

## Understanding contemporary miracles: A study on tauhīd and magical practices in Nigerian society

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### Abstract

This study investigates the understanding of miracles in contemporary Nigerian society, particularly among Muslims, with a focus on reinforcing the concept of Tauhīd. It identifies the miracles of the Prophets and the righteous as divine occurrences, while other extraordinary occurrences, particularly those linked to unethical behavior, are interpreted as magical or deceptive, possibly influenced by occult practices. However, religion has become a basis for extraordinary claims among some Muslims and Christians alike. This research employs a mixed-methodology approach that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. A total of 12 Muslim scholars and 5 pastors were interviewed, each responding to eight structured questions. Additionally, 211 respondents completed a questionnaire disseminated via WhatsApp. The instrument consisted of 25 questions, including one open-ended item designed to elicit suggested solutions. The quantitative approach provided data for statistical analysis, while the qualitative approach enabled a thematic discussion of the issues. Strengthening theological understanding - particularly Tauhīd among Muslims - could contribute to reducing the prevalence of magical interpretations of religious experiences. While completely eliminating shirk may not be feasible, increased awareness can help mitigate its occurrence.

**Keywords:** Miracle, Magic, Tauhīd, Shirk, Sunni/Salafī, Sufism

### 1.0 Introduction

Miracles today have become widespread. According to the dictionary, a Miracle is an activity with a supernatural cause. The miracle is an event that suspends the actual course of events; man cannot violate the laws of nature, but such laws can be put on hold for a particular purpose by the creator of nature (Geivett, R.D. & Habermas, 1997).

Miracles in stills restore hope in God, manifesting as an instant response to prayer, the unexpected removal of discomfort, or an extraordinary occurrence that disrupts the natural flow of events. Most often, miracles are considered religious phenomena, as God is seen as the cause of their occurrence. In Islam, there is a belief in Mu’jizāt (miracles performed by the Prophets of God, extraordinary events that God permits to occur in honor of His righteous servants) and magic that a devil facilitates. The door to commissioning Prophethood has been closed with the coming of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Nursi, 2006). This aligns with Allah’s saying, “Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets (Ahzab 33:40). This leaves us with only one possible kind of miracle, the Karāmāt. In modern times, miracles have become a measure of piety in the eyes of the

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masses. Thus, anyone who claims to possess such powers is deemed a saint. By this measure, many are misguided, some fall into acts of Shirk, some may also be deprived of their worldly possessions, and those who sought medical help may have deteriorated to the point of death. This research, therefore, will provide an exposition of some of those events, the secrets behind their activities, and their goals.

Some Muslims and Christians alike fall prey to miracle performers due to a desire for extraordinary signs from God, coupled with a limited understanding of their faith. While this concept may be unclear in Christianity, Muslims have explicit guidance on the matter. This situation is hazardous for Muslims as it challenges their faith in God and may lead to shirk (associating partners with Allah). The longstanding yearning for miracles from 'saints' among Nigerians may be traced back to the influence of Sufism in Nigeria.

When miracle performers are found among Muslims, they are often regarded as saints. Occasionally, such performers lack the confidence to make bold claims, but over time, as their following grows, they attribute their activities to religion to gain credibility. In contrast, when this occurs among Christians, such performers are referred to as prophets of God. Interestingly, there are instances of pastors repenting from their misdeeds and revealing the secrets behind their 'powers.' However, it is rare to find repentant individuals among Muslims openly discussing their past wrongdoings. This may be due to the fact that Islam disallows the public revelation of one's sins, whereas such exposure is viewed as a means to repentance in Christianity.

## 2.0 Problem Statement

In recent times, the use of magic disguised in religious practices has become increasingly prevalent in many Muslim communities, particularly in regions where there is limited understanding of Tawhid (the Oneness of Allah). This lack of foundational knowledge has created a vulnerability that some individuals exploit—posing as devout religious figures while engaging in deceptive practices. Under the guise of spiritual authority, these individuals claim to possess divine favors, yet often rely on occult practices that compromise the faith of unsuspecting believers. The intense desire for miracles and dramatic spiritual experiences—especially in Nigeria—has further fueled this trend. Nearly every religious leader, including pastors, prophets, and reverends, seeks the "anointing" for performing miracles. Similarly, some Muslim clerics (imams) have adopted practices akin to traditional healers, prescribing charms, amulets, or incantations to address spiritual or physical ailments, often leading adherents into subtle forms of shirk (associating partners with Allah) (Jibromah, 2015).

This phenomenon spans all four major regions of Nigeria and continues to grow, as miracle-seeking culture becomes more embedded in both religious and social life. Despite the widespread nature of this issue, a review of available literature suggests that this research is among the first to systematically explore this intersection of miracle claims, religious authority, and faith deviation within Nigerian Muslim communities. As such, the study holds relevance for a broad audience, including individual Muslims and Christians, scholars and educators, religious leaders, and policymakers seeking to understand and address the misuse of religious influence in contemporary society.

## 2.1 Hypothesis

H0: Miracles in contemporary times are not Shirk.

H1: Miracles in contemporary times are Shirk.

H0: There was no difference between the group that received correct religious knowledge and the group that did not receive correct religious knowledge.

H2: Those who received correct knowledge about Allah showed more excellent resistance towards miracle performers.

Sample Size: Nigeria has a large population of approximately 200 million people, comprising over 300 distinct tribes and languages. The country has four central geographical regions: Northern Nigeria, which mainly consists of the Hausa tribe with many minority tribes, where the majority are Muslims; Northcentral, which includes many tribes among the Hausa people as well; and the Southwest, where the Yoruba people are the majority tribe with several minority tribes, leading to a near-equal distribution of Islam and Christianity. The Southeast features the Igbo tribe as the majority, alongside a variety of minority groups, with most residents being Christians. Ten Sheikhs and four pastors were interviewed. The questionnaire survey achieved 211 respondents, surpassing the initial target of 200.

### 3.0 Literature Review

A key point to understand about the concept of miracles in Islam is that they result from God's power and permission. Miracles hold significance in all three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This is because God utilized miracles to support His messengers and to affirm their unique positions with Him. Moses was chosen, and God performed miracles through the agency of Moses and his brother, Aaron. The Jewish people believed in miracles with God's permission, as Moses and Aaron acted as agents while God remained the ultimate cause (Woodward, 2000). The Bible states, "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians, and they saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel witnessed the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians; therefore, the people feared the Lord, believed in the Lord, and trusted His servant Moses (Exodus 14:30-31).

Jesus performed more miracles than any prophet before him. For these miracles, Jesus was accepted as a new Moses (Woodward, 2000). This suggests that Jesus, like Moses, executed miracles by the will of God. The Quran explicitly acknowledges the miracles of both Moses and Jesus. The birth of Jesus was miraculous. "She said, 'How can I have a boy while no man has touched me, and I have not been unchaste?'" (Suratul Maryam 19:20). This matter is disputed among contemporary Christians but is affirmed in the Quran. Jesus is attributed to an astonishing number of miracles, making the reported miracles of other figures seem comparatively small (Twelftree, cited in Licona & Watt, 2013).

#### 3.1 History of Miracles of Awliyaa and Sainthood in Sufism

The understanding of who a saint is in Sufism challenges the very foundation of Islam, providing fertile ground for miracle performers. Sufism acknowledges the potential for a propagator to attain sainthood through extraordinary practices or magical feats (Maduski, 2003). Indeed, sainthood holds a possibility for the Sufi Shaykh to be regarded as a saint by his followers, even after his death. "Sufi learning is based on oral transmission via the Sufi masters, whose influence continues long after death among their followers. Therefore, his tomb is venerated" (Pinto & Devis, 2004). Some Muslims view a saint as a mediator, a holy person, a miracle worker, a defender of the faith, and a person endowed with Barakah [blessing] that manifests in the saint's person and belongings, from which devotees can benefit (Meri, 2002). This belief can be quite dangerous, leading Muslims towards the worship of entities other than Allah. To justify the status of these "saints," their followers sometimes appeal to the imagination of Muslims in their arguments.

They argue regarding a saint's ability to appear in multiple places simultaneously, claiming that "if this was possible for the angel of death, then it is no surprise that a friend of God could do the same" (Tschacher, 2009). Such arguments are raised without considering the differences between angels and human beings. While apples and onions are both edible, they possess enough distinct differences to be easily distinguished. The question of authenticity also arises among the followers of these "saints" regarding miracles, which they consider a mark of the saint's closeness to God. Some miracles are outright dismissed by their followers in no uncertain terms (Tschacher, 2009). Consequently, the role and charisma of a Sufi saint differ from one society to another. While some orders cultivate a culture of worship at the graves of saints, similar graves in other Sufi orders symbolize a cultural and civilizational missionary endeavor (Fossey, 2002). Thus, a wide range of variation exists in the practices found among the Sufi orders.

#### 3.2 Life of Al-Hallaj

Abu-Mughith Al-Husayn bin Mansur al-Hallāj was a Persian who lived in the 3rd century of the Hijri calendar (244-309 AH, 858-922 CE). He memorized the Quran at the early age of 12 and was a Sunni Muslim who often retreated into mysticism. He was a poet, a mystic, and a teacher of Sufism. He traveled to Basrah at the age of 20. He is best known for the statement, "I am the truth," which is seen as a claim to divinity. Most Sufis of his time disapproved of these words, but some later Sufis were inclined towards this belief. He went on Hajj with many students, and some Sufis accused him of sorcery. After traveling to India and Turkistan, upon his return to Makkah in 290/902, he prayed to God to be despised and rejected, hoping that God would grant him grace through the lips of a servant. This notion seems illogical and conveys the idea that God needs man instead of man needing God (Ramli, 2013). Al-Hallāj was a legend and a hero. He is remembered as a miracle worker and a man deeply passionate about God. Among the mystics, he was a pillar and a spiritual martyr; however, he was seen as a charlatan by others (Massiogna, 2019).

