

**JOB 14:1-12 AND THE BAGANDA TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF HUMAN LIFE
AND DEATH: AN IDEO-THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND
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OF MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES OF KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**

JUNE, 2022

DECLARATION

I, Kisekka Enock, declare that this thesis, titled, “Job 14:1-12 and The Baganda’s Traditional Concept of Human Life and Death: An Ideo-theological Hermeneutics” is my own work and that all sources I used have been acknowledged as reflected in the bibliography.

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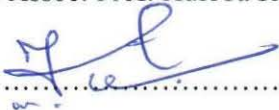
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SUPERVISORS' APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Job 14:1-12 and The Baganda's Traditional Concept of Human Life and Death: An Ideo-theological Hermeneutics" has been written under my supervision and is now ready for examination with our approval.

Principal supervisor

Name: Assoc. Prof. Kuloba Robert Wabyanga

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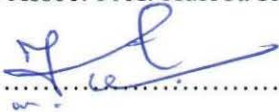
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Principal supervisor

Name: Assoc. Prof. Kuloba Robert Wabyanga

Sign: 

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my late mother, Sarah Namagulu Sserwadda, you are and will always be part on my list of blessings. Your dedicated commitment to parenting us and my siblings left a legacy in our lives. May you keep reigning in glory, till we meet.

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I thank the Almighty God who has given me the knowledge and strength to come up with this piece of work. I appreciate Ass. Prof. Robert W. Kuloba my supervisor who always gave time to my work and encouraged me to do the best in this study. Your expertise and commitment have been a great catalyst in this entire academic journey.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Kyambogo University for their support in one way or the other. I also thank all my informants and those who willfully contributed to this study.

Special thanks go to my father Pr. Sserwadda Patrick, for your continuous prayers and Mrs. Ssemanda Anne, for always encouraging me throughout this journey. I also thank my brothers and sisters, especially Ssewava Ronald for their prayers and encouragement. I would therefore dedicate this thesis to my parents, family and beloved ones for their tireless support towards my success.

ABSTRACT

The study focused on the ideo-theological hermeneutics of Job 14:1-12 in relation to the Baganda's traditional concept of human life and death. The study sought to discuss the text in relation to the Baganda's traditional concept of human life and establish the ideo-theological and cultural correspondences between the text and the Baganda conceptualization of human life and death (Okufa). The theoretical frame work of the study was African Postcolonial Bible Hermeneutics, specifically Hermeneutics of Appropriation. The study carried out a detailed examination of Job 14:1-12 in its context where the background, description and analysis of the text were made, drawing out the theme of human life and death. The study further investigated the theme of human life in relation to death in the Biblical world and the Ancient Near Eastern civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Concerning the Baganda concept of death, the study entails death management rituals and their symbolism and significance to human life, and how the Baganda embody and polemicize death. The study reveals that though Job presents his lament as the universal fate of all mankind, his idea of human life is influenced by the situation circumstances in which he finds himself. His reality of death is nihilism. Amidst the reality of losing all his children, he has no hope of having more given his imminent death. Job focuses much on the physical death and offers less attention to the netherworld. Put in the Baganda context, Job expected to suffer a bad death, the death of all his children rendered him childless and just like an African—the Muganda in that regard, the childless Job and his imminent physical death implied the death of his name, his memory and utmost nihilism of his legacy and existence. Though Job's idea of life after death as commonly known in the Bible and African cultures is not clear in his laments, the Biblical and African cultural understanding of death is that death is a gateway to another world of spiritual existence. Nevertheless, Job's idea in the texts is the reality shared by Africans in context of a person who has suffered a bad death often associated with childlessness and other social vices.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The chapter offers a background to Bible readership in Buganda, situating the Bible in the culture and history of Buganda. It offers a historical background to Buganda Kingdom, its location, people and culture. It presents Buganda as the gate way through which the Bible and Biblical readership got into Uganda and positions the Bible as key important fetish through which the Baganda view their world today.

1.2 The Study

The study focused on the ideo-theological hermeneutics of Job 14:1-12 in relation to the Baganda's traditional concept of human life and death. The study sought to discuss the text in relation to the Baganda's traditional concept of human life and establish the ideo-theological correspondences between the text and the Baganda society in relation to the conceptualization of human life and death. The study was ethnographic and comparative, describing and analyzing the Bible texts and its environment in relation to its socio-cultural resonance with the Baganda setting.

1.3 The Baganda and the Buganda Kingdom

The Baganda belong to the wider group of interlacustrine Bantu and form the largest Bantu grouping in Uganda. The kingdom of Buganda is located on the shores of Lake Victoria with in the interlacustrine region. Buganda is the largest of the medieval kingdoms in present-day Uganda. Traditions hold it that the Kingdom was established by Kabaka (king) Kintu in the late 14th century. Kabaka Kintu, is believed to have come to the region from northeast Africa, from the side of mountain Elgon around 1314 AD. He is believed to have passed through Bugishu, Budama and Busoga finally to Buganda where he seized power from Bemba Musota,

the clan head and crowned himself the head of all the Baganda clans, Ssaabataka; a title accorded to Buganda Kings up to date.

The Baganda, speak a bantu language known as Luganda, which is one of the widely known and used indigenous languages in Uganda. With their location in Uganda, the Buganda region has a higher standard of living and most occupants are more literate and modernized than any other people in Uganda (Britannica 2019). In Buganda, descent, inheritance, and succession are patrilineal with each member belonging to one of the over 50 clans. Membership to a particular clan is by decency. Each clan has a primary and secondary totem, (Omuziro and Akabbiro), which is an animal that they are responsible for preserving. The traditional Baganda religion recognizes God (locally known as, Katonda, Lugaba, Liisoddenne, Mukama, Namugereka,), ancestors (bajjajja), past kings (Bassekabakka), and nature spirits (Baalubaale), who are approached through spirit mediums (abalaguzi/abalubaale).

1.4 Buganda and the European Imperialism

Due to its strategic location along the northern shore of Lake Victoria, the Kingdom has experienced a number of foreign influences, including the Islamic and Christian religions (Britannica 2008), that reached in Buganda in the 19th century, especially during the rule of Mutesa I (1856–84). After his death the kingdom was rived by a number of politico-religious factions. In 1894 Buganda became part of the British sphere of influence, and in 1900 the Buganda Agreement made it formally a British protectorate. The Baganda played a major role in assisting the British colonial administration in East Africa. On becoming the first in the region to accept British influence, the Baganda gained even greater power and a special status in the politics of the Uganda Protectorate, and it is not surprising that when Uganda achieved independence in 1962, the British administration gave Buganda kingdom a considerable autonomy and was accorded special federal status within the new nation, a status that was lost in 1967 after Milton's abolition of the traditional institutions in Uganda (Britannica 2019). The

Buganda kingdom was restored in 1993, as a Kingdom under the Central government of Uganda, with a considerable decrease in its power and status (Kasfir 2019). Below is the map indicating Buganda within Uganda.

Maps



1 Map of Uganda, the shaded area within indicates the Buganda Kingdom



2Map of Buganda Kingdom showing its territorial borders and the counties.

<https://www.buganda.or.ug/amasaza>

1.5 Buganda and its Relationship with the Bible

It is through Henry Morton Stanley that Christianity and the Bible saw its way into Buganda. In 1875, Stanley made a visit to Kabaka Mutesa, on which he introduced Christianity to the Kabaka, who was anxious to widen his diplomatic, political and economic influence. After this convincing visit, Stanley wrote his November 15th, 1875 telegraph inviting the missionaries in

Buganda. The first Christian missionaries who were sent to the kingdom of Buganda came from the Church Missionary Society in 1877; and later the Regnum Christi mission was inaugurated by the White Fathers in 1879.

The missionary activities in Buganda were never limited to evangelism but were greatly centered on literacy learning. Many of the royal court officials and liberated slaves (abagule) picked much interested in learning and reading the Bible. Due to earlier interaction between the Baganda and the Arab traders, Swahili was a known language among the average Baganda. The knowledge of Swahili was an important factor in quickening the work of the missionaries. It was the first language of evangelization and instruction in reading and writing. Swahili became the language into which some Biblical texts were translated for the readers.

Since the introduction of Christianity in the Kingdom in 1875 and the eventual coming of missionaries from 1877, the Bible has received an eminent place in the life of the Baganda. Kabaka Mutesa I took interest in the Christian faith and undertook the pioneer task of translating of Sermons from Swahili to Luganda, forming the first Luganda Christian Literature (Tuma 1978:18). Later Swahili started losing fame in the missionary circles as it became linked to history with Islam, a rival religion by then. Missionaries adopted the use of Luganda Language, making Luganda the first indigenous language of the Bible. Mateeka (Commandments) was the first Luganda Christian Publication printed by Alexander Mackey. This publication included the alphabet, the Ten Commandments, the creed, the Lord 's Prayer, and a selection of biblical texts (Stock 1995).

Luganda Language continued to take a center stage as the Language of the Bible when Mackey completed his work of the First Luganda Translation of the Gospel of Matthew that was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, 1887. Later on, after various efforts of other missionaries, the task of translating the Bible to Luganda was taken up by

George L. Pilkington who arrived in Buganda on the 27, December 1890. Under instruction from Nuwa Kikwabanga, Pilkington expressed mastery of the Luganda Language. With the help of Baganda senior protestant converts and church leaders; Henry Wright Duta Kitaakule as the chief assistant, Samwili Mukasa, Sembera Mackay, and Nuwa Kikwabanga, Pilkington was able to translate most of the Old Testament to Luganda by 1896. The books of the minor prophets were translated by W. A. Crabtree. With their commitment, the British and Foreign Bible Society published the first Luganda Bible, known as “Biscuit Bible” in 1896, (Tuma 1978: 94-95). This was latter followed by the production of the Protestant Bible- “Ekitabo ekitukuvu”.

The Publication of the full Luganda Bible was a great achievement to the missionaries and also elevated the Language. Luganda language became a Language of the Christendom not only in the Kingdom but also in the whole country. Luganda became the Language in which catechists and other liturgy resources were made. This popularized Luganda in the areas of the Bantu speaking populations, becoming the Language of the Gospel dissemination. This achievement created a strong relationship between the Baganda and the Bible.

The translation of the Bible in Luganda language introduced the Bible to a new culture. The missionaries, consciously or unconsciously, facilitated the conversion of the Bible into a new culture, the Baganda culture. This is because language is an integral part of culture, the usage of a given word is peculiar to a language, its relationship with culture and, importantly, through language we can express cultural beliefs and values (Krasniqi 2019).

The Bible became a Baganda story and a great book of reference among the Baganda Christian converts. The Bible as a book became a heavily generated, cherished and guarded fetish among the Baganda. Biblical ideologies started taking root in the lives of the Baganda converts. Their worldview started bending towards the Biblical worldview, creating a negotiation between the

African world view and the Christian- Biblical worldview (Kuloba 2016), leading to a new hybrid of people in the Kingdom. The Hebrew God of the Bible got contextualized to Baganda God Katonda and the Bible story became “our story.” It is not surprising today that a vast group of Baganda use the Bible in seeking for answers to the questions on human life, death and life afterdeath. Infact, the text under study is one of the prominent texts used in funeral solemonities in Uganda today.

For the purpose of this study, I am so mindful while referring to Baganda; this is because not everyone born among the lineage of the Baganda is herein considered a Ganda. Considering Kuloba’s arguments on who an African is, am convinced that his criteria can apply best in my definition of the Baganda. Kuloba, (2016: 13-14), views an African not as perceived in the geo-racial and organic terms as a person and especially a black people of African ancestry but in terms of cultural aggregates that constitute and influence attitudes and behavioral disposition. It is in this similar tone that I herein use the term Baganda to refer to Ganda men or women who live the Ganda culture and behave Ganda. By this definition, I do not profess to assert that there exists a pure Baganda worldview in our contemporary Buganda, but rather assert the persistent resilience of Baganda life and culture traits, which can only be understood in terms of hybridity. I contend that the contemporary Buganda society is product of cultural interchange and negotiation between the Buganda Traditional society, her interaction with other neighbouring societies and European colonialism. This contention does not in any way suggest a view that yesterday’s Africa is no more and that the present generation has forgotten her past tradition but rather upholds the view that no culture remains static, the old conception of the world and life continues in new forms, Kabasele (1994: 80).

The term “Baganda Traditional Concept of Human Life and Death” is therefore used to refer to the way in which Baganda perceive life and death which in turn influences their ways of

knowing and doing. To understand this concept, this study considered the Baganda proverbs, sayings, cultural implications of death and meaning of rituals performed during and after death.

1.6 Problem Statement

The Biblical text of Job 14:1-12 presents Job dealing with the Question of human life in the face of death. The author presents Job's views as the universal human lament over death. However, the views in the text seemingly conflict with the Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern ideologies in regards to human life and death as the author presents Job as seeing no hope for man after death has taken its course. This leaves the reader of this text with questions of what influenced such a hopeless lament from Job? It is in this respect that the study uses the lenses of the Baganda traditional understanding of human life and death to harmoniously interpret this text and cause a clear understanding of Job's lament over death.

1.7 Aims and Objectives of the Study

1.7.1 General Objective of the Study

The study aims at making an ideo-theological hermeneutics assessment of Job 14:1-12 in relation to the Baganda's traditional concept of human life and death.

1.7.2 Specific objectives:

1. To examine Job's view on human life and death according to Job 14: 1-12.
2. To investigate the Baganda traditional understanding of human life and death.
3. To establish the correlation between Job 14: 1-12 and the conception of death and life after death among the Baganda.

1.7.3 Research Questions

1. What is Job's view on human life and death according to Job 14: 1-12?
2. What is the Baganda traditional understanding of human life and death?

3. What is the correlation between Job 14: 1-12 and the conception of death and life after death among the Baganda?

1.8 Conclusion

With that background, we can appreciate that the ideological environment in which the Baganda live is an environment influenced by the Bible and its ideologies. Many Baganda share the faith of Job and identify with his predicaments and search for meaning of life in the face of death. Questions of death are asked and answers are sought for from the Bible, and it is not surprising that the Bible is the main book of reference in funeral solemnities in our society today. It is upon that Background that the present study focuses at making an ideo-theological hermeneutics of Job 14: 1-12 in relation to the Baganda Traditional understanding of death.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section covers various scholarly works done on the book of Job, putting much emphasis on Job 14:1-12, and the concept of human life and death.

2.2 Job 14:1-12

Though the book of Job has generally attracted a wide scholarly attention, the text under study has a got a few studies carried from it. In most of the works accessed, the text is only referred to. Most of the works on the texts can be found under commentaries, which have been given attention to in the subsequent chapter of the text in its context. However, though there exists such a challenge, more relevant works can be found in the literature on the Job as discussed below.

Ilan (1992) used Job 14:1 in discussing the phenomenon of men bearing metronymes at the time of Jesus. Though he quotes the introductory words of Job, “Man born of a woman...” he gives attention to the quoted verse and only focuses on discussing various New Testament Biblical characters that bear metronymes, seeking to understand the phenomenon. His work seems irrelevant to understanding the text under study.

Hays (2015) has studied this text, with his focus put on verses 7-9. His focus was on Job’s hope for afterlife in light of the Egyptian tree imagery. Using various classical myths and Iconography, he reveals that Egyptians used tree imageries over a long period of ancient history in mythological portrayals of revivification in the afterlife, and that this aspect of Osirian religion can be distinguished from other manifestations of trees in afterlife texts, including tree goddesses. Comparing the text with Job 19:10 and 29:18-20, together with the various Egyptian data, he states that Job shows a general awareness of Egyptian religion, and the specific constellation of images relating to trees and the hope for renewed life is most plausibly to be

associated with the Egyptian mythemes. His presentation of Job juggling with various Egyptianized ideas enriched this present study particular on the Egyptian view of life.

Suriano (2010) focuses his attention on Job 19:23-27 to discuss the theme of death, disinheritance and Job's kinsman-the redeemer. He observes that the book of Job offers a rare opportunity to view the response to death in ancient Israel and early Judaism. He uses cases of tomb inscriptions and burial practices to offer a cultural background to death in Job, and observes that the inscription of Job's "words" and the interment of his remains, all in a family burial site, were critical actions that were duties incumbent upon his kin.

Muntingh (1975) offers a background to the theme of death and the book of Job, exposing various contradictions registered through comparing different works of different scholars. He then discusses various data from the Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the book of Job, basing his study on God as the giver of life, causer of death and controller of resurrection. He concludes his study with a view that the notion of resurrection in the Ancient Near East must have had a strong influence over a long period on the religion of Israel. This view has been taken in the present study as one of the bases for the use of the Ancient Near Eastern literature in the deeper understanding of the text under study.

Hays (2012) makes an analysis of Job 1:21, in light of the Egyptian mythology. Basing his arguments on the themes of; mother goddess, Mother Earth, tomb, death, and afterlife in the Ancient Egyptian mythology, Hays concludes that Job's theological rhetoric was not merely a literary invention and hence his desire to return into the mother's womb can best be understood in light of the Egyptian idea of death as a return to the womb of mother goddess.

West (2016) suggests that the proper contextualization of the book of Job can facilitate healing among those with trauma. With a case of reading Job with people with HIV/AIDS, he exposes how Bible reading methodology linked to Liberation Theology locates itself alongside more

mainstream approaches to the treatment of trauma. Though his work focused on fronting a hermeneutical approach, it reveals the theme of trauma in the book of Job which various readers can easily identify to.

Gilmartin (2016) made a study of the theme of Sheol in the book of Job, in comparison to the afterlife ideas in the Ancient Near East. His work focuses on how Sheol is presented and understood in the wisdom book of Job. He reveals that the book of Job presents Sheol as the absence of all things pertaining to life. He notes that with various evidence from the Ancient Near East, it is surprising that the book of Job is the most unique since it does not believe in life after death. In notes that in Job, Sheol was a permanent end of life and those in Sheol were never depicted active. He supports his argument with the epilogue that indicates that Job's life was restored while in the land of the living and not the Sheol. Though Gilmartin makes such observation, his study ends at description and offers no clear explanations why Job would present such an image of Sheol. This an answered question is to answered in our subsequent chapters.

In conclusion, though the text under study has a got a few studies carried on it and a few works citing it, the literature reviewed reveals that scholars are continuously using the various texts from the book of Job, in understanding death related themes. In this study, a great deal of effort has been put in studying the text using the commentaries, which have been given attention to in the subsequent chapter of the text in its context.

2.3 Human life and death

Human life is transient, it is in a state of transition from one stage to another and death is last in the long state of transition (Huntington, etal 1979:93). Death is much a mystery, a fact as life, and the two mysteries are inextricably bound together that if we wish to think realistically about life, we cannot desist from thinking about death. Death relates to life: to the recent life

of the deceased and to the life he or she has procreated and now leaves behind (Huntington, etal 1979:93). In all rites of passage, funerals are most strongly associated with symbols that express the core of life values sacred to the society at hand, Gennep (1909), Death, the inevitable and most disrupting phenomenon of all, stands between the world of human beings (the visible) and the world of the spirits (the invisible), Mbiti (1969:149).

Though death is a universal reality, it incredibly evokes a variety of responses whenever it occurs. Such responses and experiences are largely influenced by the social context in which it occurs. (Thompson, etal 2016). The diversity of cultural reaction is a measure of universal impact of death (Huntington, etal 1979:1).

Sociologists like Hertz (1907) and Gennep (1909) consider death as a transition; a transition from life rather than to death. If death is considered a transition, a gradual transition from one state of being to another, then it must be placed in the context of the period that follows and the period that precedes the cessation of breath, Huntington etal (1979). To an African this conviction goes beyond practices and is expressed through elaborate rituals that present the dead as continuing with a new life even after death (Mbiti 1969, Obbo, 2000, Isiko, etal 2009, Baloyi 2014. Etc.)

In an African concept of death, death is a creation of God (Idowu, 1962:187). It happens gradually, starting from the time of one's departure from the earth physically, to the time when the last person who knew him physically, dies off (Mbiti 1980:25). It is a transition which involves transformation from the physical into the spiritual as the dead continue to live as ancestors (Opoku, 1978:133).

In all societies, the issue of death throws into itself the most important cultural values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experiences (Huntington, etal 1979). In fact, death gives meaning to life. Death and its rituals not only reflect social values but are an important

force in shaping them (Geertz 1973:94-98). According to Huntington et al, (1979:5), tools and grave assemblies have been the epicenter of research into the emergence of human life, ancient civilization and of cultural and social institutions, forming the basis for insights on the ideologies and values of ancient societies.

Though each society reacts to death in their own ways, there are some culturally cross cutting elements of mourning that most, but not all societies practice. Leach (1958) recounts hair cutting as a prominent sign of mourning in many funeral ceremonies. This ritual is also practiced among most of the East African societies, including the Baganda. (For other common mourning rituals and symbols see, Turner 1967 and Huntington, et al 1979:46-57, Mbiti 1969).

Reaction towards death changes depending on the social status of the individual that has succumbed to it. The death of a close relative strikes much more than that of a stranger, (Hertz 1960:76). Images of corpse inspire horror and fear among the survivors. In many societies, death is a pollutant and brings a certain form of pollution in the community in which it has occurred. Surviving relatives of the deceased are not only considered polluted but also agents of pollution and danger to the societies in which they live and hence need cleansing before they can get fully integrated in the normal society activities. (See, Krige, 1950: 159-175). This could be the motivation behind many of the elaborate cleansing rituals in various societies. The belief that the corpses may be horrifically reanimated and that the recently dead hover near human habitation while the long dead are removed and anonymous, increases the fear for the newly dead (Huntington, et al, 1979:81-82). It could be the motivation behind the respect of the last words and the will of the dead.

In explaining the correlation between death and pollution, Hertz (1960:37-38) suggests that when death strikes an individual, it gives him/her a new character, his/her body which was in the realm of the ordinary suddenly leaves it, it turns into an object of horror and dread and

hence it can no longer be touched without danger. Such a transition into a new character requires a ritualistic approach to the body handling. The general structure underlying a huge variety of ritual behavior relates to the social function of recruiting and incorporating individuals that mature, age and die into a fixed system of culturally defined roles and statuses (Huntington, etal 1979) This view is held by many African and Western scholars who have ventured into deeper studies of African societies' worldviews with the theme of life and death taking one of eminent positions in such studies. Some taking a wider and generalized approach; Mbiti (1980), Opoku (1978), Idowu (1962) and others centering on specific societies; Obbo (2002), Mhaka (2014), Mwandayi (2011), Isiko (2019), scholars have successfully demonstrated the African views on death.

Mhaka (2014) used a case of the Kalanga of Zimbabwe in studying the rituals and taboos related to death, as repositories of traditional African philosophical ideas. He examined a number of Karanga philosophical concepts embedded in the various death rituals and taboos and concluded that death rituals can function as an alternative source of African philosophy. His study observes that metaphysical concepts such as nature of man, mumvuri (soul); death, causality, time, purity and pollution, heat, are preserved in rituals and taboos and that in rituals and taboos are treasured Karanga fundamental values such as family-hood, respect, responsibility and social stability.

Benyera (2016) explored the notion of death as experienced by the Shona people of Zimbabwe and as expressed by Nikolas Zakaria and the Khiama Boys in their song Rufu Chitsidzo. The article notes that death takes a central place and is dreaded among the Shona. Uncertainty regarding the status of mankind in the afterlife and the association of death to pain and suffering are the greatest reasons why death is feared. The article concludes that various forms of art and popular culture can be effectively deployed to discuss contentious and or feared subjects such as death among the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

Isiko and Maate (2019), took a descriptive approach in the study of the socio-cultural perspectives of the Bakonzo of Uganda about death. They described the Bakonzo concept of death, their death myth and death management rituals; disclosing their ideologies on death and life after death. They concluded that the Bakonzo have elaborate perspectives on death and death management and that the Bakonzo's ideologies on origin of death, and the ritualistic nature of death management are fundamental in understanding their philosophy about not only death but life in general. They raised concern of the dying out of the death management traditions among the Bakonzo due to the coming of Christian missionaries and intermarriages with neighboring tribes such as Bamba and Batooro and also recommended reforms in the Bakonzo inheritance rituals that ban a girl child inheritance upon father's death.

Isiko and Serugo (2021), studied the moral function of death in Busoga. Their approach sought to appreciate rather than problematize death. They argued that the dimensions of death present a moral consciousness in Africa and rather than militating life, death promotes and perpetuates moral values on one hand and discourages vices that destabilize society on the other.

2.4 Conclusion

In as much as many scholars have set up to write about death and the book of Job, the text under study has not been studied before in any contextual way in relation to the African contextual society as the present study has done.

CHAPTER 3: METHODODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Introduction

This study uses the postcolonial methodological and theoretical frameworks in the analysis of the Baganda culture. It falls under the postcolonial Biblical Interpretation and specifically uses the combination of African Bible Hermeneutics and Hermeneutics of Appropriation in what Jonathan Draper referred to as a “tripolar” approach (Draper 2001, 2002; West 2010:21)

3.2 Postcolonial Bible Interpretation

Postcolonial biblical criticism takes its roots in postcolonial theory which presumes that human beings are locked up in history and are strongly affected by its socio-political, economic and cultural cataclysm, Ferry (2021: 132-133).

Postcolonial biblical criticism is a branch of postcolonial theory (Kuloba 2011:27). It is a form of ideology criticism, which considers the socio-political context and addresses the silencing of the voice of the other through the colonial strategy (Punt 2003:63). It calls for the transformational activism for a politics dedicated to the removal of marginalization from the different degrees of wealth of the different states in the world system, to the class, ethnic and other social hierarchies within individual state, to the gendered hierarchies that operate at every level of social and cultural relations (Young 2003:114). In doing so, Postcolonial biblical interpretation does not seek to dwell on the crimes of the past and their continuation but seeks transformation for liberation (Dube 2000:15-16).

Postcolonial biblical criticism situates colonialism at the center of the Bible and biblical interpretation and attempts to dismantle colonizing structures, institution, ideologies, and philosophies and emancipate the colonized and oppressed (Kuloba 2011:32). It takes into consideration the situation of the colonizer as well as the colonized, in order to reconstruct a

negotiating space for equality (Rukundwa 2008:344). It is centered on the argument that the delivery of biblical interpretation developed in a foreign context cannot effectively respond to the socio-economic, political and religious challenges of another social setting (Rukundwa 2008:344).

Bible readings in Africa have suffered under the insistence of the Western academy that their readings are universally valid, whereas they were and are in fact the product of Western Enlightenment, deeply affected by literate print culture, capitalist assumptions and individualism (Draper 2015:17). This suffering is very historical, stemming from the Eurocentric colonial approach of Evangelizing Africa and the other non-West areas. The arrival of the Bible in the hands of the European brought imperial subjugation, which converted black Africans' spaces and minds into white European constructs; Christianity and imperialism hence entangled African minds to think that their history was dominated by ungodly cultures and practices (Dube 2000:19-20). In fact, the Bible will always be linked to and remembered for its role in facilitating European imperialism (Dube 2000:3). The role of the missionaries and their widespread dissemination of the Bible in the process of colonization of Africa problematized the interpretation of its text (Draper 2015:1). These missionaries were white men carrying a biblical message wrapped in European Enlightenment clothing; culturally blind and radically prejudiced, Farisani (2017:5). Their teachings instilled into an African an inferiority feeling that before colonialism, their history was dominated by savagery and that if the colonialist and missionary were to leave, they would fall back into barbarism (Frantz 1969:169). Africa had been weighed in the Western balance and found wanting: only by becoming less African could one become more Christian (LeMarquand 2000:74). As a result, this colonial approach to evangelizing Africa created what Kuloba (2011:27) refers to as a world of inequality with much difference falling across the broad division between the people of the West and those of the non-West. It was through this approach, am convinced, that all the

non-West culture and practices were portrayed as demonic; hence had to be condemned and abolished, for one to be considered civilized.

The Bible has indeed been used to legitimate imperial conquest, to suppress resistance to tyrannical regimes, to bolster male patriarchy and sometimes violent domination of women (Draper 2015:9). Therefore, the Bible was for an essential part of colonizing, (West 1996:7) and as a colonizing text emerging from colonial and imperialistic contexts; it has repeatedly authorized the subjugation of foreign nations and lands and therefore contains a call for liberation” (Dube 1997:15). Since biblical texts are products of colonial experiences, a postcolonial reading must examine the cultural and historical processes that call them into being (Pui- Lan 1996:213).

As a form of the postcolonial biblical criticism, the African Biblical Hermeneutics emerged as a methodological tool that makes African socio-cultural contexts the subject of interpretation (Adamo 2021). While reading the Christian scriptures from a premeditatedly Afrocentric perspectives, the African Biblical Hermeneutics reappraises ancient biblical tradition and African world-views, culture and life experience, with the purpose of correcting the effect of the cultural ideological conditioning to which Africa and Africans have been subjected in the business of biblical interpretation (Adamo 2021). Though the African Biblical Hermeneutics uses a variety of approaches in its operationalization, for the purpose of this study, the African Contextual Hermeneutics and Hermeneutics of Appropriation are to be discussed further herein.

3.3 African Contextual Biblical Hermeneutics

Commonly known as contextualization, inculturation, black theology, comparative study/comparative hermeneutics, Contextual Biblical Hermeneutics is a biblical interpretation approach aimed at addressing the real needs of African people (Masenya 2004:3). This

approach aims at recognizing the ordinary reader and making the African context the explicit subject of biblical interpretation. Ukpong (2000:18) emphasizes that; “The importance of the ordinary reader will gradually come to the fore because academic reading of the Bible in Africa cannot continue to ignore the concerns and perspectives of the ordinary reader. Because African biblical scholarship focuses on the community that receives the text, any continued ignoring of the ordinary readers will lead to sterile scholarship.” The text under study offers an entry point for an African to identify with the Bible and therefore any interpretation that may focus on the critical interpretation of text without putting into account the African’s experience, concerns and perspectives would be setting on an unproductive venture for an African. Job’s experience as noted in Job 14: 1-12 presents a true reality of an African’s lament in times of death.

African Contextual Biblical Hermeneutics, approaches the biblical text from a perspective where African comparative material is the major dialogue partner and traditional exegetical methodology is subordinated to this perspective (Holter 2002:88) in order to allow the other to really say something to us (Draper 2015:8). It is precisely the particular reader’s “ideo-theological orientation” (the goals and choices she makes) which brings the text and context into dialogue and enables the production of meaning and hence transformative praxis (Draper 2015:9)

The method is consistent with the argument that; “Perhaps with few exceptions, every Biblical text was written to address a specific need or concern in a particular community. The biblical text was contextual to its original readers/hearers. So African Biblical Hermeneutics cannot simply accept this message through exegesis without letting the message dialogue with the African context” (Farisani 2017:6). However, it is important to note that; “interpreting the biblical text is never, in African biblical hermeneutics, an end in itself. Biblical interpretation is always about changing the African context” (West 2010:22). The Bible and its interpretation

in Africa should aim at transforming the socio-economic, political and religious challenges and the decolonization of the African setting.

