

Appendix 7:

NOTE: This file contains two Boer articles, both of which I hope to polish up a bit in the near future. By finding <xxxx> you will find Document 2.

- 1. BZ Muslim Revival and Education**
- 2. Cluster of BZ Muslim Attitudes**

DOCUMENT 1

BZ Muslim Revival and Education

Jan H. Boer, 2008

From a Muslim spiritual point of view, the most natural solution to the sharia crisis lies in Muslims' taking the spirituality of Islam more seriously. That should provide the most genuine guarantee for the success of sharia and, on the surface at least, the simplest. Hence, there are numerous calls for increased devotion to and knowledge of both Qur'an and the *Hadisai* [traditions related to the Prophet], for those are after all the basis of spirituality. These concerns are closely related to educational concerns. So, in this file I address both of these as they develop in the BZ era.

A. Revival

In the context of the Maitatsini riots of the early 80s,¹ an anonymous writer in *Radiance*, a short-lived magazine of the Muslim Student Society (MSS), wrote about

the urgent need for a moral and spiritual regeneration Whenever Muslims are morally and spiritually weak, it becomes easy to infiltrate their ranks and to threaten their survival. Only a morally upright people can safeguard sabotage; only a spiritually sound people can resist it. A return to a simple and disciplined life, a renewed effort to cultivate superior moral qualities in people and to re-establish the moral integrity of the society are among the steps to be taken to return Muslims to the right shape.²

¹J. Boer, vol. 1, 2003, pp. 38-39; vol. 2, 2004, pp. 112, 135-137, 154; vol. 3, 2004, pp. 27, 152, 155, 270, 289.

²*Radiance*, no. 4/83, p. 39.

Muslims were seen in danger of losing their spirituality due to negative home conditions. Muhammad Sani Mohammad observed that many children grow up without ever seeing or hearing anyone reading the Qur'an at home; not mothers, not fathers. Hence children grow up on basis of anti-Muslim customs. Parents expect that the Qur'anic school will do the work for them, but when the children notice that their parents do not or cannot read, they soon decide to quit as well. They grow up as ignorant Muslims. How can this lead to a viable Muslim community?³

Sheikh Aminuddeen Abubakar, a popular imam from Kano, never tired of calling for revival. A presentation of his on the subject was summarized as “*Tsayar da sallah da cewa shine tushe na farko na kafa shariar Musulunci. Haka kuma, idan da Musulmi za su dabbakawa kansu da kansu sharia a gidajensu da dukkanin wurarensu na harkokin yau da kullum, to da ba'a sami wani wanda ya isa ya hana aiwatar da shariar.*” He furthermore insisted that “*idan da Musulmi za su riki sallah su bayar da ita yadda ya kamata, to, babu shakka, sharia za ta kafu.*”⁴ The sheikh further reminded his audience that the evils of worldliness and materialism that undermine the Muslim community are their reward for having eliminated the sharia from their lives.

A few months later, the sheikh repeated the call for revival in an article that placed the responsibility for the sad state of Muslim affairs squarely at their own feet, though the West also came in for criticism. The main reason was that Muslims were ignoring the teachings of Islam, of sharia. We have heard these laments in Volumes 2, 4 and 6 as well as from the likes of Tawfiq Ladan,⁵ who held Muslims themselves responsible as “the most guilty” for having abandoned the ways of Allah. If Muslims would only obey Allah, they could have resisted the secular foreigners. He quoted former Military Head of State Muhammad Buhari, as saying that for him “*addini shi ne na farko; Arewa ita ce ta biyu; sannan Nijeriya ita ce ta uku. Saboda haka, sai aka kau da shi, amma har yanzu ba a yi kamarsa ba.*”⁶ The sheikh then echoed Buhari: “*Addinina shi ne a gaba.*”⁷ His conclusion: “*Idan mu na so mu koma kan sirdi, sai mu yi aiki da*

³M. S. Mohammad, 17 Feb/89, p. 3.

⁴*Alkalami*, 1 Dec/88, p. 16. English translation: (1) “Faithful performance of the prescribed ritual prayers is the first step towards the establishment of sharia. In addition, if Muslims practise the sharia in all their affairs amongst themselves in their homes, always and everywhere, no one will be able to stem the sharia tide over the entire country.” (2) “If Muslims will only do their ritual prayers faithfully as prescribed, sharia will be established without a doubt.”