Al-Hallāj returned to Bagdad and taught that people should find God within themselves. He made statements that caused emotions among the masses and anxiety among the educated. Some of Such statements as: “God has made my blood lawful to you, so kill me”, “I am the Truth,” “There is nothing wrapped in my turban but God,” and “I saw my Lord with the eye of my heart. I asked, Who are you? He replied, “If you do not recognize God, at least recognize His signs. I am the creative truth because through the truth, I am eternal truth” (Ramli, 2013). Al-Hallaj was executed after the scholars unanimously declared him an apostate. He was tortured and put to death on 309AH /922CE. Even at the point of death, his words indicated he had no remorse or regret for his teachings. Before execution, he said:

Now stands no more between the truth and me  
Or reasoned demonstration  
Or Proof of revelation  
Now, brightly blazing full, truth’s lamination  
Each flickering, lesser light  
(Ramla: 2)

Arikewuyo submits that Al-Hallaj is greatly respected by the Sufis. They argue that his execution was due to the ignorance of the masses (Arikewuyo, 2020).

### 3.3 *Life of Ibn Araby*

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Araby al-Hatimi al-Tai al-Andalusi al-Dimashqi (560-638 AH/1165-1240) was a mystic from Islamic Spain who emphasized the concept of Sainthood (Wilaya). Most Western scholars and Islamic scholars regard Ibn Araby as a Sufi. While his writings share thematic similarities with those of al-Ghazālī, Ibn Arabi distinguished himself by not organizing his writings into separate themes; instead, he densely interwove various sciences. His complex writings easily identify him as a mystic, as they can be challenging to understand. His works spread throughout the Islamic world within a hundred years after his death (Chodkiewicz, 1993).

Ibn Araby learned Islamic sciences from many teachers in Andalusia and North Africa. In 1201, he traveled to Makkah for pilgrimage and never returned to his hometown. He remained in Makkah for three years, during which he wrote “Futuhat al-Makkiyah. ” After leaving Makkah, he traveled to Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Anatolia (Turkey). He reached Baghdad in 1205, where he met some students of Abdul Qadir Jilany. Throughout his travels, he devoted himself to learning and teaching until his death on November 8, 1240 (Rabi' al-Thani 638 AH). Ibn Arabi employed the term Wujud (Being or Existence) as it appeared in Avicennian philosophical discourse, merging it with Sufi concepts of divine presence and human consciousness. He believed that the heart possesses two' eyes': reason and imagination, both equally essential for perception and awareness to function accurately.

The writings of Abdurahman Jami’ (d. 1492) enhance the reader's understanding of Ibn Arabi and his mysticism, despite Jami’ being a defender of Ibn Arabi's works. “Jami’ leaned significantly toward Ibn Araby's teaching, earning a reputation as a Wujudy in Heret [today's Afghanistan, near the borders of Iran]. His dedication to Ibn Araby's works was lifelong; however, he still did not achieve a complete understanding of them. Jami’ wrote a commentary on Fusus al-Hikam as much as he could comprehend and criticized himself for being unable to grasp Ibn Araby's words entirely. Despite lacking a complete understanding of the texts, he firmly believed in their truth. Jami’ spent 10-15 years trying to comprehend Ibn Araby’s works without success, yet he remained skeptical of the concept of Wahdatul-Wujud. It is intriguing how Jami chose to dedicate over a decade to studying Ibn Araby's texts without fully comprehending them while still maintaining trust in the author (Al-Hagar, 2012).

Once, Jami visited Khwaja ‘Ubaydullah Ahrar (d. 895/1490 AH), who resided in Samarqand and was 12 years older than Jami. The visit was for Jami to ask Sheikh Ahrar for an explanation of a particular passage in al-Futuhat Makkiyyah. After the book was opened, Ahrar engaged in discussions about some “remarkable utterances. ” Subsequently, the book was opened again, and this time, the passage became clear (Al-Hagar, 2012). This is strange and resembles incantations that are likely alien to Islam. There is no record of the righteous predecessors attaining comprehension of religious texts in such a manner. Similarly, another contemporary of Jami, Amir Ahmad Bab al-Abvabi Lala of Tabriz (d. 947/1540), faced a challenge in understanding a text. He cried through the night until Ibn

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‘Araby himself appeared and clarified the text for him. Afterward, Lala considered writing a commentary on Fusus but abstained out of wisdom (Al-Hagar, 2012). Allah has revealed all the guidance necessary for humanity in clear language. It is, therefore, remarkable how people remain attached to unclear texts and consider them guidance.

Hidden knowledge serves as a means through which complex texts are created and explained in Sufism. It represents an innovation that allows the “Saint” to claim some form of revelation or inspiration for himself. As Jami’ stated, “Ibn A’rabi is the leader of those who are aware of the mystery of non-being or pole of the truth” (Al-Hagar, 2012). It appears that the “truth” is concealed in Sufism. However, Allah has illuminated the path of truth for humankind through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Additionally, Jami quotes Ibn’ Arabi, who recounts that a specific Abdul-Majid bin Salamah once miraculously passed through a closed door to present four practices a person must perform to achieve spiritual success. These practices, which Ibn’ Araby mentioned in ‘Hilyat al-Abdal Watmayazaharu ‘anha min al-Ma’arif wa al-ahwal’, are Silence (al-Samt), Isolation (al-Uzla), Hunger (al-Ju’), and Vigils (al-Sahar). The visitor then exited in the same manner that he appeared. If guidance could reach any righteous individual in this way, then anyone might claim to be inspired. The revelations ceased with the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

### *3.4 Life of Abdul Qadir Jilany*

He was born in 1228 AH (1806 CE) in the city of Mascara, Algeria. It is said that he is a descendant of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ through Al-Hassan and Al-Hussain –the grandchildren of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He studied under his father, covering subjects such as philosophy, religion, and poetry. Abdul Qadir learned Sufism from his grandfather, who introduced him to various Shaykhs during their travels to Baghdad, Makkah, Madinah, and Damascus. He also met Shaykh Khalid, the revivalist of the Naqshbandiyyah Khalidiyyah brotherhood. Like some other religious leaders, Abdul Qadir Jilani was also a Jihadist against the French colonialists in Algeria. Abdul Qadir Jilani excelled as both a religious and military leader, authoring about fifty books (Muedini, 2015).

Abdul Qadir Jilani assured his followers of salvation for all who joined his order, claiming that this guarantee was granted by Muhammad [the Messenger of Allah ﷺ] himself. Jilani also noted that avoiding sins during this period was "impossible" (Brenner, 1984). Several practices or rituals are distinctive to the Qadariyyah order, including the recitation of verses, poems, and hymns in praise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, sometimes accompanied by body movements aimed at inducing ecstasy in the participants. Festivals are held in honor of Abdul Qadir and his descendants. “Abdul Qadir Jilani was not a Sufi; rather, Sufism was associated with him to popularize it due to his charisma. In the view of the Qadaris, they are Sunnis, and Qadaris do not have any specific way of Sufism that binds them all together” (Yoriqulovna, 2021).

### *3.5 Life of Ahmad Tijjany*

He was Shykh Sidi Ahmad (1150-1230 Hijri/1739-1815) from Algeria. He studied the Qurān and religious sciences under Professor Muhammad Ben Hammon Tijjany, specializing in Sufism through other professors (Bouyahya, 2016). The writings of Ibn Araby profoundly influenced Tijjany. He adopted three main components of the Tijjaniyyah path. The first is their veneration of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as the origin of all creation, known as al-Haqiqat al-Muhammadiyyah. The second is Ahmad Tijjany's assertion of the title “Qutb al-aqtab”-Supreme role of sainthood, or Khatam al-awliya’ - “the seal of the saints, "regarded as the overflowing source of all human closeness to God and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, for his time and all future generations. The third is the members' connection to a propagandist (Muqaddam) and their respect for him, as he channels their benefits through Ahmad Tijjany to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from God (Patrick & Ryan, 2016). Each of these beliefs lacks a foundation in the message delivered by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In simple terms, these represent innovations in religion that have serious consequences.

Ahmad Tijjany defined Sufism to one of his students as follows: “Sufism is exemplifying the command of God and fleeing from what is prohibited, both externally and internally, according to God's pleasure and not one's pleasure” (Wright, 2020). This definition seems reasonable within the boundaries of Islam. However, Ahmad Tijjany laid down methods for attaining the pleasure of Allah through means that did not previously exist. He claimed to have received prayers from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in an awakened state. “Among the practices of the Tijjaniyyah order is the recitation of Salat al-Fatih 100 times morning and evening, daily. According to Tijjany, this act is superior to reciting the entire Qur'an 6,000 times. He also introduced another prayer, called Jawharat al-Kāmil (the Jewel of

Perfection), which is to be recited 11 or 12 times daily (Patrick & Ryan, 2016). Ahmad Tijjany instructed his followers, stating, “No Sufi Shaykh could claim he did you any favors. I am a true intermediary and provider. Therefore, abandon all that you have taken as Sufi ways” (Bouyahya, 2016). Here, Tijjany positions himself as the only path to God, the only Shaykh deserving of attention.

