

Islamic Solution To Lack Of Public Morality In The Governance Of Nigeria

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Abstract: Our country Nigeria is blessed with many natural resources that could lead to national development. History has shown that since independence each of the governments is involved in one form of corruption or the other. Materialism is now the problem of almost every officer both in the public and private sectors. Every person is busy devising means by which he can further his worldly fortunes. Commissions were set with the aim of probing and punishing culprits but the result is not very encouraging. Almost every sector is affected with the malice of corruption and that has led to in-security, lack of Justice and prosperity. The ruin of corruption is apocalypse to the foundations of our government to the extent that there is no more powerful engine for justice. There is the need to implement the provisions made by Islam in terms of just leadership which will lead to the achievement of developmental goals of the country.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria since independence had witnessed different forms of administration. A country which is blessed with many natural resources is still counted among the first three poorest countries of the world. So far leaders seem to be choosing false images over facts and realities. They do not follow the light of righteousness nor do they resort to a reliable segment on the path of life. Selfishness, greed, stinginess, operation etc are now blocking the path of human happiness and perfection. Lawlessness, individual pains, social disasters and various miseries are the result of the pathetic situation we find ourselves in. Materialism and lust for wealth has created an unhealthy politics and system of governance. Corruption has permeated all parts of leadership. Any society that leaves without excellent virtues and spiritual guidance would be wondering from the path of justice which leads to the peak of greatness and perfection to illusion. Man made legislations and systems are unable to penetrate the human soul, nor can they guarantee constructive relationship between the different cultures and tribes in a country like Nigeria in the same way spiritual manners can do. Man made laws which are manifestation of human ideas, are not qualified to bring total happiness because man has limited thinking capacity. Divine laws do not change with the lapse of time. It offers accurate

system of reaching perfection and moral excellence (Oudah 1999). Any society that is built on Islamic values enjoys tranquility, comfort and trust. All members enjoy equal rights and observe the inter - personal relations set by the faith. The paper intends to study how corruption affected the system of administering the state, and consider the teachings of Islam on proper mode of holding public office

It is therefore the right time for us to turn to divine knowledge which does not change with the lapse of time and offers humanity the most accurate system for reaching perfection and moral excellence. The society where the individual and social ties are trust in all aspects all its members enjoy equal rights and observe the interpersonal relations set by the faith.

II. ISLAM, PUBLIC MORALITY AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

Government is defined by Toluhi J.O. (2001) as "an academic field of study". In other words it may mean an area that deals with the study of human academic Endeavour, agencies institutions and forces that operate in the state.

Government for this purpose can be the art of governing. This can include the individuals that ran the affairs of the state

and possibly the process through which the three arms of government- Executive, Legislature and the judicial organs carry out their assigned functions. Running the affairs of the state based on laid down principles is therefore the art of governance.

Responsible governance could mean the machinery for realizing the purpose of the state through the laid down rules. The three arms of government must work hand in hand with each other for the realization of the stated goals.

LEGISLATURE: This arm of government may be addressed as the congress, Assembly parliament or House of Representatives. This arm is responsible for law making, administration of the laws, supervision and control of the state's finances. They can make new laws or change the existing ones to suit the time and changes that may occur from time to time. This arm is also responsible for controlling government's expenditure and revenue. Even though appropriation of bills comes from the executive, it has to be approved is deemed fit by the legislature. They are supposed to check all forms of maladministration corruption etc. In a situation where any form of deficiency is discovered, the house recommends appropriate steps for amendment or suggests punishment. If the legislature is convinced that the executive can no longer offer responsible governance, they have the power to pass vote of no confidence which may lead to the resignation of the officer of impeachment. The house is charged with the power to ratify certain appointment made by the executive.

EXECUTIVE: The executive arm of government is responsible with the implementation of government policies. It is in charge of the day to day running of the affairs of the state. All the laws, decisions or policies formulated by the legislature are to be carried out by the executive arm of government. Toluhi J.O. (2001) said the executive is *the aggregate or totality of all the functionaries and agencies which are concerned with the execution of the will of the state*. The executive therefore plays vital rolls of appointments, promotion and discipline of office holders. Such responsibilities cover the spectrum of the whole nation, state or local government.

JUDICIARY: The Judiciary which is the third arm of government is responsible for the administration of justice and is referred to as the Court system. This arm is quite important in the political administration of every nation as it is regarded as the ultimate hope and or protector of the rights of every citizen.

The judiciary is vested with the power of interpreting the functions of the constitution as well as other laws made in the country. Similarity it is the body that settles disputes either between individuals, government and individuals or between governments. The judiciary is also the protector of the fundamental rights of citizens. The aggrieved individual(s) can go to court for the enforcement of his right. The courts are expected to make sure that all the laws of the land are obeyed by everybody and it prescribes punishment for violators. Thus prevention of crimes, maintenance of law and order and the defense of the rights of citizens are important roles of the judiciary.

