

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



**THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIXTH (156TH)
INAUGURAL LECTURE**

**“UTILISING THE QUR’ĀN,
STABILISING THE SOCIETY”**

BY

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Bismillāhir- Rahmānir- Rahīm
In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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My Dear Wives
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Prologue

قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ
أَصْطَفَىٰ ۗ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ أَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

Say all praise belongs to Allah and peace be upon those servants of His whom He has chosen. Is Allah better or what they associate with Him? (Q27:59)

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

He (Allah) singles out for His mercy whom so ever He pleases. Allah is the Lord of the exceeding bounty. (Q3:74)

I consider it a great honour to stand before you today to deliver this 156th Inaugural Lecture of the University of Ilorin and the fourth from the Islamic Studies Unit. On January 22, 1981, a year to my graduation with B.A. (Hons.) in Islamic Studies from this great University, the Late Professor I. A. B. Balogun delivered the first Inaugural Lecture from both the then four-in-one Department of Religions (which comprised

Arabic, Christian Studies, Comparative Studies and Islamic Studies). Professor I. O. Oloyede (OFR), the immediate past Vice-Chancellor of this University and Professor Y. A. Quadri, former Dean of Arts, delivered the second and the third Inaugural Lectures respectively in the Islamic Studies Unit of the same Department.

Today, some twelve thousand, four hundred and nineteen (12,419) days or thirty-four (34) years¹ after the first Inaugural Lecture in Islamic Studies, I am having the unique privilege to deliver this fourth lecture in the Islamic Studies Unit of our great Department. The title of my lecture is **“Utilising the Qur’ān, Stabilising the Society.”**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, before I delve into the lecture, it will be appropriate to state here that my familiarisation with the Glorious Qur’ān started more than fifty years ago. First, I was born into a family where learning of the Qur’ān is the first project that a child would engage in before any other thing. Second, I have been involved in teaching and facilitating the teaching of the Qur’ān to Nigerians and non-Nigerians at all levels². This has enabled me to discover and appreciate the worldview of the Glorious Qur’ān and the Divine Intention behind its revelation, which is to rescue humankind from the darkness of ignorance, wickedness and man’s inhumanity to man and to make things easy as Allah, the Author of life, desires ease and comfort for His creatures and He does not wish that they should have difficulty (see Q14:1 and Q2:185).

All over Nigeria today, there is fear, there is tension, there is threat, and there is general insecurity to

lives and properties including places of worship³. In the 2014 report of Global Peace Index⁴, Nigeria is absent on the list of the 1st hundred (100) peaceful nations only to surface as the one hundred and fifty-first peaceful nation in the world. This state of insecurity is a source of concern to all right thinking people irrespective of their religious persuasion because the end effect of instability will not discriminate against one religious group or the other. Those who have paid the price of instability include a retired late General Muhammad Shuwa and a serving Police Commissioner, late Mr. Chinweke Asadu (formerly of the Kwara State Police Command), in his village in Enugun⁵. All over the society, there is palpable rise in poverty level, hunger and disease, embezzlement of public fund, injustice and oppression of the citizens⁶. The biggest threat to the survival of any society is corruption which is very rampant with no appreciable efforts to stem it⁷.

The scenario similar to what is painted above had once taken place in the faraway Arabian Peninsula during the pre-Qur'ānic era where people had a record of a great deal of raiding and plundering⁸, practicing immorality and violating all universally acceptable norms⁹. The revelation of the Qur'ān in the 7th century of the Gregorian calendar brought about sanity first to the immediate recipients and to the whole world¹⁰. The Qur'ān has come to establish a viable community and organise a stable society, it came with a system of justice which cannot be influenced by love or hatred, a system of justice which will use the same scale for all¹¹. It also came with a system that promotes anything that will bring good to the people, encourages

them to be virtuous and discourages them from evil practices (Q 3:104). With this, the Arabian society experienced positive change in its way of life¹².

The Vintage Qur'ān

To appreciate the fact that the Glorious Qur'ān contains principles and recipe which, if followed religiously, will be beneficial to humankind, it will be appropriate to take a short excursion into the historical origin of the Glorious Book. As stated elsewhere:

The Glorious Qur'ān is the written words of Allah which is inevitable and marchless.¹³ It was revealed to the Messenger of Allah and was preserved and successively transmitted from one generation of the Muslims to the other. It is used in worship by Muslims all over the globe.¹⁴

It should be noted that the Glorious Qur'ān has many other names or what can be termed as attributes. These include '*Al-Burhān*', which means 'The Conclusive Proof' (Q4:173); '*Al-Furqān*', which means 'the criterion used to separate the truth from falsehood' (Q25:1); '*Al-Kitāb*', or 'The Book' (Q18:1); '*Adh-Dhikr*', which means 'The Reminder' (Q36:69); and '*At-Tanzīl*', which means 'The Revelation' (Q26:192). 'Al Asfahani explained that of all these names/attributes, the most unique of all is Al-Qur'ān as there is no other religious Book that can bear this name except the Glorious Book which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW)¹⁵.

Shaykh Ādam ʿAbdullahi Al-Ilory while explaining the uniqueness of the Qurʾān observed that: The Qurʾān was revealed in a literary style that is unarguably unique and exclusive as it is neither prose nor poetry! Rather the Qurʾān is as affirmed in Q. 36:69: “*Dhikr wa Qurʾān Mubīn.*”– “A Reminder and Qurʾān made Plain.¹⁶

There is a unanimous verdict among the scholars of the science of the Qurʾān that its distinctiveness is evidently manifested in its language and style, arrangement and contents as well as in the rhetoric. This explains why the experts in rhetoric and literary style cannot find a fault in the Qurʾān, produce something similar to it, suggest “Add and drop”¹⁷ or substitute one thing with another.¹⁸

Audience of the Qurʾan

Generally, the targeted audience of the Qurʾān is humankind.¹⁹ There are abundant proofs in the Glorious Book to buttress this point. For example, Q17:89 reads:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ

مَثَلٍ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿٨٩﴾

In this Qurʾān, We have set out all kinds of examples for **men**, yet most of them persist in denying.

