## Responsibilities of the Leaders and the Led in Islam: Relevance to Current Nigeria's Political Arena

Mustapha Ahmad (Mai Ralee) (Ph.D)
Department of Islamic Studies
Federal University, Dutsin-ma, Katsina Nigeria
08036960066

mustaphamerali7@gmail.com

&

Nuradeen Gidado Yanhoho Department of Islamic Studies Federal College of Education Katsina 08035921503

nuradeengidado@gmail.com

### Abstract

The State of confusion in Nigeria's political arena in which the leaders plunder national wealth and exhibit unlimited power while the led are ignorant and directionless is as apparent as the sun. Despite the fact that over 1400 years ago Islam has clearly spelt out the responsibilities of both the leaders and the led, Muslim leaders and their subject in Nigeria continue to swim in the river of directionless ignorance, sentiment ad avarice. This paper attempts to examine the responsibilities of the leaders and led in Islam and its relevance to current Nigeria's Political Arena. The paper elicits data through document analysis. This paper discovered that the responsibilities of the leaders and the led are clearly spelt out in Islam for example a leader must be just and cares to his people who should be obedient to their leaders unfortunately this not the case in the current Nigeria's Political Arena. A paper contributes towards the creation of a just and sane leadership as well as obedient followership in Nigeria.

### Introduction

It is not the Islamic pattern of life for the people to pursue the life of animal without having a leader who will guide them to what will be good or even best for them. To realize this, the Prophet (SAW) decreed that Muslim should have a leader in any circumstance they may find themselves. He said:

Whenever three people go out for travel let them appoint one of them to be their leader<sup>1</sup>

He was reported also saying:

Every one of you is a shepherd, and every shepherd is responsible for his herd<sup>2</sup>.

In this, there is reason for the necessity for every number of people from two upward to appoint a leader among them, this will bring safety from fear and loose. In the absence of leadership, everyone will stick on his interest and desires, so they perish. With leadership, the disagreement will be less, and they will have one word and consensus. If this is the situation in the bush during journey it will not be lest, but most important in the case of community, state or national life in the cities towns or villages where justice is needed for solving disputes and resolving crises. For this reason, also it has been a duty upon Muslims to have leaders, who will stand with social, political and economic responsibilities of theirs. Based on this and the concept of that Hadith it is imperative on the *Ummah* to have a leader who will care with guidance to the right path. The leader must know that there are duties to be discharged by him towards the *Ummah*.

## Meaning of leadership in Islam:

Caliphate means deputation for another it is synonymous to Imam, guardianship or leadership in Islam. Which means succession of general leadership in

religious and worldly affairs in place of the Prophet (SAW) The person holding leadership is called *Imam*, this title is given to him as similar to the prayer Imam, who's following and emulation is imperative. Calling him caliph is because he succeeds the Prophet (SAW) in his Ummah. Based on this the leader is the commander of people, the concept in Arabic is *SAYYID* or *RA'IS*, plural is *ru'asa'u* means leaders. He is the director of the people's affairs; their life could be good if they follow him.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Khilafah*, *ri'sah* or *Imamah*, according to the Shari'ah is the bearing of all things according to the rules of the Shari'ah be it the worldly or the hereafter interests, which benefits will come back to the people and end up to the blessing of the hereafter. *Khilafah* actually means succession and taking the duties of the Prophet (SAW) in (the taking care of the safety of spiritual and political affairs.<sup>4</sup>

## **Conditions of leadership in Islam:**

Muslim scholars itemized the conditions laid down for the capacity of caliph as follows:

- i) Justice in all its ramifications.
- ii) Knowledge that can enable him to make *ijtihad* on new issues cases and matters of judgment
- iii) Fitness of senses of hearing, seeing and speaking with which he can face what come before him and understand them.
- iv) Physical fitness and being free from physical disability which can deter him from performing his duties.
- v) Logical and mental ability which will enable him to perceive the good policy making in administering the affairs of the *ummah*.
- vi) Courage and braveness which will enable him to protect the territory and fight the enemies.<sup>5</sup>

