

THE FOUNDATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND LEADERSHIP IN ISLAM



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INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah (SWT), the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Perfect Peace and Blessings of Allah (SWT) be granted our leader, Muhammad (SAW), his wives, children, the rightly guarded successors and all who follow the same path.

From the collection of authentic Hadiths, I have attempted to extract the light in respect of the position and roles of a believer along that of the leader, for a prosperous Ummah. And it will not matter whether the believers are of common faith or with others who are free to keep their faith.

It will be appreciated that, following the exposition of the basis for belief and the status of Muhammad (SAW), the Greatness and Allah's relationship with us, the ideological definition of the straight path that is the middle path, citizenship and leadership will complete the ordinary circle of our orientation. The first seven materials based on the Qur'an that provide the general framework is therefore now supported by the historical guidance by the Messenger of Allah (SAW). The reader of these materials will hopefully find the provisions of Islam for its livelihood fairly defined, without scholastic teachings of the required religious practices.

May Allah (SWT) aid us across the ladders of sticking to our belief, knowledge of our religion and commitment to a livelihood that is consistent with righteousness.

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Before leaders there must be followers. It is the prosperity of followership that warrants or justifies leadership. A following that lacks leadership is worse than a pack of cards. And a leadership that does not connect to the common essence of the collectivity can at best be selfish and dictatorial. And with time it will fail to be sustained and collapse because the ingredients of uncommonness that oppress the ingredients that are common will consistently be resisted until they have to give up.

In every community or large society of identity, the elements, ingredients or principles of citizenship or membership and the attending leadership are: being grown and as a result not clearly established; they are established but unknown; they are established, known but not imbibed or lived on; or they are established, known and lived on. Indeed even when the last case is the situation, it will need to be sustained. But the worst states are either where the terms are not established or unknown. The people will simply be living a helpless history. However, for those who have and do not live it out of ignorance or carelessness, it is foolish of them to complain of difficulties that are justifiable. You cannot have tools for serving your needs and expect that the skills for using them will not be required. And it amounts to irresponsibility for those who have it, know it and ignore living it. All communities and societies strive towards knowledge and living the identity principles established for themselves.

In Islam, the terms focus on believers only but also serve or are safe for non-Muslims because there is no compulsion in the religion of Islam and every individual shall account for himself at the end of the day.

THE CITIZENSHIP BASIS FOR A BELIEVER

Narrated Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA): I heard Allah's Apostle (SAW) saying, "Deeds (their correctness and rewards) depend upon intentions, and every person gets but what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits, or for a woman to marry his emigration is for what he emigrated for."

It is part of religion, to court a woman for marriage, to do business or attend meetings or carry out an assignment, that are legal. Each attracts rewards according to its status. For instance, the person who is on worldly visit to Makkah and goes to perform the *tawaf* is not the same with the person who went to perform Umrah or Hajj. The intention and even detail content of the procedures and activities differ. This is within the degree of permissible things. Therefore, in the relationship of a believer to what activities he engages in, when, where, how and with whom, the established standards of the straight path that is the middle path must not be compromised BECAUSE HIS BEINGNESS IS COVERED BY HIS FAITH AND RELIGION.

Narrated Abdullah ibn 'Amr (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a *Muhajir* (emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all what Allah (SWT) has forbidden."

So, a believer must as a rule, not be a threat to fellow believers. It is for that reason part of worship to serve effectively as a safety valve in his political, social and economic relationships with fellow believers. One can only imagine where ignorance drives the believer. He will become a negative factor instead of a positive one in the life and history of the Ummah. And if he accidentally occupies

a position of leadership, the consequences of igniting confusion and conflicts will be possible. And if it gets the ladder of self-serving ego massage, that will be an innovative foundation for sustaining what is questionably evil, because it contradicts the middle path that is the straight path.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.”

In apt summary, jealousy and envy between believers are unwelcome and destructive of the attainment of Iman. Who will be in a business and prefer to lose? So why should that apply to another? Who will be in authority and enjoy being pulled down or denied minimum support when and where he is right? So, why will one adopt such for another fellow believer? That will be contrary to the tenets of Islam. Who will welcome or enjoy the abuse of his marital relationship by another party or dishonourable relationship with his mother, sister and another? So, why engage in such with those of others? This principle has the benefit of not just strengthening the Ummah in terms of purity and culture, it provides a standard cultural basis for non-Muslims to recognize black sheep among members because *Zina* is prohibited in Islam. And for those who care, express provisions are available for sanctioning all forms of *Zina*.

