

Let's put Nigeria first – Sultan



■ Sultan Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III

The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), His Eminence, Alh. Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, has charged Nigerians to always put Nigeria first before loyalty to their ethnic nationalities.

The Sultan made this appeal while speaking as the Chairman of the occasion at a programme organised to mark the 58th Independence Anniversary of Nigeria on Friday, September 28, 2018, at the Conference Hall of the National Mosque, Abuja.

According to His Eminence, putting Nigeria first is the only way through which national development can be achieved.

He recalled with nostalgia the good old days when Nigeria had leaders and statesmen like Ahmadu Bello, Obafemi Awolowo and Nnamdi Azikiwe, among others, who cared for Nigeria and placed Nigeria first before loyalty to their ethnic groups, which accounted for why their legacies are still being discussed even after 58 years of Nigeria's independence.

He, however, noted that the reason Nigeria is where it is today is that "we have leaders who are dealers and statesmen who are men of state". He said, "today's leaders are dealers because they deal in all sorts of negative things and add fuel to bring the country down... Today's statesmen are mere men of the state because they

Happy New Year!



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care only about their independent environments and care less about other parts of the state."

The Sultan then challenged the northern leaders of today to not only discuss the legacies of Ahmadu Bello but also to follow his footsteps. He, in the same vein, challenged today's leaders from the Western part of Nigeria to also not just discuss the legacies of Obafemi Awolowo but also to follow the footsteps of Awolowo. Also, he charged the leaders of the Eastern part of Nigeria to follow the footsteps of Nnamdi Azikiwe rather than just discussing his legacies. He challenged them on what legacies they wish to leave behind for the coming generation.

In his reaction to the theme of the programme, "Harnessing our Diversity for National Development", the Sultan submitted that though Nigeria is a diverse country with many religious and ethnic nationalities and people who want to be identified with their own backgrounds, there is a dire need for adherents of different religions and people of different ethnic nationalities to come together as one Nigeria.

As the 2019 general elections approach, the Sultan urged Nigerians to think of ways in which they can positively contribute towards the actualization of a free, fair, credible and violence-free election, which he said is the way Nigeria can be moved forward.

He thanked Allah, the Almighty, for His blessings on Nigeria and for making us Nigerians and for the opportunity to convene the third in the series of programmes to mark the Independence anniversary the country. He also appreciated the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation for the support towards the success of the programme.

"In his reaction to the theme of the programme "Harnessing our Diversity for National Development", the Sultan submitted that though Nigeria is a diverse country with many religious and ethnic nationalities and people who want to be identified with their own backgrounds, there is a dire need for adherents of different religions and people of different ethnic nationalities to come together as one Nigeria."

Happy New Year!



Writing an article with 'Happy New Year' as its title in the Nigerian media every year in a month other than January may look strange and even odd to most non-Muslim readers. In Nigeria, like in most other African countries, South of the Sahara, the idea of 'New Year' is ignorantly believed to be peculiar to January which is the first month of the Gregorian calendar. That is the effect of the colonial scar on the body of our continent.

From whichever angle it is viewed, European colonialism has a thick Christian coloration that still portrays African culture in a rainbow of colonial Christian religion and tradition. For instance, it is a well-known fact that out of the 110 days of official religious holidays in Nigeria today Islamic religion enjoys only five of such days (two days for Eidul Fitr, two for Eidul Adha and one for Mawlidun-Nabiyy). The rest are for Christian religion as follows: two days (Saturday and Sunday) every week, two days for Christmas, two days for Easter and one day for the beginning of the new Gregorian year. Yet, it is the Nigerian Christians who enjoy 105 days as religious holidays that continue to incessantly allege Islamization of the country especially whenever a Muslim happens to be the President.

Even at the state level, the monotonous and sour song of Islamization gets loudest whenever a Muslim is elected as Governor. And the hatchet job is invariably done by the Christian-dominated media. Incidentally, this religious irredentism occurs mainly in the Southwest (the hub of Nigerian media) where majority of Muslims in Southern Nigeria reside.

The Colonial Era

Throughout the 99 years of the British colonial era in Nigeria, the Southern Muslims were never allowed any public holiday to worship once in a week or to celebrate their festivals. It took Nigeria's first and only Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to address that malicious injustice by granting nationwide religious holidays officially to Islamic festivals after independence in 1960. Hitherto, the only festivals recognized and granted public holidays by the British colonialists were the Christian Easter and Christmas and of course an additional day once in a year for the celebration of January which has no religious connection with Christianity. Even with that vivid memory, Nigerian Christians of today still believe that granting religious holidays to Muslims festivals is an aberration amounting to Islamization of Nigeria. Isn't that laughable? Yet, the leaders of Christianity in Nigeria will claim to be working with conscience on the basis of justice.

Islamic Calendar

Islam as a divine religion has its own calendar. And, like in other calendars of the world, there is a beginning and an end for every Islamic year. However, unlike those other calendars, the Islamic calendar, otherwise known as Hijrah calendar, is divinely ordained. This is confirmed in chapter 9, verse 36 of the Qur'an as follows: "Surely, the number of months ordained by Allah when He created the heavens and the earth is twelve. Therefore, do not wrong yourselves in them...."

The Months of Hijrah Calendar

The twelve months of the Hijrah calendar are as follows: Muharram; Safar; Rabiul Awwal; Rabiul-th-Thani; Jumadal Ula; Jumada-th-Thaniyah; Rajab; Shaban; Ramadan; Shawwal; Dhul Qadah; and Dhul Hijjah.