# Some responsibilities of a leader in Islam:

In Islam a leader is charged with heavy responsibilities which he is duty-bound to discharge. These are as follows:

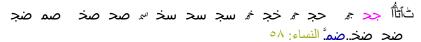
1. A leader should be just in his dealings with his family members, as well as dealings with his followers. Allah (SWT) will upgrade him and show him out on the Day of judgement on stages of light which will be decorated with grace and blessing. <sup>6</sup>It has been reported on the authority of Abdullahi bin Amir (R.A) who said; the Prophet (SAW) has said: -

Those who act justly will be seated upon pulpits of light before Allah. They will be those who do justice in their decisions, in matters relating to their families, and in all that is referred to them"7

2. A leader must have love and caring for his followers. By virtue of this, the attribution of chosen leaders be based on their love to followers and vice versa. They pray for goodness of one another. Contrary to this, is hatred between the two. Unjust leaders do not love their followers, and are in turn not being loved by their subjects. Nothing between the two other than hatred and curse. The Prophet (SAW) said:

The best of your rulers are those whom you love and who love you, and those who invoke Allah's Blessing upon you and you invoke His Blessing upon them. The worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you; and whom you curse and who curse you." It was asked (by those who were present): Should we not overthrow them? He Said, "No, as long as they establish Al-salat (the prayers) in your midst.8

3. A leader must be trustworthy it is an obligation upon the caliph and leader to set the scale of justice. Justice is what stands in the mind and proved to be right. Among the names of Allah (SWT) is *Al- adl*, (the Just). Allah (S.W.T) says:



Allah commands you to give back the trust to its owners, when you Judge between people you judge with justice. (Surah Nisa'i: 58)

In view of the content of this verse, the responsibility of Imam and caliph include discharge of trust. Trust means any compulsory duty of taking care of trusted matter and discharges it to its deserved persons. Public offices are trusts which must be confined to the deserved and competent people. The wealth of the people is a trust, which must be spent for people's interests and benefits not for personal needs of a leader. Anything belonging to the public, should be rendered to them accordingly.

However, a leader should take care of lives, religion, property, freedom, rights and dignity of the generality of his followers. Consultation is necessary on everything where there is no textual provision, he should consult any competent person who is capable of giving desirable opinion. He must check his appointees and hold everyone responsible for what he had done wrong. The Prophet (SAW) said:

The ruler is a guardian and responsible for his subjects.<sup>10</sup>

4. A leader should not to be deceitful whoever rules people, should not deceive them or cheats them by turning their benefits into his personal gain, or treat his subjects with cruel hands. Allah shall deny him the blessing and mercy in this world and in the hereafter.

The Prophet )SAW) said:

Whoever Allah makes him a ruler of Muslims and he prevents their own need, and does not settle enough their poverty, Allah will do against him as he does with his people, on the doom's day

The Prophet (SAW)was reported to have prayed to Allah (SWT)saying:

- O Allah treat harshly those who rule over my Ummah with harshness, and treat gently those who rule over my Ummah with gentleness.  $^{12}$
- 5. A leader should appoint competent and trustworthy assistants Love and enmity should not influence the selection or rejection of a person for a post. It is advisable for the *Imam* when he intends to appoint his ministers, to consider the behavior, moral quality and integrity of persons he wants to appoint, notwithstanding friendship or relationship

Islam emphasizes and directs the *Umara* and *sultans* to make good choice when appointing their assistants, ministers and officials, and encourage them to be noble sincere and trustworthy. The sign of success of a leader is to have righteous ministers, God-fearing companions and faithful friends those who could assist him to do well and remind him when he forgets to do the good. The Prophet (SAW)has said:

If Allah wishes good to an Amir, He gives him sincere minister, when he forget he remind him, when he remember he assist him, If Allah means otherwise He gives him a bad minister, when he forget he will not remind him, when he remember he will not assist him.<sup>13</sup>

It is necessary on every one who holds the duty and responsibility of Muslim affairs to search for competent persons who would assist him in discharging his duties, who could be judges, military leaders, secretaries, messengers and other workers. He should take care in selecting revenue collectors and treasurers for the safe custody of public wealth and public property.