Narrated Abdullah ibn ‘Amr (RA): A man asked the Prophet (SAW), “What sort of deeds or (what qualities of) Islam are good?” The Prophet (SAW) replied, “To feed (the poor) and greet those you know and those you do not know.”

A believer must therefore know that the base or minimum requirement of him as GOOD as against Better or Best is that, he has an obligation towards the weak in the society, regardless of religious identity and courtesy for all, those known, those

not known, those below in rank, equals and superiors. This economic and social relationship principle automatically provides security of support for the personal sustenance of all members of the society in the hands of Muslims even when they live with non-Muslims. This is a pro-mankind principle. Thus, it is clearly unIslamic to have a believer or a group of believers against the basic survival of fellow human beings by denying them the courtesy of greetings of physical (food and drink) needs. Moreover, they are prohibited against giving them what they must not give themselves.

Narrated Abu Dharr (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The rich are in fact the poor (little rewarded) on the Day of Resurrection except him whom Allah (SWT) gives wealth which he gives (in charity) to his right, left, front and back, and does good deeds with it.”

Given, the critical role of material conditions for the prosperity of society and mankind, resources are not to be hoarded by believers against the need of mankind. Those who blessed are keeping the beautiful trust of Allah (SWT) because all things belong to Him. And since all mankind are available for the compassion of Allah (SWT) like we get sunlight or rains or breast milk without restrictions based on belief, believers are enjoined to promote this compassion. The distinction of the role of believers will be that, the resources are legally acquired and disbursed on legal things. That makes the Blessings of Allah (SWT) ignite in the society **IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT UNBELIEVERS MAY PREFER.**

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person is like a warrior fighting for Allah’s cause.”

This is a window of Jihad for believers. The Prophet (SAW) who was specifically ordered to carry out some holy wars is no more. Those who joined him in that faced great trials of opportunity for martyrdom. These were believers who benefited from the crusades if they survived and if they were slayed, they were happily with Allah (SWT). The Prophet (SAW) established that although the living wished them to be alive, they preferred to be with Allah. And Allah (SWT) revealed that they were not dead but alive in pleasant livelihood close to His Throne. Rasul (SAW) wished he could be martyred over and over again.

For us, in the following generations, the window is not absolutely closed. It involves commitment of our properly earned resources for the care of the weak among mankind, the widows and the poor. This logically admits the orphans.

The principles that compel exertion of physical and mental abilities to create wealth and the purposeful circulation of these goodly, for the general benefits of humanity go to define further, the concrete basis of citizenship duties to meet such universal rights and privileges of others.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "There is a (compulsory) sadaqa (charity) to be given for every joint of the human body (as a sign of gratitude to Allah (SWT)) every day the sun rises. To judge justly between two persons is regarded as sadaqa and to help a man concerning his riding animal by helping him to ride it or by lifting his baggage on to it, is also regarded as sadaqa, and (saying) a good word is also sadaqa, and every step taken on one's way to offer the compulsory prayers (in the mosque) is also sadaqa and to remove a harmful thing from the way is also sadaqa."

This scope of definition is fundamental and not excusable because it engages the raw all-free or all-available basic physical and mental capacities of the believers for the good of themselves, fellow believers and all others. Everybody can greet a fellow human being or reconcile disagreeing parties or help a road user etc. Children can do these, adolescents can do these, adults and the elderly can equally do these, regardless of whether they are rich or not, men or women. This foundation fabric for the sociological wellbeing of any society in which Muslims live is undoubtedly a positive necessity for peace and prosperity.

From this purely sociological foundation connects the economic calling on believers for citizenship roles.

Narrated the grandfather of Abu Burda (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Every Muslim has to give in charity.” The people asked, “O Allah’s Apostle! If someone has nothing to give, what will he do?” He said, “He should work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity (from what he earns).” The people further asked, “If he cannot find even that?” He replied, “He should help the needy who appeal for help.” Then the people asked, “If he cannot do that?” He replied, “Then he should perform good deeds and keep away from evil deeds and this will be regarded as charitable deeds.”

