

THE BEAUTIFUL STORY OF
UMMI AMINA



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What particularly makes this story interesting is the fact that at the time of Amina becoming part of me and my family, hers, reveals my maturity or development in life, that I find fulfilling. By it my gratitude to Allah has become more conscious, on reflection. When I was to oblige AbdulRahman Jumare Yahya, the late grandson of respected late Waziri Lawal (for work), my father had told me that the beauty and value of Zaria rested on its past leadership under Sheikh Ja'afaru who tripled as an Imam, a Judge and a Ruler. Only a scholar can be these. Zaria is therefore endowed with men of wisdom, based on knowledge and experience of Allah. There was no more Imam when I came. But my father had entrusted me to a Visitor to the House of Allah of *Unguwan Zakara*. AbdulRahman personally introduced me to his goodly uncle Sheikh Nuhu of Durumi and another, Sheikh Sanda, who was resident at Kaduna. I learnt from them, how Allah encompasses everything and all things even as frees whichever He chooses and in the manner He pleases. How Allah is all-sides and directs whoever He pleases to the side that is right. And Nuhu introduced me to his teacher who doubled as a philosopher and Sufi. The disciplinarian is still alive. There was Sheikh Bashir of *Unguwan Alkali* that I sought for and found. I learnt from him, patience with the will of Allah when he was being tossed for *Alkalin Garka*; and restraint from rushing to closed judgement when an affair is that of Allah. This arose on the death of Dasuki and the matters that arose, between his brother Sultan, Abacha and the ward of Sultan. Through them I got audience and acceptance by Sheikh Lawal that left with his profound knowledge of the life of *Rasul* (SAW) and Sheikh Ladan who was always clarifying for me what Sheikh Zakari discussed with me. An Imam of Kona and a former Minister in the first republic taught me how to stick to Allah and trusting that you will not be dumped But submitting to whatever He eventually decides, as the best. I have inherited wisdom and discipline from them over a period of a decade. And I got a goodly wife for my beloved nephew from *Unguwan Alkali*. My special gratitude to Allah is in succeeding to drink from the kernel of wisdom that is fast disappearing. I have indeed lived well for good and richly too. I have also been generously honored, for, a child has been named after my father, another after my mother and a few number after myself. I am from Bida and got a wife that hails from Ogun and now from Kano. By residence we cannot be denied the claim of Zaria. And for me I am more than of Zaria by physical belongingness. I recall my father's urging, to go into the *Ummah* and find my relations, for they do not have to be those I was born with. I have realized it over time and this present reflection makes the story and experience of my marriage with Ummi Amina, a beautiful one to share.

MEETING WITH THE HONORABLE FATHER, ABUBAKAR ABDULQADIR

I recall my very first meeting with the father of Ummi Amina, the daughter of Fatima. He impressed on me the personality of a brief, plain and firm individual. He also loves transparency as he immediately invited AbdulRahman, her maternal uncle to join us. He could not hide his sentimental attachment and special respect for his eldest daughter, whose some of her juniors were already married with kids. She is named after his own mother. She is therefore referred to as Ummi, Mami and even Jummai, after the week day of her birth.

I introduced myself to confirm the identity of the person she had indicated to him, will be coming. I told him of how I met Amina, my evaluation of her person, my opinion of her background based on my findings. And the favour of his consent to ask for her hand in marriage. He confirmed to me that he had been kept informed of her opinion of me since we had a few interactions. That a scholar friend of his had told him that he had read one of my books and that I am an honorable person. He there admitted the recommendation of Amina as more than infatuation.

He respected the decision of Amina that he accepts my request even though she told him that I am already married with grown up children. She told him that I had emphasized the need for her to consider what she was considering to go into. He felt comfortable because of my direct plainness. But he would want to know of my own willingness, because all of her sisters that have gotten married and the three to follow are having their first experiences like their partners.

I appreciated his genuine concern and highlighted the peace, love and harmony that we have in my family informed by reasonable discipline. He expressed satisfaction with my submission because he would not advocate preferential attention for Amina. Then I intimated him that it is not my practice to give boxes of dresses, foot wears, bags, jewelries, cosmetics etc. although this is commonly done and is not prohibitive. I have given out in respect of my male children when they were required to do so in their marriages. As for my daughters I freed their suitors from that burdensome tradition. He smiled and said Amina had intimated him. That he was comfortable with whatever we agree on. I then enquired about the dowry and he gave me the Freedom to decide on the Gift. We sealed it at that. And I was exceptionally satisfied because, for him, this will be the first marriage of his daughter that he will be handling. In the past, his late senior brother was responsible for all matters. And here is he facing radically different definitions for his beloved Ummi. From here my representatives came into the matter for realizing the marriage.

MY FAMILY

I was pleased to inform my wives of the new development. They asked questions and I answered. They submitted that they were satisfied and pray that Allah make us a better and fuller family, with her joining. And they prepared for hosting my representatives who will stopover at my residence after the knot is tied, before returning to Minna. For my children, it was an opportunity for a new learning. Their trust in my judgement ensured the benefit of the doubt. And they recognize that it is not our standard for one to get involved in what is not his primary responsibility. Some were particularly more receptive than others. But the dividing line is that it is legal, and my decision, with the support of my wives. They who are transient trusts will be doing well to learn except it contradicts what Allah and His Messenger permit.

My mother was most welcoming. My senior was satisfied. My representatives were comfortable. My other relations and friends had the choice to support or remain neutral. It was fulfilling to note that everyone had a feel of a new step I was taking, that is consistent with Islam and cannot be criticized.

Then my wives paid a welcoming visit to Ummi Amina and her household members. It is untraditional and strange but not illegal. And the family of Ummi Amina was not just receptive but exceedingly pleased with the outing. And in return Allah made my wives a matter of reference for the goodly strange visit. On their part, they reported their very impressive opinion of the disposition of Uwa Fatima. That opened the window for togetherness and regular interaction. From thence, the individual personalities that we are began to play along with the new member. Praise be to Allah with the meeting and joining.

THE RESERVE OF SEVEN DAYS FOR UMMI AMINA

It is the tradition of *Rasul* (SAW) to grant her this privilege. During this period of first and initial acquaintance, the new member is summarily brought to the level of the other members in terms of orientation. It is often defined as the teaching of religion. And in Amina's case the basics are no more the requirement. We therefore deliberately planned that in the outing, I shall Open her mind to the world she has been hearing of in the manner that I know and will benefit the two of us, in the new relationship. I chose to invite her to the Beautiful Names of Allah. I passed the same material to Halima and Khadiza. And I added to it another material that is a collection of some over two hundred jokes, to ease the nerves. In the case of Ummi Amina, I asked her to choose seven attributes that she found most consuming. I did this, knowing fully well that all the ninety nine attributes are simply facets of the same reality Allah. She chose the seven and even added the benefits of reciting them.

