

PROBLEMS OF MORALITY IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE PROSPECTS OF ISLAMIC MORAL VALUES

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Abstract

Knowledge in Islam has great goals that guarantee happiness for individuals and peace for any given society. At every stage and in every walk of life man needs a good deal of knowledge and moral ethics with which to control his life and attain success. Islam, therefore, encourages knowledge and learning and lays emphasis on education as the basis and foundation to success in any given society. It is in line with this background that this paper explores the problems of morality in Nigerian education system stressing the Islamic moral values that underline its position. Hence, education without discipline and moral values becomes ineffective and valueless. The objective of the research is to underscore the problems of morality in Nigerian education as a wrong placement of academic activities. The study applied analytical phenomenological methodology.

Introduction:

Education, as a sector of development in every nation, plays vital role in the transformation and changing the fortunes of individuals and the nation as a whole positively. It is therefore imperative to make sure that resources for education are appropriately managed with least wastages². However, if education is without discipline and moral values, the whole system becomes fruitless. It is no doubt that the importance of education to human beings cannot be overemphasized. Globally, it is considered as a human right that should be accorded to all human beings. This might have not been unconnected with the fact that it was the reason why a lot of international human right bodies consider education as a fundamental human right. When the issue of Nigeria educational system today is raised, the first sets of thoughts that come to mind are decline in standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices and mass promotion syndrome before any other thing else. This calls for an in-depth study and analysis aimed at tutoring each and every stakeholders in the education system on how their actions and inactions have individually and collectively contributed to the collapsing state of education in Nigeria³.

In any case, therefore knowledge and skill acquisition which education is all about cannot be over emphasized⁴. However, one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria and making it difficult for good quality education is inadequate moral behavior which is generally referred to as indiscipline. Moral principles guide human conduct thereby indicating certain things or ways of behavior which should be adopted and other certain things or ways of behavior which should be avoided. They in fact tell us more specifically the good which the moral law obliges us to do and the evil which it prohibits us from doing.

It is in line with this background that this paper intends to unveil the importance of education, discipline and moral values for the development of Nigeria's educational system. For the purpose of better understanding, the Nigeria educational system has to be properly noted emphasizing its challenges which notably emanated from non-challant attitude of teachers and the extent to which we are indebted to the western world in this regard. This paper hopes to demonstrate the distinct universal nature of discipline and moral values which can be, generally, applied to all believers in this world, and this is in contradiction to western norms and values which, perhaps because of their nature, cannot be accommodated by Islam⁵. Studies have shown that moral principles require us to cultivate justice, honesty, kindness, truthfulness, respect for human life and dignity, respect for other people's properties and respect for other peoples' interests etc. They however, prohibit murder, stealing, embezzlement of public fund, bribery, cheating, hatred and adultery among others.

Definition of the Terms:

Education, as a concept, has no specific and acceptable definition. The reason, Jumare asserts, is that the term education varies in meaning and function from one society to the other. Thus what society 'A' desires might not be what society 'B' desires, in which case their definitions would certainly vary. Despite all these differences it is generally believed that the word education was derived from Latin words "Educi" and "cation" which signifies "lead" and "out" carrying the meaning as to lead out. It is also the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution⁶.

Different scholars of varying degrees of knowledge, using this standard, have defined education based on their understanding of the term. This is due to the fact that there are various definitions of education varying with educational philosophers; scholars and students. Frankenna, a well-known writer in philosophy of education, identifies four definitions of the term education. He harps that education is:

- a. The activity of educating the young.
- b. What goes on in the child, or the process of being educated

- c. The result, or what the child acquires or has in the end; namely an education
- d. The discipline that studies, that is the discipline that studies (a), (b) and (c)⁷.

What can be simply inferred here is that the field that reflects on all the above to build up a body of knowledge is education. Kaunda and Castle, according to Kolawole, maintained basically that education is transmission of culture from older generations to the young. This concept is often expressed not only by educational historians but by sociologists and psychologists who study education. Callaway in his effort to address the term education holds the view that education is life, stressing that the process of education spans through a man's life. On his definition, Fafunwa asserts that education is:

A process through which societies train the younger ones to acquire knowledge, skills, morals, beliefs and competencies with the view to taking their values to the next generation⁸.

While some scholars have coined it this way:

Education is training in terms of vocation, intellectual and moral values on an individual to help himself and the society (in which) he lives⁹.

In fact others see it as:

(An) Ability by individual to comply with norms and values of his (own) society¹⁰

Jekayinfa and Kolawole emphasized that the word education was derived from the Latin word "educare" meaning to bring up, to load out, to rise up and to educate. They maintain that to educate means acting in order to lead out fully all the potentialities of an individual. It is also indicates the process of helping society to which one lives, works and dies¹¹. However, from this simple definition it can be summed up that education is the total efforts of a community to raise its social, economic and political standard of life. Education is aimed at producing an individual who is honest, respectful, skilled, and co-operative and who would conform to the social order.

The Wikipedia conceptualized education thus "an act or process of developing and cultivating (whether physically, mentally or morally) one's mental activity or senses; the expansion, strengthening, and discipline of one's mind, faculty, etc; the forming and regulation of principles and character in order to prepare and fit for any calling or business by systematic instruction¹²". This definition projects the ideals of Islamic education which aspires to develop an individual who can be useful to himself, his family and largely the society. Historically, the mission of schools has been to develop in the young both the intellectual and the moral virtues. Concerned about the moral virtues, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others, is the domain of moral education. Moral education, then, refers to helping children acquire those

virtues or moral habits that will help them individually live good lives and at the same time become productive and contributing members of their communities. In this view, moral education should contribute not only to students as individuals, but also to social cohesion of a community.