6. A leader should not show his desperation for leadership and power. If it comes without asking for it, Allah will assist him in discharging it, and protect him from any hardship and problems. The prophet (SAW) said, to Abu sa'id Abdurrahman bin Sumrata:

Do not ask for position of authority. If you are granted this position without asking for it, you will be helped (by Allah) in discharging its responsibilities, but if you are given it as a result of your request, you will be left alone as its captive <sup>14</sup>

In another narration, Abu Zarr said to the prophet: "Why do you not appoint me to an official position?

The prophet (SAW)patted me on the shoulder with his hand and said: "O Abu zarr, you are a weak man and it is a trust and it will be a cause of disgrace and remorse on the day of resurrection except for the one who takes it up with a full sense of responsibility and fulfills what is entrusted to him (discharges its obligations efficiently) 15

# Some Responsibilities of the led in Islam

In Islam, the led are charged with heavy responsibilities which they are dutybound to discharge. These include:

1. Obedience to the leader Allah describes this obedience as obedience to him and to his prophet within the context of lawful activities. Allah (SWT) says:

O you who believed obey Allah and obey the messenger and those leaders of you. (Q3:59)

This obedience, should in the authority not be done in an unlawful way or anything contrary to the principles of the *Shari'ah*. The sunnah has demarcated the boarders. The prophet (SAW)said:

it is an obligation on a Muslim to listen and obey in what he likes or he dislikes except where the command is to do a sin. When he is commanded to commit a sin 'there is neither listening nor obedience.'6

2. Avoidance from instigating crisis, violence and riot which would be dangerous to the Muslim Ummah. The Prophet SAW) said:

It is obligatory upon you to listen and obey the orders of the rulers in prosperity and adversity, whether you are willing or unwilling, or when someone is given undue preference to you<sup>17</sup>

3. Praying to Allah for their guidance after giving them their rights, without standing against them; unless that would cause any critical violence. This is in line with Hadith, when the prophets (SAW)was asked "O prophet of Allah tell us if leaders, leads us and ask us their rights and deny us ours, what will you command us to do? The messenger of Allah (SAW), then said:

There will be discrimination after my death, and there will be other matters that you will disapprove/" He was asked: "O messenger of Allah! What do you command us to do when we are encountered with such happening? He answered, "Give what is due from you and supplicate to Allah for your rights.<sup>18</sup>

4. Advising the leaders on what is right and what is wrong, since the Muslim are commanded to change the bad things with their hands, tongue or heart. The messenger (SAW) said:

Whosever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hands; and if he is not able to do so, then (let him change it) with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart - and that is the weakest of faith." Imam Muslim<sup>19</sup>

5. Keeping themselves aloof from the leaders when there is mischief in the land. This can be learnt from the saying of the prophet (SAW):

Whosever obeys me, in fact obeys Allah, and he who disobeys me, infact, disobeys Allah; and whosever obeys the Ameer (leader), he obeys me, and he who disobey the Ameer in fact, disobeys me <sup>20</sup>

It is not permissible for anyone to defame and abuse a leader under the pretense of freedom of speech likewise it is not permissible for him to say lewd words and slanderous statement about a leader.<sup>21</sup> Allah (SWT) says:

And tell my servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan induces (dissension) among them. Indeed, Satan is ever, to mankind, a clear enemy (surah Isra'il:53)

## Relevance to Current Nigeria's political arena

Islam directs the leader to lead the people in accordance with the application of the decree of Allah as revealed by Him. It encompasses giving any right or interests to deserving person. Dispensing justice to people means dispensation of justice to all not only to Muslims alone but to all Muslims and also non-Muslims. Justice is the right of every person as far as he is a human being. It is a right given by Allah to all human beings, believers and non-believes alike, white, black, male, female, without regard to ethnic or denominational origin.

But the situation is contrary in Nigeria; since after independence, most of our leaders came to power by means of injustice and transgression, and they are not the most competent in most cases, but their command always had been followed by the people of Nigeria, even though the minds of their subject are not comfortable with the commands.