3.4 Hermeneutics of Appropriation

Hermeneutics of appropriation employs themes (hence, thematic analysis) as opposed to contextual biblical hermeneutics that focuses largely on contemporary interpretation of biblical narratives (Rugwiji, 2020). Like the Contextual Biblical Hermeneutics, Hermeneutics of Appropriation is described as a deliberate attempt to introduce African situational concepts and ideas into reading the biblical text but the difference is that rather than causing an interface between the context of text and reader's context, "Hermeneutics of Appropriation is an approach of biblical scholarship in which relevant themes are appropriated in a contemporary situation" (Rugwiji, 2020). It is a scientific interpretation of a theme that is applied in a differing context from which it originated. It conveys the 'other' possible meaning by utilizing relevant themes from the biblical text (Rugwiji, 2020). According to Rugwiji, (2020) the Bible is an ancient text and therefore cannot be appropriated in a contemporary context in a straightforward way; biblical themes can. He contends that ancient biblical themes can apply in every context but ancient biblical contexts don't. Critical Old Testament scholarship should interrogate themes such as: politics, power, democracy, economy, poverty and suffering among societies (Rugwiji, 2013). The use of appropriation therefore, "offers an important starting point in understanding the different emphases in African Biblical Hermeneutics" (West, 2010:22).

For the purpose of this study, I employed a Hermeneutics of Appropriation; using what Jonathan Draper referred to as a "tripolar" approach (Draper 2001, 2002; West 2010:21) to clearly seek the ideo-theological correspondence of the theme of death in Job 14: 1-12 and the Baganda traditional concept of death

The tripolar approach to the interpretation of the biblical text in Africa has three key elements or poles: the pole of the biblical text, the pole of the African context, and the pole of appropriation (Farisani 2017:8).

Following the contention that “the Bible is a collection of ancient texts, each produced in particular socio-historical contexts, and the task of biblical scholarship is ‘to hear’ the distinctive, ancient voice of the text within its own socio-historical context” (Farisani 2017:8), this study hereby took a closer examination of Job 14: 1-12, before bringing it into dialogue with the Baganda context. Aiming at giving a voice to the text, I approached it with literary rather than historical-critical and sociological tools. The preference for literary tools based on the researcher’s desire to locate the text within its linguistic, literary, or canonical contexts. Using the selected tools, I therefore expounded much on the text taking a closer interpretation of each verse, with consideration put on both analyzing scholarly comments made on the text from the various biblical commentaries and examining the message that each verse in the text conveyed to me as a reader.

The voice of the text was later complemented with library research focusing on an examination of Human life and death in Biblical world of the Ancient Near East; with focus put on Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. This offered a clear insight on the broader picture of human life and death in the Biblical World in light with the voice already gained from the text.

The first pole of Biblical text was then followed by the second pole of the African Context. With much focus put on the Baganda Cultural context, I investigated the concept of death and life after death among the Baganda. This was achieved through the employment of anthropological approach and tools of carrying out field research. The field research and data collection details are explained in later chapters.

As noted by Ukpong (2000:24), the goal of interpretation is the actualization of the theological meaning of the text in today's context so as to forge integration between faith and life, and engender commitment to personal and societal transformation. The ideo-theological engagement and conversation between the text (Job 14: 1-12) and the Baganda context formed the third pole of appropriation. The appropriation aimed at discovering the ideological correspondences between the text and the Baganda context.

3.5 Research Design

The study was ethnographic and a comparative analysis, describing and analyzing the Bible text in itself and its context, and its socio-cultural resonance with the Baganda setting. Ethnography is a field-based/ grounded inductive method that employs forms of observation and interviewing to investigate social practices and the meanings behind social interaction, (Iphofen 2011). It is a way of studying people's behavior, language, culture, values, meanings and social organization- in everyday, natural settings rather than informal research settings.

Aiming at the discovery and description of the Baganda death management rituals, the researcher viewed, observed and interacted with a sampled Baganda population in their real-life environment for over a period of twelve months. During this time, attention was given to a combination of various types of knowledge, beliefs, custom, art, moral, laws, habit, attitude of mind, the pattern of human activity, literature, language, and ritualistic expressions of the study population, in light with the occurrence of death in their individual societies.

The study was descriptive and analytical, using qualitative research approaches. The researcher described and analyzed the Biblical text of Job 14:1-12, in relation to the Baganda traditional understanding of human life and death.

While following the guide of Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, (in Brewer, 2010) contextual data was collected by using multiple data collection techniques with a major emphasis put on

participant observation as the principal one; the modes of data collection were flexible and unstructured in nature to avoid the presupposed categories and to focus on what people exactly ‘say’ and ‘do’; and the analysis of data involved attribution of the meanings to the human actions described and interpreted.

The study employed the following instruments to collect data;

1. The study made use of secondary data, where written library materials like books and articles relevant to the study were used. This was complimented by online materials and media reports and documentaries.
2. Participant observation was the basic approach used in the collection of primary data on the Baganda concept of death. Participant Observation is a very important tool in ethnographic related research: it enables the researcher to negotiate access and gain strategic positioning in the cultural event, it enriches the researcher with insider economies of scale like trust and confidence of the population under study, offering an entry into the participants’ real-life environment. The researcher actively participated in various death rituals, taking notes of the activities there done. Much attention was given to various rituals performed and the behavior and body language of fellow participants, this helped the researcher to view death through the eyes of the participants and informants hence gaining an insider’s view. The observations guided the interviews that would follow after and were also compared with the interview data that were already collected.
3. Unstructured interviews were majorly used in deepening the understanding of the observed phenomenon. Since unstructured interviews do not have a set pattern and questions are not arranged in advance, the interview sessions were mainly guided by the data collected during the participant observation sessions and the information got from the secondary data resources. Interview questions were set and ordered relying on

the flow of the conversations and the cues picked up from the participants. This approach not only helped in acquiring more details and nuance, but also ensured flexibility in the data collection process and eased the tension that often builds up in the interviewer-interviewee dynamics.

The interviewees were purposively sampled with much interest put on the elderly Baganda population sample of the age brackets 50 and above. These were considered to have had a reasonable experience with death and to have participated in multiple burial rituals than those below the age bracket. A list of key informants was drawn under the guidance of three elders. These primary informants provided a basis for the formation of a chain process through which informants identified and provided the researcher with some more respondents not identified before. The selected sample were re-interviewed several times in order to elicit deeper understanding and eliminate ambiguities. Though a few focus group discussions were conducted, much of the field collected data was got through arranged and informal conversations with individuals within the sample scale.

The preference for interviews to focus group discussions and questionnaires was based on the nature of the topic; since death is one of the issues that people discuss with much reservation, full disclosure cannot be achieved through focus group interviews. Still to note, the use of questionnaire and structured interview tools would hinder the researcher from collecting data related to emotions which is best gotten through observation than reading responses. The unstructured interviews were useful exploratory research tool used in a very informal and flexible manner, to yield captivating responses from the participants.

Participant observation and unstructured interviews were at most used simultaneously and interactively. While participating in the various death rituals, the researcher would

keep asking questions of what exactly was going on. The simultaneous usage of these approaches helped the researcher gain the in-depth information that could have been hardly got incase each method was independently used.

The sample size comprised of over forty informants of ages 50 and above years and all these informants had participated in numerous death rituals. I attended five full burial rituals, one infant's burial ritual, one second burial ritual, three last funeral rites ceremonies and one grave cleansing ritual.

3.6 Scope of the Study

3.6.1 Geographical scope.

The study was particularly limited to the Baganda community's culture and practices as the research topic suggests. Though the researcher never restricted self to one county of Buganda, much of the data collected was from the Buganda Counties of Kyaggwe, Mawokota, Busujju, Buvuma and Buddu. The study focused on the above geographical area because the researcher had close relatives and friends in all these counties and hence had little difficulty in identifying and accessing key informats. It was also easy to undertake participant observation during death rituals.

3.6.2 Time scope

The study does not have a time frame because death is both a historical and a present reality experienced by humanity. Death transcends time as the matter of the past, present and future. Rather than focusing on the time frame, much emphasis was put on the population sample to cover Baganda elders of ages fifty (50) and above. The rationale for this approach is put under research design and field data collection tools.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Any research that includes people requires an awareness of the ethical issues that may be derived from such interactions (Orb 2000). Ethical issues may range from voluntary and informed consent of the participant to ensuring of the privacy of the participants, among others. The consideration of these ethical issues and application of various ethical principles aims at prevention or reduction of the harm that would arise from participants' involvement in the research activities. Since the protection of human participants in this research study was imperative, the following ethical consideration were followed.

The researcher ensured that all participants offered an informed consent and voluntarily participated in the research activities. All the directly involved participants were adequately informed about the research by giving a thorough explanation of the research process, comprehended the information and had a power of freedom of choice to allow them to decide either to participate in the research activities or to decline. Audio and video recordings were also taken only after seeking consent from the participants. The participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study even after offering an informed consent.

The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants was preserved by not revealing their full names and identity in the data collection, analysis and reporting of the study findings. Privacy and confidentiality during the interview sessions was achieved by meeting the potential participants on a one-on-one interview without involving third parties. Focus group interview sessions were carried out only when participants thought it right and compatible with their personal reservations. In such cases, participants were encouraged to offer generalized data and keep their personal data for a one-on-one interview. Only the clan names and age of the participants were used during analysis and reporting of the study findings through the consent

from the holders. Pseudonyms were used in case the participant declined on revealing any part of his/her identity. Where pseudonyms are used, the researcher indicated that the name used is not the real name of the informant.

3.8 Gender Considerations

The researcher engaged both genders (Male and Female). The ratio of male to female respondents was 26:14. The high number of men to women was due to the cultural gender roles setting, where by men are given more roles to play in the death management rituals compared to the women. Still to note the purposive and snow ball sampling methods contributed to this difference.

3.9 Limitations and Delimitations

The field study involved a risk of the reoccurrence of ‘old wounds’ among the participants, sharing of secrets and expression of vulnerability. In circumstances where the interviews triggered painful experiences and the participants became distressed, the researcher would take an ethical decision to either stop, postpone or continue with the interview (using a risk benefit analysis of each situation as it unveiled). In such cases, the researcher would guide the participants on the importance of getting counselling and refer the participant to a potential site of help. Sometimes, the researcher made post interview follow-up phone calls to emotionally distressed participants to ensure that they have regained control after the interview.

The researcher also found a challenge in accessing the necessary Biblical commentaries and Literature to use in the discussion and analysis of the text. This was so because the Kyambogo University Library lacks such Biblical commentaries and Literature. This was solved through making use of Bishop Turker Library materials at Uganda Christian University, accessed with through the introduction letter acquired from the Head of Department, Religious Studies and Philosophy, Kyambogo University.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the research were ensured by the researcher by checking the research instruments. The researcher ensured a careful commitment to the research objective and questions. Also, by using purposive sampling method, the information collected was reliable as the selected respondents gave their true-life stories which gave authentic information for the study. The data gathered through observation was validate through post-observation discussions with individual with in the population sample.

3.11 Data Analysis:

The focus of the study was not presenting a catalogue of views but in summary, present the views gathered. The views collected from the field formed the major part of the context and were presented in a way that attaches each view to the respondent raising it. Respondents were here in presented with their Sir name, the first letter of their other name and their age. In cases where a view was raised by multiple respondents, the source was kept anonymous or the one that gave a fuller explanation was quoted.

The primary data from the field was analyzed for their meaningful content and they were interpreted rather than counted or measured using content analysis.

Textual data derived through interpretation of the Bible text was integrated with the field data research.

The analytical and conclusive remarks were made as per the study objectives and questions.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This study used the postcolonial methodological and theoretical frameworks in the analysis of the Baganda culture. It falls under the postcolonial Biblical Interpretation and specifically used the combination of African Bible Hermeneutics and Hermeneutics of Appropriation in what

Jonathan Draper referred to as a “tripolar” approach. The research designed was ethnographical and a comparative analysis, describing and analyzing the Bible texts in itself and its context, and its socio-cultural resonance with the Baganda setting.

CHAPTER 4: JOB 14: 1-12: TEXT IN ITS CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

The chapter starts with a detailed background and description and analysis of the text. This is followed by the discussion of the major issues arising in the text. To situate the text in its proper context, the chapter starts with a wider perspective, giving a brief background to the book of Job and later narrowing to verse by verse discussion of the text under study.

The text presents ambiguities in relation to the characters. Though it is assumed that the major protagonist is Job, it is not clear whether he is soliloquizing or in a dialogue with another character. In this case, the researcher is not off-guard to personify the other character as death.

According to Lockyer (1958:191) the name Job means “hated”, “one ever returning to God” or “he that weep”. There is no clear message given about Job in the text under examination. However, the opening lines of the book of Job inform us of his name, his character, and his hometown. Job 1:15 presents him as a perfect and upright family man who lived in the land of Uz. He had seven sons and three daughters and was very wealthy to the extent of being the greatest of all the men of the land. His wealth and prosperity consisted in ample herds of cattle - sheep, camels, oxen, asses, and in a proportionate number of servants. The loss of all his wealthy and children, and his body pain is seen to be influencing his concept of both human life and death as an aspect of human life.

The historical reality of the character Job is subject to scholarly debates among the biblical scholars. Was Job an actual person who lived in Uz at a particular point in time? Did he suffer as described in the book? Such questions and more are dealt with by these scholars who come up with varied conclusions on the matter. Some consider Job as a historical figure; others take him as fictitious character fabricated by the writer of the book of Job and yet other consider the Job of the prologue as the historical Job and the Job of the dialogue as a fictitious Job. However,

whether Job is a historical figure or a fictitious character, I have no space for such a debate in this work.

4.2 Background of the book of Job

The book of Job is part of the Old Testament collection of Wisdom Literature. Like the other Wisdom books Job deals with the profound theological problems of humanity. Specifically, Job deals with the question of human-life. He strives to understand the meaning and function of life of an individual, especially in the context of the problem of suffering (Brown 1968:511).

The book of Job is named after its protagonist, innocent man who suffered loss and endured pain through no fault of his own. Its author is anonymous, while its date and place of origin are matters of debate. Most scholars place the bulk of the book, if not its final form, somewhere between the seventh and the fourth centuries BCE, although also recognizing that the final form is the result of a complex history of transmission (Brown 1968:511).

The book can be divided into three main parts and the background only figures in the first and third parts. The first, Job 1-2, is called the prologue. It introduces Job and the "contest" that sets up the dialogues. The second main part – most of the book – consists of Job 3:1-42:6 and is composed of dialogues between Job, his various friends, and God. The final section, Job 42:7-17, is the epilogue which returns to the context of the prologue and describes the restoration of Job's family and possessions. This division is not autonomous as some other scholars do find it important to divide the second part of the book into three independent parts, i.e., the dialogue (3:1-31:40), the Elihu Speeches (32:1-37:23) and God's Speech and Job's Answer (38:1-42:6), Brown (1989:513-514). However, given the full meaning of the word dialogue, I find it convincing to have those separate parts put together as one.

In general, the book of Job tells of a wealthy and virtuous man in an unfamiliar land in the East. His virtue is so great that God points him out to Satan, the heavenly adversary, who, whether

by temperament or profession, is skeptical regarding the possibility of genuine human piety. This adversary argues that Job's piety is only the result of divine favor. If God stripped him of his good fortune, Job would curse God to his face. God lets the accuser destroy Job's wealth and kill his children. When even this produces no more than the pious refrain "*the Lord has given and the Lord takes away*" from his servant, God lets the Satan afflict Job with a terrible disease. Job's wife counsels him to "curse God and die," but he remains steadfast in his piety.

In what some see as a final trial, three friends of Job arrive, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They hardly recognize him. They sit with him in silence for seven days. Eventually Job speaks—and at this point the text moves from prose to poetry. In fact, Job curses, yet he curses not God but the day of his birth. This provokes or permits his friends to speak, so one after another they try to make sense of his affliction. They all subscribe to versions of a retribution principle (Walton 1954:495) that sees suffering as divine punishment for iniquity, and they advise Job to confess to sins, even ones he may not have known he committed, or ones committed by his children. Job, certain he has not sinned so grievously as to deserve such punishment, responds to each friend, with confusion that grows into anger. Afflicted by his friends' failure to recognize his innocence, Job increasingly addresses his words to God, whom he would like to call before a court.

With life turning against him, and faced with the reality "death", in Chapter 14, Job has turned from speaking to his friends, finding it to no purpose to reason with them, and here he goes on to speak to himself, in what the researcher here considers to be a soliloquy. He has reminded his friends of their frailty and mortality (13:12) here he reminds himself of his own, and pleads it with God for some mitigation of his miseries and a fair hearing.

4.3 Description and Analysis of the Text

1 “Mortals, born of woman,
are of few days and full of trouble.

2 They spring up like flowers and wither away;
like fleeting shadows, they do not endure.

3 Do you fix your eye on them?
Will you bring them before you for judgment?

4 Who can bring what is pure from the impure?
No one!

5 A person’s days are determined;
you have decreed the number of his months
and have set limits he cannot exceed.

6 So look away from him and let him alone,
till he has put in his time like a hired laborer.

7 “At least there is hope for a tree:
If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its new shoots will not fail.

8 Its roots may grow old in the ground
and its stump die in the soil,

9 yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth shoots like a plant.

10 But a man dies and is laid low;
he breathes his last and is no more.

11 As the water of a lake dries up
or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,

¹² so he lies down and does not rise;
till the heavens are no more, people will not awake
or be roused from their sleep.

This text is sometimes regarded as an independent poem. It is similar in tone to chapter seven, but there the emphasis is on human misery and here on the brevity of human life, Pope (1965:100). In the commentaries, this section of Job is categorized as Lament over human life. Williams (1994:77) gives this text a title “*a Matter of Death and Life.*” It is presented in a way that Job passes from his own to the common misery of mankind, Fausset (1995:34). The text is characterized by swift transitions of moods and feelings; wavering between despair and hope, (Laymon 1971:245).

The textual analysis reveals that this biblical chapter under study is layered with two issues: the reality of life and death and the poet’s soliloquies response to his critics. In his soliloquy, the poet downplays humanity in understanding the concept of life, and the futility of human views in judging his situation. This is what informs verses from 3 to 6, with an exemption of verses 5. In the opinion of this study, isolating these three verses (3,4, and 6) would help in focusing the reading specifically on the concept of life and death. Verse 4 is acknowledged as being out of place, obscure, probably with missing words (Dhorme 1984:195-196; Rowley 1962:344; Pope 1965:101, Zuckerman 1991:129) and therefore considered intrusive by many scholars. Some commentators bracket this verse or delete it as a gloss, Habel (1985:234). In the reconstruction of the text, verses 3, 4, and 6 are removed to render the poetic reconstruction as follows:

“Mortals, born of woman,
are of few days and full of trouble.

They spring up like flowers and wither away;

like fleeting shadows, they do not endure.

A person's days are determined;

you have decreed the number of his months

and have set limits he cannot exceed.

“At least there is hope for a tree:

If it is cut down, it will sprout again,

and its new shoots will not fail.

Its roots may grow old in the ground

and its stump die in the soil,

yet at the scent of water it will bud

and put forth shoots like a plant.

But a man dies and is laid low;

he breathes his last and is no more.

As the water of a lake dries up

or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,

so he lies down and does not rise;

till the heavens are no more, people will not awake

or be roused from their sleep.

It has to be borne in mind that textual reconstruction is a common practice in African Bible Hermeneutics and other theologies in Africa as vindicated in the works of Loba-Mkole (2009), Cook. J (2008), Longacre D. (2022) etc.

4.5 Scholarly commentaries on the text:

Verse 1. "Mortals born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Scholars like Estes (2007) observe that this verse alludes to the fact that humans are consigned to brief and troubled life irrespective of their moral or ethical status. He puts it up that trouble is not “merely a minor irritation, but for humans as it is a dominant feature of life.” The Hebrew Text presents man in singular as Adam. Yet in translation like NIV, the use of mortals—though presents the features in the text in plural form, is related to the Greek *broto.j* (*Brotos*) and presents an interpretative nuance, which is not captured by commentaries.

The word Adam in this text is used to refer to mankind that is born. Significantly, the employment of the word denotes conception, birth and death. It refers to offspring of the original man—Adam in the book of Genesis. The original man is not, interestingly conceived and born—according to the Bible, but dies. It is in this context that the text can be understood in terms of mortality/death, as a life experience which all humanity goes through. In fact, Henry (1961:536) openly puts it that this text is proper for funeral solemnities.

Born of woman, denotes normal mammalian process of conception and delivery of the living. This does not negate or demean other modes of deliveries like C-section or babies born by modern scientific interventions. Barnes (1972) agrees with other scholars that one of the objects of Job in the use of the word “Born of woman’ is to show the frailty and feebleness of man. He alludes to the delicacy and feebleness, of the female sex, and says that the offspring of one so frail must himself be frail; the child of one so feeble must himself be feeble. Possibly also there may be an allusion here to the prevailing opinion in the Oriental world of the inferiority of the female sex.

Habel (1985:239) however joins Peake (1908) in refuting the possibility of the idea of women being presented as a weaker sex in the above statement. To them, the designation “born of a woman” does not intend to denigrate women as “the weaker sex” but to emphasize the mortality and fragility of all born according to the normal human generative process. In the same sense

Barton et al (2001:341) state that this expression has nothing to do with any supposed taint involving the birth canal; instead, it merely means ‘everyone’. I agree with Barnes that this phrase arises a feeling of the struggle of child delivery that women experience. The great pain, fear, panic and shading of blood that come with it make the all experience a battle of life and death-that some survive and others don’t, which further serves to energize mortality concept.

Life is envisaged as a measure, which may be either long or short. But for man it is always too short (Genesis 47:9; Job 10:20) Dhorme (1984:194). Considering the frailty and feebleness of man, humans, by nature of being human have a short time to live as humans, and their lives are full of troubles. Man, though he is short lived so he is sad lived. “Are of few days” implies the totally temporal state of humans. If not so, the phrase would have been, “*are of few months*” or “*are of few years*”, but as a day comes and goes just in a while so is human life, every new day that comes creates a new possibility for human death. Surprisingly, human life is counted in years but not days!

One of man’s infirmities consists in his unremitting agitation, under sway of his distresses and difficulties: and ‘consumed with restlessness, Dhorme (1984:194). The way of man is a weary way-weakness, suffering and impurity is the portion of man just from birth. Despite all that man can do - all his care, and skill, and learning and wealth, life is a weary pilgrimage, and is burdened with many woes. *"The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers."* Though he is looked at to be blessed by his father Isaac, Jacob said so to Pharaoh, Genesis 47:9. This indicates the indiscriminative troubles that befall all humans irrespective of their status-being rich or poor, holy or evil is not an excuse for escaping this calamitous state of human life. To be human is to be full of trouble, just as the psalmist puts it up; “*Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow.*” Psalms 90:10.

Longman (2012:211) notes that the word for “trouble” (*rogez*) is formed from a verb that means to shake or tremble (*rgz*). Although the shaking may indicate excitement in some contexts, he continues, it is typically, as here, indicates anxiety, stress, and fear. Poole suggests that in the statement “full of trouble”, Job chiefly intends himself but expresses it generally, partly to relieve himself with thoughts of the common calamities of mankind and partly to move God with the consideration of the frailty and misery of human nature, and consequently of his condition. This suggestion sounds possible but not convincing since it is true and valid that trouble is an indiscriminate portion of human life that all humans experience in varying degrees. The preacher too dwells on the sorrows which fill the ‘days’ of man and concludes that all is vanity and a chasing after the wind (Ecclesiastes 2)

Verse 2 He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not
endure.

The verse employs botanical imageries of flowers. Needless to say, flowers are fragile and perishable. In agricultural terms, they are grown under a branch of horticulture known as floriculture-dealing with cultivation of plants for ornament. Flowers are vegetation; to which human life is likened as also seen in Psalms 103:15-22. Like human life, flowers are often brightly colored, attractive and only survive for a short time. A flower blossoms, its beauty sparkles to all that see it, it quickly fades, and all its beauty soon withers and is gone, no more of its beauty is left to it. So is the goodness of human life, it flourishes while in youth, prosperity and health, only to easily and quickly fade away when cut down by death like a beautiful flower cut down by a knife or cropped by the hand.

Longman (2012:211) comments that the fragile beauty of the flower is a fitting example of life. He observes that life may begin with hope and energy, but as time progresses, life fades into something dry and ugly. David too acknowledged this state of human life, he takes life to be

only dust and human days on earth like grass and a wildflower that blooms and dies as though it had never been here, Psalms 103: 14-16. This is the same thought in which Isaiah comments; *“People are like the grass. Their beauty fades as quickly as a flower in the field. The grass withers and the flower fade beneath the breath of the Lord. And so it is with people”* Isaiah 40: 6-7.

If it is not prematurely cut or cropped by hand, the flower naturally dies only after pollination, giving chance of the fruit and the seeds in it to grow. Therefore, though it is consigned to a brief fading life, a flower is endowed with the great potential of giving birth to new lives as it leaves a seed behind that outlives it! But Job’s situation is that of hopelessness, not even a seed is left since all his children are dead. The hopelessness of Job is similar to that of a flower which is prematurely cut or cropped by hand, it completely dies and its beauty is never remembered.

Fleeting like a shadow is human life. Gill (2012) comments that a shadow is an empty thing, without substance, dark and obscure, variable and uncertain, declining, fleeting, and passing away; and so fitly resembles the life of a man, which is but a vapor, a bubble, certainly, as nothing with God; is full of darkness, of ignorance, and of adversity, very fickle, changeable, and inconstant, and at most but of a short continuance. A shadow attends only when there is light and disappears in the face of darkness. This is true of human life; it attends when the body is in its light moments-healthy and strong and only disappears when the body is faced with its dark moment-diseases, disfigured with injuries and fading in old age. Human life always dreads living in unclean bodies that are stunted with pain and suffering-the brighter the light, the deeper the shadow. Longman (2012:212) states that shadows are even more ephemeral than flowers; they have no substance and quickly and suddenly disappear, just like life. He notes that the realization that human life is ephemeral can lead either to awe or to despair. In the dark

moments – of his severely faded body, Job sees his fleeting life shadow obscurely disappearing to nothing.

Verse 5: A person's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

This continues to re-echo the plight of human life. A person's days are determined, the number of his months is decreed, set are the concealed limits that man cannot exceed. Walton (1952:501-502) comments that the idea that man's days were numbered is known elsewhere in the Bible (Psalms 39:4) but rather suggests that the idea here is probably not that any particular lifespan was predetermined. He therefore suggests that the idea meant in that statement is that any life lifespan is a comparatively insignificant period of time and man significantly has no control over his or her life.

The verse also arouses a sense that man is born to die and lives for death. Like a fool, the wise man too must die (Ecclesiastes 2:16). From the time of conception man's days are determined and the time to spend on earth is set. Man moves through the valley of the shadow of death and only waits for his appointed time to die. What a menace human life is; that the immediate word to life is death! There is no elixir of life that humans can use to elude the limits that were set for them. Man cannot add a single minute to the already set time concealed for his death neither can he escape death. It is a reality that every man is born to face. Each individual faces death in a quite unique way since the limits set are not the same. Some are born with their limits that they cannot exceed and others meet these limits while in this pilgrimage of life.

The Roman poet and philosopher Seneca as quoted in Gill (1989) says the same thing; *"There is a boundary fixed for every man, that always remains where it is set, nor can any move it forward by any means whatsoever."* An individual can suggest that through the assistance of modern science human life can be prolonged by the use of the life support machines but this

sounds misleading. There is a clear line between life support and life prolongation. What science can do is to support the life that is still within its limits but not to prolong human life beyond the set limits-if it were so the many rich people wouldn't have died. Even to mention many die while on the life support machines. In this verse Job could be consenting that his death time has come and that he is limited in his attempt to save his life from the possible end.

Verses 7-10: At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more.

These verses take us back to the botanical imageries, this time not of a flower but a tree that is cut down. This imagery is brought in comparison with human life in the verse 10. For that observation, scholars like Estes (2013) take a collective look at verses 7-10, treating them as almost bearing the same idea. Therefore, I find it to no harm to concede this current trend of scholarship.

The hope for a tree is that though it is cut down, it may be expected to shoot up again, and another tree will be found in its place. Cutting down a tree may not imply the end of its life but a start of a renewed life. Trees have this as the hope of their life. Even though its roots may grow old in the soil and its stump dies in the ground, just at the 'scent' of water, it sprouts and puts on shoots like a new plant, its life is revived and its beauty is renewed.

The tree knows genuine "hope"; its roots survive even when the tree it's self-dies. the dead tree, like the dead mortal, lies in the "dust", the domain of death and the underworld; but even in that realm the tree has an amazing capacity to return to life at a mere scent of water. Human beings, by contrast, do not lie dormant, but lie forever lifeless. Habel (1985:241).

To mark it carefully the tree buds just at the scent of water not at the pouring of water. “At the scent of water” is an admirable image suggesting as it does the approach, the slightest contact; see also Judges 16:9 ‘as soon as it smells the fire’ Dhorme (1984:199). Though cut down, the tree still retains its life within the roots and only waits for the fragrance of water for it to sprout into a renewed tree, that the tender branch thereof will not cease. The moisture of the ground and the rain from the sky hold sufficient influence on the withering and decaying roots of the tree, to revive them and cause them to bud as if it were a newly planted tree. However, Gill (2012) asserts that this is not true of every tree, though it may be of many; for it is reported of the cypress tree, when cut down, it never sprouts out any more, unless in one place, in Aenaria; but since this is the case of most, it is sufficient to Job's purpose. The tree's statement of hope is that; *“Even if I am cut down and my stump is dead, this situation is temporal. I worry not because I don't have too, all the hope is in my roots. However dry and old they are becoming, I dare you, give me a scent of water and I will sprout back to my fallen glory and my branches will not fail.”*

Habel (1984:238) is convinced that the comparison of mortals with the trees reviving after death recalls a widespread motif in myths about the origin of death. He suggests that in these myths, mortals could die and be rejuvenated either by shedding their skins as snakes, by growing forth from the ground as plants, or by a similar natural process; but because of some deliberate or accidental intervention, the rejuvenation process was interrupted and death became permanent. This belief is reflected in the words of the immortal Utnapishtim to the hero Gilgamesh:

“It is only the nymph of the dragon fly who sheds her larva and see the sun in glory. From the days of old there is no permanence. The sleeping and the dead, how alike they are; they are like a painted death. What is there between the master and the servant when both have fulfilled their doom? When the Anunnaki-the judges, come together, and Mammetum the

mother of destinies, together they decree the fates of men. Life and death they allot but the day of death they do not disclose.” (Extracted Sandar, 1972:106-107)

For the case of such a myth, see Beier (1966:62). He concludes that Job is also convinced that God is the one who prevents mortals from experiencing the same rejuvenation possible for the trees.

