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“ALL IN THE NAME OF GOD”

By

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Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm –
In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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My Dear Wife
My lords spiritual and temporal
Gentlemen of the Press,
My Dear Students of Religions and other Students here present
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

I thank the Almighty Allah for giving me this unique opportunity to deliver the one hundred and thirty-third Inaugural Lecture of the University of Ilorin. I praise His Holy name, I adore Him, I exalt His mightiness and confirm His Oneness. He is peace, peace emanates from Him, He loves peace and enjoins His creatures to live in peace and not in pieces. May the peace of Allah be upon

His messenger, Muhammad, who taught his followers to go for peace when confronted by the ignorant people (Qur'an 25:63). May the peace of Allah also be on the messenger of Allah, °Isā (Jesus), the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) who left peace as his departing gift to his disciples (John 14:27). May the Peace of Allah be on the members of their household and those who are peaceful among their followers till the Day of Judgment.

This lecture highlights some of my contributions to scholarship in the field of Islamic studies focusing on intra-group relations among Muslims, specifically the *ṣūfī* (Muslim mystics) on one hand, and inter-group relations concerning *ṣūfī* and non- *ṣūfī* Muslims. Some other areas bordering on Islamic thought are also discussed. They include the involvement of Muslims in street-begging in the name of God and the punishment for *Zinā* (adultery) also in the name of God. Causes of conflict among religious groups are also discussed. Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, Nigerians kill themselves in the name of God. This lecture attempts to examine why they engage in wanton destruction of lives and properties. Some recommendations are made based on our findings to proffer solutions to the problems.

It is however pertinent to call attention to the fact that Islam appreciates unity and regards it as a value that must be jealously guarded. Qur'an 3:103 enjoins Muslims to be united and never be divided. Qur'an 21: 92 emphasizes the need to keep the *Ummah* (the Muslim community) united against all odds and prevent it from disintegration. Human beings could be one if only they appreciate unity of purpose while they do not allow disagreement to cause disharmony among them (Qur'an 11:8-9). And that takes us to the issue of *Ikhtilāf*.

Ikhtilāf denotes taking a different position or course from that of another person either in opinion, utterances or action (°Alwānī, 1993, p.11). It could be an expression of a different view, controversy, or discord. Muslims throughout history are known to have engaged in *Ikhtilāf* right from the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam. Even the reality of his death caused *Ikhtilāf*. The immediate companions of the Prophet were engaged in it. They differed in their opinions but not in their hearts. The successors of the companions were confronted with various issues that led to *Ikhtilāf* and by the end of the 3rd century of Islam, as many as thirteen schools of thought (*madhāhib*) in Islamic jurisprudence had appeared, four of which have survived till date. They are those of Abu Hanifah (d.150 A.H.), Malik (d.179 AH), al-Shāfi° (d.204 AH) and Ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH). In spite of their differences, they performed *Salāt* together and prayed behind an Imam belonging to another *madhāhib* (school of thought) without constructing another mosque contingent upon a difference of opinion.

The negative application of *Ikhtilaf* especially in the exchange of political ideas has contributed to the proliferation of various sects such as Khawārij who were of the opinion that Muslims who did not share their views should be killed; the Murji'ah who want to leave matters in the hand of God to decide on the Day of Judgment; the Mu°tazilites who called for rationalization of issues and the Shi°ites who are sympathetic to the cause of °Ali b. Abi Talib, the cousin of the Prophet. Each of them formulated its own methods and principles for interpreting the texts of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and for dealing with new controversies. All in the name of God, verses of the Qur'an

and sayings of the Prophet are used selectively to support one position or another, while any verse or saying (Hadith) that does not agree to a stand of a particular faction is considered inapplicable or abrogated.

The Kharijites policy of *takfir* – accusing a fellow Muslim of disbelief to justify his killing – has no basis in Islam. The Prophet condemned killing anyone who declared *lā 'ilāha illallah* (no deity except Allah).

Today, Muslims all in the name of God are divided among themselves and the major causes of differences are ignorance, deficiency in knowledge, overzealousness and holier-than-thou attitude (Qur'an 53:32). Everybody now sticks to his views and ignorantly declares a fellow Muslim a *kāfir* thereby causing disunity of the *Ummah* contrary to Qur'an 3:103.

One issue that has divided Muslims for centuries is Sufism – *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism). It is a concept in Islam which has remained controversial. The *ṣūfīs*, that is, the Muslim mystics, maintain its Islamic origin asserting that the Prophet of Islam lived a *ṣūfī* life, imparted it to his companions and advised others who wanted to learn about it should contact ʿAli b. Abi Tālib (though that view has been rejected by opponents of Sufism). The *ṣūfīs* insist that the territorial expansion experienced by Muslims during the Umayyad period brought them in close contact with riches and luxury that lured many to embrace mundanity and reject *zuhd* (asceticism).

The ʿAbbasid period of Islam (750-1258AD) witnessed the emergence and development of various schools of thought in philosophy, theology and mysticism among Muslims. Muslim mystics (*ṣūfī*) were seen emphasizing one issue or the other while they were

eventually identified with such concepts. For example, Muhāsibī (d. 837AD) emphasized self discipline, Rābi^cat al-Adawiyah emphasized divine love, Dhū Nūn al-Misri (d.860AD) emphasized on *Ma^crīfah* (mystical intuitive knowledge - gnosis) while at-Hallāj (d. 922AD) and Bistāmī (d.874AD) who were spiritually intoxicated, emphasized *fanā'* (annihilation in God) whereby they abandoned Shari^cah practices and focused only on *ṣūfī* practices such as *dhikr* (divine recollection) which they considered as the highest form of *'ibādah* (Qur'an 29:45). They regarded their approach as the truth (*Haqīqah*) based on esotericism (*bātin*) as against *Shari^cah*, the path (exotericism). They also emphasized *Dhawq* – “taste”, that is, personal experience as the only means of appreciating their method of approach to God, the Ultimate Reality.

But some *ṣūfī* leaders would not agree to the water-tight separation between Sufism and Shari^cah. That explains why Shaykh Junayd (d. 910AD) advocated the combination of the two systems, that is, both *Haqīqah* and *Shari^cah*. The classification of Islamic practices by the Sufis and its modification by Junayd were not acceptable to the Islamic authority of the time who declared Sufism as *bid^cah* innovation (introduced into Islam) which must be flushed out.

A great Islamic scholar, Abū Hamid al-Ghazālī (d.1111AD) took up the challenge of having the personal experience of the Sufis after reading their books. He went into practical Sufism for ten years and could not come out claiming that he had found the truth and that he was very happy and satisfied with his findings.

The twelfth century witnessed the emergence of *Ṣūfī* brotherhoods (*tariqah*, pl. *turuq*). Among them were

the Qādiriyyah, Shadhiliyyah, Rifāʿiyyah and Suhrawardiyyah. New ones have continued to be formed. Tijaniyyah is one of them. It came to life in 1781 in North Africa.

Some practices associated with Sufism have attracted mounting opposition against it. They include veneration of *awliyāʾ* (saints), emphasis on *karāmah* (miracle), visiting graves praying to the dead and the use of talisman. Among those who have criticized some aspects of Sufism are Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328AD) and Ibn Jawzī (d.1200AD), who have been succeeded in the modern age by the Wahhabiyyah/Salafiyyah in Saudi Arabia and their surrogate in Nigeria, the Izālah. Ibn Jawzī and Ibn Taymiyyah, we must mention, do not condemn sufism outright, they only denounce what they regarded as illegalities in *tasawwuf* (Trimingham, 1971, p.242). Ibn Taymiyyah in particular was said to be a member of the Qādiriyyah brotherhood and that perhaps explains why he was buried among the *sūfīs* in Damascus. He was said to have “considered the *sufi* path a salutary effort and even essential with the life of the Islamic community” (www.livingislam.org; www.ijma.org.uk, www.academia.edu and www.quranforkids.org – all accessed on 10th May 2013). Ibn Taymiyyah extolled the virtues of Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir, the founder of the Qadiriyyah brotherhood and referred to him as “Shaykhuna” – “our Shaykh” (www.livingislam.org).