Narrated Az-Zubair ibn Al-Awwan (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “It is better for anyone of you to take a rope (and cut) and bring a bundle of wood (from the forest) over his back and sell it and Allah (SWT) will save his face (from the Hellfire) because of that, rather than to ask the people who may give him or not.”

These set of guidance establishes the fundamental duty of engaging in economic activities for the benefit of oneself and others FOR ALL OF THOSE WHO ARE

CAPABLE OF DOING SO. This critical connection between this worldly affair and the spiritual is what defines living Islam.

And to finally ensure that believers are not only properly hooked up to this but consistently too, a religious obligation seals it, irrespective of the cardinal obligation of Zakat for those who are well endowed with surpluses.

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) has made Sadaqat-ul-Fitr obligatory (and it is), either one Sa' of barley or one Sa' of dates (and its payment is obligatory) on young and old people and on free men as well as slaves.

This definition compels catering for the weak under your immediate responsibility and eliminates carelessness or irresponsibility. Moreover, it is ordinarily expected that the beneficiaries of this giving or charity will be non-members of the immediate family. But this does not have to be so, in the case of other charity.

Zainab, the wife of Ibn Mas'ud (RA) said, "O Prophet of Allah! Today you ordered people to give alms and I had an ornament and intended to give it as alms but Ibn Mas'ud said that he and his children deserved it more than anybody else." The Prophet (SAW) replied, "Ibn Mas'ud had spoken the truth. Your husband and your children have more right to it than anybody else."

The principle and practice of sadaqa in Islam is not necessarily to the exclusion of the immediate members of the family who are equally in need of support. But economic role and value of a believer's citizenship does not stop with those who are able to acquire materials of economic value for the wellbeing of themselves and the general society.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “If any Muslim plants any plant and a human being or an animal eats of it, he will be rewarded as if he had given that much in charity.”

Thus if a believer has not amassed resources for the common application of Jihad definition as explained above, the planting of non-poisonous trees is another opening. These are to be for the free availability of their fruits to mankind and even lucky animals. It is therefore logically and sensibly most embarrassing and contradictory, to find believers being hesitant or failing to plant trees **EVEN WHEN FACING THE THREAT OF DESERT ENCROACHMENT**. It is not a national, global challenge to plant trees but a most rewarding worship especially for those who are not rich. This world is provided for the safety of all of mankind without compulsion of belief identity **AFTER THE COMPLETE REVELATIONS OF THE STANDARD AND THE EXAMPLE BY THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (SAW)**.

Narrated Aisha (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Gabriel continued to recommend me about treating the neighbours kindly and politely so much that I thought he would order me to make them as my heirs.”

This definition amounts to recognizing and supporting the neighbour to every extent, provided the believer remains within the permissible degrees of what is legal. The neighbour comes next to the immediate family. The neighbour on the right hand comes before the one on the left hand. The closest in physical proximity comes before the next. And persons or households up to forty in each cardinal direction are the constituents of a believer’s neighbours. Why and how or on what basis will a believer justifiably become a socio-economic burden or threat to a

fellow human being who is not a Muslim? The only basis will be the ignorance of the Muslim, the non-Muslim or both parties.

This does not mean that the believer should be foolish or fail to evaluate things properly. The direction is that, this relationship is the standard. And there is no room for the suspicion of being misunderstood by those who do not share the same faith. This positive orientation is the platform of granting the benefit of whatever doubt may exist. It is only AFTER this attempt that a redefinition may be entertained. This is because prospective beneficiaries may be rightly or wrongly suspicious. And humans who are ruled by ignorance are subject to acting like animals.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “A believer is not stung twice (by something) out of one and the same hole.”

A believer is required to have knowledge and act positively but not foolishly. Thus, if every Muslim were to know these and live by these orientation, how better shall the Ummah be and positively impact on non-Muslims in this country Allah (SWT) has destined for all of us?

LEADERSHIP BASIS FOR A BELIEVER

The summary of the citizenship requirements above provide the very necessary platform for leadership because in Islam the leaders are not subject to a different kind of rules from the followers.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith:

1. The one to whom Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) become dearer than anything else.
2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake.
3. Who hates to revert to disbelief after Allah (SWT) has saved him from it and he hates to be thrown into (Hell) fire.”

