



# **Muslim Scholars’\* Participation in Nigerian Politics: Challenges and Prospects**

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## **Abstract**

Politics is an integral part of Islam that Muslim. Nigeria as a nation has been devising several tactics in governing the socio-political affairs of her citizens. In addition to the ethnic diversity, the religious landscape of the country has influenced the political configuration and divided the nation the more. Currently, there is political propaganda from both Christians and tyro Muslims who vehemently opposed the ruling party, APC which filed two Muslims in respect of the forthcoming 2023 Presidential Election. From Islamic perspective, it is obviously incredible that Muslims condemn their brothers for that matter, which is a pointer to contra-distinctive incongruousness of Islamic brotherhood. This calls for research on the Islamic worldview on politics and necessity for the Muslim scholars’ involvement in the business to curb disunity among the Muslims. Historical and descriptive methods and library and interview tools are utilised. Findings revealed that majority of Muslims lack basic knowledge of Islamic politics, which is at detriment of Islamic brotherhood, the gap that could be filled by Muslim scholars. In conclusion, recommendations are made that Muslim scholars should perceive their participation in Nigerian politics as a religious clarion call and play pro-active roles at various political parties by activating certain strategic approaches as “informed politicians” chiefly to letting the Muslims see each other as one and ready to support themselves.

Keywords: Muslim Scholars, Nigerian Politics, Islamic Political System, Muslim-Muslim Candidature.

## **1. Introduction**

Nigeria has a majority Muslim population with diverse tribes, languages, and regions. Conventionally, Nigeria is a politically democratic state that has a variety of political parties with different agendas to attain the set political offices under her arms; executive, judicial, and legislative. At the time of writing this paper, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) records about eighteen (18) registered political parties as eligible for canvassing for various offices during elections.<sup>1</sup> Since 2014 till the present time, All Progressive Congress (APC) remains ruling party that has potentiality of having strong connection and power of nominating who will occupy many offices in general and Presidential seat through 2023 general election.

All Progressive Congress (APC) party after series of consultations and considerations resulted to nominating Yoruba-Hausa persons; Bola Hamed Tinubu and Kashim Shettima for the Presidential election as aired by party representatives. This, by implication, amounted to having Muslim-Muslim candidates for the purpose, which however, generated a lot of outcry and heated reactions from Nigerians at home and abroad, the party members, Christians, and Muslims based on various perceptions ranging from regional, tribal, and religious affiliations. Islamophobia is not alien to the Nigerian Muslims since decades from non-Muslims especially the Christians, which is likewise showcased in the antagonizing of Muslim-Muslim candidature of the APC Presidential candidates, unfortunately for the fact that Muslims of the party and

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\* Muslim scholars in this context refers to learned Muslims who specialise in various fields of study and be able to Islamise them for the service of Islam and humanity. Of course, it does not necessarily mean to specialise in Islamic studies but it is an added advantage for that purpose.



otherwise reveals the existence of intra-Muslim hatred and hostility, which is a pointer to postcolonial evangelistic syndrome.

Islam is a relevant religion that cannot afford to compartmentalize its adherents' spirituality and sociality but rather recommends necessary approaches to subdue any anomaly that could impede its vision of an exemplary *Ummah*. The participation of the Muslims in Nigerian politics is an immeasurable historic exercise that has an impact on every nook and cranny of the country, but the current Muslim politicians' attitude is alarmingly at odds with the Islamic vision for Muslim unity. In achieving such a common goal, the roles of Muslim scholars as people of repute could never be undermined if they could actively participate in politics as well as in spiritual activities. Muslim scholars are people with multifaceted responsibilities spanning sociopolitical, spiritual, economic, and educational domains, who use their gifted talents and possessed qualities to realize the visionary togetherness of Muslims for a better life. To this end, the paper surveys the Islamic worldviews on politics as a whole and the involvement of Muslim scholars in business in the context of the Nigerian situation, mainly to curtail the avoidable disunity among Muslim politicians and regain the glory of oneness amidst their common enemies.

