***Journal of Afroasiatic Languages/Journal of Afroasiatic Languages, History and Culture (JAAL)***

Volume 12, Number 2, 2023

# HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS ON "JINN-AFFLICTED" ILLNESSES IN WALLO, ETHIOPIA

**Assefa Balcha**

**ABSTRACT**

*The study makes an attempt to reconstruct the history of the most widely held socio-cultural and religious belief on spiritual entities known alternatively as Jinn, Ganen, Diablos, Saytan, and Aganent. These noxious spiritual beings were believed to be responsible for a range of human illnesses against which diverse kinds of indigenous preventive and therapeutic methods had been employed. Recording disease causations is an important step towards an understanding of the underlying beliefs and attitudes of a community along with its therapeutic preferences to maintain the physical and social wellbeing. The data gathered in this kind of study may well be used as an input for conventional medicine to comprehend and devise appropriate health education and intervention strategy. Making use of both primary and secondary sources the research will shed a ray of light on this existential and ingrained worldview.*

**Keywords**: *Aganent*; Amulet; *Ganen*; *Diablos*; Ethiopia; Indigenous Medicine; *Jinn*; *Saytan*; *tabal*; Talisman; *wadaja*; Wallo

## Indigenous Cosmology: A Brief Account

Various designations have been attached to the demon family, a family of noxious spiritual powers known invariably as *Jinn, Ganen*[1],

1 *Ganen* is defined as "ክፉ መንፈስ፣ ጅን ይህን አለም በጨለማ የሚገዛ፣ የግዚርና የሰው መዦመሪያና መጨረሻ ጠላት፣ በላይ በታች የሚኝ" See Desta Tekle Wold, *The New*

*Diablos*, *Saytan*, and *Aganent*. The name *Jinn* appears to be equivalent to *Djinn* in Arabic. *Ganen* is a generic Geez name given to the Devil, the major evil spirit. The belief in *Jinn*, according to Simon Messing (1957) was brought to the Ethiopian highlands from southern Arabia in the middle of the first millennium BCE, and was 'superimposed on the earlier *buda* and *zar* beliefs, but was reduced to the bottom-scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries [CE]'.[2] Actually, the Jews and other peoples of the ancient world strongly believed in the existence of demons and devils.[3]

Like other dualistic religions before them, Christianity and Islam had also incorporated the notions of "sin and punishment" and the "existential reality" of the spirits or demons as well as "good and bad" spiritual beings into their cosmology. Merid Wolde Aregay (1987) argued that both Christianity and Islam 'introduced the Jewish cosmology, which was itself a distillation of Egyptian and Persian ideology of a world dominated by two contending super gods of light and darkness'.[4] The *Jinn* family was perceived as being a collection of (terrifyingly) numerous impalpable beings which populated the physical world. Countless human problems, including mental and physical illnesses, have been attributed to the maleficence of these noxious spiritual entities.[5] For most serious and unexplained illnesses, the devil was often the prime culprit.

---

*Amharic Dictionary* (Amharic). (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1962 EC).

2 Simon Messing, 'The Highland Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia' Unpublished PhD. Dissertation. (University of Pennsylvania), 1957, p.680.

3 William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975), p.34.

4 Merid Wolde Aregay, "Traditional Medical Practices in a Historical Perspective," Paper read at the *Annual Dinner of the Ethiopian Medical association*, Addis Ababa, 1987, p.5.

5 Mekonnen Bishaw, "Integrating Indigenous and Cosmopolitan Medicine in Ethiopia" Unpub. PhD Dissertation, (S. Illinois University), 1988, p.74.

According to the Christian faith, the entire *Jinn* family, being wholly noxious, were hurled out of heaven, to earth, following a transgression. The consequent curse of God was cast upon *Satnael*[6] (Greek *Diablos*, Hebrew *Satan*), and He chased this wicked being out of heaven.[7] After being chased out of heaven, *Satnael* (the leader of all evil spiritual entities) and the "author of all evil" immediately began his sinful deeds. Since then, human beings have been exposed to the machinations of the demon family. With this, an endless struggle between "good" and "evil" spirits, and an ever-lasting hostility between Satan and human beings, ensued.[8]

This period, also called "the devil's reign", Christians believe, will only be interrupted when Jesus Christ comes back from heaven to imprison *Satnael* 'in a bottomless pit for the coming one thousand years'.[9] The Church also taught that evil spirits could be kept at bay through the assistance and invocation of benevolent spiritual powers: God, saints, and angels. According to Christianity, evil spirits are invisible in nature and they have permission from the Almighty to vex the wicked or non-believers and attack them in a wind like manner. The destructive power of evil spirits can be sensed by observing the altered behaviour of persons suffering from the kind of illnesses, these unseen forces inflicted upon them.[10]

Islam teaches that "*Jinn* pre-existed before humans; the first recorded *Jinn* to be disobedient is *Iblis*, commonly known as Satan. Allah created the Garden of Eden and made Adam and Eve. Subsequently, Allah commanded that all of the angels and Iblis were to prostrate themselves before Adam. All the angels prostrated (as a

6 Greek in origin; Hebrew *Satan*, hence *Saytan* in Amharic; see Isaiah 14: 13-15; also, Ezekiel 28: 11-16.

7 Genesis 3: 1-24

8 Merid Wolde Aregay, "Traditional Medical Practices," p.5

9 Merid Wolde Aregay, "Millenarian Traditions and Peasant Movements in Ethiopia, 1500-1855," *7th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Lund, 1982, pp.257-58.

10 "Where Evil Spirits Came from and How to Cast Them Out," *www.bibleabookoftruth.com*. p.6.

sign of respect and not worship) except *Iblis* (He was not an angel but from the *Jinn*). *Iblis* refused to prostrate due to arrogance and pride and he was removed from heaven."[11] Owing to his blatant refusal to obey God's order, *Iblis* who has been mistakenly depicted as a "fallen angel", was chased out of paradise and became an ever-accursed spiritual being. Like human beings, the *Jinn*, constituting believers and non-believers or "infidels" will be judged on the Day of Judgment.[12] All evil spirits whether good or evil, are descendants of Iblis. For instance, the principal duty of a group of malicious spirits, called *Shaitan*, was to lead human beings astray. Islam also teaches that the *Jinn* (singular *Jinni*), being created from 'a flame of fire,'[13] are of different orders and ranks. The *Jinn* family, according to their position from the lowest to the highest, comprise the *Jann, Jinn, Shaitans, Ifrits,* and the most powerful *Malids*.[14] In short, Islamic cosmology presupposed that illness, infirmity, and other morbid conditions of the human body or mind, had an 'unknown supernatural origin'.[15]

Apart from satisfying the spiritual and emotional needs of their adherents, the teachings of the two principal religions were readily taken as the underlying causes of most psycho-social disturbances and physical illnesses. Deviation from the correct religious path was taught as a major source of ill-health and various other personal misfortunes. Sickness and death were also taken as a deliberate act of the naturally wicked spiritual entities. [16] Thus, whatever misfortune befell an individual, the culprit could either be an evil

11 G. Hussein Rassool, *Evil Eye, Jinn Possession, and Mental Health Issues* (New York, NY : Routledge, 2019) pp.105-106.