This was the foundation for what I decided to invite her into, during this special period. And below is the summary of our platform in the SUNNAH of *Rasul* (SAW).

ALLAH

Allah is the name of our creator, who sent His completed message to us through the person and model livelihood of Muhammad (SAW). Allah revealed that He is He and there is no god but Him. The most distinctive relationship between a believer and Him is that of regular submission by pleas and praises. This is what makes the pillar of *Salat* the most outstanding in identifying the bearer of *Kalimatu shahada*. This Allah is the one that we hear about and has enjoined that we seek to know Him. It is in His name that we have been joined and for Him that we have agreed and will strive to live. This primarily means that whatever me, you or both of us or any other person may desire, it must not contradict His pleasure. The sustenance of this life style and culture is the service-praise that He deserves, over and above the purest forms of these in the forms of *salat* and *zikr*, that are standard. Allah is One and only. Unlike me and you Ummi Amina, Allah never begot did not beget and will never beget. Similarly He was never, is not and will not be begotten. He is therefore no father to any one and has no child.

Allah is Eternal. That is He is Ever so, outside the trap of Time and all forms of its measurement. Unlike me and you, the passage of time or relation with anything within it, does not affect Allah. We get aged, we get harmed or excited and we die. All of these do not apply to Allah.

Allah is Holy. He is pure-clean. He has no color and cannot be colored. Nothing that is bad or evil is associable with Allah. He is Not and does not because He has all rights over every and all creations while no creation or collection of all creations has any right over Him. Whatever He does is therefore necessarily right REGARDLESS of the implication or effect on us. Our perspective, opinion, pleasure or displeasure is absolutely inconsequential. Allah is therefore manifest through us, His creations. Like we are evidences of our parents and relations, some of who we may know or not know, every and all creations are proof of His existence. For instance, we are all children of Adam, irrespective of our knowledge of our relationship with Europeans, Asians, Arabs, Jews, etc.

Allah is the Hidden. He is not seen by His creatures including me and you. Musa (AS) sought to see Him within space and time that we are entrapped in and failed. It is like your property sensing you. It ordinarily does not and cannot. However if the product is built with a sensor to do so, it may. For instance, passwords by finger prints. However both we the producers and the product achieve this by this extra effort WITHIN THE SAME SPACE AND TIME. NOT BEYOND. Seeing virus, bacteria, an atom, a spirit or angel is therefore not

akin to capacity to see Allah. While we cannot see Allah because He is hidden, it is not comparable to seeing other creatures that are ordinarily hidden.

Allah is First. But in the sense and way that He came before any first and all firsts, because He is the cause of the first and all firsts. He is not the first. The first is necessarily so because some other external identity can witness and verify it as such. But Nothing is there before Allah. Allah was unknown. So when He desired to be known, He created creations. Allah is Last. He is after every and all things. He is not the last. We can only recognize the last if we have identity relationship with what we grade as the last. But Allah remains after the very last. And after all have come to pass Allah will remain the sole inheritor of all things.

Allah is Everlasting. He chooses, decides and determines the beginning and end of every and all creations. He was before our lives and will remain after our lives. He told us about before us and the end of some, like personalities and nations. Some of these have come to light only long long after the true indication by Allah. For example, the knowledge and reality that our earth planet expands. He has also informed us of the end of things, what will follow and what we should do with the present. He is permanently alive and never dies.

Allah is Light. He is the One who reveals the truth of things and the details or real meaning of any and all things. But not like the object or element of light, but like its essence. You cannot get Allah from any kind of energy generation. He gave us the Qur'an, which separates the right from the wrong. This is superior to lighting to see or carry out some activity like surgery.

Allah is Alive. He created us in His image with this attribute, distinct from death. But He lives neither like us nor any creations that have to be given their own lives. While His is ever, He grants us ours as He pleases. We can therefore sleep and awake. We may go unconscious or into coma and return. We may die and await being raised for questioning. Allah is Self-Subsisting. He neither requires nor is He dependent on whatever, to be. Indeed when He desires a thing or intends a definition, He simply commands its becoming and it becomes. He requires no aid, does not receive any aid and cannot be aided. He is free of any and all needs.

Allah is Subtle. This is Himself and in His actions. Absent of roughness. He is therefore able to converse with Musa (AS) even though He is Allah. He took the life of Sulayman (AS) long before the Jinns discovered. And raised Musa (AS) in the notorious palace of Pharaoh. "No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things" (6:103).

Allah is the only Truth. He is the same and right, in, out, both sides, up and down. Nothing is comparable or contradicts Him. Every and all essences and realities vanish in His face. Allah is accordingly Praise worthy. He is fascinating beyond comment and understanding. Of the many attributes of Allah these few I constantly find consuming and encompassing. Between these and most of His other attributes, I specifically find the following attributes of His, to be the most compelling for us, His servants, who choose to and sincerely believe. Our imperfection is constantly exposed out of ignorance, foolishness or audacity. We therefore err deliberately or innocently. And we do this against ourselves or others, mistaking that it may be in our favor or interest. For example we flow between marriage, fornication and adultery; between jihad, murder and manslaughter; between *tauhid*, hypocrisy and idol worship.

But Allah is the most Patient with us, all of His creations, given the weight and regularity of our wrongs doing. He is Forbearing of our colorful submission, as individuals, as groups and as generations. And He can choose to replace us with others, like He did at the time of Nuhu (AS) and Lut (AS). He is Forgiving of our faults and omissions, regardless of their number and weight, including Shirk, after which must not be returned to. He Forgives over and over and shrouds our shortcomings. Allah accepts our repentance when we follow the guide, as believers. And the ultimate reward of these is that He is the one and final Pardoner. This erases our wrongs and restores or uplifts our cleanliness. This means that No type or form or level of wrong affects Allah. And No amount, type or level of right favors Him. Either way, is for our own benefit or undoing.

From the first class of the attributes of Allah outlined above and the cushioning attributes that have been outlined, the Fear of Allah as the foundation of wisdom can be appreciated on four grounds.

The first is that: "To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: when He decreeth a matter, He saith to it: "Be, and it is." (2:117). "For to anything which We have willed, We but say the Word, "Be", and it is," (16:40). "Verily when He intends a thing, His Command is, "Be", and it is!" (36:82). There is the example of the signs given to Musa (AS) with his staff and hand. There is the child bearing of Ibrahim (AS) and conception of Isa (AS). There is the dividing of the sea for Musa (AS) and its closure against Pharaoh. There is the protection of Ibrahim (AS) from getting burnt in the furnace.