## **2. Politics in the Light of Islam**

Islam defines politics as an integral part of Muslim life; both state and religion complement each other mainly to realise an enabling environment where the Muslims can conveniently, to a large extent, discharge their primary assignment as Allah's viceroy on the earth (Q.51:56). Though Islam does not declare a specific political party or type to which Muslims must belong, it acknowledges the ones that concur with the Islamic political features as portrayed in the political activities of the Prophet ﷺ and the righteously guided companions. Western political propaganda has distorted existing Islamic political glory into an unpredictable cesspool of immorality; hatred, disunity, and self-aggrandizement have surfaced immensely in many Muslim countries. Afterwards, contemporary Muslim thinkers studied the political activities, theories, and/or institutions of Islamic classical scholars with the aim of emancipating the Muslim *Ummah* from the catastrophic and disastrous politics of the West and resolved to the institutionalization of the concept of *Al-Khilāfah*. Though Islam does not declare a specific political party or type to which Muslims must belong, it acknowledges the ones that concur with the Islamic political features as portrayed in the political activities of the Prophet ﷺ and the righteously guided companions. Western political propaganda has distorted existing Islamic political glory into an unpredictable cesspool of immorality; hatred, disunity, and self-aggrandizement have surfaced immensely in many Muslim countries. Afterwards, contemporary Muslim thinkers studied the political activities, theories, and/or institutions of Islamic classical scholars with the aim of emancipating the Muslim *Ummah* from the catastrophic and disastrous politics of the West and resolved to the institutionalization of the concept of *Al-Khilāfah* (Successor and viceroy of Allah on the surface of the earth). Working for this becomes a collective assignment in which Muslims of various endeavours would use every available machinery to recommend, solicit, and employ the idea in their various capacities and localities. This is because the loss of Muslim political glory is not normally revived, but rather sellable to others for mutual emulation and to restore peace to all human spheres.<sup>ii</sup>

In the activity of eradicating the inherited colonial political syndrome, the following scholars' impact could never be downgraded; Abul-A'la Al-Mawdūiy (d. 1979), Jamalud-Deen Al-Afghāniy (d. 1897), Aliy Al-Mawardi (d. 450H./1058), Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), Abu Hamid Al-Ghazzāliy (d. 1111), Hasan Al-Bannā' (d. 1949), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), Uthmān bin Fodio (d. 1817), Yūsuf Al-Qarāḍāwiyy (d. 2022) among others, played remarkable roles towards the institutionalization of Islamic political thought, especially in the Muslim nations. The scholars used various approaches and strategies for clamoring for fair political activities; selection and election of leaders, good governance, Muslim democracy, Muslim brotherhood and welfarism; etc. to actualize an exemplary society, which is envisioned



in both the Qur'an and Traditions of the Prophet. In other words, the scholars equivocally used every available opportunity to agitate for the restoration of a society where Muslim solidarity would prevail, be preserved, and be based on faith and justice.<sup>iii</sup> As such, they viewed their involvement in politics as a religious act that attracts rewards from Allah. Hence, peace-making, peace-keeping, peace-building, uprightness, and righteousness of the members of the community are essential responsibilities of devout leaders and scholars, which should not be toyed with. Their view is deduced from a tradition of the Prophet which means:

There are two classes of people in my Ummah, if they are right, the Ummah is set right, if they are wrong, the Ummah is wrong, the Ummah goes wrong: they are the rulers and scholars.<sup>iv</sup>

In his commentary on the above, Imam Al-Ghazzali maintains that the scholars are like medical personnel as they are to oversee and participate in the smooth-running and serenity of society. Its ill-management would be viewed as a result of the unproductiveness of the scholars. To him, leaders are supposed to see the scholars of their society as necessary machinery and partners in progress to a large extent by consulting them mutually and frequently, while the scholars, on the other hand, must consider guiding the incumbent leaders as an inevitable divine responsibility.<sup>v</sup> Though some Islamic scholars argue that the above quotation is not an authentic Hadith of the Prophet, it does reflect elements of the Islamic worldview on state governance, such as the separation of religious and state affairs. Really, compartmentalization of the two entities into different entities has been a success of the West in various Muslim nations to the extent that ignoramus and tyro Muslims view them as horrible parties that an individual can only affiliate himself to either of the two, while belonging to the two is vehemently regarded as an egregious act.