12 Ibid, p.107

13 Holy Quran, Iv: 13-14, and also *surat al-Jinn*, Ixxii

14 W.B. Crow, *A History of Magic, Witchcraft and Occultism* (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1972), p.74.

15 Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. 1965 ), p.260.

16 Assefa Balcha, "Traditional Medicine in Wallo: Its Nature and History," M.A. Thesis, History, (Addis Ababa University), 1992, p.17.

demon by itself, or being an agent of a mischievous person who befriended or manipulated it.[17] For this reason, as I.M. Lewis (1971) put it: 'mystic powers are realities both of thought and experience'.[18] It was also assumed that by observing God's laws, every individual would be protected from any possible misfortune, including what the Church calls *maqseft* or sudden death. In other words, both physical disorders and mental problems, the most feared spiritual punishment, have been attributed to God's displeasure, a condition that would emanate from the moral fault of the sufferer. Conceptually, faith in divine mercy, or the ability to "re-establish" a harmonious relationship with the Almighty was thought sufficient for a sick person to recuperate, and remain healthy.[19]

A point that merits mention is that both Christianity and Islam teach believers that every person is born with a pair of guardian angels, entrusted with the responsibility of protecting at all times, and acting as guides of the correct pathway of spiritual and ethical life. On the contrary, the principal duty of a spirit of darkness, which the clergy calls *Flista*, was to seduce a person to commit sin and suffer the consequences.[20] If a human being committed sinful deeds repeatedly, it would bring divine displeasure, which, it was believed, would result in the abandonment of his/her guardian angels. He/she would then be exposed to the influence and machinations of evil demons.[21] Even pious Christians were exhorted to be alert at all times so as not to be deluded or embraced by *Diablos*, opined informants.

17 Ibid, p.22.

18 I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (London: Hazel Watson and Viney Ltd., 1971), p.28.

19 Assefa Balcha, "Traditional Medicine," pp.22-23.

20 This spirit dwells on the left side of a person's shoulder. Oral Informants.

21 Allan Young, "Magic as a Quasi-Profession", p.248; for a similar view see Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p.68.

Whereas the majority of the *Jinn* are "terrestrial" ones, the rest are said to be "celestial".[22] The earthly spirits, considered inferior, were believed to be addicted to drinking, smoking, and sleeping in filthy spots. Most families warned their children not to play or walk around these unclean areas at midday for fear of being possessed by demons, who it was believed, frequently visited, to feast on the dirt and filth. The *Jinn,* belief has it, though unseen creatures, eat, drink, procreate, reproduce, and die, like human beings. As many research informants noted, a group of *Jinn* known as *Kelkeliwos* roam *only* around cemeteries. They were described as members of a single "tribe" among the so-called ninety-nine "tribes" of the *Jinn* or the *Ganen* family.[23] *Nahumelak* and *Yeayer Petros* were also denoted as two other "tribes" belonging to the celestial group.[24]

According to Islam, "One of the extra powers of the *Jinn* is that they are able to take on any physical form including humans and animals."[25] For the ordinary person, the earthly *Jinn* having both human and animal qualities have been depicted as tall, grotesque creatures with dark complexions. While the earthly *Jinn* were said to be rarely visible to the naked eye, the *Dabtara* claimed that the celestial ones could never be seen even by the *Ganen Gotach* (demon-pullers).[26]

---

22 Earthly *Jinn* and aerial *Jinn* are defined as: (የጉድፍ ጋኔን)፣ ልክስክስ፣ በጉድፍ የሚውል ሰይጣን፣ እና (ያየር ጋኔን) ባየር የሚኖር፣ Desta Tekle Wold, *The New Amharic Dictionary*.

23 For the names of the alleged 63 tribes, see Aman Belay, *Book of Remedy* (Amharic) 3rd ed. (Addis Ababa: Eleni Printing Press), 2007 EC, pp.119-120.

24 Oral Informants; *Mermerios*, *Mengist Ekmu*, *Besme Leab*, and *Ashokshewaki* also belong to the celestial group. See, Tadesse Tsega Wolde Selassie, *Neighborhood of Spirits* (Amharic) (Addis Ababa: Etafzer Printers, 2008 EC.) pp.249-250.

25 Rassool, *Evil Eye, Jinn Possession*, p.108.

26 According to oral informants, a person who possessed the 'hair' or 'bone' of a *Jinni* from a hyena's vomit could easily see earthly demons in flesh. Fumigating a *Jinn*-possessed person with the burnt smoke of these same substances was an effective tool to cast out the possessing

To successfully invoke the power of *Satan* and his demons required healers to enter into a relationship with them. This was viewed as a highly dangerous act. The procedure for establishing a friendship with evil-spirits was referred to as *mawares* (inheritance).[27] *Mawares* was a frightening experience, partly because such friendship would not provide a guarantee of safety or protection to those who concluded a pact with evil spirits from their unpredicted attacks. Above all, to seek power and knowledge through *mawares*, that contradicts the moral order, may also trigger divine displeasure.[28] A person being avidly interested in befriending the Devil (and subsequently mastering demon-conjuring skills) had to renounce Christ, the Prince of Peace, and the Orthodox faith. He had to go through a period of fasting and reciting prayers composed in the name of *Satnael* known universally as መልክአ ሳጥናኤል *Malka Satnael* (Image of *Satnael*) and ድርሳነ ሳጥናኤል *Dersana Satnael* (Homily of *Satnael*).[29] With the help of these prayers and associated rituals, notably shedding the blood of a sheep or a black fowl,[30] a person secluded for a week would "inherit" *Satnael* and became a "demon puller." However, this process could be fatal. Thus, an elderly healer

spirit. Informants emphasized that hyenas are the only creatures that are capable of seeing and devouring these incorporeal beings.