Tijjany also claimed to have visioned the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his four Caliphs, as well as God Himself, during their Friday prayer sessions. Another assertion made by Ahmad Tijjany, as stated by Patrick and Ryan, is, “Whoever has seen me has seen God” (Patrick & Ryan, 2016). This statement resembles what can be found in the Gospel of John, where Jesus said, ‘Whoever has seen me has seen God.’ This similarity may suggest influence, should Ahmad Tijjany have read the Bible. However, from the Islamic doctrine, this claim is rejected. Ahmad Tijjany faces criticism not only from non-Sufis but also from Sufis of other paths, as he has forbidden his followers from joining other Sufi orders, despite having previously been a member of multiple paths himself. His assertions of special ranks echo those of Ibn ‘Arabī, a “Saint” from approximately 500 years prior, who is regarded as the source of saintliness for those close to God, both before and after his time (Qutb al-āqib) (Hoffman, 1999).

### *3.6 Life of Sheikh Ibrahim Niass*

Shaykhul Islam al-Hajj Ibrahim Ibn Hajj Abdullah at-Tijjani al-Kawlakhi (1324- 1399 AH/1900- 1975 CE) was from Senegal. He was popularly known as Baay or Father by his followers. He belonged to the Tijjaniyyah Tariqah (order) and claimed the title Gawth al-Zaman (the reformer of the age), subsequently becoming the Khalifah of the Tijjaniyyah order. He made it an obligation for those seeking to attain Ma’rifah (divine certainty) to follow him. Although his followers are few in Senegal, his influence is significant in West Africa, particularly Nigeria. His followers have spread to various parts of the world, including the West. Niass’s followers represent the largest branch of Tijjaniyyah globally (Huston, 2015). According to Henfer, Shaykh Niass first proclaimed himself as “the reformer of the age. ” He renewed his allegiance to all Tijjaniyyah spiritual lineages, establishing direct links to the founder of the order. Prior to his time and claims, mysticism was reserved for scholars at the final stage of their journey. He made initiation accessible not only to the learned but also to the illiterate. His survival was indeed attributed to his charisma and ambition. Over time, he announced his vision, claiming that he was granted the Faydh (a flood of spiritual grace), which further reinforced his assertion of being Ghawth al-Zaman. He founded two organizations, Jama’atu Ansar Ad-Din and Jama’at al Faydh, which structured the activities of their followers (Huston, 2015). Sheikh Ibrahim Niass met the Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero, in Makkah in 1936 during a pilgrimage.

In 1937, Niass visited Nigeria and was received warmly in Kano. The Emir gave Shaykh Niass his Oath of allegiance. Hence, the Emir became a disciple of the Shaykh. Consequently, Niass received the allegiance of prominent Tijjaniyyah leaders in Northern Nigeria, and many entered this branch of the Tijjaniyyah order (Nasidi, 2018). Niass played a significant role in bringing women to the forefront of participation in religious activities, as scholarship was no longer a requirement for initiation into the order. Before Shaykh Niass’ claims, Sufism was the final stage of Scholarship; Women were far behind their male counterparts due to their biological responsibilities as wives and mothers. Hence, they had limited education and few opportunities available to them (Huston, 2015). It can be said that Sheikh Ibrahim Niass was successful in his career as a saint among Sufis and perhaps the most successful among the Tijjannis due to the widespread dissemination of his teachings. However, the authenticity of his claims in the eyes of other Muslims remains questionable.

### *3.7 Miracles in Nigeria*

On the other hand, Christians have two approaches to this. Some pastors use general predictions in gatherings of a large population, where there is a chance that such events may occur in at least a few individuals, and through prayers, which boosts optimism in individuals (Mahmood & Ushama, 2018). The get-rich-quick syndrome in Nigeria plays a significant role in the proliferation of charlatans in the country. The desire of Nigerians to achieve success quickly has attracted many to miracle performers (Oyeniran, 2011).

Furthermore, Magbadelo argues that Pentecostalism has become a thriving business in Nigeria. Healing, prosperity, and miracles are promoted as tools for instilling hope in the masses, where economic decline and social and political decadence have taken deep root (Magbadelo, 2004). Records indicate that Nigeria has the highest number

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of churches in the world, making it a primary industry. This brand of Christianity seems to offer more solace to the challenges faced by ordinary people. Unfortunately, this rise in churches is accompanied by an increase in vices such as injustice, corruption, misuse of power, and kidnappings (Jibromah, 2015). People who believe in God should rely on Him through prayer and hope rather than chasing shadows and becoming victims of charlatans (Oyeniran, 2011). Man's God-given abilities include his intellect, as well as the capacity to think and reflect. Additionally, God obliges man to utilize his senses (Mahmood & Ushama, 2018).

### *3.8 Is it a Miracle or Magic?*

The devil's ability to deceive even the most vigilant observers necessitates an assessment of the source of miracles attributed to saints, as some are sought at shrines (Parish, 2005). When miracles become a primary criterion for evaluating piety, there is a risk that the uninformed will be misled. Miracles offer societal benefits and are typically performed publicly, while magic tends to benefit individuals (Appiah & Anderson, 2013). This perspective is problematic, as it creates the impression that magic is a private matter while miracles are public events. It also overlooks the origins of these phenomena. Both magic and miracles can be private. To some, magic and miracles are equivalent because both involve the same supernatural force and yield similar effects or benefits (Appiah & Anderson, 2013). This confusion arises in the minds of those who are uninformed. This perception is concerning because all three Abrahamic religions seem to share the belief that miracles originate from God, while magic is viewed as an act of the devil. Some Muslims utilize the Quran as a talisman to ward off evil and confront challenging situations, or protect themselves from harm. Many of the miracles attributed to saints are questionable, particularly those sought at shrines (Mahmood & Ushama, 2018). This suggests a blending of magic with the activities associated with 'saints' in the religious sphere. Ancient magic primarily focuses on divination, dreams, astrology, and natural magic.

### *3.9 Jinns and Their Effects in the Human World*

The word Jinn has its roots in the concept of Jann, which implies hiding or veiling. Allah created them from smokeless fire, and they can choose between right and wrong. They were created to worship Allah alone, just like humans (Parish, 2005). This indicates that they are hidden from human beings. Jinn are among the intelligent beings created by God. Belief in the unseen world is a central tenet of the Islamic faith. For this reason, no Muslim can deny the existence of Jinn, as Allah mentions them in many verses of the Quran, and there are numerous Ahadith of the Prophet ﷺ that discuss their existence, abilities, and the forms they may take to become visible. Although it is true that Prophet Suleiman had control over the Jinn and that they had to obey him, this ability was unique to him. Prophet Suleiman ruled an extensive kingdom that stretched from Southern Palestine to the vast lands of Yemen. He understood the languages of both birds and Jinn (Labeling, 2010). Both the Quran (Suratul Naml 27:17) and the Bible (1 Kings 5:13) mention the mighty kingdom of Prophet Solomon. The Arabs believed that the Jinn made swords. These swords were not easily broken and were considered legendary for their remarkable feats. The Jinn were feared for their potential to cause harm. Human beings often sought medical assistance from the Jinn, and the science of medicine was frequently learned from them. These misconceptions were dispelled in people's minds with the advent of Islam and the establishment of accurate knowledge of Allah and matters of the unseen.

Similarly, Suhrawandi claims that the Jinn themselves inform people how to see them through the burning of incense in the house and by removing any items containing iron, which constitute seven bodies and create noise (El-Zain, 2009). Islam does not permit believers to interact with the Jinn, as such interactions often lead to shirk, except in cases of Ruqyah treatment. There is an attribution of evil activities to the Jinn to support evil humans in achieving harmful objectives. Illaiee (2018) stated that witchcraft, the evil eye, and possession are all attributed to the Jinn. Most of these result in hardship and trauma for humans. While the attribution of mental health issues to the Jinn is more common among rural dwellers and the less educated, reports of Jinn possession exist in urban areas as well, albeit at a lower rate. There are more cases of uneducated, vulnerable women suffering from conditions related to witchcraft, the evil eye, and Jinn possession. In all instances, the efficacy of the Prophet's ﷺ Quranic recitations and prayers is frequently noted. Such harms can also be prevented through prayers recited from the Quranic verses and the authentic prophetic narrations. Some Sufis venerate the Jinn, considering possession by good Jinn a blessing or an honor. Certain Sufi practices involve rituals for summoning the Jinn, which they believe lead to the reception of barakah. The presence of the Jinn is seen as a mark of honor for the Shaykh, who is assumed to have control over them. In this context, the possessed person is said to have 'worn' the Jinn, similar to how a woman wears a hijab. In

contrast, Muslims generally consider Jinn possession to be evil and thus do not see any good in venerating the Jinn (Spadola, 2014; Laughlin, 2015). Instead, it is regarded as a sickness, which is why Islam provides guidance on how to cure Jinn possession.

### 3.10 *Mu'jizah, Karāmah and Kahānah (Sihir/Magic)*

Both Mu'jizah and Karāmah are concepts used to describe extraordinary events. While Mu'jizah refers to the miracles performed by the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, Karāmah denotes the miracles attributed to the Saints. In both instances, the act must be beyond a natural occurrence and must occur through a dignified servant with the permission of Allah (Al-Ashafi et al., 2020).

Karāmah implies honor, derived from the verbal noun Karuma. On the other hand, Mu'jizah signifies challenge and occurs only through the Prophets and Messengers of God. Both are typically translated as miracles (Amanullah, 2003). Karāmah may occur with Allah's permission, but an individual's level of religiosity is not determined by the number of Karāmah they receive, nor does the absence of Karāmah indicate a lack of piety (Maduski, 2003). According to ibn Taymiyyah, a Walī does not need to be granted a Karāmah. Al-Ashafi' et al. further cited ibn Taymiyyah, who stated that the Prophets and Messengers of Allah are the best of Allah's Awliyaa. Among them, the five best Prophets and Messengers are: Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Musa, Prophet Nuh, Prophet Isa, and Muhammad (May Allah be pleased with them all) (Maduski, 2003). "Unquestionably, the pious servants of Allah, there will be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve. They are those who believe and are conscious of Allah" (Q10: 62-63). This concept is the very opposite of 'Aduwwu (enemy). It is crucial to understand the concept of sainthood in Islam, where piety is defined as obedience to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and His Messenger (PBUH) while always being mindful of Allah Himself. Al-Ashafi et al. (2020) argued that the position of God's Friend is attainable only by those who uphold the religion, both inwardly and outwardly. The servant strives to the best of his ability to practice the religion in areas of obedience and abstention from what is forbidden.