Ḥasan Al-Bannā (1900–1949), among other scholars, experienced the era when his fellow Muslims fell prey to the Western socio-political theory of nationalism and secularism that marginalized Islamic sovereignty.<sup>vi</sup> As a way out, he actively participated in the politics of his time to the extent of mobilizing the Muslims towards the realization of Muslim emancipation and a society of conscious individuals. He strategically planned well-articulated activities that almost every Egyptian saw as necessary, as Ḥasan Al-Bannā demanded. He would reach out to people secretly and openly, visit hospitals, schools, coffee houses, among others, and in the end, he succeeded in the creation of a formidable party that produced several presidents for Egypt, world-class scholars, and made landmark contributions to the development of the nation. All of this is possible thanks to the Muslim Brotherhood's political participation.<sup>vii</sup>

One of the characteristics of democracy is political multiparty, whereby a number of political organizations that merit the set prerequisites would be registered. The multiparty system is purposely an apparatus of democracy in which members of each party compete in elections, gain access to political offices, and control the affairs of the state through winning free and fair elections. The approach is required in a pluralistic society to broaden the scope of the populace's participation in the society's political activities and to accelerate the discovery and rapid identification of any type of malaise in electoral processes.<sup>viii</sup> The political multiparty is competitive in nature as each registered party would synergize amongst its members to market reasonable manifestos and manage the public amenities judiciously upon occupying the power seats as ruling party within the designed period of time. Similarly, a multi-party system provides citizens with the benefit of having multiple options based on which suits or convinces them the most, and in such a situation, there is a possibility of realizing a coalition government that would benefit society more. The coalition government is, nevertheless, observed to actualize political change more than a one-party or two-party dominant system.<sup>ix</sup>

According to Al-Qaraḍāwi, multiparty political system is a modern approach to open-access political business whereby the general members of a community would be opportune to participate in it



from micro to macro parties and from unrecognized to recognized status. Though Asan Al-Bann, a great Mullah to him, did not subscribe to the system because of the need of the time, which was Muslim unity and brotherhood after their liberation from Western colonialism.<sup>x</sup> Al-Qaradāwi, however, posited that the system is to the political system as the schools of thought are to Islamic Jurisprudence and that the Muslim *Ummah* should appreciate and participate in it actively to prove their relevance to the current trends of socio-political endeavors in order to avoid being relegated from accessing their socio-political dividends. He argues further that there is no doubt in the fact that such an approach is attributed to the West, yet so far it does not affect the fundamentals of the Islamic faith of a Muslim, it becomes necessary to incorporate it even into the political system of an Islamic state.<sup>xi</sup> The Muslim *Ummah* must be diplomatic in the realm of political organization participation in such a way that the Islamic political worldview is realistic by working strategically for peace-building and national development in their localities.<sup>xii</sup>

### **3. The Trend of Muslim Participation in the Nigeria Politics: A Sketchy Account**

Politics and politicization are not alien to the Nigerian community, hitherto the proliferation of the colonial masters and independence in 1960. Though in a limited and primitive form, Nigerians preferred the traditional political system in which leadership is determined by religious inclination or economic influence. In this sense, leadership was based on appointment rather than election, and whoever was granted rulership exercised complete autonomy.<sup>xiii</sup> The legendary struggle of Shaykh Uthman Dan Fodio of the Fulani clan (1754-1817) in all its ramifications as he demonstrated his political prowess in reshaping the lives of his people for the better will go down in Nigerian history. After discovering the political anomalies and corruptive lifestyles of the heads of certain communities and dynasties, Shaykh Uthman ventured into contemporary politics. He strategically mobilized people towards emancipating people from exploitation and peaceful co-existence among all. The activity was tagged as *Jihād* because it was for the sake of Allah and the service of humanity, but it was politically inclined. By implication, Shaykh Uthman was able to accomplish the creation of a formidable caliphate through genuine strategies; in-house cum underneath orientation and actualization of well-designed plan-work in collaboration with the Muslim trained personnel.<sup>xiv</sup>

The 1914 amalgamation of several provinces and tribes under a single umbrella of Nigeria has been faulted by various observers due to all sorts of upheavals, unfair discrimination, inter-religious and intra-religious hatred, grudges, conflicts and chauvinism, which are born of self-centeredness, tribalism, bad leadership, and religious bigotry. These among others have insinuated pessimism and loss of hope in the mind of many Nigerians in accessing their fundamental statutory rights so much that many become silent criminals but pretending pending the time when they would be opportune to strike as exhibited during the 2020 ENDSARS protest.<sup>xv</sup> By and large, the Muslims do not hesitate to participate in the politics of the nation that their vigorous roles in the fight for the independence which was realistic in 1960 are recorded and became incumbents of the offices of the head of state at various times since then till date. Perusing the records of the headship and presidency of Nigeria would reveal scratches of anomaly and chronic regional sentimentality whereby neither south-eastern, south-southern nor south-western Muslims ascended the post out of the nine Muslim heads of the state and two south-western Christians respectively.<sup>xvi</sup>