⁵See J. Boer, vol. 4, 2005, p. 17; Appendix 12, pp. 237-239.

⁶English translation: “Religion comes first; the North comes second; Nigeria is third. That is why he was removed [by a coup in which Abacha took over], but there has been no one like him since.”

⁷English translation: “My religion comes first.”

abin da Allah Ya ke cewa.”⁸ “*Koma sirdi*” [“Get back in the saddle”]—he used the phrase several times in the article—was important to the sheikh. Be in control of the country, the very attitude Christians resent. It can happen only via a revival of sharia. Or as Ladan put it, “It is necessary to revive that Muslim community which is buried under the debris of the legacy of colonialism—indeed, the legacy of failure.”⁹

Khomeini’s Iran has long served as an inspiration for revival in Nigeria. On the third anniversary of his revolution, Adamu Adamu of *Radiance* magazine shared his thoughts on Iranian developments in virile language. Iran had made genuine progress, he declared. “Progress, for us, is when the word of Allah becomes supreme.” Iran had also “showed to the world the brave Muslim spirit that does not bow before anyone, but follows the path of freedom, honour, dignity and justice in its dealings with every nation and every power.” Concretely, the regime had made great progress towards the provision of basic necessities of life—water, light, roads, hospitals, public toilets, agriculture. Khomeini also established the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the equivalent to Zamfara’s *yan agaji* and Kano’s *hisbah*.¹⁰ The pre-revolutionary educational system of Iran was much like that of Nigeria, totally secular and alien to the culture of the land. The universities were all closed to enable a purging of foreign influence to take place. They were re-opened on the eve of the third anniversary with a curriculum that had been infused with the Islamic spirit. Technologically, Adamu was impressed by the “almost every conceivable type of Iran-manufactured weaponry,” including warplanes repaired by Iranians. “Iran,” declared Adamu, “offers the world the only true society in which man is totally free to pursue whatever choices he makes.” “There is among the people the rare commodity of brotherhood to man, and a general unity of purpose that pervades their dynamic life. All in all, it was the greatest blessing and the greatest challenge to those who have to order their lives according to the dictates of their Creator.”¹¹

On the tenth anniversary of the Iranian revolution, Ibrahim Bello wrote an article of admiration for the achievements of the Iran’s revival. These achievements included evangelism from government to government with Khomeini’s famous letter to Gorbachev, calling him to submit

⁸English translation: “If we want to be in the saddle again, we must obey Allah.”

⁹A. Abubakar, 31 March/89, pp. 11, 15. T. Ladan, 7 Apr/89, p. 10; see endnote 8 above.

¹⁰See entry “Militia” in Index of vol. 6.

¹¹A. Adamu, 1983, pp. 28-30. Apart from the military rattling perhaps, the rest of this picture of Iranian society is hardly in keeping with its portrayal in the Western press, but, if you have not been there, who is to say which is the correct picture? Probably both are influenced by ideologies.

to Allah.¹² Khomeini led the world in denouncing Rushdie with a *fatwa* for his heretical book. He provided support to the Palestinians in their struggle with the Jews. He restored the decency and respect of women by insisting on proper dress. He withdrew the law insisting that men must have the permission of their first wife to add to his quiver. This last measure had two advantages. First, it freed up marriage in situations of the dearth of men due to the war with Iraq. Secondly, it meant a return to the venerable Muslim tradition of polygamy. The Khomeini also started a campaign against smoking. In general there were many developments leading to a greater food supply and better healthcare. But the best is yet to come: “*Babbar nasarar Irak wacce duk Musulmin duniya ke kwadayi kuma ke rokon Allah ita ce kafa shariar Musulunci da mulkin na Kur’ani da Hadisi.*”¹³ *Alkalami* devoted a half page to Bello’s article and a full page to pictures of the celebration in Iran, while it also published an editorial on the subject in the previous edition.¹⁴ This was the revival Muslims were jealous of and would like to copy in Nigeria. Well, some, at least.