The leader will become one, only if the foundation is as a Muslim, he has learnt, knows, and strives to make Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) FIRST. And this means referring all matters to what they have decided on. It will amount to non-negotiation on what they make obligatory and preference for what they encourage. Ignorance covered by dressing or association or name-calling alone are therefore not sufficient. This is why basic knowledge of the religion is compulsory, continual learning is encouraged and association or consultation with the learned is the best, except for leaders who will become foolish and wicked.

The leader is accordingly required to attend to the followers in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah (SWT), even as the followers are required to attend to him for the sake of Allah (SWT). There is no obligation between them over illegal things that are clearly defined. Thus, personal, regional or sectional prejudices are cancelled. He is enjoined to be just and they are enjoined to be obedient. And Allah (SWT) Who is the uniting point and Commander in all affairs intervenes (permits) as He wills. But no one will be free at the end, from justice. If the leader is unjust the followers will not be cheated. If they are unjust, the leader will not be cheated. A typical example was the case or experience of Musa (AS). He was alleged to be of unhealthy body. Then when he undressed to take a bath, Allah (SWT) rolled his clothes away (with the piece of rock he had placed on them) to the presence of witnesses among his enemies. He followed it to recover his clothes and his goodly body became evident.

Both parties are required to stick or hold firmly for certainty of safety and fear of loss. These will make them or either party taste the power and love of Allah (SWT). And leadership in Islam is not an imposture. The leader is only the first by the role or duty of taking others along, to the same goal or destination. And the best example was set by the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): When Allah (SWT) revealed the verse: Warn your nearest kinsmen. Allah's Apostle (SAW) got up and said, "O people of Quraish! Buy (i.e. save) yourselves (from the Hellfire) as I cannot save you from Allah's punishment. O Bani Abd Manaf! I cannot save you from Allah's punishment. O Safiya, (the aunt of Allah's Apostle (SAW))! I cannot save you from Allah's punishment. O Fatima bint Muhammad! Ask me anything from my wealth, but I cannot save you from Allah's punishment."

Hence, the leader is to lead to success like himself is committed to. He has no power whatsoever to protect a wrong doing person who is so by unbelief. Before Allah (SWT) all creatures stand in need. And only those who accept faith and work accordingly can expect appropriate rewards. There is no room for doing other than what I do. When that happens, the leader will fully bear his burden.

The logical and sensible deduction from this principle is the moral challenge for anybody to be in leadership. It is smelly in Islamic tradition to have someone who had been a cheat to others either by physical violence, theft etc. to become a champion critique of another person or leader. This may be understandable in another culture or society but not appreciable in Islam. This is because SHYNESS is part of Iman and it is the head of the over seventy branches of Iman. The positive benefit of this restraint is that the person is available for support, given previous experience. And it does not even sound sensible for the thief of yesterday

to make a good judge today. To judge requires the combination of the attributes of knowledge and freedom from similar wrong. But in a setting where shyness is inconsequential it will only take more time for shame NOT TO BE EMBARRASSING.

The guide posts for livelihood are therefore the same for both the leader and the followers or citizens.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Avoid the seven great destructive sins.” The people enquired, “O Allah’s Apostle! What are they?” He said, “To join others in worship along with Allah (SWT), to practice sorcery, to kill the life which Allah (SWT) has forbidden except for a just cause (according to Islamic law), to eat up *Riba* (usury), to eat up an orphan’s wealth, to give (your) back to the enemy and fleeing from the battlefield at the time of fighting, and to accuse chaste women who never even think of anything touching chastity and are good believers.”

This set of manifesto for both the leaders and citizens captures the nerves of the great sins in Islam. These are either so expressly identified in the Qur’an or Hadiths, are so, by the prescription of specific sanctions or are so connected. Thus, it does not matter, whether believers live amongst themselves or among others, their individual orientation and leadership are required to stick to the doing of good deeds and avoiding evil and encouraging others to so. They have no justification whatsoever to support or do the contrary. Doing so blots their identity as believers in the Oneness of Allah (SWT) and the perfect guidance by Muhammad (SAW).

