *Sahih Muslim*, Book 008, Number 3367; *Sahih Muslim*, Book 004, Number 1032; *Sahih Muslim*, Book 004, Number 1034.

2016:1562; Glas *et al.* 2018:687; Glas and Spiering 2019:284). Masoud *et al.* (2016:1575&1567) allude to the progressive way of interpreting the Quran to mitigate any patriarchal prejudice toward women taking on public roles or leadership. In both Zulu Muslims and non-Muslim Zulu communities the public role of women is not contested and more people from both sides advocate for the inclusion of women in political positions. Therefore, Zulu Muslim women are given leadership roles as much as those who belong to the Zulu indigenous religion.

Table 10: Do you agree that being a Muslim means denouncing everything that makes you Zulu, such as Zulu customs, values, Zulu songs, and Zulu foods?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	14	27.5
No	36	70.6
Neutral	1	1.9
Total	51	100

According to Table 10, it seems as if being a Muslim does not instantiate one to denounce everything that makes them Zulu. Zulu Muslims do not think of Zulu customs, practices, songs, and foods as things that should be denounced if they are not in violation of Islamic teachings. Most of the Zulu customs and values are taught in an Islamic manner as they sometimes correlate but are performed in different perspectives, that is, Islam or Zulu indigenous religion. There are restrictions at some Masjids concerning the use of instruments, such as only the traditional drum is permitted to be played, while other Masjids do not permit any instruments. Dunstan (1951:230) posits that it is in human nature to respond to music or hymnal stimulus and therefore singing songs can be a vehicle for worship. Worship in various cultures manifests in music, hence some of the Zulu Muslims were adamant in saying, that singing together creates a conducive place for fellowship. This is why in some Masjids the whole congregation can sing together. Nonetheless, there are Masjids that only permit a single person to sing or do poetry.

One of the respondents from IPCI mentioned that, according to Islamic teachings, food sacrificed to ancestral spirits is forbidden as it violates the doctrine of Tawhid (the Oneness of Allah). This prohibition is predicated upon worshipping only Allah and refraining from eating foods sacrificed to other gods or any entity other than Allah. All

in all, being a Zulu Muslim means following the tenets of Islam, and this results in full submission to Allah. Most of the Zulu Muslims were adamant about Islam being the bedrock for decision-making in Muslim families. Therefore, when Muslims encounter a situation where they must choose between opposing views on what culture instructs them to do and choose to do what Islam teaches, this shows they submit to the will of Allah.

Table 11: Are Zulu people being stripped of their culture in the name of Zulu culture being haram?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	17	33.3
No	31	60.8
Neutral	2	3.9
Spoiled	1	2
Total	51	100

As illustrated in Table 11, among Zulu Muslims the idea of one monolithic culture does not exist in the Islamic faith which they have embraced. In many masjids in KwaZulu-Natal the dominant cultures are often non-Zulu black Africans, Arab, and Middle Eastern. It is not correct to assume that Arab, African, and Middle Eastern cultures make up the culture of Islam and annihilate other cultures. According to most of the respondents, the Quran does acknowledge that many Muslims come into Islam from different cultures because Allah created Adam and Eve, and from them, Allah “made [mankind] into peoples and tribes” (Surah 49:13). Allah is responsible for creating diverse cultures that emanated from different people and tribes. Muslims do not necessarily think it is flawed to embrace cultural identity. Cultural identity must be cherished, and Muslims must be proud of their own culture as well as heritage. The prophet of Islam had companions who belonged to a different culture, and he did not order them to embrace his Arabian culture unless their cultural practices were incongruent with the teachings of the Quran and *Sunnah*.

Zulu Muslims believe that one of the means to make *dawah* useful is to embrace their cultural names, clothing, and language within the limits of Islamic rules. Zulu Muslims are overtly aware that Allah gave them Islam as a filter through which Muslims can discern which beliefs and practices to avoid. Hence, Muslims filter cultural

manifestations (arts, customs, social institutions, and so forth) to conform to the Islamic creed. Zulu cultural beliefs and practices that contradict Islam should be denounced or else all Zulu beliefs and practices should be retained, even if they are contrary to the Islamic creed. If the Zulu Muslims allow one thing that is contrary to Islam, they inevitably nullify what Islam is all about and render it useless. Islam without strict restriction is no longer the Islam revealed to Muhammad by Allah. Zulu Muslims have a guiding principle within the Islamic framework and cannot go beyond what is taught in Islam.

According to the Islamic teachings the Zulu culture has haram beliefs and practices when juxtaposed with the four pillars of Islam, which are all done to please Allah or to show that one submits to the will of Allah. Islam offers a complete way of life and those who convert or revert adopt almost an entire new life as Zulu Muslims. The Zulu culture must not be considered superior to Islam, but one should bear in mind that Zulu beliefs themselves should emanate from the Creator and not man-made cultural beliefs that are not static. The respondents did not think of Zulu-ness as a cultural identity they needed to denounce. As time passed Zulu Muslims found their firm ground and their attempts at self-identification led them to deem terms like revert and convert inappropriate and were later replaced by terms like “developing Muslims” (Fakude 2002:47). The terms such as emerging Muslim and developing Muslims both surpassed terms like revert and convert. Beginning from the early 2000s “developing Muslims” became a preferred label among the African Muslims (Sitoto 2003:02). Zulu Muslims believe that they are developing within the Islamic culture as well as see Islam as the only best and perfect way of life. The life of Muhammad which includes his teachings and practices must take precedence over cultural beliefs and practices.

Table 12: Do you agree that the Quran should be recited more in the Zulu language, especially in Zulu-dominated mosques?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	28	54.9
No	23	45.1
Total	51	100

The diversity of language among the indigenous people of KwaZulu-Natal has been one of the great hindrances to the spread of Islam as it has been largely taught in

Arabic and English. The Quran was translated into IsiZulu to reach the people of KwaZulu-Natal with the message of Islam and more materials were made available in the native language. However, Table 12 demonstrates that regardless of the Quran made available in IsiZulu most of the participants believe the Quran must be recited in Arabic because it was sent down in Arabic language. According to the Islamic teachings Arabic language encapsulates and captures the true revelation sent down by Allah to Muhammad.