Juwayriyya Badamasuy of Bayero University and author of the poem “Awake, Muslim Women!”¹⁵ wrote what she called “My Action Manual,” that contained a 15-point programme for kickstarting a revival of the *ummah* and that would ensure the establishment of the sharia in quick order. “As a strategy for the achievement of sharia in its totality,” she wrote, “I would suggest the following line of action.” In summary: have firm faith; strive for true knowledge of the religion; depend on Qur’an and *Sunnah*; study Islamic activists and movements of the past; understand contemporary ideologies and institutions; develop a sense of responsibility and hard work; be ready to sacrifice life and property; emphasize Muslim unity; develop a “vigorous *da’wa* programme; include the rural common people; live an exemplary life on the part of the leaders; train next generations well to take over; re-orient women towards the upbringing of future generations. And with all of this “carry on with the call for the full implementation of sharia in its totality and not in its maimed shape that unbelievers want us to be content with.” She concluded with great hope: “It is my humble submission that if careful programmes be drawn to give these points a practical realisation, the quest for sharia in Nigeria would be

¹²R. al-Khomeini, 27 Jan/89, p. 8.

¹³I. I. Bello, 3 Mar/89, p. 9. English translation: “The most important success scored for which all the Muslims of the world are jealous and for which they are pleading to God is the establishment of the sharia and the of a government based on the Qur’an and the Traditions of the Prophet.”

¹⁴*Alkalami*, “*Goma ta Musulunci a Iran*,” 17 Feb/89, p. 1.

¹⁵J. Badamasuy, *The Pen*, 15 Feb/91, p. 7. J. Boer, vol. 2, 2004, pp. 63-64, Appendix 3, pp. 162-165.

crowned with success in the very near future.”¹⁶ It took exactly a decade for this hope to be partially realized with the Zamfara Declaration of October, 1999.

B. Education

MATERIALS BETWEEN THE LINES—check whether already in this file. If not, then integrate it--

Aliyu Dauda wrote a very powerful article about the serious problems Muslims were having with ABU, the university that was supposed to help develop the Muslim community. Among other things, he reviewed a speech delivered at the 1972 ABU Convocation by the *Wazirin Sakwato*, Dr. Junaidu, outlining the problems not only but also pointing to a different direction for ABU. The University “should arrest the process of endorsing our personality out of our lives, education and upbringing.” Junaidu warned the ABU scholars, “Let not your degrees, researches and publications be an excuse to feel haughty amongst your own people. Always remember that knowledge is at its best when it is universally useful and that the best scholars are those whom the ordinary man fears neither to encounter nor to address.” Junaidu called on “all revolutionary-minded Muslim youths...to remain on the alert, be very vigilant and monitor the activities of such foreign subversive clubs, societies, associations and women libs, as well as all other dubious social groups, so that, whenever necessary, we can mobilize the already disenchanted and bitter silent majority against satan and his agents.” Dauda insisted that the situation at ABU’s daughter university, BUK, is the same.¹⁷

Auwalu Muhammad Karaye of Bayero warned that the proposed Kano State University would be similarly derailed into a non-Muslim direction unless care was taken. Existing universities are all “based on anti-Islamic principles and doctrines.” Islam may be taught, but not the true Islam. So, planners must introduce courses that cover the entire Muslim waterfront, including Qur’anic sciences, but also Islamic banking, political science and jurisprudence. This is a list similar to that offered by Professor Mahdi Adamu at a workshop at the Usman Danfodio University on the “Islamisation of knowledge.”¹⁸ Karaye called on “all Muslims to wake up and

¹⁶J. Badamasuy, Nov/89, pp. 8-9.

¹⁷A. Dauda, 1 and 15/July/88.

¹⁸On this subject see also *Companion CD* <Misc Arts/Persecution/Barnabas/Islamisation of Knowledge>.

realise the dangers contained in our system of education and call for immediate changes so that it will be in conformity with Islam.”¹⁹

Most of these ideas may seem reactionary and conservative to the secular mind that tends to berate everything non-secular as backward and reactionary, but that is not really the case. When you fit these ideas into the framework of serious modern Muslim perspectives, there is plenty of room for creativity and progress. Even the call on FG by MSS to devise a programme of continued education for young married women or, actually, married girls, is not as unusual as some might think. The Northern Muslim custom is to marry girls off as soon as maturity sets in—and that is usually the end of any thought of education. The MSS wanted the early marriage custom to continue, since it helps prevent “irregularities,” but it should not prevent further education.²⁰ An interesting mix of tradition and progress that has within it the seed for the demise of the custom.

