Proverbs as an educational factor in Hausa society

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Résumé
Les proverbes expriment une vérité familière à tout le monde et couvrent les différents aspects de la vie humaine. Ils ont, dans la société haoussa, un rôle fondamental surtout dans la formation des jeunes gens. Cette communication va examiner surtout certains proverbes rattachés à des animaux importants dans la culture de cette population : le chien, le poulet, l’âne, le singe, l’hyène, la souris, la chèvre, le lézard, le vautour, le lion et l’araignée.

Proverbs and sayings are short sentences expressing a well-known truth, or a common fact familiar to all. They cover many aspects of human life, and refer mostly to everyday facts. They are highly colloquial, and form an integral part of Hausa culture, as shown by the numerous collections published. Passed on from generation to generation, they are still in wide use today and are very much part of everyday speech.

This paper, through the analysis of some proverbs, tries to show how they function as an educational tool in the traditional Hausa society of Northern Nigeria. As a sub genre of oral tradition, the pedagogical value and its impact on the Hausa society is described.

Oral tradition plays an important role in the traditional education of African societies. They convey nearly all spiritual and moral values, and are worth observing an entire lifetime. Hundreds or even thousands of African myths, legends, fables, tales, riddles and proverbs are to be learned by all members of

1 In this paper, the Standard Hausa Writing System is used. High tone is unmarked, low tone is marked; a short vowel is unmarked, a long vowel is marked by a macron.
society, with the main function of transmitting knowledge from the elders to the youth, in order to teach them how to become good members of society.

From a cultural viewpoint proverbs make large use of animals, domestic and not, to metaphorically represent the shortcomings and capabilities of human society. They symbolically rescue all human society. They highlight man’s weaknesses and capabilities in everyday situation of life. Hence proverbs are presented in conversation to support, argue, or illustrate one’s point of view, most often with the intention of influencing the listener, dismissing their point, convincing them or simply to cut off a conversation. Being aware that it is important to accept everything of a person. From a thematic point of view, proverbs cover all aspects of life:

- sometimes it could be a simple addition
  à sō kărē hař jēlařsā
  A dog should be loved up to its tail (“Love me, love my dog”)
  Expl. You should love / like someone together with his defects

- temperamental intemperances
  an san hālin kārē, kān daukō shi
  The dog is chosen regardless of its intemperance
  (“One must take the good with the bad”)

The difficulties in which you find yourself when:

- someone has to fight against his own nature
  jākī bā yā wucè tōkā
  A donkey does not pass by the ash.
  Expl. Donkeys usually roll in ash to free themselves of parasites.
  So the urge or temptation to roll in a heap of ash is too strong to resist

- or in case one should resist the temptation to do something.
  ābin māmākī kărē dà tāllān tsīrē
  It is amazing to see a dog selling skewered meat
  Expl. It is like asking a hungry person to look after food without eating it
In any case the matters dealt with are innumerable and go far beyond the virtues and shortcomings of human nature:

- an exhortation to solve problems quickly, when they appear.
  
  à yi maza dai, à fitaɓ da jàkì dågà dùmà
  Be quick in getting the donkey out of the gourd.

- to be suspicious of someone without a good reputation.
  
  bà à bà kùrà àjìyàɓ nàmà
  You do not give a hyena meat to look after
  (“Do not set a wolf to look after the sheep”)

- never underestimate one’s own enemy
  
  kò biri yà kàrye, yà hau runhù
  Even if the monkey has broken a limb, it will climb the corn-bin
  Expl. Do not underestimate your enemy even if he seems weak

- do not rejoice for other people’s misfortune
  
  kadà kázà tà yi muñà don tà gà anà jàn hànjin ’yaɓ uwaɾtù
  The hen should not rejoice because it has seen the entrails of its companion being drawn out
  (“There, but for the Grace of God, go!”)