It is unfortunate that nominal Muslim politicians collaborated with the harbingers of Islamophobia in antagonizing their Muslim fellow for canvassing for the presidential seat in the country. The condemnation made by the Christians against the Muslim political declaration of their 2023 electoral ambition and approach could be considered a revelation of what the Qur'an says about them (Christians) as foes towards the Muslims (Q.2:120). However, it would then be viewed as coup de main when some tyro Muslims consciously and unconsciously connived with the Christians in their counterclaim preponderances which is tagged as "Muslim-Muslim ticket will not work in Nigeria". As a way of bringing the CAN's



(Christiana Association of Nigeria) halitosis into a limelight, MURIC (The Muslim Rights Concern) released a statement that says:

We are not surprised by CAN's verbal halitosis over Tinubu's choice. The Christian umbrella body is just staying in character. It is always out to oppose any Muslim in power or any Muslim seeking office. That is because CAN will never be satisfied with a Muslim as president of Nigeria. It will not suit its agenda of Nigeria for Christ... We warn CAN to leave Tinubu alone. MURIC will respond phrase for phrase and innuendo for innuendo whenever CAN attacks Tinubu or Shettima based on their religion. However, we have no business with reference to their "political" party or other official issues.<sup>xvii</sup>

This is just a rejoinder to several attacks made by the association of the Nigerian Christians on both Islam and the Muslims through series of Islamophobic video, verbal, and writing on various media attempting to alienate the "Muslims from national lives as such narratives are becoming increasingly difficult to dislodge from the mind of people".<sup>xviii</sup>

The Muslims' perception on the issue is a pathetic exhibition of cowardice especially as the majority of the Muslims at the realm of Nigerian politics are uninformed or ignoramus of Islamic worldview on the politics. Some Muslims are even bold enough to antagonize Tinubu-Shettima ticket publicly and register their support to a stunt foe of their faith and fame at the expense of their faith-brethren.<sup>xix</sup> Such Muslims would not see anything wrong if Gowon, a Christian who presided over Nigeria for parallel nine (9) years between 1966 and 1975 canvasses and got elected or Obasanjo, another Christian who also served as military and civilian head between 1976 and 1979 and 1999 and 2007 respectively (approximate of eleven (11) years).<sup>xx</sup> In revealing a sort of Christian heads' inhumane attitude and injustice towards the Muslims in various states even where they occupy reasonable population, various Muslim organizations made unrelenting efforts to cry-out how their brethren are being subjected to frustrating, threatening, and pitching conditions.<sup>xxi</sup> The Muslims are relegated to the base of national affairs through politization of matters that supposed to be instrumental in the national integration but opposite is the case to avert the CAN's ignoble political agenda and/or promote Islamophobia.<sup>xxii</sup> In this situation exist Muslim politicians who persist fighting for their political parties through thuggery, blaspheme, abusive words, jesting, and blackmailing their Muslim brother(s) rather than working for the Islamic brotherhood, which is more rewarding.<sup>xxiii</sup> Hence, several questions stir minds of well-mannered thinking individuals wanting to know why such a level of denial against accessing the office bechance the Muslims of those areas; sought-south, south-east, and sought-west.

What are the offences of the Nigerian Muslims of the areas?

Do the Muslims of those areas not participating in the nation's politics or statutorily carved themselves out of the national right?

The Muslim scholars of the areas gave verdict jurisprudentially against such right or they lack scholars who could motivate them harmoniously and challenge them to that effect?

Apparently, the above reveals that there are looping holes in the political efforts of the Muslim politicians of Nigeria that the Muslim scholars of the country ought to stand for by exhibiting their endowed qualities and potentialities.

