

The Brutality Of Magun And Tesho As Anti-Adultery In Curbing Infidelity

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Abstract

This paper examines the use of Magun and Tesho as anti-adultery devices in curbing infidelity among the Yoruba of the western part of Nigeria. The paper adopts an analytical method in carrying out this research. The study submits that magun and tesho are charms which are applied to punish adulterers in Yoruba land. The adulterer could be laced with magun unknowingly. After the preparation of the charm, it could be imbued on a string of thread or on a single broom and put across the road of the room or house for the victim to cross over without his or her knowledge. The paper argues further that this dreaded device can also be employed to fight one's enemy by lacing his motorcycle, vehicle tires especially palm-trees. It is indeed a deadly trap which kills. The paper concludes by advocating that the use of magun is barbaric and must be discouraged in Yoruba society rather another better means of curbing adultery and deviant behavior should be used. The old and barbaric method of sanctions should be frowned at while moral sanctions that give respect for human life such as employing the services of the law enforcement agent should be encouraged.

Introduction

Adulterous acts are very rampant in the Nigerian societies today. It is a behavior characterized by casual and indiscriminate sexual intercourse, often with men and women that are not tied together in marriage. Research shows that promiscuous and adulterous acts or behaviors are common these days because of too many factors including illicit movies, urbanization, individualism, and so on.

The problem of adultery is as old as the history of mankind. Adultery and sexual promiscuity featured from generation to generation of the human race since creation (Ojo, 2013: 1). In the Old Testament, the Hebrew law prohibits adultery likewise in the New Testament.

In the Greco-Roman world, there were stringent laws against adultery, even though it was applied to married women. It was not a crime for a husband to have sex with a slave or an unmarried woman. Morino (1997) submits that adultery is a social problem which brings shame on the offenders. Research reveals that 50% of males and 30% of females in the world had extramarital sex at least once during their lifetime.

In Yoruba society like other African societies, adultery is a serious and capital offense and Yoruba society has a way of punishing the offenders. In view of

this deviant act, an attempt is made in this paper to take cursory look at Magun (Thunderbolt) and Tesho as a device among the Yoruba people to punish the act of adultery.

Yoruba people use Magun and Tesho device to check infidelity because of their potency. These devices have the power to kill the victim especially the man who has sexual intercourse with the woman who had been laced with this charm.

When a woman is under the spell of Tesho the man who attempts to have intercourse with her will vomit continuously while about to attempt the act until he withdraws from the act and may not be able to regain strength throughout the day.

In the case of Magun (Thunderbolt) any man who has no anti-Magun device and has intercourse with a woman laced with Magun will instantly die. Magun (Thunderbolt) and Tesho-charms are imbued on a string of thread or single broom and them placed on the entrance of a house or room for a woman who is promiscuous to cross over and there and then the woman has been charmed with this killer device.

It should, however be noted that magun has various type of taboo (ewo) associated with it. These taboos are the power that will triggered the potent of this charm to kill the victim. For example, magun that has groundnut as its taboo the moment a man had sexual intercourse with a woman laced with magun, he begin to look for groundnut to eat and as soon as he chewed a nut the charm dashed him on ground and plunged him into a state of death. He foamed (sometimes) at the mouth with his whole body covered with sweat.

From all that has been said in the introductory part of this paper, Tesho and Magun charm are regarded by Yoruba people as instrument of justice to punish adulterous act among them but the researcher is of the opinion that this method is barbaric and primitive which should not be used in modern day Yoruba society.

Magun and Tesho Explained

In Yoruba scholarship, there is hardly a phenomenon less understood but zealously persecuted as magun. Magun does not kill willfully without a justifiable cause. Magun is not a disease but mystical device or a magic to expose or punish the man who meets another man's wife sexually. Magun is common among the Yoruba, Togo, Azande and Bunyoro people. Its forces can be geared towards productive, protective, and destruction channels. The power of magun remains constant and the same on the victims. In other words, the general effect of magun remains the same with no regards to social or political standing. Magun is a killer with no respect for the status of the victims, in as much as the victims flout the taboo of sex. Abraham (1958) in his Dictionary of Modern Yoruba defines magun as Magic drug which has adverse effect on the adulterous man causing him to fall over three times or crow like a cock and die.

The issue of magun in Yoruba land cannot be over emphasized. In some part of Nigeria, a man may want to punish unfaithful wife by using this dreaded device. In most part of Anpa Local Government Area of Benue State magun's potency is only realizable if the husband warns the adulterous man to stop sleeping with his wife for three times. But among the Yoruba people, only a

confession from both partners and the interpretation of a witch doctor who knows the antidote to administer may save the lives of the adulterers.

After the preparation of the charm, the husband of the adulterous woman puts the charm on the way the wife takes. The charm could be used on a string of tread or on a single broom and the wife who is not aware would cross over the broom or tread. After seven or nine days, whether there is sexual intercourse between a man and the unfaithful wife or not, the charm would affect negatively on the woman, and normally, the woman would die. If there is intercourse, the man would die immediately or later, depending on the type of Magun.

