

THE TARIQA OF SIRATAL MUSTAQEEM



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INTRODUCTION

The essence of creating Man and Jinn is to worship Allah. However, for worship to be valid, it has to be done in accordance with prescribed laws, rules and regulations. In Islam, this is no more than the five pillars of Islam, namely: *Iman* (declaration of Faith), *Salat* (prayer), *Zakat* (poor due), *Sawm* (fasting) and *Hajj* (pilgrimage). It should be noted that adherence to these five pillars not only enhances the spiritual well-being of a Muslim, but also cultivates praiseworthy qualities like patience, punctuality, selflessness, modesty, and so on which are the building blocks for a peaceful and developed society. That is why Islam is referred to as a complete way of life. Thus, the *Tariqa* (path) of Islam is the observance of these five pillars according to one's ability. Be that as it may, a Muslim is not immune to fear, trials or struggles in the course of treading this *Tariqa*, as these are not obstacles but tests which when passed increases one's *Iman* and trust in Allah. Consequently, ultimate success is attained if a Muslim happens to die while on this *Tariqa*.

The second part of this book emphasizes that polygamy is the yardstick for good and just leadership. In other words, a person who has only one wife is not likely to be a just leader. The reason is simple. In a polygamous family, the man (who is the head) experiences first-hand the problems of dealing with wives and children who have different behaviours and ways of thinking. Given that such a family is a sample, subset or reflection of the society, the ability to overcome this challenge by being fair and just to all members can easily be replicated when given position of authority in a larger set up. Therefore, anyone who aspires to be a leader should use polygamy as a litmus test.

The concluding part discusses the nothingness of man and his struggles to minimize pain and maximize pleasure in this world with no limitation. However, for believers – those on this *Tariqa*, Allah has put in place boundaries so as to guard against excesses. These are limitations in terms of food, clothes, sex, etc.; sharing of surplus wealth and forgiveness. Despite this restricted freedom (poverty), believers enjoy their lives to the fullest and are promised a better and eternal livelihood in the hereafter provided they live and die on this *Tariqa*.

Muhammad Imran Muhammad

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICIENT, THE MERCIFUL

THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE UNSEEN

Belief in what is seen is common and easily the most influential sense for witnessing of things, matters or events. But those who fail or refuse to transcend this level can degenerate to the foolishness defined by Seeing is Believing. The worst level will be defined by seeing Directly. The lesser level may be characterized by believing, on seeing the effect of what is not seen, by touching or feeling. For example, an irrational person will not believe in harmfulness of snake bite on advice or knowledge. This person will have to be bitten by a snake before believing. A variety of this kind of person is the one who begins to believe only after seeing the person bitten by the snake or feeling for the pain of the person bitten by the snake.

Another example is that of commencing Ramadan fast only on self witness or sect member. However, it does not mean that what is not seen is necessarily and always false, untrue or unreal. For example bacteria and viruses are not seen by all except by use of special facilities, by some people. Another example is that, the least number of people now living, saw the World Wars I and II alive or in process. But we all believe it because the information was transmitted to us by participants or show of the relics. These even have Museums dedicated to them.

Muslims Believe in Allah and know Him through His revealed attributes that are of Absolute essence. He is therefore One and the Only One that is Real. For that reason, it is contradictory to associate Him with anything or anyone. Logically, All Things and Matters originate from Him, Belong to Him and Return to Him. The foundation of all these rests on our real knowledge and experience of Muhammad (SAW), who ascended to Him through the heavens, bore His message and passed it unto us by living according to it, on absolute Guidance.

Who believe in the Unseen,
Are steadfast in prayer,
And spend out of what We
Have provided for them;

And who believe in the Revelation
Sent to thee,
And sent before thy time,

And (in their hearts)
Have the assurance of the
Hereafter.

They are on (true) guidance,
From their Lord, and it is
These who will prosper.

Qur'an 2:3 – 5

So, Muslims are those who believe in this Truth, this Reality, seek and build on this knowledge by optimal commitment as a way of life.

THE NATURE OF A BELIEVER'S CHALLENGES

With the pivotal basis of *Iman* resting on *Kalimatu Shahadah*, Allah (SWT) is the Beginning, the through-fare and the absolute end, for focus and commitment.

Say: He is Allah,
The One and Only;

Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;

He begeth not,
Nor is He begotten;

And there is none
Like unto Him.

Qur'an 112:1 – 4

But the grace in this lies in our striving with only utmost effort. This graceful limitation is revealed through Ibrahim (AS) and Musa (AS).

Behold! Abraham said:
"My Lord! Show me how
Thou givest life to the dead."
He said: "Dost thou not
Then believe?" He said:
"Yea! But to satisfy

My own understanding."
He said: "Take four birds;
Tame them to turn to thee;
Put a portion of them
On every hill, and call to them:
They will come to thee
(Flying) with speed.
Then know that Allah
Is Exalted in Power, Wise."

Qur'an 2:260

When Moses came
To the place appointed by Us,
And His Lord addressed him,
He said: "O my Lord!
Show (Thyself) to me,
That I may look upon thee."
Allah said: "By no means
Canst thou see me (direct);
But look upon the mount;
If it abide
In its place, then
Shalt thou see Me."
When his Lord manifested
His glory on the Mount,
He made it dust.
And Moses fell down
In a swoon. When he
Recovered his senses he said:
"Glory be to Thee! To Thee
I turn in repentance, and I
Am the first to believe."

Qur'an 7:143

The same objective of these two model believers is what is granted to *Rasul* (SAW) and the Believers by Allah, by repetition of some Verses and Stories in the Qur'an, IN ORDER THAT OUR IMAN MAY BE STRENGTHENED. And to emphasize the needed focus and commitment Allah expressly revealed that:

Not for (idle) sport did We
Create the heavens and the earth
And all that is between!

Qur'an 21:16

If it had been Our wish
To take (just) a pastime,
We should surely have taken
It from the things nearest
To Us, if We would
Do (such a thing)!

Qur'an 21:17

I have only created
Jinn and men, that
They may serve Me.

Qur'an 51:56

After recognizing this platform, on submission, the satisfaction of the Historical needs, wants and fancies will now be the real challenge. Whatever these are, they must neither be self destructive nor contradict the Unity of Allah. And the compassion of Allah comes handy, by recognizing believers as those who make a twin strive:

"Our Lord! Give us
Good in this world
And good in the Hereafter,
And defend us
From the torment
Of the Fire!"

To these will be allotted
What they have earned;
And Allah is quick in account.

Qur'an 2:201 - 202

Deliberate strive to make things happen, to make ends meet, to realize historical goals, means, objectives are therefore not necessarily out of the concern of a believer or believers in Allah and following the best example laid by *Rasul* (SAW).

This historical strive that is to be to the utmost, will Last for as long as Allah allows. And we are cautioned that it will be towards the Best, which has passed. In other words, the best times, opportunities, generations, examples have set the standards. With passing time, ours is to strive accordingly as things get worse, till the worst conditions justify the folding up of this entire Here and Now.

Every soul shall have
A taste of death:
And only on the Day
Of Judgement shall you
Be paid your full recompense.
Only he who is saved
Far from the Fire
And admitted to the Garden
Will have attained
The object (of life):
For the life of this world
Is but goods and chattels
Of deception.

Qur'an 3:185

All that is on earth
Will perish:

But will abide (for ever)
The Face of thy Lord,
Full of Majesty,
Bounty and Honor.

Qur'an 55:26 - 27

Intelligent or wise believers therefore consciously strive in preparation for death and all the good things that can follow, to eternal bliss, by the *Rahma* of Allah. They specifically live this transient life as travelers. For the term appointed.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF HOLDING FIRM UNTO ALLAH

The satisfaction of the challenges of a believer's needs, wants and fancies rests squarely on ABILITY, the POWER to make possible or realize Whatever needs, wants or fancies, in any circumstance and at any time, wheresoever. The Only source of this that is Allah is revealed to be of twin characteristics. The first is defined by TOTAL SUBMISSION by inevitability or without choice.

Whatever beings there are
In the heavens and the earth
Do prostrate themselves to Allah
(Acknowledging subjection), with good will
Or in spite of themselves:
So do their shadows
In the morning and evenings.

Qur'an 13:15

The seven heavens and the earth,
And all beings therein,
Declare His glory:
There is not a thing
But celebrates His praise;
And yet ye understand not
How they declare His glory!

Qur'an 17:44

An instructive case is the experience of Musa (AS). When the men of Pharaoh and those of Musa (AS) came in view of each other, and the sea before Musa (AS), he only submitted and put all his trust in Allah. He was inspired to strike the sea with his rod. "So it divided, and each separate part became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain." (Qur'an 26:64). Allah made the other party to follow. They were drowned, whereas Musa (AS) and all who were with him were delivered.

The people of Lot (AS) who hated cleanliness were showered with a rain of brimstone. But Lot (AS) and his family (excepting his hypocritical wife) were saved. And the strong headed people of Nuh (AS) threatened to kill

him, over and above their heedlessness. He pleaded with Allah to judge between them, openly. He was delivered along with those creatures with him, in the Ark. All the others were drowned to death.

The second characteristic of this Ability and Power of Allah that informs the submission of a believer is defined by the Ultimate choice resting with Allah, in respect of those creations of His, he has granted the option or freedom of Choice.

What Allah out of His Mercy
Doth bestow on mankind
There is none can withhold:
What He doth withhold,
There is none can grant,
Apart from Him:
And He is the Exalted
In Power, full of Wisdom.

Qur'an 35:2

O men! Here is
A parable set forth!
Listen to it! Those
On whom, besides Allah,
Ye call, cannot create
(Even) a fly, if they all
Met together for the purpose!
And if the fly should snatch
Away anything from them,
They would have no power
To release it from the fly.
Feeble are those who petition
And those whom they petition!

Qur'an 22:73

One enlightening example of this for reference is Allah's grant of respite to *Iblis* and the undertaking by *Iblis* to Allah, that he will make WRONG fair-seeming to mankind. The objective of this, is to gather disobedience against true submission to the Unity of Allah (Qur'an 15:39). But he immediately

admitted: "Except Thy servants among them, sincere and purified (by Thy Grace)." (Qur'an15:40)

Another example is in respect of Musa (AS). The magicians of Pharaoh challenged Musa (AS) with their ropes and rods that appeared as live snakes. (Qur'an 20:6). Indeed Musa (AS) was baffled, but Allah assured him that, success was to be his. He then threw his own blessed rod. It turned into a snake like creature and swallowed all the fake items of the magicians. The magicians fell down in prostration and declared "We believe in The Lord of Haroun and Musa." (Qur'an 20:70)

These characteristics of the Ability and Power of Allah are further revealed in His doing as He Pleases. This is because all matters return to him for decision. He asks and is not to be questioned. One example is the encounter between Musa (AS) and Khidr. Musa (AS) learnt through some patience that actions that ordinarily would have been disapproved were consistent with purity and sincere submission to Allah. Thus, the scuttling of a sailing boat, the young man that was slewed and setting up of a falling wall were not inconsistent with *Shari'ah*. Allah granted Khidr a knowledge that was unknown to Musa (AS), who communicates with Allah (Qur'an 18:78 – 82).