Similarly another proof can be found in Q10:108 thus:

قُلْ يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
فَمَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ
فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

...mankind, truth has come to you from your Lord, anyone who accepts guidance is guided for his own sake and he who goes astray does so at his own peril . . .

Another clear proof is found in Q18:54 thus:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ
مَثَلٍ ۚ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرِ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ﴿٥٤﴾

We (Allah) have explained in various ways in this Qur'an for the benefit of mankind, all kinds of examples but **man** is most contentious.

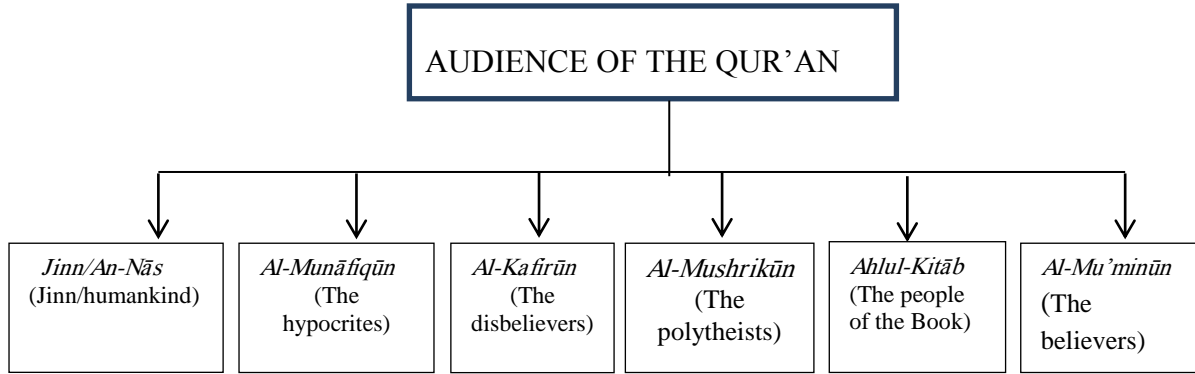


Fig. 1: Audience of the *Qur'ān* Designed by the author

For the period of twenty-two (23) years, five months and fourteen days that the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet, many among the above-listed six categories of the audience reacted in various ways ranging from hostility to the message and messenger, blackmail, rejection of the message as well as conspiracy to extinguish the light of the Qur'ān.

At the time of the commencement of the revelation of the Qur'ān, the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs in the peninsula were at the peak of their oratory and literary expertise. It was common knowledge that at that time, literature and poetry, as instruments of human expression had taken the centre stage just like science and technology in our contemporary time.²¹

Hostility and Blackmail

The immediate audience of the Qur'ān being the Arabs did not feel comfortable with the fundamental changes that the Book was introducing in order to reform the society and bring injustice and oppression to an end. They failed to realise that, if such a reform is put in place and the society is transformed into a virtuous and righteous place for all, peace and stability would reign supreme, citizens' multidimensional needs would be taken care of promptly, there would be security of lives and property, the crime rate would be reduced greatly, and this would be of benefit to all irrespective of differences in colour, creed and race. The hostility displayed by the Arabs made them not to pay attention to the Qur'ān. Qur'ān 74:18-25 captures the antics of these Arabs who did not believe in the Qur'ān. They even went

further to discourage others from believing in it. The personality involved in this orchestrated distortion and falsification of the true nature of the Qur'ān was no less than Walid Ibn Mughirah. He was initially convinced that the Qur'ān is a revelation of Allah to Prophet Muhammad, having been captivated by the recitation. But he was discouraged by others in the voyage of manifest error to make a rethink lest his position leads the entire masses to accept the Qur'ān as an authentic revelation and hence embrace Islam.¹²

The hostility continued with the ascription of the authorship of the Qur'ān to Prophet Muhammad, a claim that is easily debunked by the Qur'ān itself in Q4:82 thus:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ

لَوْجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾

Do they not ponder over the Qur'ān? Had it been from other than Allah they would have surely found in it many contradictions.

It is noted in the Qur'ān that Prophet Muhammad was cautioned by Allah in Q75: 16-18 thus:

لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۚ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ

عَلَيْنَا جَمَعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ۚ ﴿١٧﴾ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ

قُرْآنَهُ ۚ ﴿١٨﴾

Do not move your tongue with haste concerning (the Qur'ān), it is for us to compile and recite it. After we have recited it to you, then follow its recital.

In Q. 80:1-10, the Prophet was guided by Allah to pay equal attention to all sincere seekers of the truth. The Prophet was busy presenting Islam to the unbelievers among the Arabs with the hope that they would respond by opening their hearts for the message of the Qur'ān to penetrate.¹³ Suddenly, a blind servant of Allah, ^CAbdullah Ibn Ummi Maktum came to the stage requesting from him to be taught the Qur'ān. If the Prophet had been the author of the Qur'ān, he would not have kept the record of the two episodes in it. As if to keep the mouth of those promoting the fallacy which the obnoxious allegation represents shut, the Almighty Allah made an open declaration for all to note that the consequence of Prophet Muhammad saying other than what is contained in the *wahy*¹⁴ would not be palatable. Q. 69: 44 – 47 reads:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَأَخَذْنَا

مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

If he (the messenger) had invented any sayings in our name, we should certainly seize him by his right hand.¹⁵ And would have cut

his life-vein. And none of you could have withheld him from our wrath.

Having failed woefully in their blackmail and falsification, the unbelievers among the Quraysh resorted to calling the Prophet names. Sometimes, he was called a mad man; Q. 62:2 among others debunked the claim. At another time he was called a poet using his expertise in poetry to present the Qur'an; this claim is also dismissed in Q. 36:69.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, despite the several abortive efforts to discredit the Qur'an, the antagonists still resolve to forge ahead in their stiff opposition against the Qur'an. A clarion call on all is put to people to boycott the Qur'an by not reading or listening to it (Q. 41:26):

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ

وَالْغَوَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

The unbelievers say: listen not to this Qur'an, but talk at random (to divert attention when it is read) so that you may gain the upper hand.

The response of this Glorious Book to all these acts of hostility and blackmail can be classified as follows: Those opposed to the Qur'an who claimed that there is nothing divine or extraordinary in it have been

challenged to produce a book that will be unique in language style, rhetoric, contents and arrangement.