Out of these 12 months, four are specifically designated as sacred. They are the last four months of the Islamic calendar: Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhul Qa'dah and Dhul Hijjah. Some of these months have 30 days. Others have 29. No more, no less.

The first day of 1440 Hijrah calendar this year fell on September 11, 2018. That day followed the last day of Dhul Hijjah which ended on Monday, September 10, 2018. Dhul Hijjah is the last month of Hijrah calendar. It takes a well educated person to understand this and relate it to his/her life spiritually. This is what prompted the outgoing Governor of the State of Osun, Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola, to be the first Nigerian Governor to declare a public holiday for the celebration of new Islamic year.

That historic declaration by Ogbeni Aregbesola was not only an exhibition of knowledge and civility, it was also a clear evidence of upholding justice which had hitherto been denied to Nigerian Muslims despite their demographic majority in the country.

However, to demonstrate similar justice, either out of conviction or for political reasons, some other Governors have thought it wise to join the train of sanity along that line. And it is only pertinent here to say kudos to them for tolling the right path.

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Reaching for the loftiest heights...

Wishes and horses, in English adage, may be fused together to suit philological logic but they are not of the same stock in theory and in practice. While wishes are like days which dazzle their beholders with the rays of the sun, horses are like nights that are heavily pregnant with unpredictable wonders. Those wonders are only known after the pregnancy might have been discharged of its contents. In human reasoning, both wishes and horses may race separately on the same track but their destinations and purposes are never the same.

As much as possible, wishes symbolize dream just as horses typify reality. But in theological semantics, both dream and reality are strictly in accordance with the command of Allah.

The analogy here may not be perfect but it seems to be in tandem with the connotation of an English adage that says: "if wishes were horses, beggars would ride". But in reality, can wishes ever become horses?

As human beings and Muslims, we only randomly conceive or express wishes without any wherewithal to fathom the reality of those wishes. In other words, wishes are human while realities are divine.

The thought of publishing a bulletin by the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) was a fortuitous dream which turned into a reality in the month of Shawwal, 1439 AH, leading to the production of its supposed maiden edition for test-running. That edition was named *Al-Bayan* meaning 'The Evidence'. But as professionally appropriate in the norm of journalism, the name had to be changed when it was discovered to have clashed with that of a magazine locally published by students of a tertiary institution in Nigeria.

Thus, the new name adopted is 'AL-MI'RAJ', meaning

Loftiest Heights or 'The Zenith'. This new name which justifiably edifices the magnificent position of NSCIA in Nigeria is derived from Prophet Muhammad's ascension from the earth to 'Sidratul Muntaha' (Zenith of all heights) through the firmaments of the orbit. Historically, that miraculous ascension immediately followed an unprecedented night journey from Makkah to same Prophet engaged by a divine order during the early stage of Islam. As a testimony to this fact, a whole chapter of the Qur'an is named after that non-such night journey called 'Al-Isra'.

The cited Prophetic ascension which took place during the darkest moments of the night is known and called Al-Mi'raj in Islam.

By analogy, the NSCIA's journey to the present stage of Islamic pilotage in Nigeria is a spiritual forage towards an unimaginable lofty height that may soon become the ultimate destination of Nigerian Muslim Ummah. And with a continuation of this journey, it is hoped that no genuine stakeholder will hesitate to come on board.

Al-Mi'raj bulletin is for all Nigerian Muslim organizations and groups as well as individuals who are committed to Islam as worthy ambassadorial stakeholders. This monthly bulletin will be recipient to comments, observations, questions and suggestions from time to time as a forum for appropriate written interlocution between the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the entire Nigerian Muslim Ummah. It will also serve as a vibrant means of projecting Islamic thoughts, ideas and achievements in form of advertisements. In a nutshell, 'AL-MI'RAJ' bulletin is today's unifier of Nigerian Muslim Ummah for which tomorrow may enthusiastically wait to say: MARHABAN!

- Editor-in-Chief

Imprint

Editor-in-Chief:
Femi Abbas

Editor:
Dr. Muhammad Bala

Deputy Editor:
Dr. Mahfouz Adedimeji

Editorial Assistant:
Aselemi Ibrahim

Graphics:
I. B. Dan-Azumi

Publisher: NSCIA
National Mosque Complex, Central Business District, Abuja,
Nigeria.

Website: www.nscia.com.ng ; almirajnsCIA@gmail.com
e-mail: nsciahq@gmail.com
info@nscia.com.ng
+234 8139 310727
+234 8091 420017

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Why conflict is prevalent in Nigeria -- Prof. Oloyede



■ Prof. Is-haq Oloyede,
Secretary General NSCIA

The Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, has identified corruption and scarcity of resources as the major drivers of conflict in Nigeria.

Prof. Oloyede made this observation in his remarks as the Chairman of the first occasional lecture of the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, on Wednesday, September 26, 2018.

According to Prof. Oloyede, who is also the Registrar of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), "Once there is scarcity, there would always be conflict and this is why peace scholars must be ready to address not only the issue of conflict but also those things to that it the fact that we are larger than our resources is a significant factors in the problem we have as a nation. Continuing, the Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence averred, "I believe while we are addressing the issue of population, the issue of irresponsible parenting, we should also look at the issue of increasing our resources and better management of the limited resources we have."

Prof. Oloyede stressed that corruption remains a monster that must be fought to ensure sustainable peace. He emphasised that corruption is the root cause of the problems Nigeria has because, according to him, "the little we have will be sufficient to address a number of issues we have if we had not have people who are - I think they are sick in trying to amass wealth, wealth that most of them will never need." He also enjoined traditional ruler to be selective in giving chieftaincy titles to all kinds of people saying that Nigeria has enough criminals parading chieftaincy titles."