Kahānah (Magic) refers to the practices of sorcerers or witches who attempt to control the supernatural, either to achieve benefits or to prevent harm. It is mystical rather than scientific (Moro, 2018). Magic and sorcery refer to the belief that humans can interfere with the natural order, causing harm to others or preventing good from reaching them through supernatural means (Forsyth, 2016). While magic is real and can occur, the Quran informs believers that it happens only with Allah's permission. Witchcraft and sorcery are both linked to magic since magic describes the effects of their actions (including the use of talismans, incantations, spells, etc.). However, witchcraft and sorcery are gender-specific; witchcraft is primarily associated with women, while sorcery is mainly linked to men. Witchcraft is often associated with social disturbances within family units, whereas sorcery appears more like a profession, offering services to the community related to supernatural interference. A witch is believed to carry out selfish activities in spirit, mainly at night, while her body lies sleeping. Generally, witchcraft is unlikely to have any good connotations in society. Conversely, sorcery is often regarded as a means of treating diseases, preventing harm, and attracting good. Still, it can also cause significant harm (Moro, 2016). This belief is prevalent in many cultures. When a man practices witchcraft, he is referred to as a wizard, and he may also operate within cults. Although society may perceive some benefits from the services of a sorcerer, in reality, there is often no good in their activities, as they involve the worship of devils who seek to mislead humanity. This alone undermines any perceived benefits. Moro appropriately notes that there are subtle distinctions between sorcery as deviance and sorcery as a control over deviance (Moro, 2016). Magicians are often regarded as outsiders to the Islamic faith. This is evidenced in Islamic history by the account of a Jew performing magic on the Prophet ﷺ. Magic is polytheistic, which raises theological concerns within the occult, particularly the challenge of distinguishing genuine miracles from magic (Zedah, 2014). Nevertheless, a knowledgeable Muslim understands what constitutes a miracle and what does not.

### 3.11 *Saint Hood in Christianity*

In Christianity, Paul is recognized as a saint who was once an enemy of Christians but later converted and became an exemplary figure within the faith. He shaped Christianity into a religion for all, regardless of color, race, or gender (Bandak, 2022). Sainthood is rooted in discipleship, a fundamental aspect of Christianity that encompasses both the teachings of the Bible and the practices of the Church Ministry. The moral life of a Christian plays a vital role in attaining sainthood (Alhiokhal, 2012). All those venerated by the Church in the first century of Christianity were



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martyrs, except for the Virgin Mary. Innocent III believed that merits without miracles are inadequate to qualify someone as a saint. Similarly, miracles without merits do not provide sufficient evidence to establish someone as a saint. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and some seek only human glory (Vauchez, 2005). Consequently, a miracle is a condition of piety in Christianity. There is a similarity here with Sufism.

### *3.12 Self-Efficacy Theory*

The ability to carry out a task largely depends on a person's efficacy in completing that task. The lower a person's efficacy is regarding the task, the less they believe they can accomplish it (Maddux & Gosselin, 2019). Self-efficacy theory posits that past performance accomplishments serve as encouragement for undertaking similar actions in the present. An individual's success in a similar task in the past influences their current efficacy regarding that task. Likewise, if an individual has observed others' success in a similar task, it impacts their self-efficacy in approaching that task -this is known as Vicarious Experience (Maddux & Gosselin, 2019). This research utilizes self-efficacy theory as a valuable tool for addressing the challenges faced by Miracle performers today. It is essential to have individuals who are confident enough to challenge the status quo in a society where such practices are prevalent.

## **4.0 Methodology**

This research seeks to examine the behavior of a specific population—Nigerians—by exploring the relationship between two key variables: belief in miracles and the occurrence of shirk (polytheism). The study adopts both descriptive and diagnostic approaches. It aims to provide a detailed overview of Nigerian society, with particular attention to its diverse religious practices and how they relate to perceptions of miracles. The research will also highlight the intersection of Islam, Christianity, and indigenous beliefs, illustrating how these traditions sometimes overlap in practice.

In addition, the study will analyze the impact of Nigeria's political, social, and economic challenges on the evolution and expression of religious behavior. To achieve these objectives, both primary data (such as interviews and surveys) and secondary sources (including academic literature, religious texts, and media reports) will be employed.

### *4.1 Mixed Approach*

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research. Therefore, it requires the use of statistical tools in conjunction with a comprehensive description of the problem, which facilitates the identification of potential solutions. If the research had chosen only a qualitative approach, it would not have permitted the application of statistical tools or mathematical calculations, which provide greater precision in the results. Similarly, relying solely on a quantitative approach would not provide an adequate examination of the problem being studied.

#### **Qualitative Method**

Qualitative research focuses on the human behavioral sciences, aiming to uncover the reasons behind certain behaviors (Kothari, 2004). Due to the challenges associated with studying human behavior, guidance from psychology is essential. Qualitative research is reliable because it is grounded in validity. The validity of this research will be demonstrated by the cases it examines, as they are pretty recent and few reports exist in the literature. Interviews will be conducted, and questionnaires will be distributed to collect data. Qualitative Analysis

During the interviews with twelve Islamic scholars, eight questions were posed to each interviewee. Three of these eight questions were the most significant for the hypotheses. Below is a discussion of questions six, seven, and eight with all the Muslim scholars who were interviewed. Additionally, question three of the interviewees included inquiries with the pastors.

**Question Six (6): Are Miracle Performers Sorcerers and are they Considered Believers?**

All the interviewees believed that Miracle Performers are sorcerers if there is any reality to their activities. They all emphasize their disbelief in sorcery and its practitioners as polytheistic. However, Shaykh Abu Hasan added that those who visit sorcerers are not ignorant of the fact that sorcery is forbidden. Sheikh Adam elaborated on this prohibition by quoting the hadith of Abu Hurairah, who narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever engages in sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman or a woman in her anus, or consults a soothsayer, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad."

Shaykh Sanusi emphasized that a sorcerer is not merely a disbeliever but a devoted servant of the devils, as sorcerers serve the devils to receive favors in return. Shaykh Abdullāhi Mujāhid emphasized that those who consult sorcerers forfeit forty days of prayer; if they believe in the sorcerers, they commit disbelief. Shaykh Abdullāhi also stated, "The Sharia dictates that a sorcerer should be executed. However, anyone who visits a sorcerer loses his prayers for forty days. If he believes in the sorcerer, he disbelieves in what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ brought. Although the Sharia does not explicitly state that such a person should be executed, he indeed commits significant shirk. If it becomes known that an individual visits sorcerers, other Muslims should avoid praying behind him to prevent his evil from spreading. Ustadha Sagi believes they deceive people and commit shirk. Miracle performers are sorcerers. Sorcerers are disbelievers, and those who visit sorcerers possess wicked minds and a lack of trust in Allah. They assist individuals with wicked minds in harming their fellow human beings.

Shaykh Muhammad also agreed that they are frauds and sorcerers, committing Shirk and being disbelievers. However, he believed that those who go there do not fully realize the severity of the sin, even though they acknowledge it as such. The matter is serious, although people take it lightly. Ustadh Yusuf and Shaykh Yaba'ka contended that what makes a sorcerer a disbeliever is his interaction with the Jinn, they contended. Shaykh Maikudi is the only respondent who maintained that a sorcerer who prays remains a Muslim despite committing a major sin. To him, anyone who prays cannot be labeled a disbeliever. He argued, 'The sorcerer is not a disbeliever if he prays, but he commits a major sin. His customers are sinful, too. '

**Question Seven (7): What is the Role of Education in Solving Aqīdah Problems?**

All the scholars interviewed, except one, emphasized the significance of aqeedah knowledge in addressing the issue of magicians masquerading as pious individuals. Shaykh Na'ib highlighted the importance of knowledge for believers, stating, 'Education is essential for every Muslim to worship Allah correctly. Islam mandates that seeking knowledge is a compulsory act. Everyone should understand Allah, His attributes, and His relationship with His servants.' Shaykh Abu Hasan noted that a believer must pursue knowledge for guidance, saying, 'Knowledge is a vital tool; for people to be guided, they must seek accurate knowledge.'

Shaykh Yandako underscored a crucial aspect of acquiring correct knowledge, which is safeguarding individuals from the gravest sin –Shirk. He argued, 'Correct knowledge will help steer people away from falling into shirk. Sometimes, even those regarded as scholars can be misled during trials. Thus, knowledge makes life's challenges easier, enabling individuals to direct their affairs solely to Allah.'

Shaykh Nda contended that only knowledge can guide people toward what protects them from Allah's wrath. He stated, 'Knowledge is the key to proper religious practices. Without imparting the right knowledge and ensuring clarity, nothing will prevent individuals from adopting erroneous beliefs.' Shaykh Adam examined the issue from the perspective of scholars. If scholars fail to teach accurate knowledge, they will be held accountable. He stated, "Scholars must strive to provide people with a correct understanding of Islam." This is an Amanah entrusted to them, and they will be questioned about it. Allah has instructed them, so they must educate His servants.'