Allah chose to create a vicegerent on earth. The Angels expressed their fear of his contradicting the Goodness in the Unity of Allah. But Allah knew what they did not know. He taught Adam the nature of things and asked the Angels to explain. They failed and Adam obliged. The Angels submitted by admitting their ignorance. In addition, Allah who made Jerusalem *qibla* changed it to the sacred mosque of *Makkah*. He brought about Adam from clay, Hauwa'u from his rib, breathed his *ruh* into Maryam for Isa and all others through sex, conception and delivery. And:

See how We have bestowed
More on some than on others:
But verily the Hereafter
Is more in rank and gradation
And more in excellence

Qur'an 17:21

Therefore,

To Allah belong all things
In heaven and earth: verily

Allah is He (that is)
Free of all wants,
Worthy of all praise.

Qur'an 31:26

To Allah belong the East and
The West: whithersoever ye turn,
There is the presence of Allah ...

Qur'an 2:115

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A BELIVER'S UNFLINCHING SUBMISSION TO ALLAH

The first is defined by the necessary environment for all of mankind, without exception, that will enable the compliance of all, if we choose to, because there is no compulsion in the religion of Islam. This is by Allah:

Who hath created
And further, given
Order and proportion.

Qur'an 87:2

The second is defined by the laws, rules and regulations for sustenance and the elastic development of these. These are by Allah:

Who hath ordained laws
And granted guidance.

Qur'an 87:3

And such as Allah doth
Guide there can be
None to lead astray.
Is not Allah Exalted
In Power, (Able to enforce
His Will), Lord of Retribution?

Qur'an 39:37

If Allah had willed,
He could have guided all of you.

Qur'an 16:9

With the environment and the rules, the required orientation is accordingly expressly defined, for sincere and straight believers.

It is not fitting
For a believer, man or woman,
When a matter has been decided
By Allah and His Messenger,
To have any option
About their decision:
If any one disobeys Allah
And His Messenger, he is indeed
On a clearly wrong Path.

Qur'an 33:36

THE ESSENCE OF THE *TARIQA*

This rests comfortably on the recognition, admission and commitment to struggling, to striving, as long as one lives and to the best of one's ability, according to true knowledge and the best example.

Verily We have created
Man into toil and struggle.

Qur'an 90:4

Do men think that
They will be left alone
On saying: "We believe,"
And that they will not
Be tested?

Qur'an 29:2

Allah will not leave

The believers in the state
In which ye are now,
Until He separates
What is evil
From what is good.

Qur'an 3:179

Nay, We hurl the Truth
Against falsehood, and it knocks
Out its brain, and behold.
Falsehood doth perish!

Qur'an 21:18

Without such (trials)
As came to those
Who passed away
Before you?
They encountered
Suffering and adversity
And were so shaken in spirit
That even the Apostle
And those of faith
Who were with him
Cried: "When (will come)
The help of Allah?"
Ah! Verily, the help of Allah
Is (always) near!

Qur'an 2:214

THE METHOD IN THE *TARIQA*

Those who believe will not be tested with, on or by means that may not necessarily have meaningful impact on them, that are peripheral, optional or casual to them, like sharing of Jokes, Games, Entertainment or Ceremonies.

Be sure We shall test you
With something of fear
And hunger, some loss
In goods or lives or the fruits
(Of your toil), but give
Glad tidings to those
Who patiently persevere.

Qur'an 2:155

And fear tumult or oppression,
Which affecteth not in particular
(Only) those of you who do wrong:
And know that Allah
Is strict in punishment.

Qur'an 8:25

A frightening case was in respect of the *Sahaba*, who were reminded, enjoined and warned at the same time on How to stick on the course:

Fighting is prescribed
For you, and ye dislike it.
But it is possible
That ye dislike a thing
Which is good for you,
And that ye love a thing
Which is bad for you.
But Allah knoweth,
And ye know not.

Qur'an 2:216

SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE

This is an absolute assurance. All provisions are by Allah. We shall all taste of death. Life after death is the final reality. Our life is the most precious to us. And Allah has the absolute right to ask for its service or sacrifice. It is therefore the best case of example, since all matters return to him for decision.

Think not of those
Who are slain in Allah's way

As dead. Nay, they live,
Finding their sustenance
In the Presence of their Lord.

Qur'an 3:116

Accordingly,

For those whose hopes are
In the meeting with Allah
(In the Hereafter, let them strive);
For the Term (appointed)
By Allah is surely:
And He hears and knows
(All things).

And if any strive (with might
And main), they do so
For their own souls:
For Allah is free of all
Needs from all creation.

Qur'an 29:5 - 6

LIVING THROUGH THIS *TARIQA* BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE

The first and head of the basis is BELIEFS as required of a Muslim and submitting one's total livelihood according to the Guidance by Allah, lived by *Rasul* (SAW) and without contradicting them. This foundation requires as a matter of necessity KNOWLEDGE of the Guidance. This consists of those things that have to be self obliged and those things to determine all other obligations or desires by self and in respect of others. For example, the knowledge of self purification and *salat* are matters of individual responsibility. Unlike this, the knowledge of medicine is not a necessary requirement on every individual. However the terms for the learning and practice of medicine must not abuse the general determinant standards. And the knowledge of these is encouraged to be common. These cover the limits of Allah that are not negotiable, because where there is an instruction, compliance is necessary and rewarded. Non compliance, avoidance or abuse is subject to sanction and a sin. Then follows what is commendable from the tradition of *Rasul* (SAW). Compliance is rewarding, even though ignoring it does not attract sanction, except it is abused. And of

course the freedom zone that must not abuse any of the above. These may accordingly be a matter of choice and desire that may be discomforting to another person. Blanket ignorance is therefore not a part of Islamic livelihood. This is what makes it instructive to continue to pass right knowledge and practice from one person to another and from one generation to another. *Rasul* (SAW) accordingly enjoined those who were present at his last sermon to pass what they witnessed to any and all of those that were not opportune to the present. The kernel of that sermon is to hold on to Allah and the example he had lived.

It is not fitting
For a Believer, man or woman,
When a matter has been decided
By Allah and His Apostle,
To have any option
About their decision:
If any one disobeys Allah
And His Apostle, he is indeed
On a clearly wrong Path.

Qur'an 33:36

But those who disobey
Allah and His Apostle
And transgress His limits
Will be admitted
To a Fire, to abide therein:
And they shall have
A humiliating punishment.

Qur'an 4:14

The second that is practically the first in the *TARIQA* is keeping in constant direct touch with Allah. This is realized through Prescribed *Salat* and the peak of this is opportune by Hajj, which is to be performed once in a life time by those who have the means. This is because He is responsible for all that are obvious to us and those matters that do not appear to be obvious to us. Guidance and success do not rest solely on our efforts alone that cannot be perfect. Keeping in constant touch gives us the ample opportunity for making PLEAS, for forgiveness, for His pleasure, for His guidance, for His acceptance, through our strives to meet our permissible Needs, Wants and Fancies.

And establish regular prayers
At the two ends of the day
And at the approaches of the night:
For those things that are good
Remove those that are evil:
Be that the word of remembrance
To those who remember
(their Lord).

Qur'an 11:114

Establish regular prayers
At the sun's decline
Till the darkness of the night,
And the morning prayer

And pray in the small watches
Of the morning: (it would be)
An additional prayer
(Or spiritual profit)
For thee:

Qur'an 17:78 - 79

This is absolutely necessary because it is NOT enough to Believe. And we cannot be helpful to one another in the matter of final success. Thus *Rasul* (SAW) was sent only to deliver His message, guidance rests with Allah.

If thou art anxious
For their guidance, yet
Allah guideth not such
As He leaves to stray,
And there is none
To help them.

Qur'an 16:37

Those who behave arrogantly
On the earth in defiance
Of right - them will I
Turn away from My signs:
Even if they see all the signs,

They will not believe in them;
And if they see the way
Of right conduct, they will
Not adopt it as the way;
But if they see the way
Of error, that is
The way they will adopt.
For they have rejected
Our signs, and failed
To take warning from them.

Qur'an 7:146

The third that is the required Orientation or disposition is learned through Fasting and Charity. It is the combination of Patience and Perseverance. These are experienced in relation to either what we are used to or what we possess and continue to build on or want to increase. These two institutional practices enable us to defer the time of satisfaction and to share in what we properly possess. In between is the necessary development of modesty and humility, for ourselves and in relation to others.

O ye who believe! Seek help
With patient Perseverance
And Prayer: for Allah is with those
Who patiently persevere.

Qur'an 2:153

Nor strain thine eyes in longing
For the things We have given
For enjoyment to parties
Of them, the splendor
Of the life of this world,
Through which We test them:
But the provision of thy Lord
Is better and more enduring.

Qur'an 20:131

And to be firm and patient,
In pain (or suffering)
And adversity,

And throughout
All periods of panic.
Such are the people
Of truth, the God-fearing.

Qur'an 2:177

HIGHLIGHTS IN RELATION TO THE FIVE PILLERS

IMAN – THE DECLARATION OF FAITH

In the day to day livelihood of believers, *Iman* that compels right knowledge makes it mandatory that the knowledge of the Qur'an and *Hadith* along with their application in changing circumstances and generations is both an individual and collective responsibility. With respect to religious knowledge that will enable right submission and right evaluation of not strictly religious activities, there is the challenge of EDUCATION. This consists of learning and right experience through teaching and participation. This is why no Messenger of Allah asked for any fee for such. The consistent invitation has been to the knowledge of the Truth and goodly Conduct, for the safety of oneself and the collective, as it pleases Allah.

He granteth wisdom
To whom He pleaseth;
And he to whom wisdom
Is granted receiveth
Indeed a benefit overflowing;
But none will grasp the Message
But men of understanding.

Qur'an 2:269

In this respect, the BEST relationship that will enable this is on one to one terms. This is what makes the initial teaching and consequently, moulding of a child by the parents very instructive and critical. The beginning of the crises of this responsibility of the faithfuls is where the parents are themselves ignorant. This gap is for the parents, relations, neighbors, community and authorities to Ensure, is filled as quickly as possible. Even unbelievers assert that: if you think education is expensive, try ignorance. Below the best is the BETTER relationship for this education. This can be gotten between a Teacher and more than one learner. This is also possible in a family with more than one child. It is superb in a polygamy, where the

teaching will necessarily be opportune by a mother, another mother(s) and a father. Following this will be where the teacher is not a direct member of the immediate family. Formal schools are the monetized form in which we commonly have them today. This level of education is essentially characterized by learning from a teacher who doubles as a model. The hopeless principle of: doing as I say and not as I do, is unacceptable. In other words formal Certification is not in the criteria for *Iman*, making a Muslim or Islamic Education. Least still, it cannot be meaningfully achieved by principal reliance on ad hoc contact, through lectures or sermon, if the best and better foundations are absent or poor. Accordingly, learning first from radio, tapes, television, computer and the internet is poor and can be risky.

