

Islamic Theocracy in Practice: A Case Study Of Nigeria

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Introduction: Islamic Concept of Life.

Islam believes that Allah man created for a purpose. The purpose is to serve and worship Allah (swt). The Islamic way of life is based on the unique approach to life and a peculiar concept of man's position on the earth. When Allah assign to man the inheritance of the universe, Allah let it clear that He alone is the only one worthy of worship, that is, He alone is the ruler of the entire universe that deserve to be served and worshipped at all time. Man and

all other creatures must submit to Him in worship. Man must be aware that the earth is not his permanent abode, and that his staying on earth would lead to eternal life or destruction depending on the manner of his life on earth. Man does not require any other thing except to acknowledge Allah existence as the creator and the sustainer of all creatures, and to follow His guidance and His commands in all works of life. If man decides to follow the dictate of Allah and his prophet (saw) he would have cause to rejoice in the hereafter, but he decides to go contrary to the path of truth and piety he will have himself to blame.

Allah says thus:

*For Allah He is My Lord and your Lord: so worship ye Him. This is a straight Way*¹.

Allah set mankind into the surface of the earth and provided the first man (Adam) peace be unto him, with His guidance. Prophet Adam (A.S) received the knowledge of the reality and was given the code of life by following the path which would lead him to bliss and happiness. This code of life was the religion of Islam, the religion of the complete submission to Allah in all ramifications. It was this religion that Adam (A.S) passed on to all his descendants. After sometimes, generations started and gradually drifted away from the right path and adopted different and erroneous paths for themselves. It is Islam that lay down the principle of Justice, good government, and above all piety in governance and public administration.

Ideal leadership in Islamic theocracy in practice

In Islamic governance and public administration, the role of leaders cannot be over emphasized in discharging responsibilities. A leader is very important for any nation to develop. This is because he is the symbol of the national spirit, its cohesion and direction. The search for the leader therefore must not be treated with levity, but rather it has to be treated with all seriousness it deserves.

Allah says thus:

*And their prophet said unto those elders: Behold, now Allah has raised up Talut (Saul) to be your king. They said: how can he have dominion over us when we have a better claim to dominion than he does and he has not even been endowed with abundant wealth? The prophet replied: Behold, Allah has exalted him above you, and endowed him abundantly with knowledge and bodily perfection. And Allah bestows His dominion upon whom He wills: for Allah is infinite, all knowing.*²

In Islamic point of view, a leader does not necessarily should come from a noble family or wealth or social status before he could be appointed to lead. The Banu Israel thought that only a man of wealth or social status should be appointed to rule. They were rather interpreting their own social system, which conferred dignity, honour and the right to rule on certain classes and families to the consideration of the larger society. Ibrahim corroborates the above assertion thus:

*Islam holds a different view altogether. The leader needs not be a wealthy man, rather, he must possess these qualities: knowledge and bodily perfection which in a wider context implies sound mind, high moral stature, moral courage, and an ability to discharge responsibilities*³.

The learned scholar said further:

*This interprets the Islamic social system, which respects only the men of knowledge and true piety, embracing the quality of uprightness as well as the courage to fight against the forces of evil and corruption.*⁴

There is no doubt about the fact that the prophet (SAW) and his khalifs, the khulafa'u ar – Rashidun have set – up the example of leaders that should run Islamic theocracy. For any leader to be successful in his assignment as far as governance is concerned he has to be upright as regards piety. In Nigeria for instance, this is what is absent in the life of our leaders.

The present scenario in Nigeria today is as a result of lack of God consciousness on the part of our political leaders. Any nation whose leaders are not conscious of their creator can never run a successful government or bring about social justice and the rest. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz once said during his khilaafah thus:

Now that you agreed that I should continue to be your khalifah, I will strongly advise you to be conscious of Allah, because consciousness of Allah is the end of everything. It has no substitute or replacement. You should all work in this life for your hereafter. Anybody who works in this life for his Hereafter, his life affairs will be taken care by Allah. Try to purify your souls, so that Allah will make your condition better. Then be conscious of death and get prepared for it, since it is and inevitable and enjoyment destroyer. This Ummah do not engage in 'Allah's affairs, not do they preoccupy themselves with the teachings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), rather they will always engage in monetary affairs and business. I, Umar, ibn Abdul – Aziz will not allow any injustice or oppression neither will I deny anybody his right and dues. I was not sent to be a money keeper or money bags, but as a collector of the people's money for the people's affairs. O, mankind! Any ruler that obeys Allah deserves to be obeyed. Any ruler who disobeyed Allah deserves to be disobeyed. Obey me once I am seen as obedient to Allah and His messenger. Once I am seen as disobedient to Allah and His messenger,

*you have every right to disobey me. Never must we obey the created being to the disobedience of the Creator. May Allah forgive us all and have mercy on us.*⁵

In another development, when 'Umar – II had been given the mandate of the masses, he declared his asset and that of his immediate family to the public. While the surplus assets was declared to the government's asset for public use. He then gathered all Marwan families – his immediate family and said to them:

*O members of Marwan family you were fortunate to be rich and wealthy more than any other families of our time. I think half or one third of the wealth of this nation is under your control. Give out excesses of this wealth to the government treasury before I do what you may not like me to do with the excesses.*⁶

Though, the government of 'Umar ibn Abdul Aziz was compelled to use the government machineries to deduct the Zakat dues from the wealth of Marwan's family. This is a lesson for Nigeria government and Nigerian leaders. Let Nigeria political office holders donate 2.5 percent from the Jumbo allowance for the development of sectors such as Agriculture, Education, Health, Road construction, Job creation and other social services, if this is done the country will be better for it.

Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said thus: *None of you has good faith (**Iman**) unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.*⁷

Islamic Plan of Life:

It is very clear that Islam begins with laying down the proper lines of action on which man's relationship with the creator (Allah). Thus, Islam is actual submission, the way of surrender to the will of Allah in all aspects of life and behavior. The plan of life, the code of conduct is known as the Shari 'ah. Its sources are the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Those people who surrender themselves to the will of God are welded into a community and that is how the "Muslim Society comes into being." Islamic Society is a principled society, a society that is radically different from those which are founded on the basis of race, colour and territory. This is a deliberate choice and effort. It is an outcome of a contract which takes place between human beings and his creator. In fact, those who enter into this contract, undertake to recognize Allah (swt) as their sovereign.

Allah says thus:

*Then We put thee on the (right) way of Religion, so follow thou that (way). And follow not the desires of those who know not.*⁸

In other words, the ideal Islamic Society undertake to accept, without question or doubt His Classifications of good and evil, right and wrong, permissible and prohibited. Thus, Islamic society agrees to limit its volition to the extent of fact, it is Allah and not man whose will is the primary source of Law in an Islamic society where Islamic theocracy is the order of the day.

Characteristics of the Islamic Theocracy:

Here, we are going to understand the plan of life envisaged by the Islamic law (Shari 'ah) under Islamic theocracy. At this point, it is necessary that we start with a clear concept of the objective and the fundamentals of Shari'ah. Thus, the main objective of the Islamic law is to build human life on the basis of *Ma'rufah* (Virtues) and to clean it of the *Munkarat* (vices).

Abu A'ala Mawdudi explains what the two terms stand for in Islamic theocracy thus:

The term Ma'rufat proclaims as good and right everything declared by Allah and by His messenger to be so. Taking this definition as the norm, the term Ma'rufat should donate all the virtues and good qualities that have always been accepted as good by the pure and unadulterated human conscience. Conversely, the word Munkarat refers to every thing that Allah(swt) and His apostle have denounced as evil. In the light of this under standing, it donates all the sins and evils that have always been condemned by pure human nature as "evil". In short, the Ma'rufat are in harmony with human nature and its requirements in general, whilst the Munkarat are just the opposite.⁸ Thus, the Islamic law (Shari 'ah) does not however, restrict its function to providing us with an inventory of virtues and vices only, it lays down the entire plan of life in such a way that virtues may flourish and vices may not pollute and destroy human life⁹.

