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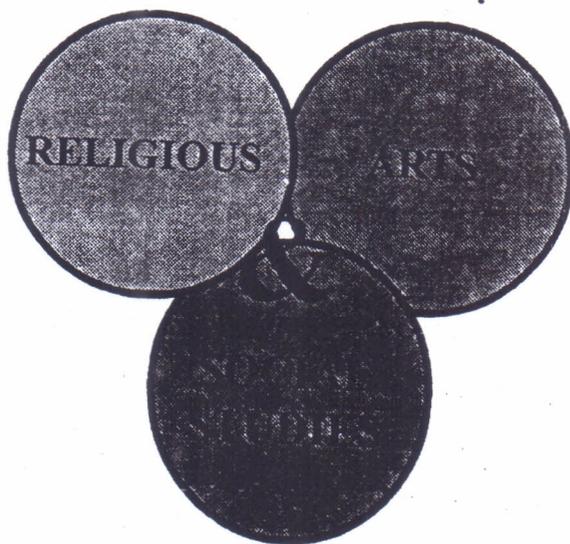
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EDITORIAL

The Publisher of **RELIGIOUS FORUM ACADEMIA** (REFA) notes with gratitude and appreciation the patronage enjoyed by this journal from Academics as well as Administrators at higher institutions. We shall be looking forward to your continued patronage and better understanding. In spite of serious problems in the publishing world, we are happy that our efforts to ensure that REFA continuously seeing the light of the day is having positive results.

We promise to continue to generate academic awareness, and enhance Scholarship particularly on the Contemporary Issues in Religious, Arts and Social Studies among the seasoned-scholars.

It should be mentioned that many articles were received from different authors. They were all subjected to serious assessment through editorial screening before only TEN were approved for the volume 3 No 1 of this edition. We hereby congratulate those authors whose articles are published here, and we advise the rest authors to rework their papers for the next edition of this journal.

Finally, we thank all our internal and external independent assessors for the well done job.

POPOOLA S.A
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CHAPTER SEVEN

ISLAMIC SOLUTION TO SOCIAL INDISCIPLINE IN THE NIGERIAN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

BY ADEGOKE, KAZEEM ADEKUNLE

ABSTRACT

The view that Islam is a comprehensive and perfect way of life has been fervently espoused by the scholars of various academic disciplines and specialization irrespective of their religious creed. This occurs as a result of the practical heritage and cultural values of Islam in the social unity and development of several nations in the Europe, Asia, Middle-East and Africa. The major difference between Islam and other religions is that the former combined together both secular and spiritual life style of man as a single and inseparable entity in its practicability while the latter deal only with the spiritual life of man in his society. Thus, Islam is not just an observance of ritual duties of mankind but as well as a major and vital instrument of making societal harmony and peace by the promotion of virtues (*Amr bi'l Ma'ruf*) and shunning-off of the vices (*Nahyu ani' l-Munkar*) in politics, economic and social life of mankind. In the light of this development, the paper attempts to examine some prevalent societal indisciplines in Nigeria with the solution from the Islamic perspective in order to pave way for societal harmony and peace in the contemporary Nigerian society.

INTRODUCTION

Social indiscipline in Nigeria of today have reached the peak of its summit in the twenty-first century of Christian era. This development has transformed Nigerian society into dehumanized society that does not fit to live since various forms of social indiscipline have become daily occurrence. The undesirable situation of social indiscipline in the country is a great challenge to the peace and

harmony of Nigeria, which greatly threatens the development of the country. Several efforts have been exerted by the various Nigeria Government of different regimes to combat the problem of social indiscipline in the country but to no avail (Solarin, 1991:6) Various non-governmental organisation and agencies (both local and foreign) have also been set up to minimize, if not to eradicate, the level of social indiscipline in the country. Arimiyah (2001) said that the well being of the society depends on high societal values or how morally upright and disciplined the citizens of the society are. Despite the numbers of enlightened and educative programme mounting up by some of this non-governmental organizations and agencies with Nigeria government to eradicate social vices in Nigeria society, little could be said to have been achieved as some government officials and the people in the position of authority are also getting involved in social vices within their area of services. Thus, social indiscipline has become the nation's cankerworm, which has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. It continues unabated despite several measures taken by the Nigerian citizens to fight it (El-Rufai, 2003:95). This undesirable situation cannot be left alone to be going on like this in a democratic nation such as Nigeria, the solution must be sought from the religious cum spiritual source of Islam since the highest number of Nigerians are the adherents of Islam.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Solution could be defined as a way or process of finding an answer or remedy to arising problem. Hornby *et. al* (1980:820) defines solution as a way of dealing with a difficult problem. Indiscipline could be defined as the lack of training of one's mind, character to be able to control oneself within the rule and regulation dictated by the society. It simply means sense and habit of obedience to the normal laid down rule of a society. Thus, social indiscipline as gross social vices prevalent in all facets of life in the contemporary society. For the sake of brevity, four of these social indiscipline in the contemporary Nigerian Society are examined in light of Islamic spiritual tendency.