Qur'an 52: 34 puts this challenge in the following way:

فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

Let them, then, produce a scripture like it, if what they say is true.

When the challenge could not be accepted and met, and the revelation of the Qur'an continued, the magnitude of the challenge was reduced only for the unbelievers to show the abysmal level of weaknesses and inability to come up with something similar to the Qur'an. Then Q. 11: 13 challenged them to produce or, better put, even forge just ten chapters only if indeed they were sincere.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ أَفْتَرَّهُ^ص قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُورٍ

مِّثْلِهِ مَفْتَرِينَ^ص وَادْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّن دُونِ

اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

If they say, 'He has invented it himself, 'say, "if you are truthful, produce ten invented chapters like it and call whom you can, besides Allah, to help you.

The climax of the challenge is captured in Q. 2:23 where the demand as small as ten chapters like what the Qur'ān contains got reduced to one chapter only:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا
فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ ۖ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّن
دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

If you are in doubt about the revelation we have sent down to our servant, then produce a single chapter like it, and call upon your helpers besides Allah if you are truthful.

Ever since the revelation of the Qur'ān and the opposition to it, nobody has been able even to forge something similar to it. Qur'ān 17:88 put an end to the discussion thus:

قُلْ لَّيِّنَ أَجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ
يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ
وَلَوْ كَانَتْ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴿٨٨﴾

Say: "If the whole of Mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like

thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.

It is our belief that, the opposition to the Qur'ān and the allegation that it was written by Prophet Muhammad would not have arisen if critical look had been taken at some passages of the Qur'ān such as Qur'ān 23:12-14 which contain accurate information about the distinct stages of human development in the womb which has been confirmed scientifically. Similarly, in Qur'ān 32:9 there is accurate information relating to the development of the senses in the embryo in exactly the correct order i.e. development of the hearing, development of the sight and the development of the mind.²⁶ Who could have taught Prophet Muhammad this information at that period? The conclusion that could be drawn is that the author of the Qur'ān is the Creator of the universe.

Attitude of the Orientalists

The orientalist are non-Muslim scholars and intellectuals of the western extraction, who have worked with zeal and zest in understudying Islam in all its ramifications.²⁷ They are doing so for various reasons and objectives, viz:

- * Promotion of doubt about the validity of the message of the Prophet;
- * Relegation of the prophetic sayings to the background and accentuation of the false claim that they were manufactured/fabricated by the Muslims in the first three centuries;

- * Promotion of doubt about the authenticity of the Qur'ān;
- * Spread of the unfounded claim that *al-fiqh al-Islam* (The Islamic Jurisprudence) relies on Roman Jurisprudence;
- * Promotion of spurious *ahādith* in order to unleash destructive criticisms on Islam;
- * Waging war against the classical Arabic language by the promotion of dialects; and
- * Weakening the spirit of unity and brotherhood among Muslims.

The orientalist did all these in a bid to create an enabling environment for the colonisation of the Arab world as well as the exploitation of their abundant natural resources.²⁸ Those who devoted their time and lives, to the study of all aspects of Arabic and Islamic studies, can be categorized into two. The first consist of those who used the knowledge acquired to attack Islam and paint it bad. They did this in a very clever way such that only very meticulous minds would be able to separate their falsehood from the truth that Islam stands for.²⁹

In order to relegate classical Arabic to the background, they advocate very strongly the use of Arabic dialects so as to make the understanding of the meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān very difficult to the native speakers of the language and also to break the linguistic platform upon which the unity and solidarity of the Arabs is based.³⁰ Those who antagonised the Qur'ān and Islamic law included H. A. R. Gibb (1895-1965). He wrote many books such as *Mohammedanism*, *Modern Trends in Islam* etc. in which he did not hide his

subjective tendencies against the Qur'an. Next is R. A. Nicholson (1868-1945) who did not recognize Islam as a system of faith, his prominent book being *History of Arabic Literature*. J. Schacht (1902-1969), the author of many books including *An Introduction to Islamic Law* and *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* is a well-known orientalist who is also not well disposed to Islam and what it stands for.

John Burton (1909-1972) in his work, *The Collection of the Qur'an*, attempted to falsify the history of the collection of Qur'an by claiming that the third Caliph, °Uthmān bn °Affān ought to be given the first credit for the compilation of the Qur'an instead of °Abubakar and °Umar³¹. The position of the generality of the *Ummah* is that it was °Umar who convinced °Abubakar on the need to compile the Qur'an after many of the Qur'anic memorisers had died³². Furthermore, Burton also alleged that the Muslim Jurists forged the concept of *Naskh* (abrogation) so that they could justify certain *fiqh* (Islamic Legal) positions³³. Those who are familiar with the *fiqh* rules know that many of them are derived from the prophet's instructions and practices otherwise known as *Sunnah*³⁴. Lastly, to draw another example of Burton's sweeping allegation, he ignored the fact that is well-known that Prophet Muhammad was unlettered, he could neither write nor read by claiming that he with his own hand canceled some verses of the Qur'an³⁵.

Despite the fact that some of the biased orientalists insisted that the Qur'an was authored by Prophet Muhammad, it was inevitable for them to reach

the incontrovertible conclusion that more than one thousand, four hundred years after its revelation, the Glorious Book remains unchangeable and incorruptible. Below are the testimonies of some of the frontline orientalist:

Mr. Torrey in his book *The Jewish Foundation of Islam* has this to say:

The Koran (sic) was his (i.e. Muhammad's) own creation, and lies before us ***practically unchanged*** from the form which he himself gave it.

On his own part, Bosworlts Smith, another antagonist of Islam, observes:

In the Koran (sic), we have, beyond all reasonable doubt the exact words of Mohammad and without addition.³⁶

It is to be noted that in most of the submissions of some orientalist there is an acknowledgement of the irresistible fact that the Glorious Qur'ān is a unique scripture, the production and authorship of which is beyond human power³⁷.

Another orientalist, Mr. Watt, in his introduction to the re-packaged book of Richard Bell entitled: *Introduction to the Qur'ān* courageously noted that almost half a century after the publication of the book:

...sound scholarship and outlook certainly now demand that we should not speak of the Qur'an as the product of Muhammad's conscious mind³⁸.