Zulu Muslim Imams argued that even translation of the Quran to another language will nullify the miraculous composition of the Quran. The Qurans that are translated into different languages should not be regarded as genuine Qurans, except the Quran written in Arabic. The acceptable translation of the Arabic Quran is related to unveiling its meanings, concepts, message, guidelines, or principles to help the non-Arabic speaker understand Allah's revelation. Zulu Muslims are convinced based on the Quran being preserved in the Arabic language and hold the view of the Zulu Quran being a mere interpretation and not even a translation. The growing need among Zulu Muslims is an interpretation of the Quran to clarify its message and spread Islam to the rest of mankind. All Muslims who participated in Table 12 strongly consider the Quran as the divine literal Word of Allah, regardless of their stance when it comes to the debate of whether the Quran in the masjid should be recited in Arabic or IsiZulu. The translation of the Quran into IsiZulu has been a matter of exigency because non-Arab Muslims like Zulu people need to comprehend the meaning of what they utter in their daily prayer.

Furthermore, in our meetings with Zulu Muslims, they argued that there is nothing like the Arabic Quran which they consider as the very Word of Allah and a miraculous speech of Allah. The question of whether the Quran was created or not remains debated among Muslims and critics. According to Table 12, some of the Zulu Muslims were convinced that the Quran should be recited more in IsiZulu in the masjids that are dominated by Zulu people. Even among those who want the Quran to be translated into their vernacular language, the notion of the Quran being untranslatable is affirmed because they believe that no one can produce something like the Arabic Quran. It is considered blasphemous to attempt to create or produce something like it. The question of whether the Zulu Quran is the Quran at all is therefore rhetorical. Based on this premise, the Zulu Quran (*IKuran EyiNgcwele*) is merely an interpretation of the Arabic Quran.

The Quranic verse in Surah 18:3 says, “verily, we have made it an Arabic Quran, haply ye will comprehend it.” Allah sent down to Muhammad an Arabic Quran and it remains untranslatable. Therefore, all the translation of the Quran in any language whether modern or classical remains as a mere approximation of the meaning which may be found in the Arabic Quran and not the authentic Quran (Tibawi 1962:1-16). Ibraheem (2018:2) argues that if the Quran was “revealed in Arabic and Muslims are forbidden to alter any word in it even with an Arabic equivalent, so any change in the holy text from the Arabic into any foreign language is much more strictly forbidden.” The Quran declares itself to be a revelation given to Muhammad in the Arabic language and assures its audience that Allah did not intend for it to be revealed in any other language besides Arabic⁷³. Muslims are not outrightly against the translation of the Quran but are tremendously cautious that the Quran should not be altered and deconsecrated. Furthermore, Zulu Muslims see the necessity to explain the Quran to their Zulu-speaking natives who know nothing about Arabic. Throughout the spread of Islam in other parts of the world, the need to “translate” or “explain” the message of the Quran for faithful Muslims has been perceived by the early scholars of the Quran and even in modern times (Shakir 1925:161). The Zulu imams in KwaZulu-Natal are concerned about the richness of the Arabic language and went further to state that IsiZulu cannot encapsulate the meaning of some Arabic terms that have no known equivalents in the Zulu language. It is the duty of every faithful Muslim not to alter the words of the Quran and translation will inevitably affect the Quranic divine attribute as the very Word of Allah, and this must be circumvented. According to Surah 39:28, “it is an Arabic Quran free from all crookedness, in order that they will be cautious.” So, the Quran must be read or recited in Arabic and, therefore, every faithful Muslim must learn Arabic to recite or pray. Zulu Muslims must learn the Arabic language and knowing the essence of the Quran has been a must for all.

⁷³ The Quranic verses such Surah 12:2; 12:44; 16:103; 18:3; 26:195; 20:113; 39:28; 41:3; 41:44; 42:7; 43:3 and 46:12, all unanimously affirm that the Arabic Quran is the word of Allah. It is incumbent upon Muslims to learn Arabic to understand Allah’s Word. The divine message of the Quran was sent to Muhammad in the Arabic language to be presented to both Arabs and non-Arabs. This is the language that Allah chose to communicate his message to rest of mankind.

The spread of Islam among the Zulu people must be based on proclaiming the message of the Quran and not translating its Arabic language (Ibraheem 2018). According to Shayk Muhammad Shakir (1925), it is not permitted to alter the Quran even if the word used to change the Arabic in the Quran is an Arabic equivalent. Therefore, the rule that forbids anyone from replacing a single word from the Quran also applies to translating the Quran to other languages. However, it has been argued among the Zulu Muslims that the people who translate the Quran must master both languages to safeguard against causing corruption in the meaning. On the other hand, the produced translation must never be a replacement for the Arabic Quran because no translation of the Quran will ever match the Arabic of the Quran. Hence, the Zulu Muslims believe that the Arabic language of the Quran is sacred and remains untouched throughout the history of Islam. Thus, devout Zulu Muslims must learn Arabic to understand and learn about the message of the Quran (Salawu 2007).

In a nutshell, the only authentic Quran is the one composed in Arabic language and Muslim scholars unanimously affirm that the only authentic Quran is the Arabic Quran. If it is a non-Arabic Quran, it is not the authentic Quran preserved from the time of Muhammad to this day (Cook 2000). Therefore, the Quran cannot be recited in IsiZulu because that will nullify the need to learn Arabic which is more beneficial based on being a devout Muslim, who embraces the miraculous language of the Quran. According to Long (2005), translating words from different languages can be problematic because even two languages cannot be adequately similar to offer a direct identical meaning. The Muslim's argument for the untranslatability of the Quran is based on their sheer reverence towards the Quran which is based on the claims found in it. The claim that there is nothing like the Arabic Quran and other claims which alleviate the Quran, make it to be sacred and not to be profaned by any translation or transliteration. Nonetheless, Zulu Muslims are fully aware that the Arabic of the Quran is of divine origin and must always be prioritised while the Zulu Quran serves as an interpretation for those who do not understand Arabic. Reciting the Quran in IsiZulu will lack the unique symphony found in Arabic and the sound or rhythm that can move Muslims into tears and cause ecstasy. Therefore, in this given context the Zulu translation can only serve as a mere effort to provide Zulu Muslims with a suggestive meaning of the Quran (Sardar 2004). Yet, if reciting the Quran in Zulu language was adopted the problem will remain because no matter how good the translator or scholar is, he cannot duplicate the original Quran in IsiZulu. Ali (2006) points out that all

translated versions of the Quran will always be an attempt to interpret the revelation of Allah found in the Arabic Quran. Consequently, a Zulu Muslim leader expressed the notion that the Quran is exclusively recited in a single language and shall not be altered to accommodate individual linguistic preferences.