#### **4. Muslim Scholars' Participation in the Nigerian Politics: A *Jihād*ic Duty**

Factually speaking, Islam acknowledges inseparability of the civil life and religious dutifulness of the Muslim adherents for they complement each other in having a well-administered Muslim Ummah where each Muslim would enjoy both mundane and ritual benefits accordingly. (Q.2:201). Negating the



misleading view of some scholars who postulated illegality of the Muslims’ participation in politics in an unIslamic country as Nigeria, majority of Islamic scholars have argued in favor of the legality of their participation considering the proxy consequences and that Muslims should use the medium to promote tolerance, peaceful coexistence and national integration in line with the Islamic worldview.<sup>xxiv</sup> Then justifying such is as good as having Muslim scholars who are more informed about the Islamic views on such business to be on board for essential reasons aside the special status conferred on them as living guides, being just for one hour in government is better than worshipping for sixty years.<sup>xxv</sup> Premised on the above, Muslim scholars’ participation in the Nigerian politics is genuinely necessitated to martialize the following strategic templates:

Unity of Muslims is an Islamic ideology that should be given a considerable attention in the realm of politics above others. Another idea that makes Islam and the Muslims distinct from other religions is Tawḥīd which is a fundamental in the Islamic religion. As the concept unites the Muslims’ faith under monotheism, it as well clamor for Ithād among them discarding their diverse in color, tribe, and languages. The Muslim Ummah has no excuse to be disintegrated but to maintain oneness in every sphere of their endeavors even if they have different opinions on issues, it should be viewed as a blessing of Allah rather than being a cause of disunity.

Assuredly, the inevitability of the politics is not questionable as it affects dealings of every individual the Muslims as well, which the Muslim politicians’ participation attest to though without considering the Islamic ideology of brotherhood, then the Muslim scholars has to fill the looping hole. This (Muslim brotherhood) being a sacrosanct ideology in the Islamic prescript calls the Muslim scholars to participate in the Nigerian politics with the aim of reconnecting the bond of Muslim brotherhood and rescue them from stabs of colonial government. For the attainment of this, tolerating each regardless of madhhab, criticizing issues constructively and not persons,<sup>xxvi</sup> and carrying each other along in acquainting them with necessity of the Muslim unity especially in the Nigerian contextual politics is apparently demanding. The Muslim scholars’ participation in the Nigerian politics would forestall that every Muslims are one, have equal rights to every national “cake” and otherwise, and should not deprive each other’s:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا<sup>٥</sup> وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ  
قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا<sup>٦</sup> كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ  
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

And hold fast, all together, unto the bond with God, and do not draw Apart from one another. And remember the blessings which God has bestowed upon you: how, when you were enemies, He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brethren; and [how, when] you were on the brink of a fiery abyss, He saved you from it. In this way God makes clear His messages unto you, so that you might find guidance. (Qur’an 3:103).

Also,

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ<sup>٧</sup> وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

The believers are but a single Brotherhood: So, make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers: And fear Allah that ye may receive Mercy. (Qur’an 49:10).



While studying At-Tawhīd and its effects on man's life, Ali argues that the concept is an all-encompassing paradigm that directs the Muslim Ummah to maintain brotherhood globally without giving any room for any sort of discrimination. By the way, would consider their brothers and sisters before others for goodness. To him, catering for Muslim brothers is not conditional in every situation as understood from At-Tawhīd:

Under the Islamic political system, Tawhīd implies that all believers are one moderate ummah, united, not separable and indivisible... One should not stand on the brink of a tragic precipice against another. The nature of the united ummah based on tawhīdic paradigm is to contain one feeling, one will, one way of thinking and one way of lifestyle to show up genuine obedience to His (Allah's) guidance and His prophets... Tawhīdic paradigm is the authority and means of their differences, success and prosperity.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Creation of subgroup under each Muslim organization whose designation would be mainly political is another step through which the Muslim scholars could impact their participation in the Nigerian politics. Realistically, majority of Muslim scholars belong to one Muslim organization or the other as we have thousands of them hence such avenue should be explored towards having "political department" at each to represent the Muslim Ummah at various Nigerian political parties enthusiastically. For the fact that wining a war depends on tactical plannings and their execution, day-to-day overseeing such a department's approaches to every political happening by her head would go a very long in giving Muslim organizations what should be the next lines of action that should be activated collectively.