We could also find expressions that have a perfect correspondence in other African languages and even in Italian. For example:

- in ka ga bërà yanà sakì, kyànwà bà tà gidà
  If you see a free mouse, the cat is not at home
  (“When the cat’s away, the mice will play”)²

- kò an kàsh biri, yà rìgà yà yi bàrnà
  Even if you kill the monkey, the damage has already been done
  (“It is useless to close the door of the stable after the horse has bolted”)³

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² Litt. A deposit of meat.
³ Cf. Swahili Paka akiondoka, panya hutawala; Italian Quando il gatto non c’è, i topi ballano.
⁴ Cf. Italian Chiudere la stalla, quando sono scappati i buoi.
à bař kâzâ cikin gâshintà
The hen should be left in its feathers
(“Let sleeping dogs lie”)\(^5\)

This enormous heritage of the Hausa society has a great value not only in the socio-cultural sphere, but also from a linguistic point of view. A linguistic analysis reveals some interesting features, like the ellipse:

- àbin mâmâkì kàrê dà tâllâns tsÌrê
  It is amazing to see a dog selling skewered meat

- yanà (yî) kôkarî yà fîd dà jàkì dàgà dumâ
  Finish off that hard job and be clear of it once and for all!

- àbokin damô guzà nê
  The friend of the land-monitor is the water-monitor
  (“Greek, stick together; Similis cum similibus”)

Another element observed is the constant introduction of the proverbs by particles as conditionals in, locative inà and indà, or multivalent ko:

- in ka ga ìkã, yanà kâiwà, yanà kâwôwà, kyânwà bâ tâ gidà
  If you see a mouse dashing to and fro, the cat is not at home
  (“When the cat’s away, the mice will play”)

- inà tukunyaì damô, inà ta guzà? Duk dâya nê
  Where is the iguana’s pot, where is the monitor’s? They are both the same
  (“What’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander”)

- indà bâbban kàrê ya yi kâshî nan kàramûn mâ yakàn yi
  Where the big dog has defecated, the little one will get used to doing it there.

- kô an ci birnin kûrâ bà à bà kàrê dillancì
  Even if the hyena’s town is conquered, the dog is not being put there as a trader [Fletcher, 12]
  (“The natural order of things cannot be subverted”)

\(^5\) Cf. Italian Non svegliare il can che dorme.
We can also find the use of impersonal forms as *an, anâ* and *à:*

- **à baʃ kâzâ cikin gâshintâ**
  Leave the hen in its feathers
  (“Let sleeping dogs lie”)

- **an kôrî ùngûlu**
  The vulture has been driven away
  (“The enemy has been driven out”)

- **wurin bàrnaʃ gîwâ bâ ã kulâwâ dâ bàrnaʃ birî**
  The damage, done by an elephant, makes that of the monkey insignificant
  (“In face of a serious disater, small woes pass unnoticed”)


**DOG - kàrê**

In many mythologies the dog is associated with death or with the underworld. In ancient Egypt, Anubi the God of death was represented with a dog head. And in the pre-Islamic era there were people who considered the dog’s saliva a disinfectant, that was applied to injuries. As a result of this, many people died of tuberculosis and other communicable diseases dogs could transmit to man. Dogs in the past were not vaccinated, and fed on carrions, so this could be the reason why the animal’s saliva was considered impure, and not the animal itself.6

As regards the Muslim world, Islam sometimes considers this animal the symbol of impurity, and the *Jinn* often appears in the form

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6 In Europe the dog is considered one of the man’s best friends, meanwhile according to Islamic law it is *naajis,* impure. So for a pious Muslim the mere contact with it creates *najasat,* i.e. a juridic-religious condition, that prevents him from having access to certain ritual acts.
of this animal in a raven-black coat. However, according to a tradition that goes back to the Prophet, the dog had a positive image.7

The dog is one of the principal character in some two thousand proverbs of my database. It is the animal most present. The reason could be that it adapts better to human life. It is the first animal as a companion of man in the village, and also has the function of guarding against thieves or other animals, and accompanies man in the woods, when he goes for hunting.

- *â dâuki kărê ran fārautâ*
  Will you take a dog on the day of the hunt?
  (“Do not leave things till the last minute”)

- *âjiyê kàrenkà don kàren gidan wani*
  Keep your dog because of the dog in another man’s house
  (“Meet a person with his own weapons!”)

- *an ki cîn kărê, an kōmō an ci kwīkwiwô*
  You have refused eating a dog, and ate a puppy
  (“Straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel”)

- *âturê bâ yâ rabâ kărê dà kūrâ*
  Pushing to separate the dog from the hyena [is useless]
  (“It is senseless trying to make peace between dog and hyena”)

**CHICKEN - kàzâ**

The hen represents the natural model of motherhood, fertility, family and is seen as the real model of love towards children. The eggs laid could sometimes be real treasures, a case made famous by La Fontaine in his *The Goose that Laid the Golden Eggs*.8

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7 In the four Muslim juridical schools there are different opinions about the dog’s impurity: for some of them it is only the saliva that is impure, while for others, neither the body nor the saliva is impure. But it is necessary to clean oneself because the Prophet has stated so. In the Malikite School, the dog is not an impure animal, but all objects touched by a dog should be cleaned by washing and disinfection.