The significance of prayer lies in its function as a direct means of communication between the devotee and Allah. Through prayer, individuals detach themselves from the mundane aspects of everyday existence and devote their complete attention to Allah. They seek His assistance, guidance, and fortitude to persist on the righteous path. It is not unexpected that prayer is widely seen as a virtuous act, since it serves as a means by which individuals can renew their patience, reverence, and self-restraint (*taqwa*), and as a source of pure water from which they might purify themselves of transgressions. The act of deviating from the customary practise of worshipping in communal areas is shown by those who opt to pray in their preferred language other than Arabic or choose to pray within the privacy of their own homes, which signifies a departure from the prescribed tradition of the Prophet. Consequently, such a departure leads to a state of misguidance. In the past, those who chose to remain at home for prayer were typically perceived as hypocritical.

Table 13: Do you agree that most mosques in KwaZulu-Natal are run by foreigners who serve in key positions in the mosques?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	23	45.1
No	26	51
Neutral	2	3.9
Total	51	100

As illustrated in Table 13, In KwaZulu-Natal, the administration of Masjids is mostly overseen by individuals of foreign origin who identify as brothers and sisters in the Islamic faith. These individuals have obtained a comprehensive understanding of Islam and are commonly referred to as Maulana. Black African Muslims from various regions of Africa play a significant role in the functioning of the masjid. However, in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), the administration and operational responsibilities of Islam are mostly undertaken by South African Indians, who are actively involved in the construction and assume major positions inside the Masjid. This statement does not

suggest that Zulu Muslims are deprived of the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of Islam and assume positions of leadership.

One of the participants pointed out that worship in the Masjid is largely led by South African Indians with callers to prayer being foreigners. Communities that build the masjid serve as trustees, be it foreigners, Turks, South African Indians, and others have the responsibility to run the masjid. Nevertheless, 26 of the respondents believe that the Masjids which are dominated by Zulu Muslims in the townships of Pietermaritzburg and Durban are mostly run by Zulu people who are Imams (prayer leaders) and Shaykhs (spiritual leaders, who are well-educated about Islamic studies).

Table 14: Do you agree that the Zulu convert to Islam should maintain their Zulu names rather than Zulu Muslim names and individual names in KwaZulu-Natal changed to Arabic names such as Muhammad, Yasir, Bilal, Ali, or Yusuf?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	42	82.4
No	7	13.7
Neutral	2	3.9
Total	51	100

According to Table 14, most of the participants believe that Islam does not require conversion/revert to replace their Zulu names with Arabic. Zulu Muslims have the discretion to retain their parent's given names if they are good names that give honour to Allah. The Arabic names should be given as additional names. Mbiti (1969:115) points out that, almost all African names have a meaning. The naming of children among the Zulu people is a significant occasion that is normally accompanied by ceremonies. This is the reason why most respondents were in favour of Zulu names over Arabic names because among Zulu people the meaning is attached to that particular name. Price (1997:94) mentions that the names often reflect an exceptional cultural setting in time. Therefore, if the Zulu children are giving their Zulu names that means they are taking ownership of their culture and showing their gratitude to God through their Zulu names. Hence, it seems good for Zulu Muslims to promote Islam among the Zulu people by encouraging them to spread the message of Islam through Zulu names.

The Islamic faith places significant theological importance on the use of the Arabic language in many manners. Under customary practise, it is anticipated that a newly converted individual will articulate their profession of faith in the Arabic language. When engaging in regular prayers, it is commonly required for individuals to have a foundational understanding of the Quran in the Arabic language. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Quran, the revered scripture of the Islamic faith, is composed in the Arabic language. Devotees of Islam are not only urged to engage in the recitation of this text as a means of seeking spiritual direction but also as a pathway towards attaining salvation in the hereafter. According to a story ascribed to Prophet Muhammad, it is recorded that he urged Muslims to have affection for the Arab people based on three justifications: firstly, due to his Arab heritage; secondly, since the Quran is written in Arabic; and thirdly, because the language spoken by the inhabitants of heaven is Arabic⁷⁴. The presence of many assertions carries implications since adherents of Islam are driven to acquire knowledge, engage in reading, and attain comprehension of the sacred text in the Arabic language. The Arabic language assumes a pivotal and indispensable role in the pursuit of religious identity among Muslims. The aforementioned findings have significant significance for the Arabic language within the context of religious practises. The durability of Islam is shown in the profound influence of Arab culture on its followers. Hence, Africans not only adopted the Islamic faith but also assimilated elements of Arab culture. Arabic names are a significant element by which Islamic culture is firmly embedded into the African context. The degree to which Arabic names are considered to be Islamic has been a subject of contentious debate even among the Zulu Muslim participants. The perception of Arabic names as Islamic may vary among conservative and liberal Muslims. It is not unexpected that scholarly literature has posited the notion that Africans exhibit a persistent and well-recognised inclination towards religious beliefs and practises. The degree to which these assertions are embraced in African society

⁷⁴ Despite that this narrative is graded as weak, it is important to acknowledge the existence of several narratives that promote a positive attitude towards the Arabs. The amalgamation of these narratives provides substantial evidence supporting the notion that we are obligated to exhibit affection for the Arab people, see Mizanul l'tidal, vol. 3 p. 113 and Majma'uz Zawaid, vol. 10 pg. 52; Faydul Qadir, vol. 1 p. 232. See also Al Maqasidul Hasanah, Hadith: 31 and Kashful Khafa, vol. 1 p. 48.

may be observed, in part, through the naming practises of infants. African names serve to assess the inherent qualities and fundamental characteristics of individuals, while also establishing a profound connection between the living and the deceased. There is a growing recognition that African names possess more than a simply functional purpose of identifying persons, but rather encompass spiritual, psychological, and physical dimensions of importance (Penzura 2021:62-65). According to Ngubane & Thabethe (2013:2), African names are intricately connected to the circumstances surrounding births, encompassing political and social factors that might influence the parents' personalities. Hence, a Muslim individual can preserve their original name and cultural identity while still identifying themselves as Muslim, as long as their conduct aligns with the prescribed principles of the Quran and Sunnah.