The Islamic Welfare Foundation (IWF) is one of the Nigerian Muslim organizations that have the needed potentiality of being harbinger of such gigantic step. The organization has a huge number of Muslim scholars who are well informed about Islamic worldview on every aspect of human endeavors and politics to be specific. An element of her astonishingly resonance potentiality shows in her annual conference on Islam in Nigeria availing young scholars and career pursuers the opportunity of tapping from their colleagues on a scheduled theme. Such an organization and the likes with uncompromised Islamic vision are viable to let the change start with them. Truthfully, there are a lot of Muslim organizations out there looking forward to having like-minded Muslim individuals and/or bodies to spring-up with in realizing a formidable "Islamically inclined politician". This as it may be, translates a speech given by Ustādh Amao Alaga, an Islamic scholar from Ibadan in an Islamic symposium held at Alausa-Lagos sometime in 2022 where necessities attached to the Muslim scholars' participation in the Nigeria politics are elucidatorily enumerated.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Giving orientation and homily to the Muslim politicians on what is ahead of them in their political sojourn. This being another role through which the Muslim scholars could partake in the politics of Nigeria is here necessary hence that the Muslim politicians would not only be reminded of what is expected of them in the political arena but would also let them realize the fact that "no matter how mundane or profane an act may seem, its spiritual implication cannot be ignored because whatever one does will be accounted for in the hereafter and one will be judged accordingly."<sup>xxix</sup> Holding a well-designed program of orientation and reorientation with the Muslim politicians frequently will kit them up mentally with every needed guidance on vicissitudes and prospects in venturing into political adventure in Nigeria. Staging series of symposium by the Muslim scholars with Nigerian Muslim politicians can inculcate spirit of sincerity cum servitudes in them, which at long-run will gear them up towards serving God and humanity worthwhile in the course of their political career. It is desideratum to unequivocally emphasize that readiness to discharge duty as an incumbent of a political office is a core principle of the Islamic political system that anyone aspiring for a post would see himself as serving humanity and not as a boss. In other words, duty should be given paramount seriousness above right by which each would be considered a constituent of another's importance and must be diligently catered for by a Muslim political office incumbent.<sup>xxx</sup>



Furthermore, the glorious Qur'an contains verses in nimety on importance of giving homily, orientation, and reminder to fellow men either on request or otherwise as well the Traditions of the Prophet, Muhammad pedagogically give directives towards the same.

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ ۙ ۙ سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ خَشِيَ ۙ ۙ 10

Therefore, give admonition in case the admonition profits (the hearer).  
The admonition will be received by those who fear (Allah). (Q.87:9-10).

As a way of sensitizing a representative and giving him qualitative orientation, the Prophet having selected Mu'adh bin Jabal to oversee the affairs of people of Yemen he instructed him to work on their relationship with Allah, their interpersonal relation which must be cordially peaceful, and should as well forbear corruptive and fraudulent acts. As he wanted to accompany him to Yemen, the Prophet oversaw Mu'adh as far as towards the boundary of Madinah while exiting for the representative assignment saddled to him by the Prophet, ﷺ.

Ibn Abbas reported: When the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sent Mu'adh to Yemen, he said to him: "Verily, you are coming to a people among the people of the Book, so call them to testify there is no God but Allah and I am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has obligated five prayers in each day and night. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah as obligated charity to be taken from the rich and given to the poor. If they accept that, beware not to take from the best of their wealth. Be on guard from the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and Allah (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, book on Al-'Īmān, Ḥadīth number 31).

In the same vein, the narration reflects the modality explored by the Prophet while preparing his representative in such a manner that he hinted him kindly in an eloquent voice, which prompted proper understanding of his message rather than addressing him bluntly, which might render the Prophet's aim futile.<sup>xxxii</sup> The orientation and sensitization given by the Prophet to Mu'adh bin Jabal as a guiding principle was instrumental to his success in his governance in Yemen where he represented the Prophet specifically and the Muslim Ummah generally.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