So, the citizenship and leadership of or by believers goes to develop and project goodness for the general benefits of humanity. The Ummah can only achieve this by uniform orientation.

Narrated Abu Musa (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “A faithful believer to a faithful believer is like the bricks of a wall, enforcing each other.” While (saying that) the Prophet (SAW) clasped his hands, by interlocking his fingers.

The methodology is that every believer helps another – making it easier for the leader to move the Ummah forward.

Thus, the statement of the Prophet (SAW): Religion is to be sincere and true to Allah (SWT) (i.e. obeying Him, attributing to Him what He deserves and doing Jihad for His sake); to Allah’s Apostle (SAW) (i.e. to respect him greatly and to fight on his behalf both in his life and after his death and to follow his traditions); to the rulers of the Muslims (i.e. to help them in their job of leading Muslims to the right and alarm them if they are heedless); and to the Muslim commons (i.e. to be merciful to them). The positions or roles of leadership and citizenship in Islam are therefore self-enforcing FOR ALLAH (SWT). This is why leadership is more of guardianship.

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Everyone of you is a guardian and everyone of you is responsible (for his wards). A ruler is a guardian and is responsible (for his subjects); a man is a guardian of his family and responsible (for them); a wife is a guardian of her husband’s house and she is responsible (for it); a slave is a guardian of his master’s property and is responsible (for that). Beware! All of you are guardians and are responsible (for your wards).”

This setting will not allow for arrogance in the Ummah except for the misguided. Where the leader knows that his burden is being lessened by the consistent following of other believers based on knowledge and can be corrected, the followers cannot afford to be blocks and stones. The followership will be living and not dead, where anything that comes from the leader is considered sacrosanct. This is because the basis of the religion is the same for all. Every and all leaders, whether in the rites of religion, in society, in politics or economy must know that their strength and rightness relate to the right support they get.

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, "Allah never sends a Prophet or gives the caliphate to a Caliph but he (the Prophet or Caliph) has two groups of advisers: a group advising to do good and exhorts him to do it, and the other group advising to do evil and exhorts him to do it. But the protected person (against such evil) is the one protected by Allah (SWT).

This is only possible if the foundation is right knowledge and discipline which attracts similar right knowledge and discipline for strengthening the truth and guidance for the Ummah. If the leader is ignorant and the followers are equally ignorant, they cannot help building what is wrong. The blind leading the blind. The interaction between the leader and the followers is not that of drumming support for whatever the leader produces.

In the lifetime or history of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), Umar (RA) was a good example of such support. Allah (SWT) for instance agreed by a follow up instructional revelation after Umar (RA) suggested the use of hijab by the wives of the Prophet (SAW), for decency and chastity. On another occasion, Allah (SWT) instructed on prayer at the spot where Prophet Ibrahim (AS) prayed in Ka'aba. This was after the suggestion of Umar (RA) to Muhammad (SAW). In the case of

Uthman (RA), he performed a perfect ablution and strengthened the rite for believers along with educating them, as the Messenger of Allah (SAW) had done.

Narrated Sa'd (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "O Ibn Al-Khattab! By Him in Whose Hands my life is, whenever Satan sees you taking a way, he follows a way other than yours!"

This is an excellent witness for the righteousness of Umar (RA). The same Umar (RA) had often wondered over the exceptional recognition of the righteousness of Abu Bakr (RA). Then Allah (SWT) offered an opportunity. The Prophet (SAW) asked for support to execute a jihad. Umar (RA) offered half of all he had and kept half to sustain his family. The Prophet (SAW) congratulated him. Then Abu Bakr As-Siddiq appeared with a wrapping with blanket as his contribution. The Prophet (SAW) asked him about it. He submitted that it was all he had. When Rasul (SAW) further enquired over what he had left for the sustenance of his family, he said they will make do with Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). Umar (RA) then submitted that indeed Abu Bakr (RA) was far ahead of him.

And the basis of this support and guidance is knowledge. Not ignorance. Not tradition. Not title. Not arrogance. Not brute force. Not manipulation.

Narrated Mu'awiya (RA): I heard Allah's Apostle (SAW) saying, "If Allah (SWT) wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion. I am just a distributor, but the grant is from Allah (SWT). (And remember) that this nation (true Muslims) will keep following Allah's teachings strictly and they will not be harmed by anyone going on a different path till Allah's order (Day of Judgement) is established."