Relations between *Ṣūfī* Brotherhoods in Nigeria

Qādiriyyah and Tijaniyyah, the two major *Ṣūfī* brotherhoods in Nigeria, have been at loggerheads with each other since the conquest of Sokoto caliphate by the

British imperialism. The two brotherhoods which ought to live by example and display love and understanding engulfed each other in needless competition and unhealthy rivalry all in the name of God.

It is important to mention that the Qādiriyyah arrived in Sokoto much earlier than the Tijaniyyah. Among those who were initiated into the Qādiriyyah was Shaykh °Uthman b. Fūdī, the leader of the Sokoto caliphate. He was initiated into it by his teacher, Jibril b. °Umar. Shaykh °Uthman, also, initiated many people into the *tariqah*. He trained them and wrote a number of works on the brotherhood (Quadri, 1981). The Shaykh was very fond of the *tariqah* to the extent that he described his community as that of the Qādiriyyah, and that probably explains why Sokoto townspeople refer to themselves as Qadirawa (Last, 1977).

The Qādiriyyah, therefore, could be described as the official *tariqah* of the Sokoto caliphate during the life-time of its leader till his son, Muhammad Bello, succeeded him as the *amīrul mu'minīn*. Tijaniyyah penetrated Sokoto during the regime of Muhammad Bello while he was alleged to have joined the *tariqah* during the stay of Al-Hajj °Umar Fūtī, a famous Tijaniyyah leader in West Africa. However, the controversy which has been hotly debated has not been resolved. The alleged entry of Muhammad Bello into the Tijaniyyah was the first cause of strained relations between the members of the two *ṣūfī* groups because each of them persistently maintained its claim over the affiliation of Bello with its *tariqah*.

The arrival of the British colonial administration in Sokoto did not help matters, rather it worsened it because the colonial masters regarded the Qādiriyyah as the “state”

tariqah while they treated the Tijaniyyah with suspicion and saw it as having revolutionary tendencies. It was on this basis that they cooperated with the Sokoto Qadiri leaders to the detriment of the Tijaniyyah.

The Qādiriyyah leaders displayed hostility towards the Tijaniyyah by thwarting the moves made during membership drives by the latter. The Sultan who probably considered the moves as open confrontation to his authority, prevented the members of the Tijaniyyah from holding their ritual *ṣūfi* prayers such as *wazīfah* and *Dhikr* on Friday evening in any mosque or in any public place and declared doing so an offence. It was also considered an offence for the Tijanis to raise their voices during any of their prayer sessions. The law was enforced throughout Sokoto province while offenders were jailed. For example, in Gusau, some twenty-eight people were arrested and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment ranging between two and three months, all in the name of God.

The religious intolerance from which the members of the Tijaniyyah in Sokoto province suffered was not limited to their being prevented from holding their religious rites in the existing mosques, they were also disallowed from erecting their own mosques. However, in 1949, the members of the Tijaniyyah in Gusau and Kaura Namoda decided to build their own private mosques because they were prevented from using the public one for their *tariqah* purposes. When the Sultan knew of them, he ordered that they should be demolished by the members of the Tijaniyyah themselves on the ground that "...the erection of many mosques was directly contrary to the Qur'anic rule and constituted 'Bidiya'" (Quadri, 1981).

The strained relations between the two *ṣūfī* brotherhoods in Sokoto province took another dimension in 1956 when the members of the Tijaniyyah introduced political strategy by joining the then Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) under the leadership of Mallam Aminu Kano which took a radical leftist approach against the domineering influence of the traditional rulers. This was done to slight the Sultan who was the patron of another political party, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC). The strategy worked positively for the Tijaniyyah because all the stringent rules against it were relaxed while the support of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass (d. 1975), the international leader of the Reformed Tijaniyyah world-wide, was secured (Quadri, 1985).

It is apt to mention that Shaykh Ibrahim Niass had a great influence on his followers in Nigeria. This could be seen in his introduction of the practice of *qabd* (folding of arms in prayer) which he argued was the *Sunnah* of the Prophet of Islam. This practice was opposed especially by the leadership of the Qadiriyyah. Consequently, there were violent reactions in some mosques in the country between the members of the Tijaniyyah who are now nicknamed *Yan qablu* and the members of the Qadiriyyah. These violent reactions led to the death of many people including eleven policemen in 1965 in riots which occurred in the villages of Toranke, Jankuku and Jaja, all in Yeldu district of Argungu Division of Sokoto Province.

It is necessary to mention that while relations between the members of the Qādiriyyah and the Tijaniyyah in Sokoto province were strained, it was not the same everywhere in the country because in some other places in the northern region, some traditional rulers joined the

Tijaniyyah. Prominent among them were Zaria, Katsina, and Kano. In these places, the Tijaniyyah flourished at the expense of the Qadiriyyah while many people who had previously been in the latter abandoned it and joined the former (Quadri, 1981).

The movement of many members of the Qadiriyyah to the Tijaniyyah has not remained unchallenged. The task was taken over by Shaykh Nasiru Kabara (d. 1996), the then leader of the Qadiriyyah in West Africa based in Kano, Nigeria. He embarked on preaching tours in Northern Nigeria struggling to convince his members to remain in the Qadiriyyah. He wrote a book titled *al-Nāfahāt* wherein he attacked the Tijaniyyah *muqadamun* (leaders) and accused them of “sheep stealing”. He also accused them of fabricating lies that their *tariqah* was better than others. Abūbakr °Atīq (1958), a leader of the Tijaniyyah in Kano replied Kabara almost immediately the *al-Nāfahāt* was published. The two major *ṣūfī* brotherhoods in Nigeria are thus seen engaging in physical wars and wars of pen, all in the name of God.

The *ṣūfī* brotherhoods and the Jamā^cat Izālah

The strained relations between the members of the Qādiriyyah and the Tijaniyyah *ṣūfī* brotherhoods in Nigeria changed for better due to the emergence of an anti-*ṣūfī* organization in the country. It is the *Jamā^cat Izālatil Bid^ca wa Iqāmatus Sunnah* (Movement Against Negative Innovations and for Orthodoxy) which was established in Jos in 1978 under the inspiration and patronage of the former Grand Kadi (Qādī) of Northern Nigeria, Shaykh Abubakar Gumi (d.1992). The organisation has objectives which include:

- to promote the fundamental teachings of Islam as laid down in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet (SAW);
- to revive in the minds of the followers of the Islamic religion the actual duties of true Muslims as are required of them by the Almighty God.
- that we are determined to guard these principles at all cost without any options for compromise (Gumi, 1992).

Prior to the formation of the Izalah, Shaykh Gumi had written a book titled *al-^cAqīdatul ṣahīhah* (1972) wherein both the Qadiriyyah and the Tijaniyyah had been condemned as unacceptable innovations brought into Islam. Gumi's position as the Imam of Sultan Bello Mosque in Kaduna, where he held *tafsir* sessions, was used to advance his anti- *ṣūfī* posture, just as he wrote articles in *Gaskiya*, an Hausa newspaper while he was able to reach wide audience on Radio Nigeria, Kaduna and Nigerian Television, also in Kaduna.

Gumi's status as a former Grand Kadi must have contributed to his leadership position among the western-educated civil servants and professionals in Kaduna who regarded him as the authority on Islam in the absence of great and respected traditional Mallams in Kaduna, who usually belong to a *ṣūfī tariqah* (brotherhood). The choice of Jos to launch and nurture the anti- *ṣūfī* organization appears informed by its religious setting; it is a predominantly Christian town. It was there that the Izālah preachers were trained under the leadership of Mallam Ismaila Idris, a former student of Shaykh Gumi, and dispatched to various towns and villages to preach against Sufism and declare all *ṣūfī* as *Kuffār* (non-Muslims).