27 *Mawares* would mean literally 'acquisition' or 'adoption' by a human being of the wisdom, attributes and assistances of the leader of evil spirits, *Satnael*, and his minions.

28 Allan Young, "The Practical Logic of Amhara Traditional Medicine", in *African Therapeutic Systems*, (Massachusetts: Crossroads Press, 1979), p.84.

29 For different versions of prayers composed in *Satnael*'s name and the magical items recommended in the ritual of invocation see, Ms No. 386 Part III (not paginated); 2417 (C), pp. 131-139; 2417 (D) pp. 1-4, 76-79; Stefan Strelcyn, "La Magie Ethiopienne," *Acadamia Nazionale dei Lincei*, 1960, pp.155-157.

30 The ritual also included offering and sprinkling of home-made alcoholic drinks like *taj*, *talla* and *araqi*, brewing coffee as well as burning incense and other aromatic items like *karbe*, *altit*, *wagert*, and *taj sar*. IES, MS No. 2417 (C), p.142.

noted: 'I had two friends, the one who succeeded in "inheriting" and conjuring up the Devil, and the other one killed, while performing the ritual, on his way to becoming a demon-puller'.[31]

Demon-pullers, more than any other cleric-healers of proven medico-magical knowledge, did not always identify themselves, or seek to pass their knowledge on to others, particularly during the imperial era when they were by far freer, and numerically greater than in later periods.

The primary advantage that they gained from "communicating" with or "inheriting" the attributes of *Satnael* was an ostensible ability to command substantial amounts of medical and extra-medical knowledge that would help them utilize a wide range of magical prayers for various ends beyond the capabilities of indigenous spiritualist healers.[32] Informants believed that those who befriended *Satnael* could easily invoke evil spirits, cast a hex, or tap the medical and magical knowledge of the spirit world. Some healers argued that evoking or conjuring spirits and consulting divinatory texts for diagnostic or therapeutic ends must be viewed as valuable wisdom.[33] Healers in this category would not want to pass down their know-how to others (even to their own sons) unless an aptitude for learning such skills and the potential of understanding the accompanying risks of mastering such a perilous expertise were evident.

Evil demons were always imagined as permanent sources of danger to lonely travellers, to women in childbirth (not yet blessed

31 Informants asserted that in order to terrorize evil demons thunder bolts were sometimes sent by benevolent supernatural beings. Personal communication with an Oral Informant.

32 It is stated in the instruction that with the use of this powerful prayer a person can supposedly perform more than forty extraordinary magical deeds.

33 Depending on their title and training, and their supposed monopoly on the written word church-affiliated healers were often seen with awe and suspicion. The majority of them were referred to as mischievous or evil-doers.

with holy water),[34] to newly-wed couples not accompanied by their best-men and bridesmaids, to children who were out after dark, to those who travelled at night, to individuals who took holy communion, and to depressed, despondent, grief-stricken or mournful persons. Demons were thought to be in search of human victims during the middle of the day and in-between sunset and cock-crow. To sleep in a newly-built house and to go out in the dark suddenly without any light was considered dangerous. To greet or respond to the call of a person's name in the dark was perilous, for the caller might be a demon.[35] People would not even venture to throw fluid in the dark 'lest the dignity of some unseen elf should be violated'.[36] To avoid sudden sickness or accident of any kind, a person had to be vigilant while walking around cemeteries and garbage dumping spots where evil demons were believed to reside or roam around. Hence, for keeping away the noxious influence of the *Jinn* and the serious dangers they represented, a person should have earnestly and consistently prayed and observed all the recommendations of the Church.[37]

Like the ancient Jews,[38] different demons in Ethiopia were held responsible for different illnesses: a demon called *Barya* for epilepsy; *Worzeliya* or *Shotelay* for repeated miscarriage; *Rahelo* for typhus-fever.[39] *Aganent* of the air were thought to be very powerful and extremely aggressive, and to whom a number of debilitating illnesses were attributed. Although *Jinn* could not be seen by

34 Hanging a bottle of holy water at the entrance of a house was believed to have protective value.

35 Personal Communication with Oral Informants

36 Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia*, V.II. 2nd ed. (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1844), p.290.

37 Oral Informants

38 Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark*, p.35.

39 Oral Informants; on the correlation of different demons with various illness conditions in Ethiopia, see for example, Stefan Strelcyn, *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the John Ryland's University Library of Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), pp.76-83; 88-89.

humans, they were thought to be capable of causing both mental and physical illnesses by entering into or possessing human beings. Being considered as a disease of the "aerial demon", no one would dare to assist an epileptic during a fit. Diabetic patients were considered possessed, a belief that seems to have developed out of a patient's overindulgence of food.[40]

Even for healthy individuals the dictum: እህል ባሳደገ ደመኛ ነው? (Lit: Food is helpful for physical growth, should it be attacked as an adversary?), clearly expressed the public's abhorrence to lack of modesty or excessive gluttonous behaviour. 'Consumption was not frequent,' writes Walter Plowden in the late nineteenth century, and 'being ignorant of the causes, the Abyssinians naturally attribute it to a zar, or some other devilment'.[41] In the same century, Cornwallis Harris wrote: 'Insanity, epilepsy, delirium, hysteria … and in fact all obstinate disorders for which no specific [cause] is known are invariably ascribed to the influence of demons…and the patient is…declared to be possessed of a devil.'[42]

For the majority of ordinary people, once in possession, the demon would soon start drinking the blood, sucking out the marrow, and devouring the heart and the flesh of the possessed person; and this, they earnestly believed, would cause permanent physical injury such as paralysis, deafness or blindness, and even death.

**Religiously-Sanctioned Healing Modalities**

The pervasiveness of longstanding sociocultural and religious beliefs in Ethiopia showed that the majority of Ethiopian Orthodox

40 Oral Informants

41 Walter Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country with Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1860), p.115.

42 Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia*, V.II 2nd ed. (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1844), p.157; see also Mansfeld Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia*, V.II, (New York: D'Appleton & Co., 1854), p.144.