With this, one could easily understand that if these three arms observe and respect their duties, the leadership of a

country will be smooth. All citizens will have the right to living, ownership and to air out their feelings. But if any or all of the three arms fail to recognize the laid down rules or code of conduct, the result will be a chaotic life, corrupt system of administration and lawless society.

III. REASONS FOR LACK OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

There could be many reasons but let us consider the following: Greed, Injustice and Inclination to ethnicity.

✓ **GREED:** Man is naturally born surrounded by certain necessities which hold a tight grip on him since birth, such as food, clothes and shelter. According to natural motives and the sense of need man seeks money and struggles with all his might against all problems and difficulties which may stand in his way to make more money; for to most people wealth is the beauty of life.

Men most understand why he is in this world in order to start his search for happiness (wealth). He must choose the method with which he can advance according to his natural and spiritual needs while refraining from shortcomings that separate the soul from the realistic growth of his personality.

Success and happiness do not mean that man must constantly excel over others in exploiting material resources, for material matters are not the main gold in life and man should not violate the borders of morality and piety to make material gains. The Quran (2:188)

And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, no use it as bait for the judges, with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of other people's property.

Material inclination arises from uncontrollable greed. Because of the imaginary happiness that it creates, greed is considered a factor which brings misery into the lives of men. As a result man disregards everything and sacrifices all moral traits in his quest towards gathering wealth until finally the feelings of want becomes rooted in his soul. Islam therefore puts a strong warning against fanatical adherence to materialism. It states that such adherence deprives man from seeking the real goal of life, the eternal happiness. The Prophet (SAW) said:

Retrain from greed, for those who were before you perished as a result of greed. Greed commanded them to be stingy and they obeyed: and it commanded them to sin and they sinned. (Nawawi 1985)

The Messenger of Allah explained the afflictions and calamities which arise from greediness. He said:

A greedy person faces seven acute problems:

- ✓ Worrying, which harms his body and is disadvantageous to him
- ✓ Depression, which is endless
- ✓ Exhaustion, from which death is the only relief and with that relief the greedy shall be more exhausted.
- ✓ Fear, which uselessly disturbs his life
- ✓ Sadness, which uselessly disturbs his life
- ✓ Judgment, which does not save him from Allah's torture unless Allah forgives him
- ✓ Punishment, from which there is no escape or avoidance.

With all these and many others one concludes that greed is dangerous to spiritual attainment which can only be cured by believing in Allah and the Last Day. Satisfaction can only be achieved by strengthening one's spirituality and developing moral excellence.

✓ **JUSTICE:** It means "a combination of moral and social values denoting fairness, balance, temperance and straightforwardness." (Madany 2010) In Islam, justice is not only a moral virtue but also an obligation to be fulfilled under all circumstances. A just law is a basic requirement for any social structure. It guarantees the right of all classes and individuals in accordance with the welfare of the public serenity between human societies, and serves as vehicle towards uniting societies. Plato quoted in Mujtaba (1990) said.

If Justice finds its way into man's spirit, the bright rays will light all his spiritual powers because all noble traits and human morals arise from the spring of Justice...

The Quran in many places directs believers to establish justice. We should understand that the Qur'an served for the early Muslims as it serves the present Muslims. It teaches fairness and fair dealing on equal bases irrespective of caste, creed and colour. "God commands justice and fair dealing (Qur'an 16:90), "O you who believe be upright for God, and (be) bearers of witness with justice..." (Quran 5:8)

Injustice on the other hand therefore destroys societies ruin their behaviour and violets the social security. For those who claim that life is just a day to day struggle for survival, constantly attempt to destroy the weak with the pressure of deprivation hoping that they will strengthen their power and protect their position. They will commit any crime no matter how inhuman in order to satisfy them.

Muslims believe in the continuity of human society, therefore they make the establishment of justice as their main goal in life. We can therefore conclude that justice is an obligation of Islam and injustice is forbidden. <https://www.islamreligion.com> (05/02/18)

The Holy Quran says:

Certainly we sent our apostles with clear argument, and sent down with them the book and the balance that men may conduct themselves with equity. (57:25).

That is to say that the conduct of leaders of religion is an important factor in awakening people against operation. It commands all adherents to implement justice and equity among them and others regardless of titles or personal consideration. It also prohibits oppression and depriving any group of people of their rights.