The Izalah group also condemned the celebration of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad – *Mawlid al-Nabī* as *bid'ah* as well as supplication to Allah through reading *Dalā'ilul-khayrāt* (a collection of prayer for the Prophet) and *al-Burdah*, a poem on the Prophet chanted as a means of warding off evil and attracting prosperity. With that, the Izalah added another group of Muslims to its list of adversaries because there are many Muslims who do not belong to any *ṣūfī* group but do celebrate *Mawlid al-Nabī*.

It is a known fact that *Mawlid* is widely celebrated in the Muslim world except in Saudi Arabia and in some other countries. Many scholars, however, see nothing wrong in celebrating the life and mission of the Prophet, commemorating his achievements (Qur'an 68:4), appreciating him as divine mercy to the entire world (Qur'an 21:107), exalting his remembrance (Qur'an 94:4) and projecting his image globally. It has been used as an avenue by Muslims to display their love for the Prophet while some Muslims exploit the occasion to generate funds to execute some projects such as building mosques as well as Arabic and Islamic Schools. It is however pertinent to note that it now appears that *Mawlid* is losing its focus because it is being observed almost throughout the year as if the Prophet's date of birth is not known.

The Izalah group has made attempts both peaceful and violent in preaching its objectives to the Nigerian Muslims while it is determined to remove all that it considers to be heretical innovations by all means. All in the name of God, the Izalah group resolved to force all members of the Qādiriyyah and the Tijaniyyah to renounce Sufism.

In consonance with their objective of making no compromise, the Izalah members resorted to arming themselves with knives and inflicted injuries on the members of the Tijaniyyah in particular while holding their ritual prayers and chased them out of mosques. The violent attacks which led to serious public disorder in different towns and villages cost some people their lives (Quadri, 1985). Leadership positions in mosques changed wherever the Izalah assumed ascendancy and the Imams remained loyal to a *ṣūfī* brotherhood. The crises also accounted for the building of *Masjidud-dirār* (contentious mosque) contrary to Qur'an 9:107-8, which warns against unnecessary proliferation of mosques. This is noticed where new mosques are built to house members of either group who are forced out of their mosques.

One important factor against the Izalah is the *ṣūfī* posture of Shaykh ʿUthman b. Fudi who had launched his *jihad* on the platform of Qadiriyyah and remained a *ṣūfī* throughout his life in spite of the unsubstantiated view of Shaykh Gumi that Shaykh ʿUthman b. Fudi renounced Qadiriyyah before he died. Gumi had to maintain that defenseless position in order to justify his declaration of the members of the *ṣūfī* brotherhoods as *Kuffār* who he said would be thrown into hellfire by Allah.

It is remarkable to note that Sokoto indigenes still refer to themselves till today as *Qadirawa*, that is people of Qadiriyyah, even though they may not know anything about the *ṣūfī* brotherhood. They do so due to the fact that their leader, Shaykh ʿUthman b. Fudi, lived and died as a great Qadiriyyah leader. Quadri (1980) had submitted that the Shaykh did not renounce his membership of Qadiriyyah *ṣūfī* brotherhood. He argued that if the Shaykh had

renounced his membership of the Qadiriyyah, he would not have hesitated to publicise it and instructed his disciples to keep off from the *tariqah* as he did in clearing the air when he was proclaimed as the *Mahdi* by some people. He refuted the rumour in his work titled, *Tahdhīrul-'ikhwān* which he wrote in 1813.

Another factor that has worked in favour of the *ṣūfī* brotherhoods is the fact that many leading Islamic scholars who are highly respected for their erudition and immense influence on their large numbers of students and admirers belong to one or more *ṣūfī* brotherhoods. Such great scholars include Shaykh Kamaludeen Al-Adabi (d.2004) the founder of the Ansarul-Islam Society of Nigeria and Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilōrī (d. 1992), the founder of Markaz Arabic Training Centre, Agege, Lagos who was also the Secretary-General of all the Imams and Alfas in Yoruba land. The two Islamic giants belonged to the Qādiriyyah *ṣūfī* brotherhood. Shaykh Adam in particular even wrote a number of works in support of Sufism and enumerated the contributions of *ṣūfī* brotherhood to the growth and development of Islam in Nigeria. The works include: *Mālā yūlam 'alyhi 'Ulamā' nijiriya*, *Dawr at-tasawwuf wa sufiyyah*; *Falsa fatul-wilāyyah*; *Tawjihud-da'wah wa du'āt*, and *Ta'rikhu d-da'wah ilāllāh*.

Quadri (1985) called attention to the positive effect of the Izalah group on the Qadiriyyah and the Tijaniyyah relation because they reconciled their differences and jointly faced the Izalah in order to retain their followers and remain in Sufism.

Street begging in the name of God

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, the high visibility of beggars on the Nigerian roads, especially in traffic jams, commercial areas, motor parks and social gatherings, their movement from house to house and sitting at strategic places in the public calls for concern. The high number of Muslims involved in the act of begging for alms in the name of Allah, chanting *fisabilillah* (spend for the cause of Allah – Qur'an 9:60), *Don Allah, Don Anabi* (Hausa – for Allah's sake, for the Prophet's sake), appearing in turban, dangling rosaries, and reciting Qur'anic verses while soliciting alms, project Islam as a religion that encourages begging for alms and turning beggary into a profession.

It must be stated that begging for alms in Nigeria is not limited to Hausa, Fulani and Yoruba Muslims, some Yoruba women are seen soliciting alms/gifts when they give birth to multiple children at a time. This is said to have a cultural implication. Traditionally, begging for alms is a taboo among the Igbo. That tradition however is already being eroded as some of them are nowadays seen on the road begging.

Before my study on the involvement of the Nigerian Muslims in begging, some scholars had examined the issue from socio-economic perspectives (Okediji & Sofola, 1972; Adedibu 1989, and Adewuyi 2000). My approach as an Islamist was from theological perspective based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

There are various categories of beggars on the streets soliciting alms in the name of Allah. They include the physically-challenged or those with physical disabilities as a result of polio; those who are partially disabled like the one-eyed; those who lost one or two fingers, those who

leap, those who have long-term mental or sensory impairments; and many others who are physically alright. This last category takes to the street for different reasons. They include the children or spouses of professional beggars and those who guide the blind or transport the cripple in wheel-barrows.

Another category is that of the pupils of Qur'anic schools. They are found mainly in Northern Nigeria and known as *almajirai*. They are sent to the streets to beg for alms and food for their Mallams (Qur'anic teachers) and for themselves. It must be noted that the Mallams devote most of their time to teaching pupils how to recite the Qur'an while they also teach advanced students of Islamic studies without being remunerated for the services they render. They therefore lack economic empowerment while relying on *sadaqah* (alms) and *Hadiyah* (gift) for their sustenance and that of their families. Even though some of them engage in farming, what they derive from it does not sustain them. Consequently they send their pupils (*almajirai*) to the street begging for alms and food. This is a form of child abuse and a by-product of irresponsible parentage. These pupils eat from anywhere including dustbins, while they are aggressive in searching for food. They eagerly wait on people who eat in restaurants to scramble for left-over. They are usually shabbily dressed and dirty contrary to Islamic precept. *An-Nazāfat min al-īman* (Cleanliness is part of godliness) – Prophet Muhammad.

The situation in Yoruba land is different from what obtains among the Hausa/Fulani Mallams. In most cases, the Alfa (Mallam) does charge for his services by asking parents of pupils to pay fees weekly or fortnightly. Some

parents pay while others default and accuse the Alfa of commercializing Allah's work. They expect them to render free services and allow Allah to reward them. The question is: how does the Mallam cater for himself and his family if he is not adequately remunerated by those who engage his services? This explains why Yoruba Mallams in some cases abandon the pupils and attend religious cum social ceremonies in anticipation of being given money for prayers they may offer in such ceremonies. The Yoruba Mallams usually do not admit pupils into their "boarding houses" except the parents are prepared to cater financially for their children. The *Mokondoros* (Mallams with big turban) are found in our studies to be an exception. Even then, they too are becoming reluctant to admit pupils whose parents cannot cater for.