Another badly needed educational improvement was for legal training in the proper administration of sharia itself. We read about this need back in Volume 6, but it was already keenly recognized during the BZ period. To advance this goal, a national workshop was held at the University of Sokoto on “Teaching of Islamic Law in Nigeria.” Be aware that such events were held more than a decade before the Zamfara Declaration. In order to fully appreciate the papers at this conference, you must be familiar with the problems and complaints treated in Volumes 2, 4 and 6. The proceedings were published under the title *Islamic Law in Nigeria* with Syed Khalid Rashid as editor. In his Foreword, Mahdi Adamu, at the time Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sokoto, wrote that “in order to restore the dignity of the sharia in this country, the teaching of this form of law should be stepped up and be firmly entrenched in Nigerian universities and colleges.”²¹ Editor Syed Rashid spoke of the need for Nigerian lawyers to “become more aware of the Nigerian and Muslim social realities.” Hence, he felt that “it is highly desirable that some elements of Islamic Law should be taught in Nigerian universities that presently ignore it completely.” He then proceeded to outline “the ideal course content” that was to “be made compulsory in such universities.”²²

¹⁹A. Karaye, 7 Apr/89, p. 3. I. I. Bello, 7 Apr/89, p. 16. See A. Dauda for the non-Muslim secular conditions of ABU (1 July/89, p. 12 and 15 July/89, p. 11). See also J. Boer, Index entries under “Education,” “Universities,” “Elite” in vols. 2, 4, 6.

²⁰*Alkalami*, “*Daliban Musulmi...*,” 31 Mar/89-14 Apr/89, p. 16.

²¹M. Adamu, “Foreword.” In S. K. Rashid, 1986, p. vii.

²²S. K. Rashid, 1986, pp. 93-102.

Though this section so far has emphasised Muslim sources and perspectives along with science, there is also a strong sense that education and knowledge can be gained from everywhere and every culture. Some militants with their strong antithetical bias may reject knowledge from any source beyond Islam and science, but on the whole Muslim writers are much more cosmopolitan than that. As Abubakre put it, no “race or group of people” has a monopoly on knowledge. “The Qur’an commends the wisdom of a Nubian.” Knowledge can be sought anywhere, even as far as China. Islam exalts “learning without discrimination against the place or the person from whom it is obtainable.” He told of the “golden age of Islam” during which one al-Ma’mun dreamt he met Aristotle. He “patronized Hellenistic ideas and adapted Aristotelian philosophy.” Islam, in fact, created the bridge over which Greek philosophy was introduced to the West.²³ In similar vein, Aliyu Dauda referred to a “Prophetic *Hadith* which commands Muslims to go in search of knowledge even if it means travelling to China.” Again, “the geo-political area where knowledge comes from is immaterial; that should never be a barrier.” Kiser Barnes recalled how the Prophet urged upon his followers “the principle of learning in these clear, emphatic statements: ‘Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.’ ‘Seek knowledge, be it even in China.’ ‘The ink from the pen of the scholar is more worthy than the blood of the martyr.’ ‘He who leaves his home in search of knowledge, walks in the path of God.’ And the Qur’an declares: ‘Are they equal: those who know and those who know not?’” (39:12).²⁴ Even Western knowledge is welcome, provided it is stripped of its secular trappings.²⁵ Islam can enrich itself by embracing knowledge from every quarter.

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If colonial education has instilled the virus of secularism in the minds of Muslims, that virus needs to be excised by Muslim education.²⁶ Though the Northern Muslim community is often berated for its ignorance and its lack of education, there is a keen desire for proper Muslim education as the way to overcome their problems in education at every front. There is a strong feeling among Muslims that rejection of Islam or its sharia is caused by misunderstanding, often rank ignorance that may be supported by “false phobias.” Adegbite frequently called on sharia

²³R. D. Abubakre, n.d., pp. 62-63. K. Barnes, 1992, p. 57. For an alternative interpretation of this history see *Barnabas Aid*, May-June/2007, pp. ii-iii. The argument here is that most of the work for which Islam claims credit was in fact done by Christians.

²⁴K. Barnes, 1992, pp. 56-57.

²⁵A. Dauda, 1 July/88, p. 11.

²⁶J. Boer, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 37-48

opponents to “show more understanding.”²⁷ There is no need to repeat what I wrote about it before,²⁸ but do be aware that the general climate of opinion on education changed little from BZ to AZ.