Shaykh Sanusi believed that consistently seeking knowledge is the key. A person must always be aware of what benefits them. He argued, 'There is no doubt, that knowledge is the major solution to the problems of Aqīdah. Those who have grown in knowledge over the years have been able to make much impact in their society.' Shaykh Mujāhid mentioned that scholars are heirs of the prophets. He mentions, 'Scholars are the inheritors of the prophets.'

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They must, therefore, teach the people the correct knowledge about Islam. Therefore, knowledge is the solution to all the problems of Aqeedah.’

Shaykh Maikudi agreed that knowledge is important, but in his view, knowledge does not necessarily prevent people from doing evil if they desire to. He argued, ‘Knowledge is vital, however not everyone benefits from his knowledge he/she has acquired.’ Shaykh Abdullāhi also emphasized the importance of da’wah activities. He said, ‘Da’wah activities must be increased through the spread of correct knowledge of Islam. Many are ignorant of the true teachings of Islam.’

Shaykh Yaba’ka agreed that knowledge is the most vital aspect of correcting Aqīdah issues. He stated, ‘Knowledge remains the most significant tool. When the Prophet ﷺ began his mission, he called people to the right path by teaching with wisdom and kindness. People must be taught what is right, and they must clearly understand the gravity of what is wrong.’

### **Question Eight (8): What is the Role of the Authorities in Curbing the Activities of Miracle Performers?**

Shaykh Abu Hasan emphasized the importance of having leaders who are good Muslims. He said, ‘Those in authority must be good examples in religious matters. They must create laws that protect the populace from all possible harms. They must support religious authorities to enable them to function effectively and bring decency to society.’ Shaykh Yandako believed that leaders have the responsibility of providing educational facilities, which will significantly support the efforts of the scholars. He stated, ‘Authorities can provide more educational facilities to increase awareness. They should also expand hospitals and offer free or at least affordable medical care. This will reduce the likelihood of people resorting to charlatans for health issues.’

Shaykh Nda addressed leaders at all levels. From the grassroots level of leadership to those at the top, everyone plays an important role. According to him, ‘Those in authority- the royal fathers (Emirs), local chiefs, local governments, state governments, as well as federal authorities- must all have an interest in safeguarding their populace. Though it could be argued that Nigeria is a secular state, most Nigerians identify with either Islam or Christianity, even if they sometimes engage in polytheistic practices.’ Shaykh Adam S. also concurred that ‘The authorities have a significant role to play. If they are themselves righteous and support the scholars, it becomes easier for the masses to follow suit.’

Shaykh Sanusi emphasized the importance of support in the growth and development of Arabic and Islamic schools, with a focus on training teachers and scholars to enhance their understanding of societal issues and develop effective strategies for addressing these challenges through education. He argued,

“Authorities must support Arabic and Islamic schools through funding and regulations that make it easy for such schools and institutions to thrive. Workshops should be organized frequently for Imams, teachers as well as judges to keep them informed of the current challenges of the society and proposed solutions. Online da’wah programs should be encouraged for wider coverage. There must be laws put in place to prevent charlatans from appearing, and consequences must apply in case they do appear”.

Shaykh Mujāhid believed that the hadith mentioning correction with the hand referred to those in authority. Changing with the tongue is the role of the scholars, be it by way of preaching or writing. According to him, ‘The role of the authorities is very important. They must support the scholars through funding and regulations that are favourable to strengthening the activities of the scholars, thereby promoting the proper growth and development of the people’s religious knowledge. The authorities must be actively involved in preventing the spread of illicit activities by criminalizing charlatans and their like. Abu Sa’id al-Khudri reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, said, ‘Whoever among you sees evil, let him change it with his hand. If he cannot do so, then with his tongue. If he cannot do so, then with his heart, which is the weakest level of faith (Saḥīḥ, Muslim 49).

Shaykh Abdullāhi M. stated that the role of the authority is to create laws that protect the interests of the people and criminalize miracle performers. He stated:

“The authorities must create laws to criminalize Miracle performers on the grounds of cheating and deception if it cannot be achieved on religious grounds. This is because Nigeria is seen as a secular state, and therefore, criminalizing on religious grounds may create uproars from the human rights commission. However, the same can be achieved through the identification of the problem as it may relate to criminal law. Such laws would further boost the confidence of the scholars in dealing with the situation.”

Shaykh Ibrahim Muhammad puts it differently: “It is the responsibility of the leaders to put a stop to cheats, people who create illusions to mislead the ignorant and take advantage of them. The authorities must support scholars by creating laws that provide them with a form of assistance and strengthen their efforts. The path threaded by the leaders influences the majority of people. It also affects the ability of the leaders to make the right decisions in the interest of all. When leaders are themselves righteous, it becomes easier for them to collaborate with scholars. Authorities must give the scholars all the support they need to expand and develop their scope through providing quality educational facilities, workshops for scholars, favourable da’wah working environment, and the like (Ustadha Sagi, Ustadh Yusuf, Sheikh Adam and Ustadh Umar).

Shaykh Yaba’ka concludes that the authorities, no doubt, play an important role in the expansion and development of Da’wah activities. Scholars can teach and guide people down the right path; however, their effectiveness largely depends on the support they receive from the authorities.

### **Question Three (3): What do Christians Believe about Miracles and the Role of Pentecostal Churches Today?**

Pastor Jang believed that whoever believes in the Bible believes in Miracles. Every Miracle occurs due to God's permission. He argued:

*All Christians believe in miracles, as they are mentioned in the Bible. Miracles are God’s expression of his presence among his people for the unbeliever to see and come to know God. They are not the wilful demonstration of man’s show of God’s presence. It is also God’s way of reminding us from time to time of his ever-abiding presence and absolute authority over all creation. The Bible says that these signs shall follow you and men shall know that you are my disciples. However, the way and manner the miracles happen is where the controversy lies. What is supposed to be the expression of God’s presence among His people has been turned into a charade. Although many miracles are true, you see men trying to take God’s glory by claiming they have the power to heal, whereas God alone holds all power to heal. Many of these miracles are deceptions orchestrated to deceive people into parting with their hard-earned riches and perpetually enriching those conducting these so-called Miracles. Some are deceived into immorality, and some even lose their lives in the process. Some claim to be miracle workers for the fame it brings them and the accompanying advantage of influencing diverse opinions. Although the Pentecostal movement is rooted in biblical principles, its actual practice often falls short. Miracles are not meant to be advertised, but rather done by the prompting of God at the moment they are needed. I believe the Pentecostal fellowship has promoted a crucial aspect of Christianity, but it has been overdone to the point of ridicule.*

Pastor Ebong F. also concedes that miracles are from God. He stated: “Christians' understanding of miracles is that it is the great work of God evidencing the great work of God to mankind. The role of the Pentecostal Churches today demonstrates this great work of God in signs and wonders”. Pastor Oladapo Y. identifies miracles as food for those who believe in the faith and as signs to those who do not believe. To him, miracles can only occur in the presence of the Holy Spirit. He argues that Miracles are signs to unbelievers that Jesus was resurrected from the Death and that He's alive forever. Because the name of a dead man cannot produce supernatural power for a miracle. For example: healing, deliverance from evil spirits and occult powers. Miracles are also "children's food". Believers have access to miracles as a source of comfort and assurance of God's love. Miracles also draw unbelievers to the Christian faith and lead them to believe that Jesus is Lord. The role of Pentecostal Churches is proclaiming the Herald of the Holy Spirit in this age or dispensation. True Miracles cannot take place without the Holy Spirit! Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and lived in fullness of the Holy Spirit. All miracles that Jesus performed were because the Holy Spirit dwelt fully in Him. That is the call of all Christians, to live the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Pentecostal preaches the life of the Holy Spirit and not doctrines of men and laws, which revealed the nature of Sin in Man.

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Pastor Clement B. spoke about miracles as an expression of God’s power. Today, people are more focused on miracles than on morality. He acknowledged that, ‘Miracles are God’s powers manifested on earth. Anything man cannot achieve by himself is a miracle. Everything that occurs on earth is by the will of God; no man accomplishes it. Anyone who believes in God must also believe in miracles. God uses man, but it is never through the power of man; it is through the will of God. Today, many pursue miracles, and most Pentecostal churches do not emphasize morality. They focus solely on performing miracles. According to the book of Romans, ‘For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God ’ (Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit distinguishes the orthodox from the Pentecostals. Those who derive powers from the devil are false pastors; some even perform dramas. If you have a genuine connection with God, you will easily identify them. Pentecostals are meant to be carriers of power, but unfortunately, they often fall short.

### 4.2 Quantitative Method

The research hypothesis will examine the cause-and-effect relationship between the occurrence of ‘miracles’ in contemporary times and the influence of Jinn (devils). This will involve figures and tabular representations based on the insights gathered from scholars and pastors (interviewed), as well as opinions collected from questionnaire responses. Quantitative research is utilized to measure and test hypotheses through values and numbers to establish the relationship between variables (Kothari, 2004).