Islamic Moral System:

It is believe that moral sense is inborn in man and through the ages it has served as the common man's standard of moral behaviour, approving certain qualities and disapproving others. On the side of moral virtues, justice, courage, bravery and truthfulness have always elicited praise and history does not record any period worth the name in which falsehood, injustice, dishonesty and breach of trust may have been upheld. While fellow – feeling compassion, fidelity have always been valued, while selfishness, cruelty, miserliness and bigotry have never received the approval of the human society.¹⁰

Islamic theocracy aim at obedience to Allah (swt). It is not for man to determine the mode of worship and obedience, it is for Allah to decide this. Allah, being the Lord of the world, has raised from time to time,

prophets for the guidance of humanity and has revealed His books through them. It is the responsibility of man to take the code of his life from these sources of divine guidance. Human – being is answerable to Allah for all his actions in life. The Islamic theocracy is therefore stipulates for man a system of life that is based on all good things and free from all evils. It invokes the masses, not only to practice virtue, but also to establish virtue and eradicate vice, to encourage goodness and to forbid wrong – doing. Allah says thus:

*Ye are the best of People, evolved for mankind. Enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, And believing in God*¹¹.

Essential of Islamic Political System:

Islam has lay down its own way of governance which include *Tawheed* (Oneness of Allah), *ar – Risalah* (Prophethood) and *Khilafah* (Successor). These three Islamic principles will be explained one after the other for easy understanding, *Tawheed* or oneness of Allah means that God alone is the Creator, Sustainer, Provider and Master of the Universe and all other things that exist in it. It is Allah alone that has the right to forbid or to command. Obedience and worship are due to Him alone. The principle of the oneness of God negates in totality the concept of the legal and political sovereignty of human beings both individually and collectively. No human class or group of people can claim sovereignty. God alone is the sovereign and His commandments are the *Shari ‘ah*, the law of Islam.

The second Principle is *ar – Risalah*. This is the medium through which we receive the law of God, the prophethood. Two things are combined in this source, that is, the book of Allah (the *Qur’an*) and the *Hadith* or the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The two sources set – up a model of system of life in Islam by a way of implementing the law which is known as the *Shari ‘ah*. The purpose of man existence is to adhere strictly to the command of Allah and response to His call. Allah says thus:

*O ye who believe, Obey Allah and Obey the Messenger, And those charge with authority among you.*¹²

Islamic political system demands that strict principles of morality must be observed at all cost and in all walks of life. Islamic theocracy lays down undiluted policy for the basis of its policies on justice (*Adl*), truth (*Sidiq*) and honesty (*Amanah*). Islamic theocracy is not prepared to tolerate any form of

fraud, falsehood, corruption and injustice. In Islamic political system precedence is given to truth, honesty and justice over material consideration. It also imposes similar obligations to the state as an individual vis – a – vis to fulfill all obligations and contracts, to use power and authority to establish justice and not to perpetrate act of injustice, to regard power as a trust from God and to carry it out with the hope that one day one will be call upon to account for all his actions in the Hereafter. Allah says thus:

*Allah doth command you to render back your Trusts , To those to whom they are due, and when ye judge Between people that ye judge with justice, Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you, For Allah is He Who heareth And seeth all things.*¹³

Abu Ala Mawdudi observes thus:

*A Muslim ipso facto becomes the citizen of an Islamic state as soon as he sets his foot on its territory with the intent to live therein and thus enjoys equal rights of citizenship along with those who acquire its citizenship by birth right. Citizenship has therefore, to be common among all the Islamic states that may exist in the world and a Muslim will not need any passport for entry in or exit from any of them. And every Muslim is to be regarded as eligible and fit for all positions of the highest responsibility in land of Islamic state without any discussions of race, colour and class.*¹⁴

Fundamental Human right Under Islamic State:

Islamic state does not restrict human right or privilege to the geographical limit of its own state. Islamic state has laid down certain universal fundamental human right which are to be observed and respected at all cost, whether such individual is a resident within the territory of Islamic state, human blood is sacred, it cannot be shed without any justification. It is not allowed to oppress children, women, old people sick person or the wounded. The naked must be clothed, the hungry must be fed, the wounded treated medically without consideration of whether they belong to the Islamic community or not confined to person born within the limits of it state but are granted to every Muslim irrespective of his place of his birth.¹⁵

The Executive and The Legislative In Islamic Theocracy:

In Islamic system of government, the responsibility is entrusted to a leader known as the '*Amir*', who may be likened to the president or prime minister of army conventional democratic countries. The '*Amir*' are being recruited from the scholars of Islamic religion. There are three main conditions that must be met for eligibility to membership of this body, they are:

- a. He must be well sound in the knowledge of Islamic, (Arabic and Islamic studies)
- b. He must be morally upright (*Taqwa*).
- c. He be well versed so as to be able to know who is most suitable for the office of the '*Amir*' (President).