Hence, there is a strong emphasis by writers about Islamic education on knowledge, understanding and reason. Abubakre stressed this “great emphasis on acquisition of knowledge.” Educational solutions to Nigeria’s religious unrest address almost every area of education you can think of, from the most humble efforts to the grandiose. Among the less institutional efforts is that of Qur’anic recitation. Sheikh Abdul Azim, a lecturer at the University of Dan Fodio at Sokoto, speaking at a youth competition in Qur’anic recitation, declared such Qur’anic education the key to the world’s problems: “*Ilimin addinin Musulunci ne kadai hanyar da za a bi a warware matsalolin da duniya take fuskanta a yau.*”²⁹

As important and effective as Qur’anic education may be, the call for education goes beyond this area, something you will see especially in the main chapter. The Northern Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies called on all Nigerian governments to upgrade the lowly and often despised Qur’anic schools so as to include ordinary primary school subjects, thus enabling their students to enter secondary schools. It also wanted primary schools to include courses on the Qur’an and Islam. In effect, it wanted to “primarise” Qur’anic schools and “Qur’anicise” primary schools.³⁰ There should be an equal emphasis on religion and other subjects, a frequently aired demand, since both are important.

The story continues more extensively in the AZ years, but for that you need to turn to Chapter 3 in the book.

DOCUMENT 2

Cluster of BZ Muslim Attitudes

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Jan H. Boer, 2008

²⁷M. Mumuni, 15 Nov/99, p. 17.

²⁸J. Boer, 2007, vol. 6, pp. 22-23. For example, A. Binji in J. Boer, 2007, vol. 7, Appendix 1.

²⁹M. Sirajo, 31 Mar-14 Apr/89, p. 16. English translation: “Education in the Muslim religion is the only way to solve the world’s problems.”

³⁰*Alkalami*, “A Daukaka...,” 17 Feb/89, p. 1. *The Pen*, “Northern Board...,” 24 Feb/89, p. 16.

There is a whole cluster of ideas that can hardly be separated from each other. A writer who deals with one invariably brings in some of the others. Though I tried to separate them into different sections, they resisted such compartmentalization. So I treat them together here in this section. The cluster includes tolerance, co-existence, co-operation, compromise, respect, sensitivity, forgiveness and similar notions. As in many other issues, this Appendix contains the BZ material; the AZ is treated in the book itself.

A basic solution offered by the Muslim community is the need for tolerance. Christians do not recognize or experience the tolerance of which Muslims boast so much. Neither do Muslims recognize the same in Christians. Hence, Christians are warned that “Muslim tolerance demands reciprocity. Fanning hatred and peddling unfounded rumours are both counter-productive and injurious to their status in the Muslim communities in which they reside.”³¹ In 1989, Jacob Olupona from the Obafemi Awolowo University, in cooperation with the Council for the World’s Religion, convened a conference on “Religion and Peace in Multi-Faith Nigeria,” the title of the book he edited and published privately in 1992. Participants included Christians and Muslims. One M. A. Abdu-Raheem presented a general set of Muslim concepts and rules that he expected to go far in overcoming the crises the country was facing. Yes, talk of crisis preceded the Zamfara Declaration by at least a decade. The Muslim duty to maintain peace with God, with neighbour and with other creatures, he explained, is the “essence [of] his responsibility as *Khalifat Allah* (vicegerent of Allah) on earth. You cannot get more basic than that in Islam or, for that matter, in Christianity. Basic as this message is, for many Nigerians, grown up in an atmosphere of violence, it was a revolutionary message that needed to be pushed if peace was to be achieved. “Nobody can claim to be a Muslim, if he does not maintain a cordial and peaceful relationship with neighbours and fellow men in general,” Abdu-Raheem declared. Having emphasised this basic principle, he went on to list various attitudes to maintain and things to do in the search for peace. First of all, he rejected all notions of compulsion. Islam “does not sanction forcing people to convert to it. He who forces or intimidates anybody to become a Muslim is guilty of a great sin against the Qur’an, which says, ‘There should be no compulsion in religion.’” “Muslims are enjoined to be sympathetic while discussing with people of other faiths. They should appreciate

³¹MSS, *Radiance*, no. 4/83, p. 44.

their point of view and reason them out of their un-islamic views with convincing argument.”
“They should extend hands of goodwill and cordiality to them.”

Abdu-Raheem referred to the disadvantages colonialism placed upon Muslims.³² Though that history has angered many Muslims and provoked them to hatred and violence, he rejected that approach. His concern was “to suggest ways and means of seeking redress without recourse to violence and disturbing the public peace.” “Force is not the proper means of bring about the desired change. It is when there is peace that lasting solutions can be found.”