Christians and Ethiopian Muslims believed in the existence of *Jinn* and in *Jinn* possession. It was also widely believed that these intrusive spirits should be exorcized as soon as possible, preferably before the disease had taken a serious turn. The clergy or faith-healers, being "first-line" religious-based healthcare providers, often preached that unless driven out immediately, a possessing spirit would cause irreparable damage upon its victim. Immersing the "possessed" with a sanctified holy water (*tabal* or *tsebel*) was the most cherished and effective therapeutic recommendation of the Church.[43] The healing ritual could take place in the patient's home or at a holy spring known for its miraculous healing power. Most patients and their families perceived *tabal* as a sacred and efficacious method of exorcizing noxious spirits. *Tabal* Lauren Anderson (2007) noted, 'should be taken a minimum of seven consecutive and for as many as twenty-one days...Besides being sprinkled or used on the outside of the body, it is also frequently drunken by [an] ill person. By drinking the [*tabal*], the evils that are believed to cause illness are expelled from the body [through]...physical excretions.'[44]

With the help of spiritual treatment, the intrusive spirit, speaking through the possessed, had to make clear why, when and how it entered the patient. While agreeing to leave its human residence during a healing ritual, the healer would put intense pressure on the spirit to make clear its identity or name, and the material requirements it needed to be provided. If the spirit in question refused to present an explicit demand, it was presumed that it was not willing to be ejected out. When the intruding spirit, however, became compliant and would want to leave its human residence, it would at least agree to be offered some waste matter such as animal offal or excreta. These items would be buried somewhere around, and found and consumed, by the departing

43 Oral Informants; Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia*, p.115.

44 Lauren Anderson, "Faith as a Means of Healing: Traditional Medicine and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in and around Lalibela," Villanova University, SIT Study, 2007, p.26.

spirit.[45] To the layman, this whole process of exorcism provided persuasive evidence of the existence of disease-causing intrusive spirits. For the church, exorcism of evil demons with holy water was held superior over other "non-spiritual" methods, which was considered objectionable and inferior. Holy water, according to the Orthodox Church, 'sanctifies whoever [is] touched by it, free[s] him from uncleanness, and attacks the power of darkness, and secures that [wherever] it is sprinkled ... freedom from pestilence and snares of Satan.'[46]

In the case of Islam, "evil" *Jinn* were expelled by invoking Allah, good angels, and even "good" *Jinn*. The Muslim *Sheikh* or *Qallicha* used this procedure as he saw fit. The art of using "good" *Jinn* or prescribing medicaments for ejecting out malicious spirits was an accepted and legitimate counter-measure. To tap "good" *Jinn,* either for treating the sick or protecting human beings from the machination of evil spiritual forces, has been the principal duty of the *dawah* tradition.[47] However, the *Qallicha*, the purportedly skilful individuals, were also the ones who would engage in black magic. They were feared for mastering the art of tapping evil *Jinn* for both nefarious and therapeutic deeds. This practice was called *sihr*.[48] *Kihana* or divination was also regarded as unlawful.[49] This suggests

45 Personal observation; other than keeping a variety of prayer books, a cross, and a sacred object including an image of a holy figure in the house, hanging a bottle of holy water at the entrance of a house was considered effective to keep evil spirits at bay.

46 Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu (eds.), *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, 1970), p.72.

47 W.B. Crow, *A History of Magic, Witchcraft and Occultism* (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1972), p.78; The *dawah* included the use of the secret names and attributes of Allah, angels and 'good' *Jinn* for divination, invocation and exorcism of evil spirits and for the production of written amulets or *kitab* by way of extracting some selected verses from the Quran.

48 Ibid; Oral Informants

49 W.B. Crow, *A History of Magic*, p.78.

that there was a great deal of similarity between the Muslim *Sheikh* and the Christian *Dabtara*.

Those who manipulated evil demons for favours, wisdom, spells, etc. presented these impalpable spirits as sources of their medical knowledge; however, any attempt to invoke or tap malefic spirits for effecting cure was a heinous crime,[50] argued many research informants. While religious healing was based upon the premise that health was supernaturally given, ill-health and other human troubles were also supernaturally-sanctioned or preordained ones. Setting this notion aside, many personal, marital, or inter-personal mishaps and illnesses such as insanity and sudden death were attributed to the magical deeds of envious or mischievous individuals. In an attempt to counteract or defuse magic spells, victims would be compelled to consult magico-religious healers or sorcerers, surreptitiously. By making use of their magical wisdom, magico-medical healers would diagnose and give solutions to the mysterious or unexplained illnesses or problems of their clientele.

The psycho-social value of the religious and non-religious spiritual treatments was very high. This was particularly true of almost all inexplicable sicknesses, the causations of which were not explicitly identified or understood. Based on this premise, all sorts of explanations regarding the maleficence of spirits and the alleged vulnerability of human beings to their malevolence seemed to have greatly contributed to the emergence of diverse kinds of rituals and ceremonies of exorcism. The existence of a wide array of activities, (constituting religiously sanctioned and indigenous healing methods) against spiritually-caused illnesses, seemed to confirm the development of syncretistic therapeutic notions and practices.[51] Inevitably, a variety of non-religious healing methods have been employed by local healers of various titles and wisdom. Though

50 Oral Informants; Assefa Balcha, "Traditional Medicine," p.22; for a related discussion, see Allan Young, "Medical Beliefs and Practices of Begemder Amhara", p.88; on the supposed talent, power and knowledge of Satan, see Matt. 8: 28 and Mark 1: 24.

51 Assefa Balcha, "Traditional Medicine," p.17.

generally perceived as "deviants" from the dogmas and creeds of the Orthodox Church, the *Dabtara* were accused of befriending evil demons and using them for beneficial (healing) as well as capricious (black magic) ends.[52] For helping the sick, the *Dabtara* produced charms, talismans and amulets using pertinent magical prayers and formulas. They also performed divinations, incantations and numerous other magical acts. All in all, the *Dabtara* serving as psycho-pharmacologists and psychotherapists offered expert services to a cross-section of their clients having different socio-economic, gender and religious backgrounds. Thus, those who suffered from unidentified psychosocial and physical illnesses or other personal difficulties would finally decide to ignore the 'stigma' and consult the *Dabtara*.[53]

It is worth noting that the "aerial *Jinn"* were said to be capable of eavesdropping and transmitting God's intentions to their earthly minions. Conjurors of this group of spirits were approached with incredulity and trepidation. Despite their alleged denunciation of Christ and absolute allegiance to *Satnael*, the "Leader of Darkness", some healers were particularly admired of their extraordinary diagnostic and therapeutic knowledge, a knowledge which they claimed to have acquired from their spirit familiars. In contrast, research informants alleged that the therapeutic knowledge of "conjurors of the earthly *Jinn"* was said to be unreliable, because almost all the terrestrial spirits were untrustworthy and fraudulent. Conversely, the celestial spirits were often believed to be good prognosticians.[54]

Out of all these beliefs, human beings would be exposed to demonic possessions and illnesses only if they committed mortal

52 Allan Young, 'Magic as a Quasi-Profession: The Organization of Magic and Healing among the Amhara.' *Ethnology*, 14 (2): 245-265, 1975b, P.248; for a brief discussion on the *Dabtara*, see Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp.171-174.