The second is: "To Allah belong the East and the West: whithersoever ye turn, there is the Presence of Allah. For Allah is All-Pervading, All-Knowing". (2:115). For example, the *qibla* used to be to Jerusalem, then He ordered it to Ka'aba in Mecca. This is most appreciated when believers across the world perform their salat. Some find the Qibla it in the East, some in the West, some in the North and some in the South. And when circumstance

dictates, like in a state of war or where the exact direction of the Qibla is not known, any direction is admitted as Qibla. In livelihood, those who were guided by the earlier revealed Scriptures and those following the guidance of the Qur'an are all believers. Both of those who voluntarily submit to Allah and those who proclaim rejection cannot fail to oblige the favors or trials or commands of Allah. These apply to rainfall or famine, harvest or epidemic, aging, falling sick or dying.

The third is: "To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills (and plans). He bestows (children) male or female according to His Will (and plan), or He bestows both males and females, and He leaves barren whom He will: for He is full of knowledge and power." (42:49). "Praise be to Allah, who created (out of nothing) the heavens and the earth, who made the angels messengers with wings, - two, or three, or four (pairs): He adds to creation as He pleases: for Allah has power over all things". (35:1). "And Allah has created every animal from water: of them there are some that creep on their bellies; some that walk on two legs; and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills; for verily Allah has power over all things". (24:45). "Verily my Lord (Allah) enlarges and restricts the Sustenance to such of His servants as He pleases". (34:39). An example is Pharaoh and Qaroon. "To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth and punisheth whom He pleaseth; but Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful". (3:129). "He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and punisheth whom He pleaseth. For Allah hath power over all things". (2:284). An example is the seventy followers who witnessed the conversation between Musa (AS) and Allah. They asked to see Allah plainly and were struck to death. Musa (AS) asked for their pardon and they were restored back to life. Such absolute discretion is the sole entitlement of Allah.

The fourth is: "If Allah so willed, He could make you all one people: but He leaves straying whom He pleases, and He guides whom He pleases: but ye shall certainly be called to account for all your actions". (16:93). "Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto them, We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah's Plan. Most of them ignore (the truth)". (6:111). This beautifully compares Pharaoh to Musa (AS).

FROM THE HISTORY OF PHARAOH AND HIS MUSA

Allah it was who enabled the vision, with fire from Jerusalem that was in his Egypt was burning the houses of non-Israelis. The unbelieving priests and magicians were the ones Allah granted the knowledge of the correct interpretation of the dream. They informed him that a male child born of Israelis will overthrow his kingdom. To check the possibility he instituted the killing of all male children born to Israelis. Allah permitted it. Then those given of the knowledge drew his attention to the long term implication. The strong Israelis

that slave for the kingdom will grow old and weak. They will not be replaced for the needed slavery. Pharaoh adjusted the policy to intermittent execution of the new born Israeli male children. Allah was in the know and allowed it. Haruna (AS) was given birth to in one of the free years. He fitted into the law and was unaffected. Allah brought Musa (AS) into the world in the year of prohibition. He was therefore liable to execution, like any other Israeli male child born in the same year. Allah was fully aware and cannot be resisted on His plan. Allah chose to inspire the mother of Musa (AS) on what to do with the child. Allah floated him into the palace of Pharaoh and made the family admit and raise him as a prince. Allah comforted the mother by making the chosen child reject all nurses except the breast of his biological mother.

Musa (AS) was endowed with physical strength. And when he was invited to intervene between an Egyptian who was molesting an Israeli, his intervention led to the manslaughter of the Egyptian. It was Allah who allowed the decision of the authorities to execute Musa (AS) even though he was raised in the palace. And Allah willed that the news of the decision and advice to flee be conveyed to Musa (AS) by a witness. Musa (AS) the chosen of Allah escaped into wilderness. Allah guided him to a safe land. There, he helped women Shepard, the means to his ten year employment as dowry for the hand of one of the maidens, from among the daughters of another chosen servant of Allah. The strive and pain through which these became were in the full knowledge and permit of Allah. On his freedom he sought to return to Egypt, as a citizen. Then Allah chose to meet him and favor him with signs of his bearing the true guidance. And Allah granted his request to have Haruna, his brother, assist him.

With one of the signs Allah enabled Musa (AS) to defeat the magicians in the contest set by Pharaoh. He gave Musa (AS) the knowledge to defeat the false claims of lordship by Pharaoh. It was Allah who guided the defeated magicians to submit to the truth and left Pharaoh to remain in rejection of the truth. It was Allah who tried the followers of Musa (AS) with the bitterness of having their children killed, men imprisoned and women raped without restraint by the people of Pharaoh. Indeed, they complained to Musa (AS) that, they suffered before he came with the truth and they were still suffering. Musa (AS) responded that: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors on the earth, so that He may see how you act". (7:129).

Allah enabled and favored one of the relatives of Pharaoh, one of his wives and Qaroon, the exceedingly wealthy, to be believers in the truth Musa (AS) was bearing. It was Qaroon who resisted giving out zakat as required by Allah for reasons of selfishness, greed and arrogance. And Allah decided to settle the matter by making the earth swallow Qaroon, his mansion and belongings, with no trace that he had ever existed. It was Allah who punished the Pharaoh and the Egyptians with drought and forgave them, when they repented. It was

Allah who punished them with crops destroying locusts and withdrew them when they pleaded. Allah pushed them with Lice and diseases for their refusal to let Musa (AS) leave with the Israelis and withdrew it when they promised to change. It is Allah who infested them with frogs and withdrew them when they undertook to oblige. And Allah punished them with their water turning into blood, but did not release the Israelis to leave with Musa (AS).

Allah instructed Musa (AS) to leave without the consent of Pharaoh and his people. Pharaoh followed them to punish them and send them back. Pharaoh and his people were indeed a strong headed people to Allah, even though He was forbearing and forgiving to them, over and above the good things of this world that He favored them with. And Allah parted the sea for Musa (AS) and the Israelis to pass through while allowing it to drown Pharaoh and his people for their extremism, as an example. The same chosen Musa (AS) of Allah is the one who was moderated when he submitted that he was the most knowledgable person. Allah directed him to meet with another chosen servant of His (Khidr) who was given special knowledge. With him Musa (AS) discovered the truth and knowledge that he did not know and contradicted what he knew. It was Musa (AS) who was mocked for his proper dressing, that he was covering an ailment. And Allah it was who enabled a piece of rock to roll away with the covering of Musa (AS) while taking his birth. He pleaded with the stone and followed it. But he reached it only after some youths had witnessed his clean and healthy body. That was how Allah cleared him of the evil rumor.