In his lecture delivered on the occasion, "Opportunities and Challenges for Peace Scholars in a Conflict-Ridden Environment", a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Mallam Yusuf O. Ali, revealed that injustice and distrust as two conflict triggers.

To resolve conflict, Mallam Ali suggested that peace scholars must possess adequate understanding and knowledge of the conflict situation, effective communication skills, patience and perseverance. He said success at

conflict resolution would not only promote security, it would also attract foreign investment.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Prof. Sulyman Abdulkareem, noted that conflict has become an inevitable reality in human life. He then challenged scholars of peace to be at the vanguard of dealing with conflict by championing not only the process of avoiding direct and structural tension but also by initiating the process of entrenching positive peace through justice, facilitation, negotiation, mediation, adjudication and conciliation.

While discussing the lecture, the immediate past Director of the Centre, Dr. Mahfouz Adedimeji, noted that the lecture was encyclopedic, touching on diverse areas like history, philosophy, peace and conflict studies, law and jurisprudence as well as communication. Dr. Adedimeji noted that as the lecturer identified various types of conflicts, conflicts actually begin at the inter-personal level. He identified the original causes of conflict as arrogance (between Iblis and God, when the former refused to prostrate to Adam as commanded) disobedience, when Adam disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, which led to his banishment from the garden of Eden) and envy, which made Cain murder his brother, Abel, just because his own sacrifice was not accepted.

The discussant then enjoined Nigerians, the youth especially, to be mindful of the vices of arrogance, disobedience and envy/ego, which enjoining them to imbibe the four principles of peaceful communication which he

mentioned as: "love your communicative neighbor, dignify your daily dialogue, be a communicative humanizer and prioritise positivism in your language use.

The high points of the occasion included the presentation of awards to the guest speaker, the Oloffa of Offa and some other dignitaries. ■

"I believe while we are addressing the issue of population, the issue of irresponsible parenting, we should also look at the issue of increasing our resources and better management of the limited resources we have."

Islamic rulings and contemporary initiatives: What a beautiful comparison

By Sekinah Lawal

Whenver we view Islamic rulings vis-à-vis some contemporary initiatives, one cannot but marvel at the beauty and divine touch of all Islamic guidelines.

There are many days which have been proposed by the United Nation members and are established by resolutions of the United Nations or of UN agencies like UNESCO, UNEP and WHO. These days are meant to raise awareness for various global problems. On many of them, activities and celebrations take place around the world.

However, Islam has taught us great values on many of these issues being raised now. For instance, every first Monday in October is designated as World Habitat Day. As Muslims, we should know that our glorious Qur'an is the ultimate guide; not only for spirituality, but in all aspects of our lives.

Our glorious Qur'an respects and glorifies nature and wildlife as an earthly heaven, a mirror to the lush forests of Paradise above. Qur'an 28:77 says; "...And do not desire corruption in the land. Indeed, God does not like corruptors." While Qur'an, 2:60 says; "...And do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption."

We have different types of corruption now ranging from murder, crime, political fraud, illegal banking systems, theft, rape, environmental pollution, littering, deforestation, toxic waste and pesticides among others even though some people might see some of those things as minor issues.

"And you do not encourage one another to feed the poor." (Qur'an, 89:18). But you do not honour the orphan." (Qur'an, 89:17)

In the month of October too, we have the International Day of Older Persons and Allah the Most-High has commanded us in the Quran 17,23-24 that;

"Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If one or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of disrespect, or scold them, but say a generous word to them. And act humbly to them in mercy, and say, 'My Lord, have mercy on them, since they cared for me when I was small' (17:23-24).

And our noble Prophet Muhammed (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "He is not of us who does not have mercy on young children, nor honor the elderly" (Al-Tirmidhi).

Also in this month, there is the International Day of Non-Violence and the Prophet (PBUH) said; "Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you, and speak the truth although it be against yourself."

We were taught that a perfect Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe. Let us always remember the saying that; "Whoever believes in one God and the Hereafter should speak what is good or remain silent. It is unworthy of a Mu'min [a person with faith] to injure people's

reputations; and it is unworthy to curse any one; and it is unworthy to abuse any one; and it is unworthy of a Mu'min to talk arrogantly.

October 11th is dedicated as International Day of the Girl Child by the UN and the hadiths of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) about raising girls are beautiful and amazing. Raising the girl child in Islam comes with great rewards and blessings simply because if we offer care, love, support and education to our girl child, Paradise awaits us In ShaaAllahu.

Even when having a girl child was deemed a source of shame and being buried alive, the Prophet came to rectify this grave wrong doing.

Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: A woman came to me with her two daughters. She asked me (for charity) but she found nothing with me except one date-fruit, so I gave it to her.

She [accepted it and then] divided it between her two daughters and ate nothing out of it. Then, she got up and went out. When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) came in, and I narrated to him the story, he said,

"He who is tested with these girl children, and he is benevolent towards them, they will become protection for him against Hell fire". (Muslim)

Uqbah ibn Aamir narrated, I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) say:

"Whoever has three daughters and is patient towards them, and feeds them, gives them to drink, and clothes them from his wealth; they will be a shield for him from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection."

Alhamdulillah for Islam, October 15th of every year is dedicated as Global Handwashing Day when indeed the Prophet had taught us many centuries ago that we should try to be in state of wudhu (ablution) all the time. He said we should wash hands before eating, before praying, upon waking up in the morning, after using the toilets, among others.