Without these, primary reliance on self study by books is only GOOD. The relationship between the three is that, the *Ummah* should strive to mill members through the three levels effectively and properly in the order of availing the Best level first, before the Better and then the Good. The body of knowledge that will enable this as well as opportunities for them OUGHT TO BE FREE, WITHOUT FEE. The more, a family, a community, society or authorities fail in this, the weaker the REQUIREMENT IN THE FULFILLMENT OF IMAN IN THAT ENVIRONMENT. And the parents, along with the leaders are squarely answerable. And the first yardstick for measuring failure or success is defined by Free and Effortless Access and Opportunity by ALL, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

This translates to admitting that the number, types and sizes of formal Islamic schools as we have them, for children and adolescents do not necessarily boost the *Iman* of the Muslim children and consequently that of the society. Price tags and profiteering in any guise goes a long way to color this responsibility arising from *Iman*. Believers cannot become the best among Mankind, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, without *Iman* or the knowledge that will sustain it through day to day historical experiences. It is therefore a check of *Iman* for the well to do Muslims and leaders, where Education is not Free for Muslims and all, at the levels we now classify as primary to post primary. And it is shameful for Muslim families who first and largely rely on contractual arrangements for the first education of their children. It is therefore most unpleasant to have a crises ridden educational machinery and system where Muslims have the opportunity to participate and lead it. The simple logic is that the set up implications of the Necessary lower level determines the cost of Others.

By interpretation, what Allah and His Messenger have decided on, is being obstructed by machineries and processes that cut on the value or benefit and free flow of religious education, with Muslims or by Muslims in high and active participation. In other words, conditions, terms, affairs and matters that are not out rightly prohibited have been made and become the MEANS to what Allah and His Messenger have made mandatory. Thus the present and contemporary challenge of Muslim Scholars, Muslims in positions of Leadership, Wealthy Muslims and Muslim parents, is to visit this matter of Education with the serious commitment it deserves, for the benefit of Mankind. We cannot claim to sincerely believe and wallow in this ignorance and oppression on ourselves and non-Muslims. *Rasul* (SAW) was specifically excused:

Or is it that thou
Askest them for some
Recompense? But the recompense
Of thy Lord is best:
He is the Best of those
Who give sustenance.

Qur'an 23:72

Long before him, with Nuhu (AS), he declared to his strong headed people:

No reward do I ask
Of you for it: my reward
Is only from The Lord
Of the Worlds.

Qur'an 26:109

Because submission to Allah or accepting the religion of Islam is a matter of choice, life and history can go on without Islam. And where Islam is claimed but no serious commitment is given to the foundation of *Iman*, resting on knowledge, certain traits are opportune to develop. For example, having children outside wedlock, leadership by ascription, are possible. And when any one from this background, propped up by ignorance, is granted authority or wealth, he will not see and treat it as a trust. In relation to fellow human beings, they will be possessive, selfish, arrogant, mean, pompous, oppressive and heartless. They will neither be useful to Muslims nor to non-Muslims. And because of the resources, when they strive to do good, they end up creating make-beliefs that never last. For the time they

last, they distort the truth and do not make life easier. This is reflected by simple non succession. Truth easily wipes them away. They do not really enjoy this world and they are among the crooked.

BY SALAT AND HAJJ

After knowledge, the first thing to follow is submission to Allah that is the Only True Reality. The justification for this is that, all the basic resources that will enable this are already given. That a believer is living, within space and time, on the earth. And the requirements for making this submission possible are knowledge and cleanliness. Purifying oneself as prescribed, to communicate with Allah specially distinct from any other permissible opportunity. This is because a believer is not restricted to communicating with Allah only at *Salat* or *Hajj* times or places. A believer does not have to be facing the *qibla*, in order to communicate with Allah. This is why after converting to Islam by a non-Muslim, *salat* is the next obligatory instruction. The superior status of *salat* is revealed in the convenience of final judgement for those whose *salat* is complete, and it will be the first to be accounted for.

The opportunities given by *salat* and *hajj* generate a living relationship between the believer and Allah. It goes beyond simple rites, rote recitations and formalities. On the physical realm, the praying believer adopts essential cleaning, of the hands, mouth, nostrils, face, head and feet. With ritual bath, the entire body is involved. And the knowledge of the kind of water that can be used for ablution completes the hygienic standard. The distinctive nature of this preparation for *salat* is that, it is done for Allah and as shown by *Rasul* (SAW). This is embodied in the necessary intention that will be declared to commence it. Accordingly, the activities have a content, a procedure, those that are compulsory, those that are commendable and what can make it void. Thus, both the physical ablution and *salat* bear the spiritual value of reward or sin. They wash away sins and position the believer closer to Allah, in righteousness. Before Allah, in *salat* and *hajj*, the believer is specially positioned to make his pleas, express gratitude, ask for forgiveness etc. The regularity of this orients the benefit of constancy and consistency. This is achieved through the discipline of timeliness and orderliness that are part of *salat* and *hajj*. And the actual execution of *salat* and *hajj* instill the attributes of focus and concentration in the worshipper. This is why absent mindedness must be avoided and care is instructed, of the *salat* and *hajj*. The summary of these all is that, *salat* and *hajj* serve as the statutory canonical means for REMEMBERING Allah. And because, when we remember Him, it is indeed for our own good, there is no limit to

when, where and how to remember Him - to the terms of *Salat* and *Hajj*. Thus, His urging to be remembered and He will remember the slave. And the most perfect direction is contained in the chapter of Opening, which is Compulsory to make *salat* acceptable. The believer will submit to Allah by doing all things for His sake, as He does not prohibit; praise Him; recognize His specific responsibility for the ultimate end of things; depend on Him; ask for His guide; and specifically aspire to be joined with those that have met His pleasure as against the losers.

The *TARIQA* by *salat* and *hajj* emphasizes the Unity of Allah and Whole submission to Him, based on *Iman* or knowledge of the Truth. The spiritual essence and benefit of this that is shared by fasting, is what is angelic in the character of a sincere believer. The real difference lies in either dropping below, that is animalistic, sustaining it, that is angelic or going above it by sustaining the purity in other day to day worldly activities that compel relating with other believers, misbelievers, disbelievers or unbelievers, without abusing their rights, while sticking to Allah and *Rasul* (SAW). This means that *salat* is an individual responsibility and then a collective duty on the leadership of the *Ummah*. Individuals and even a grouping will be free to worship Allah by restrictive exposure or participation in history. For example, limiting oneself to mostly the five pillars of the *TARIQA* and minimizing participant relationship with fellow men, beyond what is necessary. The person may not marry and live in the outskirts of a township. The person may optimize non obligatory forms of remembering Allah, through *salat*, *hajj*, *ZIKR* and fasting. This approach or orientation informed by the fear of the world and love of Allah is undoubtedly impressive and not condemnable. They will appear as elite believers. The leadership of the *Ummah* has only an intellectual-cum-spiritual challenge in the guidance of such members or participants, to protect the limits of Allah and Not introduce standards similar or equivalent to those of Allah. With the right things, this elite will always be a shining element in the *Ummah*.

FROM THE RESTRAINT THAT FASTING AND CHARITY TEACH AND INSTILL

From all of the above, Allah is the only goal of the *TARIQA*. The objective of those who carve and follow an elite path is to avoid or minimize involvement in worldly matters, out of the fear of straying more than sticking to Allah. This is defined by the obvious constant and variety of exposures, challenges or tests that one has to deal with, if one chooses to live life to the full.

But those in the majority, who choose to live life to the full, that is not prohibited, are not excused from keeping to the same goal. The fundamental difference is the additional challenges that the elite run away from or minimize. For the Leadership of the *Ummah*, it is those that belong here that have additional Right to be ensured, in the protection of the *Iman* of Muslims and thus, the proper practice of Islam. It is in this vein and respect that *Rasul* (SAW) pointed at the indicator for being rightly with Allah, the purpose of *Iman*, fasting and charity. That, one does not benefit in his *salat/hajj* if it does not keep one away from wrong doings. Believers properly on the *TARIQA* will be safe to themselves and others different with them, while making life better for everybody. This is why and how they will be torch bearers for mankind.

Patience and perseverance that are instructed through fasting and charity remain the permanent arms or weapons for keeping to the goal of Allah, while paddling through insatiable needs, wants and fancies. These qualities, these attributes are to make possible: ensuring and insisting on those things Allah has prescribed; denying or avoiding those things Allah has prohibited; cautious of those things that are doubtful over their proper belonging, between the two; encouraging and supporting what *Rasul* (SAW) has practiced or acknowledged or did not object to; not taking offense with those who so choose, when one opts not to; and not abuse any of the above in matters and areas or circumstances that do not fall under any of the above.

At the collective level, those who are entrusted with ensuring collective interests for the common good of all, without oppressing or jeopardizing the harmless differences between members have the challenge of godliness, if they truly believe. And for a Muslim leader, it means Facelessness that covers all faces according to safe rules that apply to all and discretions that will protect the superior interest of the collective. In godless parlance it is called corporate leadership. The two share the appearance of selflessness. However, godliness has defined limits that are not harmful for the prosperity of a society. This can only be appreciated if a Muslim leadership is to influence the governance of a multi religious society. Thus, in any institution where a Muslim fails to excel or make a positive mark in its leadership, it is a questioning of the leader's *Iman*. It is clearly weak or corrupt and unfit.

O Mankind! We created
You from a single (pair)
Of a male and a female,

And made you into
Nations and tribes, that
Ye may know each other
(Not that ye may despise
Each other). Verily
The most honored of you
In the sight of Allah
Is (he who is) the most
Righteous of you.
And Allah has full knowledge
And is well acquainted
(With all things).

Qur'an 49:13

Let there be no compulsion
In religion: Truth stands out
Clear from Error: whoever
Rejects Evil and believes
In Allah hath grasped
The most trustworthy
Hand-hold, that never breaks.
And Allah heareth
And knoweth all things.

Qur'an 2:256

Of the bounties of thy Lord
We bestow freely on all -
These as well as those:
The bounties of thy Lord
Are not closed (to anyone).

Qur'an 17:20

If any do wish
For the transitory things
(Of this life), We readily
Grant them - such things
As We will, to such persons
As We will: in the end

Have We provided Hell
For them: they will burn
Therein, disgraced and rejected.