Zuckerman (1991:129) suggests that the Joban author's depicting of a figure for agricultural renewal in this text may even be a move to make an indirect illusion to cyclic rebirth as celebrated, for example, in the Canaanite legends such as those found in the texts of ancient Ugarit. He comments that if a tree like a god can be resurrected from the dust, then the poet sharply notes the contrast to mortal men who can harbor no such hope. Zuckerman's suggestion may sound intelligible if the assumption is true that the poet had knowledge about the Ugaritic myths centering on Baal's fight with Mot the god of death. However, Zuckerman himself warns us that such an assumption has not gained enough scholarly consensus, (266).

The biggest question dealt with by many scholars is of whether Job believed in the future state or the resurrection of life. Scholars like Henry (1706) do strongly agree that all Job's expressions here show his belief in the great doctrine of the resurrection. But this is more an apologetic approach to this matter just as Estes (2013) notes that Job does not have the doctrine of resurrection to appeal to, for he is limited in his understanding to what God has revealed at this time in history and because of his limited knowledge, his only hope is for God to intervene for him before he dies. He therefore sharply warns us against reading the later New Testament revelation of resurrection, back into the text of Job and thus view Job as though he understood and believed what was only revealed by God much later. In doing so Estes does not wholesomely refute the intimation of immortality for human in the Old Testament texts but rather acknowledges some texts; Genesis 5:24; 2Kings 2:11; Psalms 49:15; the theme of Sheol

and after life in the book of Job; among other texts as the faint symbols of this intimation. However, none of these examples allude to the idea of body resurrection that Henry and other scholars purport to be. The best gleam is of the possibility of another existence that is beyond death and separate from that of the earthly life of substance; a life not of the body but the soul.

In the same line of Estes, Barnes (1972) is convinced that Job did not believe that man would spring up from the grave in any sense similar to the mode in which the sprout or germ of a tree does grow up when the tree is cut down nor did he believe in the doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, (A doctrine that was so common among the ancients). He bases his conviction on a widely agreed upon notion that Job lived at a time of the patriarchs, a time where the full revelation of what happens after death and the resurrection had not come. Holding a similar view Wiersbe (2003:30) also acknowledges that early believers like Job did not have revelation of future life as we now have it in Christ. He also accepts that some passages in the Old Testament hint at future resurrection (Psalms 16:9-11; 17:15; Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2), but Job did not have any of these books to read and ponder. See also Wood (1966:65). Following such convictions, it would sound possible for Job to believe that if man is cut off by death, he is forever removed from his place on earth-in the face of death man moves a journey of a no return, he can never raise back to his glory, indeed man wastes away. On this Laymon (1971:245) comments that a man's present life can never be restored beyond death; he is no like a tree, able to regenerate life from the wasted stump of a dead body.

Barton et al (2001:341) accepts that in Job's view death is final but not that everyone in the ancient Israel shared his opinion, and that gradually a belief in an afterlife emerged. See also Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2, and Psalms 73:23-28. Rowley (1962:397) argues that to base on the flat denial of persistence beyond death to accept of this as the author's conviction is but such a mere confession of the failure to grasp the poet's methods. He cites Job 14:13 as evidence for such hope. He appreciates that though it is a pale hope, it is better than hopelessness. However,

what Rowley calls “the pale hope” is considered by Barton to be Job’s fantasy about a kindly deity who would hide him in Sheol until his anger waned. Zuckerman (1991:130) too considers this hope to an imaginary leap but not a reality. He states that the wish is illogical and inconsistent with the social cultural context of the time.

Dhorme (1984:199) prefers using the statement ‘and where is he?’ to using the statement ‘and is no more’. To him, the preferred sounds much more alive than the other alternative; the end ‘where is he?’ gives a striking touch that provokes deeper thinking in the mind of the reader. He also argues that it is the phrase supported by both the Targum and the Vulgate. The description of man’s death in verses 10 is quite brief but with a detailed emotion attached to it; a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. To illustrate this, Henry (1706) made this comment on this verse;

“...Man is a dying creature. He is here described by what occurs, (1.) Before death: he wastes away; he is continually wasting, dying daily, spending upon the quick stock of life. Sickness and old age are wasting things to the flesh, the strength, the beauty. (2.) In death: he gives up the ghost; the soul leaves the body, and returns to God who gave it, the Father of spirits. (3.) After death, where is he? — Not where he was; his place knows him no more: his body and all that is visible of him, is rotting away in the grave. But where is the thinking, intelligent principle, the self-conscious being, the proper man? Is this nowhere? Yes, it is somewhere; and it is a very awful consideration to think of where they are -that have given up the ghost, and where we shall be when we give it up. It is gone into the world of spirits; gone into eternity, gone to return no more to this world...”

In the comment above, Henry looks at death as a removal forever from the earth; not an event that occurs once, but a process that begins with wasting away, followed by breathing the last or giving up the ghost and lastly being laid down to earth. The phrase, laid low brings up the

aspect of burial. Man is put down in the ground, left alone in the dark to rot away in the grave. But to him, there is something not accounted for in the verse, the breath. Since death is occasioned by man breathing his last, written in the King James Version as giving up the ghost, where does this breath go to? Is it nowhere? To him there should be another world, a world of spirits, into which this spirit goes to no return.

The Hebrew word for giving up the ghost is נָתַן *gava`* which means to expire, die, perish, give up the ghost, yield up the ghost, be dead, be ready to die. These phrases are interchangeably used by different bible versions to give the same idea of death. This statement carries a sense of man being a dual composite being that Exelle (1905) highly advocates for. He openly contends that *“Man gives up the ghost, not by an option, but by an obligation; not by a deed at will, but by the stern and just necessity of law. Man gives up the ghost, and there is a Divine will in that surrender, a surrender which is resistless when that will makes it so. Death is just the absence of life--and what a mysterious thing is life! I do not stop to show that man has a ghost, an immaterial and immortal spirit.”*

It is important to also note that the manner of surrender is uncertain. Though its occurrence is mysterious, its actual occurrence is certain. There is but one mode of entering life, but there are a thousand methods of leaving it. These methods of living life include but not limited to aging, predation, malnutrition, disease, suicide, homicide, starvation, dehydration, and accidents or major trauma resulting in terminal injury. Whatever the method is, all is death.

Aside from the above scholarly observations, this section of the poem presents information which, in my opinion, is accidentally omitted by scholarship: *at the scent of water* is interesting to the current study in two ways: it evokes the generic water of water in the 2nd creation account of Genesis as life giving force, from which creation was possible. Without water springing out from the ground, the world would have remained arid (Genesis 2). The clay from which man

and woman are made wouldn't have been probably possible. Water is a life force as reckoned with in various bible texts—both Old and New Testaments (Psalms 1:3; 23; 46:4, Isaiah 10:22; 12:3; 44:3; Jeremiah 17:7-8, Ezekiel 36:25; 47:1-13, Amos 5:24, John 3:5, Hebrews 10:22, Revelation 21:6, John 3:5, Hebrews 10:22, Revelation 21:6 etc.) to both humans and other creatures like trees and animals. However, whereas trees and other plants can be enlivened by water even after being cut, water in its natural form cannot bring humanity back to life. It is probably in the same thought that Jesus in the New Testament context dreams of a special water of life (see John 4:14, and 7:38). This suggests that the mechanism that controls human life is different from that of trees. Secondly, the poet's allusion to hope for the tree resonates with Isaiah 11:1 (A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit...). The poem can be understood from the situational circumstances of Job, where he has lost all the children. Whereas Jesse died, there is hope that a shoot would stem from his stump. Job's absence of children implied that he had no hope to live again. In the ancient world, societies accepted death as the live reality that is inescapable. One of the ways of fighting the eliminating effects of death was having children. A childless person was disparaged and hopeless. Parents lived in the lives of their children and their descendants. In Genesis 15, Abraham decried his childless state to God to the effect that he is promised many descendants that will make his name great. In effect, Job's soliloquy is not only about the physical death of the body, but more so the death of his name, fame and lineage. In Job's situational circumstances, the tree is not only cut and its stump left in the ground but its stump is also fully uprooted or removed from the ground and left with no hope of budding again, (Job 19:10).

Verses 11-12: As the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep.

In these verses the text compares human death to the geographical imageries of a lake and a river drying up. Verse 11 resembles Isaiah 19:5 and as result some modern scholars choose to cut it out on, Dhorme (1984:199). But in Isaiah's context, it is a question of a punishment inflicted on the Egyptians, of a drying up by evaporation of the Nile which is termed both "the sea" and "the river". Without having to force the sense of the verse, we shall see that it fits in well enough with the context. Its resemblance to Isaiah 19:5 is not a proof of inauthenticity.

Basically, what makes up the lakes and rivers is the availability of water. The drying up of water makes the bodies mere depressions, a collection of dust. This text suggests the possibility of the drying up of lakes and rivers and not the loss of some water, leading to lower water levels. Job's imagery of the drying up of a water body is a standing geographical fact of not only seasonal water bodies that dry up during the dry seasons and get revived during the rainy seasons but also a reality of a water body that dries up for good. Let us consider the examples of the Owens Lake that dried up only to leave behind the Owen valley in the US and the Peninsular rivers of India, (Maxmen, 2018).

Longman (2012:213) quotes as having correctly pointed to the fact that Job here uses "river" (*nahar*) rather than "wadi" (*nahal*), because the latter often dries up and then with rain or melting snow comes to life again. The use of the Hebrew *nahar*, "river," rather than *nahal*, "wadi, seasonal stream," suggests that Job has a more exceptional circumstance in mind than the occasional drying up of local streambeds that would occur during the rainy season; it is possible here that the author has in mind the gradual decline of the Dead Sea, leaving behind the evidence of its decrease in the deposit of salt and its own increased salinity that are some of its characteristics today, Wilson (2007:154).

Like dried up waters that cannot be revived so it is with man; when once the fountain of his life is dried up, he dies, and never revives again as to the present life. In this sense, Job expresses a resignation to death and hopelessness.

We never know the worth of water till the river is dry. But under what circumstances would the river dry up? Water bodies have tributaries. They have sources that continue to serve to their course and also bodies to which they pour their water load. Common causes of river dryness are aridity (absence of rain) and the diversion of waters from supplying to the course of the river or sea. Reading Job's poem with the imagery of the dry river in respect to his life situation raises several imaginations: does the river simulate the course and flow of life which has suddenly dried up? Like the valley of dry bones, does this imagery heighten the degree of hopelessness in Job's desperate quest to gain an insight about his life predicament? Rivers in the ancient world like also Africa denoted streams of life. In the ancient Near East, rivers played significant existential and cultic functions. To many communities, rivers were a source of life and epi centers of ancient civilizations (Perdue 1991, Sasson 1995, Aldrete 2011).

If water dries up from a lake or river, much is affected, the aquatic animals too die, the vegetation that has been around it too wither with time, and human activities around such a water body get to a standstill. So is human death, man dies not alone but with the parts of others. This partly explains the mourning and wailing that people make on the demise of an individual known to them. Much is affected by one's death; many unfinished businesses get to standstill, human plans and secrets die with them and their responsibilities stay unattended to.

So, man lies down, and rises not - He lies down in his bed the grave and does not rise again. The statement brings us the image of the inert corpse, lifeless until the end of the world, Dhorme (1984:201). Death is here looked at as a permanent sleep that humans go into never to wake up or to be aroused from it. Unlike the living that daily go into bed and sleep with hope

of rising up the next morning, man's sleep in the grave, as on a bed, is a permanent rest from all his labors, toil and troubles. Death is the final sleep; man lies asleep, and continues till eternity. What a disgusting maggoty image of the corpse this is! Henry (1906) has this to say:

“Every night we lie down to sleep, and in the morning we awake and rise again; but at death we must lie down in the grave, not to awake or rise again to such a world, such a state, as we are now in, never to awake or arise until the heavens, the faithful measures of time, shall be no more, and consequently time itself shall come to an end and be swallowed up in eternity; so that the life of man may fitly be compared to the waters of a land-flood, which spread far and make a great show, but they are shallow, and when they are cut off from the sea or river, the swelling and overflowing of which was the cause of them, they soon decay and dry up, and their place knows them no more. The waters of life are soon exhaled and disappear. The body, like some of those waters, sinks and soaks into the earth, and is buried there...”

Henry's statement above highlights an important idea presented by Job on human life in the face of death. Job knows of no hope for man once death has separated soul and flesh. After death, men are deprived of all that belong to the state of the living; and what is said about the dead is to be understood of this condition of deprivation of enjoyment and knowledge of the living, Orchard (1953:429).

Longman (2012:213) stands in agreement with Orchard as he notes that Job does not have sense of the afterlife, either in this text or others, though some have tried to read such a hope into some texts (e.g., Job 19: 25-27). To Longman, when Job says that humans do not awake “till the heavens are no more,” he is not contemplating a future time when there will be no heavens, but it is an idiom similar to what we might mean when we say “till hell freezes over.” Habel (1985:235) compares the phrase; “till the heavens are no more” to “till the moon is no more” that is in Psalms 72:7.

4.6 Conclusion

It is clear that the text articulates the predicament of human life in the face of imminent trouble and death. Job is presented as the major character in the text. He laments that humans are consigned to a brief and troubled life, and that a limit is set that man cannot pass. He compares Human life to the temporal nature of a flower or a fleeting shadow. In his comparison of man with the cut tree, he looks at humans (to be put better, himself) to be very hopeless in the face of death. In the text, Job consciously considers death to be the inevitable final state of humans, in fact, Job knows of no hope for man once death has separated soul and flesh. As man dies, he wastes away and becomes no more. If the text is put in context with Job's situational circumstances, it is clear that he is rather using his own predicaments to offer a universal human lament over death. From the text we draw one major issue to be discussed further, the concept of human life in relation to death. This theme is to be examined further; investigating on how it is presented in both the Biblical world and the Ancient Near East, with the main focus put on the Old Testament.

CHAPTER 5: THE BIBLICAL AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CONCEPT OF HUMAN LIFE AND DEATH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the various Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern view on human life and death. The chapter examines the Biblical perception of the origin of death and examines various Biblical texts (mostly of the Old Testament), in understanding the concept of death, under various themes. This section further examines the concept of death in the Ancient Near East, Egypt and Mesopotamia in particular. It examines how these societies conceived death and the life after death. Many of the materials used are from the various epics. The key findings from this chapter are there after expressed in the conclusion of the same chapter.

5.2 Biblical Perspectives on Human Life and Death

Like in all traditions, death in the Bible and ancient Near East is the opposite of life. Death occurs when life leaves the body. Genesis choreographs creation as involving the molding of the body and breathing the breath of life in it. When humanity loses the breath, he/she is pronounced dead! In a number of biblical verses, death is seen as the separation of the breath from the body. Psalms 146: 4 suggests that when man breathes his last, he returns to the earth and his plans perish. This implies that death puts an end to man's plans.

According to Genesis 1 and 2, God is presented as the source of human life, the designer and molder of the human being. Hence this suggests that human life did not come to exist by chance but by the divine intention (see Genesis 1:27). Therefore, the origin of human life is God.

Genesis 2:7, "*Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature*", gives us an insight on the nature of the human life. The verb "formed" describes a potter fashioning clay into a particular shape. The close relationship between the man and the ground is reflected in the Hebrew words

'*adam*' for man and '*adamah*' for the ground. To illustrate that, we can draw the following formula from the above verse; "the man of dust + the breath of life = man becoming a living creature." This formula suggests that the man of dust only became a living creature when the breath of life was breathed into his nostril, hence a suggestion of the duo-composite nature of the human being - a being composed of the body and soul or the breath of life. This conviction is here by based on the "Genesis presupposition"¹ that for the other creatures, dust was not used in their creation and above all, they became creatures without a breath of life that the first human being required for him to qualify to be less like the other creatures.

In light with the above, scholars like Galeniaks (2005:603) and Theodoras (1970) suggest that Gen 2:7; 3:18 represent the scriptural paradigm of anthropology: the dust and the breath of life as the two primary elements of humanity. Gelenieks summarizes, "At death the creation order is reversed as the body becomes again the dust of the earth, but the spirit of life, or the divine energy that animates all living beings, returns to God." This suggests a biblical scholarly acceptance of the human life being a duo-composite life. But who are the agents of that separation? Man himself, man's actions through acts of disobedience, murder and suicide and some forces of death like the angel of death in Exodus, and God himself through his anger (Exodus 12:23-29, 2Samuel 24: 15-16, 2Kings 19:35, Luke 16:22, etc.).

Still to note, highlighted in the Genesis creation accounts is the original state of man. Man is created at the apex of all creatures and is meant to enjoy a great and comfortable life in the Garden of Eden, (Genesis 1: 27-30). On the privileges given to man was that of being immortal only on the condition that man would obey and never eat nor even touch on the forbidden fruit. Due to man's failure to keep the command, man lost his immortality, man's state of life

¹ Considering the widely agreed upon scholarly stand of the first eleven chapters of Genesis being Mythological, I do find it better to use the word Genesis presupposition in this work.

changed, making man lose the ambiance he was enjoying in the garden of Eden and started striving to make ends meet (See Genesis 3).

However, though man lost most of the privileges got in the first place, man retained the privilege of multiplying human life, but with a lot of pain associated to it. This made child bearing a battle of life and death that Rachael never survived during the birth of Benjamin, Genesis 35: 16-18. This battle involves the shading of blood - blood signifies life in the Bible, Leviticus 17: 11. But even with this privilege, human life solely remains depending on God from the time of conception to the time after death (Psalms 139: 13-18, Jeremiah 1: 5).

Genesis 3 introduced the idea of happiness and suffering in human life. There in is the idea of God's intention of happiness for the created human beings through obedience to his commands, but the human's choice to disobey God brought in the suffering in the human life. According to the chapter, suffering and death in human life is as a result of human's rebellious actions. This is the Deuteronomistic perspective on happiness and suffering in human life.

According to the Deuteronomistic view of human life, the Israelites were under a covenant with their God Yahweh and so they had to live a life that is in line with the terms of the covenant. The most conviction of the Deuteronomist is that the Israelites happiness and suffering were a function of their obedience and disobedience to their God Yahweh. This view influenced not only the book of Job but also the writing of the Old Testament books that fall under the Deuteronomistic literature. This idea of the rewards and punishments explains why many life experiences that the biblical characters encountered were measured and interpreted according to the way they lived their lives in line with the Covenant with Yahweh. Some of the examples to sight include the records of the reign of the various Kings of Israel. The success and failure of each king based much on his relationship with God and this can be seen in 1Samuel 15, 1Kings 21:19 and 22: 38.

The theme of suffering in human life is so salient in the Bible. Life is presented to be challenging and characterized with hardships ranging from diseases, sicknesses and other infirmities such as boils and ulcers, deaf, dumb and blindness, Lameness, Leprosy and Palsy among others. These were sometimes linked to the divine retribution, 1Chronicles 21: 1-17, and obedience to God was seen as a remedy to these kinds of challenges, Exodus 15:26, Psalm 103: 2-4. Almost all the problems that man faced, including wars, had a divine cause. Death is the climax of all the human suffering on earth and is perceived with mixed emotions in the Bible. Some of these emotions are of acceptance and others are of rejection. The text under study indicates that death is a compulsory experience for every man that is born of a woman. Man's days are numbered and a limit that he cannot pass is appointed. How does the Bible perceive death?

5.2.1 Death as a Possibility

The focus of Israelites faith is in the concern of the life of the living, while after life was of little concern (Johnstone 2002:70). However, though there is no committed chapter centering fully on death in the Bible, death is a cross cutting topic that has been given much attention throughout the Bible. In its literature, the Bible speaks of death as a true and active reality that is engrained in the lives of its characters. Various biblical texts and other archeological and anthropological finding communicate much on the reality death. For the purposes of time, this section focuses on a few of those biblical verses, putting much emphasis on the Old Testament, since it is the testament from which the lead text is got.

The creation accounts rightly state that man was created in the state of “*conditional immortality*” (Bacchiocchi 2013) but as a result of man's disobedience (Lawrence 2020) death came into the world, Genesis 3: 19. However, this statement does not seemingly refute the possibility of death in the original state of the world. Though God did not create death in its actuality (Pusey, 1909), He created the possibility of it occurring in the world through giving

the created human beings a chance of choosing to eat or not to eat the forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:17). I am therefore not off guard to comment that though God never intended death in the creation of the world, He is responsible for the creation of the possibility of death that man brought into actuality.

5.2.2 The Actuality of Death in the Bible

The first account of actual human death in the Bible appears in Genesis 4. This was death as a result of murder. This was seen as a great disgrace to the human race because in the Bible, human life is considered sacred and anybody who takes another person's life, without a just cause, is cursed, Deuteronomy 27: 25. Cain was cursed and made a wanderer as a result of killing his brother Abel (Genesis 4: 1-15). "*You shall not murder*" is one of the commands that were given to the Israelites during the exodus event, Exodus 20: 13, Deuteronomy 5:17. To emphasize the sacredness of human life, the retribution for murder was death, Genesis 9: 5-6, Exodus 21:12, Leviticus 24:17. Numbers 35:31 even denies the acceptance of a ransom for a murderer but rather to pay him/her by death. Even a murderer who may have fled from punishment should be hunted for by the elders of the community and be handed over to the "avengers of blood", (The family member who avenged a death was called, "the avenger of blood.") to be killed, Deuteronomy 19: 11-13. Therefore, though death is a limit appointed for every living being, deliberate taking of someone's life by another or by self is impermissible.

5.3 Other Perceptions of Death in the Bible

While other Semitic Peoples questioned the phenomenon of death as the end of life, the ancient Israelites may not be excluded in the search for their own meaning of death and resurrection. The Israelites for example perceived Yahweh as having power over death and life (Exodus 4:24-26, 1 Samuel 2:6) (Herrmann 1977:162).

Human life is viewed as moving under the control of death, man is under the surveillance of death, any time is a time for death. No escape from death but the comfort is that of living a life with God as the psalmist clearly states, *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me”*, (Psalm 23: 4). The “living” have it in mind that at a no particular time they shall die, Ecclesiastes 9:5. This is a helpless state that every human being goes through and only learns to deal with, Psalm 39:4; 73:36; 89:48.

The greatest problem and questions that many characters in the Bible kept asking is the question of what happens to man in the face of death, Job asked this same big question; *“If a man dies, shall he live again?”* Job 14:14a. To battle with the same question, how does the Bible understand death? The Old Testament has various verses that give us a faint hint on hope of life even after death. These verses present the perceptions that the ancient Israelites held on death. These verses are discussed below under the various ancient Israelites perceptions on death in the Bible.

In many circumstances death was perceived as a form of divine punishment for living an evil life (Genesis 20:3; 7; 38:7; 10:24, Exodus 22:24, Numbers 11:1, Deuteronomy 32:22, Ezekiel 18) and therefore obedience to Yahweh was seen as a remedy for early death. According to Craig (2008), sin in the ancient world does not necessarily denote being immoral. It also refers to not being devout to God by offering sacrifices, obeying purity laws, etc. In other circumstance death was perceived as a normal route to human destiny “the way of all the earth” (1 Kings 2:1-3). Furthermore, the death of someone at an old age was seemingly accepted in ancient Israel as “normal.” The death of an elderly person was regarded as the death of a person who had lived to ripe age and therefore it was a natural death. It was less painful (compared to the death of a younger person) to the bereaved when an elderly person died because ancient Israelites believed that such an elderly person (who had died) had only gone to rest at a good

age from the problems of life on earth hence a normal death or even relief (Agai, 2015:169-176). It could be upon such a background that on his death bed, David instructed his son Solomon not to let his enemy Joab son of Zeruiah grow old and go to his grave in peace (1 Kings 2: 5-6), Jacob deeply mourned for Joseph after the deceit from his sons about Joseph's death (Genesis 37: 34-35). This implies that death at an old age was a peaceful death. For the Israelites, it was a kind of blessing to live longer. Methuselah was said to be the oldest man that has ever lived, he lived for 969 years thus a blessing (Kaplan 1993:17-22).

Death is seen as rest or sleep among some of the biblical texts. “...*then rested with his ancestors...*” is a common phrase used in the narratives about the death of some kings (1Kings 14:20; 16:6; 22:50, 2Kings 14:16; 15:7; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18). This phrase looks at death as a comfortable state that humans go through-it indicates more of death acceptance than death anxiety, (Harding2005: 257). Daniel looks at multitudes of the dead to be sleeping in the dust of the earth (Daniel 12:2) and in 2 Samuel 28, Samuel demands for an explanation from Saul asking him. The dead are presented as resting not in their solitude but with their ancestors. This presentation portrays a belief in the existence of a family life in the afterlife among the ancient Israelites.

5.4 Family Reunion in the After life

The idea that the departed join their ancestors or relatives in the world of the dead is attested among ancient Israelites-it is most known by scholars as the belief in family reunion in afterlife. The most important piece of evidence for the belief in family reunion in the afterlife in ancient Israel, Artemov (2014:28) asserts, is the famous biblical idiom usually translated with “to be gathered to one's people”. It is found in the accounts of the deaths of patriarchs in the book of Genesis as well as in the speeches of God announcing the deaths of Moses and Aaron in Numbers (Genesis 25:8; 35:29; 49:29,33. Numbers 20:24; 27:13; 31:2). This same idiom is used in the death accounts of a good number of Israelites Kings (1Kings 14:20; 16:6; 22:50,

2Kings 14:16; 15:7; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18). In all the contexts under which this idiom is used, one can hardly think of anything else than reunion with the ancestors in the netherworld (Mckenzie 1965:106). Putting the idiom aside, King David's statement in 2Samuel 12:23 brings this belief in direct light. The statement; *"I will go to him, but he will not return to me"* raises a possibility of the belief in family reunion in the afterlife. If it was not for that belief then David wouldn't have reacted as so at the death of his son. Jacob too stated that he was to continue mourning until he would meet his son Joseph in the grave, (Genesis 37:34-35). In this statement, Jacob never implied that he was to be buried in the same tomb with Joseph-since Joseph was allegedly eaten by wild animals, but he implied mourning until he would meet his son Joseph in the afterlife.

However, some scholars suggest that the idiom "to be gathered to one's people" is better explained by the common human desire to maintain some contact with the community even after death, through burial in one's native land at least, and if possible, with one's ancestors. They contend that, "Bury me with my fathers," Jacob's request (Genesis 49:29), was the wish of every ancient Israelite. Thus, the aged Barzillai did not wish to go with David, "that I may die in mine own city, [and be buried] by the grave of my father and of my mother" (II Samuel 19:38); and Jerusalem was beloved to Nehemiah, in exile, as "the city of my fathers' sepulchers" (Nehemiah 2:5). In support of this argument, the tomb most typical of the Israelite period is a natural cave or a chamber cut into soft rock, near the city. Bodies would be laid on rock shelves provided on three sides of the chamber, or on the floor, and as generations of the same family used the tomb, skeletons and grave goods might be heaped up along the sides or put into a side chamber to make room for new burials. This practice of family burial, though not universal if only because not all could afford it (see references to the graves of the common people in II Kings 23:6; Jer. 26:23), they suggest, was common enough to give rise to the Hebrew expressions "to sleep with one's fathers" (e.g., I Kings 11:23) and "to be gathered to one's kin"

(Gen. 25:8; et al.) as synonyms for "to die." But this suggestion may not be convincing enough and therefore I agree with Artemov (2014:12) that both the usage and the wording of the biblical idiom point to the fact that it originated in the idea of reunion with one's ancestors or kinsmen in the afterlife. "It means more than to die. I also agree with him that this formula was reserved for the patriarchs venerated by the Israelites as their progenitors and for cultural heroes such as Moses and that it is associated with peaceful dying at an old age in all of the passages.

The Israelites not only believed in family reunion but also had a strong belief and attachment to their ancestors and the ancestral land. This attachment, Agai (2015:174) suggests, does not imply that the Israelites might have worshipped ancestors as it is in most African societies but they revered their ancestors which also suggest that they might have thought that their ancestors lived to favor them or mediate for them during their prayers. This can be vividly seen through the Israelites reference to their God as the God of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in the great respect put on the oath made to the dead before their death (Genesis 49 and 50). Still to note the Israelites are strongly forbidden from any form of communication with their ancestors - and all the dead (Leviticus 19:26-31; Deuteronomy 18:10-11; Job 7:7-10; Ecclesiastes 9:4-10; Isaiah 8:18-20). Such restrictions could include restriction against consulting the dead, giving offerings to the dead and engaging in self-lacerating ritual. The existence of such clauses in the Deuteronomic legal materials, Davies (1999:65-66) suggests, is evidence enough for us to safely believe that the cult of the dead existed and flourished in ancient Israel to the extent that they were considered a threat to what becomes normative Yahwism. More so by implication, these legal restrictions confirm the belief that the dead are not dead since they could be communicated to and consulted from by the living 1 Samuel 28:3-19.

5.5 Sheol, the Land of the Dead

In response to the question of; what happens to the dead after death? Or, what is the true reality after death? The Israelites developed the concept of Sheol. Since there is no scholarly consensus on the etymology of Sheol, the term is widely regarded as unique to the Hebrew Bible, possibly originating from Israel, (See, Lewis, 1989). The etymology of the word is contested and its meaning is not completely understood. According to Segal, (2004:135), the root of the word is the verb שאל, which means “to ask or inquire,” perhaps indicating the obscurity surrounding the realm of the dead that one would ask about. There are strong connections between the word and I Samuel 28 where Saul inquires of the dead Samuel through the medium, an event for which Saul was always remembered and likely explains the choice of his name by the author. Both Saul and Sheol are spelled שאול. (Segal, 2004).

The Hebrew Bible is clear that there is no god in Sheol and that those in Sheol cannot praise God, Isaiah 38, Psalms 6:5 and Psalms 30:9-10. Death is seen to be compulsory and so is Sheol, Psalms 89:48. The underworld or Sheol is perceived in a variety of ways in the canonized Hebrew Bible. It is considered to be the land of no return where those that go to cannot return to the land of the living (Job 7:9-10) and various images are analogously made by the different authors of the Hebrew texts. Images include cords, snares, maggots, worms, bars, and dust, among others (2Samuel 22:5-6, Isaiah 5:14, Isaiah 38, Psalms 6:5, Isaiah 14:1-20, and Job 7:9-10). It is also considered a land of no return, Job 7:9-10). The use of the maggots and worms’ images reflects the condition of the corpse while it decomposes well as those of the cords, snares, bars, and dust may either denote the suffering met and the undesirable environment the Sheol can be to a person that has suffered a tragic or untimely death. Sheol is only appointed for the dead and not the living except for the case of Korah, Dathan and Abiram who were swallowed alive by the mouth of the Sheol due to their rebellious sins, Numbers 16. Lloyds (1979:40), notes that Sheol as often in the Old Testament is likewise a metaphor for

misfortunes of various sorts. Such misfortune ranged from total loss of all personal possessions to sickness, Psalms 30:3. In all the times Sheol is described as a place of suffering and a horrendous environment, its reference better serves to explain the condition of the wicked or enemies of the Israelites and those that die tragic or untimely deaths, Genesis 37:29-35, 1Kings 2:6, Psalms 9:17, Psalms 31:17, and Psalms 55:15-22. In fact, Sheol is conspicuously absent from the death reports of righteous men in the Bible (Johnston 2002:71-72, 82)

As a response to death, the Israelites lamented when their loved ones died (Genesis 37:35; Genesis 50:1-12; Numbers 20:29; 2Samuel 11:12; Ecclesiastes 12:5.) and proper burial was also regarded as an important ritual for disposing off the dead, Artemov (2014:28). Proper burial, on the other hand, was viewed as imperative for the dignity of the person in ancient Israel (Deuteronomy 20:26). The patriarchs certainly valued the practice for their family members (Genesis 23; 25:8-10; 35:29; 50:1-14, 24-26; Joshua 24:32). The account where the men of Jabesh-Gilead retrieve the bodies of Saul and his sons from Beth Shan and bury the bones in their ancestral tribe also serves as an example (I Samuel 31:11-13). There is no mention in the Hebrew Bible of how improper burial would adversely affect one's fate in Sheol (Gilmartin, 2016:11). However, one of the curses for breach of the covenant is: "Your carcasses will be food for all the birds and the wild animals, and there will be no one to frighten them away" (Deuteronomy. 28:26), (cf. 2Kings 9:30-37; Jeremiah 22:19).