Our regular Wudhu is about hygiene. The ritual bathing and washing or ablution a Muslim performs before prayer is now being seen as very important to good health. Without ablution, a Muslim's prayer is invalid. This involves cleaning the hands, mouth, faces, and arms to the elbow, head, ears and feet. These basic hygiene practices are now known to be integral to good health.

Airborne illnesses spread through droplets in the air, which land on nearby objects. Touching an infected object transmits germs to your hands; touching your nose or mouth with your unwashed hand infects you with the virus or bacteria. Hand washing is now known to be the single most important method of preventing the spread of infection. Which of the favours of Allah will we deny?

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Comment

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Genesis of Hijrah Calendar

Hijrah calendar took its name from Prophet Muhammad's migration from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. Hijrah means migration.

The use of Hijrah calendar began when Umar Bn Khattab who became the second Caliph, advised that Islam should have its own distinctive calendar to be based on Hijrah. He concluded that such a landmark event in Islam deserved to be credited with a special calendar. As a matter of fact, Hijrah is one of the three main factors responsible for the survival of the religion of Islam. The second was the victory of the Muslims in the battle of Badr which was waged against them by the Makkah pagans in Madinah, (about 500 kilometers away from Makkah), shortly after the Prophet's migration to Madinah. And the third is Allah's great promise that became an everlasting fulfilment. That promise is contained in Chapter 15 verse 9 of the Qur'an thus:

"It was 'We' (Allah) who revealed the Qur'an and it is 'We' who will ensure its preservation..."

Comment

Now, after about 1500 years of revelation of that divine religion that was ushered into the world by the sacred Book called the Qur'an, who can doubt the ability of the Almighty Allah to make promises and ensure their fulfillments. But for these three fundamental factors, perhaps Islam or the Qur'an would have joined the legion of defunct religions in human history. It is only with Allah that all things are possible.

Significance of Hijrah Calendar

The first day of the Hijrah month (Muharram) is one of the most significant days in Islam. Without 'the great Message of Islam' Prophet Muhammad (SAW) would have had no cause to migrate from Makkah to Madinah.

It was that Great Message which compelled him to migrate that eventually made him the greatest man that ever lived.

Benefits of Hijrah Calendar

Basically, Hijrah institutionalized three important aspects of Muslim lives. These are social, economic and political. In the social aspect when the first revelation was made to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), a period of twelve (12) years was devoted by him to incubation of the religion in the minds of individuals at a time when no pattern of a collective life based on true religious concepts could be presented to the world. As a result, the status of the Muslim individuals in Makkah at that time gave rise to the misconception that Islam, or rather, believing in the mission of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was one's personal affair. This was believed to pertain only to the hereafter which at that time had nothing to do with people's collective life.

Social Effect

It was only after the Prophet's migration (Hijrah) that people began to see Islam clearly as a total way of life which paid attention to and reformed every facet of human existence. It then became evident that Islam was the religion that gave mankind directions regarding almost every moment of a believer's conscious life. Hijrah also enabled the Arabs in particular to see what a Muslim's matrimonial home should be in a Muslim society. Thus, it was only after the Prophet's migration that the world could see the aspect of human social decency and decorum prescribed by Islam.

The second reason for the importance of Hijrah is its

economic significance which manifested in the lifestyle of the pioneer Muslims who were led by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself in migrating to Madinah. The unsurpassable hospitality of the people of Madinah towards the Muslim immigrants at that time did not only provide a new peaceful home for the immigrants, it also showed the hosts' passionate self-sacrifice in philanthropic gesture. And with Hijrah, those immigrants vividly came in contact with advanced agricultural acumen and ingenious artisanship which they never experienced before. These resulted in an unprecedented economic revolution for the city. Since the hosts shared virtually everything they had with the immigrants when the latter first arrived, a lesson was learnt by those immigrants not to continue to be a burden on their brotherly hosts. Therefore, every one of them adopted legitimate ways of earning righteous income as the city's economy attained an unprecedented boom.

Moral Effect of Hijrah

Initially, the Muslim Immigrants in Madinah worked as labourers in the agricultural fields, and construction sites. But later, they, being traditional traders, started small trading activities which brought them into an economic competition with the Jews of Madinah. One aspect of the Islamic economic revolution was that the Muslim immigrants paid the right price for every product they consumed since the Prophet had forbidden the practice of acquiring products on reduced prices in return for loans given to the artisans or to the land cultivators as was the practice in Madinah before Hijrah. That practice was prohibited because it was considered to be a form of usury.

Thus, it was only after Hijrah that agriculture, industry and trade freely helped the Muslims to bring about an integrated, balanced and unfettered economy to the Ummah.

Judicial Effect

The third reason which made Hijrah a very important event is the enjoyment of political freedom by the Muslims. Before Hijrah, the Muslims in Makkah had no say in any matter, internal or external. They were unfortunately a minority against whom the hearts of the majority were full of poisonous enmity simply because they were considered to be an insignificant part of the dominating unbelievers' society in Makkah.

It was Hijrah, therefore, that made the Muslims masters of their own internal affairs, external relations as well as other matters relating to war and peace. If there was any disagreement between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in Madinah at that time, the final decision was to be made by the Prophet who was an unbiased mediator. This indicated a kind of autonomy enjoyed by the Muslims for the first time in their Islamic religious lives. And thus, Madinah became the nucleus of a city-state which, within a period of ten years 622-632 CE, in the life time of the Prophet, expanded to the entire Arabian Peninsula. It is therefore evident that the event of Hijrah turned a few hundred Muslims resident in Madinah into a highly

successful society in commerce and agriculture.