BRIBERY

Bribery could be defined as an act of unlawfully giving or taking of somebody 's property in order to influence or persuade the taker (of bribe) to render undue favour to the giver. (Hornby, 1980: 104). Bribery has eaten deep into the fabric part of the Nigerian society to the extent that it appears in all facets of life . Act of bribery has been tagged with various names such as bribe, settlement, kick-back, *riba*, *egunje*, *owo-ehin*, *ije* and so on. There are lot of cases of some government officials in the public office who would not offer their duty and responsibility to the citizen until they are given bribe before they could offer the service for which they are employed. In the various parastatals, awarding of government contract to the contractors depend on who among them can offer highest percentage of bribe to the government official in charge. This bribery percentage ranges from ten percentage to twenty-five percentage depending on the greediness of the government official in charge. Consequently, these government contractors may collect several millions of naira without carrying out any project or abandoning the project uncompleted or carrying out half done project which would not last longer for the public benefit. It could be rightly said that more than eighty percentage of the moral indiscipline in Nigeria are associated with the bribery as various offenders have been made to go scot-free because of the fact that they can offer more bid for bribe. At this point, we should call our attention to an act of bribery going on among the Nigerian law enforcement agent(the police) who are suppose to keep the law. Hardly can you make a journey of few kilometers without meeting them collecting money from the transport workers. They do not even mind checking their vehicle documents, driving license and the roadworthiness of the vehicle as far as they can give them money ranging from twenty to one hundred naira. They are ready to trigger their gun on the refusal of transport workers to give them such money. In the judiciary organ of government, there are several instances where the injustice is done to aggrieved person in favour of guilty personality because the latter could offer bribe to the custodian of justice. This social vice of bribery

is also extended to the educational or academic circle in which teacher or lecturer is ready to reveal the examination question to the students or pass the students with the intention of collecting money from them or having sexual enjoyment with female ones. As a result of this, examination malpractices, admission racketeering and certification racketeering have become everyday occurrence in the Nigeria academic environment. In the political system of the country, the hope of the people has been dashed or thrown into the river through the act of election rigging and inflation of census figures in favour of highest bidder of bribe to the electoral officials. It is also reported that there are some instances whereby the national government bribe some religious scholars in order to speak favourably of their policies without considering the benefit of such policies to the public. (Al-Qaradawi, 1991: 72).

Islam does not condone the act of giving and taking of bribe in whatever form as God (Allah) enjoins man to get his or her food, clothing and shelter from the lawful (*halal*) source.

Qur'an says:

Oh, you who believe, eat of the good things which we have provided for your substance if it is Him you are worshipping: (Qur'an 2 : 172).

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) also narrated story of a man on long journey in desert, who was disheveled and dusty but kept asking God (Allah) to show mercy on him. His prayer and supplication was not accepted due to the fact that his sources of sustenance were from unlawful (*haram*) sources. (Abdul, 1982 :36). Due to the severity of this social evil in the human society, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). as quoted by Ndagi, was reported to have said;

God cursed the bribe giver and bribe taker. (Ndagi,1991:11)

At this juncture, it is note-worthy to distinguish between bribe and gift or present. Present or gift is anything given out to a person

without having an ulterior motive or asking for any favour from the receiver. It is lawful (*halal*) to give and take present or gift and it is highly encouraged among the human beings as it fosters unity, love and friendship. (Ndagi, n.d: 10). However it is discouraged to give present or gift to the people of authority, such as President, Minister, Governor, Commissioner, Judge, Head of service, Director-General, head of public parastatals and board on the account of their position for which they are receiving fixed salary and several allowances. Giving present or gift to them usually amounted to bribe as it is normally done to get undue favour from them. A Yoruba adage says:

“Bi enu ba je dodo, ko ni le so ododo,
nitoripe ti enu ba je, oju yoo ti.

“When the mouth take fried plantain, it would be difficult to say the truth, because when mouth eats, it would be difficult for it to say the truth.

On this, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said:

“If a public officer accepts present or gift, it is corruption and if a judge accepts bribe it is disbelief (Kufr); (Doi, 1990).