It is also in the same manner that a prominent orientalist, Arthur Arberry, who left his footprints on the sands of Arabic Studies and Islamic Scholarship through his numerous works especially his interpretation of the meaning of the Qur'ān, corroborated what is said in Q.17:88 to the effect that if humankind and the jinn formed an alliance and they gave support to one another with the aim of producing the like of this Qur'ān, they would **never be able** to do so. This divine verdict has been put by A.J. Arberry as follows:

The rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Qur'an are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly ...that any version whatsoever is bound by the nature of the things to be but a poor copy of the glittering (and) splendor of the original³⁹.

The second group of orientalists is those who are academically objective and honest. They refrain from distortion and falsification while the findings of their research into Islam and the Glorious Qur'ān are presented correctly⁴⁰. One of them is Hardiem Roland who wrote a book entitled *Muhammadan* (sic) *Religion* in the Latin language. The two-volume book was prohibited from circulation by those who did not feel comfortable with the truth and facts contained therein.⁴¹

Another objective orientalist, J.T. Reiske (1716 – 1774) made Arabic Studies to occupy a prestigious position in Germany⁴². He was made to pay for this through marginalisation and pauperisation by those who expected him to be hostile and harsh in his research about

Islam and the Qur'ān. He eventually died in abject poverty. Be that as it may, it can be seen from the submissions of most of those non-Muslim scholars who devote time to study Islam and the Glorious Qur'ān that the Qur'ān is an inimitable symphony, the sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy.⁴³ It is remarkable to note that there are some orientalists whose minds have been illuminated by the light of Islam. They consequently resolved to embrace Islam which they practised with uncommon sincerity and total commitment. Mention should be made of the most prominent of them in person of Thomas Arnold, who wrote the book, *The Propagation of Islam and Dune*, the French orientalist who embraced Islam and lived in Algiers. He was the author of some books on Islam. He died in France but was buried in Algiers.

It should be noted that in Q. 15:9 a very strong assurance for the protection of the Qur'ān has been clearly stated. It will therefore remain unchangeable and incorruptible and it will also continue to move men and lead some to spiritual upliftment. The divine assurance has inspired Muslims, young and old, to be vigilant so that extraneous and strange material will not creep into the Qur'ān.

It is apposite to recall here that efforts to fabricate the Qur'an especially after the 9/11 episode have been futile and fruitless. For example the following is one of the passages invented and given Suratul Muslimoon in imitation of the authentic Qur'an Suratul Mu'minūn (Chapter 23):

سورة المسلمون

الصم (١) قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ
بَعِيدٍ (٢) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَمَسِيحِهِ لَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ
نَارٌ جَهَنَّمَ وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ (٣) وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مَغْرِبَةٌ
مَكْفُورَةٌ تَلْتَئِمُ عَفْوًا لِلَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ (٤)
يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الرَّحْمَنُ يَا عِبَادِيَ قَدْ أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْ الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ بِالْهَدَىٰ مُنْزَلًا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ (٥) فَمَا كَانَ
لَكُمْ أَنْ تَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ وَتَضَلُّوا سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ (٦)
قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَا ضَلَلْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا بَلْ أَضَلَّنَا مَنْ ادَّعَىٰ أَنَّهُ
مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٧) وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَغْوَيْتَ عِبَادِيَ
وَجَعَلْتَهُمْ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ (٨) قَالَ رَبِّي إِنَّمَا أَغْوَانِي
الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِبَنِي آدَمَ أَكْثَمَ الْمَفْسُودِينَ (٩)
وَيَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَمَنْ أَغْوَاهُمُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَيُبْعَثُهُ
بِالَّذِي كَانَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ نَصِيرًا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَبئسَ الْمَصِيرُ
(١٠) وَإِنْ قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا قَضَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (١١)

Surat Al-Muslimoon

Translation

1. Alef Lam Saad Meem
2. Say: O Muslims, You are far astray.
3. Those who disbelieved in God and his Christ shall have in the life after the fire of hell and a severe torture.
4. Some faces that day will be subdued and darkened seeking forgiveness from God and God shall do whatever He wants.

5. That day, the Most Merciful shall say: O my servants I favored you with my guidance revealed to you in the Torah and the Injeel.
6. And you should have not disbelieved what I have revealed to you and go astray from a plain road.
7. They said: We did not go astray ourselves but he, who claimed he was one of the messengers (of God) has misled us.
8. And as God says: O Muhammad, you allured my servants and caused them to become disbelievers.
9. He said: O my Lord, it is Satan who allured me and truly he has always been the most corrupting to children of Adam.
10. And God will forgive those who have been allured by man and then repented and he will compel that one who was Satan's advocate to hell, a hapless journey's end.
11. And if God rules something, He is most knowing of what He rules and of what He had ruled and He is able to do all things⁴⁴.

No sooner these forged texts hit the streets than the vigilant Muslim intellectuals discovered that it is a mere fabrication by those who are waging incessant war against the Glorious Qur'ān. Even among the children there are some who are vigilant and who will detect and resist any addition or subtraction to the Qur'ān as could be seen in a scenario that took place among children in a *masjid* during the month of Ramadan. One of the children was leading in the night supererogatory prayer. As he

read Q48:29, which provides thus: “*Muhammad Rasullullah*,” meaning: “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” He quickly added *salla llahu alayhi wasallam*, (meaning may the blessing of Allah and peace be on him). He was immediately called to order not to add to the Qur’ān what is not part of it.⁴⁵

It should be noted that orientalism as an intellectual movement has both negative and positive aspects some of which have been observed in the preceding passage. It is however important to add that it has contributed tremendously in the area of translation of the Qur’ān to English, French and other languages. In addition, it has contributed to the development of research methodology in Arabic Language and Literature. Some of the orientalists championed the cause of publication of academic journals on Arabic and Islamic Studies⁴⁶. However, their negative impacts include misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Islam as well as distortion of well-known historical facts in order to justify their position on any issue; that is why one has to be very critically careful when using books authored by them.