53 Oral Informants

54 Ibid

sins or when their guardian angels abandoned them. But if their sins were not serious enough, it was believed, they would be able to obtain absolution through strenuous fasting and supplicatory prayers. [55] Hence, susceptibility to *Saytan*-caused illnesses was thought to be determined by individuals' allegedly acrimonious relationship with the "Supreme Being" and their guardian angels, assigned to them. But those who believed in God's omnipotence stressed the idea that they would never be trapped by the snare of evil demons for they enjoyed divine protection and the guardianship of benevolent spiritual beings. Paradoxically, God was also held indirectly responsible for tolerating evil spirits' to attack transgressors with illnesses and misfortunes. This would not necessarily mean that the Supreme God was inherently malevolent. However, His 'benign indifference to the unwariness of the guardian [angels] he had appointed to watch over, protect and guide ordinary humans' would implicate Him in such allegations.[56] And yet, the ability to maintain sound health, or recovering from sickness, was said to be fully dependent upon God's merciful intervention or His willingness to forgive.

**Alternative Healing Methods**

As a direct result of the incessant admixture of age-old indigenous and religious beliefs, a number of physical illnesses such as scabies, scrofula, eczema, *qoreqor* (sore on the head)[57] and other animal-human contagions, were attributed to the evil influence of an impalpable force of one sort or another. For example, drinking or washing with water allegedly touched, tasted, or breathed upon by evil demons was believed to cause an illness called *likift*. Not surprisingly, leprosy, the most feared disease, was associated with

55 Ibid.

56 Mekonnen Bishaw, "Indigenous Medical Beliefs and Practices and Their Implication to Biomedical Practice," mimeo, March 1989, p.5.

57 It was common to see the heads of children being greenish after having been anointed with the crushed leaves of *astenagir*.

the use of *Jinn*-infested water.[58] For most people, leprosy was just a punishment from God[59] because the source of infection caused by *Mycobacterium leprae* was just a mystery and incomprehensible. As to its mode of transmission, it was mostly believed to be a hereditary disease that could be contracted through skin-to-skin contact, a view that indicated the contagious nature of the disease. In addition to heredity, leprosy was also associated with God's punishment for a guilty, impure, cursed, and rejected, person. The song-mendicancy or the Hamina tradition may illustrate the socio-religious and medical conceptions of people towards leprosy. As Mesele Terecha (2010) aptly asserts: "The Hamina [also known as *Abba Wudde* or *Lalibeloch*] are a social category [of people] ... who perform the ritual of song-mendicancy [begging by singing] in the belief that it will ward off the debilitating impacts of leprosy coming down from a *legendary* leprotic ancestor.' He added, The *Abba Wudde* 'perform the ritual of pre-dawn song-mendicancy going from province to province, village to village, and door to door, with the belief that a swirl of mist from plants and a haze from a barking dog protects them from the spirit of a hereditary leper".[60] It was believed that begging for alms through singing would help healthy members of the lepers' family from contracting the disease.[61] Apart from leprosy,

58 Oral Informants; Assefa Balcha, "Traditional medicine," pp.36-37; also, Allan Young, "Medical Beliefs and Practices," p.7.

59 Setting aside the use of different types of indigenous treatments, many patients afflicted with skin disease and even leprosy often sought miraculous cure by visiting holy water (*tsebel*) and hot springs.

60 Mesele Terecha Kebede, "Origins and Transformation of the Hamina Song-Mendicant Tradition," *African Study Monographs, Suppl.41*: 63-79, March 2010, p.63.

61 Ibid, p.70; There was also a widely held belief that those who had leprosy in their families or lineages were rumored to have protected themselves from catching the disease by what may be termed as a "ritual murder' of bathing their bodies with the blood of children of 'connected' eye-brows. It was to protect them from leprosy that individuals would become professional beggars, known as Lalibeloch or singer mendicants. Amedie Lemma, referring probably the so-called

a number of other diseases were also believed to be contracted through mere contact with magical items known traditionally as *denqara* (an Oromo word which means literally 'obstacle'). The *denqara* was mostly put at a cross-road to magically transfer an ejected disease-causing spiritual entity from the sick, to some other unwary passers-by.[62]

Another indigenous method for exorcizing a troublesome spirit was to prepare the traditional *wadaja* ritual. The idea behind a *wadaja* session, a ritual of chewing *chat* (*Catha edulis*) in response to adversity faced by an individual and as an integral part of the ritual process, and rhythmical singing, was to exert intense psychological pressure upon the possessing spirit and to make it surrender and leave its human abode.[63] When used for curing purposes for example, the family of the sick would summon experts of the *wadaja* ritual to undertake a healing session and help the sick suffering from physical or socio-psychological illnesses and regain their health.[64] It is also well-known that both Christian and Moslem families prepared the *wadaja*, if they deemed it an essential step. Tapping

---

'ritual murder', has noted the persistence of human sacrifice in the post-Italian period. See Amedie Lemma, *My Life History* (Amharic), (Addis Ababa: Master Printing Press, 2003 EC), p.194.

62 Fikre Tolossa, *The True Origin of the Oromo and Amhara [people]* (Amharic) (Addis Ababa: Nebadan m. c. PLC, 2008 EC), p.18.

63 For a comprehensive treatment of the ritual, see Assefa Balcha, "Wadaja Ritual: Portrait of a Wallo Cultural Coping Mechanism", *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, 3:1, 40-52, 2017.

64 Fumigating the possessed with the fumes of medicinal herbs was another method of exorcism. Many of these remedies were also used against 'buda' or other lesser spiritual illnesses. The rationale behind fumigating the possessed was to put intense pressure upon the intrusive spirit so as to identify itself and confess its guilt. Having been interrogated and cross-examined, the intrusive spirit would be forced to leave its involuntary human host. This type of therapy was provided by herbalists or cleric healers. This therapeutic ritual would surely give emotional catharsis and reassurance to the purportedly possessed individual.

such an arsenal of inter-religious cooperation in times of adversity has promoted mutual trust, social cohesion and solidarity. In the words of Jan Abbink (2007):

> In this mixed setting of Christians and Muslims, both indigenous to the area and sharing many customs, a pattern of open borders and accommodative social practices developed. Muslims and Christians frequently intermarry, socialize, attend each other's festivities, and undertake joint activities. Sometimes Muslims accept the mediation efforts of Christian priests and the healing power of Christian priests and saints, to whom there are also some shrines in the area. On the other hand, many Christians visit the tombs of Muslim shaykhs (for instance, at mawlid) and consult the shaykhs' living descendants in cases of personal problems, illness, and other affliction. Most remarkably, there are also many cases of people converting to the other faith and then returning to the first. Such successive conversions result in mixed personal names...[65]

If the son or daughter of a Muslim individual married an Orthodox Christian or vice versa, such an arrangement was never opposed, detested and did not affect future family relations. Rather, inter-marriages across religious lines seem to have reinforced a pluralistic society embodying strong inter-familial and inter-communal foundations. The same is true of the persistence of mixed Christian-Muslim participation in *wadaja* sessions, veneration of local Muslim saints and visitations to holy springs.