In the avenue, the Muslim politicians must be availed with Islamic desirable qualities. By this, qualitative characters such as mutual empathy, sympathy, tolerance, servitude, conviviality, accommodating must be incorporated into the content of the program. It is highly pathetic that the Nigerian Muslim politicians have as well failed in the aspect of Islamic desirable qualities not only among their Muslim brethren but likewise fellow human beings. They are fond of showing-off, saboteur, lie-telling etc. in the name of their political pursuit. Imperativeness of instilling and imbibing good character by the Nigerian Muslim politicians was recapitulated by Prof. B.O. Yusuf while lamenting the unIslamic characters of the Nigerian politicians during his Khuṭbah on 07/10/2022 and advised them to portray standard behavior positing that such quality would endear them to the mind of people ardently.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Further still, the Muslim scholars must prepare Muslim politicians on how to devise a reliable way of ascertaining prowess and competence of whom to be nominated, campaigned for, and supported unanimously regardless of such a person's political party. Al-Ghazzālī maintains that in order that the affairs of a state to be smoothly governed, a person to be elected must possess certain qualities vis-a-vis piety of Allah, knowledgeability, courageousness, and ability to appoint and direct dedicated experts towards administrating various ministries and parastatals effectively. Likewise, acquaintance with plights of citizens as well readiness to proffer effective solution are required of a prospective public office seeker / nominee for that matter.<sup>xxxiv</sup>





In a nutshell, accessing a well-prepared and coordinated orientation is capable of yielding positive effects on the Nigerian politics as Burhanuddin Al-Helmy (1911-1969) demonstrated in Malaysia. He, as a Muslim scholar did not ordinarily participate in the politics of Malaysia, his home town but made significant impact on the life of Muslims and non-Muslims in accordance with the Islamic ideology. He proved that the series of orientation and education received from those “who had the progressive understanding of Islam” formulated, modified and influenced his Islamic political thought in piloting and mobilizing the Muslim youths towards realizing Islamic values at expense of secularism in Malaysia. He however used every available opportunity like symposium, seminars, and conference to enlighten and influence people convincingly a result of which restored prosperity and tranquility to Malaya.<sup>xxxv</sup>

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper has justly shed light on the unavailability and inseparability of religion and politics as they affect each other as acknowledged in the Islamic law. A cursory account of how Islamic and Muslim scholars had reasonably participated in the endeavor has likewise been discussed. At the same time, the scenario of how contemporary Nigerian Muslim politicians use the avenue to manipulate and distort the Islamic brotherhood to the extent of sidelining their brothers of certain area of the country consciously and unconsciously is not left unaddressed. As such, it is believed that the current situation of the Nigeria politics has egregiously become alarming and participation of Islamically informed personalities is inevitable to curb the situation. This is viewed as an approach to reinstating the lost glory of the Nigerian Muslim Ummah which had been landmark hitherto. In achieving this, the Muslim scholars are recommended to synergize and strategize on realizing a true Islamic brotherhood that is devoid of discrepancy and disintegration, form subgroups in each Muslim organizations, and hold frequent in-house and public conferences, seminars, workshops, symposiums etc. to sensitize themselves and the Muslim populace on the necessity for having a balance Islamic approach to the Nigeria politics. This, of course, would go a very long way in having politicians with Islamic desirable character that would endear them ardently to fellow Nigerians.

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- <sup>vi</sup> Thameem Ushama, “Hasan Al-Bannā's Life, Mission, Political Thought and Reforms,” in *Contemporary Islamic Political Thought: A Study of Eleven Islamic Thinkers*, ed. Zeenath Kausar (Malaysia: International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 2009), 206-212.
- <sup>vii</sup> Sulyman Muhammad-Busayri, “The Relevance of Hasan Al-Bannā's Thought in As-Salām fil-Islām on Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria,” (M.A. Dissertation, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, Nigeria, 2021), 17-20.
- <sup>viii</sup> <https://www.elections.org.za/workarea/multi-party-democracy-and-its-relevance-in-africa> accessed on 12/10/2022.
- <sup>ix</sup> [www.shivajicollege.ac.in/econtent](http://www.shivajicollege.ac.in/econtent) accessed on 12/10/2022
- <sup>x</sup> Al-Qaradāwi, Yūsuf. *Min Fiqh Ad-Dawlah Fil-Islām* (Cairo: Dār Ash-Shurūq, 2009), 157.
- <sup>xi</sup> Ibid 154-155.
- <sup>xii</sup> Ibid 147-149.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Ehiedu E.G. Iweriebor, “State System in Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial Nigeria: An Overview,” (Africa: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO), December, 1982), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40759619> accessed on 12/10/2022.