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Listen and obey (your Chief) even if an Ethiopian whose head is like a raisin were made your Chief.”

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): When the earliest emigrants came to Al-Usba, a place in Quba, before the arrival of the Prophet (SAW), Salim, the slave of Abu Hudhaifa (RA) who knew the Qur’an more than the others used to lead them in prayer.

The leader must therefore be knowledgeable even if he is not the most knowledgeable. In our circumstance as Nigerians, any leader from among the Ummah need be knowledgeable in the Qur’an, Hadith and secular life, to protect the interest of the Ummah and those who are not part of the Ummah. Leaders to be supported should not be ignorant people. Whatever they possess must be in addition to religious knowledge. How then can they not be in the forefront of promoting whatever will enhance religious knowledge? This is because imparting knowledge is a primary duty. But where even the bearer of the head of believers is ignorant, a traditionalist and even a criminal is in leadership position, believers can only get losses.

Steering the affairs of the Ummah must also not be on difficult or discouraging terms. The objective is for the average person to conveniently pass through.

Narrated Anas ibn Malik (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Facilitate things to people (concerning religious matters) and do not make it hard for them and give them good tidings and do not make them run away (from Islam).”

Leaders are not to be overbearing by themselves or the path they pass people through. The Prophet (SAW) was of the practice of repeating a statement thrice to enable proper understanding. Clarity and emphasis is the sound basis for learning. For instance in Kaduna State, when the government was to introduce a new outfit

to manage safety and sanitation, it started by sensitizing the public for some months. The government of Saudi Arabia considered a law amendment to permit women to drive cars in 2017 against implementing it in 2018. Whatever is right, beneficial should be learnt to last fulfillingly. It characteristic of Aisha (RA) to ask the Prophet (SAW) again on an unclear matter until she understood it.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "If I had not found it hard for my followers or the people, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with *Siwak* for every prayer."

The leader should strive to make following easy for the followers. The Straight Path is also the Middle Path and not the extreme. This is because consistency builds a tradition, a culture. And a standard of what is right begins from what is within the ability of everyone.

Narrated Anas (RA): The Prophet (SAW) used to pray a short prayer (in congregation) but used to offer it in a perfect manner.

This does not mean that good things have no expansive scope, for those who can, where it exists.

Narrated Abdullah ibn Mughaffal Al-Muzani (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, thrice, "There is a prayer between the two Adhans (Adhan and Iqama)," and added, "For the one who wants to pray."

A leader must therefore make a clear distinction between what is regular and what is not. What is regular is what gets institutionalized. What is also permissible need not be institutionalized as it will become a super-structure. And it will amount to adjusting the standard.

The trial of authority trust with the leader is not for whimsical employment to his prejudices or even weaknesses.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger."

This was typically demonstrated by the best model for guidance, the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): A Bedouin stood up and started making water in the mosque (urinating). The people caught him but the Prophet (SAW) ordered them to leave him and to pour a bucket of water over the place where he passed the urine. The Prophet (SAW) then said, "You have been sent to make things easy and not to make them difficult."

The leader will always consider many options and give preference to what is right and convenient for the followers, not destructive. He must act mercifully. The mosque was then just growing in history. It was not even built as today but demarcated and covered with palm leaves. The sacredness was not impressive on strangers. It will be insane to do so today by anyone in a mosque, a church, synagogue or temple. This level of patience followed by proper evaluation before a decision is what distinguishes a leader who is a believer. Instigating followers to resist another appointee to lead prayer will amount to excesses.

Therefore, Allah (SWT) remains and must continue to be the standard for directing affairs and being directed.

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): Somebody asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Who is the best among the people?" Allah's Apostle (SAW) replied, "A believer who strives his utmost in Allah's cause with his life and property." They asked, "Who is next?" He replied, "A believer who stays in one of the mountain paths worshipping Allah (SWT) and leaving the people secure from his mischief."

In a different narration, it is the person who mixes with people and endures their mischief. Either way, the leader must avoid reproducing himself when he guards on the straight path that is the middle path.

And from the close companions of the Prophet (SAW), we have starling examples of leadership in different spheres.