According to Olyan (2009:491-501) one's fate was probably believed to be improved through reburial if the person was left unburied, although he admits that biblical texts are not clear on the issue and his assertion is premised on Israel sharing reburial beliefs expressed in Akkadian texts. It seems logical that unburied corpses or those whose remains were exhumed from their tombs such as the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14 still were envisioned as going to Sheol in ancient Israel, considering that Isaiah speaks of the king being mocked in Sheol upon his entrance there (Isaiah 14:9-20). The necessity of burial is never minimized, however, and even impaled

criminals were to be buried the same day (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). Saggs (1953:175-182) maintains that this passage from Deuteronomy could be potential evidence for an Israelite belief in harm from an improperly buried person. He concedes that the implication is that the body of the criminal needed to be buried or else his departed being could in some way cause havoc for the living. Though most scholars, maintain that this commandment is simply related to cleanliness laws, Agai (2015:174) is deeply convinced that the reburial of Saul and his son (2 Samuel 21:12-14) indicates that the welfare of the living could be affected by the nature of burial of a deceased loved one. He supports this by re-echoing that Yahweh brought an end to famine after proper funeral rites were performed for Saul and his sons.

According to Gilmartin (2016:38), to the Israelites, Sheol was in no way considered an extension of earthly life, and those in Sheol were not to be communicated with or sustained through grave offerings. He suggests that during ancient Israel's early stage as a nation, there was no clear belief in resurrection. This suggestion is widely accepted by many classical biblical scholars who suggest that the idea of resurrection among the Israelites was a foreign ideology developed during the exilic and post exilic period.

However, Bronner (2020:1-2) believes that the Israelites concept of resurrection pre-dates the exilic periods. She argues that there are traces of the afterlife beliefs in the Old Testament which evolved to their conception of resurrection. This is the same stand taken by Agai (2015:170) though he generally looks at resurrection not as living "healthy" or as strictly the conferring of a new celestial body-as the Christian do teach, but as an understanding that the body and the soul possessed the ability to rise or to live again in another state of life and in another world like Sheol. He uses the ancient Israelites views on the conceptions of the soul together with their burial beliefs, to argue that the ancient Israelites beliefs in the afterlife which evolved into the doctrine of resurrection were visible even before the exile. Certain beliefs and practices of the Israelites suggest that their beliefs in the resurrection of the dead pre-date the

exilic periods-the period in which many scholars trace the initial emanation of the Israelites theme of resurrection. However, it is fair to say that biblical scholars are currently divided between the position that ancient Israelites had no belief in spirits and the position that they had rather pronounced dealings with them.

5.6 The Antithesis of Death

Various Old Testament and New Testament Biblical texts (1Kings 17:17-24, 2Kings 4:18-37, Matthew 27:50-54; 28:1-20, Luke 7:11-17; 8:49-58, John 11:1-44, Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12) present God, through resurrection, as the antithesis of death. In the same accounts God is presented manifesting His power over death, through the resurrection of the dead. The existence of such accounts in both Testaments, is clear evidence that the people of the Bible believed in God as holding a greater power over life and death and as the only source of revivification from death.

5.7 Death and Human Life in the Ancient Near East

It is a wide concession that the Israelites interacted with their Ancient Near Eastern neighbors and that this interaction had a quite significant effect in the shaping of the Israelites beliefs and practices in the different aspects of life, life and death inclusive (Jeon 2020). From the onset, Job the character is scholarly acclaimed as not Israelite but some character who existed (or didn't exist) in the ancient Near Eastern regions of either Edom, Arabia, Egypt or Mesopotamia (Seow, 2013, Kugel, 2012). The book's inclusion in the Old Testament Canon is apparently due to its unique but realistic theological answers about God, human life and the problem of evil. Therefore, the understanding of life and death among the people of the contemporary ancient Near East may be illuminative to our understanding of life and death in the Bible context. This section examines the concept of death in the Ancient Near East, Egypt and Mesopotamia in particular. It examines how these societies conceived death and the life after death. Much of the materials used are from the various epics.

5.7.1 The Egyptian Concept of Death and the Netherworld

The Ancient Egyptians' belief was that each individual had a soul that was made of five distinctive parts: the "ib" (heart), the "sheut" (shadow), the "ren" (name), the "ba" (personality), and the "ka" (often called the "vital spark"). When a person died, the Egyptians believed that their ba, in the form of a bird with a human head, would leave the body and go on to live in the afterlife. This concept of a soul departing the body at the death hour is attested to in Job's lament of man giving up the ghost. However, unlike the Egyptian, Job seems not to have an idea of where this given up ghost goes to. He lives a question of: "...and where is it?")

Egyptians used tree imageries over a long period of ancient history in mythological portrayals of revivification in the afterlife. The afterlife tree and the tree goddesses in the Ancient Egyptian mythology and Iconography attest to this conviction that although trees were associated with various deities in various ways, there is a clear and long-standing tradition of mortuary association between trees and resurrection and it is not a coincidence that Job refers to a tree cut down in his despair for revivification of life after death taking its course, (see Hays 2015).

The West was conceived as the location of the realm of the dead, the underworld, which was inaccessible to the living human, except through tombs, which were regarded as the entrances into the realm of the dead. The netherworld was a destination for both Pharaohs and ordinary people. Egyptians believed that Pharaohs were incarnated gods who came to the world in order to rule the world according to the cosmic order. They thought Horus, a tenth god in the creation myth of the *Enneadin Heliopolitan*, was embodied by the living pharaoh (Jacobus). Upon death the Pharaoh returned to his home, the celestial realm in heaven, to join the sun god *Re* by becoming a star in the sky. However, this was not an automatic case for the ordinary people. The ordinary people (*akhu*) had to pass through various gates, portals, rivers, and caverns in

the underworld. Since these processes were considered very harsh and difficult, guide books were necessary for the dead to get through safely (Harold 2013:3).

Since the journey to the netherworld was conceived to be very terrific, the Book of the Dead, (Nuria 2016) was so instrumental in easing the passage of the deceased through the underworld, offering them protection to face the ordeals and terrors lying in wait there. There was also an expectation of judgment for the deceased at the Hall of Two Truths. Should they be proven worthy, the deceased would enter afterlife, which was a perfect mirror of the real world and contained everything a person wanted or needed in life. On entering the afterlife, the deceased became circumpolar stars by joining to the sun god *Re*. However, the unworthy received punishments that included, but not limited to, perpetual hunger and thirst, being boiled, or devoured by a wild beast, and most detestable were, eating feces, drinking urine and walking head down.

The idea of having a soul or ghost lingering behind was extremely against the grain. This only occurred when the deceased had met an especially violent or abrupt end (like with the assassinated pharaoh Amenemhat I) or were denied the appropriate burial rites or accommodations, (Naguib, 2013:13). In both cases, the deceased were permitted to return to the world of the living to rectify their unfinished business, and, once they were satisfied, they would return to their proper place in the afterlife (Caitlin 2020).

The Egyptians depicted the netherworld (Amenti) as the land of heavy slumber, and darkness, an abode of sorrow for those who dwell there (Salmond 1895:64). The dead are depicted to be sleeping in their forms: they wake not any more to see their brethren: they recognize not their father and their mother. Those that dwell there are deprived of the water of life since the water of life is for those who tarried on earth. The water cometh to him who remains on earth, but the dead weep in thirst for the water. This depiction of Amenti share a similar tone with Job

7:9-10; 10:21-22; 17:13 and 16. To be more particular the depiction of Amenti as a land of heavy slumber is similar to that of Job 14:12; “so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep.”, and qualifies the view of death as an endless sleep.

Egyptians also developed a means of sustaining interaction between the living and the dead. They considered the dead not so different from the living. They believed that they could communicate with the dead, as through the “Letters to the Dead”. Caitlin (2016), explains that the ancient Egyptian Letters to the Dead are texts written by living people to their dead ancestors in order to ask for help concerning difficulties they experienced in life comprising topics like matters of inheritance, the plea for health, guilt, the plea for descendants and the fear of revenge. The letters were mostly written on bowls and deposited at the offering place of the addressee’s tomb having been accessible to the public to guarantee that the dead relative would read the letter. The existence of such written communication to the dead is clear evidence that the ancient Egyptians believed that the dead continued participating in and influencing the daily life of the living. The Letters to the Dead offer glimpses of what common interactions between the living and the dead may have looked like (e.g., Harrington 2013) and confirm that the dead indeed remained active members of social systems despite their corporeal demise.

Therefore, to sum it up, the ancient Egyptians believed that each individual had a soul and death would occur when the soul permanently leaved the body to go and reside in the netherworld. This is similar to Job’s conception of death as man giving up the ghost and becoming no more. To the Egyptians death was for the body but not the soul. The soul continued living in the afterlife. Tree images were widely used in the mythological portrayals of revivification to life after death and Job’s usage of a tree imagery in his laments over human hope for renewal after death could have been influence by the such widely expressed Egyptian myths. To the Egyptians, the dead are going to the East, on a horrific journey to the underworld.

Since they conceived the journey to the nether world to be horrific, guide books were very important for the dead. They believed that the dead continued influencing the life of the living, even in their corporeal demise and this belief influenced their practice of sustaining communication between the living and the dead as expressed by the letters to the dead and grave offerings. Job's depiction of man lying till the heavens (Job 14:12) are no more is consistent with the Egyptian image of the Amenti as the land of heavy slumber.

5.7.2 The Mesopotamian Concept of Death and the Netherworld

Concerning the concept of death in Mesopotamia, Mesopotamian texts are noteworthy sources. The most important sources describing Mesopotamia's notion of death and the underworld include; "*Inanna's* descent into the netherworld (Sumer)," "*Ishtar's* descent into the netherworld (Akkadian)," "*Nergal and Ereshkigal*," "*Erra and Ishum*," "*Ur and Nammu*," and "*Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and netherworld*" in the Gilgamesh Epic. These myths are used concurrently in this discussion however much attention is put on the Gilgamesh Epic, particularly in the matters concerning the concept death. It is true that various versions of some myths do exist and describe slightly different notions about the underworld, however, a certain amount of generalization is possible on matters of the netherworld concept.

Death in the Epic of Gilgamesh occurs with Gilgamesh killing Humbaba and when Gilgamesh and Enkidu kill the Bull of Heaven, which ultimately leads to the death of Enkidu. After the death of his best friend, Gilgamesh acts like a madman and doesn't believe it until worms take over his body and Enkidu turns to dust. The death of Enkidu brings the reality death nearer to Gilgamesh than it was before. Gilgamesh's response to Enkidu's death portrays the view that Humans feel the power of death after losing a close relative or friend.

Death is viewed as inevitable in the culture of Mesopotamia. Mortality is to humans as immortality is to gods. It is a fate that is to befall all humans. "Death was a part of the scheme

of things, so, since you had to die anyway, let it be a glorious death in the battle with a worthy foe so that your name and fame would live.”, (Jacobsen 1976:202). This belief comes as a motivation to Gilgamesh in his attack and killing of Humbaba. Gilgamesh realizes that although we as civilized people must bear the unbearable knowledge of our own death, our consolation is the greatness of our works, (Kaise 2020).

Though humans acknowledge the inevitable nature of death, like Gilgamesh, they repeatedly fail to find peace with it. It is through such struggles to overcome the inevitable that humans come to appreciate its inevitability, grow and find peace in it. After Enkidu’s death, Gilgamesh struggles with his sense of mortality and looks for a way to defeat the inevitable. In the end, after being unable to find immortality and a way to relive his life, Gilgamesh finds peace with death (Tigay 1982). Death seems to help Gilgamesh grow up and look it in the face as well. Gilgamesh searches for ways to stay immortal, but eventually finds peace in death with the hope that he will someday be reunited with his friend Enkidu. The loss of the plant stands thus for the loss of the illusion that one can go back to being a child. It brings home the necessity for growing up, for facing and accepting reality. And in the loss Gilgamesh for the first time can take himself less seriously, even smile ruefully at himself; he has at last become nature (Jacobsen 1976:219).

The Mesopotamians believed that the incorporeal part of an individual would be set free at the point of death causing the body (mitum) to go to a permanent rest or sleep (Joncker 1995, 190-191). On the death of an individual, the bones (esmetum) and the ghost/spirit (etemnum) are the essential entities left (Cooper 1992, 27). The etemnum was a complex concept of mind, spirit and life force combined, which survived in an immaterial state in the netherworld. This had a connection with the bones and could also visit the family member in various forms (Joncker 1995, 191-192).

In response to the questions of life after death, the Mesopotamians believed in the continuation of life, (a passive and dormant life) in the netherworld. The netherworld is an exclusive place that only the dead could enter and it was a realm separate from that of the living and that of gods.

Though there is no direct answer to the geographical location of the netherworld in Mesopotamia, a general imagery of its location is seen to be beneath the earth and so one has to go down. The main entrance to this realm of the dead was seen to be the grave (Katz 2003:238), however in some instances; mountains too were seen to be an entrance to the netherworld.

Since the grave was believed to be the entrance to the netherworld, proper burial was imperative for a better state of the dead in the netherworld. Without proper burial, the Mesopotamians believe that the deceased would live like a beggar in the underworld. Mesopotamians also believed that the dead, now in the form of ghosts, would return from the underworld to harm their families if proper rites were not performed. Thus, funeral rites were motivated by anxiety that the dead might return, and mourning and burial rites were intended to place the dead firmly in another dimension (the underworld) and prevent their return to the land of the living (Jeon 2020).

The underworld was described as a gloomy, lifeless, and static place where the deceased were deprived of earthly life and ate dust until they might receive real food or drink from the living (Rachel 2001:107-109). A recurring Akkadian description, especially, rendered the netherworld as a dark house, with dust and inhabitants without clothes, clad in feathers eating clay and mud (Katz 2005, 67). For example, this description can be found in the text Nergal and Ereškigal. Dalley (2000, 168) makes the following quotation;

“To the dark house, dwelling of Erkalla’s god, to the house which those who enter cannot leave. On the road where travelling is one way only, to the house where those who enter are deprived of light, where dust is their food, clay their bread. They are clothed, like birds, with feathers. They see no light; they dwell in darkness.”

In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the underworld is described on tablet VII, the Death of Enkidu. Enkidu narrates the dream he got, and through which the gods decide that he should die. The description is as below;

“He bound my arms like the wings of a bird, to lead me captive to the house of darkness, seat of Irkalla: to the house which none who enters ever leaves, on the path that allows no journey back, to the house whose residents are deprived of light, where soil is their sustenance and clay their food, where they are clad like birds in coats of feathers, and see no light, but dwell in darkness. On door and bolt the dust lay thick, on the House of Dust was poured a deathly quiet. In the House of Dust that I entered,” (George 2003, 61).

With such gloomy images of the underworld, the Mesopotamians believed that the dead depended much on the living for their wellbeing in the netherworld. It is hard to live in the netherworld when there is nobody alive to look after the deceased, since food and water seems to have been provided by the family of the dead, meaning that there is no food or water in the netherworld. This belief partly accounts for the grave offerings and gifts that the Mesopotamians offered to the dead.

Linked to the wellbeing of the deceased, causes of death were crucial to the quality of life in the underworld. Also was the belief that having a big family was a key to having a good life in the netherworld. In the narrative of his dream on tablet XII, Enkidu recounts that he that had one son weeps bitterly at the nail which was driven into his wall; he that had two sons sits on two bricks and eats bread; he that had three sons, drinks water from a water skin carried in the

desert...; while he that had seven sons, as a companion of gods, sits on a chair and listens to music (Shaffer 1963). Such an account suggests that the person with more sons enjoyed so much more than the one with less or no sons at all. In fact, that without sons eats gleanings of scraps of leftover foods, thrown away in the streets; while he that was cursed by his mother and father lacks an heir and his spirit roams about (Shaffer 1963, 119-120). Thus, the Mesopotamians were particularly concerned with the proper remembrance of the deceased. They wanted to live a good, long and healthy life and bear many children. If they failed to achieve this, it could result in abandoned graves without anybody to tend them hence leading to the suffering of the dead.

When brought in comparison with the Mesopotamian concept of the netherworld, Job still sees no reason of hoping for the afterlife since it would reduce him to nothing but agony. Oh, poor Job, with all his children gone, what good thing would he expect from the Mesopotamian netherworld except the gleanings of scraps of leftover foods, thrown away in the streets? Who would remember him and offer him grave offertories when all his progenies are already dead? Who would keep his name and memory alive in the land of the living? Job's loss of his children may have been responsible for his mourning and his loss of hope of life after death. To him, he was wasting away, dying to nothing.

To sum it up, the Mesopotamians believed in a temporal state of human life and made much effort to make sense of life and death. They believed in death as the beginning of a journey into the netherworld. The netherworld was the realm of the dead, different from the realm of the living and that of the gods. It was conceived to be a lifeless, static and gloomy area characterized with dust and darkness. The dead were deprived of the earthly life and depended on the grave offerings of food and drinks from the living, without which, they would survive on the dust and muddy waters of the netherworld. The status of the dead in the netherworld depended much on how they lived their life while on the land of the living. Other factors that

contributed to the status of the dead in the netherworld included, the causes of the death, the number of children that the deceased had, proper burial and post burial rituals, and sometimes, the previous status of the dead during his/her earthly life. When put in comparison with Job's situational circumstances, the death of all his children rendered him childless and therefore he expected to suffer the terrific plight of the childless dead, his name is not to be remembered and his death is only reducing him to nothing since he has no progenies to keep a memory of him in the land of living. Using the Mesopotamian world view, am convinced that Job's lament is a lament of a childless person in the face of death. Whose life is just like a shadow that disappears when the light of life is swallowed up by the darkness of death.

5.8 Conclusion

To sum it up, both the Bible and ANE contexts clearly indicate that man was created in a state of conditional immortality, but as a result of man's disobedience, death came into the world and from then, man is under surveillance of death. The Israelites perceived Yahweh as having power over life and death and so in some instances, death was perceived as a form of divine punishment for living an evil life. The death of an elderly person was regarded as less painful compared to the death of a younger person. And so, such deaths were represented as resting or sleeping. There was also a belief in family reunion in the afterlife. The Israelites also held a strong belief and attachment to their ancestors and ancestral land. They developed the concept Sheol to explain where the dead go to after death. However, Sheol was in no way considered an extension of earthly life and those in Sheol were not to be communicated with or sustained through grave offerings. The prohibition put on the communication with the dead suggests the possibility of the living communicating to the dead and could work as response to Job's assertion that man becomes no more in the face of death, as it confirms the belief that the dead are not fully dead since they could be communicated to and consulted from by the living. The Israelites also valued so much the proper burial of the dead and it was a curse not to be buried.

Though it is clear that the quality of life lived in terms of morality, the age of the individual and the nature of death suffered by the individual affects one's condition in Sheol, it remains a scholarly debate of whether decent burial affected the state of the dead in Sheol. There is no dualistic perception that the afterlife is two places of either paradise or complete torment and the ancient Israelites did not share the later belief in paradise and hell.

The ANE however presents insights that indicate death as an open gate to another life. Death puts an end to the earthly life and opens doors to the netherworld, the land of the dead. The Egyptian depiction of Amenti, the netherworld has a similar tone with Job 7:9-10; 10:21-22; 17:13 and 16. To be more particular the depiction of Amenti as a land of heavy slumber is similar to that of Job 14:12; "so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep.", and qualifies the view of death as an endless sleep. The Egyptians use of the tree as a depiction of their belief in the revivification of life in the netherworld is consistent with Job's view of the hope for a tree, though in the Joban imagery, only the tree (and not man) is seen to have the hope of revivification. In both cases, the netherworld is a harsh world that requires sustenance from the living, those with children seem to live a relatively better life in the hereafter in comparison to those with no children. When put in comparison with Job's situational circumstances, the death of all his children rendered him childless and therefore he expected to suffer the terrific plight of the childless dead, his name is not to be remembered and his death is only reducing him to nothing since he has no progenies to keep a memory of him in the land of living. Job's lament is a lament of a childless person in the face of death; whose life is just like a shadow that disappears when the light of life is swallowed up by the darkness of death. He sees no hope in not only the netherworld but also in land of the living; when gone, he is gone completely with no one to remember him or even offer grave goods for him.

CHAPTER 6: DEATH AMONG THE BAGANDA

6.1 Introduction

Death among many Bantu speakers—Baganda inclusive is called *Okufa*. Though death is like a robe that everyone must wear, it still remains enigmatic to all. Even when it seems obvious that one is dying, it is always a fierce message to know of death of a dear one. The various reactions that people express out during the demise of an individual speak volumes on how such a community conceives and perceives death. In this chapter, a discussion of death (okufa) specifically among the Baganda is made. The chapter entails Baganda concept of death (Okufa), death and post death management rituals and their symbolism and significance to human life i.e. questions of what, how and why of the death management rituals and the polemics of death among the Baganda.

6.2 The Death Word, ‘Okufa’ as used by the Baganda

Death is well known among the Baganda as okufa, a period when an individual stops breathing—“Okussa Omukka ogw’enkomeredde,” and functioning biologically. A dead person is referred to as “Omufu” while the corpse as “Omulambo.” The same term “Omufu” or “Omufiirwa” is also used in contexts of an impotent man who cannot function sexually. It denotes a realistic or imaginary wasteful, hopeless and useless state of affair in which a person or situation lies.

In day-to-day usage, the word okufa is a common lingo among the Baganda that can be said in many situations:

While in a state of a dilemma or under a serious scare, it is common for a Muganda to shout “Nfudde”, (am dead). This phrase “nfudde” is also commonly used by the mourners while crying over the death of their beloved one. When used in this circumstance, the phrase “nfudde” does not imply that the speaker is literary dead but rather implies that the speaker is “completely finished” and expresses a state of helplessness that the speaker is in.

An individual's response or answer to a given question can also be referred to as "kifu" literary translated as "it is dead" to technically mean nonsense. This does not actually intend to denote that such an individual is giving a dead answer but rather that such an answer or response is invalid, wrong or irrelevant.

The same word okufa can be used in describing the going bad condition of some perishables like fish, milk, meat, tomatoes among others. It is very natural for the Baganda to talk of such perishables as "bifu" (spoilt). Statements like: "amata mafu" (the milk is spoilt), or "ennyama nfu" (the meat has gone bad/is spoilt) are commonly used. When used in such a condition, the word "okufa" would mean the going bad or the getting spoilt of something.

Okufa can also be used as a descriptive pronoun for an individual. In the day to day talks the Baganda can use the word okufa in describing an individual who is even in real sense not dead. The phrase "Oli mufu" (You are a dead) is commonly used not in a sense of implying that the person under description is literary dead, but rather that such a person is worthless, useless or good for nothing. It can also be used in describing places. When a place is described as "kifu/wafu", it means that it is unproductive in a certain aspect and nothing good can come out of it.

Therefore, the term okufa (to die/ death) can mean to be completely finished, going bad or getting spoilt, becoming worthless, useless, invalid, wrong, and irrelevant or even being good for nothing. It can also mean being unproductive. When put at use in matters of human death, I would not be mistaken to state that the Baganda's reference to the dead person as "omufu" is made in the same spirit to refer to the dead person as the one that is completely finished, gone bad or spoilt, worthless, useless, invalid, and irrelevant or even good for nothing. Since at the hour of death, an individual loses his/her essence of goodness, which Job refers to as "giving

up the ghost”, all the above descriptions are only given to that which remains visible after the soul has departed.

In matters of death among the Baganda, “omufu” and “omulambo” are words used interchangeably in reference to the dead body/corpse. The application of the same word “omufu” or “omufiirwa” in referring to an impotent man is with specific reference to a “dead” penis--expressing the cultural discontent over this man’s useless body in sexual matters and his natural failure to contribute towards the expansion of the society by giving children to his ancestors. Such a man is considered invalid, worthless or even good for nothing hence getting a description Omufu/Omufiirwa. According to Mze Kisolokyamanya (73) in order to avoid such a rude description, an impotent man would be allowed to marry but let one of his brothers perform his conjugal sexual responsibilities on his behalf. Such an arrangement would be kept a secret to the public and even the children born out of such an arrangement would be considered belonging to the impotent man that owns the wife. Such a woman would be considered not adulterous but rather praiseworthy for saving the face of her husband and protecting his “presumed manhood.”

Other statements that are used to describe the dead/death can be found in the following Luganda proverbs, idioms, and sayings;

“Kitaka talya, atereka buteresi” – The ground does not eat people but just keeps them.

“Olumbe musolo, wegukusanga w’oguweera” – Death is like the graduated tax, you pay from wherever it finds you.

“Mpawo atalifa” – None will escape death.

“Okuzaawa” – To completely disappear/ get lost (being no more)

“Okuvvuunika entamu” – To overturn the sauce pan

“Okusirika”- Getting silent

6.3 Origin of Death according to Baganda: The Myth of Walumbe

Just like in the biblical Genesis narratives, the Baganda also hold that death has an origin which they trace from the commonly known myth of Walumbe, the widely known god of death among the Baganda, responsible of inflicting pain and causing diseases (olumbe) among the people.

There are many versions of the myth of Walumbe but the most common one has it that Kintu, the first man on earth, lived alone with his only cow that he depended on for milk. Ggulu, the creator and father figure, lived in heaven with his three children, Nambi his daughter and his two sons; Kayikuzi and Walumbe.

Nambi and his two brothers could usually descend on earth to play and have adventures. On one of their visits to earth, they met Kintu grazing his cow. Nambi and Kintu gradually fell in love and Kintu asked Nambi for a hand in marriage, something that Nambi accepted but also required permission from her father Ggulu. Kintu moved to heaven and met Ggulu, seeking for his blessings in their marriage with Nambi. Though He was hesitant at the beginning, Ggulu later blessed the marriage of his daughter, Nambi, with Kintu, after Kintu’s passing of Ggulu’s tests, exhibiting courage and determination in taking care of Nambi. Walumbe was not pleased with the union and vowed to wreck their marriage.

As the married couple was returning to earth, Nambi realized that she had forgotten the grain for her fowl. Therefore, she decided to get back and pick the grain. Unfortunately, Kintu tried to dissuade Nambi from going back because her father Ggulu had warned her not to let her brother Walumbe (Death) know about her departure, but the woman insisted. Arriving in ggulu, she found her brother Walumbe (Death) there. She tried to steal away without him, but Walumbe followed her and joined the couple on earth. Thereafter, Walumbe asked one of

Nambi's children as food, and when the couple refused, Walumbe killed the child, causing the first death on earth.

On the loss of the first child, Nambi sought for the intervention of her father Ggulu who in response sent Kayikuzi, Nambi's other brother, to pick Walumbe and take him back home. While at the battle in Tanda, Walumbe overpowered Kayikuzi and managed to escape from him, hiding in the caves through which he accessed the abyss. Since then, Walumbe (death) has lived on earth, killing the offspring of mankind.

6.4 The Belief in Death Messengers

Among the Baganda, death is a lived natural experience, which is sometimes predictable. There is a section of people that believe that death sends messengers that would announce its arrival. These are incidental happenings in nature that some people consider as portraying a death invitation message.

These messengers are believed to deliver messages to the close relatives of the candidate to die. According to Mwanjje S. (74), these messages are locally known as "Ekyebikiro." Unlike the biblical angels, the Baganda's death messengers are signs endowed in nature that indicate the encroachment of death. They range from internal personal feelings to the environment around someone's home. In a focus group discussion with Ssemwanga S. (69), Muwanga P. (74), Kanyike D. (72) and Ssebalamu D. (65), it was disclosed that in most of the times death announces its coming but human beings, either intentionally or unknowingly tend to ignore the messages that death sends. According to them, some of the death messengers include stomach upsets (Embiro), experiencing general body weaknesses, having weird dreams about the dead or dreams linked to mushrooms, when a rat cuts an individual's clothes, when an owl hoots around the home, when an individual sights a squeak or certain small crickets locally known as "Namunyeenye" crossing in front of him/her, the crowing of a cock at midnight, when wild

cats (Emiyaayu) yowl around an individual's home and if the lower part of one's eye keeps on winking (ekisulo kya wansi). When an individual experiences any of these, it could be more prudent not to take such an experience as a coincidence but to rather consider it a message from death.

"If you hear an owl hooting then death is approaching for someone you know", Muwanga P. (74). This is almost a global historical belief that is not only housed in the Baganda culture, but throughout many cultural traditions, Owls have been considered harbingers of bad luck, ill health, or death (Fox Sister 2014). In the Native American Tribes, owls are considered as messengers and companions of the gods of death. They are associated with ghosts because it is understood that the bony circles around an Owl's eyes are made from the fingernails of ghosts. In the Roman times owls were birds of doom and signs of the underworld; Romans upheld that the hoot of an Owl indicated imminent death (Gaussion, 2020). It is alleged that the deaths of many famous Romans were preceded by an Owl call. In the Middle East Owls represent the souls of people who have died without having been avenged. In the Arabian tradition, there is a belief that the *"al Sada"* (death-owl) will continue to hoot over the grave of a murdered man endlessly until his death is avenged. While in most African societies, Owls are recognized as messengers of sorcerers, wizards, and witches. Since most deaths were linked to the workmanship of the sorcerers, wizards and witches, it was more plausible and safer to consider their call as an omen of evil and death. Muwanga P. (74) advises that one should throw a burning log to a hooting Owl in order to send it away from their homes.

Ssemwanga S. (69) states that being a very fragile plant that quickly grows and easily decomposes a mushroom gives the best image of death among the Baganda. Its fragility is linked to that of human life and its quick decomposition, to that of the corpse. In fact, the mushrooms, among the Baganda, are widely known as *"omufu"*, a term that is also applied to a corpse. Their harvesting is locally known as *"Okuziika omufu"* which can literally mean

burying the dead and can only be done in a group just like the actual burial of the corpse is meant to be. It is with such conviction that Ssemwanga S. (69) and the other discussants are deeply convinced that dreams linked to mushrooms do portray a strong message of an imminent death of a close relative.