Observation

While celebrating Mawlidun-Nabiyyi, you can only praise the Prophet and nothing more. But when celebrating the Hijrah day, you are celebrating not only the Prophet's migration but also the triumph of Islam as the everlasting password of the Universe. That is why we exchange pleasantries by congratulating one another and by chanting the slogan, HAPPY NEW YEAR! ■

“It was only after the Prophet's migration (Hijrah) that people began to see Islam clearly as a total way of life which paid attention to and reformed every facet of human existence. It then became evident that Islam was the religion that gave mankind directions regarding almost every moment of a believer's conscious life.”



■ R - L: Minister of Abuja, Alh. Muhammad Musa Bello, the Sultan of Sokoto and the representative of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation at the 58th Independence programme

Let's correct past Mistakes - Murshid urges Nigerians

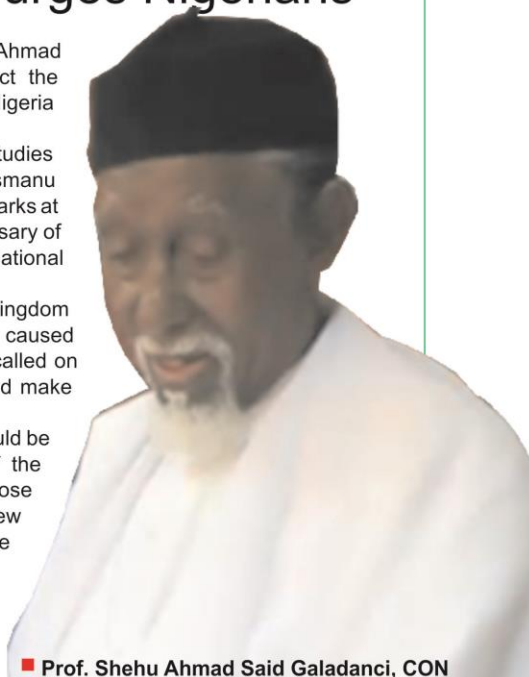
The Murshid of the Abuja National Mosque, Prof. Shehu Ahmad Said Galadanci, has called on all Nigerians to correct the mistakes committed in the past and make efforts to take Nigeria to where it deserves.

The Murshid, who is an erudite scholar of Arabic and Islamic Studies and pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sokoto (now Usmanu DanFodio University), made this call while giving the opening remarks at a programme organised to mark the 58th Independence Anniversary of Nigeria, on Friday, September 28, 2018, at the Conference Hall, National Mosque, Abuja.

Prof. Galadanci, who is a former Ambassador of Nigeria to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, noted that some avoidable circumstances had caused Nigerians to make some mistakes in the polity. He, therefore, called on government at all levels to correct the mistakes of the past and make serious efforts to take the country to where it deserves.

On the question on whether or not Nigeria's independence should be celebrated, the former permanent National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) opined, "Those Nigerians who knew this country during the colonial period or a few years after would definitely affirm that our country has made remarkable changes and developments during this period."

The Murshid prayed that the Almighty Allah assist Nigeria and Nigerians in the fight against corruption and eliminating terrorism in the country.



■ Prof. Shehu Ahmad Said Galadanci, CON

Let's promote peace always -Sultan

The President-General, Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, has called on all Nigerians irrespective of faith or tribe to always promote peace wherever they find themselves.

He gave this advice recently during the presentation of Staff of Office to Sheikh Abou-Nolla as Lagos' 10th Chief Imam. He also enjoined Sheikh Abou-Nolla to promote peace and harmony not only in Lagos but in the country at large.

The Sultan, represented by NSCIA's Deputy-President and President of Muslim Ummah of South-West Nigeria (MUSWEN), Alhaji Sakariyau Babalola, advised the Chief Imam to work for the progress of Islam and enjoined the congregation to redouble their efforts in the propagation of Islam and entrenchment of peaceful and harmonious relationship among religious adherents in the state.

His Eminence also lauded the appointment of the new Chief Imam, expressing confidence in his capacity to relate well with the Muslim community in Lagos, the Lagos Central Mosque Executive Council Chairman, Sheikh AbdulHafeez Abou, presented the Chief Imam with his Staff of Office.

Sheikh Abou was supported by the Vice-Chairman and Bashorun of Lagos, Alhaji Sikiru Alabi Macfoy, Commissioner for Home Affairs, Dr AbdulHakeem AbdulLateef and Alhaji

Femi Okunnu, among others.

Represented by his Deputy, Dr Idiat Adebule, Governor Akinwunmi Ambode of Lagos said the state recognised the role of Muslims in the peace and harmony being enjoyed in Lagos and described spiritual leaders as development partners in the effort to bring greater progress and prosperity to the state.

"Your contributions have greatly aided government's efforts in the delivery of services and dividends of democracy to the people, especially those at the grassroots. Your roles in raising awareness and influencing attitudes, behaviours and practices, you have also helped us to enjoy relative peace in the state," he said.

Sheikh Abou, in his welcome address, described the Chief Imam as an erudite scholar and a well-cultured personality. He called for support for him, to enable him discharge his responsibility well.

In his lecture, the President of the Muslim Community of Lagos State (MCLS), Prof. Tajudeen Gbadamosi, urged the faithful to respect the Chief Imam as his installation was divine.

The 60 newly turbaned title holders in the state were urged to justify the confidence reposed in them.