The indiscriminate practice of polygyny among Muslims in Nigeria has been identified by Quadri (2006) as a factor responsible for the plight of the Qur'anic school pupils (*almajirai*). Even though a Muslim is allowed to marry a maximum of four wives at a time, some conditions are attached to it which include the ability to cater for the material needs of the wives as well as their children, (Qur'an 65:7; al-Jazā'ir, 1976). Many Muslims have more than one wife while in reality they do not have the means both financially and materially to support them. They leave the women to fend for themselves contrary to the dictate of the Shari'ah (Qur'an 4:34). They also raise large families without possessing the means to support them arguing that Allah will provide for them. The wives too contribute to the problem by vying to have equal number of children thereby increasing the family size. Qur'an 2:286 warns man not to

bear a burden he cannot bear because Allah does not burden anybody beyond his capacity.

It is pertinent to point out here that if the *almajirai* system must stop, Muslims must stop producing children they cannot cater for morally and financially. Qur'an 4:34 must be obeyed by ensuring that they possess *qawwāmah* (support) before embarking on polygyny. And that is where the Islamic authorities come in. The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Council of 'Ulamā', the Muslim organizations such as Jamā'at Nasrul Islam, Ansar-ud-Deen, Nawairudeen, Ansarul Islam, NASFAT, Quareeb, etc. are expected to educate Muslims on the requirements a Muslim must meet before going into polygyny. Any Muslim who does not meet them should not be allowed to marry more than one wife.

There is also a need for the Islamic authorities to establish pre-marriage counseling centres for would-be couples to be properly counseled on *Nikāh* (marriage) before solemnization. The indiscriminate practice of joining couples together in marriage without letting them know their responsibilities as required by the Shari'ah creates problem. Shari'ah stipulates that a father must cater for the material needs of a male child at least till he attains maturity while the female child must be taken care of by the father till she marries ('Abdul-rahman, 1969). According to the Hanafi School, the male child must be maintained by his father as long as he is a student. It therefore amounts to sheer irresponsibility on the part of a father who dumps his child with a Mallam from age five or thereabout and expects the poor boy to fend for himself.

There is a wrong perception of physical disability among many Nigerian Muslims especially the Hausa and

the Fulani. Whenever anyone of them sustains an injury that leads to amputating any part of his body or he/she is deformed physically like the cripple or victims of polio, many of them usually end up begging on the street in the name of Allah. They do not seem to know that physical disability is not a barrier to the acquisition of knowledge, or skill, or being engaged in a trade. They hardly attend schools built purposely for the physically challenged. Some Muslims in Northern Nigeria have a wrong belief about polio arguing that it is an affliction from Allah which cannot be prevented. They oppose vaccination against the disease under the pretext that it contains some ingredients considered to be *haram*, and that it causes infertility.

The vehement opposition against vaccination assumed a dangerous dimension in Kano in February 2013 when nine female health workers were killed (*The Nation* Feb.9, 2013). These actions lack support from the Qur'an. For example, Qur'an 2:195 warns Muslims against self-destruction; refusing to take vaccination against any disease amounts to self-destruction which is contrary to Qur'anic precept. Likewise, the Prophet of Islam caters for the physical well-being of the Muslims by instructing them to take medicine and guard against disease. The Prophet did not only take medicine when he was sick, he prepared medicine and enjoined Muslims to learn it (Quadri, 2010).

Who is allowed to Beg for Alms in Islam?

The Prophet was asked by Qubaysah, one of his companions, concerning who was allowed in Islam to beg for *sadaqah*. He replied:

O Qubaysah! Begging is not permitted except for one of three categories of

people: a man who has incurred debt, for him begging is permissible till he pays that off, after which he must stop it; a man whose property has been destroyed by calamity which has smitten him, for him begging is permissible till he gets what will support life or will provide him reasonable subsistence; and a man who has been smitten by poverty, the genuineness of which should be confirmed by three knowledgeable members of his people, for him begging is permissible till he gets what will support him, or will provide him subsistence. Besides these three, Qubaysah, begging is forbidden for every other persons, and one who engages in such consumes that which is forbidden (*Sahih Muslim & Sunan Abi Dawud*).

Muslims who beg for alms hide under the three categories of people mentioned in the above quoted *hadith*. They care less about the statement of the Prophet which says:

Whosoever opens unto himself the door of begging, God will open unto him the door of poverty (www.twf.org/sayings)

It is observed that the Muslim beggars on the Nigerian streets do not behave ethically from the Qur'anic point-of-view because they beg importunately in the name of Allah (Q2:273). Furthermore, they do not stop begging

even if they have collected what will be enough to feed them for a day as directed by the Prophet, who said: “A man who has one day’s meal or a day’s and night’s meal should not beg”. (Fazlul Karim, 1939). From this *hadith* it is clear that many of the beggars are involved in *haram*. Likewise is a Muslim who consumes *sadaqah* in any form if he/she possesses what is enough for him in a day.

Quadri (2006) has proffered some solutions to the problem of street begging by Muslims. One of them is the integration of Qur’anic schools into the educational system by the various governments in the Federation, while adequate budgetary provision should be made for the remuneration of the Mallams as well as other running costs of such schools. The suggestion is being implemented. For example, the Federal Government through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has built 35 Model Almajiri Schools, ten of which have boarding facilities, costing N5 billion to cater for about 5.7 million estimated *almajiri* pupils in the north-west geo-political zone. The Government is reported to have built another 51 of such schools through the Universal Basic Education Commission (www.nannewsngr.com accessed on 5th May, 2013). This is a right step in the right direction towards solving the menace caused by the *almajiris*.

However, we must emphasize that if the Federal Government intervention on the *almajiri* education must succeed, the state governments that are saddled with the responsibility of maintaining and sustaining the schools must live up to expectation. Secondly, the gesture of the Federal Government will provide only a short-term relief while it is capable of encouraging the parents to produce more children. Perhaps, the only solution that will provide

a long-term answer is for the Muslim parents to be more responsible for the educational and material needs of their children whether physically- challenged or not and take all necessary precautions against avoidable afflictions. They must immunize their children against polio to reduce the number of cripples begging for alms in the name of Allah.

Quadri (2006) also called for the establishment of Zakat Board especially by the state governments which re-introduced Shari'ah in the country recently. Such state governments could spend proceeds of Zakat to establish rehabilitation centres for the poor Muslim beggars on the streets and also make them acquire suitable skills that will enable them become self-reliant. It is noted that some Muslim organizations have started to implement the suggestion. One observes, however, that the level of patronage is low. The responsibility therefore lies on various Imams especially during *Salatul Jumu'ah* to educate Muslims on the need to pay *Zakah* and *Sadaqah* to the Zakat Board/Committee which will in turn spend the fund judiciously. In addition, the *Khatib* must make Muslims especially the physically-challenged recognize that there is ability in disability and that there is dignity in labour as taught by the Prophet of Islam, who says: "The hand that gives is better than the one that receives"; "No one eats better food than the sweat of his labour". (Quadri, 1988)

Governments at different levels sponsor people to perform pilgrimage. Our observation reveals that many beneficiaries of the sponsorship do not deserve it because in the first instance the poor Muslims who ought to be considered, though *Hajj* is not obligatory on them, are not given sponsorship instead the rich and the politicians,

including their aides and people with low morality, are the beneficiaries. The money spent on pilgrimage sponsorship by the various governments is better expended on ameliorating the condition of the poor in the Nigerian society.

The high unemployment rate in the country is a factor responsible for the disturbing level of poverty among Nigerians. The youths in particular are idle; they must be rescued from the devil's worship of armed robbery, kidnapping and terrorism. Government must find solution by creating meaningful jobs and empowering the youths in order to be positively engaged. The wide gap between the rich and the poor must be bridged to enable all experience peace and tranquility in the Nigerian society.