It is Musa (AS) who had the privilege of conversing with Allah that sought for and was granted the opportunity to interact with Adam (AS). He queried Adam as to why he excused mankind's coming onto the earth by eating the forbidden fruit. But Adam (AS) educated him on how Musa (AS) blamed him for expecting him to go against the plan of Allah. Musa (AS) slapped the angel of death, when he appeared to take his life. Allah received the report and gave him the option of living for as many additional years as the number of hairs his hand will cover on a calf. He chose to return to Allah.

DEAR UMMI AMINA

From my knowledge of Allah, for me, for you, for our families and relations who choose and do sincerely believe in Allah (SWT) and Muhammad (SAW), we have two things to consider and embrace. The first is to constantly ask for the forgiveness of Allah; send blessings to *Rasul* (SAW); and the glorification of Allah. This is because of our imperfection and the fact that we have no real constant and final identity, except what Allah permits. We can also not have anybody deserving of our appreciation and gratitude for our complete and final guidance, other than Muhammad (SAW) who lived the best example for us. The only relevant way is by referring it to Allah, to bless him, his family members like the family of

Ibrahim (AS), as he had taught. And because only Allah remains the Truth, His glorification is not only deserving but responsibly necessary. And the highlights of some of His attributes above are sufficient for our education.

Mami Amina, as you know, I am not a scholar. I also know that you were already a Muslim before we got married. This is therefore not Teaching you Islam or the five pillars of Islam. I am simply a Muslim and given my philosophical orientation, this sharing is what I consider to be a fair reminder and emphasis in these reserved days.

THE SECOND THAT IS BOTH IMMEDIATE AND LIFE LONG

This has to do with the direction for livelihood. The guide given by *Rasul* (SAW) is that believers live this world like travelers, with the destination in view to be eternal life which is bound to follow in the hereafter. This is why the most intelligent person is rightly, the one who prepares for death, as death is the beginning of real life. And in the command of Allah, we have not been created for any purpose other than to worship Him.

Umami Amina, being a family already fairly developed, I need to highlight a few things for you, which will serve as the foundation for your orientation. I am recording this as I had told you earlier, before your consent. I have been married to Halima Baiwa who doubles as a paternal cousin. We have been tried by the blessing of two boys and two girls. The two boys have gotten married and one of the daughters. I had an Amina Ladidi as another wife. We have six children together. Four boys and two girls. The eldest daughter is married. The other is completing her higher education. Two of the boys are in the university and a third to join. The other is going through higher education. But Allah enabled our divorce on kind terms. Each and every one of them got the opportunity for basic education through cultured institutions. Performance you know, depends on discipline and learning effort supported by the will of Allah. I have been married to Khadiza Wuraola who is a beloved Ijebu woman. We have remained on the trial of love in the circumstance of the absence of children. She has demonstrated genuine love for the sake of Allah, to me and the members of my immediate and larger family. And from my evaluation they have reciprocated responsively and responsibly fairly above average. I have also appreciated some commendable gaps in these, because it is free of hypocrisy. In a collection of many, you expect some admixture and what remains superior is discipline, which is faceless and universal.

A big brother in law, a retired jurist entrusted me with two of his sons, begotten with my late beloved sister, Khadiza. They are Abdullahi and Ibrahim. They are both married with children. Abdullahi wrote my profile on my website. Ibrahim sealed my honorable relationship with the *Alkalawa* of Zaria city. You have therefore now joined the family as my wife with an independent and equal knot. You are joining us with a responsible

experience of divorce. You are joining us with the variant experience of child bearing and looking up to the will of Allah. You are joining us where I lead the strive for loving care, justice and fairness for the sake of Allah.

We believe in Allah and *Rasul* (SAW). We pray. We fast. We give charity. I have had the opportunity to visit *Masjid Aqsa* during four training trips to Israel. We pray to be able to perform goodly hajj, by the grace of Allah. But there is the superior life project of preparing for our real destination and life that commences from death. It is Islamic. It is Educational. It is Philosophical. It is Free. It is our *sadqatu jariyat*. The platform is *Sadaqatu Tayyibatun Foundation*. It is by the websites www.sadtayyfoundation.org and www.jimada.sadtayyfoundation.org. The structure of the materials is that the main materials are directed to the *Ummah*. The Letters to my family members. The other affiliate site is directed to all Nigerians. Those for the family are equally valuable to every family of the *Ummah*.

The invitation and contribution of every family member is to read the materials, live by the tenets and share it. The secondary one is to reproduce hard copies and share freely. The tertiary is in building the website(s). For example Imran has developed the websites and manages them. He has also contributed exceptional materials to it. Ghazzali has posted a comment to the blog. The next leg that I plan to introduce, which will be started with you from its beginning involves rotational education in the family based strictly on the Qur'an and Hadith. I am building a fair library for this purpose. What will distinguish it is that, it will be learning for living by us, to the best of our abilities and for as long as we are together. While I anticipate that the 'infrastructure' will eventually develop, we shall give emphasis to only those things that can be freely, easily and safely done. Not institutional things like Schools, Mosques, etc.

MY REALIZATION AND DIRECTIONAL DECISION

Aminan Zaria. The real stepping stone in wadding through this life is the wish, the desire and taste to achieve or see to the realization of an ambition. This applies at individual level, but is often social in nature, necessarily involving or relating to another person. If it is for self, for the two of us, like our coming together in marriage or for our immediate collection, like our family or the larger collection like the *Ummah* or the entire humanity, the end result is our utmost interest. Respective examples will be, good health, marriage, our family project, abiding charity and justice.

But we are created in haste and often driven by either inordinate greed or evil in its essence. For example, we will want to be healthy and never fall sick. In the event we fall sick, we wish to recover or get healed in a twinkle of an eye. We will want our marriage to be blissful and free from any sort of interference or association. This shows its face by a

promise between the parties never admitting another wife or the wife demanding for such undertaking or when it arises, declaring a war on it. It may be, wanting to have all members of the family to follow the Right and Middle Path or all members of the *Ummah*. But Allah did not choose to make us one. And to ensure that there is justice and fairness across humanity. There is no doubt that each and all of these are laudable.