In search of miraculous healing, Muslim patients like their Christian counterparts, visited holy springs (*tabal* or *tsebel*). This suggests that the need to obtain a cure or to regain health, often cut across religious boundaries. One notable exception is the existence at a place called Bilen (about 3 kilometres south of Dessie) of a holy spring named after *Sheikh* Ali Jirru, a venerated holy man to whom a shrine has been dedicated. Local oral tradition has it that with the

65 Jon Abbink, "Transformations of Islam and Communal Relations in Wallo, Ethiopia," in *Islam and Muslim politics in Africa*, edited by Benjamin F. Soares and René Otayek, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2007), p.72

blessing of the *sheikh,* the spring at Bilen was endowed with miraculous healing powers.[66] This spring was, and is, frequented by Muslims and Christians alike. This would suggest that springs have been changed from earlier notions of being "abode of nature spirits" to that of "spring of saints".[67] The following examples may demonstrate the existence of a shared notion on the curative value of natural springs as holy water. Venerating the mythical St. Gebre-Kristos as patron saint to leprosy-sufferers, and St. Tekle Haymanot as patron saint to those who suffered from skin diseases, can be a living proof of the interpenetration of two major religions. Many Muslim families used to drink and smear their bodies with the holy water and *emnet* (burnt ash) of the church of St. Tekle Haymanot. They even commemorated the saint's day by offering a feast consisting of *tella* (locally brewed beer), *qollo* (roasted barely) and *dabbo* (bread) on *Nehassie* 24 (2 September).[68] It was not unusual for members of the Muslim community to escort the *tabot* (replica of the Ark of the Covenant) of a nearby church during the Ethiopian Epiphany.

The steady noise of the cracking of a handmade long lash (*jiraf*) and the whipping contest among children and adults for weeks preceding *buhie* (the 'Feast of Transfiguration', a religious-cum-cultural annual bread festival celebrated for two consecutive days in August or *Nehassie*) where children would chant and roam around the neighbourhood to collect and partake the bread they gathered, was an inter-religious yearly ritual. Like *buhie,* there were a number of festivities and sayings that fostered the importance of being moderate and lenient towards one's own co-religionists and those

66 Oral Informants

67 Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), p.260.

68 St. Tekle Haymanot was even perceived as provider of health and wellbeing known locally as የጤናየ ጌታ (lit: 'Lord of my health'). Personal observation and Oral Informants.

belonging to another religion.[69] Consumption of *tej* (mead), *tella* and *araqi* (local liquor) together was so common that some of the drinking houses were owned by Muslims. Commemorating Wednesdays, Saturdays and Tuesdays by chewing *chat* and holding an elaborate coffee ceremony for Abd el Qader Al-Jilani, a certain *Sheikh* Kedir, and *Sheikh* Nura Hussein respectively, in both Christian and Moslem families, enhanced conviviality, inter-faith communication and interaction between the two religious communities. For instance, without attaching any religious implications, Muslim women in rural Wallo adorned themselves with cross-shaped necklaces or skin tattoos.

Similarly, when a Muslim individual embraced Christianity, his former co-religionists would simply say "he has become Amhara", rather than saying "he has been converted to Christianity." Other than meat, Christians and Muslims ate or drank animal products, such as butter and milk, together. It was from the surrounding Muslim communities, such as Ruga, Kelem Meda, and Boru, that the urban population in Dessie used to be provided with items such as milk, butter and sheep on a day-to-day basis.[70] Despite some observable changes in Christian-Muslim relationships in recent years, the following testimony eloquently demonstrates the affinity of the two communities in the rural area of Wallo at the end of the last century. From Panos London's Oral Testimony Programme (2001) comes the following:

> [T]here are Muslims around here. They call us to assist them during the threshing. We too invite them when we have a Mahber [community association for those who share the same patron saint] or a wedding. They bring us gifts, including goats. Then they themselves slaughter the animal and prepare their food. They eat

69 የባለጌ ሐይማኖት ከጅማት ይጠናል። እምብዛም ጡሀራ ከነጃሳ እኩል ነው። (lit: 'The religion of an ill-mannered person is much crispier than a dried skin '; 'Extreme cleanliness is virtually the same as being unhygienic').

70 Several Arab shop owners in Dessie got married to the pretty rural women who used to supply them with milk and butter.

> and drink their injera and tella and enjoy the festivities together with us. So we have such relations with them. When a person dies from among them, we don't go about our business [out of respect]. When someone passes away from among us, they don't do their farm work or any other business. We contribute food grain and they cook that for feeding the mourners. They do the same thing in our case, just as in the Qire [traditional funeral association]. So we support each other.
>
> If we have family members or friends living in the towns, they entertain us when we visit them. We too bring them the ripe crops [such as corn, or peas or beans]. When they come to our places, we invite them to take boiled milk and fresh honey, or we slaughter a goat for them. Only now there are few of these because there is no grass for the livestock…[71]

The same was true for the veneration of local Muslim saints, or *wali*. With the expansion of *tarīqas* (mystic orders) around the end of the 18th century, various learning and local pilgrimage[72] centers began to be seen in different parts of Wallo. With the exception of the shrine at Geta, which is from *Tijaniyya*, the other Muslim shrines in Wallo were of the *Qadiriyya* Sufi order.[73] These holy men, often dubbed *sheikhs*, to whom shrines had been dedicated, were perceived as local saints.[74] The saints in their lifetime were known to have had tremendous wonder-working, or mystic, powers, including a reputation for curing illnesses and helping people suffering from other non-physical problems. For example, it was customary for pilgrims suffering from internal and external ailments

71 Panos London's Oral Testimony Programme, "Voices from the Mountain: Oral Testimonies from Wollo, Ethiopia", *The Panos Institute*, (London: 2001), p.18.