Devotion to the Glorious Qur’ān

Ever since the revelation of the Qur’ān to Prophet Muhammad in the seventh (7th) century of the Gregorian calendar, Muslims have considered it incumbent on themselves to learn how to read, understand and memorise the Glorious Book. The reality is that wherever there is Islam, there will be Qur’ān learning outlets which could be in *Masjid*⁴⁷. Qur’ān 96:1 has directed Muslims to read, and to be able to carry out this directive, learning of

how to read and teach Qur'ān is imperative. As the Prophet was reported to have said:

خيركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه

The best among you is he who learnt the Qur'ān and taught it (to others)⁴⁸

Available records indicate that the second *Khalifah*, 'Umar ibn Khattab, set up a Qur'anic learning centre with a budgetary provision for the emolument of the teachers in charge of the centre. It is in light of this that some scholars are of the view that teachers of the Qur'ān should be remunerated for effective teaching⁴⁹. On the other hand, another group of scholars does not encourage collection of any payment for the teaching of the Qur'ān. The basis of their argument is that "teaching the words of Allah to the servants of Allah can only be adequately rewarded by Allah alone"⁵⁰. It is argued further that the 'Ulamā' who teach the Qur'ān are the heirs of the Prophets, and no Prophet was on record to have requested for a fee to deliver the Divine message. It is then concluded that collecting payment will not be in consonance with the practice of the Prophet. As we have once argued:

The issue of payment (by the Qur'anic students) should be seriously considered because of its economic benefit to *Malam* (teacher), it will lead to effective teaching.⁵¹

There is no doubt that, Qur'anic teaching will no longer be disrupted if payment is made because the teacher's precarious financial condition would be

ameliorated. Parents who can afford to pay teachers for providing private tuition for their children in English, Mathematics, etc. so that they can perform better in examination should also be able to afford Qur'anic school fees.

At this juncture, it should be stated that there is a noticeable improvement on the number of the avenues from which one can learn the Qur'ān. These avenues include but are not limited to:

- *Masājid*: These remain, as ever, as Qur'ān learning centres in various neighbourhoods. More often than not, the residence of the *Malam* is usually adjacent to the *Masjid*.⁵²
- Verandah of the *Malam*'s house is another Qur'ān learning centre where students gather to learn the Qur'ān.
- In some schools of Muslim proprietorship, provision is made for learning Qur'ān so that within the period of their pupils' stay in the school, they would have finished learning the Qur'ān.⁵³
- Private residence of some parents who can afford to hire and pay handsome remuneration for the teaching of their wards at home;
- Centres for learning and memorisation of the Qur'ān being established by individuals from some Arab Universities⁵⁴ and Organisations;
- Through the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) especially in some Arab and European countries where time may not permit the

physical presence of people willing to learn the Qur'ān.⁵⁵

Challenges

The objective of teaching Qur'ān has not been holistically grasped by most *Malams* as they do not teach its meanings to students. Teaching of the Qur'ān is not to be limited to proficiency in reading so that its recitation will be with *tajwīd*,⁵⁶ it should also include textual understanding of the meaning. Memorisation should also be part of it while application of the teaching should be encouraged. It is only with this that development of the learners' minds as well as the correct understanding and application of its teaching can be achieved. Their tastes, personalities and attitudes will also be Qur'ānically shaped.⁵⁷ With the right and proper organisation, it will be easy to implement all the objectives of teaching and learning the Qur'ān thus making its ideal teachings to guide the learners' conduct just like the Messenger to whom it was revealed⁵⁸. If Qur'ān students, at the beginner's level are taught the proficiency in the recitation of the Qur'ān along with memorisation, the next level which is missing in most of the Qur'ānic schools in our society is teaching of the understanding of some aspects of the message of the Qur'ān which will guide the learners and galvanise them in contributing to the stability of the society.

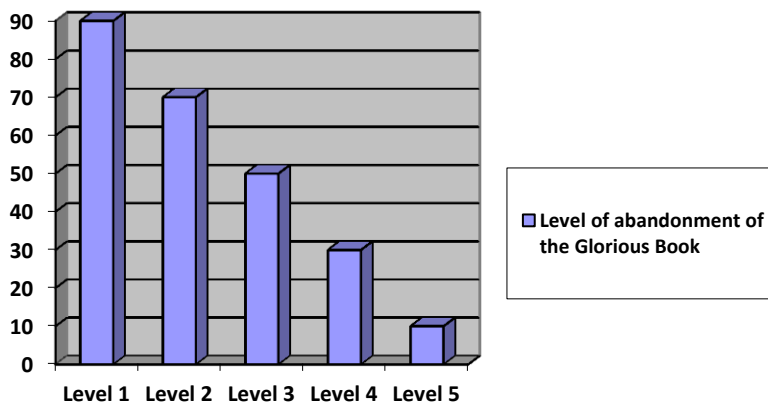
It is, indeed, an encouraging development to note that, from time immemorial, Muslims usually gather in *masājid* and other places throughout the month of Ramadān to listen to the explanation of the Qur'ān

(*Tafsīr*). Prominent and most important of the *Tafsīr* centres in Ilorin is the Shaykh ^cAlimi *Tafsīr* Centre in the Palace of Emir of Ilorin⁵⁹. This centre has been attracting large number of attendees annually. From my personal experience, I observe that among the teeming members of the audience are Imam from Ilorin and environs who are *Mufasssirūn* in their own right. Whatever knowledge gain by them is usually utilised at their own *masājid* where they, in turn, conduct oral *Tafsīr* to the members of their communities. However, it is observed that only few of the members of the audience put knowledge acquired about some Qurānic codes and guidelines into practice⁶⁰.

In our on view, the style and method of *Tafsīr* which is based largely on the explanation of the complete Qur’ān should be reviewed so that topical issues (touching economic, moral, socio-political issues) could be selected and addressed at each *Tafsīr* seating for maximum positive effect.

The Spirit of the Qur’ān

The spirit of the Qur’ān seems to have been lost to many people because of the unnecessary gap between them and their Creator as a result of the abandonment of the Glorious Book.⁶¹ The levels of abandonment vary as could be seen below:



Keys:

- Level 1: Not reading or listening to it, not memorising it, not acting on it, not pondering over it, not acting/judging by it, not using it as a cure
- Level 2: Reading it, listening to it, memorising it, not pondering over it, not acting/judging by it, not using it as a cure
- Level 3: Reading it/ listening to it, memorising it and pondering over it but not acting/judging by it. Not using it as a cure.
- Level 4: Reading/listening to it, memorising it, pondering over it and using it as a cure.
- Level 5: Reading it, listening to it, memorising it, pondering over it, not acting/judging by it fully, using it as a cure.