Kanyike D. (72) explains that it is a bad omen for a cock to crow at midnight (mu matumbi); it is a death invitation message that indicates that one of the members of the extend family or a friend is soon dying. He states that such a cock is supposed to be slaughtered there and then because it is considered to be an agent of death.

This concept of death messengers raises a lot of controversial arguments among the respondents. One case to cite is in the researcher's interview session with Kigongo P. (50), who in his narrative states that, he used to hear people talk of yowling cats as death messengers (Ekyebikiro) but never gave a second thought to such talks. He reveals his attitude towards this belief neutralized after his mother's demise. Two days before his mother's death something weird happened around his home. He is quoted saying,

"I don't love cats and I actually feel very uncomfortable staying around them but two days before my mother's death, I heard cats yowling around my house all the night long. In the morning I failed to even find one in the compound. When I consulted with the neighbors around, they told me that such cats are death messengers and advised that I should check on my relatives. On checking on them, all were doing fine by then but it was only after two days that I received a call about my mother's death."

When asked whether he believes in death messengers, Kigongo P. (50) openly states that he acknowledges their existence but does not believe in them as having power over him. He prefers considering his experience as a coincidence to associating it with death messengers.

Kigongo P. (50)'s experience is just a glimpse of the great reality of the conflicting religious belief systems that many people face today. Being a committed Christian, Kigongo openly acknowledges the existence of the death messengers but is too careful not to hurt his Euro-Christian belief by only choosing to consider his experience as a coincidence. This to the researcher is to live in denial.

Many respondents expressed great hostility towards such animals that are believed to deliver death invitation messages; the hooting owl and the yowling cat are sent away by throwing burning firewood (ekisiki) towards them and cocks that crow at midnight are slaughtered there and then. In my opinion, such reactions towards death messengers are very unfair. Just as it is insane for an individual to hate a phone simply because it has been used as a medium to deliver a death announcement to him/her, so it is the act of hating death messengers. I suppose that just as the phone remains a good item even when it is used as the medium to deliver a bad message, the hooting Owl, yowling cat or dog, the midnight crowing cock and any other death messengers are never essentially bad in any way whatsoever. They simply deliver a message and the nature of message delivered cannot affect their essence. Death messengers do not cause death but rather announce its advance or occurrence; and so, they should not at any time be associated with bad or good luck

6.5 The Land of the Dead

The Baganda considered the dead to be on a journey to the land of the dead, the land of ancestors. This land is paradoxically depicted to be far from the living that they cannot see the deceased but at the same time near that they can literally speak directly to the deceased. In my interactions with the different respondents, the dead were often referred to as "Omugenzi", a word that can literally mean a sojourner. It comes from a Luganda verb okugenda (to go) which depicts the dead as "those that went". In this land, the dead are imagined not moving on the foot but their backs like the boats, (gyebatambuliza emigogo ng'obwatto), an image

influenced by the posture in which the corpse are laid to rest in the grave. Since they are laid to rest facing upwards, it is imagined that their nose collects the muddy waters from the earth's surface (Ennyindo gyezirembekera mukoka). This land is referred to among the Baganda as "Tanda, Magombe, Kaganga, Kalannamo and Zzirakumwa". Though most of these terms are descriptive, for example Kalannamo describes the laying posture of the corpse as it is put in the grave; Magombe is a commonly used word among most of the interlacustrine Bantu groups in reference to the underworld. The word can mean a bottomless pit.

Tanda is the only name that is given to the netherworld and can be physically located. In the myth of Walumbe, Tanda is the place from where Walumbe over powered Kayikuzi, managing to escape from him. It is an archeological Archive found in the Buganda region, Mityana District, Tanda village. It is believed to be the place through which Walumbe takes the spirits of the dead to the netherworld. The place has many shrines and many believers in the Baganda's Indigenous Religion make it a point to usually visit and say prayers in the shrines built in the tanda sites, Bamuturaki (2020).



Images of worshippers offering prayers at the Walumbe's Shrine at Tanda, the hiding place for Walumbe the deity responsible for death in Buganda.

6.6 The Living Dead

Mpagi (2017:15) clearly states that the dead are not completely dead. He notes that the African peoples strongly believe in the active presence of the dead person or otherwise what is known as the after-life; after the person has lived here on earth his death is not the end, though the body dies the spirit continues to live on in the other mysterious world. He quotes Birango Diop's poem as the strongest evidence to prove his assertion. These words can be summarized as below;

“Those who are dead are never gone; they are there in the thickening shadows. The dead are not under the earth. They are in the tree that rustles. They are in the wood that groans”

Death, although a dreaded event, is perceived as the beginning of a person's deeper relationship with all of creation, the complementing of life and the beginning of the communication between the visible and the invisible worlds (Encyclopedia of Death and Dying:2014). This depiction of the dead as not completely dead is also central in the Baganda concept of death. Kafeero believes Walumbe has a deathly music band where he keeps on taking musicians and recruits them undeniably. Since death is seen to be a rite of passage, it is never seen as putting a total end to the life of the living but rather as opening a possibility for a new life superior to that of humans. Am not misguided to use (as proof), Kafeero' belief that Walumbe has a deathly music band, to suggest a general belief that individuals continue with their earthly professions, duties and life style even after death. (Kafeero' convictions will be discussed more in the polemicizing death among the Baganda.)

The Baganda believe that the dead indeed remain active members of social systems despite their corporeal demise. The dead are not completely dead but rather living in an immaterial state different from that of the Hollywood Zombies. Apart from not possessing a physical body, Ssemwanga S. (69) is convinced that the dead have all and more of the abilities of the living

humans. They can listen and speak to their relatives through dreams, possession and visions, though not seen-they can see and watch over the living. This was experienced by the researcher on the 14th of February 2021 during his participation in the burial of the one Nabutono S. (40), in Toowa village, Kawolo division, Lugazi Municipality, Buikwe district. A day after the burial of the late Nabutono, rumors spread that her spirit was haunting the family over the poor way she was buried. In particular, one of the brothers to the late (kept anonymous) was said to have been possessed by the deceased's spirit, demanding that her body should be exhumed and get it rewrapped. People stated that the spirit was complaining of being buried with a rope, something many were contending. On the second day after burial, the clan members with some few community members, the researcher inclusive, gathered and exhumed the corpse which had even started decomposing. On unwrapping the bark cloths from the corpse, it was found true that a rope was tied on one of the bark cloths that were used while wrapping the deceased. Having removed the rope and rewrapped the corpse in a proper way, there have so far been no other reports of Nabutono's spirit haunting the relatives.

6.7 Death and Age

Death is also described according to age and circumstances under which an individual encounters it. With regards to age, the death of an elderly person is celebrated and there is less mourning. Words indicating a peaceful death like "Awumudde", s/he has rested, are commonly used to imply that the dead has lived life to its fullness, has died after raising his/her children, seen some of his/her grandchildren, and was left with nothing to do but to rest. Such deaths are easily accepted and are hardly linked to Walumbe. This is quite different when a young energetic youth dies. Expressions used include words like;

"Afiiridde mu maanyi" – He/ she has died within his powerful stage.

"Akutuse" – He/she has broken.

“Olumbe lutunyazeeko” – Death has robbed us of...

“Olumbe lumumiziza omuka omussu” – Death has made him inhale poisonous gas.

“Olumbe lumutuze” – Death has strangled him/her.

Such words express the discontent that life has ended prematurely, not as it is expected to be. For example, to state that “death has strangled” someone, is to signify a forced death that was not meant to be, a flourishing life that has been cut short, not like a tree that can grow back, but never to sprout again. At the occurrence of such deaths, mourners are found of making dirges that include statements like these;

“Had he/she gotten married to someone?” “Has he/she had some children before his death?” “Who have you left your little children to?” “You would have at least left us with a child from whom we could base our memories about you” “Why have you died completely?”

Mze Ssempala W. (81) explains that such funeral dirges are made to express that such a person has not lived a full life. He states that a full life is that where a person has been able to grow up, get married, give birth to children and watch them grow into responsible adults and be able to see grandchildren. The spirits of those that failed to meet that criterion were never considered good and were highly dreaded with a belief that they were bitter and could easily harm the living since they forcefully died without living life to its fullness. They were never considered as ancestors and no last funeral rites were made for them. It is for that reason, Mze Ssempala W. (81) narrates, that the corpse of a young person that died before marriage or even before giving birth to children was never taken from the house to the burial ground through the door but rather a hole could be made through the behind walls of the house, from it his/her body could be taken outside. Such a wall could be immediately covered to stop his/her spirit from

getting back into the house through it. Such spirits were denied communion with the living. Such a background could be the motivation behind Kafeero's pleads;

*“O death be merciful to us
Let us have time to bring up our little ones
For dreadful is the place of no return.”*

The death of infants is another hard terrain to navigate, it is regarded as a particularly grievous evil event locally termed as “Olumbe olw'ekibamba”. Death rituals performed for each of the above deaths are quite different. In respect to age, the dead elders are taken through so much elaborate rituals compared to dead infants.

6.8 Death and Circumstances of its Encounter

Circumstances under which an individual encountered death are another determinant on which the Baganda societies base on to describe the quality of death an individual encountered. Deaths encountered as a result of committing suicide, murder, accidents or mob justice and being bewitched are considered to be bad deaths since they are looked at as deaths due to reckless behavior or conduct of self-neglect. Such deaths are considered avoidable deaths hence being termed as bad deaths. On the other hand, when a person dies of old age or prolonged sickness, giving an opportunity to kinsmates to take care of him/her is deemed to have experienced a “good death”. It is seen as a good death since it brings relief to pain and anxiety that the individual would be experiencing. Therefore, the circumstance under which an individual encountered death played much in the description of death as either *good* or *bad*.

The status of the deceased too counted much in the description of death. Such status was routed in the various birth rights that the different people held. For example, the death of the members of the royal family, “Abalangira n'Abambejja”, was referred to as “okuseerera.” The King's death was prestigiously described with many luxurious terminologies which made it sound

special in comparison with the death of a common Muganda. According to Ndagire J. (80), kings are considered to be next to God and so they don't die because their death would imply the death of the entire kingdom; they simply slide or retire from their royal duties (Okujja omukono mu ngabo). Twins (Abalongo) and the twin parents (Ssalongo and Nnalongo) are also given special treatment during their death. The death of a twin is termed as "Okubuuka", literally translated as flying. The twins don't die but fly away.

Since the Baganda have great anxiety and anger towards death, there are changes in status and titles among the people and items whenever death occurs. When closely scrutinized, the new titles depict the negative attitude that the Baganda have towards death. The widow is given the title *Nnamwandu* while the widower is given the title *Omulangambi*. A prince (Omulangira) that has lost a wife (Omuzaana) is given a title *Omuyaayaanyi*. Children that have lost one of their parents are given the title *bamulekwa* while those that have lost both parents are titled *enfuuzi*. The food eaten during the funeral rites is not termed as "emmere", the local name for food but rather as *ogumere*, which depicts it as bad food. The house (enju) from which the family head dies is referred to as liyumba.

To sum it up, the Baganda acknowledge death as a reality that is to be encountered by every individual. They express death with varying levels of acceptance and anxiety. Death acceptance is expressed at old age, at a point when death is looked at as a normal, unavoidable conclusion of a busy, long life. But death anxiety increases when death strikes at a young or worst at a youthful energetic stage of human life. Death is not an end to human life but rather a pathway to a far more superior life in the human cycle. It is a change in human substance, from a physical being to a spiritual being that is not limited in space and time. Death is a door to human eternity that can only be cut short when the livings lose the memory of the living dead. To have a clear insight on the concept of death among the Baganda, it is incumbent to dig deep in to the death management rituals among the Baganda. Below is an ethnographical and anthropological

account of the Baganda death management rituals considering the pre-burial, burial, and post burial rituals.

6.9 Death Management Rituals among the Baganda

In his essay, “the Ubuntu Concept of Good Life” Louis Zulu states that every living human being relates on three levels; firstly, to people who are presently living. Secondly, every living human being relates to the natural surroundings. Lastly, there are ancestors who are called the ‘living-dead’ among the Bantu. Aries (1974, 1981) argued that death was always a social phenomenon, an event that produced communal responses and that was contained by collective signs and rituals. In the past, death represented a disruption to the *social body* more than it did the passing of an *individual body*. According to his influential thesis, identity was rooted more in the group than within the individual. Thus, in the past, death did not threaten the individual as it does in today's society: death meant that the society had lost part of itself, more than the individual had lost society (Bloch and Parry, 1982). These statements and more, describe the Baganda’s communal collective response to the death of individual members of the community, here in referred to as death management.

Death management is here described in what the Baganda do upon the death of an individual in the society. How the corpse is treated and how the Baganda express emotional reactions and personal feelings for the loss of a loved one in a culturally accepted manner. Taken into consideration are the rituals performed and the circumstances under which such rituals are performed. As briefly noted above, the discussion below establishes that expression of grief, bereavement and mourning processes among the Baganda largely depend on one’s social positioning in the community regulated by age, gender, wealth and social status as discussed above. Different rituals are performed for men and women. More ritual demands exist for elderly dead persons than the children. Suicide victims have specific rituals too because of the disapproval of suicide in society. There exist special rituals for a dead twin. More elaborate

burial ceremonies and rituals are performed for dead kings and cultural leaders because of their status in society.

In his description of the Africans' concept of death, Anderson A. explains that the goal of life is to become an ancestor after death. This is why every person who dies must be given a "correct" funeral, supported by a number of religious ceremonies. If this is not done, the dead person may become a wandering ghost, unable to "live" properly after death and therefore a danger to those who remain alive. He asserts that it might be argued that "proper" death rites are more a guarantee of protection for the living than to secure a safe passage for the dying. There is ambivalence about attitudes to the recent dead, which fluctuate between love and respect on the one hand and dread and despair on the other, particularly because it is believed that the dead have power over the living. I am convinced that the Baganda's concept of death and their funeral rites motivations do not run short of this description. The Baganda have an elaborate management of the dead body that promotes respect of the dead and the dignity of the bereaved family as discussed below.

6.9.1 The Corpse Preparation Rituals

As soon as the death of a person is confirmed, the corpse is subjected to careful treatment. This early and quick response is intended to have the body put in a clear posture before rigor mortis. For example, the corpse is washed with warm water; the body is made straight with the hands attached to the thighs (Okugolola omulambo). The eyes and mouth are made to close in order not to scare the mourners. A cloth is tied from the head to the jaws in order to support them and keep the mouth closed intact; this is known as "okusiba akaba." Though majority of the respondents only take this act of keeping the eyes and the mouth of the corpse closed to be a tradition, I suppose that due to the much fear for a dead body exposed among the Baganda, in case the mouth and eyes of the corpse are left open, people would think that the corpse is seeing them. This may sound irrational, since the individual is already dead, but Nakayiza Meega (78)

asserts that it is wide concession that though dead, a corpse still possesses the ability to see, hear and identify people and their voices in case they are speaking next to it but lacks the ability to directly respond to them. She also believes that it is upon that background that the living are stopped from speaking ill about the dead.

If the dead person is a man, the “okusiba akaba” is done after the shaving off of the beard. According to Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73), a beard is a very important symbol of manhood and so the shaving off of the beard from the dead family head symbolizes his loss of manhood through death. It is also in that same spirit that only those without relatives and or kinsmen were buried with their beard, since they were considered not men enough even before their death. After the cleaning of the corpse, it is wrapped in bark cloth, locally known as “embugo”, with the legs tied together to maintain the straight posture. In town setting, the bark cloths are getting substituted with fine blankets and bed sheets following their scarcity.

The dead body is rested in the “eddiro” which is the most common and easily accessed area in the house. The “eddiro” can be faintly compared to a sitting room in the modern-day homes though such a comparison can be misleading that I prefer using the local term “eddiro”. According to Musiitwa D. (68), a special place was usually made in the “eddiro” using banana stems (emigogo) on which a mat is laid. He also notes that with the improvement in standards of living, today, mattresses are widely used instead of the banana stems. Though he cannot explain the reason for the preference of banana stems to other materials, I suggest that this preference is but one of the good indicators of the Baganda’s belief in the interrelatedness of the human, animal and plant life which is highly depicted throughout the period of death management. It symbolizes the dying nature of plants, animals, and humans. This aspect will be given attention later in this chapter.

The spirits of the dead are considered to be having more powers and influence in the lives of the living which they (spirits of the dead) sometimes misuse and hence a need to tame them. According to Namwandu Kkyaka (84), when the corpse is laid in the sitting room, close members of the bereaved family - mostly the children and widows or widower, are made to jump over the corpse. She explains that she has practically participated in this ritual for several times but the most memorable time was that after the death of her husband, the one late Kkyaka. She states that it was the time she first inquired why she had to jump over the body of the person she highly respected. And an explanation given was that the jumping is done to stop the spirit of the dead from haunting (okululuma) the living relatives, causing misfortunes like barrenness, poverty, deaths and miscarriages to befall them. I find her narrative convincing because even an average Muganda knows that in Buganda it is morally wrong to jump over an individual, irrespective of the age. It is a sign of disregard of an individual's authority and a move to subdue an individual. Therefore, since the dead are believed to have more superior power compared to that of the living, it is in best interest of the living to tame the spirits of the dead before they could negatively use their superior power against them. Jumping over the corpse is an act of getting over the deceased's authority, and subduing him/her to the authority of the living relatives.

Since the bodies of the deceased could be kept for some days before burial, the burning of incense was used to make the room have a nice scent. It could at least help reduce on the nasty smell that could be produced by the decomposing body. Such a bad smell could make the mourners fail to come near the dead body hence creating more distresses to the bereaved family. Musiitwa D. (68) notes that it is a taboo for an individual to shun away from a corpse because it smells bad. He notes that it would even be more dangerous to spit because of the corpse' nasty smell and doing so would make an individual live with such a smell for the rest of his/her life. When asked whether that could be possible, Musiitwa D. (68) reluctantly notes that

mourners need to respect the corpse, irrespective of the state it is in and should know that at one time the individual that they are mourning was once like them and they are all going to be like him/her in a no particular time. The burning of incense was a common practice of purification not only in the Ancient Near East, including the Ancient Israel, but also in many African societies (Hutching 2007). This purification burning of incense was key in invoking spirits of ancestors in Africa and therefore the burning of incense around the corpse could be away of invoking the ancestors and creating a pure environment for them to reside in and participate in the funeral activities.

A part from burning of the incense, a coin was put in the face of the deceased. To Nakayiza M. (78) and Musiitwa D. (68), if put in the deceased's face, the coin prevents the corpse from decomposing and developing a bad smell which may pollute the entire home environment. I find such a belief not scientifically convincing since a coin cannot stop a corpse from decomposing and if so, many individuals wouldn't have embraced the expensive modern medical science of treating dead bodies using chemicals like formalin and the use of full body freezers yet a cheap coin can yield the same desired results. This coin, in my opinion, serves a purpose of diverting the individual mourner's attention from the corpse. Since many people fear looking at the dead bodies, this coin turns into the center of attention for those that come to mourn the loss of their loved one.

6.9.2 Death Announcement and Mourning Rituals

Nakayiza M. (78) states that it is after ensuring that the corpse is in a good condition for public view and that all the necessary rituals are performed, that the family members make a louder cry or screech that alerts the neighbors that the disaster of death has fallen in the society. It is this cry that sparks the community involvement in the death of their member. It is followed by sending death announcements to the different relatives and kinsmen who are near and far. A

person who makes death announcements is locally known as “Mawuggulu”, a name derived from that of an owl (ekiwuggulu).



Image 3. The image of an owl, a bird that is greatly reviled as a death messenger among the Baganda.

Nakayiza M. (78) states that the hoot of an owl is one of the symbols of death and that it is a bad omen for an owl to cry around one’s home.

According to Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73), death announcement is not only limited to people but is also extended to the deceased’s possessions, most especially the banana plantation and poultry. This ritual is performed by the nephew. For the banana plantation (Okubikira olusuku), a nephew - “omujjwa”, cuts a certain banana plant species locally known as “embidde ya nsowe” (if it is the death of a family head) or another species locally known as “Nakitembe” (if it is the death of a wife to the family head). The stem of the banana plant is not supposed to be cut down completely but rather to be left bent or hanging. In explaining so, Mze Ssempala W. (81) says that it is only a thief that harvests a matooke and lives the stem (Omugogo) hanging without using it to mulch the garden. Therefore, the act of half way cutting and leaving

of the banana stem hanging, by rightful owners, signifies that Walumbe has stolen from the family and has left the family helplessly hanging without a stable support. The nephew also slaughters a cock from the deceased's poultry and roasts it from the bonfire made using the corner pole (Seddugge). According to Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73), while crocking, a cock says "Nze ndi musajja" literary translate, "I am a man" which means that considering its self to be a man, it may take up the status of the dead family head and hence a need to slaughter it, however this is more of a myth than a reality as a cock cannot assume the role of a husband in the home. Namwandu Kamyia (78) suggests that the death "Olumbe" is believed to have come through the slaughtered cock, making it responsible for the death of the deceased family head. Mze Ssempala W. (81) also suggests that the role of the cock in the home is of reminding the husband of waking up to perform his sexual duties and so the death of the husband in the home renders useless the cock's presence in the home. Though not fully convinced by the other suggestions, I would polish Mze Kisolokyamanyi's opinion and state that the cock (Ssegwanga) is considered to be the head of the poultry farm in a home and hence living a life in parallel real and analogous to that of the dead family head. Therefore, the death of the cock symbolizes the death of the family head and is meant to give space for another family head/cock to rise.

If the dead is the family head (Nnyinimu), a nephew locally known as "omujjwa" had significant roles to perform upon the death of his maternal uncle (Kojja). A nephew could perform a lot of rituals among Baganda because they believe that the clan calamity cannot affect him since he is not a direct member of the clan. The nephew is charged with the responsibility of cutting one of the corner poles of the family head's house known as "Sseddugge" immediately after his death. Musiitwa D. (68) states that just as the family head supports the family together, this "Sseddugge" is also one of the main supporting pillars of the house and so the cutting down of the "Sseddugge" symbolizes the family's loss of support as

a result of the family head's death. The nephew uses the Sseddugge to make a fire right in the middle of the compound. Kibenjala Y. (80) states that the major reason for the making of the bonfire (Oggwoto) is to inform the mourners of the status of the dead person. For the death of a family head, fire is made in the middle of the compound, for the wife it is made on the right side of the compound and for a child, fire is made on the left side of the compound. The bonfire keeps the mourners warm during the night coldness, keeps away dangerous animals and insects that could hurt the mourners, symbolizes presence and also serves as the meeting venue from where men sit to discuss important issues regarding the burial of the deceased and conduct of the bereaved family. Muwanga P. (74) also states that the spirit of a dead individual always keeps around the home in which the body is kept and so the bonfire helps the spirit easily identify this home. He also notes that after burial, the fire keeps burning to light the way of the spirit to the netherworld.

According to Bbawuza R. (69), Mourners are expected to keep around the bereaved home for a period from death to about three to four days after the burial. They are expected to spend the night in vigil (Okusuza) and it is unacceptable for an individual to stay in his or her home when the death strikes a member of the community. This act of "Okusuza" is a sign of unity among the Baganda. It indicates brotherhood and it is a form of giving a debt to the deceased family which can be paid back only if they also reciprocate in the same measure. The people's turn up for the death vigil is an indicator of the level of relationship that exists between the deceased, his family and the members of the community in which he lived. It sets a demand for people to live a socially acceptable life that meets the requirements of living a full life in the society.

6.9.3 The Grave and the Burial Ground Rituals

According to Namwandu Kyakka (84), the Baganda's burial practices have gone through numerous changes as the culture evolved. She notes that in the early days, the head of a family could be buried in the compound and there after the house could be demolished and built in a

new ground, abandoning that compound of misfortunes. Such a compound would lose its local name “Oluggya” and gain a new name “Ekiggya”, which name depicts such a compound as bad and filled with terror. However, as culture evolved this practice was abandoned and the Baganda started forming family burial grounds, “Ebiggya” from where all family members of different generations are buried.

The digging of the grave (Entaana) is done voluntarily by the men who take and follow the height measurements of the corpse using a banana fiber (akaayi) or small but long stick. As a form of reward, those who dig the grave are given a gallon/calabash of local brew, (Ekita ky’omwenge omuganda) which is referred to as “mpeera y’abasimi.” Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73) states that the tools used in the digging of the grave are kept outside the house for the whole mourning period, without being used for another activity until when a cleansing ritual is performed on them. This tools cleansing ritual is performed by the nephew to the deceased and involves the washing of the hoes using local brew. It is believed that such tools possess powers of death and if not well cleansed they may act as agents of death to other family members.

According to Ssemujju M. (68), the grave was not supposed to be left open for even a single night; it was dug on the actual day of burial and covered before night came. This was due to the belief that leaving a grave open for long was dangerous as it would create a way to and from the netherworld. This created way could be used by the spirit of death (Walumbe) to access the world and cause more deaths mostly at night. It is for that reason that if the grave is made and fails to be used for burial during the same day or permanently, a banana plant could be planted in it. This is so common when a grave is dug for an individual that is mistakenly announced dead. It is from that practice that the Baganda locally refer to the situation where an individual narrowly survives death as, “yasimbyeyo kitooke”, implying that a banana plant was planted in his/her already dug grave. Such an individual’s grave may not have been dug in actuality but rather his/her hopes of surviving may have been lost. It should be noted however

that the practice of digging the grave on the actual day of burial is being abandoned mostly among the wealth Baganda. Some of them chose to even dig their graves by themselves and keep them open till their death; others dig them on the day one's death is announced and keep them open for days till the day of burial. This, to Musiitwa D. (68), is the cause of rampant deaths among such families and their communities at large; it is a way of welcoming death in one's family.



An Image of the late Ssalongo David Ssebayiga Jodoro, 1956-7th/July/2001 (the man well known for digging his own grave)

Musiitwa's conclusion is similar to that made by one of the late Ssalongo David Ssebayiga Jodoro's widows (kept anonymous) who attributes the death of her husband to his own action of inviting death into his family. According to her, while in his blossoming age, Jodoro (the commonly known name) dug and built his own grave and two other graves for his first-born son who was named after Jodoro's father and his daughter that was named after Jodoro's mother. He built these two graves just besides his and also constructed a house structure to

offer shelter for the graves. Though Jodoro died of an accident, this widow is convinced that Jodoro's death was not a coincidence but death was haunting him and his two favorite children. She also revealed that Jodoro's favorite son too died just a year after the husband's death. And an empty grave is still there waiting for the death of the daughter for whom it was made.



A photo of the late Jodoro's grave



The photo of an empty grave waiting for the death of the favorite daughter to the late Jodoro. The grave has stayed open for 25yrs



A photo of the three graves dug by the late Jodoro.



A photo of the shelter that houses the three graves that were dug by the late Jodoro.

Unlike in Jodoro's case, it is a common practice to bury the dead under tree shade and most Baganda family grave yards are situated under big tree that make a wide shade. Some of the trees commonly found around the family grave yards include the Mvule trees, the Mutuba (*Ficus natalensis*), Muwafu trees (*Canarium schweinfurthii*), among other. Children are guarded against playing under shades of big tree, particularly during the afternoon hours since their playing can interrupt the ancestors that resting within them. The belief that human can dwell in trees; especially big trees, is part of an African dilemma of comprehending human life which is given great attention in the next Chapter.

6.9.4 The "Okuziraga Ritual"

The final embalming of the corpse was preceded by a special ritual locally known as "Okuziraga." Mpagi (2017:11) states that this ritual is currently performed in a brief manner but his elaboration seems to be a description of this ritual as performed by the urban dwellers. Sebwami F. (72) narrates that, the ritual is spearheaded by the paternal grandmother who collects sponges from the core of the banana plantain stem (*ebinyirikisi*) and places them in a small banana leaf which she then places near the face of the corpse. She gathers all the orphans (*bamulekwa*) around the corpse and distributes these sponges among them which they use in cleaning the corpse starting from the face, to the chest and end with the feet. He also notes that this ritual signifies that the dead has not died childless. In my opinion, this ritual mainly aimed at giving the close family members-mostly the orphans- a chance to pay their last respect to the deceased before is fully wrapped. Since it is performed by the deceased's children, the ritual was not performed for those who died unmarried or childless.

In the past, if the dead person was a married man, this ritual (*Okuziraga*) was always followed by another ceremony locally known as "*Okulumira empambo*." Its purpose was to show the widow to be inherited by the heir to the dead. According to Wakikaatu S. (82), pumpkin seeds (*empambo*) are put in the palms of the corpse and have them mouth picked from there by the

heir to the dead. He chews them and spits them towards the widows who would be sited around the corpse of their fallen husband. The widow on which the spittle could fall would be inherited by the heir to the fallen husband. This was possible because the dead were inherited by a brother and not by a son. He notes that this ceremony was later abandoned when King Muteesa I abolished the culture of the brothers becoming the heirs to their fallen brothers and only permitted the sons to become heirs to their fathers. Since all the widows were considered as mothers to the children of the fallen man, such an inheritance of a widow by the son to the deceased would be incest - an act that is so detestable among the Baganda. Therefore, due to the change in the patterns of inheritance, widow inheritance became a no more hence making this ritual of “okulumira empambo” not necessary. However, this ceremony was not performed for those that died childless and unmarried; they were considered to have died a bad and discontented death, (Agenze n’eggoogonyo oba n’ekizirokibi). The ceremony is no longer performed in the present Baganda burials.

6.9.5 Rituals of Guarding the Corpse from Cannibals

The Baganda believe in the existence of cannibals (Abasezi) in their society who are well known of feasting on the dead bodies of human beings. According to Nambogo F. (75), the cannibals get the corpse (Omulambo) from the grave not through digging the grave but rather through calling them out by their names. They are believed to be possessed with a cannibalistic spirit (ekitambo) which enables them communicate with the corpse. To prevent the corpse from getting eaten by the cannibals, a ritual locally known as “Okugema omulambo okuliibwa abasezi” is performed. This is done by putting an eggplant (entula) in the palms of the corpse believing that if the cannibals call for the corpse from the grave (entaana), it will not come out but rather will respond that it is still sorting its eggplants, “Nkyakongola ntula zange”. Later on, some Baganda adopted the use of a needle (empiso) which is put in the palm of the corpse believing that if the cannibals call out the corpse from the grave, it would not come out but

respond by giving an excuse that it is still mending clothes for its children, “Nkyatungira baana bange ngoye”. This ritual expresses the belief among the Baganda that the dead possess the ability to hear and speak to some people who possess the power to speak and listen from the dead. It also expresses the care that the living extended to the corpse even after burial, not wanting the corpse to be disintegrated by the cannibals but rather to be left intact and naturally decompose from the grave.