72 Hussein Ahmed, "Traditional Muslim Education in Wallo," *9th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, V.3 Moscow, August 1985, p.96.

73 Jon Abbink, "Transformations of Islam and Communal Relations in Wallo," p.68.

74 Elevating Muslim religious figures to sainthood might have been one of the earliest influences of Christianity.

to drink or smear their bodies with a potion made of soil taken from the saints' tombs. The tombs of *Sheikh* Mohammed Shafi of Jama Negus, and *al-Hajji* Bushra of Geta, have been, and are, very popular centers of local pilgrimage or *ziyāra* (places for venerating the tombs and shrines of deceased *wali or* saints)[75] and saint veneration in Wallo.[76] They had a reputation for their extraordinary spiritual power of performing miracles[77] and healing, including an exalted reputation for alleviating the suffering of the possessed. Seeking to benefit from the intercessory and healing powers of the *wali*[78] these local pilgrimage centers attracted countless pilgrims. 'Sufi's best traditions of tolerance, humility, openness to local traditions and public service enabled Islam to be' embraced by the community and as a 'major foundation for its survival and continuity.'[79] Even some of the students of prominent *wali* had established their own schools of learning in other places which later became famous local pilgrimage centers.[80] Among the many *wali* who were known to

75 For the social and cultural acceptance of local pilgrimage centers and their role in dealing with spirit possession complaints, see Minako Ishihara, "Spirit Possession and Pilgrimage: The Formation and Configuration of the *Tijjānī* Cult in Western Oromoland," *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. by Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Teferra and Shiferaw Bekele, (Trondheim: 2009), p.505.

76 Hussein Ahmed, "Two Muslim Shrines in Wallo," paper read in the *5th Annual Seminar of the Department of History*, Debre Zeit, 1989, pp.6, 17-18.

77 At Geta, for instance, *Hajji* Bushra was said to have stuck a twig of his tooth brush at the shrine which subsequently became a huge olive tree.

78 Either for internal or external ailments, pilgrims to the Muslim shrines would often drink or smear their bodies with the soil of the *wali*'s tombs. Personal observations

79 Alem Hailu, "Islamism and Its Threats to Africa's Rich heritages of Pluralism: Ethiopian and Wallo as Cases from the Horn of Africa," *Horn of Africa*, Volume XXIX, 2011, p.18.

80 For example, *Sheikh* Siraj Mohammed Awel, a famous sheikh from Yejju born around 1885 at a place called Dana in Yejju, had established

have been endowed with prophetic and curing powers in Wallo included *Getaw*/*Sheikh* Sherefedin of Borena; Seid Mujahid of Albuko; Ahmed Adam of Dana; *Sheikh* Seid of Maybar; *Sheikh* Indris of Mesale; *Sheikh* Seid Ibrahim of Chalie; *Sheikh* Mohammed Annie of Raya; *Sheikh* Mohammed Meawa of Mersa; *Sheikh* Hamza Boru; *Sheikh* Adam Derqa and *Sheikh* Ahmed Yusuf.[81] And a few of them have been remembered for their prayerful chants and litanies called *menzuma*.[82]

At a place called Harbu in Qallu Woreda for example, a mythical *sheikh* by the name Zechariah endowed a hot-spring with inestimable curative powers with his blessing. With a dramatic pierce of his wonder-working spear into the ground, the *sheikh* is believed to have created a therapeutically important hot-spring at this place.[83] The spring is still famous for curing skin diseases. Irrespective of their religion, patients would bathe their bodies together, praising and blessing the curative powers of the hot spring. In spite of the association of the *sheikh* and his alleged role in

---

a shrine at Tiru Sina in Jille Dhumugaa (in Oromiya Zone, Amhara region) after completing his religious studies in Wollo and Shewa. He had also established other shrines in Mekdessa, Chafa Robit, Jubaruhman, Chiri and Karakore. Meron Zeleke, "Ye Shakoch Chilot (the court of the sheikhs): A traditional institution of conflict resolution in Oromiya zone of Amhara regional state, Ethiopia," *African Journal of Conflict Resolution* 10 (1): 2010a, pp., 63-84.

81 For a very brief history on the life and deeds of these individuals, see Tesfaye Berhanu, *The Four-Eyed* (Amharic). (Addis Ababa: Berana Printing Enterprise, 1999 EC).

82 For the nature and purpose of *menzuma*, see Assefa Mamo, "Some Prominent Features of the *Menzuma* Genre in Wallo Region," M.A. Thesis, Literature, (Addis Ababa University, 1987).On the type, purpose and personality of *menzuma* composers, also see Solomon Teshome Bayu, *Folklore: Its Nature and Research Perspective* (Amharic) (Addis Ababa: Far East Trading Private Ltd., Co, 2007 EC), pp.228-229.

83 It could have been a local variant of the legendary achievement at Mecca of Ibrahim who made available the blessed spring of *yezemzem wuha* (Water of *Zemzem*) with his holy grace or *Baraka*.

endowing the hot spring its medicinal virtue, however, the following verse may suffice to illustrate its importance by those who travelled there, seeking to obtain fast recovery and healing from their ills:

በገብስማ ዶሮ ሲበረበር ቤቱ
አድኖ ሰደደኝ ሐርቡ መድሐኒቱ[84]
*When a "barely-coloured" fowl was ransacking my house*
*Harbu my medicine sent me back with sound health!!*

**Concluding Remarks**

Both Christianity and Islam have made a relentless effort to furnish a comprehensive explanation for incidences of a range of human misfortunes. They attributed countless human predicaments to a believer's preordained fate, visitation by an evil spirit, or a divine punishment for transgression. Yet, these explanations could not provide satisfactory answers as to how and why ill-health and numerous other personal and social problems happened. Attributing most human maladies to the interference of invisible cosmic forces demonstrated the efforts of religious institutions in combating these forces with spiritual treatments. Inevitably, the lacuna in both theory and practice of the mainstream religious establishments seem to have provided opportunities for other indigenous healing methods to thrive. As a result, both rural and urban dwellers continued to utilize magico-religious or magico-medical healing modalities and other alternative therapeutic services simultaneously, or consecutively. People simply used multiple forms of healthcare provisions without taking any precautionary measures into consideration. This pluralistic approach, appealing largely to socio-psychological needs of the indigenous perceptions of diseases and therapeutic modalities of the

84 It is about the ultimate failure of a repeated and costly offering of sacrifices given to the allegedly disease-causing spirit by a patient suffering from non-spiritual illnesses, and a compliment to the therapeutic value of the thermal bathe or hot-spring at Harbu.

populace, survived, and continued through the Imperial period (1941-1974). Still people in Wallo actively seek an assortment of home-grown treatments, even when receiving treatment from biomedically trained practitioners, partly because of a misunderstanding of the cultural beliefs of the causes of sickness. Indigenous remedies that are being used have created a barrier for workers of conventional medicine against gaining in-depth knowledge on local views on the causes of ill health so as to build trust and get acceptance as providers of effective cures for most microbial and other disease-causing agents.