Punishment for Zinā

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, in 1999 the Zamfara State government under Governor Sani Yerima Bakura expanded the jurisdiction of the Shari^hah law from personal law to cover some other aspects including criminal law. Some people ignorantly condemned the exercise and accused the Governor of attempting to Islamize Nigeria. Quadri (2004) examined the whole issue and came to the conclusion that the Governor acted within the provision of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution Sections 262(1), and 277(1), 260-264 and 275-279. It is noteworthy to mention that after Zamfara State, other states in Northern Nigeria also expanded the scope of Shari^hah law in their states, and no Nigerian has been reported forced to appear before any Shari^hah court, the country has remained a multi-religious nation where everybody is given the right to practise his/her religion without hindrance.

One aspect of the Shari^cah law however attracted the attention of Quadri (2004); it is the punishment for *Zinā* (adultery) which is stoning to death (*Rajm*). One became agitated because the punishment is contrary to the provision in the Qur'an 24:2-3 that stipulates flogging one hundred times (*Jald*). The Qur'an is unambiguous about the punishment for *Zinā*. Stoning to death is not contained in the Qur'an; it is however contained in *hadith* which reported that the Prophet of Islam applied *Rajm* (stoning to death). The first culprits who were sentenced to stoning to death by the Prophet were not Muslims but a Jew and a Jewess. He applied a Jewish law to the Jews (Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22). He also applied the same law to two Muslims (Mā'iz ibn Malik al-Aslamī and a Ghamidiyyah woman), apparently before the revelation of Qur'an 24:2-3, which appears to have been revealed to abrogate the punishment of adulterous Muslims by *Rajm*.

A *Sahābah* (companion of the Prophet), ^cAbdullah b.'Abī'Awfā, was asked to clarify which one came first between *Rajm* and Qur'ān 24: 2-3. He replied that he did not know:

عن الشَّيْبَانِي: "سَأَلْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ أَبِي
أَوْفَى: هَلْ رَجَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ؟ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قُلْتُ قَبْلُ سُورَةِ النُّورِ أَمْ
بَعْدُ؟ قَالَ: "لَا أَدْرِي"

On the authority of Ash-Shaybānī who said; I asked ^cAbdullah b.Abī'Awfā, "Did the messenger of Allah (SAW) stone (anyone) to death?" He said, "yes". I

said: was it before the revelation of *Sūratun-Nūr* or after it?” He replied: “I don’t know”. (Ahmad b. ʿAli, 1421AH)

One agrees with Muhammad ʿAli (1973) who said: That stoning to death was never contemplated by Islam as a punishment for adultery is made clear by Qur’an 4:25, where it is stated expressly that the punishment for adultery in the case of slave-girls, when they are married, is half the punishment which is inflicted on free married women, and stoning to death could not be halved.

It is pertinent to recall that the Qur’an maintains that every religion has been given its own law which is peculiar to it (Qur’an 5:48). The adherents of every religion are therefore expected to abide by the prescription in their religious law. Muslims are expected to be guided by the Shariʿah and the Jews by the Mosaic law. Qur’an 45: 18 instructed the Prophet of Islam not to follow any law other than the one revealed to him and that is the law contained in the Qur’an.

The reports ascribed to ʿUmar, the second caliph, and ʿAli, the fourth caliph, on *Rajm* are contradictory. ʿUmar was reported to have claimed that *Rajm* was a Qur’anic directive (Muhammad Iqbal Siddiq n.d.). According to ʿAli, *Rajm* was a *sunnah* and not a Qur’anic legislation. His position is deduced from a statement credited to him on the practice of *Rajm*. He flogged a

woman on Thursday and stoned her to death on Friday for *Zinā* and said:

I have flogged her in obedience to the commandment of the Book of God and have stoned her to death in accordance with the practice of the Holy Prophet.

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, the *Sunnah*, that is, the practice or tradition of the Prophet, is not expected to contradict the Qur'an, rather the *Sunnah* explains it (Qur'an 16:44). The Prophet also made it clear that he was not expected to change the rulings of the Qur'an (Qur'an 10:15). Furthermore, majority of the schools of law in Islam maintain that *Sunnah* cannot abrogate the Qur'an, rather it is the Qur'an that can abrogate the *Sunnah*. It is apposite to examine the statement of 'Umar b. Khattāb who was reported by Sa'id b. Al-Musayyab to have said:

من طريق سعيد بن المسيب عن عمر بن الخطاب قال: إياكم أن تهلكوا عن آية الرجم أن يقول قائل: لا نجد حدين في كتاب الله تعالى: فلقد رجم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ورجمنا بعده فوالذي نفسى بيده لولا أن يقول الناس: زاد عمر في كتاب الله لكتبتها: "الشيخ والشيخة إذا زنيا فارجموهما البتة نكالا من الله".
أخرجه الترمذي

Be careful concerning the verse on stoning (*Rajm*) and do not allow it to ruin you because one might say: "we do not have two categories of punishment in the

Book of Allah the Exalted (concerning adultery)”. The messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had stoned to death and we stoned after him. By the One in whose hand is my life, were it not because people would say that ‘Umar added to the Book of Allah, I would have written it, that is, “if an old man and an old woman commit adultery, stone both of them to death as a decisive exemplary punishment from God”. At-Tirmidhi collected it.

The above quoted statement ascribed to ‘Umar, no doubt, is forged because there is no *Rajm* in the Qur’an and if it was there and forgotten he (‘Umar) ought to have included it during the compilation of the Qur’an. We would recall that the compilation of the Qur’an took place in 632 AD, the same year the Prophet died, at the instance of ‘Umar even when Abubakr, the then *Khalīfah*, hesitated to embark upon the exercise. ‘Umar convinced him on the need to compile the Qur’ān into a single volume in order to safeguard it against loss. The purported statement of ‘Umar also portrays the Qur’ān as incomplete which is contrary to Qur’ān 15:9 that refers to Divine protection for the book against interpolation, accretion, corruption, alteration and lacuna. It reads:

إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإنا له لحافظون

“Verily it is We who have sent down the Qur’an and We will surely guard it”.

The purported missing Qur'anic verse has rightly been declared forged by Imam Shāfi^c who said that it was never a Qur'anic verse. It must, however, be mentioned that one of the bases of the protagonists of *Rajm* is that *Rasulullah* applied it to abrogate Qur'an 24:2-3 that stipulates flogging. It is a weak basis because the opinion of the majority of scholars is that it is not permissible for the Qur'an to be abrogated by the *Sunnah*. Imam *Shafi*^c supported his view with Qur'an 10:15

Whatever a verse We abrogate or cause
to be forgotten, We bring a better one or
similar to it...

He rightly concludes that the *Sunnah* is neither better than nor similar to the Qur'an (Mustafa as-Sibā^cee, 2008). As the *Sunnah* is not expected to abrogate the Qur'an so also it should not contradict it but explain it (Qur'an 16:44). It is also clear that it cannot alter or change its ruling (Qur'an 10:15), rather it is the Qur'an that can abrogate the *Sunnah*. It is on this basis that Quadri (2004) concluded that Qur'an 24:2-3 was revealed to abrogate the *Sunnah* on *Rajm* (stoning) as the punishment for *Zinā* and substituted it with *Jald* (flogging).

Inter-religious Crises

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, all in the name of God, Nigerians kill themselves during inter-religious crises. By inter-religious crises, we mean tension, fighting or conflict between adherents of one religion and another. Crises of this type are many and common in Nigeria. Such crises had occurred between Christians and Muslims as well as

between adherents of African Traditional religion and Muslims. It is apt to mention that the causes of religious crises are multi-faceted. They include ethnicity, unhealthy competition, rivalry, fear of domination or extermination, aggressive approach to evangelism and *da^cwah*, impunity, selfishness, mistrust, suspicion, ignorance and intolerance.