Qur'an 17:18

The challenge of every Muslim leadership is therefore to serve All, including non Muslims when given such a trust or burden. And this is possible only by harnessing and coordinating all goodly resources for the safety and prosperity of all. In other words, the interests of Muslims will be protected to the limits that they will not trample on those of non Muslims. And Muslims must be kept within the limits set by Allah and His Messenger. It will therefore be unbecoming of a Muslim to insist that he can only contribute what is good when he is directly or personally entrusted. Such neutrality, failure or carelessness is condemnable, because is based on selfishness and greed. Such knowledge, resource or support is only a trust of Allah. And a believer has the godly responsibility to share or give it out appropriately, for the benefit of humanity. This is why the first level of *Iman* is to act out what is right or enforce, if one has the recognized authority. The second is by right advice. And the third is by distancing oneself from what is wrong. Those Muslims, both in leadership positions and those outside, who shy away or pretend or refuse to aid what is good, right and correct, because the wrong pays their selfish interests or awaiting to be given the specific trust are a disgrace to Islam and will account for it. All of these have to do with Policies, Laws, Recommendations, etc.

And let not those
Who covetously withhold
Of the gifts which Allah
Hath given them of His Grace,
Think that it is good for them:
Nay, it will be the worse
For them: soon shall the things
Which they covetously withheld
Be tied to their necks
Like a twisted collar,
On the Day of Judgement.
To Allah belongs the heritage
Of the heavens and the earth;
And Allah is well-acquainted
With all that ye do.

Qur'an 3:180

With wealth or collective resourcefulness, there is the critical Means, Money and Facilities. An example of the contemporary challenge for protecting the *Iman* of believers, on the leaders and leadership, is the management of money. In Nigeria, the time it has taken to have an Islamic bank in place and the level of patronage is a slap of shame. It is as if there is no difference between the two or one has no capacity to grow and develop like the other.

Over and above this, is the general and specific failure to provide all Nigerians or even Muslims basic resources like housing, employment, good health, education, etc. Those Muslims that have had the opportunity of this superior trust are not fit for references, because they have paddled the trust on ignorance and selfishness. This is contrary to the *TARIQA*. Inheritance of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. The trust is temporary and those who abuse it with audacity will answer for it.

Thus in the matters of Leadership and Collective welfare, the leaders are to check their ordinary inordinate greed and ensure sharing. This is because Allah has essentially provided for all of mankind, with a measure. Whereas in respect of animals, He provides for them without our involvement, we have the challenge of Justice and Fairness as the means of utilizing our free will, to achieve good.

And the earth We have
spread out
(Like a carpet); set thereon
Mountains firm and immovable;
And produced therein all kinds
Of things in due balance.

Qur'an 15:19

And We have provided therein
Means of subsistence, - for you
And for those for whose sustenance
Ye are not responsible.

Qur'an 15: 20

The alternative, without restraint or patience, is disaster, frustration, etc. As for the followers, there is the need to exercise both patience and perseverance to enable the processes that require time, to realize collective and secure individual welfare. The difference is that insistence on excesses can be checked by law, by force and rightly too.

We created not
The heavens, the earth,
And all between them,
Merely in (idle) sport.

Qur'an 44:38

We created not
The heavens and the earth
And all between them
But for JUST ends, and
For a term appointed:
But those who reject Faith
Turn away from that
Whereof they are warned.

Qur'an 46:3

Fasting therefore proves that whatever you constantly need, like food and drink can be moderated, without our losing anything in essence. And charity proves that sharing is not harmful. It has the double benefit of easing the needless surplus of those who have amassed wealth and cushions the frustration of the likely envious. The summary of these are Health and Security of the individuals and the collective. This is what taxation attempts to achieve partially. The difference between the two is that, the actions informed by belief and obedience to Allah ensures humane effect, whereas taxation is strictly formal and free of value. Its evasion can therefore only be tackled by the force of law.

EXAMPLES FROM HALF OF THE RELIGION

It is instructive to know, appreciate and learn that, in Marriage and the Family, the believer is opportune with optimal exposure or challenges that will enable living life to the full, in this world and success in the hereafter. *Iman* is intimately required and tried, just as *salat* and *hajj* serve as the opportunities for sustenance and resolution of marriage and family matters, with the help of Allah. And the weapons of patience and perseverance are the *TARIQA* mode of submitting, so that in the end, the pleasure of Allah is what is served, from wheresoever angle. This is the ultimate principle and living terms that will guarantee success in the end through pain or pleasure.

Your riches and your children
May be but a trial:
But in the Presence of Allah,
Is the highest Reward.

Qur'an 64:15

For marriage, the backgrounds of both parties are required to be ascertained. This is to ensure compliance that will keep one within the confines of what Allah admits. The Muslim woman will out rightly object to any asking from any Non Muslim. It will therefore be most shameful and irresponsible of a Muslim parent or guardian to be involved in giving the hand of a Muslim woman to a non Muslim. Because Allah expressly prohibits it. This goes to imply that, if the non Muslim man proposes to convert to Islam, it is as tricky as one who already converts, for the sake of the woman. This is because the person who proposes best expresses the condition of converting because he wants the woman. This kind of challenge is for reasonable and sensible resolution, because of the fragility. Once a man declares faith, the affair is that of Allah. But if the person later recants, will he be subject to the sanction of apostasy? This security is absolutely important, because if that happens, the marriage becomes void. And if within the time a child is gotten, the identity crises the child will be subjected to because of the weak basis of his coming about, he will be a peculiar challenge to the *Ummah*. This is not the kind of foundation that the *Ummah* should tolerate.

For marriage, Allah and *Rasul* (SAW) have decided on a free gift to the woman. Any additions to this that may not be out rightly prohibited MUST NOT be allowed to weaken or make DIFFICULT the decision. This exposes the madness of boxes as distinct necessity, along with other standard

requirements, as a challenge or failure of the Muslim parents and Leadership, who claim the love of *Rasul* (SAW).

In marriage, Allah has permitted the parties to be a garment for one another and indicated that reproduction is strictly His choice. The tradition of building the *Ummah* of *Rasul* (SAW) through right reproduction Must not be raised to the level of Displeasure or Failure in the case of those who are not blessed with any. Indeed the reduction of the purpose or definition of successful marriage as such, is Exceeding the limits. Allah neither said nor narrated any example to teach that not having a child in marriage makes it inferior. Children are not exempted from being a source of trial. They can be enemies. They can be a boost to the *Ummah*.

In marriage, polygamy is permitted, to encourage and institutionalize Justice. It will therefore be unbecoming to make the undertaking or initiate a seal or close to it by either party, as part of the marriage. This is akin to the suspension of taking honey by *Rasul* (SAW), to please his consorts. Allah instructed him to immediately return to what He has made legal. The challenge of the leadership here is to ensure the right example by practice or at least Not allowing a mix up of the standard.

Leadership challenges in polygamy are generated by the required neutrality of the husband between the wives, between the wives and the children, between the children, etc. This is because they are different individuals with equal and common rights and duties across each other. The wives will learn respect for each other as they respect the husband. They will also learn, love for children other than their biological one. The children will learn on the same line. The feasibility of these rests squarely on the focus to what Allah and His Messenger prescribe. For instance, the principle of loving for another, what you love for yourself acts out by the children respecting and honoring the father's wife that is not their mother as they treat theirs. Doing otherwise is a failure in *Iman* and submission to Allah. This form of challenge confronts the husband and father in a superior form, because of the different women and common children. This is how and why one who does not return an insult, leaves the insult on the initiator. This is why *Rasul* (SAW) condemns insulting the gods of non Muslims, to save doing the same to Allah. Indeed, in a family, where divorce has been experienced, the challenge between the children, other children, the other mother or mothers and the father, opens up opportunities for patience and perseverance, to stick to and please Allah. What they do, others may do to their mother that is out or into another family. Those who tolerate it or think it is right will be suggesting that disrespect and dishonor

to one that is not your mother or from the same mother or same father, the godly standard for believers. But even lower people that thrive on tribalism, racism or racialism seek to go beyond the family. The intelligent challenge is: how can one who has not experienced such rudimentary level of challenges be humanely successful in protecting the interests of different people, without brute force in different forms? This is essentially what explains the high level of security concerns and commitment, which has become an encompassing concept. The necessity for brute force, for correcting or dis enabling or disabling break down of law and order, is to serve First failure in learning to be orderly. And the expense continues to rise because the opportunity for such learning is blocked or disabled by prohibiting polygamy or making monogamy the standard. In other words the backwardness in the development of the family through the greater practice of monogamy is responsible for imbibing the spirit of sharing. The absence or weak existence of a common *qibla* is the loss that is necessary for world peace and development.

THE SUMMARY POINTS OF GUIDE

The prayer that man
Should make for good,
He maketh for evil;
For man is given to
Hasty (deeds).

Qur'an 17:11

Say : "If ye had
Control of the Treasures
Of the Mercy of my Lord,
Behold, ye would keep them
Back, for fear of spending
Them: for man
Is (ever) niggardly!

Qur'an 17:100

The Evil One threatens
You with poverty
And bids you to conduct
Unseemly. Allah promiseth
You His forgiveness

And bounties.
And Allah careth for all
And He knoweth all things.

Qur'an 2:268

Verily Man
Is in loss,

Except such as have Faith,
And do righteous deeds,
And (join together)
In the mutual teaching
Of Truth, and of
Patience and Constancy.

Qur'an 103:2 - 3

THE DIFFERENCE AND PROSPERITY OF OUR POVERTY IN LIVING OUR TARIQA

FOR US WHO CONSCIOUSLY BELIEVE AND UNDERSTAND

Those who belong for reference and attention are those who, without doubt, willingly and patiently accept and persevere in living in accordance with the Qur'an as authentically guided by the *Sunnah*, established by Muhammad (SAW).

... To those who fear Allah;

Who believe in the Unseen,
Are steadfast in prayer,
And spend out of what we
Have provided for them;

And who believe in the Revelation
Sent to thee,
And sent before thy time,
And (in their hearts)
Have the assurance of the Hereafter.

Qur'an 2:2 - 4

For us, Allah is the Truth and true. By His numerous attributes we are able to have a glimpse of His Unique Unity. And our selfish destination is defined by what Allah is ABLE to do for us. This is because we are inevitably constantly seeking and striving to have and secure an identity.

Like all others we have no idea of where we came from or how we came about – on our own. But either by guess, by thwarted, wrong or right information, we all settle for our immediate realization and proceed to need, want and fancy to live forever. In our case Allah has conveniently and fully informed us that He is the originator of life and is responsible for taking it. He has decided that after death, we shall be returned to life and will be sieved for a type of eternal life that befits us. The dividing line is between those who believe and obey against those who do not believe, whose actions do not count.