...Blames money-based politics on unprecedented corruption

The President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, has described money-based politics as a major factor behind the prevalence of corruption and bad governance in the country.

His Eminence made the observation at the 23rd Ummah Convention, organised by the Ummah Movement, in Abuja, themed "The Muslim Voice on Good Governance in Nigeria."

According to the Sultan, Nigeria's political culture has deteriorated and become increasingly mercantile, where money is believed to be everything, saying that Nigerians cannot allow money politics to reign with hindrance and expect corruption to go away.

"This is partly responsible for bad governance that has characterised our polity, subverting our development, perpetrating poverty and eliciting the unending social conflicts. This money-based politics will continue to fuel the unprecedented corruption we see in our society; as a result of these our pristine values as people have been supplanted and our future thrown into jeopardy," he said.

The NSCIA President-General called on all Nigerian leaders, political, spiritual and traditional to come together to salvage the polity from dangers that the current political culture poses.

"The consequences of ignoring these standards are already showing and we must not wait until the bubbles

bursts," the Sultan said.

He also counseled leaders at all levels to take leadership with the seriousness it deserves saying that Nigerians cannot ignore the centuries-old wisdom that places high premium on leadership and places criteria for shouldering responsibilities.

He said that in Islam, leadership was fundamental and it was bestowed at every level as a trust from Allah and for which Allah would hold those entrusted to account.

The monarch, therefore, advised Muslims to be at the forefront in advocating and leading with examples in promoting ideals of good governance.

Sultan noted that in Islam governance was people centred, designed to meet the welfare and security of citizens, adding that the measure of good governance was the quality of life of the governed.

Earlier, Mrs Amina Omoti, former National Amirah, Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN), said good governance was very important aspect of human existence.

Omoti added that good governance was the citizens right and demand from the leaders as well as a religion duty, adding that provision of social amenities and welfare by the government was a critical aspect of governance.

"For the Muslims, it is an integral part of his or her religion to call everyone and in this case those in position of authority to do the right thing and persuade them to refrain from doing those things that will lead to decadence in social values.

Stop profiling the Fulani -Sultan

The Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, has decried the profiling of Fulani by the Nigerian media.

The Sultan, who spoke at the first National Quiz Competition and 1439 National Conference of the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria, noted that the Fulani are being dangerously targeted as killers though they are not the only ones that own cattle.

The President-General charged Muslims to invest in the media because the media are being used to wage psychological warfare against Muslims. He stressed that more than 500 people had been killed between March and June in Zamfara State but the killings did not get the attention of the media.

The Sultan commended the MSSN for its various activities noting that the exuberance of the youth requires the wisdom and maturity of elders. He then lauded the participants in the quiz competition for their commitment to excellence and complemented the awards of the various categories of participants with cash gifts.

In his lecture delivered on the occasion, which focused on the theme of the conference " My MSSN, My Nation: Our Roles", a former National Amir of the MSSN, Prof. Afis Oladosu, traced the history and development of the body, describing it as a society without borders. He advocated a compilation of the contributions of the MSSN to fighting corruption in Nigeria while noting that the society has produced great men and women who are champions of good leadership and anti-corruption in Nigeria including those he described as planters, waterers, harvesters and horticulturists/sanitary inspectors.

The high points of the occasion which was attended by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, represented by the Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu, included the presentation of commendation awards to the Secretary-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and Registrar of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board, Prof. Is-haq Oloyede and the Director-General of Nigeria Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Dr. Isa Ali Pantami, among others.

MSSN appoints new national officers

A new Executive Council, comprising the following members, has been sworn in to pilot the affairs of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) for the next three years:

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|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Dr. Taofiq Yaqeen | - | National Amir |
| 2. Barr. Muhammad Bello Abdullahi | - | Naibul-Amir (International) |
| 3. Ishaq Muhammad Ishiyaku | - | Naibul-Amir (National)/A-Zone Coordinator |
| 4. Barr. Qaasim Odedeji | - | Naibul-Amir (National)/B-Zone Coordinator |
| 5. Engr. Tajudeen Olumide Mustapha | - | National Secretary General |
| 6. Olayinka Dhikrullah Yusuf | - | National Assistant Secretary General (Admin) |
| 7. Nurudeen Muhammad Ilyas | - | National Assistant Secretary General (Scholarship & Studies) |
| 8. Gambo Garba Muhammad | - | IVC Organiser/National Islamic Affairs/Deputy Zonal coordinator (A-Zone) |
| 9. Abdulhakeem Kolawole | - | IVC Organiser/National Islamic Affairs/Deputy Zonal coordinator (B-Zone) |
| 10. Alh. Muqaddas Hassan | - | National Financial Secretary/Treasurer |
| 11. Abdulazeez Oladejo | - | National Public Relations Officer |
| 12. Muhammad B. Chiroma | - | Assistant National Public Relations Officer |
| 13. Umar Muhammad | - | National Auditor |
| 14. Alh. Nurudeen Matanmi | - | National Asset Maintenance Officer |
| 15. Muhammad A. S. Bello | - | National Chairman, Business Committee |
| 16. Barr. Umar Mahmud | - | National Legal Adviser |
| 17. Muhammad Jameel Muhammad | - | Ex-Officio I |
| 18. Auwal Yunus | - | Ex-Officio II |



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and washing or ablution a Muslim performs before prayer is now being seen as very important to good health. Without ablution, a Muslim's prayer is invalid. This involves cleaning the hands, mouth, faces, and arms to the elbow, head, ears and feet. These basic hygiene practices are now known to be integral to good health.