In Islamic system known as Islamic theocracy, the *Amir* could retain his office as long as he observes the injunction of Allah, rule justly and implements the Islamic law (Shari'ah).

The Amir must be ready to vacate his seat the moment he loses the confidence of the masses.

In Islamic theocracy, legislation is restricted within the limits prescribed by the Islamic law (Shari'ah). The injunction of Allah and that of His noble prophet are to be accepted and obeyed and no legislative body could make any changes or alterations in them. In Islamic theocracy, the judiciary is not placed under the control of the executive. The judiciary derives its authority directly from the Shari'ah and is answerable to God. Allah says thus;

*If any do fail to judge by what Allah Hath revealed, they are unbelievers.*¹⁶

Though, the judges are being appointed by the '*Amir*'. the moment the judge occupied the bench he will have to administer justice among the people according to the Islamic law (Shari'ah) in an impartial manner. All the organs and functionaries of the Islamic are under the legal jurisdiction of the judge, the '*Amir*' (President) or any other executive officer may be called upon to appear in the court of law as a plaintiff or defendant like any other citizen of the Islamic state.

Rulers and the ruled are subject to the same law and there should be no discrimination on the basis of position, power or privilege. Islamic theocracy stands for equality and strictly to this principle in social economic and political affairs.

Recommendations.

With the characteristic features of the Islamic system of government, one will notice that equality, justice and fairness are the hallmark of the Islamic theocracy. Let the people of the Book, the Christians and the Jews boldly implement the laws that contained in their books, the Torah (*Tawrat*) and the Bible (*Injil*), the revealed books to both Moses (Musa) and Jesus (‘Isa) (peace be unto them). The revealed laws to all prophets of God are known as the Shari ‘ah, the path to follow so as to attain felicity in this World and the Hereafter. Allah says thus: *Let the People of the Gospel Judge by what Allah hath revealed Therein. If any do fail To Judge by What Allah hath revealed, They are Those who rebel.* ¹⁷

Conclusion.

The paper deliberated on the characteristics features of Islamic theocracy. The paper suggested that Islamic system of government is the solution to Nigeria problems such as injustice, corruption insecurity, social vices, unemployment among others if given a chance. Let Nigeria borrow a leaf from countries such as Saudi-Arabia, Iran, Malaysia ,Kuwait to mention but few where crime rate is zero percent and the wealth of their countries are evenly distributed, education is well funded and freed, security of life and property are guaranteed.

Endnote:

1. Qur’an 19: 36
2. Qur’an 2 : 247
3. I. Sulaiman; “*Sustainable Governance*” contemporary issues series – 1, (International Institution of Islamic Thought Nigeria, 2000) page, 10 – 12
4. I Sulaiman, page 11
5. Y.K, Jimoh: *Islam and National Integration and Development*; An Examination of ‘Umar ibn Abd Aziz administration, NATAIS Journal (2013) Vol.6, pp.13-15.
6. Y . K Jimoh 16, p 13 – 15
7. Sahih Al- Bukhari.
8. Quran 45 :18
9. Abu A’ala Mawdudi: *Islamic way of life: “Solution to the global problem”*. (Ikmotullah Productions, Shomolu – Lagos), pp. 25 – 50
10. Abu A’ala Mawdudi, pp. 50 – 55
11. Qur’an 3:110
12. Qur’an 4: 59
13. Qur’an 4 : 58
14. al- Mawdudi: pp. 85 – 87
15. al-Mawdudi; pp. 85_87

16. Qur'an 5:44
17. Qur'an 5: 47