**Refrences Cited**

Abbink, Jon. "Transformations of Islam and Communal Relations in Wallo, Ethiopia," in *Islam and Muslim politics in Africa*, edited by Benjamin F. Soares and René Otayek, New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2007.

Alem Hailu, "Islamism and Its Threats to Africa's Rich heritages of Pluralism: Ethiopian and Wallo as Cases from the Horn of Africa," *Horn of Africa*, V. 29, 1-31; 2011.

Aman Belay, *Book of Remedy* (Amharic) 3rd ed. Addis Ababa: Eleni Printing Press, 2007 EC.

Amedie Lemma, *My Life History* (Amharic), Addis Ababa: Master Printing Press, 2003 EC.

Anderson, Lauren. "Faith as a Means of Healing: Traditional Medicine and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in and around Lalibela," Villanova University, SIT Study, 2007

Assefa Balcha, "Traditional Medicine in Wallo: Its Nature and History," M.A. Thesis, History, Addis Ababa University, 1992.

Assefa Balcha, "Wadaja Ritual: Portrait of a Wallo Cultural Coping Mechanism," *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, 3:1, 40-52, 2017 DOI: 10.1080/23277408.2017.1323170.

Assefa Mamo, "Some Prominent Features of the *Menzuma* Genre in Wallo Region," M.A. Thesis, Literature, Addis Ababa University, 1987.

Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu (eds.), *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, 1970.

Barclay, William. *The Gospel of Mark*, Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975.

Crow, W.B. *A History of Magic, Witchcraft and Occultism*, London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1972.

Desta Tekle Wold, *The New Amharic Dictionary* (Amharic). Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1962 EC.

Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965

Fikre Tolossa, *The True Origin of the Oromo and Amhara [people]* (Amharic) Addis Ababa: Nebadan m. c. PLC, 2008 EC.

Harris, Cornwallis. *The Highlands of Ethiopia*, V.II 2nd ed. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1844.

Holy Bible, Ezekiel 28: 11-16; Genesis 3: 1-24; Isaiah 14: 13-15; Matt. 8: 28 and Mark 1: 24.

Holy Quran, IV: 13-14; *Surat al-Jinn*, Ixxii.

Hussein Ahmed, "Traditional Muslim Education in Wallo," *9th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, V.3., Moscow, August 1986.

Hussein Ahmed, "Two Muslim Shrines in Wallo," paper read in the *5th Annual Seminar of the Department of History*, Debre Zeit, 1989.

Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Ms No. 386 Part III; 2417 (C); 2417 (D).

Ishihara, Minako. "Spirit Possession and Pilgrimage: The Formation and Configuration of the *Tijjānī* Cult in Western Oromoland," *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. by Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Teferra and Shiferaw Bekele, 505-516, Trondheim 2009.

Levine, Donald. *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Lewis, I.M. *Ecstatic Religion*. London: Hazel Watson and Viney Ltd., 1971.

Mekonnen Bishaw, "Integrating Indigenous and Cosmopolitan Medicine in Ethiopia" Unpub. PhD Dissertation, S. Illinois University, 1988.

Mekonnen Bishaw, "Indigenous Medical Beliefs and Practices and Their Implication to Biomedical Practice," mimeo, March 1989.

Merid Wolde Aregay, "Millenarian Traditions and Peasant Movements in Ethiopia, 1500-1855," *7th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 257-58, Lund, 1982.

Merid Wolde Aregay, "Traditional Medical Practices in a Historical Perspective," Paper read at the *Annual Dinner of the Ethiopian Medical association*, Addis Ababa, 1987.

Meron Zeleke, "Ye Shakoch Chilot (the court of the sheikhs): A traditional institution of conflict resolution in Oromiya zone of Amhara regional state, Ethiopia," *African Journal of Conflict Resolution* 10 (1), 63-84, 2010a.

Mesele Terecha Kebede, "Origins and Transformation of the Hamina Song-Mendicant Tradition," *African Study Monographs, Suppl.41*: 63-79, March 2010.

Messing, Simon. 'The Highland Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia' Unpublished PhD. Dissertation. University of Pennsylvania, 1957.

Panos London's Oral Testimony Programme, "Voices from the Mountain: Oral Testimonies from Wollo, Ethiopia", *The Panos Institute*, London, 2001.

Parkyns, Mansfield. *Life in Abyssinia*, V.I, New York: D'Appleton & Co., 1854.

Plowden, Walter. *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country with Account of A Mission to Ras Ali in 1848*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1860.

Rassool, G. Hussein. *Evil Eye, Jinn Possession, and Mental Health Issues*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2019.

Solomon Teshome Bayu, *Folklore: Its Nature and Research Perspective* (Amharic) Addis Ababa: Far East Trading Private Ltd., Co, 2007 EC.

Strelcyn, Stefan. "La Magie Ethiopienne," *Acadamia Nazionale dei Lincei*, 1960.

Strelcyn, Stefan. *Catalogue of Ethiopian Manuscripts in the John Ryland's University Library of Manchester*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974

Tadesse Tsega Wolde Selassie, *Neighborhood of Spirits* (Amharic) Addis Ababa: Etafzer Printers, 2008 EC.

Tesfaye Berhanu, *The Four-Eyed* (Amharic) Addis Ababa: Berana Printing Enterprise, 1999 EC.

Trimingham, Spencer. *Islam in Ethiopia*, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965 "Where Evil Spirits Came from and How to Cast Them Out," www.bibleabookoftruth.com.

Young, Allan. 'Medical Beliefs and Practices of Begemder Amhara', Unpub PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1970

Young, Allan. 'Magic as a Quasi-Profession: The Organization of Magic and Healing among the Amhara.' *Ethnology*, 14(2), 245-265, 1975b.

Young, Allan. "The Practical Logic of Amhara Traditional Medicine", *African Therapeutic Systems*, Massachusetts: Crossroads Press, 1979.

*Assefa Balcha*
*anegwo@gmail.com*
*Wollo University*
*Dessie. Wollo, Ethiopia*