We have settled with the understanding of this truth. We have heard and seen people live and have not escaped death. We have established by His authority to Isa (AS), the dead being raised and returning. We have

received life recording of Muhammad (SAW) taken to Him and some of his spectacular interactions with Prophets of the past. We have received the record of the reality of Jinns in serving Sulayman (AS) and accepting Islam on hearing the recitation of the Qur'an, revealed to Muhammad (SAW). We have witnessed living things prosper in rocks, in the earth crust and in water. We have established ordinarily unseen living things like bacteria and viruses. We do not therefore bother about the full truth that we can live well forever. And immediate death is not an obstacle to that.

Like all others, we have no knowledge of the reality or absolute truth about our livelihood here on earth. We simply know that people had lived, have lived, are living and are likely to continue to live in this world. While there is abundance of literature on improving lifespan, we have established that earlier generations had lived longer and were greater in build, than our depreciating experience. We have not been able to deal with or eliminate getting ill, aging and death for ourselves and depreciation, change or transformation of things around us. We have therefore settled with the absolute truth that this life and all that it contains are temporary, transient and false because they will definitely not last.

Like all others, our summary inevitably conscious or unconscious objective is to always minimize or even eliminate any and all sorts, types and forms of pain or displeasure. If, when and where we can, we avoid, check by stopping or controlling our relationship with pain or displeasure. For example, against malaria, for a sicklier, there is an appropriate drug. For non-sicklier there are numerous options. On infection, there are standard immediate drugs. For complicated cases, there are prescription lines for them. Indeed, where the diagnosis indicates a peculiar strain of parasites, there are preferred drugs. But with malaria, there is a combination of genotype and blood group that is more prone to infection against one that is close to absolute safety, when exposed to mosquito bites in an endemic environment. The position of obesity, diabetes and hypertension are different. Once one belongs, the commitment is to control it against taking over the person's life. Thus, riders are required to use helmets, those trained and authorized to take the lives of others are entitled to use bulletproof vests. Automobile and plant users are required to be licensed. Pilots like ship captains need to be certified. Do prospective couples not go for genotype and HIV tests?

We have settled to partake in this strive and process, but with a distinctive orientation. This orientation is first defined by doing our utmost best and NOT losing out at the end of the day NO MATTER WHAT. And what insures

this, is ensuring that the striving is in accordance with what is CLEARLY ADMISSIBLE by our Belief and Standard for livelihood. Thus, ordinary infection by malaria parasites necessitates our treatment of it like all others, but reminds us of the falsity of this life and a means of cleansing us of some sins or getting some reward, for our permanent benefits. Thus, with an epidemic, our standard is NOT to escape and possibly spread it. This is because if we remain, we shall not be loser even when we die. The very same applies to HIV infection BUT NOT WHEN ACQUIRED OUTSIDE THE PRESCRIBED STANDARD FOR OUR LIVELIHOOD. As with ourselves, so does it apply to our acquisitions – relationships, material wealth, power etc.

Like all others, we either by implication of avoiding pain or displeasure also DELIBERATELY strive to MAXIMIZE OR OPTIMIZE pleasure, peace or satisfaction. For example in respect of the physical body, orchards have developed to meet the variety needs of fruits. Mechanized farming is an expression of the quantities we will need, want or fancy, for plants, crops etc. Animal farming or production, including fish and birds are part of it. At home, it is variedly expressed with satisfaction in the forms of single course meals three times a day; three course meals three times a day or five course meals three times a day. And the interaction between practitioners of these has been showing that the three course meals three times a day is most modest. Majority of the middle class belong to the first. Most five star hotels provide the second. And the third is the common reserve of the *Shuwa-Arabs*. There is no difference when it comes to wears, housing, and transport, in their forms, types and costs. Those who take alcoholic drinks, smoke marijuana or sniff cocaine do not believe that there is something wrong with them. In the same vein, lesbians and practitioners of anal sex do not see themselves different from those in marriage relationship. Indeed, because they still believe that things need to be RIGHT, as against prostitution, they are fighting to legalize same sex marriage.

We have settled to equally strive as such but with a distinctive orientation. Like with avoiding, checking or controlling pain, we are also not against enjoying what this world can enable. And accordingly it has to be within the terms of our already fully defined standard for livelihood. That for example means that alcoholic products are out of question. Same sex relationship is out of scope. And we have two ways benefits. By compliance we enjoy like all the others and in addition get permanent reward for avoiding the matters out of question and scope.

As humans in society, we have this responsibility for ourselves. This is because there is no compulsion to belong to or tread this path. We should

therefore be reasonably and sensibly able to live with all others that are mildly or radically different WITH EQUAL OR NO LESS RIGHTS AND SECURITY in our difference. Our opportune Leadership must not compel others, just as our Non Leadership must not subject us to denial or amendment or abuse of our differences. Societies or nations that are UNABLE to practice this are both backward and unbecoming.

OUR DIFFERENCE BY OUR POVERTY

We are not required to be in common haste. This is ordinarily the most intelligent thing or orientation to adopt. Like in eating and drinking, hastiness chokes, and destroys the desired pleasure, satisfaction and fulfilment.

The first characteristic of our orientation against hastiness is in relation to acquisition of the good things of making this livelihood tick. The scope of what are to be enjoyed is defined by exclusion of specific things or categories. This limitation is a critical trait of compliance. For example, while no one is permitted intoxicants, men are not allowed gold wears but women are. This setting of livelihood is disciplinary because limits have been set. Profiteering is permitted but distinct from usury – regardless of the change in labelling. Men are to give dowry for the marriage of every woman within the permissible degree, and limited to four.

Another characteristic of our orientation against hastiness is by defined sharing of what we properly acquire in excess of our needs with those in need and permissible sharing of even our needs with those in greater need. We therefore have grades of gifts, compulsory charity, optional charity and detailed rules for inheritance of what a closed life leaves behind. This principle and practice extends from self to the family, the kindred, neighbours and all humans - irrespective of religious faith.

A third characteristic of our orientation against hastiness is by POSSIBLY forgiving wrongs and mistakes or at least a willingness to do so, in the first instance, on matters that largely rest on our persons. The simple principle and practice is based on the reality that we make mistakes or wrong doings too and will prefer to be forgiven. Forgiving makes the forgiven indebted to the forgiver because the hand that gives is above the one that receives. The benefit of the doubt is a safe guarantee for misunderstanding. And settlement in similar coin is rarely equally in view or achieved. This characteristic plays the role of smooth rebuilding of genuine cracks, so that only serious breakages will require knitting. Livelihood should not be by maximum policing as a standard. This orientation saves public life from

psychological challenges like prejudices or transfer of aggression that are individually based.

This difference implies that all efforts at improving livelihood by the quantum, quality, forms, types, times and places of things to satisfy our needs, wants and fancies are permissible PROVIDED they do not negate the preceding characteristics. We can therefore compete in the healthy improvement of our education, health, technology, society, economy, finance, agriculture, politics, etc.

Our poverty is therefore NOT defined by Tolerating, Accommodating, Condoning or Admitting wretchedness, absolute lacking or fringy prosperity. It is rather a disciplinary orientation that ENABLES THE PRESENT LIVELIHOOD TO ALSO SERVE AS AN INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE, REAL AND ETERNAL LIVELIHOOD.

OUR UNBEATABLE PROSPERITY TARGETS

Given the choice, unintelligent people will want to live for a thousand years. More sensible people that are observant will foresee the foolishness because of the inevitable changes that one will be undergoing. If at eighty one will lose the pleasures of the body and flesh, one would have transformed into something getting different from the ordinary human, at age one thousand. But intelligent Musa (AS) asked the angel of death: what will follow after the respite for living longer? He got the truthful reply that: you will die. He simply submitted for death.

Believers prosper to live eternally or forever. They therefore do not have to waste most of their time, efforts and resources in struggling to live for any impressive length of time. This is intelligently defined by the fact that no one has a clear or useful idea of when, where and how one will die, scientifically. In other words even when it appears that an already dead person had an idea of his departure, it is always in arrears and cannot be shared for reasonable application and guide. Indeed, from the common natural response from those who test HIV positive and the value of counselling that helps them for emotional stability, it is an indication that only the abnormal will prefer and be able to withstand knowledge of when, where and how they will die. This difference is one superior prosperity of our *TARIQA*.

The hastiness or lack of patience in the general orientation of the present livelihood is really informed by the desire, the wish, the prayer and the will to Realize or Achieve anything in focus as at when due, timely, to save time

for more and other things. But even with switching a bulb on, spare parts, connections, infrastructure etc. are required. Internet service is no less. Surgery without knives is no doubt some improvement but is still very backward. Historical orientation has therefore been coloured by real fascination either by miracles or common realisations that make do with scientific standards.

Believers prosper to realize whatever they desire, to be earlier than immediate. The superiority of this status is characterized by two qualities. The first is that, there will be no need for short, medium or long term planning or procedures within time frame. One simply realizes it as quickly as the wish. The second quality is that, every and all results are free or without side effects of any kind, type or form. For example, you will not eat and drink what you desire and later waste it. There wouldn't be even excess. The drawback of lateness is therefore eliminated. The pain of striving is also eliminated because it will be effortless.

The worthlessness of limiting one's prosperity to this myopic worldly life is also revealed in the double pain of having its best. To enable anything, a lot of organized efforts have to be brought into play. And the satisfactory outcome depends on the less amount of errors and further discoveries by improved design or accident. And even after any interim successful enabling, enjoying it is both logically and sensibly stressful. This is because of the necessary environment of scarcity, competition and constant efforts at resolving the arising disagreements and conflicts. And men are roving between health and ill health, wealth and poverty, safety and insecurity, knowledge and ignorance etc. The best circumstances are not devoid of stress.

The prosperity that believers are working towards by utmost compliance or obedience to the only one and ultimate source and giver of all things good, is the exact opposite. The enabling of desires will be effortless and enjoying them will be stressless. This tops the super efficiency of availability, that will be beyond immediate.

Any observant man given of understanding will appreciate that to realize the best of our insatiable scope of desires to the utmost will inevitably be suffocating and self-destructive. Imagine desiring to have a taste of the best dishes of all climates, the best wears of all cultures and enjoying the best hospitalities of different nationalities alone. Given the resources to have them, the time will not be there, the people to appreciate it will not be there, the competencies to enable them will not be there, the space will not be there – in any given place and time. To assemble them for self will give

the person away as a strange creature. For example, seeing the person from Gashua dressing like an Eskimo. Feasting on snakes as a delicacy will not be funny. And the cost and processes of such assembly will attract security attention. Those who merely keep horses or calves of radically different climate have a taste of the madness. The most convenient means will be to be moving from a part of the globe to another, limited to what you can physically withstand. Logically and sensibly, it is just impossible to get FULLY SATISFIED TO THE BEST, WITHOUT ANY OPENING FOR WHAT CAN BE BETTER, no matter how much we try.