***Fig 2: Levels of abandonment of the Glorious Book.
Designed by the author***

If the Qur'ān as a great treasure had been allowed to influence this life of ours, humankind would not have undergone and experienced series of the past and present calamities. There is no plausible explanation to justify about thirty-seven (37) million casualties in the First World War alone⁶². Similarly, the Second World War which resulted in the estimated fifty (50) million to eighty-five (85) million fatalities⁶³ could not be what man deserved judging by the lofty purpose of creation. It should be the concern of everyman that human beings have not been living peacefully in a stable society. The world has become less peaceful every year since 2008. There is war in Syria, Mali, Libya, The Philippines, South Sudan, Central Africa Republic, Republic of Rwanda and Afghanistan. There has been tension in Egypt and Ukraine as well as some parts of Europe. Nigeria is also no longer at ease judging by the way the so called Boko Haram, Gunmen and other criminals have been snuffing life out of innocent and easy-going citizens of this country irrespective of their religious persuasions. That Nigeria and Nigerians are passing through a difficult period is reflected in the inability of the government to rescue the abducted Chibok girls as it has also reflected in the inability of the government to provide the needs of the citizens especially in the areas of security of lives and property, alleviation of poverty, prosperity-driven policies among others⁶⁴.

Man that has been made in the best symmetry and nature was given what is required for him to navigate the turbulent water of life to a safe destination. Q20:123-124 reads:

قَالَ أَهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ
 فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ
 فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن
 ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ
 الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى ﴿١٢٤﴾

...if there comes to you guidance from Me,
 then whoever follows My guidance will not
 lose his way nor will he come to grief. But
 whoever **turns away from My reminder**,
 will lead a straitened existence.....

Having been created in the very fine mould
 (Q.95:4) and having been equipped with the guidance
 from the Creator, what remains for man is to key into the
 template put in place for him. The function of the Qur'ān
 in the bodies and lives of those who uphold its teachings
 and put same into practice is like *Rūh* (i.e. spirit) and life
 that is injected in the human being. This is succinctly put
 in Q42:52 thus:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا
 مَا كُنتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَٰكِن
 جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا
 وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

We have thus revealed a spirit (Qur'an) to you by Our command ...

The use of *Rūh* for the Qur'ān is significant and pregnant with meaning, the summary of which is that when you take the Qur'ān out of life, life will become a mere jungle, the hallmark of which will be man's inhumanity to man and the spread of corruption and indiscipline in the society⁶⁵. The use of *Rūh* to describe the Qur'ān is to explain what it is capable of doing in the transformation of human society in which the Qur'ān codes are observed.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, the similitude of humankind without the light of the Qur'an is like the condition of the first man, Prophet Adam. Before the *Rūh* was breathed into him, he was merely insignificant clay which was incapable of doing anything at all. He was in this condition for a while and during this period he hardly attracted attention as no attention was paid to the clay. This scene is captured in Q76:1 as follows:

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ

شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا ﴿١﴾

Has there not been over a man, a period of time when he was not anything worth mentioning.

Prophet Adam (AS) in that condition could not undergo some of those very significant things which eventually became more or less turning points in his life. They include being:

- a. taught and educated by Allah – Q2:31;
- b. directed to teach the Angels who could not pass the examination set for them by Allah – Q2:31;
- c. conferred with honour of recognition and superiority over the Angels when they were directed to bow down for him as a mark of regard. – Q.2:34; and
- d. granted resident permit to dwell in Paradise. Q.2:35

The life of Prophet Adam became eventful and meaningful only after the *Ruh* was infused into the insignificant clay.⁶⁶ This enabled him to realize the goals for which he was created by Allah. From this perspective, it can be argued that life without the Qur'ān serving as compass will be like a dead body that has no soul; it will be futile to live without the manual of life which the Creator of life has prepared for people living in the world.

The Glorious Qur'an has graphically painted this in Q6:122:

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن مَّثَلَهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Can he who was dead, to whom we gave life, and a light whereby he can walk amongst men, be like Him who is in the depths of darkness, from which He can never come out? Thus to those without Faith their own deeds seem pleasing.

From the foregoing, it cannot be gainsaid that anyone or society which follows the path of the Qur'an and lives under the guidance provided by it will find no difficulty in having peace with himself, peace with his Creator and a stable society where things work smoothly.⁶⁷ Once the spirit of the Qur'an is imbibed, there will be a good sense of equilibrium, balanced judgment in spiritual and mundane matters and positive transformation in the outlook, behavior and the conduct of the society.⁶⁸

The wonder performed by the spirit of the Qur'an started from the Messenger of Allah, Prophet

Muhammad, to whom it was revealed as clear guidance and criterion. It is common knowledge that the Prophet in his forty years of sojourn on earth was an ordinary person (*bashar*) like any other person in the Arabian Peninsula. However, with the revelation of the Qur'ān and the penetration of its spirit in his body system, ways of thinking and belief, he became an extraordinary character and he was able to inspire people who quickly adopted him as a role model, an embodiment of virtue and an epitome of good conduct.

The effect of all these was reflected in the reforms which he was able to carry out in his society. The society that was hardly stable and was notorious in the three Ws i.e. war, wine consumption and women, suddenly became a reference point among nations of the world.⁶⁹ Note that he was able to use the Qur'ān to promote unity among those sworn enemies especially the *Aws* and *Khazraj* who thought that they would never ever have anything to do with each other except war.⁷⁰ The spirit of the Qur'ān got infused into all those who had not been able to see eye-to-eye, who could not contemplate being their brothers' keepers. This was possible because of the teaching, learning, understanding and application of the Qur'ān.

As we have noted elsewhere⁷¹, applicability of the rules contained in the Qur'ān should not be difficult once one is willing and has precise understanding of such rules. The question now is: why has the Qur'ānic guidance not been influencing many Muslims who had (and are still serving) served as the Presidents, Ministers, Governors, Chairmen and other public office holders in this society?