### Quantitative Analysis

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#### Coding Question Six (of the interview with the Islamic Scholars)

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<p><b>Shaykh Abu Hasan</b> They are either cheats or sorcerers. A sorcerer is a disbeliever; the one that visits him according to a hadith loses 40 days of prayer.</p>	<p>Shirk (10%)</p>
<p><b>Shaykh Sulaiman Adam</b> had a similar view. He, however, expounded on the consequences of visiting a sorcerer. He said: “A Sorcerer is a disbeliever,</p>	<p>Shirk (10%)</p>
<p><b>Shaykh Sanusi</b> Emphasized that a sorcerer cannot be considered a believer. He said, “A sorcerer is a disbeliever”.</p>	<p>Shirk (10%)</p>
<p><b>Shaykh Abdullāhi Mujāhid</b> He said, “Sorcerers are disbelievers; they are the servants of the devils.”</p>	<p>Shirk (10%)</p>
<p><b>Shaykh Muhammad Abdullāhi</b> He argued: “Sorcerers are disbelievers. The sharia rules that they should be executed”.</p>	<p>Shirk (10%)</p>
<p><b>Ustadh Umar Yusuf</b> said, “Sorcery is disbelief. Therefore, the sorcerer is a disbeliever (disbeliever)”.</p>	<p>Shirk (10%)</p>
<p><b>Shaykh Abubakar Yaba’ka</b> argued, “Sorcerers are disbelievers because they interact with the Jinn and harm people. Their acts is shirk and they are disbelievers.”</p>	<p>Shirk (10%)</p>
<p><b>Shaykh Ibrahim Maikudi</b> he said, “sorcerer who prays remains a Muslims though he commits a major sin”.</p>	<p>Shirk; here we assign half of 10% because he did not agree that it is a major shirk. So, it will be reduced to 5%</p>

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**Ustadha “Aisha Sagi** believed, they deceive, and commit Shirk. They are Sorcerers. Sorcerers are disbelievers and those who visit sorcerers are people with wicked minds and lack of trust in Allah. Shirk (10%)

**Shaykh Ibrahim Muhammad** (Interviewed on 10/8/2022 at 4:00 pm) agreed they are deceivers and sorcerers. They commit Shirk and are disbelievers; he was of the opinion, however, that those who go there are not aware of the severity of their sin, though they are aware it is a sin. Shirk (10%)

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There was missing data during the analysis and coding process. Therefore, the opinions of Ustadh Uthman U. and Shaykh Na’ib M. on this question were lost. Of the ten considered, nine held the opinion that sorcery or magic is shirk and that the sorcerer is a disbeliever, except for Shaykh Maikudi I., who agrees that a sorcerer commits shirk but maintains that he is not a disbeliever if he prays. This implies that 95% of our respondents believed that miracles today are magic, and that magic is shirk.

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**Coding Question Seven (of the interviews with the Islamic Scholars)**

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**Shaykh Na’ib** stated, ‘Education is something every Muslim needs in order to worship Allah correctly. Islam makes seeking knowledge a compulsory act. Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Abu Hasan** mentioned that a believer must seek knowledge in order to be guided. He said, ‘Knowledge is a vital tool, for the people to be guided they must seek correct knowledge.’ Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Yandako** highlighted an important point in gaining correct knowledge, which is to save the individual from the most dangerous of all sins – Shirk. Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Nda** believed only knowledge can guide people to that which saves them from Allah’s wrath. He stated, ‘Knowledge is the key to correct religious practices. Unless people are taught the right knowledge and they are clear about it, nothing prevents them from wrong beliefs. Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Adam** examined the matter from the perspective of the scholars. If scholars fail to impart the correct knowledge, they shall be held responsible. He argued. Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Sanusi** believed seeking knowledge consistently is the key. A person must always be aware of what benefits them. He argued, ‘There is no doubt, that knowledge is the major solution to the problems of Aqīdah.’ Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Maikudi** agreed knowledge is important, but in his view, knowledge does not necessarily prevent people from doing evil if they desired to. He Knowledge may not make that much difference

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argued, 'Knowledge is vital, however not everyone is prevented by the knowledge he/she has acquired.'

**Shaykh Mujāhid** mentioned that scholars are heirs of the prophets. He said, 'Scholars are they who inherit the prophets. ' They must therefore teach the people the correct knowledge about Islam. Therefore, knowledge is the solution to all the problems of Aqīdah.'

Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Yaba'ka** also agreed that knowledge is the most important matter in correcting Aqīdah issues.

Knowledge makes a difference

**Shaykh Abdullāhi** said, 'Da'wah activities must be increased through the spread of correct knowledge of Islam. Many are ignorant of the true teachings of Islam.'

Knowledge makes a difference

Out of the twelve scholars interviewed, only ten responses were considered for this question, as data from Ustadha Sagi A. and Sheikh Yusuf U. were missing for question 7 during the data collection and coding process. Of the ten, only one individual believed that knowledge is not always a solution to issues related to Aqīdah. If we assign 10% to each response, it follows that 90% agree on the indispensable role of education.

### Coding Question Eight (of the interviews with the Islamic Scholars)

**Shaykh Abu Hasan** said, those in authority must be good examples in religious matters. They must create laws that protect the populace from all possible harms.

Government regulations with respect to Consequences

**Shaykh Abubakar Nda** said, "Those in authority; the royal fathers (Emirs), the local chiefs, local governments, state government as well as the federal authorities must all have interest in guarding their populace.

Government regulations with respect to consequences

**Shaykh Sulaiman Adam** agreed that "the authorities have a significant role to play." If they themselves are righteous and support the scholars, it becomes easy for the masses to follow suit.'

Government regulations with respect to reforms

**Shaykh Sanusi said** there must be laws put in place to prevent charlatans from appearing and consequences must apply in case they do appear.

Government regulations with respect to consequences

**Shaykh Abdullāhi Mujāhid** believed the hadith that mentioned correcting with the hand, referred to those in authority. According to him, "The role of the authorities is very important.

Government regulations with respect to consequences and reforms

**Ustadha "Aisha Sagi** stated that the authorities must support the scholars by creating laws that would be a kind of support to the scholars and strengthen their efforts.

Government regulations with respect to supporting scholars

<b>Ustadh Umar Yusuf</b> said, argued, ‘When the leaders are themselves among the righteous, it becomes easier for them to work with the scholars. Authorities must give the scholars all the support they need to expand and develop their scope through providing quality educational facilities, workshops for scholars, favorable da’wah working environment and the likes.’	Government regulations with respect to education and Da’wah
<b>Shaykh Ibrahim Muhammad</b> puts it differently, ‘It is the responsibility of the leaders to put a stop to cheats, people who create illusions to mislead the ignorant and take advantage of them.’	Government regulations with respect to stopping those activities
<b>Shaykh Abubakar Yaba’ka</b> concludes that the authorities no doubt play an important role in the expansion and development of Da’wah activities. Scholars can teach and guide people down the right path; however, their effectiveness largely depends on the support they receive from the authorities.	Government regulations for the growth of Da’wah
<b>Shaykh Muhammad Abdullāhi</b> said Nigeria is seen as a secular state, and therefore, criminalizing on religious grounds may create uproars from human rights commissions. However, the same can be achieved by identifying the problem as it relates to criminal law. Such laws would further boost the confidence of the scholars in dealing with the situation.”	Government regulations regarding consequences and support for the activities of scholars.

*Questionnaire Survey*

Table 4.2a Distribution of Questionnaire Respondents’ Region of Origin:

Region	Percentage	Number Achieved	Number Proposed
North	23.7%	50	80
Northcentral	46.9%	99	50
Southwest	22.3%	47	40
Southeast	7.1%	15	30

Although the sample was not as proposed at the start of the research, the number achieved is still fair and represents the style of sampling. Fifty percent of respondents from the north are more than half of what was proposed (80). Ninety-nine percent of people from the Northcentral region is much higher than the proposed number (50). The number achieved for the Southwest is 47, which exceeds the proposed target of 40. At the same time, that of the Southeast is half less than what was expected (15 instead of 30). However, every region was pretty well represented.

Table 4.2b Age Range of Respondents

Age Range	Percentage	Number
18-30	34.6%	73
31-40	26.5%	56
41-50	29.4%	62
51-Above	9.5%	20

18-30 is the age range with the highest number. This reflects the platform used. Since the Google Form was used and distributed via WhatsApp. It was natural that most respondents were youths.



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Table 4.2c Age Range of the Miracle Performers

Age Range	Percentage	Number
1-18		
19-40	39%	73
41-above	61%	114

The table shows that the majority of the Miracle Performers usually come from the age range of 41 and above.

### 5.0 Result and Discussion

#### 5.1 Findings from the Samplings

**Poor understanding of Tauhīd:** This research has found that the average Nigerian has a limited understanding of the true essence of worship. This is evident in the responses to the first question of the interviews. All the scholars interviewed maintained that Nigerians are dedicated to acts of worship. However, this dedication is marred mainly by cultural biases and a lack of understanding.

**Miracles of today are often viewed as magic:** All Muslim scholars interviewed maintained that miracles today are either the result of deceptions and tricks or due to the activities of the Jinn. They differentiate karāmah from miracles performed by the Prophets of Allah (mu'jizah). The questionnaire survey also shows that most respondents believe that miracle performers are individuals practicing traditional religion, followed by those who think they are Christians. Those who opine that the miracle performers are Muslims are the least represented. This is illustrated in the table below:

Table5.1a Religion of the Miracle Performers

Islam	23.7%	50
Christianity	37.9%	80
Traditional Religion	38.4%	81

**The Religion of the Miracle Performers:** From our interviews, we see that all the scholars hold the view that anyone who claims to perform a Miracle today is a Magician or a Sorcerer if they really do so. They also declared that Sorcerers and Magicians are disbelievers. Our Questionnaire Survey shows that most of our respondents (38.4%, i.e., 81 people out of 211) were of the view that Miracle Performers belonged to the traditional pagan religion. However, it could be a result of the fact that most of our respondents were Sunni Muslims who believe that such Miracles were, in fact, Magic. Otherwise, among the Christians, it was expected that the majority would believe that Miracle Performers should be Men of God. Moreover, among Sufi Muslims, it may be regarded as Karāmah (a miracle for saints).

**Large Population of Sufis:** This research has also found that the Majority of Nigerians practice Sufism, according to the responses of the Scholars as well as available literature, although the population of the Sunnis is rising. Hill (2010) pointed out: Sufi Islam, mainly the Qadariyyah and Tijjaniyya orders, dominate Muslims in Nigeria. This, however, is not reflected in the Sample of both the interviewees (six Sufis and six Sunnis were interviewed) and the questionnaire (respondents), which showed that a more significant number of respondents were Sunnis (73%). This is because the sample was convenient, as the research was conducted among Sunnis.