The believers prosper to enjoy whatever is their desire in their BEST, better than what is possible in the present space and time and to a filled fulfilment, beyond which there will be no need, want or fancy, OF GOOD THINGS. For instance in paradise, there will be fruits that only look like those we are familiar with here. The abundance and purity is for instance in the flowing rivers of honey and milk. A partner will not fall sick or age, free of jealousy and will be transparently beautiful. The superiority of the provisions is describable by WHAT NEITHER SENSES HAVE EXPERIENCED NOR ANY MIND CONCEIVED OR CONTEMPLATED, Jinn or Man. Indeed after self-admission by the inhabitants, that THEY CANNOT BE IN ANY OTHER OR MORE NEED, WANT OR FANCY, Allah (SWT) will reveal His Glorious Self for a glimpse. Allah is One.

This is why Believers ask of Allah (SWT) who is the Originator and Owner of all things for the good in this world, the good in the hereafter and safety from the Fire. From Him who has no need and is Forgiving and full of Mercy.

THEN WHICH OF THE FAVOURS OF ALLAH SHALL WE (Jinns and Mankind) DENY?

IZALATUL BID'AH WA IQAMATUS SUNNAH IN OUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

THE POSITION OF THE FAMILY

It is indisputable that no single individual has any possible standing in isolation of a family, as far as beginning to live in this world is concerned. This family can be restrictive to simply A WAY. This is why non married persons can be associated or referred to be involved in a family way. The absolute meaning is that two human beings are in an intimate relationship, that is short of recognized responsible rights and duties that the larger society accepts for General well being. This is the fundamental basis for homosexuals asking for statutory recognition. Before such unfortunate recognition, they are only worse than heterosexuals who are unmarried. Single parenting is only another shade of carelessness for the general well being.

As Muslims, what distinguishes us is that we have a defined standard upon which human beings, the family is to rest. It provides the security and basis for nurturing each and every individual and the collective whole. And in the context of humanity, this standard is what will provide leadership, security and prosperity for ALL, irrespective of any current status of variation or abuse of the standard. This is what will build the *Ummah*.

Any Community, any Society, any Nation and any Generation that Ignores, Underrates or pays little Attention to what becomes of the family, is surely on the course of self destruction. If the single human being that is a bundle of capacities, which can enable contradictory things, is not sufficiently cared and catered for, the larger number will unavoidably pay for the price. This may initially appear insignificant or negligible. But, the moment it becomes a matter of concern, it will take more cost to begin to recover.

THE PLATFORM FOR ESTABLISHING A FAMILY

In Islam, the first term is for a man and a woman that are outside prohibitive degrees to come together for the purpose of total living. This negates the recognition of gays and lesbians and bisexuals, on their own and their togetherness IF they are Muslims who sincerely believe. At this level, it is the challenge of *Ahlus SUNNAH* to focus and strategize on protecting and ensuring that NO Muslim is in abuse of this term. This *jihad* that is now ripening to a burst is ONE that we cannot ignore or underrate. The gravity of this problem is measurable by the standard of NOT NEARING *ZINA*, by those who heed to the heterosexual term.

The standard for all *Jihad* is by authorized enforcement, by advice or distancing oneself from that which is wrong. Enforcement has been by law and those entrusted with maintaining what the laws express. This falls within the realms of those who make the laws and those who ensure that the laws are kept. But, we can all Advise, Remind and Warn those who have already or are about to breach the standard. We can do this directly to those involved and we can do this on general terms. Over and above these, we can Effectively avoid them in many ways. We can avoid their gestures for General well being and we can restrain from recognizing or commending them or what they do or involve them in.

There can be no doubting that this is a big challenge to our generation. This is because we are enveloped in the fear of poverty, of losing their seeming favours. But, that is what makes it a *Jihad*. In Islam, for the establishment of a family, the consent of both parties and preferably those of their sponsors are required, to be established. In our times, this term does not face the sufficient threat for a *Jihad*.

In Islam, responsible and willing witnesses are required in the joining of the two parties. Although this is fairly watered down, the level of response it requires is that of caution and sensitivity. The pointer to this is that MOST of the marriages that run into crises and often collapse are never referred to the witnesses that double as sponsors because, they are considered unfit or are not rated for that valuable role of knowledgeable resolution, when a serious disagreement arises. The unfortunate supporting practice is that A LOT of time, energy and resources are invested in WHO and HOW to invite witnesses. It is such a big issue that it often appears as if the more corporate this is realized, the better the marriage. This diversionary, embarrassing veil of deceit needs to be checked and highly redirected.

In Islam, an honourable gift is required to be given to the woman by the man. This has no prescribed limit, provided it is within the competence choice and convenience of the man. This particular term is one that poses a reviewing challenge. The first is that unlike in the variant example of *Rasul* (SAW), our generation has slavishly reduced this honourable gift to one form – Naira. This has tempted the process of institutionalizing a minimum amount, to guard against what in our times may be considered as ridiculous. But that is like whitewashing the standard. The gift of what is lower is not prohibited and cannot render such marriage as null and void. The challenge in this respect can be attended to by recognizing and even encouraging honourable gifts Other than Naira. Like *Rasul* (SAW) admitted a ring and teaching of chapters of the Qur'an as honourable gifts, it is time

to recognize and encourage variety of gifts. For example, in these times of religious ignorance the gift of especially Hadith books and the Teaching of these are of superior value to loads of Naira. This is most inviting, because the easier the gift, the more sincere, the more blessed, the more genuine. Unlike when it is money and the sum may not even be given to the woman or spent on the discretion of the woman, other gifts, when announced are more likely to totally go to the woman. This aspect of the *Jihad*, this aspect of *Iqamatus SUNNAH* rests on parents who have the responsibility of giving the hands of their daughters out, in marriage. While they have the right and duty of guiding their daughters, they must Restrain from the rule of Dictating the Form and Type or Level of honourable gift.

In Islam, the man is encouraged to share his joy with well wishers. *Rasul* (SAW) specifically mentioned the roasted thigh of a ram as an example. He also indicated the appropriateness of inviting people to come along with what they will eat/drink, if you cannot afford the feast. This continuum reveals the simplicity and convenience of realizing what is recommended. The structure of Bachelors' eve, Spinsters' eve, Mothers' day, Fathers' day, reception, lunch/luncheon or dinner are extravagant for Most people. Special dresses or codes are part of the niceties that have become hurdles to achieving the simple *SUNNAH* that seriously rates to half of our religion. The required *Jihad* in this respect must go far beyond changing the names or labels of the activities and separating the men from the women.

The above define the combination of those things that are both obligatory and commendable in the establishment of the institution of marriage and family. In practice, it will be appreciated that we have failed in sustaining the institution by ignoring its modesty, by indulgence in excesses. But our failures are worse and more serious than the carelessness, by excesses relating to these terms that combine what are obligatory and those things recommended.

OUR CHOICES AGAINST EASY INSTITUTION OF OUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

One practice we have institutionalized over and above the standard set out above, consists of a fairly standard list of ITEMS the parents of the woman, are required to provide. These are largely, Capital items. And it is expected to be shared between the parents. While the mother provides kitchen and cooking utensils along with some jewellerys and fancies/decorations, the father is required to provide bedroom and living room furniture items. The evaluators are those who have no primary responsibility for the marriage of the woman. And it is shamefully understood that the parents should

meet up with the baseless expectations of these evaluators. Those who are comfortably able to oblige this self imposed but meaningless excesses do it with audacity and set the pace for the ignoramuses who mistake it to be part of the standard. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong in doing such, it ought to be the Private Choice of the parents, like buying underwear for the daughter. It must therefore be based on NEED and ability. And it cannot be modestly concluded without relating with the prospective husband.

The correction of this burdensome practice will begin by NOT INVOLVING OR INVITING ANYBODY FOR THE INSPECTION OF WHAT IS NOT THEIR PRIMARY BUSINESS. And in the transition, those who may deliberately or in error seek to interfere deserve to be educated.

Another burdensome imposition is the one on the husband to be. It is usually presented in the form of required boxes of personal wears. The content and quality of the requirements are made to appear reasonable and sensible by considering the status of the husband to be. Thus, some will present a box while others will present fifteen. The embarrassing value that is attached to this is revealed by the fact that, it can suspend or even inhibit marriage. Where the prospective husband strives to avoid such, it will always be at the price of Almost Regret. While in principle there is nothing intrinsically wrong in such, making it a condition or even expecting it, DISTORTS the modest standard for establishing this critical institution. And as it is to be expected, the collection of the appointed and self appointed inspectors is more ignorant and ambitious than when the items are provided by the parents of the woman. Like the first one, this practice has turned into a hurdle in the *SUNNAH*.

The correction of this practice rests in being silent about it and having the husband to be, keep the materials at home until the woman arrives as his wife, where he Chooses to do such. It has no basis of becoming part of the marriage process.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE SELF IMPOSED EXCESSES ON OUR HISTORY

The very first price is the promotion of the culture of insuring marriage with material provisions. In a best scenario where a new couple is provided with a furnished house, a car, a bank account and house helps including guards, it is tacitly felt that NOTHING ELSE is a serious challenge, for the success of the marriage. Interestingly, most of them collapse shortly after the fan fare. And it is not limited to members of the wealthy families. For

those who can be classified as belonging to the middle class, they mostly face a long period of managing frustration before the real marriage begins. For the lower class, it is often like the sweet taste of the marriage is Gone while the Real Suffering that marriage is, has commenced. For all the classes, a goodly proportion lives in the marriage as an ad hoc affair.

In summary, this insurance package that we have developed has done more harm to the institution of marriage and family, for us. It is a big shame and a disappointment that, with our hands, resources and before our eyes, we have the Guidance of the Qur'an and SUNNAH and are in this trap. It is disgraceful because it relates to half of the religion that we profess.

The second unfortunate price is the systematic waste of the life efforts of the parents and the husband to be, in preparing for the collections that will enable the marriage. At the end of the day, the insurance is more meaningless than useful. But this is not the most critical aspect of this second price. This same wasteful preparation goes along to delay the real development of the parents as a family and delays the commencement of real marriage life by the new couple. This is because the new couple will not begin to experience the challenges of meeting the NEEDS that have already been provided UNTIL in later time. Indeed when the time gets ripe the circumstances would completely be different from IF the excesses were not the foundation. The only exception to this trap falling will be women who are lucky to be joining an existing family, as against starting one, on their own.

THE INEVITABLE REAPS THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE CRYING OVER

The first laughable concern is that of the popularity of *Zina* among and with believers. The one among believers covers those who are married and those who not married. The class of those defined as, with believers, consist of Muslim men in relation to non Muslim women and Muslim women to non Muslim men. Common sense and ordinary reason will question: How this is avoidable when marriage is both made difficult and without regard for the simple modest principles to be driven by knowledge. The truth is that we cannot sincerely be considering minimizing *zina* in a situation when SUNNAH is made more and more difficult.