At the same conference, R. Deremy Abubakre of the University of Ilorin similarly called for tolerance and mutual fairness. He insisted that “it is wrong to subsume non-Muslims in the jurisdiction of sharia. That any Muslim leader at any point in history and at any place did that, does not accord such error legitimacy. The sharia itself is unequivocal on this.” But, he continued, “it is equally unfair for non-Muslims to reject sharia dispensation as long as this applies only to Muslims. The issue {solution?} is simply to take non-Muslims out of the sharia, but not to take sharia out of the Constitution.”³³

Throughout this chapter and, in fact, this entire series, the importance of education has always been recognized by Muslims. Islam “abhors ignorance,” Abdu-Raheem insisted. Hence,

if every Muslim is aware of how important peace is in Islam, it will go a long way in reducing incidents of violent clashes between Muslims and others. The Government owes it as a responsibility to Nigerians to provide for the teaching of each religion in all institutions of learning. The mass media should also make adequate provisions for religious instructions, not only to make everyone better informed of one’s religion, but also to make the citizens have an idea of the religion of one another. This will promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance.

By now it will be clear that Abdu-Raheem is not your average Muslim, certainly not the average *Northern* Muslim we have been reading about. No hint of violence or rancour. While especially the more militant Muslims may reject any sense of allegiance to the Constitution and the legal system, Abdu-Raheem strongly advocated obedience to “the constituted authorities” on basis of Qur’an 4:59:

This verse clearly prohibits taking laws into one’s hand, no matter what the situation. It strictly commands all Muslims to settle differences between them and others through the

³²See vols. 2, 4 and 6 of this series for details.

³³R. D. Abubakre, 1992, p. 131.

proper channels. This is a lesson for the Nigerian Muslim. It is time we learnt that two wrongs do not make a right. A Muslim must learn to exercise self-restraint. That is why the Prophet says, 'He is not strong who throws down another, but he is strong who controls his anger.'"

A negative action Abdu-Raheem listed was that avoidance of rumour mongering. In Nigeria this has been a particularly dangerous feature of life. He considered it "one of the factors responsible for most of the conflicts between religious groups in the country. Many blatant lies are fabricated to incite one group against the other." Muslims should guard against it. If people had done so, "many crises would have been averted. It is hoped that other religious groups will identify this problem and find an effective solution to it."

Another cause for friction has been the distance between the two communities. There "is a lack of interaction between them." This distance creates suspicion. "Efforts should be made to close ranks and to see each other as brothers and sisters." He recommended holding "seminars, symposia, public lectures and workshops to provide avenues for religious groups to discuss matters." Such activities will teach them to accommodate each other.

Finally, there is the familiar demand for the government to encourage harmony. "To achieve this, it must strive to create a conducive atmosphere by not favouring one group at the expense of the other." This should be a serious consideration in the matter of appointments and in the distribution of social amenities.

Though Abdu-Raheem did not claim to have the full solution to the crises, he entertained the hope that those listed above "will be useful to formulate a kind of general approach."³⁴ This was the hope of a man who seemed to be "without guile," a truly irenic man without any hidden agenda. This was a Yoruba with their customary tolerance but without the syncretism.

A very similar lecturer at that conference was Muhib Opeloye, whom we have already met above. His attitude of tolerance was similar as were his list of recommendations and his hopes that, if followed, they would lead to peace and harmony.

The teachings of the Scripture on tolerance, if properly digested, could be utilised as a means of welding the adherents of the two religions into one feeling of universal brotherhood under one benevolent God. The teachings could be utilised to bring about mutual understanding and harmonious co-existence among Muslims and Christians.

³⁴M. Abdu-Raheem, 1992, pp. 70-80.

Islam and Christianity are both religions of tolerance and forgiveness, of mercy and compassion, of benevolence and goodwill to all. The two religions hold the love of others as the sine qua non of piety and righteousness. It is of their essence to seek man's reconciliation and co-operation. This was why the Prophet was prepared to enter into the treaties of co-operation with peoples of other faiths.