And despite the attitude of corruption and injustice of the leaders, people in Nigeria did not turn their face to instigate crisis, violence and riot like what is happening in some countries. Instead of that in most cases you find that most of them are praying when the leader is sick or in a certain bad condition for him to die, The leaders have fail to take care of both internal and external affairs of Nigerians based on law and order which will ensure justice and security for every individual and the society, and which will also bring about progress and guide their relationship with others. Also, they fail to provide Nigerians with social services through the use of available natural resources which are abundant. They also fail to ensure good life, quality education, job opportunity and means of livelihood for average Nigerians.

- Islam warned Muslim *Ummah* from aspiring leadership, just to satisfy self-esteem, personal desires, jealousy or grudges. The case is different in Nigeria today, some people are desperate to position of leadership just, for material gains, without thinking that it a trust which must be accountable on the Day of judgement.
- Muslims scholars itemized certain conditions laid down for appointment of a leader. While in Nigerian political arena, there is nothing like that rather than a minimum paper qualification i.e. Secondary school certificate. Any person can be a leader without considering any one of those conditions.
- In Islam only one who can care with justice in his decision between others, just in his dealings with his family and with others can be a leader, while in Nigeria is not so, any person can be a leader and become a head at any level and in every aspect of life together with who every he like.
- In Islam the quality of leaders should include their love for their followers and be loved by them and they pray for good for one another. Contrary to this is what obtains in Nigeria, nothing other than hatred between leaders and subjects, as a result of injustice.
- In Islam it is an obligation upon the leaders to set the scale of justice. This means that it is their responsibility to discharge the trust i.e. any compulsory duty of taking care of trusted matter and discharge it to its deserved persons. When a leader intends to appoint his ministers, he should consider the

behavior, moral quality, and integrity of persons he wants to appoint. But in Nigeria it is contrary; a person can become a leader based on friendship or other personal relationship.

- In Islam the wealth of the people i.e. (public treasury) is a trust. The leader must spend it judiciously and for their best interest and benefits. He should not embezzle or squander it. But contrary to the situation in Nigeria today, the leaders mostly spend such wealth for their personal needs, and the needs of their families.
- In Islam consultation is necessary upon a leader on everything where there is no textual provision. He should consult competent people who are capable of giving good advice. But in Nigeria today, our leaders use to consult only a person who protects their personal interests. In most cases, they use to induce the election of Speaker and President in Houses of Assembly, House of Representatives and Senate respectively.
- In Islam, life, Religion, property, progeny, freedom, rights, and dignity of the generality of people is a trust a leader must take care of. But in Nigerian political arena the case is different. In Nigeria there is no freedom to anyone except who has the power at hand, also there is no any right of religion, it is only written in the constitution, the leader has the full power to stop people from performing their religious activities at anytime, anywhere any place directly or indirectly. An instance can be referred to the current banned on any public gatherings which affected Mosques and Churches. Congregation during *juma'ah* and five daily prayers was equally banned from operating by some State Governors across Nigeria, as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. It was reported also that, some leaders recently, held meetings on how to ban the operation of *almajiranci* and the traditional *almajiri* school settings.

In view of the fore going, leadership in Islam is all about serving humanity and a good Muslim leader should Therefore, live up to expectations of his subjects. However, leadership in Nigeria today, has taken a dimension which poses doubt, suspicion and alleged speculations between the leaders and the led. Therefore, a leader should consider the following:

- Give priority to the religion, belief and theological aspects of his followers. This is because religion, (worship) is the purpose of the creation of the human being.
- He should protect the lives, and property of his people from internal and external aggressions, this is to compliment with the objectives of Islamic law (*Shari'ah*) which provides death punishment for the terrorist and armed groups who molest, kill and destroy properties of the innocent people unjustly.
- He should protect people's intellect. This is done by giving them an access to
  education and equipping them with knowledge right from childhood to
  adolescence stage. Because Islam makes sanity a yardstick for considering
  liability to responsibility. Therefore, it forbids and declares consumption of
  alcohol and other intoxicants as crimes punishable by the law.
- He should give priority to protecting of posterity. In order to fulfill this, Islam prescribes marriage and makes it mandatory on parents to take good care of their children. It also commands the community to take care of orphans, and abandoned children, so that they will not be neglected.