The fruit of this failure is revealed in our reproduction outside wedlock. The rate and level is so high now that, it is growing less and less shameful. One form in which this expresses itself is by the number of marriages that are contracted with pregnancy. And this covers both the high and low. Indeed there is this notorious culture of reducing women to baby making

machine. Such people even prefer pregnancy before the joining, as if in Islam, marriage is incomplete without the pleasure of Allah to bless the woman with child bearing or if before Allah a child bearer is superior to the other or if the bearer will not have it as a trial and a trust.

The ultimate taste of this evil production is in the fate of men under the leadership of such, who are Muslims. Men under them live under a curse. Deceit and Hypocrisy become the order of the day as majority languish in poverty and ignorance. Force, violence, threat and machinations become the safety guard for survival – in spite of religious activities and institutions that continue to expand. The picture becomes complete if such leader is bisexual. What is therefore frightening and a big challenge to the *Ummah* is in dealing with those already produced and is growing, over and above stemming the process. WE MUST NOT PRETEND OR DECEIVE OURSELVES THAT WE ARE PROMOTING GODLINESS , WHEN WE ARE BUSY AND CARELESS ABOUT THE PRODUCTION OF THOSE TO PRAY IN MOSQUES AND UPHOLD THE *SUNNAH*.

It is therefore not surprising to find handy satanic help. It comes in the form of not tempering with the excesses that we have self imposed. It intervenes in the sexual laxity through concern for spread of transmissible diseases. This is what sheaths do. It is beneficial for both married and unmarried and it can help to promote another concern for over population. This web becomes a tight and effective trap for us who Allah has completed His favour on us.

Another helpful hand is the twisting or making the concept of the orphan fit into our new *SUNNAH*. We now have orphanage homes with children whose parents are unknown and may never be known. The operational principle of these homes is for the volunteer parents to face the future and forget about the past. A livelihood where the foundation does not matter. In all cases, when the volunteer parents later have their children, prospect of a burst of the truth and the answer to, who are the real parents of the adopted children is a challenge. And these often unwanted children that escaped abortion now occupy a place of artificial pride in our history. While it is neither their making nor their choice, the collapse of the marriage and family system or standard is responsible for it. The price on the society is therefore only logically, a deserving one. The *Ummah* as a result, has a challenge to deal with this.

THE DEEPER AND ULTIMATE DAMAGES RESULTING FROM OUR NEW SUNNAH

The very first is that family life gets characterized by elements that get the members more than fully occupied for the physical body and Less for spiritual well being. In extension of the culture of material collection to become fit for marriage, both the men and women continue to wait to collect enough. This is best expressed by finishing enough schooling (not education), secure a job and save for readiness. The principle of leadership in the family is gradually eroded by the misplacement that it is more honourable not to be dependent on the husband, from the perspective of the woman. Beyond this, the parents of the woman are tempted to see the daughter as an investment and expect returns, as a matter of responsibility. This is as far as struggling to get married and the possible relationship with the parents of the wife goes, especially if they belong to the class of those poor in heart and faith, indulgent in Self, Ignorance and Tradition.

This over riding culture and orientation of collection is more powerfully replicated in the new family. It takes the form of particular family responsibility and effort to insure and ensure that the members and especially the children are **TOTALLY AND FULLY PROVIDED FOR, FOR LIFE**. And because success is so defined those who acquire good collections can go to adopt from the helpful orphanages after artificial insemination has failed. To collect is the purpose of life and getting an inheritor or inheritors is a task to complete meaningful life. In between, there is little time for parental upbringing for the products, especially as human beings. The easily available solution is to contract the responsibilities out, to Nannies, Day Care and Nurseries. Where the parents are themselves ignorant and uncultured, the children get worse off, even though a fine house, good cars and bank accounts compensate for these.

The **ESSENTIAL DAMAGE** in this process, this history, this arrangement is that the spiritual experience that will flow from the modest prescription for marriage and family life is twisted, suffocated, frustrated. It is therefore getting more and more common and normal to find in a family, daughters that are in chronological age, running mates of the mothers, like the sons are of the fathers. And from the observation of parents in post-primary schools Parents Teachers Associations, it is now getting common to find the parents as near or retirees. This is certainly neither good, better nor the best, for generational development. The younger generation is therefore distanced from experiential reality. Consequently, they grow and live on far less exposure, which they deserve to make the future more human.

The second is a logical consequence of the life style. Indeed there has been the attempt to even rationalize this damaged standard as right, against the express straight statement of the Qur'an. I have shockingly heard and read that in Islam, Monogamy is the rule, while Polygyny is the exception. This is seen in the clear preference in the marriage of one wife, monogamy. This is because it is expected that marriage to another woman will be a burden. If children are to come from this additional marriage, it cuts down on the level of insurance to be ensured and automatically raises the level of premium investment to enable the children escape the need to struggle in life. Those who are the best collectors will therefore make their children the best of the coming generation. It is this senseless and dangerous, like leadership by ascription. There is Nothing Islamic about this kind of messy situation. But the misfortune goes beyond this level. Muslim countries as governments popularize monogamy and non Muslim countries prohibit polygyny. However our difference is growingly getting clearer. The non Muslim countries are right to consider and even legalize same sex marriage. They are consistent while we are the ones that have "improved" on our completed favour. This singular orientation is a great shift from the enjoinder to marry Two Two, Three Three or Four Four. The last enjoinder is to marry one if you fear inability to be just and fair.

In practice, it will be observed that those who have collected much are those who fear attempting to try justice and fairness at home level by marrying more than one wife. Unfortunately for all of us, they are often those entrusted with our social, political, economic and even spiritual resources for management, justly and fairly. And we can neither deny nor run away from their more evident failure. A cursory reflection on Muslims that have been in leadership position and made impact will reveal that the monogamist is in rule, even when a polygynist is among them. The volcanic misfortune will be to have one, born out of wedlock, a monogamist, a bisexual and one that also has a wife that wags in public matters (in the share of responsibilities with her husband) giving us justice and fairness. Such is the greatest enemy of Muslims. To be sure, leadership in justice and fairness goes far beyond the arithmetic of things between a number of men. Thus because the world is ruled by the first world, driven by monogamy, the justice and fairness HUMANS are facing across the globe, permits humans to suffer starvation, fight avoidable wars, malnutrition against the Pets of these monogamist leaders, in the name of over population and corruption. The Pets (domestic or exotic), are more fed, more studied, more cared for, than the greater number of humans in the world. This leadership challenge and crises should not apply inhumanly to Muslims and where

there are Muslims in leadership. But these are inevitable in a history, where Muslims that should be the answer have abandoned their simple and modest completed favour for goodly livelihood in this world and in the hereafter.

THE ANSWER BY REVERSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF OUR EXCESSES

The first necessary step for all of us is to make Marriage and the development of Family easy and modest, by simply reverting to the very basics set down and exemplified by *Rasul* (SAW). The subject of the mandatory honourable gift should be REALLY TO THE PROPOSED WOMAN. The leaders should consider that the stipulation of Naira minimum is only a guide, and a restrictive one for that matter. The form that the Gift takes must need to begin to broaden, rather than limiting it to money.

Parents have a right and can rewardingly continue to contribute to the well-being of their daughters on giving them out in marriage. While prospective husbands who wish to give more than the honourable gift are not prohibited from doing so, it must be left to be done after the marriage proper. The ceremonies or festivals that use marriage as an opportunity ought to be reduced to a very modest and responsible level, by brevity and cost. These do not add any value to the marriage. The number of days, the dress codes, the scope of publicity and event structure are all not beneficial to the marriage life of the new couple.

INSPECTORS or assessors should be expressly educated on the harm and danger of tempering with the standard for marriage and the family set by *Rasul* (SAW), according to the dictate of the Qur'an. This is why dealing with their damaging role is *Jihad*. In addition, we must dissociate, isolate and possibly punish homosexuals and bisexuals in as many forms as permissible, within the laws. Also, those who tie the knots of marriage and the sponsors should feel fulfilled and encouraged to announce that the marriage requirements met, have been simple and modest. This will encourage those reluctant to remain within the limits of the *SUNNAH* to do away with the excesses that are now unfortunately matters of pride.

Next, marriage and family education should be emphasized and popularized to the youths, on marriage and after. This is principally because over seventy percent of what makes a marriage right and fulfilling are built in marriage, and NOT in its process. And education is critical as a foundation as well as in developing it.

Polygyny should be well admitted to spread the culture of justice and fairness. With more people conditioned by the necessary requirements for justice and fairness, superior and responsible social ties will develop. And they will of necessity go beyond larger family relations, because inter marriage and polygyny opens up marriage more, beyond language group and geographical location and even race. Indeed it is capable of crossing religious differences decently, because Muslim men can marry women who believe in the revealed books. Accordingly people will develop the understanding and culture of selflessness, beyond self, to others for the intrinsic good of it and the larger collectivity. This is the spirit that makes a foundation for nationalism, patriotism or internationalism. This will reduce the scope and need for dry justice and fairness that the collective system can offer.

In other words, formalism, institutionalism will become more serving and fulfilling because of its humanistic nature. Monogamy cannot generate this and the enormous proof is in the lifestyle and orientation of the so called developed societies. The present very negligible practice of friends, relations and well wishers making contributions to the proposed couple should be strengthened But directly and privately rather than on microphone or at a reception. It must not be a form of pay back.

MAY ALLAH BE WITH THOSE WHO RECOVER THE SIMPLICITY AND MODESTY OF MARRIAGE AND HELP IN THE BUILDING OF FAMILY LIFE WITHOUT PLACING ANY DAMAGING BURDEN ON THE *SUNNAH*.

CONCLUSION

This reminder is to encourage us to desist from wasting our time and effort in trying to deny the coming generation from the critical and responsible learning process, in the building of the Family and *Ummah*. So far our wasted efforts have only committed us to the wrong and fruitless orientation that, closeness to Allah can be achieved by some safety valve, for us and our children. But Allah has only promised TRIALS and the right overcoming of these as the ONLY PATH to Him.

Why should a traveller turn into a settler? How do we expect to establish eternal bliss or safety in this transient life? What is particularly WRONG with this arrangement is its UNSOCIAL character. The fact that it is done at the expense of collective justice, fairness and convenience. It allows for squeezing the majority to get into a noble institution that provides the foundation for building half of our religion. In other words, each and every family is left to find its way in a setting of ignorance and pride sustained by

general injustice in the distribution of wealth. Or have we seized to be here for worship, as a determinant of where and how we settle for eternity?