CORRUPTION

Corruption is an act of carrying out of social immoral action for a certain selfish benefit at the expense of the general public. This social immoral act of corruption as it is going to be expatiated in this work signified the converting of public property into one's personal use. (Abdul-Hamid, 2001: 46). It is a most commonly committed social indiscipline among the government officials, administrators and the people in the position of authority of various works of life. It takes form of embezzlement, misappropriation and mismanagement of public property, inflation of contract and all forms of fraudulent acts existing in various administrative organizations. (The path

2003:18) The cankerworm of this social indiscipline has gotten itself into every facet of Nigerian economic and political life that there is not a day when one will not read the cases of corruption in the public offices in the Nigerian dailies and other media sources.(Solarin,1991:6) El-Rufai(2003)classified corruption into two broad categories which are as follows:

1. **Grand scale corruption:** This involves highly placed elites who are in control of political and economic institutions of the society. It is caused by human greediness and insatiable desires to accumulate wealth from whatever means.
2. **Small scale corruption:** This involves members of the lower segments of society in a bribe scandal segments such as a small bribe, examination malpractices, certification racketeering and some minor social vices, it's cause is attributed to poverty and ever increasing cost of living in the society.

El-Rufai (2003) traced the emergence of corruption in Nigeria to the British colonial administration (1861-1960), which came to Nigeria purposely to exploit and plunder the nation's resources to facilitate the development of their home country (Britain). Thus, the political, economic and legal institutions formulated by the colonial government were to satisfy the selfish interest of their home country. After the Nigeria independence, this corruptive attitude of colonizers was inherited as each of the people in corridor of power sees it as an avenue of making money at the expense of common citizen. It was within this context that member of political class and their allies started plundering the resources of the nation to oil and grease their political interest. The emergence of military officers into the political arena of Nigeria could not do anything rather than adding more salt to the wound. Their interference serves as the beginning of the institutionalization of unethical behaviour in governmental administration, lack of accountability and non-transparency in the public management. The numerous revelations of the billions of naira that had been outrightly embezzled and kept away in foreign banks account by some of these government officials, members of their families, friends and collaborators is an indication of how corruptible, bankrupt and morally decayed the Nigerians have become in the

contemporary time. (Uneze, 2002:11)

Islam strongly condemns all forms of corruptible tendency among the people of various categories. The public property belongs to the entire citizens of a country irrespective of their language, tribe and colour. The government officials should hold it as a trust (*Amanat*) for which they would account in this life and hereafter.

Qur'an says:

And do not devour your wealth among yourselves through falsehood or unjust means, nor offer it to those in authorities in order that you may knowingly deprive other people part of their wealth; (Qur'an 2:188).

It also says:

And it is not possible for a prophet to act dishonestly, and who ever acts dishonestly shall bring within him that about which he has been dishonest on the day of resurrection. Then every soul shall be paid what it has earned, and they shall not be wronged (Qur'an 3:161)

It was reported that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said;

Verily, everyone of you is a shepherd and he is going to be asked how he

Shepherd his flock. Thus, the leader who is placed over the people is

Responsible for his governance ——— (Abdul, 1982)

ARMED ROBBERY

Armed robbery is an act of violently depriving somebody of his or her property. (Hornby Co, 1980; 734). The menace of armed robbery in the Nigerian society cannot be over-emphasized. Hardly could one listen to the media news without having a case or two

cases of armed robbery taking place on Nigeria highways and communities, which sometimes involves loss of human lives. In fact several lives who could have had their own contribution to the development of the country, have been wasted away by the menace of dare-devilled armed robbers during their operations. Armed robbery is a great crime against the humanity. Doi (1990) describes the operation of armed robbers as an exercise of a group of armed people or a single person who may attack travellers or wayfarers on the highway or at any other place depriving them of their property through the use of force especially, when the victims could not get any immediate help from the public. The punishment of armed robbery in the Nigerian secular law is life imprisonment, firing squad or death by hanging. Despite these costly punishments, the problem of armed robbery in the Nigerian society is still looming in the mind of average Nigerians.

Islam regards armed robbery as a waylaid against God and His messenger and an attempt to spread mischief in the peaceful world since it involves taking arms against fellow beings which one have no enmity with. This is the reason why it is called "*Hirabah* in the Islamic law. The scholars of the four mostly recognized Sunni Schools of Thought (Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shaf'i and Hanbal) explained the act of robbery in the following categories: (Doi, 1990: 252). The armed robbers who

- i. could only kill but could not get away with their loot.
- ii. kill and take away the property.
- iii. take away property with the use of force but without killing.
- iv. only frightened away the people in order to hide their identity and without intention to rob.

On the Islamic punishment of armed robbery, Qur'an says :

The punishment of those who wage war against God and His Messenger and strike with might and forment mischief through the land is execution or crucifixion, or the cutting-off the hands

and feet from the opposite side or exile from the land (Imprisonment) outside his hometown. That is their disgrace in this world and heavy punishment is theirs in the next world. [Qur'an 5;32]

The punishments of armed robbery as stipulated by above Quranic verse are execution, crucifixion, amputation of hand and feet from the opposite side and banishment or imprisonment for specified period based on the discretion of the judge. Doi [1990] specifies these varied punishments to the various forms or levels of the act of armed-robbery. According to him, armed robber should be executed or crucified if he kills with intention to rob and take away the other's property. His hand and leg should be amputated from the opposite side if he takes away the property through the use of force but does not kill in the attempt, he should be exiled or imprisoned.