Airborne illnesses spread through droplets in the air, which land on nearby objects. Touching an infected object transmits germs to your hands, touching your nose or mouth with your unwashed hand infects you with the virus or bacteria. Hand washing is now known to be the single most important method of preventing the spread of infection. Which of the favours of Allah will we deny?

16th of October is tagged the World Food Day while in Quran 76, Allah SWT says:

"The righteous truly drink of a cup tempered with camphor a fountain from which the servants of Allah drink, making it flow in abundance. They fulfill vows and fear a day, the evil of which is widespread.

"And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive, [saying] "We feed you, for Allah's pleasure only We desire from you neither reward nor thanks. Surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day.

"So Allah will ward off from them the evil of that day, and cause them to meet with splendour and happiness; And reward them, for their steadfastness, with a Garden and with silk". (Qur'an 76:5-12)

Elsewhere, Allah describes those who feed needy people as those who will be among the "Companions of the Right" and those who will inherit Paradise. The Prophet also encouraged feeding people

Abu Dharr (RAA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: "When you make some soup, make a good amount by adding plenty of liquid, and give some to your neighbours."

Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The

Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) had slaughtered a sheep and distributed major portions of its meat. Then he (peace be upon him) asked, "Is there anything left?" She replied, "Nothing, except the shoulder." Thereupon he said, "All of it is left except its shoulder." [At-Tirmidhi].

Also, we were taught that feeding the poor is serving Allah. There is another saying of the Prophet that goes thus: On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Allah (mighty and sublime be He) will say on the Day of Resurrection...

"...O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so asked you for food and you fed him not? Did you not know that had you fed him you would surely have found that (the reward for doing so) with Me?" [Muslim]

October 17th is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and we have seen many Qur'anic verses and Hadiths talking about fighting hunger and eradicating poverty.

So, we must work hard to feed the poor and needy, as well as our neighbours, and collaborate with government in ending poverty. As stated by almighty Allah that He has completed His favour on us and has chosen for us Islam, let us hold on to the true teachings of Islam, alhamdulillah for being Muslims, may Allah SWT make it easy for us, Aameen.

Those in position of authority should always remember that they are just holding those positions in trust and should fear Allah in all their dealings as everybody will be held accountable here and the Hereafter, In Shaa Allah. The same also applies to all the citizens as followers to be the best of followers in deeds and character.

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people.
Given their antecedents, it is just true to type that General Alkali's car, the clothes he was wearing and other personal effects were all found in the evil pond.

Other similar and alarming discoveries are still being made, like carcasses of human bodies and cars, and other things that prove beyond reasonable doubt that the area in question has been converted to a triangle of undiluted evil, where innocent people plying the Jos-Abuja road are profiled religiously and Muslims are frequently hacked to death with their bodies dumped in some shallow graves while their vehicles are buried in the bellies of ponds.

So far, many vehicles including an 18-seater bus of Gombe Line, 6 motorbikes, and several dead bodies have been discovered in that particular pond alone. We understand that about 80 other ponds dot the community and it will actually take some time to unravel the depth and dimensions of the atrocities committed against innocent Muslim commuters over the past one decade. It is this blood-chilling reality that makes travellers to Abuja from Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, Borno and Adamawa State to pass through Kano, enduring the hardship of travelling for a whole day on a journey that could have been undertaken within an average of 5 or 6 hours. For a madness that has lasted this long, it is curious and disappointing that no definitive measure has been taken to deal decisively with the situation as the security agents cannot claim ignorance about it.

In the face of this unsavoury and sense-numbing development, we are dismayed and appalled that the media have chosen to remain hypocritically silent and ignominiously disinterested, understandably because, and as it has often been the case, Muslims are the victims and the perpetrators of the evil and crime are Christians. If it were to be the so-called herdsmen attack, though it is the same anarchists that often disguise as herdsmen to give a dog a bad name in order to hang it, the media would have been awash with sensational headlines, mischievous reports and obnoxious hyper-analyses. In fact, if General Alkali were a Christian, a dominant section of the media would have earned for themselves accolades for bigotry and the corrupt-souled purveyors of hate speech, masquerading men of God, would have been spitting fire and brimstone, beating the drums of war, fanning the embers of hubris and mischievously mouthing their ill-digested 'Jihad'.

Now, we strongly demand that the Federal Government holds the people living in the communities around the

Lafendeg Du pond responsible for the disappearance of General Alkali and the ordinary civilians whose lives had been gruesomely terminated. The guilty conscience of these terrorists and cannibals had made them to use their women to attempt stopping the search of the pond. The leader of those barely-clad women and her co-travellers should be arrested immediately and investigated to determine their actual motif and culpability in the disappearance of the General and the death of others.

The efforts of the Governor of Plateau State, Rt. Honourable Simon Bako Lalong, at entrenching peace and stability in Plateau State is commendable. At least, his own administration, in the last three and a half years, until the past few months, is different from what obtained in the immediate past administration in the State when the State Government was not only brazenly taking side but was also culpable in certain situations. The former Governor should be able to assist the authorities in their investigations as a federal legislator had revealed on the floor of the National Assembly, even while citing security concerns for his own life, how mercenaries and terrorists had been trained abroad by politicians to kill, plunder and massacre.

The Council appreciates the Federal Government, in spite of the daunting challenges it faces from the corrupt and conflict entrepreneurs, on the appreciable progress and achievements it has recorded in addressing the various challenges of insecurity in the Country. We acknowledge the doggedness and resolve of the military in unearthing the facts surrounding the disappearance of one of their own.