But by Allah, NONE of these is possible without a strive, within self like antibodies, with me and our relations, with fellow family members, with fellow believers and with fellow ordinary human beings. Inside us, through our organs, thoughts or spirit, outside us, from the natural environment including living and non-living elements. For instance, I need energy to realize the desire to come and see you. On my way I need to resolve it as the admissible priority against other desires of mine and in relation to others that are my equal, my superiors and those that I have responsibility for. And when I set out physically, I need to avoid being crushed in the geography of reaching you. This crush may be physical or a message of deceit that you are not available, by someone who does not like our relationship.

To cross any and all of these to utmost fulfillment requires a standard orientation. The preferred one should always lead us to a winning result. No room for disappointment or even delay in arriving at the goal. As a Muslim, I have recognized that *Rasul* (SAW) has set the best standard. Every other attainment will fall short of his. And those who had the opportunity of realizing it with him and those who followed in that culture are no doubt, more than enough scope of examples for right bearing. The relics of these are still abundantly available. Therefore, seeking to conclude a matter by reaching *Rasul* (SAW) himself or asking why or how or when Allah will enable or permit a thing is no more necessary - no matter how compelling I may feel or desire.

What has been taught and remains absolutely constant is that the will, plan and pleasure of Allah is ALWAYS right and necessarily what comes to pass. And this is safely hidden, absolute reserve of Allah. For example, for how long one will live, where, when and how one will die. What detail pattern one will chart in history, what will follow after death. Now, later, tomorrow or immediate and distant future. Any reasonable and sensible efforts in having prior knowledge of this or attempt to control it is always certainly neither definite nor foolish. We can end up succeeding, we may partially succeed or even fail woefully. This is what inevitably results from our best plans, budgets, projects etc. But it is most intelligent to continue in the efforts.

What distinguishes a believer is the recognition, admission and comfort with the knowledge and reality that the Pleasure of Allah will necessarily be the end result, after the best has been put in. And that immediate success or failure is SUCCESS for the believer, IF

IT IS IN THE NAME OR FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH. This is the life line for livelihood in Islam. I still recall the closing of each prayer by your goodly father with: OR WHATEVER ALLAH CHOOSES AS THE BEST FOR US. This applies to the Subject of desire and the Time in view. To be on this life line, the necessary orientation is to SUBJECT SELF to Allah and *Rasul* (SAW) FIRST IN ALL MATTERS, AFFAIRS AND CIRCUMSTANCES. This requires knowledge from the examples of Scholars and their Ink pots. And whatever of these must be from the Message *Rasul* (SAW) was witnessed to have conveyed to mankind and his example. The search for knowledge and guidance that is Right is therefore both a Must and Constant. And the use to which this knowledge and practice must be put must follow the following terms:

- Avoiding all that are Prohibited by Allah and *Rasul* (SAW).
- Engaging in all that are enjoined as Obligatory by Allah and *Rasul* (SAW).
- Preferring all that do NOT contradict any of the above two.
- Cautious about what is not clear or is doubtful.

This essentially instructs patience and perseverance through moderation. In all of our pursuits, we should advisedly seek optimal comfort to average or just above average levels. This will apply to for instance the type, size and cost of materials that we need, want or fancy for our own use or to sponsor for others. It will therefore be immodest to have a limousine for private use even if we can afford it and is legal. We will not require a living house with fifty rooms or on a land space of one square kilometer. The historical rationale of this is informed by the unavoidable fact that our ordinary needs, wants and fancies are always changing in their quantum, variety and quality of availability – given the continuous improvement of science and technology.

Amina *na*, anyone who strives for the best or all things unavoidably gets imprisoned or enslaved, by wasting time on a crave that is not in control or obsession for what is in hand. For instance, one who should be healthy, comfortable and thankful to Allah for not having a child as the choice of Allah will become helpless to oneself and to others on many other critical matters that he or she is capable of participating in. If it is in chase of enormous wealth on a fast track, cultism and the logical covenant for a seeming simply price will end up to be the source of self-undoing. The ambition to amass things does not save one from this imprisonment. The undefined love of a child or relation or spouse can be this chaining. And another way in which it can be expressed is by igniting and sustaining opposition or hatred for any person who is perceived to be the hurdle against such arresting attachment. And excessive collection of things is more unacceptable than serious self-denial because, the former has social implication of cutting on others' or igniting undesirable similar

ambition or jealousy. Thus, either way moderation is what is Islamic, healthy and safe. And the standard that defines it is KEEPING WITHIN THE RULES.

For those who strive to keep within what is assuredly right, they must be humble. In Hausa parlance, *BA A GADARA DA ALLAH*. Humility is the standard ethic. Thus we are reminded by Allah that we can neither break the earth crust by our confident stepping nor rise high to the sky for arrogance. This is why charity followed by announcement degrades its value and that charity that is given to the needy who do not ask is the best. In human relations, *Rasul* (SAW) was seen rising up to welcome his goodly in law Ali (RA). And he rose up in respect for the corpse of a fellow human being that was being carried by for burial. This is the ethical orientation for keeping within the rules of Allah and the guidance of *Rasul* (SAW).

With this orientation and life line, I can assure you that you can hope for the Mercy of Allah in the real life after this. You will be safe with and to every individual and group. You will achieve your goals above average. You will not regret or get frustrated by any or those things that you fail to achieve. You will be living in this world as if you will not die and always be in the readiness to answer the call of Allah. And you will get the good of this world, the hereafter and look up to safety from fire.

MY CAUTION AND ADVICE AGAINST COMMON TEMPTATIONS AND DIVERSIONS

Amina *kyautan Fatima*, the very first is against *Shirk*. The popular understanding is in reference to the experience of Ibrahim (AS). The idol worship that grew and developed between the times of Adam (AS) and Nuhu (AS). The type that *Rasul* (SAW) was specifically commanded to wage war against, which is not absent even today. But *shirk* covers every reference to anything that is compared to the holy attributes of Allah. It is worst, when the object or subject of reference is evil, regardless of whether it is living or dead. And if it is not evil, it is worse, if any superior power is attributed to it, beyond what can be scientific i.e. capable of being shared or transferred to anybody. For Allah has not restricted His favors to anybody. Thus taking a prescribed drug for treating a particular ailment is not necessarily *shirk*. Holding unto anybody along with the kind of claim to Lordship like Pharaoh is what is *shirk*. Any threat or luring that will have these kinds of ingredients Must be resisted, Regardless of how inviting it may be. And it is only on this issue and basis that *Iman* must constantly hang and be sustained or protected, defended or fought for. This is the Rope of Allah.