One of the participants from IPCI asserted that he uses his Zulu names to show non-Muslims that Zulus who come into the fold of Islam can still maintain their Zulu names. He further mentioned that he prefers to be identified by his Zulu name because it demystifies the myth of Islam being the Indian religion. The act of keeping his Zulu identification name shows that Islam does not propel one to denounce their cultural identity. Nonetheless, other Zulu Muslims believe that when Zulu people convert/revert to Islam, they are like newborn babies and are given a Muslim name because as they become Muslim their lifestyle must change and new name-giving denotes their new way of life. For some Muslims, Zulu names should be replaced with Arabic names because this allows Zulu Muslims to relate to their newly found religion. Arabic names, sometimes referred to as Islamic names, have played a significant role in fostering and reinforcing Islamic identity.

Table 15: Do the Muslim youth and children manuals cater to the needs of Zulu people?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	30	58.8
No	13	25.5
Neutral	5	9.8
Spoiled	2	3.9
Total	51	100

As shown in Table 15, the highest number of 30 respondents confirm that Zulu Muslim youth and children manuals cater to the needs of Zulu people. The Zulu Muslim youth and children are nurtured in Islam to make them better leaders in the future. Muslim families ensure that they instil knowledge into children as well as love their Creator and his creation. The children are taught in a language they understand and are trained to be Quranic reciters and *huffaz*⁷⁵. Furthermore, Islam is structured in a way that allows it to cater to everyone, and the Zulu Muslim youth are also not neglected. Once a Zulu person becomes a Muslim the needs of Zulu Muslim youth are not drastically different from other ethnic Muslim youth groups which are all catered to by the spiritual leaders. All Muslims regardless of their age are taught that the devout adherent of Islam seeks to attain the favour of Allah through all their actions. The Muslim youth and children are taught to demonstrate a lack of care over the acquisition of validation from others and put Allah first in all endeavours. Their endeavours to attain Allah's favour may result in the elicitation of anger and animosity from individuals, as stated by the Prophet:

'Abdul-Wahhab bin Al-Ward narrated from a man among the inhabitants of Al-Madinah who said: "Mu'awiyah wrote a letter to 'Aishah, that: 'Write a letter to advise me, and do not overburden me.'" He said: "So 'Aishah [may Allah be pleased with her] wrote to Mu'awiyah: 'Peace be upon you. As for what follows: Indeed I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: **Whoever seeks Allah's pleasure by the people's wrath, Allah will suffice him from the people. And whoever seeks the people's pleasure by Allah's wrath, Allah will entrust him to the people. And Peace be upon you**⁷⁶" (bold emphasis mine).

From an early age, Muslims are imbued with the teachings of the Quran and sunnah, enabling them to develop a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practises associated with the Islamic faith. As a result, a Muslim evaluates all his actions concerning his aspiration to achieve the satisfaction of Allah and will either maintain or abandon any practise based on this criterion. Therefore, adherents of Islam will possess suitable criteria, ensuring that they can navigate the righteous path with clarity and guidance. The Muslim youth and children are taught to strive to prevent

⁷⁵ *Huffaz*: is a person who memorised the Quran.

⁷⁶ Reference: Jami` at-Tirmidhi 2414; In-book reference : Book 36, Hadith 112; English translation: Vol. 4, Book 10, Hadith 2414.

engaging in incongruous contradictions, wherein they adhere to the commands of Allah in one instance while disregarding them in another, or when their perception of something as permissible (*halal*) in one-year changes to impermissible (*haram*) in the following year. The Zulu Muslim youth and children who deviate from the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah suffer from a profound misinterpretation of the essence of Islam. Islam, as a comprehensive religion, guides Muslims in all aspects of life towards a higher objective, which is the attainment of Allah’s pleasure and glorification. The pursuit of a higher objective compels adherents of Islam to evaluate their actions following the criteria established by Allah. Furthermore, one of the participants mentioned that individuals who can be categorised as “nominal Muslims” are those who identify as Muslims but do not actively practise or adhere to the principles and teachings of Islam. The phenomenon of split personality poses a significant threat to the Muslim community; hence manuals have been produced in *IsiZulu* to educate Zulu Muslims about Islam.

Table 16: Do you agree that the majority of Zulu people see Islam as an Indian religion?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	42	82.4
No	7	13.7
Neutral	2	3.9
Total	51	100

The score of 42 points as illustrated in Table 16 agree with the notion that Zulu people see Islam as an Indian religion. The Islamic faith has always been perceived as lacking significance to the Zulu community, sometimes being dismissed as an exclusively Indian religion. However, it is mostly individuals who do not adhere to the Islamic faith that dismiss Islam as an Indian religion. According to Kaarsholm (2011),

this also affected the practice of Islam, which tended from the inside to be seen as an Indian religion – or as restricted to a community of ‘born’ Muslims, who were predominantly Indian – and who therefore did little to proselytise among other groupings.

However, Shaykh Abbas Phiri, who was not from among the Zulu people, possessed a keen understanding of the formidable and arduous challenges he had undertaken.