Traditional Religion

Nigeria is a pluralistic and complex society in terms of culture, tribe, language and religion. The heterogeneous nature of its diversity permeates every stratum of its existence while it influences major political decisions of the Nigerian government. Diversity from religious perspective is highly noticeable in Nigeria. The country is a melting pot of many religions ranging from the major ones, Islam, Christianity, and traditional religion to the newly emerging ones such as the Grail Movement and Eckankar. Nigeria is no doubt a multi-faith society, which harbours shades of religious opinions and even atheists.

An attempt to determine the religious affiliation of Nigerians statistically has not been possible because various censuses conducted in the country have remained controversial while the last two conducted in 1991 and 2006 did not include religious identities. What seems less controversial is that the North-West and North-East Nigeria are predominantly Muslims while the South-East and South-South are mainly Christians. North central and South-Western Nigeria share the two religions almost equally. In spite of the profession of Christianity and Islam, many Nigerians are involved in syncretism; they outwardly display Islam or Christianity while they are inwardly deeply entrenched in traditional religion (Quadri, 2003). A

line of religious demarcation is very difficult to draw among Nigerians except, perhaps, the Hausa/Fulani. Other Nigerians are not only somehow syncretic, they are also heterogeneous because the three main religions in Nigeria are represented in many families.

The above scenario notwithstanding, reactions to traditional religion have been noticed in some quarters leading to religious tension and crises. With the exposure of the Yoruba Muslims to Islamic learning, especially the tradition (*sunnah*) of the Prophet of Islam, things began to change in the 1940's whereby some of them would like to imbibe Islamic culture whole-heartedly which is in tandem with the Qur'anic directives that a Muslim must embrace Islam absolutely while all traditional practices not in conformity with Islam are jettisoned (Q 2:208). Q 9:73 and 66:9 also enjoin Muslims to invite others into the religion and encourage them to worship Allah alone. Such Qur'anic injunctions among others appear to have spurred Muslim preachers to embark on preaching against idol worshipping, human sacrifice and cultism. Expectedly, the traditionalists reacted negatively to the preaching and regarded it as an effrontery against ancestral and societal norm. Such reaction accounts for the murder of Alfa Bisiriyu Apalara in Oko Baba, Ebute Metta in Lagos on the 3rd of January 1953 by Oro cultists.

Earlier in the 1940s in Ikorodu, present Lagos State, Alfa Ajagbemokeferi Mustapha Osoala (d.1987) escaped being murdered by the traditionalists, for preaching against a seven-day curfew during Magbo and Liwe Nikoro festivals. Female members of the town irrespective of their religious affiliation were barred from coming out for seven consecutive days. Alfa Ajagbemokeferi succeeded in

mobilizing people against the traditionalists which led to a great religious crisis that claimed some lives, the outcome of which produced a compromise whereby the seven-day curfew was reduced to only one day and the day must not fall on either Friday or Sunday. A similar instance of incessant clashes of Muslim preachers and traditionalists in Ila-Orangun and Ibadan has been reported by some scholars including Adebayo (2012) and Salisu (2009).

All in the name of God, traditional religion in Nigeria had been responsible for crisis that usually led to wanton destruction of lives and valuable property. This is noticed during masquerade festivals whereby innocent people were beaten mercilessly, which leads to death in some cases. The case of Ekuechi in Okene, Kogi State is a typical example described as “festival of violence” (Abdullah, 2008, Abdullahi, 2010).

Christian and Muslim Crises

Many factors are responsible for the crises between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, however the introduction and implementation of Sharīʿah appears to be the major one. The Northern Christians are fighting for survival and relevance just as the Southern Muslims too are struggling for official recognition and attempting to maintain status quo numerically against the aggressive Christian evangelism.

The re-introduction of the Sharīʿah law in Northern Nigeria and the expansion of its jurisdiction in the fourth republic have been long awaited by the Northern Muslims. They regard the development as a reclamation of a lost glory. Prior to British colonialism in Nigeria, the Sharīʿah law was fully administered throughout the Sokoto caliphate

which covered the whole of the present day northern Nigeria. The British came, subjected Sharīʿah to common law scrutiny and destroyed virtually all aspects of it and allowed only what the colonial masters considered personal to the Muslims. They were not only conquered, they lost their glory and pride and that explains perhaps why the Muslims resented the British throughout their stay in Nigeria.

The refusal of the Muslims to accept the new interpretation given to the Sharīʿah is borne from the fact that Sharīʿah to them deals with the totality of a Muslim's life and not just an aspect of it. Sharīʿah teaches him to recognize the existence of Allah, the Supreme Being, while it explains to him the type of relationship that should exist between him and his creator. It teaches him how to worship Allah and adore Him. Sharīʿah also teaches him how to become a total man. It teaches him morality as it affects his private and public life and his relationship with other human beings whether Muslims or non-Muslims in politics, economy and other human endeavours, including international relations. He learns through the Sharīʿah that there is no compartmentalization in life as there is no dichotomy between his public life and private life as everything is governed by the Sharīʿah. There is no line of demarcation between mundanity and spirituality just as there is no division between the mosque and the state, and between Caesar and Allah. In Sharīʿah, everything belongs to Allah, including Caesar himself as asserted in Qur'an 10:55 and 10:66.

Sharīʿah therefore cannot be confined to a particular aspect of human life. An attempt to do so usually leads to chaos because the desired goal will not be achieved, while

a Muslim under such a system becomes completely different in outlook and behaviour from another Muslim who lives under complete Shari^h. Shari^h, therefore, is Islam and anybody whose life is not comprehensively governed by it socially, politically, economically, educationally, technologically, and legally cannot claim to be a Muslim.

The antagonists of Shari^h displayed gross ignorance of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution when they argued that the establishment of the Shari^h court was unconstitutional. A cursory look at the Constitution reveals that Section 275 allows the establishment of Sharia Court of Appeal at state level. An appeal from the Sharia Court of Appeal can lie at the (Federal) Court of Appeal (Section 240 of the 1999 Constitution), while Section 233 (5) of the same Constitution allows an appeal from the (Federal) Court of Appeal to lie before the Supreme Court.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, on 11th November, 2011 the Central Bank of Nigeria granted a licence to Jaiz International to operate an interest-free banking system in Nigeria. Some years before the licence was granted, some Muslims in Nigeria had clamoured for the establishment of an interest-free banking to cater for the interest of Muslims due to the teaching of their religion which forbids *ribā* (usury or interest – Qur'an 2:775-8; 3:130 & 4:161). Some Christians in Nigeria condemned the Central Bank for granting the request of the Muslims hinging their opposition on the secularity of the country and the 1999 Constitution. It should be noted that Britain that introduced secularity to Nigeria granted licence to Islamic Bank of Britain Plc in September 2004 (www.Islamic-bank.com). One Godwin Sunday Ogboji sued the CBN and asked a

Federal High Court in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to declare the licence issued to Jaiz International illegal, null and void. But because Godwin lacked the *locus standi* to institute the action, the licence would have been nullified, the court ruled.

Considering the economic predicament of many small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria under the heavy burden of high interest rates that hover between 20 and 25 percent and the attendant problems of high cost of production, low capacity utilization, low sales and inability to repay bank loan, which usually lead to business failure, one would have expected all Nigerians irrespective of religious affiliation to welcome the idea of interest-free banking in the country. The opposition appears to be sheer hypocrisy because Jaiz assured that its products are open to all Nigerians. Of course nobody will be forced to patronize the bank. Nigerians have been complaining of high unemployment rate in the country while many people who want to embark on business lack capital. Jaiz offers cheap loans and people are complaining. What a paradox!

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, Nigerians need to tolerate one another and respect the religious teachings of one another as long as such teachings do not infringe on other Nigerians' rights. Nigerians need mutual understanding to move the country forward. Everybody needs to enjoy religious freedom guaranteed by Section 38 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, just as everybody is free to propagate his/her religion within a reasonable limit without attempting to force one's religion either overtly or covertly on others.

The recent attacks on places of worship, wanton destruction of valuable properties and killing of Nigerians

by *Boko Haram* that camouflage as an Islamic organization call for a critical examination. From all indications, the group is not an Islamic organization. Its demands and mode of operation are far from being Islamic, for example, it opposes man-made laws and westernization. It seeks to establish Shari^cah law in the country (Wikipedia, accessed on 21-04-2013).