However, in the course of daily livelihood, you will find variations in different shades and of different weights. This is where the capacity of evaluation is required for protecting one's faith. You will recall the number of times you submitted, the attributes of Allah may be recited for making particular related pleas. In my reply I appreciated and informed you a

variant suggestion for the same pleas or even different ones. The number of times cannot qualify for igniting a war or separation between us, to the point of suggesting who remains in the fold of Islam and who is out. It may be an odd number; it may be an even number. It may be in single digit, in tens, in hundreds, in thousands or and admixture of these. Where this is advised with a particular time, it cannot be outside the general space and time that we live in. It can only begin to become an issue when a variation from any of the suggestions is ascribed the status of attracting sin. If this status is claimed, then it has been associated with the reserve of Allah. For, what distinguishes the field of Allah is that obliging His instruction as specifically defined earns reward and failure earns sin. Indeed where people decide to debate and fight over the rewards that they have neither knowledge nor capacity for its details, it is diversionary and wasteful, because it does not help *Iman*. This is the greatest challenge of our times that knowledge and our scholars have to constantly keep track of and in check.

Praise be to Allah and welcome beloved Amina.

AN EXPLANATION OF HOW MARRIAGE LIFE IS REQUIRED TO BE LIVED WELL?

Dear Ummi Amina.

Alhamdu liLahi you have asked a summary critical question that is most important in keeping a good society. The foundation of society is the family. And marriage is the only proper arrangement for establishing and building the family. The importance and rating of marriage and family is half of the religion or submission of each one of us to Allah, in Islam. It is also important because marriage has brought us together.

To start with, you are not totally blank or ignorant about marriage and family. This is because you have heard, shared and participated in numerous marriage and family related matters. Like the courtship between us has been crossed. The joining and the celebration of this have been crossed. And now we are making history. We are establishing and building our family together. So far it has been good because it has been more pleasant and satisfying than otherwise. We have crossed a lot of disagreements.

You are also very much aware of my specific conscious efforts in attending to this critical and important subject. On my website the section on LETTERS specifically lays out my orientation on marriage and family under the banner of some members of our family that have been addressed. And the particular one addressed to you is a fair exposition on *Tauhid* in marriage and the family. The materials on *Izala* and *Tariqa* further help to throw light on the basis of Islam for everything including marriage and family. And before the larger society or *ummah* that we both belong to, my immediate family members and your

immediate family members both serve as resource base for our learning and living what you have asked me to teach you.

Teaching you this desirable truth is of utmost importance because at the end of the day, each person shall be accountable for himself or herself. In Islam, it is not impossible for a husband to go to hell while the wife goes to paradise and vice versa. The very same applies in respect of siblings or between a child and a parent. What I am therefore going to do this time around is to repeat the foundation principle in Islam and relate it to real practical situations. I believe that this will help to lighten other practical situations when they arise, for serious attention and resolution. And I will try to draw from a cross section of the members in the relationship.

Dear Ummi Amina.

There are two clear paths for believers to follow, in Islam. There is the path of light as against the path of darkness. These are the path of righteousness as against the path of wrongdoing. Accordingly, the final destination is either paradise or hell fire. Although there is no middle path between what is right and what is wrong, Islam is on the middle level of the different levels of what are right. This means that all that are wrong are not to count. In other words, there is no room for wrongs that are manageable. This is the basis of the superiority of discarding matters that are doubtful or controversial. The Qur'an and *Sunnah* therefore guide to the right path by separating between what is right against what is wrong. The difference between what is of Allah and *Rasul* (SAW) against what is of Satan.

And the scale of measure or determination is the knowledge of what must be kept away from because Allah has forbidden it and what must be committed because Allah has instructed it. This is the first, primary or principal level. The second level consists of all that are recommended because authentic reports have it as haven been instructed, committed or not disallowed in the model livelihood of *Rasul* (SAW). And the third level is defined by the knowledge of all that do not contradict or come close to contradict the spheres of the first and second levels.

The consequence of this is that like any other aspect of life, marriage and the family are to be ruled by right knowledge of light already defined and established by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. And every other thing not specified can be admitted on the qualification of not contradicting either. The final distinction is that while the first level is characterized by allowing no option, between the second and third levels, the second is the level of superior options.

Dear Ummi Amina.

Before living in marriage according to Islam, the marriage or basis of the joining must be set right. The rules that must need be obliged include express consent of the parties that have such responsibility to give; a voluntary bearable gift from the man to the woman; sponsors representing both parties; and witnesses to contracting the marriage. A modest feast is also recommended.

The consent is expected to be based on the certification of the appropriateness of the two persons being joined together. This requires the approved knowledge of either party by both parties. For example, for believers, it is out of place for a non-Muslim man to ask for the hand of a Muslim woman. If the man asks, the woman or along with her family and relatives must decline acceptance. This does not require conviction because the rule belongs to the first level. If the man is a Muslim but is recognized as having no respect or commitment to the first level of rules like *salat* or fasting, consent cannot be given. If the man or woman was born out of wedlock a re-evaluation is necessitated before any responsible decision. This is the basis for permitting investigation on either party by both parties, because they can be totally unknown to each other. For instance, a fornicator and adulterer are most suitable to a similar character. Both parties and representatives of both parties need to satisfy themselves that the first line has not been compromised.

The gift that is required to be expressly specified for appreciating the granting of consent to the man must be established. While it may be given before the consummation of the marriage, it can be deferred. And it is best, when it is purely volunteered and bearably modest. If by any trickery or arrangement it is made to frustrate the upcoming of the joining to be witnessed, it amounts to obstructing the second level and in this particular case half of the religion. It is worse and therefore condemnable where Other things are introduced that sum up to make the possibility of the marriage uneasy and difficult, for a real smooth and pleasant take off of the union. Those who by so doing frustrate the path of Allah must surely await the earnings of self-imposed difficulties, loss of associated blessings and becoming answerable for such before Allah and *Rasul* (SAW) on the Day of Truth. But it is only for parents and guardians with inordinate greed, stack ignorance or both to worry.

You will appreciate that in these examples the prospective husband, the prospective wife, their families and relatives and friends all play some roles. But the ultimate factors that eventually determine what is righteous include a combination of knowledge and discipline. Knowledge and discipline constantly define the orientation of believers, who are true and sincere in faith. And the main responsibility lies in the hand or on the head of parents or guardians and then the authorities if they fail or insist on what is not right. Where both parents and authorities are nonchalant, righteousness may be achieved by only some chance or gamble.

Dear Ummi Amina.