Unfortunately, it is sad to mention that our leaders today, in Nigeria neglect or fall short to give priority to protection of the lives and properties of the citizens. As a result, killings, raping, kidnapping, kettle rustling, stealing and destroying people's properties became so rampant.

This can be proven from several attacks and counter attacks launched almost every day on the armless and innocent citizens, especially, in the North east and western parts of the country, claimed responsible to the insurgent groups such as, Boko Haram, Bandits, Kidnappers, kettle rustlers among others

#### **Conclusion**

The paper examines the responsibilities of leaders in doing justice in their decisions, in their relationship with their family and the general public, how they should behave in their role as leaders in terms of observing trust and discharging of duties to avoid the disgrace and regret in the hereafter, and also the role of the subjects such as obedience, praying for the goodness of leaders, respect to constated authority and admonish them in good manners. In this way then the relationship is balanced between rulers and the ruled, (*Ra'i and Ra'iyyah*). This is a clear expression that leadership is a trust one must discharge. People are the servants of Allah, leadership is a deputation of God, and leaders represent Allah (SWT) in doing justice among their subjects.

### Recommendations

Based on the fore going, the paper recommends the following:

- i. The leader ship is a trust, it is necessary on anyone who leads the people to discharge its responsibilities accordingly, and search for competent persons who would assist him in discharging such responsibilities.
- ii. Leaders should be respected, followed and prayed for Allah's guidance and protection in discharging their duties by the followers
- iii. Leaders should be seeking consultation from the learned, professional and other relevant stake holders on issues before taking decisions.
- iv. The subjects shall be dealt with justly by the leaders especially, with regards to welfare, security and other necessities of life
- v. The scholars are expected to guide the leaders on what is right and what is wrong.
- vi. Nigerian's should pray to Allah for good and just leaders.
- vii. We should look at the good leaders that can secure our lives and properties not those that can loot our wealth for their own benefits.
- viii. The leaders in Nigeria should provide welfare facilities to their people, especially in this critical condition.

#### **End Notes**

- 1. Abi-Dawud, A. S. (2001) *Sunan Abi-Dawud* vol. 3 Dar- al-Risalatu al-Alamiyya P. 36.
- 2. Muhammad, N. A. (1422/2002), *Mukhtasar Sahihul al-Imam al-Bukhari* vol.1, al-Makatabatul al-Mu'arifu linnashari wattauzi'I, P. 272
- 3. Ibn manzur, A.I. (2009) *Lisanul Arab*, vol,9 Alqahirah Egypt, Dar al-Tawfiqiyyah, p.92
- 4. Ibn Khaldum, A. (nd) *Mukaddimatu Ibn Khuldun* bairut, lebenon, Mu'assasati al-Alami lil madabu'ati, P. 180-181.
- 5. Al-Dabbarani, A. A. (nd) Ruhudden al Islami Alqahirah Egypt,p. 314
- 6. Al-Nawawi, Y. A. A. (2009) *Sharhu Riyadh al-Salihin* vol.6 alqahirah Egypt, Dar al-Sabuni, p.627
- 7. Ibn Hanbal A. M. (2001) *Musnad Ahmad* vol. 6 P. 45 and Ibn Hibban, M. A. (1988) *Sahih Ibn Hibban* vol. 10 Beirut, Mu'usasat Risalah, P. 338
- 8. ibid, P. 406
- 9. Ibn Manzur, A.I. (2009) op. cit. p.93.
- 10. Sayyid Qutb, (2003) *Fizilalil Qur,an* vol.2 Egypt, Qahirah, 1434H.2013 AH. Dar al-shuruq, p.689.
- 11. Al-Asbahani, M.A.A (2001) *Musunadu Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal* vol. 6, Beirut, Lebnan, Mu'assasati Arrisalah, P.425.
- 12. Ibn Hanbal A. M. (2001) op.cit. vol. 8 P. 261
- 13. Ibn Hibban, M. A. (1988) op.cit. P. 347
- 14. Ibn manzur, A. I. (2009) op.cit. vol.8 p.186-187
- 15. Al-Bany, N.M (2001) *Mukhtasar Al-Sahih Al-Imam Al-Bukhari* vol. 2 Saudi Arabia, al-Riyad: Al-makatabatu al-Mu'arifu. P. 307,Sunan Abi Dawud vol. 3 P. 40