Shari^cah is already being implemented in the country in the states that enacted law to that effect. The only exception is the South-Western Nigeria where Muslims have been consistently denied the Shari^cah legal system by their various governors. For example, in December 1999, a delegation of the Ibadan Muslim Progressive Committee visited the Governor of Oyo State, Alhaji Lamidi Adesina, and requested for the establishment of Shari^cah courts in the State for Muslims only. The Governor who himself was a Muslim immediately “ruled out the adoption of the Shari^cah legal system being agitated for by some Islamic adherents in the state”. (*The Guardian*, Friday 31st December 1999, p.56). The Muslims in Oyo State did not react violently to the unconstitutional response of the governor who denied them the right granted them by Section 38(1) and Section 275 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Instead some Muslims in Ibadan established Shari^cah panel at the Oja’ba Central Mosque which has been hearing cases brought before it. Some Muslims in Lagos followed the example of their Oyo State counterparts and established an Independent Shari^cah Panel under the auspices of the Supreme Council for Shari^cah in Nigeria (Adetona, 2005). Muslims in Osun State too have a Shari^cah panel. The rulings of these Shari^cah panels, we must admit, lack official recognition of

the states where they are given. The various governments in South-west must not wait for Muslims to adopt violent means in requesting for their legitimate rights before establishing Shari'ah courts for the Muslims only in such states.

Nigeria is a multi-religious country which grants freedom of religion to all her citizens (Section 38, 1999 Constitution). She also allows each religion to adopt its law and apply it to its adherents only. The stand of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution agrees totally to the view of the Qur'an on multi-religious community. Qur'an 5:48 reads:

... To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation...

Failure on the part of the adherents of any religion to adjudicate according to the provision of its law is however condemned by the Qur'an (Qur'an 5:44; 47-8). Qur'an 10:99-100 also makes it clear that it is the wish of Allah not to make everybody a Muslim. He has given everybody the choice to choose which religion he/she wants to adopt. Qur'an 2:256 is emphatic on the issue of freedom of religion. It reads:

There is no compulsion in religion.
Verily, the right path has become distinct
from the wrong path...

From these Qur'anic verses it is clear that *Boko Haram* cannot claim to be an Islamic organization. Neither can it claim to be guided by the Tradition (*Sunnah*) of Prophet Muhammad who was described by Quadri (1989) as an

embodiment of peace. The Prophet granted freedom of worship to the Christians and instructed Muslims to protect them. This was when he granted a charter to the monks of the monastery of St. Catherine, near Mount Sinai. In enumerating the privileges and immunities granted to the Christians by the Prophet, the Charter stated that:

He (Muhammad) enjoined on his followers, to protect the Christians, to defend their Churches, the residences of their priests, and to guard them from all injuries. No Christian was to be forced to reject his religion; no monk was to be expelled from his monastery. Nor were the Christian churches pulled down for the sake of building mosques or houses for the Muslims (Ali, 1967).

The Charter referred to above aptly reveals Prophet Muhammad's attitude towards the Christians. It shows that Muslims and Christians should not only live together peacefully in the same environment, they should co-operate and assist each other in their individual endeavour.

Boko Haram need to be told that the concept of war in Islam is defence and not offence. Allah only instructed Muslims to fight in the defence of Islam as illustrated in Qur'an 2:190-1 which reads:

Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah does not love transgressors. And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have

turned you out; for tumult and oppression
are worse than slaughter.

A close look at this Qur'anic verse reveals the Islamic concept of fighting. Islam recognizes war as a lawful and justifiable course of self-defence and restoration of justice, freedom and peace. Islam condemns aggression from any quarters and that explains the reason Muslims are warned by Allah not to initiate hostility or violate the rights of others. Islam does not eulogise war like the jingoists nor does it inculcate pacifism or non-resistance to aggressors. Islam does not support any war waged for territorial expansion, personal power or glory, economic opportunity, exploitation and depriving others of their religious and cultural freedom (Quadri, 1989), it is significant to note that Qur'an 2:193 says: "And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God" (Yusuf Ali, 1975). Faith in God in this context should not be narrowly interpreted to mean Islam alone. Other monotheistic revealed religions are covered by it (Qur'an 2:62 and Qur'an 5:69). The verse calls for fighting for religious liberty, freedom of worship, and freedom of conscience. Qur'an 22:40 mentions the protection of other religions along with Islam. It says:

Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: "Our Lord is God" for had it not been that God checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the name of God is commemorated in

abundance would surely have been pulled down.

This Qur'anic verse clearly indicates that no war should be waged in the name of religion to coerce others to accept a particular faith or ideology. It is *live and let live* (Qur'an 109:6). As I said earlier, Qur'an 2:256 is emphatic that there is no compulsion in the matter of religion. If *Boko Haram* is an Islamic organization it would have been guided by Qur'an 16:125 which advocates the utilization of wisdom, good exhortation and dialogue to convince non-Muslims to appreciate Islamic value.

Evidences from the *Sunnah* (Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad) do not support the affiliation of *Boko Haram* to Islam. Suicide bombing which is its major weapon of attack against its target is condemned in Islam. Qur'an 4:29 warns Muslims against committing suicide while Qur'an 2:195 instructed them against involvement in self-destruction. Prophet Muhammad, too, condemned any Muslim who commits suicide and declared him an inmate of Hell-fire, where he will reside eternally (*Sahih al-Bukhārī*). From all these, it is manifestly clear that *Boko Haram* is not justifiably fighting in the name of Allah. The organization should be bold enough to unmask itself and declare its true identity. After all, President Jonathan blamed politicians for religious crisis in Nigeria (www.ynaija.com). He also maintained that most of the religious tensions in the country were politically motivated. The political class in Nigeria ought not to disparage the good name of Islam. It is high time they thought of building this country by being statesmen like Prophet Muhammad in Madina and Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, *Boko Haram* is not an agent of Islam, it is the handiwork of the destructive Nigerian politicians. If Nigeria must know peace, the Nigerian politicians must resolve to achieve it not through the manipulation of religion but by becoming nation builders. Qur'an 13: 11 says "Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in their hearts".

Mass Media

The mass media in Nigeria has not been able to live above board in the issue of religious crisis. It has been part of the problem rather than make attempt to solve it. Quadri (2000) noted that hardly would a day pass without many of the print media publishing one negative report or the other on Shari^cah depicting it in cartoons as unprogressive law and agent of disintegration in the country. The quality of their editorials on Shari^cah at times portrays them as alarmist, myopic and uninformed. They are very quick at jumping into conclusions that the introduction and implementation of Shari^cah in Zamfara State on 27th October 1999 was unconstitutional as if the office of the Chief Justice of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was located in the board rooms of the Nigerian press. They view Shari^cah as an unfortunate development capable of destabilizing the Nation. The unfolding events in the country since the implementation of Shari^cah in Zamfara in 1999 have proven the critics wrong. Other Northern states, namely Sokoto, Kano, Niger, Katsina, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kebbi and Yobe have invoked Section 275 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and expanded the jurisdiction of Shari^cah in their respective States. The people of the

States where Shari^hah has been re-introduced and implemented have been living peacefully among themselves. If there is any crisis in any of such States, it is not as a result of the implementation of Shari^hah law. In addition, nobody has been reported coerced to be tried under Shari^hah against his will or religion in any of the States where Shari^hah law is operated.