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- **in mūguwâr kâzâ tâ shiga akurkî, kôwaccê ta zû, sai tâ sârê tû**
  If a bad hen enters a pen, each one tries to peck(harm) her
  ("No fellow-wife is welcomed by the others")

- **in don à cî, bà à sayař ba, kâzâ tâ fi dôkî**
  If it is for eating and not for sale, the chickens is better (more useful)
  than the horse
  ("the Value of things depend on what they are to be used for")

- **kadà à d'aurâ mini jâkař tsâbâ, kâji sù rîkâ bîna**
  Do not tie the bag of corn on me, lest the chickens following me
  ("Don’t falsely accuse me!”)

- **kwai à bakâ yâ fi kâzâ à akurkî**
  An egg in the mouth is better than a chicken in the pen
  ("A bird in hand is better than a thousand in the bush")

- **sâbô dà kâzâ bâ yà hanà yankà tà**
  Getting used to a chicken does not prevent it from being slaughtered (Business
  is business! One thing is business, and another thing is friendship)

**DONKEY - jâkî**

The donkey has a strong symbolic significance. In ancient
Egypt, where it was associated with Seth, the murderer of Osiri,
and to the hieroglyphics of the murderer, the design of a knife
was added to neutralize the harmful character of the sign.
Therefore in ancient Egypt, the donkey was connected to hell.
Instead in Greek and Roman mythology it was considered stupid
and unreasonable. An example is found in Ovid’s
*Metamorphoses*,
where the unfortunate king Mida is punished
by the god Apollo for his unfair verdict of a musical competition,
in which he gives the victory to Apollo’s rival Pan. Apollo got
angry for the judge’s clumsiness, and imposed the ears of a
donkey on the unlucky king. Another way of seeing this could be:

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9 Abraham (1962: 792b) and Yunusa (1977: 36) give this variant: à cî bà
à sayař ba, kwai yâ fi dôkî.
10 Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Book XI.
the donkey’s ears could have allowed Midas to hear better in the future, allegorically enabling him to distinguish Good from the Bad.

For the Greeks and the Romans, the donkey was the symbol of stubbornness, stupidity and lust. But with Christianity, the Fedro’s archetype was completely overturned. It is seen as the prototype of the worker par excellence, being able to bear great burden.

- an haṛ jākā anā dūkān tākī
  They let go the donkey and beat the bag
  (“Blaming the innocent and acquitting the guilty”)

- haṛbi gā dān jākī, gādō nē
  The art of kicking is hereditary to a young donkey
  (“What’s bred in the bone is born in the flesh. Talis pater, talis filius”)

- kāsā-kāsā yā fī kāsā, wai mā́i jākī yā fī mā́i tākālmī
  Being dusty is better than walking, they say the donkey-rider is better off than the man with shoes (one who walks)
  (“Half a loaf is better than none”)

- tākarkārī kām dōrā, jākī yā sābā dā kāyā
  Ox is used to pull (plough), donkey is accustomed to loads
  (“What’s bred in the bone”)

**MONKEY - birī**

In ancient Egypt monkeys were the object of deep respect. It seems the Nubian tribes sent them as a tribute to allied peoples and according to some belief, they understood human speech. In the shape of a white cynosephalus, the god Thot in ancient Egypt – sometimes represented by the ibis – was the protector of scholars and persons of letters.

It is the symbol of slyness and guile, but also of prudence in all circumstances where the game is not worth the risk.