Tesho

According to James (1970:57) “not only is magic an essentially human possession, but it is literary and actually enshrined in man and can be handed on only from man to man, according to very strict rules of magical filiations and instructions. The strength of magic is embodied in spell and in specific rites performed and mystical formulae pronounced for the express purpose of bringing about some practical result, such as making rain, giving stability to pregnancy to avoid miscarriage, wounding an enemy and so on.

Tesho is a Yoruba magical device with potency to cast spell on a woman suspected by her husband to be unfaithful. Like magun, there are different types of this charm. There is one that has to do with penis captivus whereby the private part of male victim will be stuck inside of female private part till both will die.

Usually dog or goat is used to test the potency of Tesho before it is applied on a human. In the case of the animal incantation could neutralize the terminal effect on the animals involved.

Another type of Tesho is the one that will affect the erection of male private part. The private part of the man will not erect at the time the man is on the woman and the man will continually vomit till he withdraws from the act. If he fails to treat himself with herbal medicine, he may become impotent for life.

Concept of Magun

Olubiyi (1992:20) defined Magun as the phenomenon which is popularly known among the Yoruba as charm that curbs infidelity. The Yoruba designed it to prevent or expose illicit sexual relationship between a man and a woman who are not properly married. Myth has it that such preventive measure discourages a married woman who may have unbridled sexual appetite for infidelity. In his typology of magun, he mentioned two different ones under the majela (do not eat Okra soup). The most notorious according to him, is the one that makes the victim crow like a cock before giving up the ghost.

Even if a woman is innocent but contacts Magun, perhaps by unfounded suspicion the woman eventually dies, even in innocence. The woman dies of chronic stomachache or headache. But, if the husband confesses that he placed Magun on her wife, a herbalist or diviner administer on the woman a substance called ‘ero’ to neutralized the power of Magun.

Elewude (1979:55) describes Magun as death trap. When it is placed on a chosen object it brings sudden death, whether the victim is guilty of innocent.

This is one of the notorious effects of magun. According to him, Magun can also be employed to trap thieves and enemies. He listed ten types of magun, including somersault magun, thirst magun, never cross over water, and earth grave-forbidden, walnut-eating-forbidden, race or fighting competition-forbidden, penis atrophy, penis-cutting, tuberculosis producing, cold magun, or perpetual ailment inducing.

The practice of magic in African religious system

The practice of magic is one of the important pillars in African traditional religious belief. Magic and medicine are based on the belief that there are vital forces or supernatural powers in the universe that can be tapped and controlled by humans for the maintenance of balance in the system. It is usually referred to as summon or manmade objects such as charms, mascots, amulet, juju, to mention a few, all fall under the category of magic, because they signify the means through which occult forces are generated into action. These forces are used both for good or beneficial purpose, and for bad or injurious ends.

However, it should be pointed out that though Africans belief and practice magic and make use of charms but there are charms that are bad which people use for anti-social purposes, as when a man causes rain to fall to spoil the festival or party organized by his enemy.

Malicious acts of Magun (Thunderbolt) and Tesho

Magic is generally considered under ‘good magic’ and ‘evil magic’. The use of good magic is accepted and esteemed by society. Evil magic involves the belief in and practice of using this power to harm fellow human beings or their property.

From the above standpoint magun and tesho charms could be said to be part of evil magic because they kill even innocent persons. Magun and tesho charms are too barbaric and brutal to be used in curbing infidelity in these modern times. They stand for anti-social employment of mystical power. The use of magun and tesho in Yoruba modern society is still very rampant.

A female banker and her concubine died while having sex at Ezuido autonomous community in Ezinihitte, Mbaise local Government Area of Imo State. The two deceased are Mrs. Adejoke Ayeola, 44, from Iperu Remo in Ogun State, and Wilson Ugwunna, 42, from Ezinihitte. Both have two children each with their respective spouses. Mrs. Ayeola was said to have been married to a traditional ruler in Ogun State. It was noted that Mr. Ugwunna’s family who resides in Lagos were alerted when both lovers were discovered in bed dead and their bodies were said to have started decomposing. The community disclosed they strongly suspected the tragedy was caused by Magun (Thunderbolt). Mr. Ugwunna brought the woman, Mrs. AdejokeAyeola from Lagos down to his village to spend the weekend together. It was further gathered that the lady, Mrs. Adejoke, who worked in a new generation bank, lied to her husband that she was going for a meeting at Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, while she followed her lover to Mbaise.

Another incident happened in Ondo town when a man had illicit affairs with a woman who had been put under the influence of Tesho charm. The private part of the man could not erect while on the woman. The man has remained

important since then. There are different types of magun and tesho. A type of Tesho has to do with penis captivus, an occurrence in heterosexual intercourse.