He was cognisant of the complexities and perils associated with his endeavour to introduce Islam to a predominantly Christian community residing in the periphery of an urban locality. Before proceeding with his plans, he initially engaged with the local chiefs and town councillors to provide a comprehensive explanation of his intentions and to elucidate the principles and tenets of Islam in his *Dawah* project. This approach was effective since it was not impeded by any local authoritative person. While it is true that none of the councillors or local chiefs embraced Islam, it is worth noting that a significant number of individuals were indeed impacted by the teachings and principles of the Islamic faith. During that period, several challenges had to be addressed due to the prevailing misconceptions surrounding Islam and Muslims. It was seen that certain Africans associated Islam exclusively with Indian religious practises, hence contributing to the existing misunderstandings.

Furthermore, the absence of centralised houses of worship, such as Masjids, was also evident. Additionally, a lack of financial resources and funding hindered religious or *dawah* endeavours. The link between Islam and the Indian population was readily apparent and comprehensible. Nevertheless, there were other ramifications. The characterisation conveyed a perception that, like Hinduism, Islam was a faith centred around the veneration of idols, and that mosques were replete with such idols, rendering them unsuitable for entry by those adhering to the Christian faith and possessing a sense of self-esteem. Additionally, the religious practises of the Indians were mostly embraced by traders and merchants, making it ill-suited for adoption by Africans (Mumisa 2003:288).

This perception is prevalent among the Zulu people because they are not aware of the teachings of the Islamic faith. Therefore, the failure to understand that Islam is meant to be a universal religion for all tribes and nations has caused Zulu non-Muslims to see Islam as an Indian religion.

Table 17: Do you agree that mosque leaders should appoint and develop Zulu people as leaders to grow and spread Islam in KwaZulu-Natal?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	38	74.5
No	10	19.6
Neutral	3	5.9
Total	51	100

According to Table 17, the majority of the respondents concur that Zulu Muslims must be given opportunities to learn more about Islam and run madrasahs and masjids. It will be through the teaching, developing, and appointing Zulu people as leaders who will spread the message of Islam in their language. Educating Zulu people about Islam can help to spread the message of Islam in an informative manner. Zulu Muslims should be encouraged and trained to be able to teach Zulu people about Islam, and this dawah project will help to transfer knowledge about Islam among the Zulu-speaking community. The focus on non-Zulu Muslims is also necessary because all Muslims must know why the Dawah movement towards the Zulu people is important in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as learn how to communicate with the Zulu people effectively.

Table 18: Did the Zulu religion manage to domesticate Islam in KwaZulu-Natal?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	24	47
No	16	31.4
Spoiled	11	21.6
Total	51	100

The score of 24 points in Table 18 is based on the premise that the Zulu people may adopt a syncretistic outlook when it comes to religious worldviews but that is deviating from the true form of Islam and contrary to the Islamic creed. In KwaZulu-Natal, the Zulu converts/reverts seem to understand that the purest form of Islam will not be altered by anything beyond the message revealed to Muhammad and written down in the Quran. It is discernible that Zulu Muslims do not see any influence of Islam being syncretised in the Zulu religious worldview. However, most of them have deduced from their experience that Zulu people are inclined to domesticate other religions for spiritual potency and other reasons.

One of the reasons why non-Muslim Zulu people do not make use of the Islamic relics for spiritual potency as seen in Christianity, is propelled by the lack of knowledge about Islam among them. One of the participants was adamant that the Zulu religion did not domesticate Islam in KZN because Islam is a complete religion and superior to other

religious worldviews, because it calls people to true monotheism (*Tawheed*) and seeks to reveal the message of Allah to his creation.

Table 19: What allows the Zulu indigenous religion to be accommodative if it is so?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	13	26
No	15	29
Neutral	1	2
Spoiled	22	43
Total	51	100

Zulu indigenous religion adherents embrace syncretism as a partial means of increasing spiritual potency. Perhaps, indigenous Zulu spiritual beliefs are accommodative because they are not restricted by a codified text like Islam. The members of the indigenous Zulu worldview live to placate the ancestral spirits as well as oblige when the ancestral spirits determine that someone should become a diviner. On the other hand, Islam regards ancestral worship/veneration as a forbidden practice that will inevitably lead to shirk. Zulu indigenous religion recognises that beliefs and practices inform and touch on every facet of human lifestyle, and therefore Zulu indigenous religion is not distinct from the mundane or everyday life.

Most of the participants were quick to point out that Islam cannot be a mixed bag, that is, to be synchronised with other religions. The Zulu spirituality must be seen as truly holistic. For example, sickness or disease in the Zulu indigenous worldview can be caused by an imbalance in one's social life and by the imbalance of the body. In the Zulu indigenous worldview sickness is strongly believed to be caused by the breakdown in one's family and kinship relations or even to one's relationship with their ancestral spirits. Zulu indigenous religious worldview does not accommodate other religion(s) but cherry-picks what may be useful and disregards the core claims of other religion(s). Furthermore, it does not adhere to the teachings of Islam and cannot be truly accommodative to the Islamic faith. The Zulu indigenous worldview is a fully-fledged religion in itself and does not need other religion(s) to be recognised as a complete religion.

Furthermore, the Zulu indigenous worldview does not adhere to any written text like any of the Abrahamic religions. The difference between the Zulu indigenous religion

and the Islamic faith is predicated upon the fact that Islam claims to follow Allah’s revelation while adherents of ZIR follow the traditions of their forefather and whatever the ancestral spirits have communicated to them through a particular medium (dreams, visions, Sangomas, etc). The adherent of ZIR cannot correctly claim to be a Muslim in the same way a Muslim should not be an adherent of Islam and still practice ZIR.

Table 20: Is there anything done to promote Zulu herbs and concoctions among the Zulu adherents of Islam?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	27	52.9
No	16	31.4
Neutral	7	13.7
Spoiled	1	2
Total	51	100

A considerable proportion of Zulu Muslims—27 points out of 51—were persuaded those traditional Zulu medicines and concoctions are remedies that are encouraged in their community. Zulu Muslims are willing to promote the use of good herbs for natural remedies if they do not get them from traditional healers. The Zulu herbs and concoctions must be free from acts that can make them haram such as those that are concocted by traditional healers. Muslims are not permitted to use any herbs and concoctions that are sold by diviners as they are haram and lead to shirk which is a grievous sin. Zulu herbs and concoctions must be used with thanksgivings and worship to Allah, who created them as an aid to human beings. Needless to say, the Zulu Muslims revealed that they depend almost entirely on Western medical doctors rather than the use of Zulu herbs and concoctions.