More importantly, we reiterate that Government must not allow the perpetrators of this heinous crime in the Plateau axis of evil to go scot-free in the guise of playing politics. This is a moment of testing the commitment of Government and political will to put an end to impunity in Nigeria. We demand that Government ensure that justice is done and that the law takes its full course. This is the only sure way of engendering good governance, responsible leadership and enduring peace and stability in the country.

Nations/governments do survive on justice even if they are led by infidels, but they do not survive on injustice, even if they are led by believers in God. We cannot afford to continue as a nation of actions without consequences. We, therefore, insist that in the spirit of the change mantra, the killing fields and ponds of Jos will be thoroughly

investigated and the perpetrators brought to book to serve as deterrent to other terrorists.

Nothing less is acceptable to the right-thinking and peace-loving Nigerians.

**Professor Salisu Shehu,
Deputy Secretary-General,
NSCIA**

“ Now, we strongly demand that the Federal Government holds the people living in the communities around the Lafendeg Du pond responsible for the disappearance of General Alkali and the ordinary civilians whose lives had been gruesomely terminated. The guilty conscience of these terrorists and cannibals had made them to use their women to attempt stopping the search of the pond. The leader of those barely-clad women and her co-travellers should be arrested immediately and investigated



Matters Arising From The Plateau

The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), under the leadership of its President-General, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, is compelled to express its shock and stupefaction on the tragic bloodbath and savagery emanating for the umpteenth time from Plateau State. Formerly a haven of peace and a pride to the nation, Plateau State, especially the three Local Government Areas of Barkin Ladi, Riyom and Jos South, has relapsed into a state of anomie, a condition of intermittent, internecine and seemingly intractable violence.

At the centre of this horrible and extreme criminality are the Berom Christians, a bunch of evil and deadly ethnic supremacists whose brazen show of cannibalism astounded the world when they slaughtered, burnt and ate the flesh of several Muslims about a decade ago when the worshippers were waylaid at a major Islamic festival. It is the same terrorists that have turned Jos to a theatre of carnage again with the unbelievable discoveries being made in Lafendeg Du pond, where the car and belongings of a General of the Nigerian Army, Idris Alkali, were criminally deposited, among other traces of unimaginable horror.

NSCIA condemns in the strongest terms the unspeakable disappearance of Major General Idris Alkali (rtd). We remonstrate the gruesome murder of several other Muslims, including Zayyanu Shallah, Manager, Department of Universal Service and Provision Fund, Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), and Jubril Mailafia, an award-winning Film Editor and Animator, in the same community.

As responsible and civilised people, we must all collectively and unanimously condemn the killing of innocent souls regardless of whoever is perpetrating it and or whoever may be the victims. All human souls are sacred and they must be equally protected and valued. The usual silence of some self-styled religious leaders when their people are the perpetrators of crime and their cantankerous posturing and raucous cacophony when their followers are perceived as victims of mayhem smack of hypocrisy and wickedness in the sight of God and indeed in the sight of all just, fair and humane

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HAPPY NEW HIJRAH YEAR 1440AH

The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), under the leadership of its President-General and Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, felicitates with the Nigerian Muslim Ummah and their counterparts all over the world on the auspicious occasion of the new Hijrah year 1440AH, which begins today Tuesday Muharram 1st 1440AH, corresponding with September 11, 2018.

The whole essence of the New Hijrah Year is that it opens new vistas for all of us as a people to improve our well being, physically, mentally and spiritually. This year's New Hijrah message will be anchored on one key thematic area namely; Spiritual Re-juvenation: The Prophet's (SAW) Last Sermon in View.

The New Hijrah Year affords us another golden opportunity to mend our ways with our Creator and Sustainer, Allah (SWT). It is a period of spiritual rebirth and re-juvenation. It a rare opportunity for us as a jammah, and as individual adherents of the Deen to utilize this period most judiciously in servitude to Allah (SWT).

Again, it is a period of self - evaluation and reawakening. We should use this New Hijrah Year to review our spiritual life and how we fared last year with a view to previewing (with Iklass) how our spiritual life should look like in the coming months of the New Hijrah Year.

Also, let us use the New Hijrah Year to reconnect with the ideals that the Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) espoused during his life time, especially during his Last Sermon on Mount Arafat. The Prophet [SAW] spoke passionately and eloquently about many things. They include but not limited to the following:

- Freedom from the tribalism of paganism
- Supremacy of Muslim Brotherhood
- Trust and Accountability
- The declaration of Shaitan as an avowed enemy
- To be kind and dutiful to one's spouse
- To render undiluted worship to Allah (SWT) alone
- To be good to one's neighbour

Similarly, Allah (SWT) commands us thus: "Whatever the Prophet gives you, you take, and whatever he forbids you, you abstain". (Q 59:7)

Furthermore, one of the greatest mercies that Allah (SWT) blessed humanity with is the GIFT of REPENTANCE. It is a phenomenon that we must embrace with gratitude and sincerity. One of the rarest moments when repentance is needed is in the beginning of the New Hijrah Year.

Consequently, the Council fervently appeals to Muslims across the country to seize this New Hijrah Year to sincerely repent to Allah [SWT], the Most Merciful.

Finally, as we enter into the New Hijrah Year 1440 A.H, let us not forget that Allah [SWT] will not change our conditions unless and until we have sufficiently demonstrated a paradigm shift in our thought processes and actions.

May the best of our deeds be the last of our deeds.

HAPPY NEW HIJRAH YEAR!

Signed

Prof. Salisu Shehu

Deputy Secretary-General, NSCIA