O ye who believe stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well – acquainted with all that ye do. (Q5.8)

Islam gives special importance to justice in that it disqualifies unjust individual from occupying position he cannot effectively take care of. The Holy Prophet Said:

Woe to the rulers, the leaders and the trustees on the Day of Resurrection some people will wish that they could be suspended between heaven and earth rather than having had the burden of their responsibilities. (Nawawi 1985)

Whoever happens to be a leader should make up his mind to be fair and justice. This will make a responsible leader. Fourteen hundred years ago these commands created a society where rich and poor, friend and foe, Muslim and non-Muslim, the ruler and the ruled, were all treated equally and all of them could count on receiving justice. The qazis (judges) were independent and no one, including the khalifah was above the law. If a dispute arose between the Khalifah and an ordinary person, both had to appear in court and provide their evidence. Islamic history is full of stories of this justice that filled the earth wherever Muslims ruled in their golden era. <https://www.soundvision.com>

Ethnicity: Ethnicity which is defined by Elizabeth (1994) as *social identification based upon the presumption of shared history and common culture inheritance*. Such identify plays a prominent role in political struggle. Be it the object of struggle is securing resource in competition with other ethnic groups or resisting domination. Ethnic identity provides a powerful ideology for political mobilization. The groups that engage in these struggles often cut across class lines, containing both elites who provide leadership and a mass of members drawn from lower classes. In the Nigerian context, ethnicity is frequently bound up with factional competition from different ethnic units. The traditional ethnics bound by language, culture, location etc.?? More so the ruling elite have created new ethnic groups by altering the attributes that define ethnic identify. They try to protect the survival of their fundamental goals which are;

- ✓ Economic exploitation of populations and resources and
- ✓ The protection of the integrity of the state frontiers at the expense of the state's citizens.

They try as much to acquire power through positions of ethnic status. Islam teaches that all mankind are the same. It is piety that differentiates them not their tribes, races, or nations. The Holy Quran says

O mankind we created you from a single (pair) of a Male and Female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of all is (he who is) the most righteous of you and Allah has full knowledge and as well acquainted (with all things) (49:13)

It is therefore duty bound on the leader and masses to elect and appoint people to offices on merit. This will create a good atmosphere for the workers to use their knowledge and initiatives for the development of the country. They will strictly adhere to the acceptable social and public norms of their offices.

IV. ISLAM AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

Islam as a religion and a way of life aims at training the sensibility of an individual in such a manner that he is governed by the spiritual and deeply felt ethical values of his religion. It is accepted that education is the most effective method of changing the attitude of the young and thus leading him to accent and initiate social change. Western education places much emphasis upon reason and rationality and underestimates the value of the spirit. It encourages scientific enquiry at the expense of faith; it promotes individualism, it

breeds skepticism, it refuses all that is not demonstrable and even where it does not directly challenge faith it relegates it. This resulted in producing individuals who are at variance with one another, each claiming his philosophy to be the only correct guidance for himself. In the Nigerian curriculum for example, religion has gradually been banished. The home and the environment instead of promoting religious education are contrarily undermining it.

V. WHAT SHOULD BE SOURCES OF GUIDANCE?

There are basically three sources of guidance each claiming an upper hand over the others.

They are:

- ✓ Science,
- ✓ Philosophy
- ✓ Religion

Let us examine them one after the other.

A. SCIENCE

The scientific method of obtaining knowledge consists of observation and experiment. Let us at this point examine the reality of observation so as to see whether it can help us with all certainty in solving the ultimate problem.

Scientifically, observation consist three factors:

- ✓ The Observation,
- ✓ The Object and
- ✓ Conditions under which the observation is made.

OBSERVER

It is an accepted fact that human beings are unique and therefore observation is bound to vary from one observer to another. This is because the different human beings do not have similar sharp and accurate powers of observation as regards to their physical senses of taste, touch, hearing, sight, smelling or intellect to co-ordinate the report that the brain gets through the physical senses. For example observation of a myopic person must certainly differ from that of an observer with normal eyesight. Similarly a person may lose the discrimination of taste or the sense of touch. It is thus a well established fact that the first factor in observation is a variable factor. That is observations can vary on the basis of this factor.

THE OBJECT

The possibility of an observation to be correct depends and its concreteness, and comprehensiveness. Therefore the more remote object the more suitable the observation and the more ungraspable the object is, the less possibility is there for an accurate observation. For example it is believed that every human being possesses a soul. But where is the soul? Until this time the scientist could not agree as to the location of the soul in the body Ansari (1977) said:

...till sometimes back scientists had agreed on a certain calculation of the distance between the earth and the moon. But now they say it was more than what had been believed in

THE THIRD FACTOR

Condition under which the observation is made. This can also be a variable factor. If we take the issue of a mirage'. When we view a sandy waste in a sultry heat of the sun from a distance, it appears to us as if it is a huge expanse of water. But when we approach that supposed lake of water, the false nature of the observation becomes known to us. That is if we become contented with the first observation, we would always remain in misunderstanding about the supposed lake of water.