Furthermore, the respondent said that among the Zulu Muslims traditional medication is demonised and discouraged. The use of traditional medicine is believed to pose a serious threat of causing a Zulu Muslim to commit shirk and become dependent on traditional medicine with the potential of using it for witchcraft. Islam has its ways of dealing with similar problems that traditional medicine is used for and Muslims can employ treatments prescribed by Muhammad, who is considered as the best example for all Muslims and the whole of mankind.

Table 21: Can Islam be better than it is now, especially when it comes to accommodating the Zulu culture or spirituality?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	27	53
No	20	39.2
Spoiled	4	7.8
Total	51	100

Zulu Muslims strongly believe that Islam is completely a different worldview in comparison to the Zulu indigenous worldview, particularly in terms of the veneration of ancestral spirits. One of the participants said that there are a few aspects of Zulu culture that are not consistent with the teachings of Islam, and one of them is the veneration or worship of ancestral spirits. The overarching argument against any proposal for Islam to accommodate Zulu culture or spirituality was deemed as not possible unless Islam becomes a filter of what can be acceptable and not acceptable. This is argued because Islam is believed to be very rigid, and adherents of Islam cannot modify or synchronise the religion of Islam to align with their personal preferences.

Furthermore, Allah told Muslims that he has already perfected Islam through the message found in the Quran, therefore, Islam cannot practically get any better if it is perfect. Allah employed the Quran and the sunnah to address and describe how faithful Muslims should handle issues of worship, spirituality, rituals, etc. Islam is not a religion of intellectualism, that is, its teachings and laws are not open for discussion. Therefore, it is incumbent upon individuals to accept Islam and submit to the will of Allah by following his religion willingly without question. The Zulu Muslims believe that Zulu culture or spirituality will not by any means make Islam better because Islam has been complete and perfect since the time of Muhammad. Nonetheless, Islam does acknowledge other cultures, and Zulu culture is not excluded. On the other hand, Islam will always remain a filter of what must be retained or discarded based on the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.

6.5 Descriptive statistics

A total number of 51 participants in the survey tend to believe that Zulu customs and values which are consistent with the Quran and Sunnah must be preserved within the proper Islamic guidelines and are more likely to assist in the spread of Islam among the Zulu people. It is evident according to Tables 1-11 that most of the respondents see value in Zulu customs and values. Zulu customs and values should be considered and promoted among the Zulu Muslim community to make the Dawah projects more relevant to the Zulu people.

6.6 Findings

The respondents in their own words in Tables 12-21 expressed various and diverging views concerning the Zulu beliefs and practices of their religion as Zulu Muslims:

One participant had this to say,

Muslims have to bear in mind that the publication of Islamic materials in the people's local language will help them to understand Islam. It will also conscientise the adherents of Islam to embrace their Zulu culture as long as it does not violate the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. There is a need for seminars to be conducted on Zulu beliefs and practices in contrast to the Islamic faith.

In addition, Zulu Muslims will be holistically prepared to reach out to Zulu people with the message of Islam if they are well equipped in Islamic teachings and understand the Zulu beliefs and practices. Zulu Muslims have to rely on one another as they attempt to interact with people in the world where Zulu cultural beliefs and practices are held in high esteem. One of the respondents succinctly said, "Zulu beliefs and practices should not be undermined because they integrate and bring Zulu people together under a common worldview, therefore, Zulu Muslims have to seriously engage with them." The emphasis among many of the respondents was the idea that the Muslim community's posture towards non-Muslims has to be permeated by mutual understanding and toleration of other people's beliefs and practices.

6.7 Discussion of findings

The Zulu people who embraced Islam during the apartheid era sometimes did not convert purely based on religious reasons, but it was intended to be a political statement. Muslims were able to juxtapose Islam with Christianity and concluded that

Christianity was employed to oppress the African people. The Zulu people who embraced Islam became aware that they could not identify or associate themselves with the religion of the oppressor. Ncube, one of the interviewees in Sitoto's (2003:4-5) work said that:

I am a Muslim first. If I assert that I am an African first...it would mean that I am succumbing to external pressures. However, you need to take people with you. I do not see any dichotomy between being African and Muslim. Islam is fully African and African is fully Islam... the two are synonymous because the values of African people are similar to Islam. The whole question boils down to the question of definition and central to that definition is the concern for human well-being. The more you go deeper into Islam the more you go back to your African culture. So, let's call it homecoming!

Zulu Muslims are constantly engaged in the comparative discourse as they address the claims of Zulu Indigenous Religion, Hinduism, Christianity, and so forth. A respondent from IPCI expressed an equivalent perspective to that presented in Sitoto (2003:4-5), which posits that "the more you go deeper into Islam the more you go back to your African culture." This is however arguably false because the idea of Zulu Muslims observing some of the Zulu traditional customs and rituals especially those that may lead to shirk is unthinkable, to say the least. Most of the respondents conveyed how the influence of Christianity in their upbringing continues to interplay between the Zulu indigenous religion and its confrontation with Muslim identity. This is why when responding to the questionnaire some of the respondents did not hesitate to mention that "ancestral worship is forbidden in Islam, and it is the same in Christianity." When asked about allowing Zulu attire in the place of worship, they said, "In Islam, the normal Zulu traditional clothing is not permitted in the Masjids as it is also not allowed in the Church."

Furthermore, Sitoto (2003:7) correctly said, "The rhetoric of affirming African culture aside, it seems that the ambivalence shown towards African culture stems from residues of an earlier upbringing in Christianity." It seems at a pragmatic level that Christianity continues to play a role in shaping the views of Zulu Muslims on Zulu beliefs and practices. Very few Muslims are unaware of the arguments against the traditional Zulu culture by Christians, especially the "born-again" group of Christians. Nonetheless, Zulu Muslims have managed to primarily rely on the teachings of the

Quran and Sunnah to decide what they ought to abandon or preserve concerning their Zulu identity.