What the present-day Muslims should learn from Prophet Muhammad's treaty with the Jewish tribe and the Christians are the spirit of tolerance and co-operation with other faiths. The adherents of other religions should similarly learn to recognise the legitimate rights of the Muslims. These are the essential ingredients for peaceful and harmonious co-existence in a pluralistic Nigeria.³⁵

Abubakre of Ilorin University affirmed that "right from Arabia" Islam has been marked by "consistent tolerance." It was a mark of tolerance that led the Prophet to allow non-Muslims "to decide their cases according to their customary laws and practices. It is laid down in the Qur'an itself: 'Let the people of the Gospel decide cases by what God has revealed in the Book' (5:50)." As Islam spread into areas where Christians or Jews were dominant, it became a "necessity to cooperate [and] compromise." When it conquered Hindu territory, instead of treating that great mass of people as requiring *jihad*, since they were not among the approved "People of the Book," Muslims treated them as *Dhimmi*, as a protected people. That was toleration beyond the letter of the Book. Abubakre concluded, "sensitivity and respect for each other's views should be an important recipe to mutual tolerance in a multi-religion state like Nigeria. Whether respect can co-exist with a kind of pride that Abubakre, along with Muslims in general, displayed is questionable. He proudly quoted one colonial governor Moloney who reportedly said that "Muslims were the most orderly, intellectual and respectable class of citizens" among the Yoruba. Or one Governor Carter who declared that Muslims were "as a rule the most intelligent portion of the country."³⁶

"Peaceful co-existence" is part of the cluster. Bashir Tofa, Chairman of the Bureau of Islamic Propagation (BIP), the publisher of both *The Pen* and *Alkalami*, praised the FG very much when it interfered in the proceedings of the CA by stopping the discussion on sharia.³⁷ His praise was opposite to the Christian negative reaction. Nevertheless, Tofa took this controversial

³⁵M. Opeloye, 1992, p. 91.

³⁶R. Abubakre, n.d., pp. 60-70.

³⁷J. Boer, vol. 7, 2007, ch. 5, p. xxx. *Alkalami*, "Tsai de Mahawara...." 9-23 Dec/88, p. 1.

interference as an opportunity to call upon both Christians and Muslims to “start working for genuine peaceful co-existence.” He furthermore prayed for God’s guidance for all who work for such cooperative peace. This, in spite of the rather vitriolic language with which he would sometimes berate Christians. As to those who sought to foment antagonism between the two religions, well, for them it’s a different story: “May hell fire be their abode.”³⁸

Sometimes this call for tolerance is found in unexpected contexts. Ibrahim Bello wrote a report on the launching of a book on Shehu Dan Fodio, the great jihadist of the early 19th century. In the report, the Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, was quoted as saying that a careful study of Dan Fodio’s works could “bring about the desired religious tolerance in the country.” There was much to learn about “how Muslims and non-Muslims can live together in harmony.” But side by side with these comments in Bello’s article you read about “the works of the 18th century jihadists whose path must be followed by contemporary Muslims for the restoration of Islam and Muslims’ glorious days.”³⁹ Those were the days of Muslim hegemony over the North and the days of horror for the Middle Belt targets of Muslim slavery.⁴⁰

Another concept included in tolerance is “multi-religion.” Readers of Volume 6 should remember how often Muslims advocate it as a reality and as desirable policy for religions to pursue.⁴¹ Balogun represented the mainline opinion well in his submission “that a multi-religious society is an ideal state for Nigeria.” Whether or not the content he poured into that term also represents mainline opinion is another question. To him it meant “a state where one religion is not super-imposed on the other; a society where people will have freedom of worship; where no government makes a proclamation in favour of one religion to the detriment of other religions; and a society where government does not promote any religion as the official religion.”⁴² His content would seem to be very close to the Nigerian Christian notion of secularism.

We have heard the many Muslim complaints about lack of respect and sensitivity towards them on the part of Christians, hatred even and strong prejudice. Such complaints have solid ground. If you have read the Christian-oriented volumes in this series, you have come across many instances of it. In view of this situation, there were/are many calls from Muslim to Muslim to

³⁸B. Tofa, 16-30 Dec/88, p. 1.

³⁹I. I. Bello, 27 Oct/89, p. 16.

⁴⁰J. Boer, 2003, vol. 3, pp. 203-204.

⁴¹J. Boer, vol. 6, 2007, pp. 109-110, 213, 228, 242, 283.