From the foregoing, we have seen that all the three factors which constitute a scientific observation are variable. Therefore with the ever changing character of scientific conclusions training scientists without the knowledge of religion cannot solve the problems of Nigeria.

B. PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy which we may refer to as an area that deals with human reasoning. As the second sources of guidance it helps the individual to know a part of reality and solve the ultimate question. Let us consider the followings schools of philosophy.

FORMAL RATIONALISM

This School holds that human reason unaided is capable of knowing the ultimate facts of life and the world. It depends wholly on Logic. The method is for one to choose a hypothesis as the starting point of his investigation. Using the instrument of Logic, one builds up a whole world of philosophical thought. If we study carefully, the school is capable of giving us the sure and accurate knowledge of the ultimate problem. The reason is the starting point is always a hypothesis which is nothing more than a supposed idea or an observation based on common sense and it has always been chosen by every philosopher arbitrarily. Therefore the hypothesis, especially in the realm of abstract thought is uncertain. And if it is uncertain the thought structure built upon it and the conclusions arrived at must also be uncertain.

EMPIRICAL RATIONALISM

This school holds that Reason and sense – Experience should combine to enable human beings to find out the ultimate truth (Ansari M. F. 1997) According to this view, through the combination of reason and experience philosophy can solve the ultimate problems and guide humanity. This school which is referred to as philosophy of science uses the method of collecting and arranging the facts discovered by science and to endeavour by using this instrument of reason to form an integrated picture of the world as a whole and thereby to answer the ultimate questions. The starting point of this school is sensorial observation. As earlier mentioned in the discussion of scientific method, the scale is observation which we have already seen its short comings. Hence for ultimate problems, they have neither finality nor perfect accuracy, nor absolute certainty, and therefore the conclusions arrived at will also suffer from the same shortcomings. From the discussion so far, we can positively conclude that neither science nor

philosophy can ever be capable of giving accurate answer to our ultimate question on the basis of sure knowledge.

C. RELIGION

The fact remains that the only source of true guidance is religion. It affirms and teaches the assistance of God, the Creator and cherisher of the universe. That He is All Powerful, all knowing and omnipresent. He possesses perfect knowledge of the origin, the constitution and the function of everything. And He not only possesses that knowledge but has also revealed to humanity the correct guidance on the ultimate and intricate problems which defy correct and sure solution by means of sense and reason. The guidance comes through spiritual Luminaries that are sent to humanity from time to time. They include men like Prophet Adam, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and the last among them being Prophet Muhammad (P.B.H), and the last revealed book Quran.

The Holy Quran was sent down gradually to Prophet Muhammad not by more inspiration but through the process of prophetic Revelation which was the same with revelations to other Prophets. Being the revealed word of God, it imports knowledge which is immune from all possibilities of doubt, every form of discrepancy and the faintest taint of evil. It is sent to lead forth humanity from the spiritual and moral darkness into the light of the achievement of human destiny. It serves as a criterion which distinguished clearly the right from the false and it serves as guide for all humanity which imparts detailed and comprehensive guidance in all matters where human reason can possibly fail. The Holy Quran specifies the type of people to be appointed or elected to office. It says:

(They are) those who, if we establish them in land establish regular prayer and give Zakat, enjoin the right and forbid wrong with Allah rests the end (and decision of call) affairs (22:41).

From the above quotation we can understand that the best person to be appointed or elected to an office must be pious. And who will stand fast to see that his subordinates and himself work towards achieving the state's goals. Similarly the Holy Quran warns leaders to be just in their transactions, where it says:

O David we did indeed make thee a vicegerent on earth: so judge thou between man in truth (and justice) Nor follow thou the lust of thy heart for it will mislead thee from the path.

The present system of training does not give due recognition to the spiritual development. It is time for the country to introduce the true moral and everlasting spiritual training to all students in preparation for building a just

society. We should restructure our curriculum in such a way that our present and future problems will be reduced to the barest minimum.

VI. CONCLUSION

The solution to Nigerian problems of irresponsible governance includes lack of teaching of religion from Primary to tertiary Institutions. The course (Religion) should be made compulsory to every student just as the case of General Studies (GS). The present course civic education does not contain enough to change the attitudes of Nigerians. This will provide every student a comprehensive knowledge of his religion and that of his area of specialization. By this the country will produce God fearing Doctors, Engineers, Architect, Teachers, Technologists Administrators, Accountants etc.

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