After marriage, there is an enforced opportunity by the members to build on the two principal principles for livelihood as believers. The first is defined by Allah's revealed purpose for creating us. We are informed and believe that we have not been created for fun but to worship/serve Allah. This is the primary goal and commitment that we must not lose sight of if we desire to succeed. This clearly means that the two parties are to ensure more than for the requirement of only one person, to oblige what have been commanded and to distance, avoid and reject what have been prohibited or forbidden. This pedestal guarantees reward on both sides but with recorded sin for actual commission of the wrong, intentionally. When you intend and commit good you get rewarded like when you intend doing wrong and decline to commit it. In this affair of Allah, both parties shall better learn to be pleased or parting ways shall be considered because it is not to be compromised. Like being a believer is the foundation, *salat*, fasting, zakat shall not be compromised. In sexual relationship the anus must be avoided or having sex during menstrual flow. In self-beautification by the wife, changing her form by for example tattooing is not condonable. Prosperity with *Riba* is not for Allah etc. etc. etc. The immediate implication of this requirement is that both parties must continuously strive in the knowledge of Allah by what He instructs and the limits He has set, for living on or by it. It is the combination of this knowledge and compliance that is worship/service, for which we are created for.

The first and best level for such acquisition is from a learned leader. This is a scholar that lives according to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. It is here assumed that the different parents of the two parties had reasonably educated and disciplined the parties in this same orientation. This is the basic foundation for learning from authentic books, by reading and evaluating, to admit what is consistent with what had been taught. To be sure, learning from forums, organizations or movements is very secondary, superior to learning from radio and television. The most risky and weakest source of starting is the internet. The safety catch is the guidance of a living learned leader. This is the link to the truth revealed in the Qur'an and the model livelihood of *Rasul* (SAW). This is the link to the approved examples by the four guided caliphs and the *tabi'uun*. This is the link with the learned who live rightly as successors in the tradition of *Rasul* (SAW).

Marriage life must be oriented by the right knowledge and living the very same as much as possible in keeping within the rules and outside limitations. This is achieved by the combination of practical intent or deliberate consciousness and enjoyment of the real commitment in compliance. This is because there is no compulsion in Islam. And with Allah this is opportune for building with supererogatory acts. Thus for example *Salat* has just like fasting, charity or hajj. The essence and ultimate goal is for an individual believer/worshipper/slave to feel and transform into an identity that makes the state of

worship/service normal. And the effect is that the state of godliness becomes a power that repels what is evil and doubtful. This is why one of the benefits of performing *salat* is keeping away from evil. This is the root of the tradition that whoever walks towards Allah, He will run towards him, until they meet and the slave transforms to doing as Allah wills. This implies that the behavioural identity of each and both members will melt into what Allah directs. They will not find burden or displeasure in what Allah has chosen for them. They will constantly be in compliance without hesitation like the believers who turned to *Ka'aba* when they were asked to change from turning to Jerusalem in *salat*.

Dear Ummi Amina.

The second and final but related principle is defined by the best summary prayer Allah has taught believers. To ask and strive for the good in this life, the good in the hereafter and ultimate safety from the fire. The implication of this is that obedience to Allah which must not be contradicted can best be first supported by the best example we have been favoured with in the life of *Rasul* (SAW). For example, *Rasul* (SAW) had one wife in the beginning. *Rasul* (SAW) was instructed and permitted up to nine wives but limited to four for believers. *Rasul* (SAW) had male and female children and some died. *Rasul* (SAW) had beloved Aisha who did not bear a child. Between these, it is clear and comfortable to marry a woman older than or younger than a man. It is as much of the blessed choice of Allah to bestow a child in a marriage or not, because the marriage tie of each woman with her husband is independent of that of another. It is also clear that there is no gender superiority between the male and the female. It is also clear that the privacy of each wife as well as the privacy of the relationship between the husband and each wife is required even in the larger family relationship. It is also clear that mischief or pleasing self or another against what Allah has decided is ungodly. The superiority of marriage is also clear from the respect *Rasul* (SAW) accorded Ali and the instructions of *Rasul* (SAW) to Fatima on obedience to her husband. From the above alone, it can be appreciated that homosexuals, lesbians, oral sex, anal sex, making polygamy illegal, making monogamy a rule, premarital sex, marital crisis because of child bearing, gender preference are all serious abnormalities, contradictions and abuse.

Marriage that is a matter of recommended choice is in addition to the five pillars of Islam for practice. *Rasul* (SAW) performed the five obligatory daily prayers and also performed several forms of non-obligatory *salat* including specific *salat* for specific circumstances like asking for rain, in the experience of an eclipse, to calm down from anger, against a trial etc. etc. *Rasul* (SAW) observed the fasting in the month of Ramadan and non-obligatory ones in several other months. *Rasul* (SAW) was generous by gifts and charity and performed pilgrimage. He was full of gratitude to Allah. His wife Nana Aisha had expressed concern over his night prayers when his feet were getting affected. He advised that it was

in gratitude to Allah. *Rasul* (SAW) was constant in asking for the forgiveness of Allah. And he taught his daughter Fatima the superiority of glorifying Allah over the helping hand of a slave.

These matters that are the pivotal standards for worship, belonging to Allah alone are neither negotiable nor required in extreme terms. That is why on an occasion when a believer asked *Rasul* (SAW) if he could hope for admission into paradise if he stuck to only the obligatory, *Rasul* (SAW) promised him, as a guarantee. On another occasion, a believer asked if he could divorce his wife so that he can live by *salat* and fasting, he was discouraged because his physical body has the right to rest and his wife has the rights of his responsibilities on him. But he had also pointed out that the greatest fasting is like that of Dawud, who fasted every other day. Therefore the solid foundation for building a meritorious and fulfilling marital life by a believer rests on the knowledge of Islam and following the footsteps of *Rasul* (SAW). Through this the Qur'an and *Sunnah* will light the right and middle path to follow and the couple or any party in the marriage will be enveloped in it. This is the step and level that is inexcusable for every and all believers. This is the *Tariqa* of every believer that necessitates *Izala* and not one in isolation or opposition of the other.

Dear Ummi Amina.

With a life orientation based on the above, between the husband and the wife the evaluation of any matter in life should be fairly easy - if it is to be for the sake of Allah and as guided by *Rasul* (SAW). One example in marriage is the subject of child bearing. It is unacceptable to have anybody giving any of the party or both members the instruction to produce grandchildren, just like it is an unwelcome instruction between the two. What is admissible is the prayer for such blessing. Thus, there is nothing forbidding ardent prayer for a child. However when deliberate efforts in that direction begins to assume the principal position of the purpose of the marriage, it is unfortunate. A child is a gift and temporary trust of Allah. Allah has not promised that those with such trial are necessarily superior to those who are spared. Indeed, there is no promise that even good marriages will necessarily produce good children. Those who are so possessive as to aspire to have their office, wealth or knowledge secured by succession or inheritance by their own, forget that, that is better asked for from the owner of all things. And those who have faith and learnt from *Rasul* (SAW) know that after prayer, sincere believers submit to whatsoever Allah offers. Going for artificial insemination will therefore be extremely odd.