6.9.6 Rituals of Final Embalming of the Corpse

In his narrative, Wakikaatu S. (82) states that the final embalming of the corpse (Omulambo) is done with the wrapping (okuzinga) of the corpse in the bark cloth (embugo). He continues that for a woman, the wrapping is completed from the house while for the man—mostly the head of a family, the wrapping is partially done from the house and completed from the compound in the presence of the mourners. The wrapping of the corpse is spear head by the men. For the family head, the wife/wives’ traditional wares (Budeeya/Gomesi) are wrapped first on the corpse of the dead husband and then the bark cloth follow thereafter. Sserwadda P. (62) states that the bark clothes in which the corpse is wrapped are provided by the community members and that this depends on the relationship that the deceased and his/her family has with the members of the community in which they live. To him, it was a corporate responsibility of every adult member of the community to participate in the burial of a dead member of the community. The more the number of bark cloths an individual corpse could be buried in, the more honorable the burial could be considered and the opposite was true. In my personal opinion, the value attached to the number of bark cloths an individual could be buried in is dependent on the Baganda’s commonly shared imagery of the nether world as being a cold place, completely devoid of warmth. This image of the nether world is clearly expressed in a Luganda proverb; “Attamanyi mpewo y’emagombe, y’amma omufu olubugo” which can be literary interpreted as; “He who does not know of the coldness of the netherworld denies a

corpse a bark cloth.” With such an image of the netherworld, I suggest, the Baganda believe that the only way the dead could survive, in such a cold environment, is through the wrapping of the corpse in as many bark cloths as possible.

Nambogo F. (78) notes that the wrapping (Okuzinga) of the corpse is preceded by a ritual locally known as “Okubikka akabugo”; literally translated as covering with a bark cloth. She narrates that this ritual is performed by the eldest grandson, (Omuzukulu omukulu) to the family head, but if the head of the family died without a grandson, then the elder son to the dead family head could perform this ritual. He stands beside the head (emitwetwe) of the fallen grandfather/father and covers the corpse with the bark cloth from the head to the foot. This ritual is not performed for a childless man and if this ritual is performed by a prince, he is not allowed to participate in the actual burial of his father, the fallen king.

6.9.7 The Burial Rituals

Sserwadda P. (62) states that after the final embalming, the body is then judged ready for burial. The corpse is then lifted to the grave, if the grave was a distance from the home, the body could be wrapped in a mat with sticks around it and then carried to the grave. The elder grandsons were responsible for carrying the corpse of their grandparent and if one died without mature grandchildren (Abazukulu), other men could carry the body to the grave. I suppose that this is the reason as to why fathers could demand for grandchildren from their sons at a young youthful age. The corpse is carried with the legs facing where the grave is and the head facing the house. According to Nakayiza M. (78), the corpse is not supposed to be taken back into the house after being moved out, though it rains. She reasons that taking it back to the house would imply bringing death back into the house; it would also confuse the spirit of the dead (Omuzimu gw’omufu) to mistakenly consider the house as its final place of resting. Sserwadda P. (62) too states that the corpse was also not supposed to be rested on the ground while on the way from the home to the grave. It was believed that the dead’s ghost would remain there on the way and

fail to reunite with the body in the grave. Such a spirit would disturb the living even after all the other burial rituals are performed. Mze Ssempala W. (81) and Ssemujju M. (68) similarly narrate that if the corpse falls down from either the bicycle or the hands of those lifting it; it is punished by beats using a cane. When that is done, the Baganda believe that then the corpse would stop acting stubborn and accept to be taken to the grave and if such a corpse is not punished, there are higher chances of it falling down again.

It should however be noted that with the presence of modern funeral services, some of these rituals have been abandoned and replaced by the scientific methods of embalming of the corpse, characterized by the hiring of funeral services and medical treatment of the corpse. This is so common among the wealth urban drawlers who live a new hybrid life which is a product of mixing the Ganda culture with the Euro-Christian or Islamic practices. This present trend neglects the spiritual aspect of these abandoned rituals. Cook 2007:665 states that unlike most modern, Western funerals, the burial rites of an African kin group are not merely for the emotional benefit of living members of the clan. Rather, they preserve a strong social and spiritual bond between all clan segments, both living and departed. The bond is interactive and reciprocal. On the one hand, the departed establish the living. On the other, the living represent the dead on earth.

The way to the grave is mixed with a big run of emotions over the mourners. It is at this point that much mourning and grief is highly expressed with close relatives and friends crying loudly throughout the walk. When given great attention, one may acknowledge that this mourning conveys a lot of messages both to the living and the deceased. According to Namwandu Kamyia (78), through this cry, the bereaved individuals express their future fears about the life without the help of the deceased. These expressions are embodied in statements like; Naanyumyanga naani? -Who will I converse with? Naakuza ntya abaana baffe wootali? -How will I groom our children without you? Others express their gratitude towards the deceased by talking of his

good deeds and character in statements like; Omwami oweddembe-A peaceful husband, Omukungaanya w'abantu-He/She that unites the people, and many others. Such statements of character praises are intended to express the gaps left by the deceased and how irreplaceable the deceased is in their lives. These funeral dirges are explicitly expressed by Donkor E. (1997:132-133) as follows:

“Why didn’t you tell me that you will be going?” “Why have you left us this way?” “Whom have you left us with?” “So, you were bidding me bye when you were conversing with me yesterday!” “Greet all those who have preceded us, and tell them we are well” “Send us money, we need money to defray your expenses” “Go and prepare a place for us.”

Such phrases are also common during the funeral laments among the Baganda, they express the communication that the living make to the dead mostly during the mourning and burial moments. The existence of such communication among the Baganda is a clear indication that the dead are not completely dead, but continue to be present even if their bodies are buried deep down in the ground.

After the corpse is lowered down into the grave, a grandson to the deceased and one other man get into the grave and the grave is covered with a bark cloth. While in the covered grave, the grandson then cuts a piece of a bark cloth from the underneath bark cloth used in wrapping the corpse and climbs out with it. This part of the cloth is normally left out hanging while the wrapping is going on. This ritual is locally termed as “Okusalirira omulindi” According Ndagire J. (80), if the grandson was away during the burial ceremony, this part of the bark cloth could be left flowing from the corpse in the grave, to the top of the grave until when the grandson to the dead could come and cut it right from the grave. She notes that after the cutting of the bark cloth, the grandson could move out of the grave and could be given, as a wife, one of the childless widows to his fallen grandfather. Other gifts given to him included a goat and

a bark cloth. Bangi Z. (75) adds that if an individual dies without a grandson, the ritual is then performed by the granddaughter to the dead. That granddaughter too is given, as a servant, one of the childless widows to her fallen grandparent and a goat and bark cloth. He also notes that if the dead person has left no grandchild, then it is the duty of the brothers to the dead to offer one of their grandchildren to perform the ritual. If the ritual is not performed, such a dead person is considered to have gone with a bad omen, “ekizirokibi.”

After the burial all the female mourning relatives are expected to move back into the house while weeping; this act is locally known as “okuyingiza olumbe.” It marks the end of a normal burial ceremony but not the mourning period. The mourning period extends up to the last funeral rites ceremony.

6.9.8 The Last funeral rites and Inheritance

The last funeral rites mark the end of the mourning period and open a new beginning of a normal life after the death of an individual among the Baganda. It is locally known as “Okwabya Olumbe/Okumala Olumbe” and takes a period of more than a day. There are variations on responses in regards to the time taken between the burial and the last funeral rites. According to Mze Kisolokyamaanyi (73), this period of mourning depends on the readiness and preparedness of the family to perform the last funeral rites. He however notes that before these rites are performed, the family cannot continue with their normal life and so issues of other ceremonies and parties cannot be conducted. It is because of such restrictions, I suppose, that many Baganda choose to perform the last funeral rites as soon as possible such that life can move back to normal.

In a focus group discussion with some elders, when asked of the relevance of the last funeral rites, Namwandu Kamyia (78) recounted that the failure to perform the last funeral rites leaves the spirit of the deceased unsettled in the land of the ancestors; which may cause misfortunes

among the living. She recounted that after the burial of her late husband, the one Kamyia Temiteo, it took them over three years before performing his last funeral rites. During the third year after burial, her son Kimbu (not real name) developed a mental illness and when they consulted the diviner, it was revealed that it was the spirit of the late husband that had caused Kimbu to act insane, in demand of having his last funeral rites performed. The diviner then advised her to organize and perform late Kamyia Temiteo's last funeral rites before the matters could run out of hand. She remarks that her son later regained his mental sanity in months after the last funeral rites were performed. It was also revealed that these rites are also believed to scare away death that may desire to claim other lives from the same family. It is also during the last funeral rites performance that the heir, (Omusika) to the deceased is officially given the responsibility to take administrative charge of the deceased's possessions (Omwandu). These possessions are made publically known and distributed to the widows, orphans and other relatives according to the provisions left in the deceased's will (Ekiraamo).

According to Wakikaatu S. (82), it is a common practice among the Baganda men to make a will (ekiraamo) while they are still alive. He notes that a man's failure to make a will is a sign of pusillanimity, which is an abuse to masculinity. He recounts that in the gold ages, before the culture of writing was embraced, a will could be made verbally by the man to his trusted relatives or friends who could keep it a secret until his last funeral rites. He notes that as culture evolved, people embraced the art of documenting and preserving of their wills in a written form. Such wills too are made and kept in custody of the trusted members of the family or the friends to the individual that is making the will. These written wills clearly indicate, among other things, the deceased's bio-data, the children and wife/wives to the deceased, the deceased's property and possessions, the selected heir to the deceased and the distribution guidelines for the distribution of deceased's property. He notes that the will is kept a secret in order to avoid succession disputes that may even lead to the premature death of the will maker

or even the murder of the heir before he assumes his responsibility. It was the full responsibility of the trustees to keep as an intact secret, all the information written in the will and their failure to do so would call for punishment from the deceased's spirit.

Though permissible, a few elderly women take the writing of the will as a reserve for men. Even though some own property, their choice is of distributing it to whomever they may desire to give a portion while they are still alive. Nambogo F. (78) explains that the making of the will was a reserve for men, princesses inclusive, and it was not a normal practice for women to write a will. She explains that women were not property owners and all their possessions belonged to their husbands. Because of such a setting, it was irrelevant for women to write their own wills. The heir to the woman could be selected among the sisters or daughters to the brothers of the deceased. Land, which was the most valuable property, belonged to men and average women could not own or inherit land. She states that things have just changed that today women can buy and own property, most especially the learnt; hence making it necessary for them to write wills (ebiraamo).

On the night that precedes the last funeral rites ceremony, people stay in a celebration with drums, dancing, and loud singing covering the entire atmosphere around the deceased's home². The grandmother to the orphans prepares a special meal (Emmere eya nkago) which is a mixture of matooke and another banana species known as embidde. Embidde is a banana species locally use making local brew and only taken as food in times of scarcity or famine. Therefore, the mixing of matooke and embidde is to symbolize the hard times the family is likely to face as result of the death of the family head. This explains why this meal is only

²Mutyaba P. (64) explains that this night is locally known as "Okusula mu ngalabi." The ceremony is a mixture of both mourning and celebration. The mourning is as a result of the loss of the individual while the celebration is due to the end of the mourning period and the start of a normal life. To Mutima T. (77), the celebration is due to the getting of new responsibility and titles since during the last funeral rites celebration, the heir is officially announced and the deceased's possessions are distributed among the relatives.

prepared during the family head's last funeral rites. Gonzaga K. (83) also explains that this meal also signifies that the head of the family is dead and he can no longer eat food or drink alcohol. He adds that this meal is strictly eaten by the orphans and widows to the deceased and its leftover is trampled on the ground to avoid other people from taking a portion of it. It (the meal) is taken from outside the house and thereafter, the orphans, widows and other relatives to the deceased, dressed in a mourning manner³, move to the house while weeping and the drums sounding louder. The grandmother to the orphans then closes the door to the house⁴, picks a stick and uses it to tap at each person in the "eddiro". Whoever is tap at by the stick then sits down on the ground. This act is done in order to ensure that all the orphans and widows to the deceased are present in the house for the other rituals to continue. According to Namwandu Kanya (78), it is done by the grandmother to the orphans since she is the person, who has full knowledge of the orphans to the deceased, and is responsible for performing the children's confirmation rites (Okwalula abaana) through which the orphans were confirmed as members of the clan, born to the deceased.

As the morning dawns, the ritual of "*Okufulumya Olumbe*" is performed. As the local name suggests, this ritual is performed to move death out of the deceased's house. It is a house

³ As a sign of mourning, the orphans, widows and close relatives to the deceased tie banana leaves in the waist. This is locally known as "okwesiba empina." Nampeera Z. (82) elaborates that female orphan use leaves from a local banana plantation known as "nakitembe" while the male use those from "mbidde." The aunties to the orphans use the leaves of plantain, "gonja." She adds that "okwesiba empina" also helps the other mourners to identify the bereaved family members from the other mourners who come for the last funeral rites.

⁴ Ssebulime B. (79) states that the door is left closed up to the early morning when the ritual of *Okufulumya olumbe* is done. All the orphans and widows keep inside for the all night while singing songs about death and twin rituals (Ennyimba z'olumbe ne ez'abalongo). During this night, even the rites of confirming children into the clan (Okwalula abaana) are performed if there is any. The orphans and widows are made to stay indoors for the all night under fear that any of them may delay to come back and hence miss the rituals to be performed during the early mornings. Still to note, it is a way of keeping safe the heir to the deceased as some family members may plot to have him or her endangered or he/she may have plans of evading the responsibility that comes with inheriting the deceased's blood.

cleansing ritual that corresponds to that of “Okuyingiza Olumbe” which is done immediately after the burial. Mutyaba P. (64) is convinced that after burial, the spirit of death keeps lingering in the deceased’s house where he was laid before burial and therefore needs to be chased from there such that it does not devour any other family member. While the singing goes on, the grandmother to the orphans ties a piece of bark cloth or a cloth in waste of each of the orphan while telling each of them that; “mukaddewo yaffa, kaaba”, which is literally translated as “your parent died, cry.” This act is locally known as “Okusiba amafuvu.” In my personal opinion, this act aims at helping the orphans to overcome the denial that they might be experiencing about the death of their father. It serves as a call for the orphans to accept the fact that their parent is dead and continue living their lives as they did before the death.

Maviiri G. (78) narrates that after the “okusiba amafuvu”, the orphans and the widows are led outside the house with the drama initiated by an already coached community member, locally known as “Omukeeze” who knock at the door to create a cause for the opening of the door. The *omukeeze* is given local brew as a token of appreciation. While outside at the point where water from the roof is collected, “amazzi g’ekisasi”, the chief celebrant (Omukulu w’olumbe) narrates his genealogy (Okulombojja obujjajjaabwe/Okutambula ng’Omuganda) and there after gets a sprat (enkejje) and throws it into the bonfire (ekisiki) light in the compound and utters the words; “Gundi (the deceased’s name) eyakwalula esiride”. These words send a communication to the deceased that his/her connection with the world has come to an end. Maviiri G. (78) explains that the burning of the sprat (enkejje) marks the end of the mourning period and opens an era of happiness in the bereaved home; it crowns the ritual of house cleansing, *Okufulumya olumbe* which is followed by the official announcing and installation of the heir to the deceased. He however adds that in the days of widow inheritance, it was always at this moment that the widow and the heir to the deceased would move into the house and have their first sexual intercourse. This sexual intercourse, between the heir and the widow,

signified the transition of the status of family headship from the deceased to the heir who was always a brother to the deceased. The shift in the succession patterns among the Baganda rendered these sexual rituals useless and immoral. Since succession by the brother to family head shifted to that of the son to the deceased family head, in the new era this sexual intercourse would be incestuous; which is an abomination among the Baganda.

According to Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73), inheritance and the installation rites of the heir are very important moments among the last funeral rites. These rites are performed on the eve of the last funeral rites, mostly during midday (kalasamayanzi). It is the responsibility of every qualifying adult to select an heir to inherit his blood while he/she was still alive. Unlike in some isolated cases, the will of the deceased is highly respected among the Baganda.

Kitimbo L. (80) explains that in some circumstances the deceased's choice of the heir can be refuted by the close relatives mostly due to the abuse of some traditions in regards to inheritance. In such a situation, the daughters to the deceased have a right to select, among their brothers or the sons to their brothers, an heir to be installed. The Baganda have clear guidelines that are supposed to be followed in the selection of an heir. Kitimbo L. (80) and Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73) elucidate that among those that are prohibited from becoming heirs to any one include; twin parents (Ssaalongo/Nnaalongo), twins (Abalongo), a no clan member (Omweboolereze), a nephew (Omujjwa), a mentally deterred person, a person who has already inherited another deceased, an impotent man or a barren woman, and an immoral individual (Omugwenyufu)- mostly the child who attempts to usurp or challenge the powers of the family head while he is still alive.

According to Namwandu Kyakka (84), men too are not supposed to be selected as heirs to women and so do women to men. She also notes that in circumstances where a family head dies without a boy child born to him, it is the responsibility of the brothers, with the approval

of the deceased's daughter (s), to provide one of their sons to serve as the heir to their deceased brother; even though this man had responsible daughters born to him. However, this has remained a controversial issue in the contemporary Buganda society; where some men find it okay to select their daughters as their heirs (Kigundu 2019). Most of the reasons given by some people in support of this new trend are more economical and ethical but not cultural. For example, some men find it so illogical living their hard-earned wealth in the hands of irresponsible sons who show less interests of running their firms yet they have daughters who are proving, beyond reasonable doubt, to be in possession of such required abilities. More so, women activists too find it fair to have a female heir to a deceased father in case she merits. To them the tradition of only permitting male children to become heirs to their fathers is very retrogressive and infringing on the rights of women who have already proven their ability to manage the family firms. But as noted earlier, all the reasons given are more economic than cultural. When brought in to discussion with some elders, they emphasized that the purpose of installing an heir after the death of a meriting individual⁵ is to ensure continuity of the family lineage (Omusaayi). To these old folks, a woman cannot ensure the continuity of the family lineage in a patriarchal society like Buganda and so letting the daughter inherit the blood of her father would be a direct move to completely cut short the lineage of that deceased family head (Okuzaawa). To pour more light to this, these elders don't suppose that inheritance of property by women is something bad, as it was in the past days, but rather call upon the Baganda to

⁵ The term *meriting individual* is here in used with a background that not all people qualified to have heirs installed for them after their death or even to have the last funeral rites performed for them. Barren women, impotent men, infants, childless adults, suicide victims and immoral people, among other cases, were never given heirs, under the fear that their spirits would haunt the heirs and make them experience the same death or have the same life as that of the deceased. Their last funeral rites are never performed as special and standalone rites but are rather taken miscellaneously during the performance of rites for meriting individuals and are considered as misfortunes (Enyimbe z'ebibamba). Only adult men and women with children, a good moral record and with a normal death were considered worth to have the last funeral rites performed and heirs installed for them.

differentiate between an heir and the administrator. To them, only a man can be an heir to the head of a family but either a woman or a man can gain the rights of an administrator to the property of a family head.

The installation rites for the heir are locally known as “*Okussaako Omusika*.” The installation of a male heir is done from the house’s front terrace (*ekifugi*) next to the water harvesting point (*ekisasi*) while that of a female heir is done from either the house or the hut of the clan head (*Ensiisira y’Omukulu w’ekika*). One of the most important rituals performed during the installation of an heir is that of *okusumikira*, which involves the dressing of an heir in a bark cloth and handing over symbols of authority to the installed heir. According to Kitimbo L. (80), the *okusumikira* of a man and a princess⁶ is done while he is standing and the bark cloth is passed under his right arm pit and its two ends are tied together above his left shoulder. For a woman, the bark cloth is tied around her chest, right below her arm pits. The ritual is mostly performed by the head of the clan. He there after calls out the name of the heir, and tells him or her of the person he/she has succeeded, his/her family lineage, and their family duties to the Buganda Kingdom. Thereafter, he hands over to him/her the symbols of authority. To a male heir, a spear (*effumu*), a shield (*engabo*), a pang (*Najjolo*), a wooden rode (*omuggo*) and a calabash filled with alcohol (*endeku y’omwenge*) are given to him as symbols of authority. The calabash is given to him with two small tubes made out of bamboo stems. According to Mze Ssempala W. (81), one of the tubes is given to him blocked inside while the other not blocked. The unblocked tube is meant for the deceased (*omugenzi*) while the blocked is for the placenta⁷ (*ekitanyi*). He is also given money which is put in a porch made out a bark cloth.

⁶ In Buganda, a princess is given a status equivalent or even above that of a man. She is referred to as Mr. (*Ssebo*), and therefore given masculine pronouns.

⁷ During child birth, the placenta (*ekitanyi*) comes after the baby. Among the Baganda, it is the second child (*omwana ow’okubiri/omwana ow’emabega*). Though it is considered to be born dead, this second child is believed to be guiding the one born with it throughout his/her life. At the last funeral rites of its brother or sister, it is also given an heir locally known as “*Lubuga*.”

Mze Ssempala W. (81) states that all the above symbols of authority have meanings and are given to the heir for a purpose. A spear is a symbol of authority, responsibility and justice and is a must have tool in all Baganda homes. It reminds the heir of his responsibility of providing for and defending his family and the Buganda kingdom at large. The shield is a symbol of bravery and it is given to the heir such that he can be brave in his defense of the *Kabaka* (Buganda King), the Buganda Kingdom and his inherited family. The rode signifies the authority given to the heir to lead his siblings while the money signifies wealth and is meant to give the heir a good financial start in his new responsibility and is also a sign of love. Alcohol too is given to heir as a symbol of hospitality; that she may be hospitable to all the family and non-family members that may come to him/her.

A female heir is given, as symbols of authority, a knife (*akambe ka mukazitatuma*), a hoe (*enkumbbi empange*), a calabash filled with alcohol (*endeku y'omwenge*) and money put in a porch made out of a bark cloth. The calabash is arranged in a similar way as that given to a male heir and also performs a similar function. A knife is a defense tool for women and it is given to a female heir that she may lead with justice, tame her tongue, and lead with humility. The hoe is for cultivation; that she may grow more food to feed the family that is put under her care.

Namukasa D. (78) adds that the heir is also given a female assistant locally known as *Lubuga*; as she explains. The *Lubuga* for the male heir comes from the same clan as that of the heir while that for the female heir comes from the clan of the husband to the deceased. She is the heir to the placenta (*ekitanyi*) from which the deceased developed. Since the placenta is believed to have been the guide to the deceased, its duty is then assumed by the *Lubuga*, whose main duty is to offer guidance and assistance to the heir. The *Lubuga* does not go through the

Since it cannot drink, a blocked tube is put for it in the calabash just to indicate that it is also part of the family and not just abandoned from where it was buried.

ritual of *okusumikira*, but rather is made to sit on a new bark cloth. She is not supposed to breast feed or even lift her baby while sited on this bark cloth. This is because the child to the *Lubuga* does not belong to her clan but that of her husband. She is also given a basket (*ekibbo*) with a knife (*akambe*) in it. These symbols given to her serve to remind her of her responsibility of feeding the family that she has assumed. The clan head also tells her that she should be a very hard working and hospitable lady, who welcomes and feeds all those that come to her.

The installation rites for the heir are climaxed by giving of gifts to the heir (*Omusika*) and his/her assistant (*Lubuga*). According to Nankabirwa V. (82), the giving of the gifts to the heir is headed by the person who performs the ritual of *okusumikira* (*omusumikizi/omukulu w'olumbe*). He publicly announces that; "I (names); here by dismantle the death of (name of the deceased) and all the other deaths of misfortunes. This (name of the heir) is the heir to our dear (name of the deceased)" (*Nze gundi; njabya olumbe lwa gundi n'ez'ebibamba zonna. Ono gundi y'asikidde munnaffe guundi*). He then gives the heir some money and also welcomes other celebrants (*abasumikizi*) to come and do the same. Each celebrant that comes out introduces him/herself to the heir, stating his connection with the deceased's family, gives some words of guidance to the installed heir and concludes by giving his/her gifts to the heir. This function is termed as *okusumikira*. It is after this function that the installation of the heir to the deceased would be completed.

This ritual is followed by that of shaving off of the orphans' hair (*Okumwa bamulekwa enviiri*). The paternal grandmother covers all the orphans, excluding the heir and his/her assistant (*Lubuga*), with a cloth or a bark cloth and leads them to the banana plantation (*Olusuku*) from where their hair is to be shaved off. To Namwandu Kamyia (78), the covering of the orphans under a cloth is meant to make them move together, symbolizing that the family is intact even under the leadership of the newly installed heir. While in the banana plantation the grandmother does a ritual cleansing of the orphans starting from the eldest to the youngest of them. She

washes each one's head, hands and the legs and then shaves off each one's hair, living the head bold. She unties the clothes that were tied in the waste of the orphans (*okusumulula amafuvu*) and cuts short their nails both for the fingers and toes. She applies oil on them, dresses them in fresh clothes and serves them with food (*Omuwumbo gw'amatooke*) and local brew. After the meal, she takes them back to the compound to welcome the heir to their deceased parent. This ritual cleansing is purposed to wash away tears from the face of the orphans (*okubanaazaako amaziga*) while (In my own opinion) the shaving off of the hair symbolizes the deceased's reincarnation through the newly installed heir. It shows the hope that as the hair grows back on the head after being shaved off, so it is with a human being that after death he/she does not completely perish but an heir is installed for him. It is for such a reason that childlessness is seen as a misfortune among the Baganda and anybody who dies childless is considered to have completely perished from the land of the living since no heir is installed for him/her; hence the Baganda proverb "*okuzaala kwe kuzuukira*" which is literally translated as, "Child bearing is resurrection".

According to Nankabirwa V. (82), a ritual performed for the widow's ritual cleansing is locally known as '*Okuggya Nnamwandu ku Kifugi*.' This ritual is performed by the brother to the widow who takes a big calabash of local brew to his in-laws in exchange for her sister. He picks her sister from the porch (*ekifugi*) and takes her to his hut. This ritual aims at introducing the deceased's in-laws to the heir. It also signifies that the widow has a family from where the deceased got her. There is also the reading of the deceased's will to the family member. It is after this reading of the will that deceased's property is known and distributed to those that he wished to give his property to. There is serving of food to all the participants and whoever finishes eating is free to depart at will except for the family members who stay for other rituals. Since the last funeral rites last for a night (*okusula mu ngalabi*) and the day that follows after (*omukolo omukulu*), huts (*ensiisira*) made of small poles and dry banana leaves (*essanja*) are

built around the home of deceased. These huts help in providing shelter for the participants who come to engage themselves in the last funeral rite. After the last funeral rites, the nephews (Abajjwa) to the deceased are charged with the duty of dismantling these huts and cleaning of the entire home environment. This act of dismantling the huts is locally known as “okwabya ensiisira” According to Mutyaba P. (64) one hut is always left intact in order for the spirit of the deceased to rest from it. It is also a sign that the deceased’s last funeral rites were performed. This hut is locally known as “Lwayaba”, and it is in this hut that any person who may receive the death message of the deceased after the last funeral rites may mourn from. In my opinion, this belief that the spirit of the deceased rests from the hut, serves an answer to the Jobian question that “If man dies will he live again?” It affirms the Baganda belief that man exist even after his physical demise. Mutyaba P. (64) states that all food and drink offerings to the living dead are put in that hut from which is believed to be the resting shelter for the deceased’s spirit.

6.9.9 Rituals for a Suicide Victim among the Baganda

Though I earlier stated that the Baganda look at death as a must way of passage for each individual to take, dying is never regarded a choice for one to make. For that reason, committing suicide is highly prohibited and condemned among the Baganda. Mutyaba P. (64) clearly states that death as a result of suicide is a great misfortune to the society and brings a curse to the victim’s family. The most common form of suicide among the Baganda is by ‘hanging one’s self using a rope or any strong material around the neck upon a tree branch or a horizontal pole in the house. This form is locally known as “Okwetuga”. Though dead, a suicide victim faces a number of repercussions from the society, including denial of a decent burial. It is never permissible to name a newly born child to the victim’s extended family by the names of a suicide victim. Such a name is considered accursed among the victim’s extended family and is likely to cause the new name bearer to fall into the same fate, Nandawula F. (75) explains.

Mpalanyi J. (70) and Ssemugabi F. (74) narrate the burial rituals performed for a suicide victim as recorded here. According to them, a suicide victim was never buried at the family's burial ground (ekiggya), with an intention of denying him or her communion with the ancestors. He/she was sometimes buried under the tree, on which he/she hanged. In some cases, he/she could be buried in a forest (ekibira), a bush (olusaalu), or on the margins of the family's land (Olusalosalo). The suicide victim was not buried in the grave (entaana) but in a pit (kinnyannya). His/her body (eddambo) was never embalmed because physical contact with it could make an individual ritually unclean. A pit could be dug under the tree from which he/she hanged and then a nephew (omujjwa) to the victim's family climbs up the tree and cuts the corps from the tree on which he/she is hanging to the dug pit. Then the victim's body could be covered with soil, not minding of the posture in which it is laying in the pit. Fire could be made on top of the suicide victim's grave after his/her burial. To Mpalanyi J. (70), the making of such a fire was meant to keep his/her spirit away in the grave such that it may not hurt the living relatives.

Kanyike D. (72) explains that sometimes the suicide victim was first flogged before his/her body could be cut from the tree (or any item) on which it is hanging. He explains that this aimed at punishing the body of the victim with a belief that his/her spirit was around observing these entire happenings. It was also a deterrent act that could send a message to the living relatives that choosing to commit suicide was never a better choice to take. He describes that those that came from burying a suicide victim could come back home while running and could wash their hands using water, not banana stems. The washing of hands using water and not the Banana stem was, I suppose, a move to deny the victim a privilege to get into contact with the environment. The family was not supposed to mourn but to rather celebrate their escape from a murderer. A suicide victim was considered as a murderer (omutemu); whoever came to greet

the bereaved family would congratulate them upon surviving a murderer, “mukulike omutemu” and they would respond, “tumuwonye” meaning, “we have escaped him/her”.

After the burial, the nephew was given a goat as a token of appreciation. Since he was not part of the victim’s clan, this nephew was not considered ritually unclean and never had to go under a cleansing ritual. Miiro S. (68) also says that the tree from which an individual commits suicide could be cut down and be burnt to ashes. Such a tree was considered to be inhabited by the spirit of that suicide victim and hence such a spirit could lure other people to commit suicide as well. Its wood was not used as firewood since it was unclean and could also make the food, cooked using it, unclean. He adds that not like the normal grave, a suicide victim’s grave was kept leveled on the ground and this purposed at helping the relatives to quickly forget the victim and not to keep his/her grave as a monument for the generations to come. It is for such reasons too that a suicide victim’s grave was also kept bushy and never would his or her name be given to a newly born child in the family.

However, in urban societies, many people have abandoned such rituals and even suicide victims are given a decent burial. The most common form of suicide in the urban centers is poisoning and it leaves many people doubting weather the victims are deliberately self-poisoned or are poisoned by another party. To the elders, the abandoning of a suicide victim’s burial rituals is one of the reasons as to why suicide cases are on the rise in the Buganda region today.