The researcher discovered from the survey that the Zulu Muslim community has to foster contextual Dawah projects that are relevant to Zulu beliefs and practices while remaining consistent with the teachings written in the Quran and Sunnah to enhance the presence of Islam among the Zulu people. The contextual relevant Dawah projects through Zulu customs and values can significantly attract the Zulu-speaking community to the Islamic fold. Contextual dawah projects among the Zulu people must manifest in fellowship, community spirit, local leadership, and Zulu-ness in terms of worship in the Masjids, child naming and boy-child circumcision, meals, marriage, dating, herbs, and concoctions. All these aspects and many more demonstrate that they play a vital role in the growth and retention of Islam among the Zulu community.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

7.0 Conclusion

This thesis effectively demonstrates that, as per the perspective of Zulu Muslims, the traditional beliefs and practises of the Zulu people have seen minimal to no alteration because of the impact of Islam. The impact of Islam on Zulu Muslims is evident, as they engage in an ongoing process of determining which aspects of their original Zulu faith they may still embrace and observe. The impact of Islam on Zulu Muslims appears to be intricately rooted in the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. The teaching of the Zulu imams regarding the idea of *Tawhid* and their emphasis on this particular topic undoubtedly have a significant impact in preventing the Zulu Muslims from engaging in shirk. The theological reflection effectively shows that the Zulu Muslim communities utilise the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah as a criterion to evaluate and sift through various religious practises and beliefs that are collectively embraced and esteemed. The impact of Islam on Zulu individuals who have embraced or returned to the faith is extensive and evident in several aspects of their religious practise and behaviour. Zulu Muslims have demonstrated a strong emphasis on their identity as individuals who have embraced the Islamic faith as their guiding truth.

According to the findings of the study, the Zulu Muslim maulanas did not see the need to target one specific group of people because Islam is meant to be for the whole of human species and moving away from ethnocentrism is a necessity. The Zulu Muslims were unanimous that Islam has no impact on the non-Muslim Zulu people. The Zulu Muslims substantiated that Islam has no impact on non-Muslim Zulu people because they are not familiar with Islam, and some of them still see Islam as a foreign or Indian religion. Additionally, the non-Muslim Zulu people are firmly rooted in their Zulu beliefs and practices, and adopting Islam is equal to abandoning their ancestral spirits.

According to the Islamic viewpoint, the diviner is credited with having the same knowledge that Allah possesses of the past, the present, and the future. Divination is sometimes referred to as the “handiwork” of Satan because it sows the seed of enmity between family members and hence is classified as “the work of Satan.” Whoever visits a diviner and believes in what is revealed to them will have his prayers hindered for a period of forty days, as stated by a tradition that was passed down from

Muhammad. Both the Quran and the hadith discuss the existence of witchcraft and sorcery as well as the need for mankind to seek protection against the practise of divination or witchcraft. Nevertheless, it is essential to stress that Islam has been intensely influential among the Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal and is more likely to continue in this trajectory of spreading Islam strategically.

Time will tell regarding how the Dawah projects in KwaZulu-Natal will respond to meet the needs of Zulu indigenous people and offer a better-contextualised Dawah without compromising the message of Islam. The Zulu Muslim presence is not documented in South African Islam and remains invisible in scholarship. Sitoto (2003:01) correctly argued that most of the scholarship focuses on the “history and experiences of the Asian diaspora or Asian Muslim community.” Although the focus on these historical communities is geared towards exploring the origins of Islam in South Africa, this presents us with an incomplete picture of the Zulu Muslim history. The lack of Zulu Muslim history and demography contributes to the presence of Zulu Muslims being either unconsciously ignored or erased. Nonetheless, this remark does not dismiss the writers who have addressed the challenges and the state of Zulu or Xhosa Muslims, such as Rebekah Lee (2001), Tahir Sitoto (2003), Tayob (1999), Haron (1998), Kaarsholm (2011), etc. Zulu Muslims need to sound the clarion call for a fruitful dialogue between them and non-Zulu Muslims. Until this takes place, the attitude of superiority and superficial understanding of Islam among the non-Muslim Zulu people will remain as it is.

Furthermore, to some degree, the Zulu Muslims in KwaZulu-Natal will continue to internalise the process of their conversion and attempt to harmonise the new religious identity. The Zulu people's conversion narratives to Islam tend to unveil the cumbersome challenge of Zulu Muslims to harmonise and preserve both identities. For instance, some of the Zulu Muslims perceived their conversion to Islam as an opportunity to return to what they had already rehearsed in their Zulu ideologies and rituals existing in Zulu tradition. Many of the Zulu converts to Islam said that embracing Islam allowed them to find their truer traditional customs and values than previously. The influence of Islam on the Zulu indigenous worldview is visible among the Zulu Muslims, and the Zulu beliefs and practices have been eroded by the Islamic religion. The converts are not hesitant to point out that Islam and ZIR have similarities and differences. The emphasis has been placed on the validity of Islam as a religion that becomes an embodiment of the true Zulu beliefs and practices that are not corrupted

by man. The Zulu Muslim's conversion narratives present us with a sense that Islam offered them a nostalgic Zulu past that was not viable in the chaotic secular world. Again, there are myriad opinions among the adherents of both Islam and Zulu indigenous religion, but the overarching difference is that one claim is to be a religion revealed by God while the other claim is to follow the path of the ancestors, respectively.

It is undoubtedly upon closer inspection that Islam has offered Zulu Muslims a fundamental departure from the Zulu worldview to an Islamic worldview, though few converts chose to perceive it as such, many chose to adhere to the Islamic way of life. Therefore, the Zulu cultural beliefs and practices from their previous lives are filtered through the Islamic worldview predicated upon the Quran and Sunnah. The influence of Islam on Zulu Muslims can be observed in how they greet, pray, dress, and conduct themselves as slaves of Allah (Muslims). The Zulu Muslims find themselves in a complex situation where they navigate between the cultural expectations of the Zulu community and the principles of Islamic culture. They strive to achieve a state of equilibrium that allows for the coexistence of these two worldviews. This phenomenon is observed even within the Zulu Muslim community, where individuals acknowledge that certain elements of Zulu cultural practises are not in conflict with Islamic teachings, but other components are indeed contradictory to Islamic principles.