The answer could be traced to any or all of the following factors:

- a) Ignorance : some Muslims have no knowledge of what is contained in the Qur'ān and they do not care to find out about it from those who have the knowledge
- b) Arrogance: many who have some rudimentary ideas are too arrogant to put the guidance of the Qur'ān into practise.⁷²
- c) Hypocrisy: many will be parading themselves as Muslims only to attract public attention whereas in practical term they cannot be so considered because of their shaky belief and failure to practise the tenets of the religion⁷³.
- d) Belief in secularity: some Muslims have the wrong notion that religious guidance should be relegated to the background while in public offices.⁷⁴

It should be noted that applicability of codes and rules of the Qur'ān to life activities of individuals, families and the society at large has once been demonstrated by the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. They were able to contribute to the economic development of Egypt and provide employment opportunities for the youth through the establishment of many companies and enterprises.⁷⁵

The prohibition of usury (*Riba*) in Qur'ān 2:276 is to stem the tide of exploitation which could have corrosive effect on the borrower. Giving loan to a distressed person and expecting an interest when he is paying back may compound his problem and make him

more bankrupt⁷⁶ especially when he is unable to pay back the loan. The prohibition of interest by the Qur'an has recently, caught the attention of many banking and finance experts across the globe so much so that many banks in Europe and the western world adopted this rule and introduced Islamic Banking System where interest-free loan is granted and any form of usurious practises have been discarded. This is what is in vogue in the US, UK, Germany, France, Russian and Italy among others⁷⁷.

It should be emphasised here that the Glorious Qur'an promotes unity of humankind and abrogates any form of discrimination based on race, colour and other ephemeral considerations; and where Muslims meet and go they are expected to demonstrate this sense of unity as emphatically advocated in Q.4:1 and Q.49:13 thus:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ
 وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ
 عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other. The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who fears Allah most. Allah is All-Knowing and All-Aware.

It is appropriate to illustrate the extent of this teaching of unity regardless of colour and race with an episode between Muslims and the respected Archbishop Cyrus. The Muslims had appointed the leader of the delegation who happened to be a black man to be the spokesman. As he stood up to speak, the Archbishop reacted and said: "Take away that black man; I can have no discussion with him".⁷⁸ To his astonishment, he was told that "Negro Ubadah was commissioned by our leader, and that Negroes and white men are held with equal respect as man is not judged by his colour but by his conduct and character". The Archbishop then said: "Well if the Negro must lead, he must speak gently".⁷⁹

The effect of listening to and hearing the Glorious Qur'ān on the human soul can be great. It would be recalled that ^CUmar ibn al-Khattab used to be an ardent enemy of Islam. His enmity knew no bounds as he once resolved to physically eliminate Prophet Muhammad. But when people heard about his resolve, he was told to put his house in order first as his sister, Fatimah, and her husband, had embraced Islam.⁸⁰ Off to the house of his sister he went. On approaching the entrance, he heard them reciting Qur'ān 20 with a very melodious and captivating tone! He became calm and immediately succumbed to the spirit of the Qur'ān. On entering the house, he wanted to collect the Qur'ān, but for some reasons, he was denied that.⁸¹ He then left to meet the Prophet where he pronounced the testimonial statement and became a Muslim and a strong defender and supporter of Islam after he had been an ardent enemy who did not have any regard for Prophet Muhammad and the

Glorious Qur'ān.⁸² He then started to propagate Islam and promote justice and fair play. The positive transformation of Umar by the Qur'ān should not be a thing of surprise because he devoted time to learn the Qur'ān and he did not regard it as a mere Book of worship and healing. He understood it to contain a code of conduct for meaningful and spiritually rewarding life.

Stability of the Society

Our study of the attitude of some people to the Qur'ān has enabled us to see that some of them, who did not bother to go through its pages, will wonder if the Glorious Book has any way of contributing to the stability of the society. Qur'ān 47:24 has this wakeup call for those who have the capacity to digest its contents to bring out practicable provisions which would guarantee a peaceful and stable society but do not do so. What should concern us is the stability of the society because that is what is desired by all. It is observed that many people judge the Qur'ān by the wrong behaviour of some Muslims, who are causing unrest and instability in the society and who may even be interpreting the Qur'ān wrongly to back up their misbehaviour.

In the society where there are intellectuals, no one will accept hook, line and sinker an attempt by some characters who may be interpreting the law wrongly to justify their criminal acts; they will simply go into the law to establish whether or not the quotation has not been put out of context. This is what should be the role of the refined people with robust intellectual background; to ascertain if misbehavior of some misguided people is

really in consonance with the letter and spirit of the Qur'ān.⁸³

The Qur'ān has the characteristics of being a revelation which contains the rules of engagement between humankind and the Creator. It also contains guidelines on how man should live in the society and how to display high moral value so that on the Day of Accountability they will have a good account to give⁸⁴. Further to that, the scope of the rule is far reaching and comprehensive. It is very distinctly different from those put in place and frequently changed by man. It is not a mere set of rules which shifts the borderline between right and wrong for personal gain and benefit. The commitments and prohibitions are imposed to build in the individual, general discipline needed for the mind to be sound, the soul to be at peace with self and the society to have stability and progress⁸⁵.

In nowhere in the entire one hundred and fourteen (114) chapters of the Qur'ān has anyone found a passage which calls for the disruption of peace and stability. On the contrary, the Qur'ān warns of the danger in the *fitnah* which is the most appropriate word for any act that disrupts peace, causes crisis and promotes violence. This is because the consequence will not discriminate between one group and the other, it will mercilessly engulf all.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾

Beware of *fitna*⁸⁶ that will not smite exclusively those among you who have done wrong. Know that Allah is severe in exacting retribution. Q. 8:25

In the hadith reported from Prophet Muhammad by ^CAli ibn Abī Tālib, the former was asked by the latter on what to do in case of *fitnah*. The reply goes as follows:

(Hurry on to) the Book of Allah, in it is the story of the people before you and information about the people coming after you. It is the law on what is between you. It is the means of separation (of the truth from the falsehood) and not jesting. It is the Book from which whims and caprices can make one turn away his sight. The ^C*Ulamā'* can never be fed up with it. It cannot be worn out as a result of the frequent consultation. Its miracles are inexhaustible. Whoever abandons it because he is autocratic, Allah will make him feeble. Whoever seeks guidance from other than it will (be made by Allah to) get loss. It is the strong rope of Allah. It is the straight path. It is the Book that whoever puts into practice will be rewarded. Whoever uses it to dispense justice will be just. And whoever calls to it shall be guided to the straight path.⁸⁷

It remains to be added that the provisions of the Qur'ān for stabilising the society is based on natural justice, logic and facts that are difficult for anyone to

fault. In Qur'ān 4:1, the basis for stabilising the society has been clearly stated. It points to the fact that the nature of human society is integralistic. Therefore, all human beings are one and the same by birth. Ultimately, everyone can trace his origin to the same source i.e. Ādam and Hawwā'u. It is, therefore, incumbent on everyone to have a feeling of affinity towards each other like members of the same family.⁸⁸

It is obvious that where poverty and injustice have become a way of life, stability will be far away from such a society and where there is no stability there will be no development and progress. The Glorious Qur'ān stipulates three things that bring about stability and enjoins all to observe them. Equally three things that could lead to instability have been enumerated for avoidance. Three things that will stabilise the society are:

- a. justice
- b. kindness
- c. taking care of the kith and kin

Three things that will destabilise the society are:

- a. shameful deeds
- b. evil
- c. transgression Q. 16:90

For leaders in the society who are desirous of stability and tranquility, the Glorious Qur'ān commands in Q. 4:58 that trust should be rendered back to whom they are due and that leaders should judge (rule) between people with justice. This is also stated in Q. 38:26 when Allah addresses Prophet Dā'ud who was also a leader:

يٰۤاُوۤرُدْ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيۡفَةً فِى الْاَرْضِ فَاحۡكُمۡ بَيْنَ
النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنۡ سَبِيۡلِ
اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ يَظۡلُمُوۡنَ عَنۡ سَبِيۡلِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
شَدِيۡدٌۢ بِمَا نَسُوۡا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥٨﴾

... We have made you a *khalifah* (leader) over the land, judge fairly between people. Do not follow your desires, lest they divert you from Allah's path...

It is in the light of totality of what has been said so far that we would like to submit that Leadership should not be an avenue to amass wealth. It is a call to service and another avenue for worship through fair administration of human and material resources to promote peace and wellbeing of the followers.

A large part of the world today including our dear country, is experiencing instability and insecurity because leaders promote injustice and corruption and neglects the welfare of their followers; only recently a former Secretary of State for the United States of America, Mrs. Hillary Clinton, lambasted the Nigerian leadership for squandering the resources of the people and indirectly festering corruption⁸⁹. As we have noted elsewhere:

Application of the provisions in the Qur'ān on the maintenance of justice and fair play in the society as well as kicking out corruption and indiscipline from the governance will bring about stability and tranquility.⁹⁰

Leadership as a position of trust is fragile and has to be handled with care by eschewing some unethical behaviour and conduct which could hinder peaceful coexistence and stability of human society.⁹¹

Through various stories of leaders and wealthy people narrated in the Qur'ān, it is possible for the rich and those in leadership positions to realize that failure to obey the natural and divine rules set to guide may lead to the same consequence suffered by the Fir^cawn and Qārūn⁹². If leaders will function well according to expectation, there would be a functional economic package which will benefit the rich and the poor. No room should be left for manipulation of the measurements or exploitation of the poor and the less privileged members of the society. The whole of Q. 83 deals with fraudulent dealers, economic cheats and fraudulent people.⁹³

EPILOGUE

Recommendations

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir,

- (1) Teaching of the Qur'ān should not be limited to its reading and memorisation alone; it should include not only understanding of its meaning but also how to apply it to life.

- (2) Government should recognise the Qur'anic learning centres through payment of salaries to the functionaries and the building of classrooms for them.
- (3) Centres and *Masājid* where *Tafsīr* sessions are held annually in the country should adopt *Tafsīr mawdu'ī* so that different topical issues on various aspects of life could be treated to enhance understanding and practicalisation of the Qur'anic provisions.
- (4) The Kwara State Qur'ān Recitation and Memorisation Committee should endeavour to mobilise and sensitise the “high” and “low” among the stakeholders to build a permanent Qur'ān Memorisation Centre for better achievement.
- (5) The ^ʿ*Ulamā'* and the leadership of the Muslim *Ummah* in the country should come together with a view to evolving guidelines from the Glorious Qur'ān to guide both private and public activities of the Muslims.
- (6) Any public office holder who wants to swear by the Qur'ān while taking oath of office should be made to invite Allah's curse on himself/herself if he/she fails to abide by the dictates of the Qur'ān.
- (7) In the light of the ordinance in the Qur'ān which prohibits extra-judicial killing and man's wickedness to man, politicians are hereby implored to moderate their utterances and avoid any action that could cause

instability before, during and after the forthcoming 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, in our journey so far, we have talked about the Glorious Qur'ān, its revelation and the numerous provisions for stability in society. We have also stated that, where there is justice there would be stability, and where there is indiscipline and corruption there would be instability. We also recalled both the negative and positive attitude of the orientalist to the Glorious Qur'ān in particular and Islamic Studies in general, just as we highlighted the efforts of the 'Ulamā' who are making frantic efforts to advance the wheel of progress of learning and teaching the Qur'ān as well as the memorisation, understanding and dissemination of its message. Let me conclude that, inculcating the right values and virtues of the Qur'ān in any willing people of any society will lead to moral and spiritual empowerment and that is the road map to stability in such a society.

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Notes and References

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2. Between 1975 and 1976, Honorable Justice A.K. Imam Fulani, retired Grand Kadi of Kwara State Shariah Court of Appeal while he was in Kano gave me an opportunity to teach the Qur'ān to members of the family of Dr. M. Alvi, a Pakistani Dentist working at the Kano State Dental Centre. I was being paid five (5) kobo per week for my transport.
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53. Such as some Qur'anic learning and memorisation centres established in Ilorin, such as Markaz al-Huda and the one in Abuja under the proprietorship of Imam Fuaad Adeyemi which has produced a number of adult male and female Muslims who completed their Qur'anic learning there.
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