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11 Cf.: gā macīji kwānce, anā bugūn dârāri.
• **bā nā âbūtā dâ birĩ, sândânà yà kwan bisà**
I will not be friends with the monkey and my club will remain up on the tree
(“What is the good of being a king’s favourite if I can’t get what I want”)  
Expl. A friend should be able to help you, if what you need is within his capabilities

• **birĩ bâ ki mûrûcî ba, sai dai wûya ḥakâ**
The monkey does not dislike palm shoots but can’t extract them
(“All seek success, but it’s hard to attain”)

• **birĩ yâ san jibâd dâ yakê (yî) wâ kâshî**
The monkey knows the small anthill where it can defecate
(“Everyone knows his own limitations”)

• **in Allâh yâ ki âddu’âr birĩ, sai yà mutû à gônař ařnâ**
If God refuses (to hear) the monkey’s prayer, it will die on a pagan’s farm (pagans eat monkeys, while the Hausas do not)
(“One can not fight against ill fortune”)

• **sai birĩ yâ zî hannun mâlâm yakàn yi gûdâ, in yâ zî hannun Mâgûzâwâ, sai yà yi kûkâ**
If the monkey ends up in the hands of a Hausa gentleman, it will ululate (in sign of joy), if it ends up in the hands of Pagans it will weep

**HYENA - kûrâ**

In the past, the hyena had been considered in different ways. But always in a derogatory manner: sometimes as a bastard of a dog and a wolf and, according to Sir Walter Raleigh, as a hybrid of a dog and a cat. This supposed hybrid nature might have been due to Noah’s refusal to include it in the ark. Magical power and special skills have always been conferred on this animal, including its ability to reproduce the human voice. Saint John in his Apocalypse speaks of a creature with seven heads, each representing the seven capital vices: one of this head is that of a hyena, symbolizing avarice.

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12 Pagans eat monkeys, Moslems don’t.
13 Seafarer, corsair, poet and courtier of Elisabeth I. In his *History of the World* he affirms that its existence would have begun after the deluge, because it would not have been tolerated in the ark.
The hyena is a grotesque and famous character in fairy tales, as well as in proverbs. Because of its insatiable appetite, it eats anything it comes upon, without considering the possible consequences. It is the personification of thievery and of less magnanimous aspects of human nature.

- **bā à bā kūrā ājīyař nāmā**
  You do not give a hyena meat to look after
  ("Do not set a wolf to look after the sheep")

- **bā rikidâ kūrā kē dà wūyā ba, à yi wutsiyā**
  It is not changing into a hyena that is difficult, but getting the tail
  ("Acquisition of knowledge is easier than passing it on")

- **dà ganin kūrā, an san tā ci ākuyā**
  If you see a hyena, you should know it has already eaten a goat
  ("If your enemy is able to get into your territory, then he/she has already done some harm")

- **dà kūrā dà kàrē bā sà gamà mazaunī**
  A hyena and a dog cannot live together
  ("Oil and water don’t mix")

- **kūrā tā cīnyè bārāwô**
  The hyena has eaten the thief
  ("A thief has stolen the thief")

**MOUSE - ṃērā**

In spite of, or maybe exactly for its littleness, the mouse has a special role in people’s beliefs and the connected symbolism. On the whole, it has a positive representation, even if it is one of the animals that arouses the most irrational of phobias. In the Old Testament, the mouse was considered an unclean animal and Christianity considered it as devillish because it was thought of as being ghoul. A positive observation comes from the study of Aesop’s fable on the lion and the little mouse.¹⁴ A metaphorical representation of strength hidden within

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¹⁴ Aesop: [http://www.lefiabe.com/esopo/leoneetopo.htm](http://www.lefiabe.com/esopo/leoneetopo.htm)
someone apparently weak, who is able to defeat the powerful, as in the case of David who defeated the giant Goliath.\textsuperscript{15}

- \textit{àbîn dà ya kôrâ bêrâ cikin wutā, yà fi wutař zân}\textsuperscript{16}
  What chases the mouse into fire is hotter than fire
  ("Critical situations call for drastic measures")

- bêrâ (ya)nà ganin râminsà, bâ yà yârďà wutâ tâ cî shì\textsuperscript{17}
  The mouse in sight of its hole will not let the fire burn it
  ("Home sweet home"). The home will always provide protection from external dangers

- in kâ ga bêrâ yanâ sakâ, kyânwâ bâ tâ gidâ\textsuperscript{18}
  If you see a mouse weaving, the cat is not at home
  ("When the cat's away the mice will play")

- tsiyâ gàrê shì kâmař bêrân masallæ\textsuperscript{19}
  He is poor as the mouse of the mosque
  ("He's as poor as a church mouse")

\textbf{GOAT - àkuyâ}

The goat has been one of the first animal species to be domesticated by man in the Middle East around 10,000 and 8,000 B.C. to obtain milk, cheese and skin. In Greek mythology the goat Amantea nourishes Zeus, who from its skin made Aegis, the shield that helped him to triumph over the Titans. Meanwhile in antiquity it was considered a divinity, while in Christianity it has always been