Narrated Al-Ma'rur (RA): At Al-Rabadha, I met Abu Dharr who was wearing a cloak and his slave too, was wearing a similar one. I asked about the reason for it. He replied, "I abused a person by calling his mother with bad names, the Prophet (SAW) said to me, 'O Abu Dharr! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names? You still have some characteristics of Ignorance. Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has his brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them to do things beyond their capacity and if you do so help them.'"

Leadership should not be overbearing on the followers. The difference is by responsibility and not appearances. A leader is not so or more by making the follower look different. Looks or appearances can be safely sacrificed. Eating, drinking and dressing are not the required differences. It is rather the order of their relationship. The leader can join public transport, wear common clothes, etc.

Another example is in the economic sphere.

Abu Talha (RA) said to Allah's Apostle (SAW), "O Allah's Apostle! Allah the Blessed, the Superior says: By no means shall you attain righteousness, unless you spend (in charity) of that which you love. And no doubt, Bairuha garden is the most beloved of all my property to me. So I want to give it in charity in Allah's cause. I expect its reward from Allah. O Allah's Apostle! Spend it where Allah (SWT) makes you think is feasible!" On that Allah's Apostle (SAW) said, "Bravo! It is useful property. I have heard what you have said (O Abu Talha), and I think it would be proper if you give it to your kith and kin." Abu Talha said, "I will do so, O Allah's Apostle!" Then Abu Talha distributed that garden amongst his relatives and his cousins.

Narrated Ibn Umar (RA): When Umar got a piece of land in Khaibar, he came to the Prophet (SAW) saying, "I have got a piece of land better than which I have never got. So what do you advise me regarding it?" The Prophet (SAW) said, "If you wish you can keep it as an endowment to be used for charitable purposes." So Umar (RA) gave the land in charity (i.e. as an endowment on the condition that the land would neither be sold nor given out as present, nor bequeathed) and its yield would be used for the poor, the kinsmen, the emancipation of slaves, Jihad and for guests and travellers. And its administrator could eat in a reasonable just manner, and he also could feed his friends without intending to be wealthy (store anything for himself) by its means.

These two cases reveal the rubbing between a leader, his followers who are also his supporters in righteousness, in practical economic life, for the benefit of themselves and the Ummah FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH (SWT). This redefines riches or to be wealthy. You are more by giving as against accumulating.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “Riches does not mean having a great amount of property but riches is self-contentment.”

In the same vein, there can be dignity in poverty.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The poor person is not the one who asks for a morsel or two (of meals) from the others, but the poor is the one who has nothing and is ashamed to beg from others.”

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “The poor person is not the one who goes round the people and ask them for a mouthful or two (of meals) or a date or two but the poor is that who has not enough (money) to satisfy his needs and whose condition is not known to others, that others may give him something in charity, and who does not beg of people.”

This special categorical definition of the poor has a distinct possible benefit that the leaders and other believers can take advantage of. A common one is that, charity to them attracts a special scale of reward. Another has to do with their pleading with Allah (SWT) for the Ummah and especially the leaders.

Narrated Mus’ab ibn Sa’ad (RA): Once Sa’ad (ibn Abi Waqqas) thought that he was superior to those who were below him in rank. On that the Prophet (SAW) said, “You gain no victory or livelihood except through the (blessings and invocations of) the poor amongst you.”

Leaders in particular must as a result heed specific warnings over and above the burdens of cautions highlighted above.

Narrated Abu Bakr (RA): A man was mentioned before the Prophet (SAW) and another man praised him greatly. The Prophet (SAW) said, “May Allah’s Mercy be

on you! You have cut the neck of your friend.” The Prophet repeated this sentence many times and said, “If it is indispensable for anyone of you to praise someone, then he should say, ‘I think that he is so and so’ if he really thinks that he is such. Allah (SWT) is the One Who will take his accounts (as He knows his reality) and no one can sanctify anybody before Allah.”

The praising or flattering of leaders in their faces is therefore an abomination. Those who enjoy it live in deceit. It is harmful to the recipients and those who offer it. Ego massaging is not part of responsible leadership in Islam. A leader who does not welcome correction is liable to straying. And if it is for the sake of Allah criticisms are made, the affair is of Allah and should not attract personal grudge. Where the leader resists criticism or correction, he is on the path of extremism, personalizing an affair that is not his. You cannot submit to Allah (SWT) and keep a stake.