**The Forces behind today's Miracles:** This research has found that Muslim Scholars in Nigeria understand that Miracles in contemporary Times can only occur at the hands of Magicians or Sorcerers if there were some realities to it. Otherwise, it is an act of deception. The observations made during this research indicate that there is a high likelihood that when Miracle Performers appear among Muslims, they are, for the most part, tricks and deceptions. Sometimes, Magicians and Sorcerers may also take up the role of righteous people in society.

Table5.1b Goals of the Miracle Performer

Fame	Money	Altruism	Others
37%	31%	10.4%	21.6%
78 people	67 people	22 people	44 people

**Many Christians in Nigeria attend Pentecostal churches; most of our survey participants who identified as Christians attended Pentecostal Churches.** These are Churches known for Miracles. The Table below shows it:

Table5.1c Denomination of Christian Respondents

<b>Pentecostal</b>	<b>Non-Pentecostal</b>
53.2%	46%
25	22

Table5.1d Knowledge of Aqīdah as a Solution

Yes	82.4%, i.e., 164 people
No	17.6%, i.e., 35 people

82.4% of our respondents believed that knowledge of Aqīdah is the solution to the challenges faced by miracle performers in our time among Muslims.

Table 5.1e Reasons Why People Seek Miracle Performers

Economic	33.2% 67people
Social	18.8% 38 people
Health	34.2% 69 people
Political	6.45% 15 people
Religious	7.4% 13 people

Health (34.2%) is the primary reason that causes people to flock to the Miracle Performers. The second reason, according to this research, is economic factors (33.2%). It is therefore evident that poverty plays a significant role in attracting people to those who claim Miracles, as a lack of affordable healthcare facilities, as well as harsh economic factors, have led people to seek cheaper alternatives.

Table 5.1h Effects of the Activities of Miracle Performers

Economic	16% 30people
Social	30.5% 57people
Religious	51.3% 96 people
Political	2.1% 4people

However, these activities of the Miracle Performers have a significant impact on the individuals' religion, as their faith in God is tested. Social factors are following in line since accusations of witchcraft most often lead to shame and disgrace as well as breaking family ties.

Table 5.1i Factors Responsible for the Appearance of the Miracle Performers

Religious	41.3% 81 people
Economic	33.7% 66 people
Political	6.1% 12 people
Health	8.2% 16people
Others	10.7% 21people

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Religion is also the primary reason why Miracle Performers appear. Claims of sainthood stem from the religious belief in saints, often accompanied by the ignorance of the majority concerning who a saint truly is.

Table 5.1j Suggested Solutions by participants in the Survey

	Single Opt	Double Opt	Multiple Opt
Avoid (them)	3	5	2
Knowledge	40	11	2
Government	6	10	2
Not Harmful	2	0	0

Knowledge has been found to be the most important tool in fighting the problems of this research. Which is followed by the role of the government, then the avoidance of such places.

### 5.2 Evidences for the Miracles of the Righteous (Karamat) Historically

Shaykh Al-Uthaymeen (2016) stated that one of the miracles of the righteous is that Allah answers their prayers in the exact manner they request. Several examples can be found among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ as well as some righteous predecessors. In a narration, Urwah bin Az-Zubair narrated,

Arwah bint Aws brought a suit against Sa'id bin Zayd bin Amr ibn Nufayl (May Allah be pleased with him). She complained to Marwan bin al-Hakam that he had wrongfully taken possession of a portion of her land, while I had heard a denunciation regarding this from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Marwan asked him, 'What did you hear from the Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, 'He who takes a span of land unjustly will be made to wear seven earths around his neck on the Day of Resurrection.'" Marwan responded, "I do not seek any proof from you after this." Sa'id supplicated, "O Allah! If she is a liar, deprive her of her eyesight and cause her to die in her land." 'Urwah said, "She did not die until she became blind. While she was walking in her land, concerning which the dispute arose, she fell into a pit and died.

There are many instances of Miracle experiences among the companions. For example, **Narrated Abu Ishaq** hearing Al-Bara say:

*There was a man [Usayd bin Al-Hudayr] reciting [Surat] Al-Kahf when he saw his riding animal stamping his feet, so he looked, and there was something like a shadow or cloud, so he went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and mentioned that to him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "That was the tranquility which descends with the Qur'an, or descends because of the Qur'an (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 2885).*

These are instances of Karamat (Miracles of the pious). However, it is evident that the righteous do not possess any form of power over the occurrence of such miracles; instead, they are all events that occurred by the permission of Allah. Such occurrences are still possible today by the will of Allah, and there is no limit of time and space to it.

### 5.3 What is the Islamic ruling on the 'Miracles of contemporary times'?

The data suggests that the scholars interviewed believed that Miracle displays in contemporary times are not Miracles from Allah. To understand the ruling on such performances in Islam, the opinions of the interviewed scholars must be viewed in light of the Quran and Ahadith, in accordance with the understanding of the early scholars. An exposition of the concept of Walī (Awliya-pl) in Islam would help us understand the nature of these "Miracles". Allah says;

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ هُمْ الْبَشَرُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي  
الْآخِرَةِ ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٤﴾

Behold! The Awliya' of Allah, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve—those who believed and have Taqwah. For them is good news, in the life of the present world, and the Hereafter. No change can there be in the Words of Allah. This is indeed the supreme success (Suratul Yunus 10: 62-64).

Imam At-Tahawiyy mentioned that all believers are friends of Allah, the Most Merciful. The word Walīy is derived from Walāya, meaning friendship and closeness. It is the opposite of 'Adawa, meaning enmity and distance. The believers are the friends (Awliya') of Allah, and Allah is their protector (Ibn Abi Al-Izz, 2000). Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah stated that the friends of Allah are those who love what He loves, hate what He hates, and are pleased with what pleases Him. They are angered by what angers Him, command what He commands, and prohibit what He prohibits. They grant to those whom He loves and withhold from those whom He does not (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000). This understanding aligns with the perspectives of our interviewees. For example, Shaykh Mujahīd A. (one of the interviewees) argued that a person is either a friend of Allah (a Saint) or an enemy of Allah (a friend of Satan). Every Muslim is a Walīy (Saint). There is no midpoint; you are either a friend of Allah or an enemy of Allah. You are either a believer or a disbeliever. It is "Ibādah (worship) that makes a person a Saint, not miracles. Accordingly, Allah says:

لِلَّهِ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

Allah is the Walīy (Protector or Guardian) of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into light. However, as for those who disbelieve, their awliya' (supporters and helpers) are ṭaghut (false deities and false leaders); they bring them out from light into darkness. Those are the dwellers of the Fire, and they will abide therein forever (Suratul Baqarah 2:257).

The above verse shows that the word Walī (friend, protector, or guardian) can change meaning depending on the context, like many other words. In Sūratul Yunus, verse 62, quoted above, Allah uses the same word, Walī, to refer to the believers who have God-consciousness. In contrast, in Sūratul Baqarah, verse 257, Allah refers to Himself as the Walī (Guardian) of the believers. Moreover, He (Aza-wajal) refers to Satan as a guardian to disbelievers. Allah also mentioned the disbelievers and supporters of evil as the friends of Satan. Allah says:

*It is only Satan that suggests to you the fear of his friends; so, fear them not, but fear Me, if you are indeed believers (Suratul Baqarah2:175).*

Shaykh al-Uthaymīn (2016) commented on this verse, saying: he (Satan) will cast fear into you from them. Moreover, 'his friends' refer to his helpers who aid shameful deeds and ignoble practices among the friends of Satan. Once, a questioner asked Shaykh al-Uthaymīn: How can we differentiate between Mu'jizah, Karāmah, and Kahānah? The Shaykh answered:

*Mu'jizah is for the Prophets, Karāmah is for the Allies of Allah, and Kahānah is for the friends of Satan. Mu'jizah no longer exists because it was reserved for the Prophets, and Prophethood has ended. Karāmah existed before the Prophet ﷺ and will continue until the end of time. Karāmah occurs at the hands of the righteous person who fulfils Allah's rights and the rights of his servants. Consequently, if a miraculous feat occurs at the hands of a soothsayer, an obviously unrighteous person, then it is from the devil. Satan sometimes helps the sons of Adam achieve their desires (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000).*

#### 5.4 What is the interest of the Magicians and the Charlatans?

The Quran rightly informs believers of the magician's intent. Allah says:

وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْعَالِيِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

Thus, the sorcerers came to Fir`awn. They said, "Indeed, there will be a good reward for us if we are the victors." He said: "Yes, and you will (in that case) be of the nearest (to me)" (Suratul A'raf 7:113-4)

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The Magicians wished for a reward –wealth, and Fir'awn added that they shall become close to him. Being close to the king implies a certain level of power and fame. Therefore, the Magician does not intend to benefit the people; instead, they seek wealth, fame, and power, which they often attain when leaders patronize them. They, however, seek all these knowing its harms to themselves and their victims. Allah mentions this:

وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۖ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ

However, neither of these two (angels) taught anyone (such things) till they had said, "We are for trial, so disbelieve not (by learning this Magic from us)." Moreover, from these (angels) people learn that by which they cause separation between man and his wife... (Suratul Baqarah 2 :102)

They seek worldly gains at their own risk, causing harm to others. Our data reflects this accurately. The responses from our questionnaire survey indicate that 67.8% of participants believe that miracle performers typically pursue wealth and fame. This aligns with what Allah tells us, as quoted above. Therefore, seeking benefits in a forbidden manner is not righteousness. Islam clearly closes all doors leading to shirk by forbidding whatever leads to it. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ warned Muslims not to exaggerate in praising him. Umar Ibn Al-Khatāb narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Do not praise me excessively as the Christians did to Eesa the son of Maryam, for indeed I am only a slave of Allah and His Messenger (Sahih al-Bukhari 3445)."