Magun or tesho can either kill a victim or cause misfortunes, thereby making the victim's life very unbearable for the family. The thrust of this paper is that Magun and Tesho charm are brutal, barbaric and unjust.

Adultery is a sexual intercourse or relations with a person other than a marriage partner (marriage customs 2011). It applies equally to a betrothed woman it is deemed an outrageous crime, striking at the norm of the society and when it results in conception it inflict a spurious offspring on the husband. The Traditional structure of the society makes adultery a crime, not only against the partner as an individual, but also against the extended family relations. Arowolo (1990) described adultery as an offense against the religious objects, the husband and his ancestors.

Furthermore, it is a criminal act against the gods because infidelity in the matrimonial life is punishable by supernatural beings. Right from the beginning of courtship, religious rituals are performed to stabilize and hallow the marriage, ancestors and divinities are consulted and approached for their support. Usually the wife of an adherent of the traditional religion is, as it were, the wife of the gods. She is commended to the care and protection of the supernatural beings and she is required be faithful. Rituals and ceremonies accompany the wedding. The aim of these rituals and ceremonies is to pray for the welfare of the new couple so that they will bear children with good upbringing. During these rituals God and the living-dead of the family are called upon to witness the occasion and to give their blessings to the couple.

Adewale (1994) argued that among the Yoruba natives, the ifa oracle warns against adultery, thus "She destroys the member of the household of the husband; she destroys the member of the household of the concubine. Thereafter, she destroys herself and goes on a far journey to return no more so declare the oracle to the adulterous woman who is a servant of death". The ifa system, which serves as the Yoruba traditional religious scriptures, has been researched by eminent scholars such as Fabarebo, Adewale and found to be known not only among the Yoruba land but also among non-Yoruba in Nigeria and some West African countries like Sierra-Leone, Republic of Benin, Togo and part of Ghana.

Causes of Adultery

The causes of adultery or marital infidelity vary from individual level to the cultural belief systems of every society. Eysenck (2009) argued that men are likely to commit adultery because of their natural preference for promiscuity and avoidance of emotional investments in their marital lives. Excessive power of man over woman in marriage is another factor which allows man to dominate his wife, in area of marital infidelity. Kung'u (2011) argued that in Kenyan society, women are considered sexual property of their men. In South Africa, woman falls under her husband's marital power (South African Law Commission 1996). Undue power of men over women is a known factor which makes men not to respect their matrimonial vows.

Hall and Fincham, in Ojo (2003:134) identified some causes of adultery or extra marital affairs. The two argue that individuals with permissive sexual values are more likely to engage in infidelity, and this permissiveness is more common among males, Africans, Americans, and illiterates. Infidelity has also been consistently linked to sexual or emotional dissatisfaction in one's primary relationship. The female, may feel lonely and disconnected because her husband won't talk or care for the woman's feelings.

Nelson in Ojo (2013:134) explained some fundamental causes of infidelity or extramarital affairs in the society. To them, women and men will seek extra marital sex for erotic variety or because their partner is not providing sexual opportunity. For them infidelity may be caused by lack of a "good-enough" sexual relationship between the couple.

Infidelity may be an effort to repair early ruptures in the parental bond and attachment. It may be as a result of a loss in the critical development of the sensual bond between mother and infant at a nurturing stage of development. The need for new sexual excitement as a result of sexual boredom is another factor. Boredom by real life sexual relationship is caused by repetitive exposure to the same erotic scene. Sexual dysfunction of the partner is another factor which can cause infidelity. Inability to achieve orgasm, lack of interest in sex or premature ejaculation or other sexual dysfunctions are factors which may stimulate infidelity between couples and finally, lack of physical attachment may prone a partner to infidelity. Families no longer live in social communities with their extended families and support systems. Most couples are isolated, and forced to connect by the internet and through wireless connection. Couples experience separation distress when they have attachment disruption which in many occasions can encourage infidelity.

Conclusion

Modernization and westernization have seriously reduced the rate of using "Magun" to punish adultery among the Yoruba people. Instead of using "magun" to punish adultery, Yoruba men prefer divorce. Hence the age, of modernization would view the act of punishing adultery with "Magun" as barbaric and primitive. The act would be considered as wickedness. Magun and Tesho charm are barbaric and primitive and should not be used in modern time to curb infidelity. Magun kills even innocent persons by mere unfounded suspicion on the side of the one who applied the magun. Infidelity should, however, be discouraged and addressed in a more enlightened manner. Experiences show that many Yoruba people living in villages are still using "magun". This is as a result of high rate of illiteracy and uncivilized life. In traditional African society adultery is not condoned, it is a breach of societal and religious norms and it breeds an unhealthy and unwholesome relationship in society, a relationship that can ruin the total well-being of the people. However, modern and more decent ways should be adopted to condemn infidelity.

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