There is no orderliness in an arrangement where what is of Social need and Social benefit, access is made different and difficult for the majority. If there is a collective basis for this access, it will be admissible. For example, if there is a standard obligation of the collective that is responsible for sustaining the requirements for basic access, like Kano State and the Emirate Council do on ad hoc and publicity basis for matrons, it may be tolerated. As it is now, in my opinion, that is a most commendable effort with only the drawbacks of expensive publicity, dryness of the sponsors (given their purely formal nature), and that it is targeted to matrons instead of first entrants into the institution. This amendment, this revisit, this correction, this adjustment, this straightening in our entering into marriage and the building of the family unit, is the greatest challenge to the *Ummah*, for having a foundation upon which closeness to Allah can be built in its entirety. There is no comfort in building an *Ummah* after *Rasul* (SAW) and his successors by a CARELESS, EXPENSIVE, PAINFUL SELF IMPOSED EXCESSES. This is our aught IZALATUL BID'A WA IQAMATUS SUNNAH today. And like Uthman ibn Fodio, it did, it does not require formalism, organisations, or institutions THAT HAVE INEVITABLE UNPLEASANT CHARACTERISTIC IMPLICATIONS.

And We created not the
heavens and the earth, and
all that is between them, for
mere play.

We created them not except
for **JUST** ends, but most of them
do not understand.

Qur'an 44:38 - 39

We created not the heavens
and the earth and all that is
between them but for **JUST** ends,
and for a term appointed.
But those who reject Faith
turn away from that whereof
they are warned.

Qur'an 46:3

And the earth We have spread out, and have placed therein firm mountains, and caused to grow therein all kinds of things in due proportion.

And We have provided therein means of living, for you and for those whom you provide not (leaving creatures, cattle, beasts and other animals).

And there is not a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in a known measure.

Qur'an 15:19 - 21

To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows (female) offspring upon whom He wills and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills.

Or He bestows both males and females, and He renders barren whom He wills. Verily, He is the All-Knower and is Able to do all things.

It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by Revelation, or from behind a veil, or that He sends a Messenger to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise.

Qur'an 42:49 - 51

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL
TEACHINGS FROM THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ISLAMIC
MARRIAGE

Marriage in Islam is the legal platform upon which a believing man secures the companionship of a fellow believing woman. This belief extends to believers in the scriptures before the Qur'an, from Allah, in respect of the free women whose hand can be asked for and secured in marriage. A Muslim can therefore ask for the hand of a fellow Muslim woman or a woman from among the people of the Book (Christians and the Jews) for marriage. It is therefore unbecoming of a Muslim to oppose inter marriage between a Muslim man and a Christian or Jewish woman. It also means that they can retain their religion.

Islam directly contradicts any restricted marriage relationship within a Race, a Language, and a Locality. In other words there is no appropriate partner to be first identified by common race, language or locality. Islam promotes it on the superior ladder of *Iman*. While it does not prohibit such lines, that are easily the first openings, it is better understood and appreciated across such limitations. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was an Arab from the clan of *Quraish*. He was Islamically a Believer, the lead believer. The first standard for our identity for marriage is therefore defined by Belief in Allah, *Rasul* (SAW) and what they instruct. Accordingly, for the immediate, within our locality, our language and our race, Islam defines the Prohibitive degrees for marriage. All others are permissible. The scope of freedom is therefore as wide as the world community of believers excluding those within the prohibitive degrees.

The Challenge, the Opportunity and the Teaching from this is that a Muslim is one who strives to be a universal man or woman. Through marriage the community of believers, which transcends one locality, language and race will be reproduced with those limited colours forming a rainbow that is new and pleasant, better and stronger. This is the bird's view that is seen or experienced during *Hajj* or *Umrah*. A microscopic view of the world *Ummah* is seen in the *Ka'aba*. All worshippers turn to the *Ka'aba* as the *Qibla*. It is the meeting point for those who live in the east, west, north or south to it. And the time of *Salat* is like the living clock hand of Allah, symbolized by believers.

This is the route to multiplying the *Ummah* to give *Rasul* (SAW) the largest follower-ship, Thus, Allah expressly alerts and warns us to take note that He has created us of different languages, localities and races, in order that

we may easily and conveniently recognize one another. It is like the functional beauty in discriminating between words for meanings. Those who are opposed to cross marriages must therefore note that it is not the standard for purity. And it amounts to hypocrisy to believe in one part of Islam and hold reservations on the other. Islam is not an affair of any locality, language or race.

This is the basis for the caution by *Rasul* (SAW) to the believers that, it is not being an Arab or even a *Quraish* that qualifies for righteousness but your fear and love of Allah. It is the consistent basis upon which mere Traditionalists were warned by Allah in the Qur'an. The best example is the misplaced pride of the Jews, who consist of a race, a faith and a nation. It is therefore in this foot path that one will find himself, if and when you hang onto your larger family, your locality, your language group for marriage. Those who do this are ignorant, do not truly believe and are not assets to the *Ummah*.

Islam permits the practice of Polygyny, one man marrying two, three or four wives. The basis of this is a challenge to justice and fairness. Muslims are therefore invited to Leadership. To arbitration. To conflict resolution. To dispute settlement. To securing a balance from variations. When two or more people come to live by the same guide, differences, disagreements are inevitable. The resolution of this to common satisfactory level is the business known as justice. Islam provides a Standard. It is acquired by knowledge. And it applies to both the husband and the wives. The first has to do with NOT trespassing into the reserved jurisdiction of Allah. This is defined by things PROHIBITED and those things made COMPULSORY. Approaching the prohibited attracts sanction and omitting what is compulsory generates offense. Following this is the Secondary ladder of those things that are COMMENDABLE and attract rewards even though their omission do not attract sanction or blame. Then of course, all things that DO NOT contradict the first and are not in the second. Livelihood by Muslims must first be defined and based on these. And the root of the *Ummah* is the family, brought into being by marriage. Common sense dictates that Justice to Self is a lower burden compared to Justice between two and that Justice which involves three is certainly superior. The level of this superiority is allowed for up to a husband and four wives. It serves as a fundamental basis for higher complexities characterized by non relations, different believers, seniors, juniors, equals, enemies, strangers, etc.

To be sure, marriage in Islam is not a system of sex machine and sex objects. Man has a variety of characteristics, attributes, potentials and

whatever. Indeed the sexual potency of man varies from one person to another. And the windows of attraction between two people is NOT restricted to sex or even Firstly sexual. And the relationship between men and women is not solely sexual from Islamic perspective. It is this social, political, economic, spiritual platform that enables the Believers to be identified with encouraging the doing of the Good and restraining from the doing of the Wrong, to be the best and model among mankind. Thus for clarity the Qur'an rates Believing Men along with Women, Muslim Men along with Women, Sincere Men along with Women, Faithful Men along with Women, Patient Men along with Women. And that no One person shall be made to bear the burden of Another, parent of child, wife of husband, brother of sister, employer of employee, Prophet of follower, etc.

Thus, the FEAR or RESTRAINT from (polygyny) the foundation of justice must be admitted as a weakening of capacity of the *Ummah*. This popular run away is a Key root of pervasive injustice symbolized by SELFISHNESS, PRIVACY, and SECRECY etc. It is the culture of abandoning the basis for justice that has been replaced by the FEAR OF SHARING. When I hear people talk about limiting the number of wives or children to be recognized and it is hinged on economic factors, I wonder as to who came into this world with any asset and if we may not NEED the same law to equally provide offsprings for ALL couples irrespective of their blessedness, by Allah who provides, for whomsoever He pleases. Then we run into having societies that over feed against some that under feed, couples gambling for workshop babies through test tubes, awards for having male children. Our history gets stressed, a product of artificial justice. The story of growing or over population is not impressive either. The assumption that the capacities of men and available natural resources are stagnant is inconsistent with common sense and knowledge. Do we not produce in quantum, quality and variety the needs, wants and fancies, good and evil, for our sustenance and destruction more than mankind had ever done in the past? Are there no more than we need want and fancy? The barrier is justice that has been abandoned. And justice is superior to arithmetic or mathematical solution. What remains constant is the absolute creation of all means of sustenance by Allah.

I am yet to understand how problems like too many men; too many women with no prospect for partners or popular sharing in the pools of widows, divorces will arise in a just arrangement. Indeed because sex is a common physiological need, the shades of harassments, escapades or improper modes of satisfying it have inevitably developed a dangerous culture. This is characterized by Orphanages with no transparent and responsible social

foundation, dry child adoption practices, single parenting, pornography, etc.

In the realization of marriage, Islam provides for two believers to come together IN FAITH. This is characterized by transparency and shyness. Thus the permission of the parents or guardian is sought and the interaction between the two is not shrouded in secrecy. Kindness, Generosity and pleasantries symbolized by the dowry, witnesses and *Walimat* are shared. This admission into what is UNKNOWN believing that it will all be the best is the shade of *Iman*. The requirement to put in your best by striving, persevering and patiently too is captured by accepting that women are created bent. No effort should be wasted in trying to bend them more or to make them straight. That will lead to their break. In them we find a garment, a covering, a shield, a protection, a guard, a safety valve for comfort, compassion, consultation, and companionship. In our families we also can have our enemies, detractors, etc. With them, our giving is charity. Our restrains are fasting. These may be patience with wrongs, mistakes, pains in our livelihood, in our relationship, in our marital life. For example, the compulsory fasting comes on during the monthly flow after birth, on divorce or upon death. Thus believers are warned not to mis-think that they will qualify for paradise by merely believing in Allah, in *Rasul* (SAW) and seeming compliance. The platform in reality is that of Trials, Tests, Temptations, etc with our Likes and Dislikes – THROUGH DISAGREEMENTS AND THE RESOLUTION OF THESE, THROUGH JUSTICE ARISING FROM RESPONSIBLE TOGETHERNESS.

Justice through Everyone for Himself first is escapist, deceitful and untrue. The Challenge in this micro social setting is hinged on the Leadership status and role of the husband. The Qur'an instructs that the men are placed a stage above women. These men are those who seek for, acquire and employ knowledge. Those who accordingly stick to the limits Allah has set. When they breast feed and want to complete the circle, they do not exceed two years. They do not place the burden of the child on the parent nor the other way round. They do not prefer boys to girls and do not lose faith and hope with Allah when they are tried with lacking or abundance. This is the basis for connecting the value and benefit of *Salat* to reduction in wrongdoings. *Zakkat* is made to support *Sadaqat*. And *Hajj* provides an opportunity to witness the Unity of Allah. It is the basis for the holistic prescription that We are not created for fun but to serve, for worship, in the conditions of toiling. Marriage and the Family in Islam is therefore half the religion. The remaining half is making the general society right, by goodness, compliance

and justice IRRESPECTIVE of differences in the membership. For, there is no compulsion in the religion of Islam.

MAY PEACE BE UPON US ALL AS WE KEEP OUR FAITH ALIVE AND TRUE.