Within the framework of interfaith engagement between Islam and ZIR, religious leaders are faced with a predicament about the presentation of an Islamic faith that resonates with the Zulu indigenous population of KwaZulu-Natal, therefore ensuring its acceptance among them. The Zulu Muslim community must acknowledge the prominent reality that certain adherents of Islam perceive the religion as a catalyst for the renunciation of Zulu cultural identity. The profound impact of Islam on Zulu Muslims residing in KwaZulu-Natal is readily apparent. However, it is imperative for both non-Muslim Zulu individuals and Zulu Muslims to actively foster mutual engagement to strive towards a more optimal societal framework.

The Zulu Muslim community has had significant influence from Islam, leading to the rejection of ancestral reverence or worship, a fundamental aspect of the Zulu Indigenous Religion (ZIR). Consequently, those who do not engage in ancestral veneration may face accusations of ignoring their ancestors. In contrast, the Zulu people who do not practise Islam maintain the tradition of appeasing ancestor spirits, who serve as intermediaries between humanity and the Supreme Being. Diviners,

witch-doctors, chiefs, tribal leaders, and household heads fulfil the role of intermediaries between the mortal realm and ancestral spirits, who in turn relay messages to the divine being. Hence, within the Zulu indigenous belief system, there exists a structured hierarchy of guardians whose primary role is to safeguard the community from deviating towards other religious practises or adopting a secular, materialistic worldview. Islam is a religious faith that centres around the worship of God, a concept that resonates with Zulu converts who willingly become a slave of Allah following their understanding of the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, the devout Zulu Muslims have chosen to renounce any Zulu beliefs and practises that conflict with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. In a nutshell, it is imperative for both non-Muslim Zulu individuals and Zulu Muslims to actively participate in constructive dialogue and avoid participating in heated disputes. Moreover, it is essential that adherents of Islam and ZIR cease perpetuating stereotypes of one another's worldviews.

8.1 Recommendations

The assimilation of Islamic culture by Zulu Muslims is not a strictly linear process, as the reciprocal effect of both cultures can influence each other, especially when they are not directly opposed. Therefore, the Zulu Muslim community must acknowledge the prominent reality that certain adherents of Islam perceive the religion as a catalyst for the renunciation of Zulu cultural identity. The profound impact of Islam on Zulu Muslims residing in KwaZulu-Natal is readily apparent. The following recommendations can serve as a significant stride towards the realisation of an ideal Zulu Muslim world.

1. It is imperative for imams and shaykhs to actively interact with Zulu culture and emphasise how Masjids may support and develop it while adhering to the principles outlined in the Quran and Sunnah.
2. Zulu Muslims should continue to encourage Islamic courtship (culture of chastity), which is not distinct from that of Zulu culture.
3. Zulu Muslims should actively promote the preservation of traditional wedding customs, as well as the inclusion of Zulu songs and dancing, within the context of their Islamic festivities.
4. There is a need to conscientise Zulu members to embrace their culture as long as it does not contradict the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.
5. The Zulu Muslims should continue to organise seminars with a focus on Zulu culture with Islamic Dawah initiatives. Moreover, by drawing upon Zulu culture and spirituality, Zulu Muslims must be adequately equipped to engage with the Zulu indigenous people in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.
6. The process of Islamisation of the Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal should involve the Zulu Muslim shaykhs and imams being open to interacting with Zulu culture and values, such as ukudla kwesintu, ukulobola, ubuntombi, African clothing, and respect for elders.
7. Religious leaders should prioritise their attention towards Zulu Muslims who express the desire to engage in negotiations regarding their identity.
8. Zulu Muslims should acknowledge that Zulu identity and Muslim identity are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but rather can be viewed as complimentary aspects to some degree.
9. The Dawah projects in KwaZulu-Natal must be able to address the questions and misunderstandings about Islamic teachings and praxis.

10. The emphasis on the doctrine of oneness (*Tawhid*) plays a crucial role in preventing the idea of synchronising the Zulu indigenous religion with Islam and Identifying the aspects of Islam that align with the pre-existing Zulu cultural ideas and rituals.
11. The Zulu Muslims involved in Dawah must be familiar with the Zulu indigenous religion and the reasons why the Zulu people find it convincing as a way of life, and juxtapose that with why Islam can be a better religion for them.
12. Zulu Muslims must continue to familiarise themselves with Zulu traditional food, Zulu traditional weddings, Zulu dance, Zulu traditional herbs and concoctions, Zulu songs, Zulu worship style, etc. within the guidelines of the Islamic religion... religious leaders should prioritise what is relevant to the local context.

The Zulu Muslim community has had significant influence from Islam, leading to the rejection of ancestral reverence or worship, a fundamental aspect of the Zulu Indigenous Religion (ZIR). Consequently, those who do not engage in ancestral veneration may face accusations of ignoring their ancestors. In contrast, the Zulu people who do not practise Islam maintain the tradition of appeasing ancestor spirits, who serve as intermediaries between humanity and the Supreme Being. Diviners, witch-doctors, chiefs, tribal leaders, and household heads fulfil the role of intermediaries between the mortal realm and ancestral spirits, who in turn relay messages to the divine being. Hence, within the Zulu indigenous belief system, there exists a structured hierarchy of guardians whose primary role is to safeguard the community from deviating towards other religious practises or adopting a secular, materialistic worldview. Islam is a religious faith that centres around the worship of God, a concept that resonates with Zulu converts who willingly become a slave of Allah following their understanding of the Quran and Sunnah. Hence, the devout Zulu Muslims have chosen to renounce any Zulu beliefs and practises that conflict with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. Both Zulu and those who do not adhere to the Islamic faith and those who do must engage in constructive discourse and avoid engaging in contentious debates with one another.

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