- 16. Al-Bukhari, I.M. (1982) *Al-Jami'u Al-Sahih*, vol. 2 Alqahira, Egpt: Dar al-Gaddal-Gadid. P.225, Ibn majah sunan ibn majah op. cit. vol. 2 P. 955, Ibn Hanbal A. M. (2001) op.cit, op.cit. vol. 27 P. 209
- 17. Ibn Hanbal A. M. (2001) op.cit. vol. 37 P. 403
- 18. Muslim, M. H, (1982) *Al-jami'u Al-sahih*, vol. 3 (npp) (np) P. 1474, Addabarani-Al-Mu'ujamil kabir vol. 22 P. 16
- 19. Muslim, M. H, (1982) ibid, vol. 3 P. 1472
- 20. Al-Bukhari, I.M. (1982), op. cit. vol. 2 P. 307, Ibn Hanbal A. M. (2001) op.cit. vol. 16 P. 454
- 21. Abi-Dawud, A. S. (2001) op. cit. vol. 3 P. 131, Ibn Hibban op. cit. vol. 10 P. 345
- 22. Salih, U. M. (2012) Sharh al- Siyasat al-shar'iyyah, fi islahi alra,I wal-Raiyyah, Darul Qadri Aljadid Liddiba,a wan-nashar. P.23-28

### References

- Abi-Dawud, A. S. (2001) *Sunan Abi-Dawud* vol. 3Al-Qahirah, Egpt: Dar al-Risalatu al-Alamia.
- Al-Asbahani, (1996) *Al- Musunad Al-Mustaharaj Ala-Sahih Al-Imam Muslim* vol. 1 Beirut, lebanon: Dar-al-Kutub Ilmiyyah.
- Al-Asbahani, M.A.A (2001) *Musunadu Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal* vol. 6, Beirut, Lebnan: Mu'assasati Arrisala.
- Al-Azim, A.S (2004) *Al-Dimuquradiyya wanazariyatu Al-Islah Fi-al-mizan*, vol. Iskandariya; Dar Al-Imam.
- Al-Bani, N.M (2001) *Mukhtasar Al-Sahih Al-Imam Al-Bukhari* vol. 1 Saudi Arabia, al-Riyad: Al-makatabatu al-Mu'arifu.
- Al-Bukhari, I.M. (1982) *Al-Jami'u Al-Sahih*, vol. 2 Alqahira, Egpt: Dar Al-Gadd-al-Gadid.
- Al-Qardawi Q.Y (2008) *Al-Siyasa tu al-Shariyyah Fi-dau' Nusu Al-Shariyya Wa-maqasidiha* vol. 4 Alqahira Egypt: Makatabatu Wahabah.
- Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Mushaf Al-Madinati Al-Nabawi Linnashir al-Jazubi.
- Annawawi, Y.A.A (2005) Sharhi Riyadh Al-Salihin vol. 1, Al-Qahirah, Egypt, Dar Alsabuni.
- As-Shaibani, M.A (1988) *Musunad Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal* vol. 6, Beirut, Lebnan: Mu'assasati Arrisala.
- Al-Dabbarani, A.A (nd) Ruhuddeen Al-Islami, Alqahira Egypt: Dar Gaddi Al-jadid.
- Ibn Khaldun, A (nd) *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun*, Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasati al -alami.
- Ibn Manzur, A.I (2009) Lisanul Arab vol. 9, Al-Qahirah, Egypt: Dar Al-Taufiqiyyah.
- Muslim, M. H, (1982) Al-jami'u Al-sahih, vol. 3 (npp) (np)
- Sayyid Qutb, (2003) Fi zilal Al-Qur'an vol. 2 Al-Qahirah, Egypt: Dar Al-Shuruq.