ASSASSINATION

Assassination can be defined as the unlawful or unjustifiable killing of a person (especially an important politician or ruler) violently and treacherously for political reason or any other reasons [Hornby *et.al*,1980;46]. This social vice in Nigerian society has risen to its peak in this new millennium that hardly a month passes without hearing the news of assassination from our media sources. It is a heinous societal vices that is bringing a clock of Nigerian society backward as several lives of Nigerian political figures, who could have one way or the other contribute to the development of the country, have been lost through the means of assassination, most of which goes with impunity. [The Sunday Concord, 1997] It could be rightly said that only the assassins of the former military head of state, Gen Muritala Muhammad(1975-1976)], during the unsuccessful coup of B.S Dimka, were brought to book in the history of assassination in Nigeria. All the four democratic republican regimes that we have cut across in Nigeria were characterized with various assassination of

different personalities of political figure such as Alh. Adelabu Adegoke(1958), Chief S.L Akintola(1966), Chief Okotie Eboh(1966), Alh. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa(1966), Alh Ahmadu Bello(1966) , Chief Alfred Rewane(2001), Mr Dele Giwa(1986), Alhaja Kudirat Abiola(1996), Chief Bola Ige(2002), Chief Harry Mashal(2003), Chief Aminatsari Dikkibo(2004) and a lot of others. It should be noted that the societal security is at stake in a situation where the criminals or assassins are not brought to book without any substantive reason.(Abdul-Hamid, 2001:49)

Islam considers the life of human being as sacred thing that belong to God alone. This is the reason why it is forbidden to take oneself life or commit suicide on the flimsy excuse of claiming the ownership of that life, talkless of taking other person's life. As a result of this development, saving the life of others is regarded as a meritorious act or service as it is equivalent to the act of saving of life of the entire mankind. Qur'an says:

"Verily, whoever assassinates a person, unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land, it would be as if he assassinates the entire mankind, and if any one saves a life, it would be as if he saves the life of the entire mankind. (Qur'an 5:32)

Do not kill a soul, which God has made sacred through the due process of law; (Qur'an 6:15)

Doi (1990) asserts that human being forfeits his right of life if he is guilty of any of these five criminal offences.

- i. In the exercising of law of equality (*Qisas*) applied to criminal who killed some one intentionally
- ii. In the war of defence (*Jihad*) against the opponent in war.
- iii. Punishment of death to the traitors or coup-plotters who make attempt to overthrow Islamic government.

iv. In the exercising of the *hadd* or Qur'anic punishment for highway robbery (*Hirabah*)

On this, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) says:

"The blood of a man who is a Muslim is not lawful (that is, it may not be lawfully shed), save if he belongs to one of three classes. A married man who is an adulterer, one who owns his soul for another soul (that is murderer), one who abandons his religion (thus becoming) one who splits the community. (Abdul, 1986:85)

In another prophetic tradition, he declares the act of assassination as heinous crime next to associating partner with God (*Shirk*).

The greatest sins are to associate something or someone with God and to kill human beings. (Doi, 1990:229)

On the heinous gravity of the crime of assassination, Qur'an also says:

" If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is hell in which he will abide therein forever and the wrath and cause of God shall be upon him and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him. (Qur'an 4:93)

CONCLUSION

Having examined some social indiscipline in the contemporary Nigeria society and Islamic antidote as a remedy, it is obvious that Islam has already laid down the system of life for mankind from his cradle to grave. This system of life is solidly built on the principle, which can govern the affairs of human beings in his social environment. In the contemporary world, social indiscipline has

become widespread in every society to the extent that government could not curb it again. Even, the military governments in some African nations, which used to come to power through coup d'etat with a monotonous slogan that:

“This government will not tolerate indiscipline, corruption and abuse of office”

At the end of the day, this same regime would come to accept all these social vices they have declared as indiscipline when all the measures they undertook to curb the problems proved abortive. This development could be attributed to Nigerian legal system which tend to favour secularism and irreligiosity just as the Qur'an says:

“Indiscipline has appeared on land and sea because of the handiwork of men, that Allah may give them a taste of part of the deeds in order that they may return from evil, (Qur'an 30:41).

The above Qur'anic verse, which was revealed over fourteen hundred years ago, is as valid today as ever. Islamic solution is the best way for seeking solution to any form of societal problems in a society that determine to conduct its life on the basis of Islamic principles. Thus, there is a great need for Nigerians to be God-conscious in whatever step they undertake by abstaining from social indiscipline in the society and even encouraging others to do the same in other to sustain the unity and peaceful development of the country.

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