6.9.10 Rituals Performed on a Dead Infant

The death of an infant is considered a bad death (misfortune) among the Baganda and therefore special rituals are performed during the burial of a dead infant. According to Nassanga D. (72), the parents to the infant have to wrap the body of their dead child in their clothes. Each parent gets one of his/her already used cloth, not underwear, and wraps the infant’s body into it and

then the bark clothes follow. The infant's body is not supposed to be wrapped in his/her baby shawl (engozi). This could be given to the infant's grandmother, who would keep it safe. She believes that if an infant is buried in his/her shawls, or if this shawl lands into the hands of an evil person, the mother to the infant may fail to conceive again.

Infants are buried on the family burial ground. A bonfire is lite for infants but there are no special funeral rites performed for them. However, Kitimbo S. (83) states that after the burial of an infant, parents are expected to perform a ritual of announcing death to their marital bed (Okubikira ekitanda). This is done through parents jumping on and off their marital bed. The main reason for this ritual is to inform the bed that the child that was made from it is dead and so it should bless the parents with a new baby to replace their dead infant.

Namuyanja S. (68) explains that as a form of mourning, all relatives that mourn the death of an infant shave off their hair from the head living it bold. This exempts the infant's mother who is, as a form of mourning, not supposed to shave off her hair and cut short her finger nails. She is also required to live a lonely life, sleeping and eating alone. Namwandu Kkyaka (84) says that the mourning of infant lasts for a period of three days and thereafter the bereaved mother throws three sprat fish (enkejje) into the lite fire. This aroma of the burning sprat marks the end of the mourning period. She adds that the parents to the dead infant also perform a marital bed cleansing ritual (okunaazaako ekitanda amaziga). This ritual is done by washing the bed using water mixed with local herbs (Olweza and Ebbombo)

Bbakanansa R. (71) explains that in case a baby dies immediately after birth (okufiira mu ssanya), he/she is buried immediately as possible and his/her body is not supposed to be kept for a night. She adds that such babies are only buried by elderly women who have reached menopause and their graves are left leveled to the ground and above them, a banana plantation is planted. She says that these same rituals are also performed for a baby that dies before birth.

However, such a baby is not supposed to be buried on the family burial ground and she/he is buried with a banana stem (Omugogo); as a companion to stay with while in the underworld.

Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73) explains that it is against the Baganda custom to burry two people within the same grave and for this reason, a woman who dies with a fetus in her berry is not supposed to be buried with it. The fetus is supposed to be removed from the mother's womb before her burial. This is locally known as "*okutemula omufu*." He narrates that in the past an anonymous individual (Omutemu) would be hired to cut (*okutemula*) the berry of a dead pregnant woman and remove the fetus from it. The person who performs such a ritual was given whatever he asks for because it was a fierce ritual to perform. Most of the common things that were given, as a reward, to this anonymous individual include; a box of lazarus blades, a goat, a cock and money. Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73) clarifies that this person is left anonymous to avoid the stigma and discrimination from other members of the society. This ritual is performed from the banana plantation (Olusuku) where a tent is made and the dead body is left with all the items that this anonymous person uses during this operation. In this case, the fetus is buried in the same way as a child who has died from the womb. However, with the improvement in health services and technology, this postmortem operation is now performed from the hospitals by professional surgeons.

6.9.11 Rituals Performed on a Dead Accident Victim

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2018), accidents are one of the major causes of death in Uganda. Deaths as a result of accidents fall under the Baganda's category of "bad deaths" and as a requirement, some rituals have to be performed to complete the burial process of such a victim and ensure that the victim's spirit is not kept homeless. Nsubuga V. (70) and Boogere M. (76) narrate that after the burial of an accident victim, the deceased's family goes to the accident scene and collects his ghost from there. This ritual is locally known as "*okukima omuzimu*." It is believed that if this ritual is not performed, the deceased's spirit

continues haunting the relatives and killing other people, by causing accidents in the same spot. This is why, some road spots are known as danger spots, with many accidents recorded around them.

This ritual is performed with the headship of the nephew to the deceased, who with other family members take a cock, in case the victim was a man or a hen in case the victim was a woman. They also take with them a bark cloth and a stem of a land boundary marking plant (Oluwaanyi/Omulamula). While at the scene the nephew lays the bark cloth at the exact place where the deceased fell and puts the stem on the bark cloth. He then moves a distance from the bark cloth and starts to call upon the name of the deceased; “(deceased’s name, we have come for you, come and we take you home”.

They narrate that after the name of the deceased is called upon; wind (deceased’s ghost) comes around the bark cloth, shaking the *omulamula* stem on it. It is at this moment that the nephew picks up the stem and wraps it into the bark cloth. He holds the wrapped stem together with the cock/hen and moves straight from the scene to the deceased’s grave, without looking behind. This step is held with much care and respect as that accorded to the real corpse. While at the deceased’s grave, he unwraps the *omulamula* stem and plants it on the head side (emitwetwe) of the grave while saying these words; “(deceased’s name) this is your home land”. As a reward, he then slaughters that chicken and eats it alone. Nsubuga V. (70) and Boogere M. (76) believe that the spirit of the deceased sometimes reunites with the body in the grave and so if it remains away at the scene of the accident, then it may fail to occasionally reunite with the body making it feel lonely and crave for more spirits to join it, such that it may overcome the loneliness. They share a similar thought with Mutyaba P. (64), a renowned diviner in Kiteza-Lugazi municipality, who attributes most of the accidents that occur on Kampala-Jinja Highway around Kitega trading center in Lugazi municipality to the failure to pick the ghosts of the

accident's death victims by their relatives. He believes that the said spot on that highway has ghosts that cause such accidents by confusing the drivers.

If an individual dies from a water accident, Kirunda W. (53) states, the mother to the deceased would be called to breast feed the lake in order for it to bring back the dead body. She would leave her chest open, with breasts out and would call out the name of her child, inviting him/her to come and breast feed; "My child come and breast feed." It is believed that on hearing the call, the body of the water accident victim would start flowing towards the shore where the parents are. If the victims were many, the family that has seen the body of their relatives is not supposed to remove it from the water before the other bodies are seen. This is meant to signify the unity and to offer companionship to each other.

When the body is removed from the water, it is immediately drained by pressing the stomach, put in a bag like polythene material that is locally known as "Kkapera" from which it is picked, wrapped into the bark cloth and put into the coffin for the burial. Such bodies are not exposed for public view and do not go under the detailed normal burial rituals. They are not entered into the house but are buried immediately since they are already decomposing due to the much water in them. After the burial, the ritual of "okukima omuzimu" is performed by the nephew to the deceased, just the same way as that of the road accident victim.

6.9.12 Post- Burial Rituals among the Baganda

As Cook emphasizes, proper burial and generous grave goods are important, but care for the dead continues long after all goods have been deposited and all funerary rites concluded. He observes that African 'umbilical' connections extend permanently to deceased kin. Living relatives and friends strive to perpetuate a caring and mutual relationship with their departed loved ones, as long as their minds and bodies allow (Cook 2007). This caring and mutual relationship is maintained through practices of memory and invocation (Mbiti 1990:21-6).

Africans are intentional about keeping the memory and the name of a deceased relative alive (Cook 2007:667). In Buganda this is physically evident whenever a person fully introduces him/herself. While making self-introduction, the Baganda are expected to clearly state their genealogy starting from their living members of the family moving toward the fifth or sixth generation of their ancestor. This practice is locally known as “Okulamya” a term that can be literary translated as “to turn somebody/ something to life or to give life.” This self-introduction is also known as “Okutambula ng’Omuganda”, a phrase that can be literary translated as “Walking like a Muganda”. When critically examined, this phrase can imply that for a person to be a full Muganda, one has to have full knowledge of his genealogy from the living parents to the fifth or even the sixth ancestral generation. It requires the full knowledge of the name of the ancestor, his/her generation and the place where he/she was buried. To ensure that this memory and name of the deceased relatives is maintained, the “Okulamya” is intentionally made a mandatory part for every cultural ceremony among the Baganda. Okulamya is the Baganda’s intentional way of preserving the memory of the dead relatives and bringing these deceased members of the family to a practical living in this land of the living. Nsubuga V. (70) states that it is the responsibility of the elders to teach the young ones of their genealogy and to always work with the clan leaders to organize clan get together functions (Okumanyagana) through which the young ones get full knowledge of their living and deceased relatives.

In the same line of keeping the memory of the deceased members of the family, the Baganda are sensitive during name selection in their naming rituals. Namukasa R (76) states that during the naming ceremony, the names given to the newly born children are intentionally scrutinized to eliminate names of those that are not considered to be ancestors. She notes that names of those that died prematurely, suicide victims, witches and criminals, those that died childless, were never given to children. She states that giving such names to the newly born children would cause them to fall into the same fate. However, in my personal opinion, this practice

aims at cutting off the communion of the living with such deceased family members, through intentionally making their memory to gradually faint from the heads of the surviving family members and their names to disappear in the generations to come. It is for this same reason, I suppose, that the names of those considered to have died a good death and lived a good life would be commonly given to newly born children.

The grave yards too are kept a property of the family and are supposed to be kept clean, free from long grasses. To ensure that the grave yard is kept clean, a grave cleaning ritual is regularly organized whenever required. This ritual is locally known as “okulima ebiggya” and is sometimes, but not usually, done in combination with either the last funeral rites or during the family get together ceremony (Okumanyagana) and is a duty of all the living relatives to their deceased relatives. The keeping clean of the grave yards seems to affect both the state of the deceased’s spirit in the life after death and even that of the living relatives. According to Nankabirwa V. (82), in case the family members neglect the graves of their deceased relatives, the deceased’s spirits may appear to those living relatives in dreams complaining of the poor state in which they are living in the afterlife. She continues that incase the living relatives fail to positively respond to such complaints; the abandoned ancestors may then use coercion to have their graves cleaned. The means of coercion used by these ancestors may include causing illnesses and poverty, instabilities in homes, making a family member run mad or even at worst, causing death to a family member. In case any of those things happen, consultation to a medium can be made through which the family members can be instructed to visit their ancestral land and have the grave yard attended to in order for them to get relief. A local statement “Genda empewo z’ekika zikufuuweko” is commonly used as an advice to a person that has overly experienced such misfortunes.

The living and the dead are presented to be living in the same spatial area but in the different substantial state. Unlike the living that are physical, the dead are spiritual and can only be seen

by those that they deliberately choose to appear to. They sometimes appear in the same likeness of their bodies or sometimes through animals like cats, caterpillars, dogs, snakes, rats, leopards among others.

The spirit's incarnation in animals is part of the profound beliefs among the Baganda's cultural construct of the afterlife. Those that claim to have had encounters with such animals do testify that when they appear, they act in a very friendly humble manner and cannot endanger any one unless if proven a danger to it. Such animals are linked to families or clans and sacrifices are made for them. It is usual and common for people that live in the ambiance of the Baganda culture to hear individuals speak of family animals with statements like, Engo y'ekika-Family's leopard, Timba w'ekika-Family's python, among others. To avoid getting endangered by those animals, families that have such animals do treat them as visitors (Omugenyi azze) whenever they appear. They organize habitants for them to rest from whenever they pay a visit to the home. For example, some build a small hut for the family dogs, cats, snakes, and rats; those that have leopards usually keep a bush (Akabira) next to their homes. Mze Kisolokyamanyi (73) explains that whenever a family leopard appears, the family offers a live goat or cock for it feast on and failure for the family to do so; this leopard may cause chaos to the community by strangling other people's goats and calves.

Though unusual, secondary burial rituals (Okujjulula omufu) are performed by the Baganda. Such secondary burial rituals can be initiated by either the living or the deceased. They can be performed in case there is a need to transfer the remains of the deceased to another burial area for given reason. Kitimbo S. (83) notes that sometimes the spirit of a dead relative may appear to the living relatives demanding to be transferred from where it was buried to another area. These rituals are performed by a nephew to the deceased and those that participated in the first burial are not permitted to participate in these secondary burial rituals. Since these rituals are performed in the late evenings, careful procedures are followed to ensure that no single bone

from the deceased (Ebisigarirwa by'omugenzi/Engumbagumba) is left behind, in case the deceased's flesh had fully decomposed. It is believed that if any of the deceased's bones (Engumbagumba) is left behind, his/her spirit may haunt the living relatives and cause misfortunes to them. After exhuming the body or all the bones, they are wrapped in new bark cloths. A cock (for deceased man) or a hen (for a deceased woman) is tied on top of the wrapped body or bones and transferred together to the new burial ground. Kanyike D. (72) explains that it is through this cock or hen that the spirit of the dead is transferred from the former grave to the new grave. He states that such a cock or hen is later eaten by the nephew who has performed these rituals.

Ssemwanga S. (69) cautions that the remains of the dead (Amagufa or Engumbagumba) are not supposed to be taken through the compound (Oluggya) for this would make the compound ritually unclean and would be a sign of welcoming death into one's home. For this reason, they are taken through bushes to the new burial grounds. As a replacement for the deceased's remains, a banana plantation is planted in the old grave. Unlike the normal burial ceremonies that are communal, secondary burials are limited to family members and a few helpers.

When closely examined, the death management rituals among the Baganda attest to the belief that every living human being relates to the natural surroundings. These natural surroundings range from animals to plants, mostly owned by the individual. For that reason, the death of an individual was seen not as affecting the living relatives alone but also his possessions in the natural surroundings. The head cock (Sseggwanga) was considered living a parallel life with that of the family head and the death of the family head called for the slaughtering of the Sseggwanga not only to make the death of the family head known to his flock but to also give chance to the rise of a new Sseggwanga in the flock, symbolizing the inheritance and heir installation rituals performed during the last funeral rites.

During child birth, the placenta (ekitanyi) comes after the baby. Among the Baganda, it is handled with much care considering it to be the second child (omwana ow'okubiri/omwana ow'emabega). Though it is considered to be born dead, this second child is believed to be guiding the one born with it throughout his/her life. Since after birth the placenta is buried in the banana plantation, the banana plantation is seen to be a home for the individual's birth companion and the death of an individual calls for extending death announcement to the individual's kitanyi. It is with that background that a banana plant is cut from the plantation as narrated above.

The burial of a banana stem with the corpse of an infant that has died immediately after birth is another case that depicts the inter-relatedness of the natural surroundings to the life of the human beings. The banana stem in this case is taken as a companion to this dead newly born infant. It is believed that such an infant lacks sufficient connection with the dead ancestors and can only have this banana stem as a companion in the netherworld. This belief indicates that the banana stem buried with a dead newly born baby goes with him/her to the netherworld.

If the grave is not used for its intended purpose, it is never left open or covered plain but, as a substitution, a banana plant is planted in that unused grave. This act may indicate a substitution of a human life with that of the planted banana plant.

6.10 Polemicizing Death among the Baganda

Death in Buganda as many other African communities south of the Sahara is polemicized in many ways. Africans lament and soliloquize about death in their songs, poems and conversations. Perhaps, the only Ganda old song and poem which has received scholarly attention is the lament called Ssematimba ne Kikwabanga (Katamba, & Cooke 1987). In other polemics, the phenomenon of death among Baganda is embodied as Walumbe—the angelic feature who introduced death among humans. The name Walumbe is commonly used in all

religious circles in Buganda. Funerals and vigil nights are widely referred to as Olumbe. Of interest are the words and music of late Job Kafeero, which is briefly discussed below:

In his song, “Essaawa y’okuzaawa” (The time to be no more), the late Prince Paul Job Kafeero presents a great deal of insight about an African’s lament over the feebleness of this transient life in the face of death. Like the Biblical Job, Kafeero expresses an African’s discontent over the adversity of death and offers a great insight on the Baganda Traditional concept of death, using the richness of the Luganda language. Below are the Luganda lyrics of this song transcribed by the researcher from his audio recordings as retrieved from; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2019f33EVXE>

ESSAAWA Y’OKUZAAWA (THE TIME TO BE NO MORE)

Verse 1

- 1a. Nafunye ekangabwa ewaka eyo mu matumbi, nga ndowoozeza essaawa y’okuzaawa
 - 1b. Olumbe lutulanga bwemage bataayi nkivumbudde.
 - 1c. Tulabye n’obulamu obukira obuwoomu, Okutusaanako nga tewali ategedde
 - 1d. Eby’ensi ebitwemazaamu bya bulimba, Kalenge busa
- 1e. Pawulo buli lwendowooza kw’ebyo, bwenkunganya ne mbula obunnywa buggweewo
 - 1f. Ate ndituuka nakaki eyo kulukuusi, kiteebereze!
 - 1g. Kwo okufa tukimanyi nti kyabutonde, naye tekimanyiirika ekyo bakulimba
 - 1h. Ate nga n’awazaayirwa olaba nga wampi naye nga wala.
 - 1i. Tulabye n’enfa ya luno ezisa amayumba, n’obuto okusigala nga buyaayaana
 - 1j. Luwemye abalenzi abannyumirwa amassuuti, obutteddiriza
- 1k. Ndowooza gyebalindeka eyo kulukande, okunkasukira envunyu zirye ekiwedde
 - 1l. Kale eyazaayirwa bannange gyendigenda, olumbe luno
- 1m. Ndowooza gyemulindeka eyo kulukande, okunkasukira envunyu mpunye ekivundu
 - 1n. Kale eyazaayirwa ne mmange gyendigenda, olumbe lubi

1o. Lweluno olutuyiga engeri ya ddungu, kutuwanika embegabega okuzaanamyanga

1p. Era lwe lutawankanya buli kitonde, lutuwemmense

Chorus

Tulabye n'obulamu buno obwa kokoonyo, butulyanguzi ossuwa ne kuky'otazze

Sso gyetwabugya tewali amanyiiyo nga ne gyebulaga tewali ategeera

Yii essaawa yo'kuzaawa!

Verse 2

2a. Lutwala n'ennyama beewedde kumagumba, n'obunnyaaluse nabwo lubukukumba

2b. Abazzaala lubalesa bwana mu zireeba, nga lwettika

2c. Abakunkuna n'emigo mu bukanzu, terubawanise mpalaata luweneena

2d. Olaba lukyagguwa abakuumbwa ekikungu, lusajja lukka

2e. Ebintu by'okoleredde ebanga eggwanvu, bitwalibwa abataali baakinywi ne bejja

2f. Bavulubanira mu byebataamanya gyebyaava, olumbe luno

2g. Walumbe n'otutambuza nga twemassaga, okutukenenya endusu okira ebimenke

2h. Omukulu gy'otusindika entiisa nyingi so tegendwa adda

2i. Okufa tekusiimibwa kula ekyo kyagwa, ndabayo n'abamu abakyusibwa omusaayi

2j. Balala batwalwa London mu baakakensa, naye nga wa!

2k. Mukama watuppangira obulumi bungi, okutwabaliza ensi olage emagombe

2l. Luttuddaaza ng'olutagenda na kukutta ohoh!

Verse 3

3a. Lwemmonkoolera kubaatona amayumba, lugabaggyamu nabo tebannasiima

3b. Lubasanga kumbaga omugole n'affa kiteebereze

3c. Ebituwalaganya katubikyawe, eno ensi okujjaamuka akolola alwawo

3d. Abagagga lwabattereka eyo ku lukuusi tebaddanga

3e. Abayaaye n'abateefu gyetugenda, n'otamanya bw'oliba nga lukugimbye

3f. Nange alijja ne gitta bwemulinziika mmale nzaawe

3g. Buli awali akalungi w'asibidde, nkugambye lwatiribiiza empale abalenzi

3h. Olaba lutaayiza kkappa eraba amatumbi, lussukirivu

3i. Ssebo walumbe n'obuyinzabwo tuyambe, tusomose kubwana bwaffe buyaayaana

3j. Kubanga gy'otuganzika entiisa nnyingi, bikuuno, bisa

Verse 4

4a. Otunnuulira eyali annyirira n'otya, nga anti akunkumuka evvu akira ekikoomi

4b. Abaali beeyiringula kati bigooge, olumbe luno

4c. Lutera n'okulingizaako mu malaame, omusikka n'akusookayo mu by'omuzannyo

4d. Omwanawo eyali akuwa buli kalungi nga lwettika

4e. Kalenno twalitegedde ddi lw'oligenda, twekanga abamu lubajje mu luguuddo

4f. Ne mubire lubawanulayo kisufu, terwewalika

4g. Singa atuyigga bwa ppeke afazaali mw'ekyo, n'atayambibwako baamize mikambwe

4h. Lututeega n'emiyaayu gituganze, wagwenya yii!

4i. Nze n'emikwano gyaluno sikyetegeera; abasinga okutwagalangako luppiiya

4j. Ssebo n'akuppangira attyo mubulwadde offe agabane,

4k. Tutintima buli bwelunyaga omu kuffe, banange essaawa y'okufa ejja n'ebigambo

4l. N'owulira abawoza gundi y'amunyodde kyokka ensi eno

4m. Ebyo byebintunnuza ng'amira akaloddo, okufa bwekumala okugwa teri ategeera

4n. Okutabangula emikwano buli kadde lwa katwewungu

4o. Simanyi n'ebiwugulu obirya toziza, ndaba byebyekobozesa mbu bitulanga

4p. Ne binamunyeenye byabikanga mwana wange

4q. Endulu n'emiranga munnaku ebisufu, byebiwerekera ddala alaga emagombe

4r. Kimwakire atebenkere ttogenda kudda tukwerabire

Verse 5

- 5a. Nze ndutya kwekyusiza ba kakwaya, basajjabe ate abamubaagira bya'aggunze
- 5b. Bwonna ne buccuula bumuwoomera teyeenyinyala
- 5c. Nakubuuza dda nti etali ssiteegi olituteekawa ggwe atamanyi kuzimba
- 5d. Ye ate tunaagamba tutya nga n'abazimbi obasombodde
- 5e. Bannange lwatirimbula Simbwa nentya, fundi wange anzimbira ekifo ekka
- 5f. Musajjawattu ataalina luyombo eyasaaganga
- 5g. Omwami alinna layifu eri ewuwe emagombe, alina gubbandi ogumukubira ebiddongo
- 5h. Yatirimbula abayimbi mungeriye enkabwe, abangi batyo
- 5i. Mazima Jim Reeves n'abulwako entaana, lulina amatte luli lukambwe
- 5j. Nakati gyelwayisa Hitler tteri amanyiiyo owamagye ffugge
- 5k. Ye abaffe, Sese Seko wali omulangaki okumutwala nga yeesimbye gyali
- 5l. Nabafuzi obabaaga bubuzi omanyi okubamba, wagenda wala
- 5m. Lutwogezaako n'ebigwanira abagwenyu, mbu afudde n'awonna obulumi obw'ensi
- 5n. Nti ani yali alabye ku bifa gyebazaayira mubakiine mutyo
- 5o. Akyassa tomanyi nti lunaalumba, kyebava bawemukira alaga emagombe
- 5p. Ebintubyo ne binnyagwa okira byewabba enganda zino
- 5q. Ne bweribeera banja teri kusaasira, wakiri gy'offiiridde abowa omulambo
- 5r. Magobaaki agasubirwa okuva mw'azaaye mutubanjenga
- 5s. Obwanabwo gyebusoma ggwe kasita ofa oyinza ogamba nti babuzza lwa kuziika
- 5t. Kati eddimansita amannyi teri kuyamba olwo kweganwa
- 5u. Waliwo welwantabulirwa ate ku belwalya ne lubazuukusa okunona n'abakyassa
- 5v. Emizimu gidobonkanya ebika bataayi baganda bange
- 5w. Oba okyakungiriza abagwa mu mayanja, n'ojja owulirayo ate bakibwetere
- 5x. Omuntu naayokya banne enkuyanja bw'etyo oli kasajja kabi

- 5y. Oba okyakungiriza abaggwa mu mayanja, n’ojja owulirayo ate ba Kibwetere
- 5z. Omuntu naayokya banne enkuyanja bw’etyo ddiini mppya
- 5aa. Pawulo buli lwendowooza kw’ebyo bwenkunganya ne mbula obunywa bugwewo
- 5ab. Ate ndituuka na kaki eyo kulukuusa ettagendwa adda?
- 5ac. Pawulo buli lwendowooza kw’ebyo bwenkunganya ne mbula obunnywa bugwewo
- 5ad. Ate ndituuka na kaki eyo kulukuusa ettagendwa adda?

(Transcribed by Kisekka Enoch).

Falling in the traditional “kaddongo kamu” genre of music, the above song poses challenges in translation as in this genre of music, singers often express their ideas in ambiguous, proverbial fragments, leaving it up to knowledgeable listeners to fill in the meanings (Barrett 2012). However, for the purpose of this study, the above Luganda lyrics can be loosely translated as;

TIME TO BE NO MORE

1

I was left distraught when I pondered over a time to be no more!

I was at home at dead of night

I have discovered that death torments and tortures us but for no reason.

O life sweeter than the sweetest yet cut too short for one to notice!

All these worldly treasures we crave are nothing but mere dross.

That’s why whenever I, Paul, muse over our unfortunate state; I almost consider drinking myself to oblivion, for what will I take with me to the land of no return.

Although we know that death is natural

Be not deceived, no one can ever get used to it!

Although the grave may appear shallow and close

It is deep and far!

O death, how insensitive you are! How heartless you are robbing toddlers of their parents,
leaving them languish!

Look at once healthy crop of our youth incessantly being eaten away irreversibly
O no! Time is coming when I, too, shall be left to the maggots to feast on my lifeless body in
that land where death reigns

Time is coming when my rotten stinking body maggots in that land where death dragged my
mother too! O death!

O death making the whole creation groan;

We are butchered,

Hunting us down like Ddungu the great hunter

Turning healthy bodies gaunt and lean fleshed.

Chorus

O what a transient life we live!

Where we got it no one knows

Where it is going no one understands

O a time to be no more

2

O death the indiscriminate taker;

Taking the skeletal

Taking the emaciated

Taking women delivered of their babies, leaving them to their own devices.

Taking the crippled devouring their leathery hair to baldness

Breaking through heavily guarded parameters

Pulling down VIP's

Death knows no boundaries!

All that you have toiled for, for ages are taken over by mere acquaintances

They scramble and grab your property without demur!

Death O death turning us walking zombies

Lost in plunging thoughts!

No one returns from where you take us,

A horrible terrible place of no return!

Death is invincible

No amount of medical attention, however sophisticated, can beat him.

O death the heartless sadist

Taunting and tormenting us before it finally strangles you!

O Lord, this wrath of yours is too much for us to bear!

3

O death the sucker of joy!

As soon as they finish building their houses, they go still

Imagine! In the middle of the wedding banquet, the bride dies

Therefore, there is no good reason for bad blood between us since in the end,

Death takes us fast.

O death the unselective;

Stashed the sticking rich in the morgue of no return
You can never imagine how you shall be when it takes you!
Taking both the crooks and the courteous
So shall it take me, the guitarists,
And I shall be no more
Boys once sinewy now bony
O death be merciful to us
Let us have time to bring up our little ones
For dreadful is the place of no return.

4

Behold they were once robust and sturdy but now as scrawny as a starved vulture
They were once well-figured bodies now hollow-cheeked and as thin as a rake
Death peeps through wills and carries the heirs to the land of no return
Leaving their testators helplessly groaning for their departed progeny
O death the unannounced assailant
With surprise attacks it takes us
Even from the airplane in the clouds
Death has a variety of agents; the ruffian and whores!
I wish death hunted us singly!
To my surprise, our friends too become his agents
Conspiring with murderers to take your life so that they share your property as booty
We are left speechless and astounded whenever he robs us of one of us!
Rumor goes round: "Mr/Mrs so and so is behind the deceased's death".
What a world!

That's why we look aghast when death strikes
Death strikes friends apart
Using one of his stripes, madness!
Death the indiscriminate killer
It has no mercy on owls that announce our death
It also brings down the bar-headed goose! Imagine!
Great alarms and unlimited mourning accompany them who go to the land of no return!
“Rest in peace and may you rest in eternal light” they say moreover to a land of no return
Never to be remembered!

5

O death the indiscriminate eater!
Imagine, it eats even the scraggy
Death, O death, where do you take the artists without a stage
O death ignorant of building and construction yet you have devoured builders!
I remember when it brutalized Ssimbwa my builder,
Ssimbwa the peaceful nonaggressive man
Death has a deathly music band in the land of no return
There he keeps on taking musicians: and recruits them undeniably:
Jim Reeves without a grave.
Hitler's whereabouts no one can tell
Sese Seko buried as upstanding as an electric pole!
You slaughter rulers like slaughtering goats!
It evokes mocking speeches from mourners:

“Now that he/she’s dead, he/she’s healed from all earthly pain!”

But who knows or has ever seen what goes on in the land of no return!

Your property is divided and shared as if it were plunder

What profit can be obtained from the dead o shameless creditors?

Your children are sent back under the guise of attending the burial

Yet the head teacher’s aim is to discontinue them indefinitely!

Death is incomprehensible.

Can you imagine, after taking some to the land of no return, it returns through the spirits of

the dead to haunt take the breathing ones too!

While you are still perplexed by those who perish at sea,

You get flummoxed by Kibwetere’s carnage, who massively burns thousands of people in his

new cult,

That’s why when I, Paul, muse over our predicament,

I almost consider drinking myself into nothingness

I came in this world with nothing

And nothing shall I take with me to land of no return!

That’s why when I, Paul, muse over our predicament,

I almost consider drinking myself into nothingness

I came in this world with nothing

And nothing shall I take with me to the land of no return!

(Translated by Kisekka Enoch).

The late Prince Job Paul Kafeero’ song transcribed and translated above offers a more detailed lament over the unfairness of death compared to that of the Biblical Job, in the text under study.

With evidence from the title of the song, I can state that Kafeero looks at the time of death as

a time to be no more. He looks at death as a monster that attacks, devours and turns things to nothingness. Death cuts short the physical existence of individuals.

In his first line Kafeero openly discloses how distraughted he was left when he pondered about the time to be no more, the hour of death. This is not only a unique feeling experienced by Kafeero but rather a general feeling expressed by all that picture selves in a state of being no more. In interaction between the different respondents, I observed that matters of death are not widely discussed and require a lot of sensitivity when brought in a conversation among the Baganda. A thought about death raises more questions for one to ponder about; it turns worldly possessions to nothingness but mere dross and may influence behavior change in life as Kafeero reveals how it influenced his choice of living an alcoholic life style.

Walumbe (Death) is conceived a natural insensitive heartless sadist that robs the toddlers of their parents, incessantly eats away the healthy crop of our youth and makes all the creation groan. It is an indiscriminate invincible taker, taking the skeletal, emaciated, delivering mother, the crippled, the crooks and the courteous, and knowing no boundaries that it also breaks through heavily guarded parameter to take the corporates and stash the sticking rich in the morgue of no return.

This general Baganda belief and acknowledgement of the indiscriminative nature of death is expressed in a proverb, “Ssekiriba kya ttaka, mpaawo atalikyambala”; literally translated as “no one will escape wearing the skin of the ground.” Whoever is born of a woman is expected to meet death at an uncertain point in life. Though accepted as the natural fate of all living things, no one can ever get used to it or even make total peace with the thought of his or her death as Kafeero clearly states;

Although we know that death is natural

Be not deceived, no one can ever get used to it!