\textsuperscript{16} Variant: \textit{àbîn dà ya kôrō bêrā hař yâ să yà fädâ wutā, tô, yà kûwâ fi wutař} zâfî - Abraham: 96a.
\textsuperscript{17} Variant: bêrâ yanâ ganin râmî, wutâ bâ tâ kônâ shi - Karin Magana: 63.
\textsuperscript{18} Variants:
  a) \textit{in kâ ga bêrâ, yanâ kâîwâ, yanâ kâwôwâ, kyânwâ bâ tâ gidâ} - Abraham: 95b.
  b) \textit{in mûgê bâ tâ nan, bêrâ sai yà sakê} - Abraham: 635a.
linked to the devil, the billy-goat especially is considered the personification of the devil and wretches.

- àkuyà tə yi wàyö dà yànkakken kùnnë
  The goat learns wisdom from a cropped ear ("A burnt child fears the fire")

- àkuyà yànkakkiyä, fidà bà tà sà tà ji ciwò
  Flaying cannot hurt a goat that has already been slaughtered ("You are flogging a dead horse")

- dà kùkan kùrä dà ñacëwař àkuyà dukà dàyà nè
  The howl of the hyena and the killing of the goat are the same thing ("Give a dog a bad name and hang him")

- in zä kà daurë àkuyàřkà, kà daurë ta à magaryà
  If you intend tying your goat, tie it to a Jujube tree ("When you speak, say the truth")

- kàrëmbàñín àkuyà gai dà kùrà
  The stupidity of a goat makes it greet the hyena ("Do not tempt the monster") or let sleeping dogs lie

LIZARD - damô, guzà

In Greek and Egyptian mythology the lizard represented wisdom and luck: it was the symbol of Hermes and Serapide. On the contrary, in Zoroastrism it was the personification of badness. Instead, in Roman times they thought that the lizard holed up during winter and emerged from hibernation only in the spring. For this reason it was the personification of death and rebirth.

According to a myth from Ivory Coast, God sent two messengers to the earth: the chameleon, charged with the task of informing men about their resurrection after death, and the lizard, with the duty of announcing
death without the possibility of resurrection. God decided that the messenger, who was to arrive first will prevail, marking the destiny of humanity. The lizard, however, by skilful words, succeeded in cheating the chameleon and, arriving first at the finish line, condemned humanity to a finite destiny.\footnote{Ries, Julien (2009: 141).}

The lizard is the animal that, in its apparent docility, represents a problematic event, a situation which needs to be controlled as best as possible to avoid degeneration.

- \textit{àbōkin damō guzà}
  The land monitor is a friend of the water monitor ("Birds of a feather flock together")

- \textit{inā tukunyař damō, inā ta guzā? Duk dāya nē}
  Where is the iguana’s pot, where is the monitor’s? They are both the same ("What’s sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; dogs of the same street bark alike; pares cum paribus maxime congreguntur") \footnote{From Cicero’s \textit{De senectute}.}

- \textit{kā fi cîn damō, kā ci kiskī}\footnote{a) kiskī: lit. “orange-headed male lizard” \hfill b) Cf.: \textit{an kī cīn kârē, an kômō an ci kwîkwiyô} - Abraham: 598a.}
  You have refused eating the lizard and ate the orange-headed male lizard ("From frying pan to fire")

- \textit{kunā barin damō, yanā zamā guzā}
  You leave the land monitor, and it becomes a water monitor ("Check him while there’s yet time”; “Nip the enemy in the bud")

- \textit{rab dā rab: tsârâncen damō dâ kaskā}
  Exactly matched: the monitor having a cuddle with the tick ("Fitting like a pair of gloves")

\textbf{VULTURE - ūngūlū}

The vulture is connected to death, its symbolism is however ambivalent. Its role of eating dead animals assumes different
meanings in the folklore of some cultures. Its negative connotation is completely absent in ancient Egypt, where it was the object of veneration. The deities associated with it are numerous: Mat, goddess of maternity is often represented by the head of a vulture. And also Hathor and Nekhebet. For Romans the vulture was holy to the god of war, and to kill it was considered an act of sacrilege.