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): The Prophet (SAW) said, “The worst people in the sight of Allah (SWT) on the Day of Resurrection will be the double faced people who appear to some people with one face and to another people with another face.”

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA): Allah’s Apostle (SAW) said, “The signs of a hypocrite are these: whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (proves to be dishonest).”

These are certainly not fitting attributes for an individual believer or for any leader among believers.

Consequently, it is illogical, senseless and undefendable to have dependable leadership from a believer enmeshed in the crises of moral identity. Allah (SWT) is

pure and connects only with the clean. This quality of moral uprightness must flow along with *Ihsan*, which is not achievable without the combination of knowledge and discipline, within the permissible limits of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger, Muhammad (SAW). Where such is found, the leader is not only an embarrassment to the Ummah but those who so appoint or recognize him are gamblers. They are in a trade that will neither benefit their worldly life nor an investment with Allah (SWT). This will be without consequence of regular Hajj performance or fasting. A murderer, a thief and a cultist cannot have sitting place for the identity of a leader of believers. Those who look up to such for leadership and guidance are engaged in an affair that has rooting in Islam.

Accordingly, such a defiant cannot be suitable for even advising on what is right and beneficial to the Ummah. Their choices and recommendations will inevitably be selfish and a disservice to the Ummah. They will always incline towards family members, relations and those with whom they share the security of their identity. And where such continue to have their way in leadership, only their death will open a window of relief to the society. They will be masters of intrigues, whereas *Ihsan* should be the revolving point for decisions and movement.

Thus, the challenges before the Ummah in our circumstance of Nigeria, is NOT whatever misunderstanding Muslims may suffer in the hands of other Nigerians BUT the commitment to the acquisition of basic or foundation knowledge and the discipline or orientation of *Ihsan* . Then, those who genuinely misunderstand will correct or adjust their understanding. Those who do so out of ignorance will be assisted by fellow objective non-Muslims to clarify and Allah (SWT) will personally take care of the wicked. This challenge is not ideologically and practically different in respect of our Christian brothers and sisters who share the same foundation doctrines with Muslims. The individual faithfuls need to study

and learn the scripture for themselves and connect with any leaders at the level of discipline or actions. Then, we will discover our harmless differences and prosper **OUTSIDE THE TRAPPINGS OF INORDINATE AMBITIOUS PREJUDICIAL IMPOSTERS** among us Nigerians, either as Muslim or Christian leaders. It is for instance inconceivable to place the conflicts, disagreements and even opposition between Muslims and Christians who believe in one God, have sex outside marriage prohibited, idol worshipping or cultism prohibited, murder prohibited, usury prohibited as against constant praise and glorification of the Lord. The root is not in the scriptures. The leaders cannot alone on their own become the solution. Every believer, every Christian, will need to learn and know the basics. And they are **NOT CONTROVERSIAL**. However, because the citizens or followers do not care to know and live the principles two related inevitable consequences are our takings. The first is that leaders cannot insist on the discipline of the followers because they will not want to lose the size of following they enjoy. It is therefore not for the sake of God but to serve themselves. On the part of the followers, they will not mind even if the leadership indulges like them – beyond the expressly defined limits in the scriptures. This is for instance the logical and sensible explanation of having women already pregnant and admitted for marriage, with followers. And leaders get found to be involved with single and married women among the followers. Indeed, we are beginning to experience the acceptance of same sex relationship in our folds. The leaders cannot resist the temptation of setting us aflame as they enjoy fame and influence, fed by our ignorance and carelessness. No leader can be more religious or holy by destroying peace and understanding. No leader has the mandate to compel others to what is variant of the **BASIC TENETS OF THE SCRIPTURES**. If we are so alert, we should benefit the leaders with guidance support and be able to **JOIN HANDS TO DEAL WITH MISCREANTS** across the two religions.

Democracy is what we make of it because it is only a formless name for historical experiences. Those who have nothing to keep swallow whatever is given to them. Those who have, protect themselves against losing what they already have. Those who believe and have the scriptures will either have abandoned them or ignored them for 'pure' democracy. And the inevitable consequence is dissatisfaction and frustration sustained by confusion.