In 2002, a section of the print media, specifically *ThisDay Newspaper*, threw all caution overboard and displayed unethical behaviour and flagrant disrespect for the Prophet of Islam and the feelings of the Nigerian Muslims when it carried an article considered sacrilegious, written by one Isioma Daniel who opined that the Prophet would have loved to marry one of the contestants for Miss World who were billed to display nudity in Abuja in the holy month of Ramadan of the year. Many people lost their lives in Abuja and Kaduna due to the protest that greeted the publication of the article in *ThisDay*. Perhaps if the management of the paper had been sensitive enough to the feelings of the Nigerian Muslims, the precious lives of Nigerians lost in the crisis would have been preserved.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a factor responsible for some of the so-called religious crises in Nigeria. This has been noted especially in Jos, Plateau State, between the Hausa/Fulani settlers who are predominantly Muslims whose parents or grandparents migrated to the town from different parts of the north, and the indigenes, the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere who are almost entirely Christians. The two groups since 2001 have been struggling over land ownership, economic resources and political control.

(www.crisisgroup.org). Crises between the two groups which have led to the loss of many lives were precipitated by ethnic interests but assumed religious dimensions. This is a problem for the National Assembly to address. The status of the children and grand children of settlers deserves to be looked into especially when such children have lived all their life outside their state of origin. Every Nigerian must be given sense of belonging in order to cultivate the spirit of patriotism wherever he may be residing after he must have contributed to the development of the state where he domiciles. There is need for national integration and sustained peaceful coexistence.

Other Area of my Contribution: Translation Exercise

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, I observed in the early 80's that there was a problem with the quality of undergraduate students that were admitted to read Islamic Studies in this University. The students could be divided into three main categories namely; those who had attended Arabic school to the level of at least *Idādi* or Higher Islamic Studies (HIS) and obtained Diploma in Arabic and Islamic Studies, those who attended secondary school only and obtained five Credits including Islamic Studies and a few who combined the two. The first two categories were deficient in one way or the other. The deficiency of the first category is in the mastery of the English language. The students could not express themselves correctly in the language while they were good in Arabic. The second group were better in English but lacked the basic knowledge of Islam in Arabic. I therefore decided to proffer some palliative measures by organizing extramural classes for the two groups where they were taught basic *fiqh* (jurisprudence)

books beginning with *Matn al^cAshmāwī*. Later, I added *al-Akhdarī*. The books were translated from Arabic into English while commentaries were made on them. I acknowledged the useful comments of Dr. Z.I. Oseni (now a Professor) on my translation. The next translation exercise was a collaborative effort between Y.A. Quadri and I.O. Oloyede. We introduced *Al-muqadimatul ^cIzziyyah*, an advanced text in Islamic jurisprudence to the students. This was later published in 1990 and titled: *Al-Izziyyah for the English Audience*.

Quadri (1986) translated *Juz^cAmma (Hisbu Meji, Qur'an Chapters 78 to 114)* into Yoruba language with commentary and transliteration. Within one year, over twenty thousand copies were sold. I regard this humble contribution to the understanding of Islam in the community as a success because of the high demand for the book till date, which has occasioned its being pirated and plagiarized. The level of its success can also be measured by the demand by its readers for the translation of the whole Qur'an into Yoruba by Quadri. The translation exercise that lasted seven years (1990-1997) employed idiomatic system of translation using standard Yoruba language that is intelligible to most if not all speakers of the language. The work is fully tone-marked and an index is provided. I must thank Dr. N.I. Raji for his useful comments on my draft of the Yoruba translation of the Qur'an. His words of encouragement assisted me to complete the self-imposed task. It is noteworthy to mention that the work has attracted academic attention from within and outside Nigeria. (Ogunbiyi, 2001; Ahmad, 2009)

The English edition of *Juz^cAmma* was published in 1993. This also has enjoyed a good patronage in the

English-speaking countries of West Africa. Through these humble efforts, I have attempted to contribute my little quota to the understanding of the message of Islam.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, there are many Muslims in Nigeria who do not understand the meaning of the Qur'an. Many Muslims also perceive it as a prayer book because they are expected to recite it in their five daily obligatory prayers. This informs the response of such people to say "amen" whenever the glorious Qur'an is recited. In a study carried out by Quadri (2003), it was found out that many Yoruba Muslims including many Alhajis and Alhajas did not acquire Islamic education even as youth. They were born into Islam. They grew up to find themselves in the religion without knowing anything about it. At best, some of them attended the Qur'anic school (*Ile-Kewu*) as infants where they learnt how to read or recite the Qur'an in Arabic without learning its meaning. Some of them even celebrated *walimatul Qur'an* (feast at the completion of learning the reading of the Qur'an) elaborately without knowing the meaning of a word in the Qur'an. How can such Muslims be influenced by the message of the Qur'an? The Qur'an has not been able to transform them spiritually and morally.

There is therefore the need for the Yoruba Muslims in particular to educate their children Islamically right from youth if the children must grow to become proper Muslims that Allah wants them to be (Qur'an 3:110). They must ensure that their children are taught Islamic Studies in Primary and Secondary Schools in conformity with the National Policy on Education. There is a need for West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) to review its rule on subject combination for SSCE. Currently, Islamic Studies

cannot be taken by Science and Technology-oriented students. This is a major problem which must be corrected and it is probably the reason Nigeria is producing Scientists, Engineers and Technologists who have not been given proper religious orientation. The consequence of such is high emphasis on materialism at the expense of spirituality. Humanity requires a total-man that will always have human feelings and God's consciousness (*taqwa*) in whatever is done.

Recommendations

In the light of this lecture, the following recommendations are made to achieve sustainable peaceful co-existence in the country:

- Nigerians are said to be religious but they do not study religion. There is need for them to study religion in order to understand God and discover the purpose of their existence.
- Many people worship God out of trepidation and selfish interest expecting miracle to happen, they need to worship out of love for God and show love to others.
- Nigerians need to cultivate the spirit of live and let live in order to stop the incessant ethno-communal-religious crises in the country.
- Government need to solve the problem of poverty in the country by creating meaningful jobs for the idle youth to discourage them from being used negatively.
- Parents need to take proper care of their children especially the disabled in order not to push them to the street to beg for alms.

- Muslims need to imbibe the divine attribute of *Tawhid* (unity) and allow it to reflect in their dealings with fellow *ahl lā'ilāh ilallāh* and avoid *takfir* among themselves in order to remain united and strong.

Conclusion

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, we would like to conclude this lecture by saying that disagreement, tension, conflict, crises and wars associated with religion are not caused by God but by human misconception, misunderstanding, intolerance, overzealousness, unhealthy rivalry, fear of domination or annihilation by the minority and misuse of power by the majority. God is peaceful, He loves peace and He wants man to project peace in dealing with others. Nigerians must therefore note that meaningful and sustainable development can only take place where there is peace, tolerance, understanding and sincerity of purpose among Nigerians in whatever they do.

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Al-hamdulillāh rabbi'l ālamin – All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the universe for His infinite mercy on me.

وإن تعدّوا نعمتَ الله لا تحصوها

...and if you count the blessings of Allah,
never will you be able to reckon them...
Qur'an 14:34.

I acknowledge that the Almighty Allah has been very nice and kind to me in various ways. He is indeed a very good Lord.

My thanks also go to my lovely parents for giving me the best Islamic education they could. I say:

رب ارحمهما كما ربياني صغيراً

My Lord, Have mercy on them as they
did care for me when I was little
Qur'an 17:24.

All my *Alfas*, teachers and *Muqaddam* are remembered. I cannot thank you enough for the exoteric and esoteric knowledge you imparted to me. It is only Allah, the *Shakkūr*, that can reward you adequately.

هل جزاء الإحسانِ إلا الإحسانُ

Is there any reward for good other than
good? – Qur'an 55:60.

I thank all my students for being good and teachable and also for allowing me to learn from you.

I thank all the members of staff of this University for your selfless contributions in building this Citadel of Learning. Do not be tired. It is only God that can reward you.

All my friends too numerous to be mentioned, I appreciate you. My gratitude goes to Drs. Mahfooz Adedimeji, R.I. Adebayo and Imam Ali-Agan for the editorial assistance you rendered on this lecture.

All my children must be remembered because they are nice. They give me joy all the time. I am proud of them.

Finally I thank my darling wife for the good companionship we have shared since 1973 when we first met during Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN) meeting at the University of Ibadan.

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