- **dòmin nàmàn sarki nà bìsà kàràgà, bà à hànà ùngùlù gëwayà**
  Because the chief’s meat is on top of a couch of sticks, it does not stop the vulture from circling around
  (“A cat may look at a king”)

- **hař à nadê ƙasà ùngùlù bà tà ràmà gàyyař zàbì**
  Until the end of time, the vulture will never equal the guinea-fowl
  (“Someone useless can never equal someone of value”)

- **kařà ùngùlù mà bàtà miyà**
  The vulture’s foot spoiled the soup
  (“An enviable person will sabotage your efforts”)

- **ùngùlù bà kàzař kòwà ba**
  The vulture is nobody’s chicken
  (“Nobody needs something of no value”)

- **ùngùlù bà tà säukà banzà**
  The vulture doesn’t descend without reason
  (“An effect does not come about without a cause”)

**LION - zàkì**
From time immemorial the lion has been associated with the sun for the colour of its coat and mane. Symbol of lordship and of majesty, it is identified in tales as ‘the king of animals’. The symbolism of the lion is present in Egyptian, Greek and Hindu

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25 *ùngùlu bàtù miyà*: expression used in Ghana to describe a person able to damage his neighbors just for fun. Sometimes used as a proper adjective to describe the character of someone.

26 Used to designate a woman not married any more, so able to remarry.
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mythology and often ascribed to femininity. In fact in Egypt Sekhmet,27 the goddess of war, is symbolized by a wild lioness. In the Greek pantheon there are a few examples that connects the lion with this goddess: Ecate,28 the goddess of magic, had a triple head, made up of a lioness, a bitch and a mare. The carts of Demetra and Rea, both deities of the Earth Mother, were dragged by lions.

- bàri muırlà sai kàrenkà yà kàmà zàkà
  Suspend your joy until your dog catches the lion
  ("Don’t count your chickens before they are hatched")

- harshèn mùtùm zàkinsà
  A man’s tongue is his lion
  (A man’s tongue can be a powerful weapon)

- in dà zàkà yà san zài sàmì ìbíncì cìkìn sàrkàkìyì yà bàì fìtò sàrà fì bà29
  If the lion had known it could find food in a dense thicket, it would not have bothered coming out into the open (if your needs can be satisfied at home, no need looking elsewhere)
  ("Necessity is the mother of invention")

- inà dà zàkà küncè mì nì kë tsòrò?
  I possess a free lion, what should I fear?
  ("I have a lion at my disposal. I fear no enemy")

- kò zàkà yà lầlcè, yà fì kàrfin àlhànzìr
  Even a weak lion is stronger than a hog
  ("The powerful will remain powerful to the end")

SPIDER - gìzò
The spider is often the principal hero in tales, personifying skill and initiative. It is an animal which, for its characteristics, has

27 For more information about the myth of ‘Ra’s eye’, that is the goddess Sekhmet, see: http://www.ancientegyptonline.co.uk/Sekhmet.html
29 Variant: in sàkì yà san zài sàmì nàmà yànà cìkìn sàrkàkìyì, hà yà fìtà wàje - Abraham: 962b.
affected and inspired human unconsciousness, being present (sometimes as a mythical creature) in the folklore and in the mythology of various peoples. Among the numerous testimonies, the myth of Arachne and the phenomenon of tarantism stand out particularly. Its ability to clear houses of insects, helped it develop a positive reputation in many European cultural contexts. We find a proof of this ability in the English proverb: “If you wish to love and thrive let a spider run alive.”

In the Islamic religion, the spider has a certain important significance for two reasons:

1) it gives the name to 29th Surah (‘ankabūt ‘spider’);

2) according to a tradition, when Muhammad and Abū Bakr were escaping from Mecca, they hid in a cave to escape from enemies on their heels. To conceal their hideout, a spider miraculously built its web in a few instants to cover the entrance of the cave. On arrival, the enemies did not believe someone could have been in the cave, so they went away.

• **bà nan gizò yakè sākàr ba, sāmùn kudìn**
  It’s not where the spider makes its web, (it’s a question of) making it
  (“It’s not a question of what you do; the important thing is obtaining the results”)

• **yā bätà mà gizò yānà**
  He has spoiled the spider’s web
  (“He took to his heels”)

**References**


YUNUSA, Yusufu. 1977. Hausa a dunküle. Zaria. NNPC, vii-120 pp. [A collection of 792 proverbs, of which the first 202 are explained.]