### 5.5 The Religion is Complete

Islam is complete and the revelation came to an end in the life time of the Messenger of Allah. Allah stated in the Quran:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion (Suratul Ma'dah 5:3).

Ibn Jarir recorded that Harun ibn Antarah said that his father said, "When this verse (Q5:3) was revealed, during the great day of Hajj (the Day of Arafah), Umar cried. The Prophet ﷺ asked, what makes you cry? 'He said, 'What made me cry is that our religion is being perfected for us. Now, it is perfect, but nothing is perfect, and it is bound to deteriorate. The Prophet ﷺ said You have said the truth (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 2000).

The exaggerated status of Awliyaa (friends of Allah) came with the appearance of Sufism, hundreds of years after the Prophet ﷺ had left this world. Sufism thrives on innovations, which are, in fact, against the teaching of the Prophet ﷺ.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ . قَالَ " مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ "

Aisha (May Allāh be pleased with her) narrated that: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) that is not part of it, will have it rejected (Sunan Ibn Majah 14).

Sufism thrives on innovations. If innovations are removed, the very essence of Sufism is lost. Despite the Prophet's ﷺ warning against innovations, these people have paid no heed. Their innovations have dragged Muslims into Shirk. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said concerning the Pond of Kawthar after the chapter of Kawthar was revealed:

*Verily, it is a river that my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, has promised me and it has abundant goodness. It is a pond where my Ummah will be brought to on the Day of Judgment. Its containers are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Then a servant of Allah will say: "Verily, you do not know what he introduced (or innovated) after you (Sahih Muslim: 400).*

### 5.6 How is Sufism a breeding ground for charlatans to take advantage of the mass of people?

In Sufism, obeying and honouring the righteous even in disobedience to Allah and His messenger became virtuous. Worshipping at the graves of the righteous and traveling for the purpose of visiting the graves of such righteous people all became acts of worship. Badr quotes Timingha, who submits that by the 17th century, Sufism had developed into a devotional religion rather than a mystical one. Their devotion was focused on their Shaykh and his descendants (Badr, 2016).”

Tauhīd is understood differently in Sufism. Imam At-Tahawiy mentioned the beliefs of the Sufis in contrast to the teachings of the prophets of Allah. It is established that tauhīd is what the prophets preached and what the heavenly books taught. As has been pointed out, one should not heed the statement of those who divide tauhīd into three types (as in the following manner). This first type of tauhīd, they say, is the tauhīd of the ordinary people. The second type is the tauhīd of the elect, which, they say, is the tauhīd that is realized in a mystical experience. The third is the tauhīd of the elect of the elect. The Eternal Being Himself, they believe, affirms this tauhīd. However, one should not heed these statements, for the people who were most perfect in tauhīd were the prophets (peace be on them all).

It is, therefore, incumbent on the believer to follow the correct teachings of Islam. This is even more important when it concerns issues of tauhīd. So that the believer is protected from falling into the opposite of tauhīd, which is Shirk, for this reason, Imam at-Tahawy emphasized that, ‘No tauhīd will be more complete than the tauhīd taught, preached and struggled for by the Prophets (Ibn Abi Al-Izz, 2000).’

### 5.7 The Position of Christianity

Christianity recognizes miracles as evidence from the Bible as well as the responses from the pastors interviewed. For instance, Pastor Ebong said, “Christians' understanding of miracles is that they are the great works of God evidencing the great work of God to humanity. The role of Pentecostal churches today demonstrates this great work of God through signs and wonders. " His explanation is similar to that of Islam regarding the source of miracles- that God is the reason behind such occurrences. Pastor Oladapo also identifies miracles as nourishment for those who believe in the faith and as signs for those who do not. To him, miracles can only occur in the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Christianity, there is no closure to prophethood; hence, there are continuous claims to prophethood and miracles. The pastor did acknowledge that there are many cases of false prophets. For example, Pastor Clement talked about miracles as an expression of God’s power.

“People today are more concerned about miracles than morality and Pentecostal churches are focused on Miracles”.

The significant difference between Christianity and Islam in the matter of miracles lies in the fact that Islam distinguishes between what was given to the Prophets and Messengers of God and that which may occur at the hands of the righteous. This points to the very reason for the explosion of Miracle performers in Christianity at the expense of the faith of their devotees. The Pastors also identify the need for Christians to know their God so that the false Prophets do not deceive them.

### 5.8 Standing up for the Truth

Islam encourages the believer to be proactive and stand up for the truth even if it implied standing alone against the whole society. The Prophet ﷺ said,

إِنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ بَدَأَ غَرِيبًا وَسَيَعُودُ غَرِيبًا كَمَا بَدَأَ فَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ "

"Indeed, Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange as it began. So, Tuba (glad tidings) is for the strangers (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 2629).”

In societies where the belief in sainthood and their ability to carry out miracles has become widespread, it takes a great deal of courage to stand up for the truth. However, it remains the responsibility of the knowledgeable to sensitize and teach the ignorant. It is also on the elites who play an important role in influencing the activities of the

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ordinary people. When those in authority have a correct understanding of the religion, it becomes easier to implement laws that prevent the attendance of such displays and the appearance of charlatans. The Prophet ﷺ said,

مَنْ رَأَى مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ .

“Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot, then with his heart- and that is the weakest of Faith (Sunan an-Nasa'i 5008).”

He ﷺ also said,

مَنْ دَلَّ عَلَى خَيْرٍ، فَلَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ فَاعِلِهِ

“He who guides (others) to an act of goodness, will have a reward similar to that of its doer (Book 16, Hadith 30, *Kitabu Jami*).”

The believer stands up for the truth in hope for Allah’s reward. This makes any struggle worthwhile. Employing the self-efficacy theory, individual Muslims must see the Prophets as their model. Prophet Ibrahim [May Allah be pleased with him] is a good example when he stood alone against the whole society, including his father. Similarly, the Prophet ﷺ fought his people, including his uncles. He remained firm knowing Allah will give him victory. Allah says;

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

However, those who hold fast to the Book and establish prayer - indeed, we will not allow to be lost the reward of the reformers (Book 16, Hadith 30, *Kitabu Jami*).

### 6.0 Conclusion

There seems to be confusion among the Muslim masses concerning what constitutes a genuine miracle and what is magic. However, knowledgeable individuals have no confusion regarding this matter. Miracles are signs from Allah that He supports His Messengers with. Every Messenger sent by Allah had a miracle that served as proof to the people he was sent to. Such miracles are known as Mu’jizat in Islam. Although some righteous servants of Allah may be honored with certain forms of miracles, such as answers to prayers or support from Allah that transcend the natural order of events, these privileges are referred to as Karamat. However, miracles of this category are neither a requirement nor a criterion for measuring piety. Instead, every believer is a friend of Allah, irrespective of whether they experience unique miracles. Such miracles are possible only by the will of Allah, and the righteous have no control over them. As for those who claim miracles while being obviously unrighteous, they are undoubtedly friends of the devils, and their actions are, in fact, magic (Sihir).

This research has found a close relationship between the miracles commonly performed for the public and the activities of devils. They are, in fact, magic (sihir) and polytheism (shirk), as the devils (jinnns) are the sources of such performances. For this reason, the null hypothesis for the first hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative (H1: miracles in contemporary times are shirk) was accepted. The results of our interviews indicated that 95% of our respondents, who were Muslim scholars, believed that miracles today are magic and that magic is shirk. These finding gains support from classical sources of Islamic knowledge. Once, a questioner asked Shaykh al-Uthaymīn how to differentiate between Mu’jizah, Karāmah, and Kahānah. The Shaykh answered that Mu’jizah is for the Prophets, Karāmah is for the allies of Allah, and Kahānah (sorcery/magic) is for the friends of Satan. Mu’jizah no longer exists because it is reserved for the Prophets, and Prophethood has ended. Karāmah existed before the Prophet ﷺ and will continue until the end of time. Karāmah occurs at the hands of a righteous person who fulfills Allah’s rights and the rights of His servants. Consequently, if a miraculous feat occurs at the hands of a soothsayer, an obviously unrighteous person, then it is from the devil. Satan sometimes helps the sons of Adam achieve their desires (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000).

Indeed Allah has declared obedience to His Messenger ﷺ a condition for any claim of the love of Allah:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Suratul Al-Imran 3: 31)

This research also proposes educating people about issues of Aqeedah (the existence of Allah) as a countermeasure to the problems of widespread claims to Miracles in contemporary times, particularly among Nigerian Muslims. Ninety percent of our interviewees believed that knowledge is the most important factor in solving the problems of widespread miracle performers in contemporary times. This research then rejects the null hypothesis of the second hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>: There is no difference between the group that received correct religious knowledge and the group that did not receive correct religious knowledge). Moreover, it accepts the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>: Those who received correct knowledge about Allah showed more resistance towards miracle performers). The research also shows that government policies will play an important role in curbing the activities of charlatans and preventing spectators from attending such displays.

The research has also identified innovation in the religion as a significant loophole that has already been closed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, if only the Ummah adhered to the Prophet's guidance strictly. Therefore, the one that clearly innovates, disobeying the Messenger of Allah consciously, cannot be deemed a wali. Thus, correct knowledge of Aqeedah must be taught to the people to address the problems of Miracle performers as they exist today, and the authorities must collaborate with scholars for the effective implementation of policies to curb attendance and the display of such activities.

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