This means that a couple may decide to commit all its time, knowledge and resources to getting a child. It will be like asking Allah to avenge for doing you wrong for as long as it will take to manifest, even if it will be for the remaining days you will live. What is common

to the two is that none is illegal. The first appears to be positive while the second appears to be negative. But both are a waste of time and diversion from raising to optimal godliness or building the blocks of compliance on matters that are rewarding and uplifting. How can any of these compare with a couple that ask and thereafter focus on asking for forgiveness, sending salutations to *Rasul* (SAW) and glorification of Allah? How can they compare with the couple that turns to learning and teaching, to spread the word of Allah? How can they compare with the couple that asks, leaves the decision to Allah and focuses on charity activities for the good of humanity?

Another example in marriage is that of living the lives of your immediate relations. Any party or couple that has no reference but their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters or such relatives or the children of these, is not likely to get the better in marriage. Indeed the party or couple is capable of degenerating to tradition and culture. This is a diversion from the unity of Allah that must remain as the constant goal. And the basis of this are two. The first is that we are created to find and focus on Allah. This is why Allah reminds us that *Rasul* (SAW) is not the father of any one of us but a Warner and bearer of Good tidings. *Rasul* (SAW) is the first and greatest in knowledge and submission. The second is that believers are one body. The best are those who fear Him most. And from among them, the successors of *Rasul* (SAW) are the scholars. If then the relation is not in this class, it will be wasteful to turn to any beyond the basic rights of respect and support, within the limits of *Shari'ah*. It should be embarrassing to have relations that do not bear above attribute as source of pleasure more than Allah and *Rasul* (SAW) - by regular turning. In addition to such being irregular, it wastes the opportunity for godliness and has the risk of promoting what is inconsequential or what is doubtful or even wrong.

Yet another example in marriage is that of spending most of the time and opportunity to acquisition of the good things of life. Good housing. Good clothing. Good looks. Good cars. Good furniture. Good feeding. The trap here is that these provisions are constantly subject to improvements. If you therefore fail in controlling contentment you will spend all of your life chasing them. They are not illegal or can be within the bounds of the things permissible, but they are surely LOWLY. The windows and path to getting close to Allah is cheap or free for all. And that is the best platform for competing. The requirements for this are sanity, good health, knowledge and compliance. Where and when Allah focusing is not obstructed for self and it is for others, it may be wasteful and tend towards harm if not checked. This is the definition of boxes, elaborate ceremonies in marriage beyond what can be easily bored. All sorts of birthday or anniversary ceremonies and the content of these. The time and resources committed beyond what is modest for the bearer is a thing to be frowned at. The implication from these examples is that an individual believer or a couple must be conscious and protective of what they use their time for. While they must avoid wasting it,

the more they avoid those channels that are prone to attending to doubtful things, the safer they are from outrightly illegal things. We must be conscious of the fact that our investments with Allah critically depends on the unknown length of time granted us checkered with falling ill and aging before death.

Dear Umami Amina.

Beyond committing our utmost individual or family time to principal and specific affairs of Allah, there is the window for the group or the collective. Islam is not against relatives or relations of either party or both parties. The limitation is that beyond rights, where they can come first, they have others like the immediate categories of the neighbourhood of the couple, the *ummah* and humanity at large to be part of. The answer of Islam is selfless commitment in any chosen direction for the safety of all. This is defined by Justice and fairness in all affairs relating to family relations. Closeness to a party or the couple cannot be a criterion for who is right or first. Age superiority cannot come first in considering matters of right entitlement. Knowledge and consistent right conduct must be the first and principal determinant of the relationship with all members. The best opportunity for such training is in a polygamous family setting where a common leadership is legally in place. The different and even contradictory relationships will generate the necessity for quality evaluation and resolution, according to the terms admissible by Allah and *Rasul* (SAW).

One example is in respect of sticking to Allah first. Thus any member or number of members, who degrades, abandons, adjusts or abuses any decision of Allah must not be spared every possible sanction. And others shall be encouraged to keep away and dissociate themselves from the same. A fornicator or adulterer, a thief or a liar must not be condoned. Another example is in respect of commendable things as done by *Rasul* (SAW). Members who engage in non-obligatory *salat* or fasting should be expressly commended or appreciated, second to only those who strive in the acquisition of religious knowledge. While everyone should find it attractive and respectful, those who do not, deserve to be looked down upon.

And the other area consists of resolving disagreements or faults that do not warrant outright sanctions. For example while seniors should try to do the right things most of the time, when they fail like in offending juniors, they should be able and be encouraged to apologize. This is a greater trial to the apology of a junior that is often obliged. The practice and livelihood based on equal application of the laws of Allah, the popular commendation of the traditions of *Rasul* (SAW) and give and take by forgiveness for mistakes is the summary standard for marriage and the family in Islam. These circumstances are what build a husband as a leader. This is how the family is the foundation of society and humanity by reproducing itself. This is the basis of the true guide that the best woman for

marriage is the one learned in religion and living it. This is the basis for seeking for the probable best mother for the children. This is the basis for the probable implication that if a woman is educated, the family is safe. This is the difference between the application to women even though some are shared with men. Islam is not built on ignorance or dark traditions that have no connection with the light and bearing of Allah and *Rasul* (SAW).

Dear Ummi Amina.

The principle and orientation of selflessness that is best opportune in a polygamous family setting is what is required for projection in the larger society for the good of all. At this level, the contentment restrictions for personal and immediate comfort are permitted to be explored and pursued to the utmost. This is how economic activities are admitted for optimal productivity, for the general good. This creates wealth and surpluses that should be reinvested and for charity. As this happens, attendant political and judicial structures and procedures become ripe for implementing and even adding to what are already expressly available for guidance. In a society where any individual, group or family leads or monopolises the affairs of politics, economy and society that is not based on right knowledge, the historical process of the people will be twisted to self-suffocation even when more than the ordinary needs, wants and fancies of all the people are produced. There will be shortage of Justice and fairness. You can therefore only imagine the injection into this standard an arrangement where a family or a group of specific families continue to hold claim to political or economic leadership at the detriment of right knowledge. What more if the personality or some of them who become so opportune, were products out of wedlock? This highlights the challenges of the *Ummah* in respect of Marriage and the Family, the foundation for a better society.