⁴²K. Bolagun, 12/86, p. 65.

shore up relations with their Christian neighbours. Such calls come especially from emirs and chiefs. The Shehu of Borno, Mustapha Umar El-Kanemi, encouraged his subjects “*da su cigaba da zaman lafiya da aminci tsakaninsu da sauran al’ummomi na kasar nan.*” His motivation was that such positive relationships with others are helpful in evangelism.⁴³

Muhammad Gashua argued that “nothing short of according each other the deserved respect” will bring peace and stability to Nigeria. “Such respect must include allowing each faith the healthy atmosphere to put on their fundamental requests by avoiding emotions, insularity, etc. and, especially, the selfish desire to oppose requests for mere opposition sake. Muslims, more than anybody, deserve such respect, realizing the fact that they are taken too far for a ride by their Christian brothers.” Nigerians and their leaders, including members of the CA of the day, “must learn to respect each others’ sensitivities, especially on emotive issues like religion, in order to allow a healthy atmosphere to reign.” Fair enough, but one wonders how serious Gashua was about this respect when in between these commendable statements, he threw in the following: “It is ironic that Christianity, a child of imperialism and an agent of neo-colonialism, has no blueprint of its own making, other than transplanting the neo-colonial traits.”⁴⁴ That hardly betrays respect!

P. A Dopamu observed,

*No religious understanding and cooperation can be achieved, if we think that others must subscribe to our own religion. All religions must be allowed and encouraged to go on with their beliefs and practices. There must be no idea that a particular religion must superimpose its tenets on others. Since religion should guide the human family into wholeness, we should always inspire in men a wholesome respect for other people’s religion so that religion may achieve this goal. If men have the right to seek salvation through their own religion, others also have the same right. In doing this, we have to demonstrate a certain level of emotional maturity.*⁴⁵

In closing this article, a couple of stories may be beneficial. Their total impact is sweet and bitter at the same time.

STORY 1

⁴³Alkalami, “*Shehun Borno...*,” 31 Mar/89-14 Apr/89, p. 16. English translation: “They should continue to live in peace and trust with all the people in this land.”

⁴⁴M. Gashua, 2 Dec/88, p. 5.

⁴⁵Quoted by K. Balogun, Dec/86, pp. 66-67. I do not know Dopamu’s religion, but I include it in this Muslim chapter, since Balogun appropriates him.

Religious controversy is at present a wide spread epidemic in the Muslim society. It is just like a religious pastime led by the devilish spirits and it is rarely free from evil motives. Controversy is the evil of the tongue which envelops the plight of the heart with darkness. The effect of such controversy is the darkening of the soul from which ultimately no light of faith can appear. It is a weapon for the devil given unnoticed to the so-called learned men to set fire to the peaceful society. The following example should be kept in mind by such two men.

Two men were once quarreling over a mango. One says it is bitter and the other says it is sweet. They went on quarreling for a whole day. A third man came and solved the problem in a second. He told them both to taste the mango instead of quarreling. Both of them tasted it and found that it was sweet. The quarrel thus happily ended. Similar should be the case with all pious men.

Pious men tasting spiritual food do not at all enter into religious duels. It is only the so-called learned men who have not drunk deep from the fountain of knowledge, who enter into such quarrels. Before actual duel, everybody should first taste the thing which is the bone of contention in order to make the ground firm.⁴⁶

STORY 2

And then a not-so-sweet story from the closing days of the first administration of Zamfara's sharia government: "...the situation in Zamfara, the first state to practise Islamic law, is a surprise: The women's wing of the ruling All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) is torn into two over a parting gift of N21 million from the government. The money was allegedly diverted by party leaders. This has prompted state party Chairman, Ibrahim Mallaha, to form a committee to resolve the conflict and ensure a peaceful hand over."⁴⁷

And then, as the story went:

Indeed Yariman Bakura of Zamfara State {Governor Sani} felt the first and most urgent need of any responsible government is to battle against corruption and dishonesty; to fight against it in public and civic life and war against it in business and communal life. Because in many forms, corruption today indeed stands out to be the archenemy of our republic, the chief foe of our commercial institutions, the principal adversary of

⁴⁶H. Abubakar, 14 Apr/89.

⁴⁷T. Abatan and others, 29 May/2007.

government and, of course, an even more dangerous enemy than open lawlessness of violence, because it works in hidden furtive passion.⁴⁸

When will this end? When will we see evidence of sharia social justice?

⁴⁸I. Majega, 24 Sep/2004.