- xiv <https://www.britanica.com/biography/Usman-dan-Fodio/Later-life> accessed on 12/10/2022.
- xv Mahfouz A. Adedimeji, “Moving Forward is Glancing Backwards: Towards Regenerating a Degenerate Ummah,” (a paper delivered at the 29<sup>th</sup> the Annual Ramadan Lecture organized by the University of Ibadan Muslim Community, university of Ibadan, Ibadan-Nigeria, 16th April, 2022), 6.
- xvi ‘Abdus-Sami’i Imam Arikewuyo, “Legacies of the Administration of the Nascent Islamic State of the Madinah: Implications for National Integration and Development in Nigeria,” in *Religion, Peace Building and National Integration* eds. Y. O. Imam, D. Oguntola-Laguda, M. M. M. Jimba, A. K. Makinde and M. A. Folorunsho (Nigeria: Department of Religious Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, 2020), 97-100.
- xvii The writer received the message through a WhatsApp platform on July 23, 2022 at 8:25pm.
- xviii Abdulrazaq O. Kilani, “The Dialogue of Monotheism and the Struggle to Surrender,” (being a paper delivered at the 173<sup>rd</sup> Inaugural Lecture of University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt-Nigeria, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2021), 65.
- xix On 4th July, 2022, in a course of discussing situation of things in Nigeria with a Muslim man and on political matters to be specific when I inquired, would it not be joyous to the south-western Muslims if Tinubu-Shettima presidential candidacy becomes realistic so far that the Muslims of the geo-political zone have never been opportune to occupy the Presidential seat? His response was “what is specialty in that situation because Tinubu is already rich and owns several big companies in Nigeria and broad. As such, he may not be able to cater for the lower classes of masses in Nigeria.
- xx Arikewuyo, “Legacies of the Administration,” 100.
- xxi See: [www.mssnlagosstate.org](http://www.mssnlagosstate.org)
- xxii Imam, Yahya Oyewole, “Religion and Law: n Examination of Infringement on Muslims’ Rights by Nigerian Authorities,” in *Interrogating Problematic Issues in the Humanities and Education* eds. Paramole, K. O., Salisu, M.T. and Johnson-Bashua, A. (Lagos-Nigeria: Department of Religions & Peace Studies, Lagos State University, 2020), 25-32.
- xxiii Adeola Ogunlade, “Cleric urges more Muslims participation in Politics,” *The Nation* article on April 28, 2022, accessed on 18 October, 2022. <https://thenationonlineng.net>
- xxiv Muslim taking part in elections with non-Muslims (Question 111898). <https://islamqa.info/amp/en> uploaded on 25-02-2008, accessed on 18 October, 2022
- xxv Imām An-Nasā’. *As-Sunan Al-Kubrā*. Hadith 16139.
- xxvi See: Abdul Malik Mujahid, “10 things you can do to develop a culture of Muslim unity,” <https://www.soundvision.com>article> accessed on 18/10/2022.
- xxvii Ali, Yousuf MD, “While *At-Tawhīd* and its effects on man’s life,” 135.
- xxviii A video clip received on 30/08/2022 through a WhatsApp platform.
- xxix Imam, Yahya Oyewole, “Islamic Response to the Problem of Insecurity in Nigeria,” (a paper delivered at the 28<sup>th</sup> the Annual Ramadan Lecture organized by the University of Ibadan Muslim Community, university of Ibadan, Ibadan-Nigeria, 24th April, 2021), 19.
- xxx See Abu Al-Ḥusayn, Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjāj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ At-Turāth Al-‘Arābī, vol. 2, Ḥadīth 1218), 886.
- xxxi <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/225160/etiquette-of-giving-advice> accessed on 22/10/2022.
- xxxii <https://www.abuaminaelias.com/lessons-from-the-journey-of-muadh-ibn-jabal-to-yemen> accessed on 22/10/2022.
- xxxiii As aired on 08/10/2022 through Radio Kwara FM around 12noon.
- xxxiv M.O.A. Abdul. *The Classical Caliphate Islamic Institutions* (Lagos-Nigeria: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1980), 169-170.
- xxxv Muhammad Fuzi Omar, “Burhanuddin Al-Helmy: Political Activities and Ideas,” in *Contemporary Islamic Political Thought: A Study of Eleven Islamic Thinkers* ed. Zeenath Kausar (Malaysia: International Islamic University, 2009), 289-310.