Although the grave may appear shallow and close

It is deep and far!

Agents of Death

Kafeero also brings light to the Concept of death agents and that of death messengers. Though the words agents and messengers may appear as synonyms, in this work, am too careful not to mix-up the two concepts and therefore I here in look at death agents as the different means/ways through which Walumbe (Death) claims the living well as death messengers as the signs endowed in nature that indicate the adversity of Walumbe (death). In a simpler explanation, as death agents directly cause death, the death messengers only deliver death invitation messages.

Kafeero presents Walumbe as the unfair serial killer that while in his hunt uses a number of agents to taunt and torment us before he finally strangles us and turns us into his meal. These agents range from diseases, ruffians and whores, close friends that conspire with murderers, spirits of the dead that haunt the breath of the living, accidents, and terrorists like Kibwetere. He uses madness as his strip. These are not the only agents of death that the Baganda know, other agents include witches and witchcraft, and ancestral curses.

In describing Walumbe's hunting, Kafeero uses strong words that keep the listener dreadfully thinking of the time to be no more. He states that like Ddungu the great hunter, death spots his game, launches a surprise attack, taunts, torments, turning healthy bodies gaunt and lean fleshed, and finally strangles the individual and eats him/her. Kafeero notes that sometimes Walumbe also peeps through wills and carries the heirs even before their testators. He also slaughters rulers like slaughtering goats. This description is not only limited to Kafeero's understanding but also extends to the general Baganda beliefs

In his lament over the indiscriminative nature of death Kafeero states:

*“It has no mercy on owls that announce our death. It also brings down the bar-headed
goose! Imagine!”*

These lines openly acknowledge that Walumbe does not only take humans alone but is also sometimes responsible for taking animals even those well known as death messengers.

When closely examined it becomes clear that various lines attest to the incomprehensible nature of death and the netherworld that Kafeero tries to comprehend in his song. He presents the netherworld with very unpleasant images that could offer a reason to his conviction; *“You can never imagine how you shall be when it takes you!”* He states that the grave that appears shallow and close is actually deep and far. This imagery tallies well with the consideration of the grave to be only an entrance to “Magombe”, the obscure land of no return. A horrible place filled with maggoty rotten stinking bodies and dangerous haunting spirits. Such an imagery of the land of ancestors is so consistent with the general Baganda beliefs in regards to the netherworld, it can only offer a glimpse of the corpse’ condition in the grave.

6.11 Conclusion

With the above discussion on the Baganda death management rituals, I find it safe to state that the Baganda death management rituals can be classified into the following stages: a mourning period, preparation of the corpse, interment, and regular post-burial ritualistic practices for the deceased intended to be maintained indefinitely. These three stages are essential in the maintenance and continuation of life even after death by uniting the recently deceased with their dead kin. They are also motivated by the fear of punishment from the deceased. A decent burial is that when the deceased is buried in the family’s ancestral burial ground. It may mean much beyond this, however, including cleaning and grooming their bodies to meet the ancestors, offering them a big amount of bark cloths for purposes of warmth and sending along special greetings with them. They are climaxed with the last funeral rites. These decent burials

are only fully accorded to those considered to have died a good death. Full decent burial is denied for those that die unmarried, childless, infants and those that face untimely tragic deaths. Even with children, suicide victims are totally denied the privilege of having a decent burial.

The post-burial ritualistic practices aim at keeping the memory of the good dead among the living. The only truly dead are those are not accorded proper burial and those that are forgotten but as long as we live so do the living dead, for they are a part of us as we remember them through the post-burial rituals. These ritualistic practices range from pouring libation, keeping alive the memory of the dead among the living, offering an heir to a meriting dead, renaming children after the deceased, cleaning and maintaining of graves and grave yards, taking care of animals with incarnated spirits of the dead and fulfilling the demands of the dead as made known to the living relatives. Such rituals can best be fulfilled if the deceased left children behind. Those without children can hardly be remembered and hence stand less, or even no, chances of being kept alive in the memory of the living. They quickly become truly dead.

CHAPTER 7: IDEO-THEOLOGICAL CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN THE BOOK OF JOB AND THE BUGANDA TRADITIONAL SETTING

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the establishment of the correlation between Job 14: 1-12 and the conception of death and life after death among the Baganda. It embodies the synthesis of the text of Job 14: 1-12, the biblical and ancient near eastern concept of human life and death, and death among the Baganda.

7.2 Analysis and Synthesis

The occupants of the Ancient Near East and the Baganda share a common belief in regards to the nature of life of the first humans as built in their myths of origin. They both believe that man was created in a state of conditional immortality and that this state was only reversed by man's choice taken either by manipulation or self-free will. The sacredness of human life is not debatable in both contexts and it is considered immoral and illegal for one to take one's or other individual's life, except for legal vengeance. Job's observation of human life as a few of days and full troubles is a dilemma attested to in the Biblical world (Genesis 47:9, Job 10:20, Psalms 90:10, Ecclesiastes 2, etc.). Kafeero's polemics clearly bring out this message when he refers to human life as a transient life, man left helpless in face of death. The way of man is a weary way-weakness, suffering and impurity is the portion of man just from birth. Despite all that man can do - all his care, and skill, and learning and wealth, life is a weary pilgrimage, and is burdened with many woes.

Job's alluding to the numbering and reducing of man's days demonstrate that man has no control over the longevity of his/her life. In the Bible, as also the African Traditional Society, it is God/gods who determines the longevity of humanity. Man's struggles to live longer are

all in vain. Therefore, Job seems to be consenting his limitedness in extending his life since such powers are not with in dispensation.

The analogy of a tree to human life in the face of death is a salient theme in the human struggle to make sense of life and death in many societies. It is attested to in the Bible under the theme of the tree of life which runs right from the creation stories of Genesis 2:8-10, through various texts to Revelation 22:2. Egyptians used tree imageries over a long period of ancient history in mythological portrayals of revivification in the afterlife (Hays 2015). The Canaanite goddess Asherah is consistently represented in iconography by a tree, symbolized by a wooden pole called an asherah and associated with life and fertility (Hestrin 1987 and Smith 2002). The afterlife tree and the tree goddesses in the Ancient Egyptian mythology and Iconography attest to this conviction that although trees were associated with various deities in various ways, there is a clear and long-standing tradition of mortuary association between trees and resurrection (Hays 2015). Some of these myths testify to the prominence of the motif in the ancient Near East of a mythical plant or food with life-giving properties (Wallace 1985). In African societies trees not only offer shade to ancestors but are a representation of the undying spirits of the ancestors. Some special trees are believed to be inhabited by ancestors who are believed to dwell in big trees like the Mvule trees, Mutuba trees, Muwafu trees among others. In Africa, spirits are believed to dwell in forests and water banks with trees. From generation-to-generation big trees have been regarded as sacred shrines or places of sacrifice to the ancestral spirits (Hutchings, 2007). In Buganda, trees like the Nakayima tree in Mubende District and the Nabukalu tree of the Lugave clan (Tenywa and Ssekidde 2022), among others are revered as sacred trees, hence deifying them. Usually, sacrifices are made to appease the ancestral spirits in them, to invoke rain, to ensure a good crop, to relieve famine, to eat the first fruits and generally to safeguard the tribal and local welfare. This African mummification of the dead in trees is a symbol of the Africans continuous belief in the undying spirits of the ancestors.

Therefore, it is not a coincidence that Job refers to a tree cut down in his despair for revivification of life after death taking its course.

Job's allusion to hope for the tree resonates with Isaiah 11:1 (A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit...). The poem can be understood from the situational circumstances of Job, where he has lost all the children. Whereas Jesse died, there is hope that a shoot would stem from his stump. This ideological nuance of comparing children to the shoot is not foreign to the Baganda. In Buganda, children are likened to saplings (emiti emito). A common Luganda proverb goes; "emiti emito gye gigumiza ekibira." This can be literary translated as "the saplings make the forest thick, firm or strong." "Okugumira" is a Luganda word that can mean; to get thick, firm, grounded, or strong. All these words may imply vitality. In essence, the proverb depicts children to be the strength and hope for survival of not only an individual, but also the entire society. A forest without saplings is a hopeless forest, transparent, forceless and sees no hope for future survival; this is the fate of a childless Muganda in the face of death. Job's absence of children (emiti emito) implied that he had no hope to live again. In the ancient world, societies accepted death as the live reality that is inescapable. One of the ways of fighting the eliminating effects of death was having children. A childless person was disparaged and hopeless. Parents lived in the lives of their children and their descendants. In Genesis 15, Abraham decried his childless state to God to the effect that he is promised many descendants that will make his name great. In effect, Job's soliloquy is not only about the physical death of the body, but more so the death of his name, fame and lineage. In Job's situational circumstances, the tree is not only cut and its stump left in the ground but its stump is also fully uprooted or removed from the ground and left with no hope of budding again, (Job 19:10).

Reading Job in context of Ancient Near East, he is not concerned about life after death but the reality that death robs people of physical life. Job can't be conceived as conflicting with the

popular reality than of the spiritual world, which was a common belief in the Ancient Near East. The usage of terms like waste away, disappear among other, clearly express what actually happens to humans after death. Though kept in the memory of the living, as generations pass memories fade and an individual disappears to nothing. This physical disappearance (Okuzaawa) is compared to the invisible nature of winds. The Baganda considered the process of dying to be that which transforms man in to the winds that dry clothes, (Okufuuka embuyaga ezikaza engoye) and the ancestral spirits are also referred to as empewo (the winds). Though felt, winds can't be touched, though their actions are noticeable, winds can't be seen; so is the state of the dead. To Job, though the dry valley can have hopes of getting refilled with water in the wet season, the waters filled in will not be the exact waters which dried out. So is the world as humans die others are getting into life, but this does not imply that the dead are getting a rebirth through the newly born children. The dead go for good as the waters that dry out of the lake or river.

Job's anguish is pronounced when he realizes that all his children are dead, and his imminent death leaves no offspring to carry forward his name and would have no place in the spirit world or non will give him decent burial and burial rites. In the Ancient Near Eastern beliefs, the status of the dead in the netherworld depended much on the number of children one had, how they lived their life while on the land of the living, the causes of the death, proper burial and post burial rituals, and sometimes, the previous status of the dead during his/her earthly life. When put in comparison with Job's situational circumstances, the death of all his children rendered him childless and therefore he expected to suffer the terrific plight of the childless dead, his name is not to be remembered and his death is only reducing him to nothing since he has no progenies to keep a memory of him in the land of living.

In conversation with the African Traditional Society, Job presents fears which are shared among Africans: the fear of death, underworld, no way to return—the fear of being finished,

becoming worthless—fear of being called omufu. The fear of dying childless, the fear of dying a bad death. It brings in perspective several questions an African would ask when faced with inexplicable or mysterious illnesses, which are believed to be either witchcraft or wrath of gods. If Job was a Muganda, he would have asked the same questions: what have I done? Whom have I wronged?... and probably next course of action is seeking spiritual solutions to the unanswered questions all in the name of saving the precious life from being taken by Walumbe.

The fear of death—is also the reason for the detailed death and burial preparations. Dreaming or seeing the feature of a dead person to many Baganda is dreadful as it beckons death. Dead people who are displeased are believed to have propensities of coming back to claim lives of the living. The elaborate death rituals are meant to ensure a proper send off—not to the entertainment of the deceased but for the safety of the living.

Job's use of words like waste, whither and dry, in his botanical and geographical imageries of the flower and river, implies the fading, loss of beauty, being no more, and loss of the essence of goodness or value: the same meaning denoted by the Baganda word okufa. Since it is believed that at the hour of death, an individual loses his/her essence of goodness, which Job refers to as “giving up the ghost”, all the above descriptions are only given to that which remains visible after the spirit/ghost has departed. In other words, Job's description of man using the same wordings is a description made for the corpse and not the ghost (Spirit) that is given up at the time of death. It is the decaying corpse that becomes completely finished, gets bad or spoilt, becomes worthless, useless, invalid, and irrelevant or even being good for nothing, at the hour of death.

Job not only expresses a fear of physical death but also a commonly shared fear of the death of a name, fame and the disappearance of one's memory from the land of the living - the fear of becoming no more. Such fears were among the Baganda neutralized by the after-death rituals.

The after-death rituals testify to a quite generalized need not to cut the threads that linked the members of the family and community after a death. Death is a terminal moment, but the mourning, manipulation and displacement of corpses contributed to maintaining a spiritual and even physical contact between the living and the dead, consequently providing consolation for the loss, shortening the distance from the dead, and relieving the anxiety of nothingness.

In some circles, Job is not amused with the reality of death—contrary to the African Traditional Society and Christian beliefs which characterized the modern society and reader. At least, as in the case of Ssematimba and Kikwabanga song, an African gets to terms with death because he/she will join his or her ancestors. To a Christian community, some accept death so that they meet Jesus who has promised eternity for them.

Death hits hard when it either touches a close relative or a kinfolk. Illnesses bring the reality of death closer to an individual and make an individual question his or her readiness to face death. It is not clear from the text whether Job was ready to die after such a long illness. Many people always wish to die after a long suffering. At this point death ceases being the monstrous robber but a means of escaping from physical pain or suffering. “Kaawumule”- let him/her rest is the phrase that most of the mourners use during funerals of people that suffer and die of a long illness.

The description of death to a permanent sleep is a theme that cuts across the text and all the above contexts. Looking at death as the final sleep, that man lies into till eternity, can arouse a disgusting maggoty image of the corpse. It is also a more relaxed depiction of death and those that die, reducing death related anxieties to an image of a resting person, resting from the troubles of the world. In other texts of the Bible, sleeping and resting are terms used interchangeably in the death talks (Daniel 12:2, 1Kings 14:20; 16:6; 22:50, 2Kings 14:16; 15:7; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18.). Daniel’s mention of the multitude sleep in the dusts of the ground can

be used to assert that Job is referring the physical bodies lying in the graves. The description is consistent with the Egyptians images of the netherworld (Amenti) as the land of heavy slumber, and darkness, (Salmond 1895:64). Brought in the Baganda context the depiction of dead to be sleeping is only a description for corpse and not the netherworld. Just like in the Bible, among the Baganda, only those that experience a good death are depicted to be resting with their ancestors. In African traditional society, the spirits of those that suffer a bad death and those without a decent burial are considered never to have such a rest, they are left wondering all over and bringing danger to the living.

Though death is believed to be the inevitable and invincible fate of every human being, individuals react to the thought and occurrence of death with variations of acceptance and anxiety. Job offers a great deal of insight in the level of emotional turbulence that comes with the thought about or occurrence of death. In the text, Job expresses a mixture of a neutral and negative attitude of death. Basing on Tomer and Eliason's model of measuring death attitudes, as quoted in Craig (2008), Job's attitude is influenced by his conception of death, past related regrets and the future related anxieties. His conception of death as the compulsory normal ending of every man that is born of a woman expresses a neutral or even a minimal level of death acceptance. Job laments not because of death but because of what becomes of the body after death. His understanding of death as that which reduces humans to nothing and his seeing no hope of life beyond death influenced much of his lament. If read in light of the Baganda concept of death, Job's lament covers much.

In our discussion of death among the Baganda, it has become clear that the factors that contribute to either death anxiety or death acceptance vary from the age at which an individual dies, circumstances under which an individual encounters death, burial conditions, marital and parental status, one's moral stand in the community, among others. Below is an attempt to dig deep into some of these factors in line with Job's expression of death anxiety.

Childbirth is but a symbol of victory over death. It is a spark of continuity in the human race and human life. Thus, the Baganda proverb, “Okuzaala kwe kuzuukira” that can be literary translated as “Child birth is resurrection” is an example of the Baganda’s hope of continuity of human life and victory of life over death. This belief in the victory over death through child birth explains the great celebrations that the Baganda engage in when a new child is born. In fact, to an African, being childless is a state of abject and complete poverty (Kirwen 2005:52); it is a state of hopelessness and a sign of lineage extinction. Since a living adult needs to have connection to the past (Ancestral world), the present (the community) and the future (the descendants), this can only be achieved through child birth. Only those that die after giving birth are permitted an heir to ensure their connectivity to the present and the future. For this reason, an impotent man is allowed to marry but have his brother play sex with his wife, in order to permit this impotent man a chance not only to preserve his manhood that is at stake but to also save his lineage from extinction. In all the contexts, barrenness justifies polygamy and a barren woman that gets sad when her husband finds another wife is considered a witch in the Baganda society. This is because such a woman is an enemy of lineage continuity and threatens family stability. Whoever dies without children dies with no hope of continuity and therefore dies with much anxiety towards death than he/she that dies after giving birth to children.

Giving birth to children is only a starting step to overcoming death anxiety. It is followed by other steps for one to make peace with death. It is a joy for parents to live and see their children grow, make families and at least see and name their grandchildren. Whenever their bodies weaken or whenever they encounter diseases, young parents get concerned about the welfare of their children in case they are claimed by death. At an old age, however, parents die contented knowing that they have graduated all their children from the stage of vulnerability to self-reliance and are to be buried by their children. It is a very unfortunate state for a parent

to bury his own children. It creates fears and anxiety of how such a parent is likely to survive and thrive in the old age that comes with a lot of vulnerability. In interaction with the different respondents, it was discovered that parents wish not to bury any of their children and many elderly respondents exhibited a certain level of death acceptance with the comfort that they have seen their children grow to adulthood and to a state of self-reliance. In this spirit therefore it is safe to conclude that child birth offers not only assurance for the survival of the family lineage in the face of death, but also acts as a social security for the parents as they grow towards the evenings of their lives. It offers to the parents the hope for a long life in the *sasa* period as their memories will keep alive in the minds of their children and their names shall be renamed to their grandchildren.

The conditions under which an individual encounters death are very important in the understanding of death anxiety and acceptance among the Baganda. Having a peaceful death is a common goal of the elderly Baganda. In this context, a peaceful death is that encountered either in the old age or after a long period of illness. When a peaceful death occurs, mourners are found of making relaxed statements that show acceptance towards it. The common word used in describing such a death is “resting”. Therefore, death acceptance is expressed at old age, at a point when death is looked at as a normal, unavoidable conclusion of a busy, long life. At this level, an individual is expected to have raised his/her children to maturity and to have achieved all his/her goals in life. But death anxiety increases when death strikes at a young or worst at a youthful energetic stage of human life.

The prerequisite for old age works closely with that of dying amidst the care of close kin and relatives. One of the great curses that the Baganda make to wicked individuals is; *“You will die in great agony and your body will be abandon like that of a wonderer.”* Since sickness and old age bring vulnerability, living in a caring company of relatives creates much comfort and a great assurance of good care and proper burial of one’s corpse.

7.3 Conclusion

All of the above factors resonate with the element of death anxiety in the Ancient Israelites milieu and the worlds of their neighbors as discussed under the section death in the Ancient Near East and seemingly have much to reveal about Job's lament and death views. This lament comes at a time when to an African, Job was under a level of abject poverty and left with only a wife and friends around him. Though Job had given birth to children, he expected to meet death childless since all his children had died before him. Being childless at the time of the lament, Job saw nothing good in death as he expected no remembrance of his name as he had no descendants and therefore expected no grave offerings too. Death was reducing Job to nothing; it was making him wither and waste away just like a drying river and his place would not know him anymore. Though Job considered death a must for all that is born of a woman, he still remained anxious about his death. This could have been as a result of his childless state at the time of the lament. Though he presents his lament as a universal fate of all human being the data presents a contrary view when compared to both the Israelites milieu and the Baganda concept of death. Such a lament could best serve for a person who has suffered a bad death. Such people could either have no hope of a good life after death or even completely no life after death.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMERY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations arising from the main findings of this study.

8.2 Summary

The study focused on the ideo-theological hermeneutics of Job 14:1-12 in relation to the Baganda's traditional concept of human life and death. The study sought to discuss the text in relation to the Baganda's traditional concept of human life and establish the ideo-theological correspondences between the text and the Baganda society in relation to the conceptualization of human life and death.

The theoretical frame work of the study was post-coloniality. Using African Bible Hermeneutics, specifically Hermeneutics of Appropriation; using what Jonathan Draper referred to as a "tripolar" approach (Draper 2001, 2002; West 2010:21) to clearly seek the ideo-theological correspondence of the theme of death in Job 14: 1-12 and the Baganda traditional concept of death, the text is interpreted in the context of the Baganda people.

The study carried a detailed examination of Job 14:1-12 in its context where the background, description and analysis of the text were made. This was followed by the discussion of the major issues arising in the text. To situate the text in its proper circumstantial context, the researcher started with a wider perspective, giving a brief background to the book of Job and its character Job and later narrowed to the verse-by-verse discussion of the text under study. During the examination of the text in its context it was revealed that the text articulates the predicament of human life in the face of imminent trouble and death. Job is presented as the major character in the text. He laments that humans are consigned to a brief and troubled life, and that a limit is set that man cannot pass. He compares Human life to the temporal nature of

a flower or a fleeting shadow. In his comparison of man with the cut tree, he looks at humans (to be put better, himself) to be very hopeless in the face of death. In the text, Job consciously considers death to be the inevitable final state of humans, in fact, Job knows of no hope for man once death has separated soul and flesh. As man dies, he wastes away and becomes no more. When put in the context with Job's situational circumstances, it was clear that Job is rather using his own predicaments to offer a universal human lament over death. From the text we drew one major issue to be discussed further, the concept of human life in relation to death.

The study further investigated the theme of human life in relation to death in the Biblical world and the Ancient Near East. In discussing biblical concept of human life death, it was disclosed that the Bible clearly indicates that man was created in a state of conditional immortality, but as a result of man's disobedience, death came into the world and from then, man is under surveillance of death. The Israelites perceived Yahweh as having power over life and death and so in some instances, death was perceived as a form of divine punishment for living an evil life. The death of an elderly person was regarded as less painful compared to the death of a younger person. And so, such deaths were represented as resting or sleeping. There was also a belief in family reunion in the afterlife. The Israelites also held a strong belief and attachment to their ancestors and ancestral land. They developed the concept Sheol to explain where the dead go to after death. However, Sheol was in no way considered an extension of earthly life and those in Sheol were not to be communicated with or sustained through grave offerings. The prohibition put on the communication with the dead suggests the possibility of the living communicating to the dead and could work as a counter-response to Job's assertion that man becomes no more in the face of death, as it confirms the belief that the dead are not fully dead since they could be communicated to and consulted from by the living. The Israelites also valued so much the proper burial of the dead and it was a curse not to be buried. Though it is clear that the quality of life lived in terms of morality, the age of the individual and the nature

of death suffered by the individual affects one's condition in Sheol, it remains a scholarly debate of whether decent burial affected the state of the dead in Sheol. There is no dualistic perception that the afterlife is two places of either paradise or complete torment and the ancient Israelites did not share the later belief in paradise and hell.

The study further progressed to examine the concept of death in the Ancient Near East. During this section, an examination of the concept of death in Egypt and Mesopotamia in particular was carried out, with an intention of establishing how these societies conceived death and the life after death. Many of the materials used were from the various epics. It was discovered that unlike Job who doubts (or even refutes) life after death, the people of the Ancient Near East held a strong belief in life after death. They viewed death as that which puts an end to the earthly life and open doors to the netherworld, the land of the dead. The Egyptian depiction of Amenti, the netherworld has a similar tone with Job 7:9-10; 10:21-22; 17:13 and 16. To be more particular the depiction of Amenti as a land of heavy slumber is similar to that of Job 14:12; "so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep.", and qualifies the view of death as an endless sleep. The Egyptians use of the tree as a depiction of their belief in the revivification of life in the netherworld is consistent with Job's view of the hope of tree, though in the Joban imagery, only the tree (and not man) is seen to have the hope of revivification. In both cases, the netherworld is a harsh world that requires sustenance from the living, those with children seems to live a relatively better life in the hereafter in comparison to those with no children. When put in comparison with Job's situational circumstances, it was discovered that the death of all his children rendered him childless and therefore he expected to suffer the terrific plight of the childless dead, his name is not to be remembered and his death is only reducing him to nothing since he has no progenies to keep a memory of him in the land of living. Job's lament is a lament of a childless person in the face of death. Whose life is just like a shadow that disappears when the

light of life is swallowed up by the darkness of death. He sees no hope in not only the netherworld but also in land of the living, when gone is gone completely with no one to remember him or even offer grave goods for him.

Concerning the Baganda concept of death, the researcher focused on the death word (Okufa), death and post death management rituals and their symbolism and significance to human life, and the polemics of death among the Baganda. It was discovered that the Baganda acknowledge death as a reality that is to be encountered by every individual. They express death with varying levels of acceptance and anxiety. Death acceptance is expressed at old age, at a point when death is looked at as a normal, unavoidable conclusion of a busy, long life. But death anxiety increases when death strikes at a young or worst at a youthful energetic stage of human life. Death is not an end to human life but rather a pathway to a far more superior life in the human cycle. It is a change in human substance, from a physical being to a spiritual being that is not limited in space and time. Death is a door to human eternity that can only be cut short when the living lose the memory of the living dead. It was made clear that the Baganda death management rituals can be classified into the following stages: a mourning period, preparation of the corpse, interment, and regular post-burial ritualistic practices for the deceased intended to be maintained indefinitely. These three stages are essential in the maintenance and continuation of life even after death by uniting the recently deceased with their dead kin. They are also motivated by the fear of punishment from the deceased since it is believed that meriting deceased that were not accorded proper burial could haunt the living. A decent burial is that when the deceased is buried in the family's ancestral burial ground. It may mean much beyond this, however, including cleaning and grooming their bodies to meet the ancestors, offering them a big amount of bark cloths for purposes of warmth and sending along special greetings with them. They are climaxed with the last funeral rites. These decent burials are only fully accorded to those considered to have died a good death. Full decent burial is denied for those

that die unmarried, childless, infants and those that face untimely tragic deaths. Even with children, suicide victims are totally denied the privilege of having a decent burial. The post-burial ritualistic practices aim at keeping the memory of the good dead among the living. The only truly dead are those are not accorded proper burial and those that are forgotten but as long as we live so do the living dead, for they are a part of us as we remember them through the post-burial rituals. These ritualistic practices range from pouring libation, keeping alive the memory of the dead among the living, offering an heir to a meriting dead, renaming children after the deceased, cleaning and maintaining of graves and grave yards, taking care of animals with incarnated spirits of the dead and fulfilling the demands of the dead as made known to the living relatives. Such rituals can best be fulfilled if the deceased left children behind. Those without children can hardly be remembered and hence stand less, or even no, chances of being kept alive in the memory of the living. They quickly become truly dead.

8.3 Conclusion

Matters of death and life are painful realities that different communities and civilizations may perceive and understand basing on their experiences. In fact, am not mistaken to state that death is an enigma that can be understood and interpreted different. The study reveals that though Job presents his lament as the universal fate of all men, his arguments on the human life in the face of death focus much on his situational circumstances and those of those that can identify with him. The various contexts have revealed that the transient nature of life is undeniably a universal reality that all men in all ages have struggled with and as a result imagined of a netherworld in which life continues. However, in this text, Job seems to focus much on the physical death and offers less attention to the netherworld. This could be partly due to his expectation of a childless death. Put in the context of Ancient Near East and the Baganda, Job's images of a flower, the hope for a tree cut and a dried up river all point to reality of a childless death. Put in the Baganda context, Job expected to suffer a bad death, the death of all his

children rendered him childless and just like a Muganda childless person, Job's physical death implied the death of his name, his memory and a total reduction to nothing. Job could not become an ancestor and could not join the ancestors since he had no heir and living descendants to keep him as a living memory and perform the post burial rituals for him. Seeing death advancing to claim his own childless life, Job saw his tree not only getting cut but getting fully uprooted. In Buganda, only the childless (like Job) expect to be completely reduced to nothing in the face of death. Job's lament would have changed if he had children, he would have talked of the hope of prevailing even after death. It is upon such a background that I am inclined to conclude that though he presents his lament as a universal fate of all human being, the data presents his view as contrary to the Israelites milieu and the Baganda concept of death. Such a lament could best serve for a person who has suffered a bad death. Such people could either have no hope of a good life after death or even completely no life after death.

This conclusion reveals that an isolated reading of Job 14:1-12 can be misleading in interpretation as it abstracts the reader from considering the situation context from which the soliloque is derived and therefore serves as a warning to contemporary preachers in funeral ceremonies and daily religious congregations to consider reading the Bible as a product of ideology and theology that can be best understood if read in its proper context. It also presses a demand on the African Bible reader to always create a proper dialogue between the Bible text in its context and his own African context; this will work at making the African take the Bible as an African story that is relevant to his own context.

8.4 Recommendations

Though the author presents Job's lament as a universal fate of all human being this study has revealed that the data presents a contrary view when compared to both the Israelites milieu and the Baganda concept of death. Such a lament could best serve for a person who has suffered a bad death. Such people could either have no hope of a good life after death or even completely

no life after death. Following this background this study recommends that with the present Christian teachings on resurrection, hope and life afterdeath, this text should be used selectively in funeral solemonities of those whose circumstances resonate with Job's situational circumstances.

The study also recommends that other scholars should carry out more contextual studies on the book of Job in light with other themes in African religious studies. Forexample, scholars should carry out a study on the Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern concept of a bad death in relation to COVID-19 related death in Africa. Such studies will help make the book of Job and the entire Bible more relevant to the Aficans, as the text will be allowed to interact with our African Context.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF INFORMANTS

S/NO	NAME	GENDER	AGE
1	Mwanje Sulaiti	Male	74
2	Ssemwanga Sirajje	Male	69
3	Muwanga Paul	Male	74
4	Kanyike Dodovika	Male	72
5	Ssebalamu Deo	Male	65
6	Kigongo Peter	Male	50
7	Ndagire Jesica	Female	80
8	Nakayiza Meega	Female	78
9	Mze Kisolokyamaanyi	Male	73
10	Musiitwa Deo	Male	68
11	Namwandu Kkyaka	Female	84
12	Mze Ssempala Wiliba	Male	81
13	Namwandu Kanya	Female	78
14	Kibenjala Yakuubu	Male	80
15	Bbawuza Roviina	Female	69
16	Ssemujju Mohamed	Male	68
17	Ssebwami Fulugye	Male	72
18	Wakikaatu Sulaiti	Male	82
19	Nambogo Filidasi	Female	75
20	Sserwadda Patrick	Male	62
21	Bangi Zzaake	Male	75
22	Boogere Mpagi	Male	76

23	Nsubuga Vianne	Male	70
24	Kitimbo Sowaali	Male	83
25	Bakanansa Roviisa	Female	71
26	Mpalanyi Joseph	Male	70
27	Ssemugabi Francis	Male	74
28	Miira Stanley	Male	68
29	Mutyaba Philip	Male	64
30	Nandawula Filda	Female	75
31	Gonzaga Kizito	Male	83
32	Mutima Tadeo	Male	77
33	Maviiri George	Male	78
34	Kitimbo Lawulensiyo	Male	80
35	Nankabirwa Veronica	Female	82
36	Namukasa Doroka	Female	78