Purpose of Education:

The singular purpose of education is to produce a useful citizen, who is useful to himself and the society in which he lives and mainly to the world community. In Nigeria for example the national policy on education spells out the nature and purpose of education as captured below:

An instrument per excellence for effecting national development to use education as a tool to achieve its national objectives to make education relevant to the needs of the individual and set its goal in terms of the kind of society desired in relation to the environment and realities of the modern world and rapid social changes¹³

The conclusion that can be made here is the fact that the kind of story a nation tells; whether it would be of sweet dreams or haunting nightmares depends on the kind of education its people get. Thus; when a nation's education is poisoned, its story is poisoned. A nation with a poisoned story is a nation without future¹⁴. Discipline on the other hand connotes the practice or method of teaching and enforcing acceptable patterns of behavior. It is also the ability to behave in a controlled and calm way even in a difficult or stressful condition. More importantly, it remains mental self- control used in directing or changing behavior; learning something or training for something¹⁵.

Morality refers to the quality of being in accord with standards of right or good conduct. It is a system of ideas of right and wrong conduct or virtuous conduct. The crux of the matter is that, morality signifies the standards of conduct that are generally acceptable as right or proper. Values on the other hand, alludes to rules by which one makes decisions about right and wrong, should and should not be, good and bad¹⁶.

Similarly, Jumare hinted that ethics do not only analyze, classify, describe and explain human action as good or bad but also help us to know why and on what basis our actions are justified¹⁷. Moral values therefore could be regarded as a moral sense which clearly enables one to differentiate between right and wrong as well as good and bad¹⁸. This is the reason why even the primitive societies had words that denoted difference between good and bad, right and wrong. Despite all these all communities knew what was good and bad. For instance speaking the truth, keeping promises, respecting family ties, helping the poor, less privileged and weak ones, were considered signs of good morality. This may not be unconnected with the fact that

Muslims took their guidance from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). In one of his traditions he was reported to have said:

No one of you has complete faith until he wishes his brother what he wishes for himself¹⁹.

Concept of Moral Values in Islam:

The entire Qur'an is full of moral teachings, and the entire canvas of the Divine plan of human existence on earth is under its purview. In formulating this plan, it has kept the dictates of perfect fairness and equity. It tells us the internal and personal mechanisms which make us act or not to act. Islam has recognized the power of morals in all spheres of human life. It is very interesting to note that all the major religions in the world preach morality as an indispensable part of their teachings, but the approach followed in these religions towards morality is what makes the difference.

Islam, therefore, being the last revealed religion provides the best and most comprehensive moral teachings that are capable of eradicating all forms of social vices in human society. Thus; there is no an aspect of human actions, psychological conditions, circumstances, rights, excellence and etiquette which has been left out of the Qur'anic moral teachings.

Islamic Morality:

Morality as an English word denotes the 'principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad behaviors. But for the proper understanding of its concept, the word must be taken back to its origin. The Arabic equivalent of this word is *Khuluq* (pl. *Akhlaq*) which literally means innate disposition, character, behaviors, and nature e.t.c. Technically it means the science of virtues and the way to acquire them, of vices, and how to guard against them²⁰. Islamic moralities are therefore divine in origin, human in nature, universal in approach and comprehensive in its scope. In Islam however, morality has five basic foundations upon which all other Islamic moral values are attached. These include:

- (a) Patience, (*sabr*) which helps a Muslim to bear and conceal anger and all other undesirable attitudes,
- (b) Temperance (*iffah*) which enables one to shun immoral behaviors in words and actions and makes him to be modest and prevents him from bad habits,
- (c) Courage (*Shaja'ah*) which helps one to have self-esteem, uphold noble characters and properly control himself in love and anger,
- (d) Justice (*'adl*) which puts one on golden means. This helps him to be generous- a quality between miserliness and extravagance-, it also helps him to acquire forbearance (*hilm*) – a quality between anger and self disrespect. The aforementioned are the sources of all other moral qualities from which all the rest emanate.

- (e) Wisdom (*al-hikmah*) which is the fifth foundation comes from sound faculty of knowledge. It helps one to have foresight enabling him to distinguish between true and false in statement, right and wrong in belief and between good and evil in actions.

It could be well understood from the above that Islamic morality is limitless as far as Muslim life on earth is concerned. In fact, morality in Islam is not a mere theory which is documented in scripture, but rather a practical training for which the Noble Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sent to train the *Ummah*. This is clearly elucidated in the following verse of the Glorious Qur'an:

And indeed you are on a great moral character²¹

‘Aishah, (RA) the wife of the Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said that the character of the Prophet (SAW) was the Qur'an. This interestingly reveals that the Prophet has exemplified all the teachings of the Qur'an. Almighty Allah therefore directed all mankind to emulate him when He elucidates:

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern²².

As mentioned above, one should note that Islamic moralities are divine in origin, human in nature, universal in approach and comprehensive in scope.

Determinants of Islamic Morality:

Morality in Islam has many factors that help to initiate, maintain and develop a sense of direction among people in their environment. These determinants are aimed at achieving and fulfilling Allah's mercy. Below are three among the determinants:

- a. **Motive:** This motive is also divided into two; extrinsic and intrinsic motive. These are attached with the power that causes a person to act and why an action is done. **Extrinsic** refers to doing certain things for the sake of physical reward he/she hopes to get. **Intrinsic** implies that which prompts a person to do certain actions in anticipating spiritual benefit. This is in line with the teaching of the following Hadith:

Motive determines the value of all conduct and a person attains that which he desires²³.

- b. **Faith:** One of the most significant ingredients of good conduct is faith. This faith has, no doubt, a decisive effect on the spiritual and material lot of a person as well as his social behavior, political conduct and financial life. It could therefore be understood that faith in Almighty Allah is the foundation of good morality.

- c. **Fear of Allah:** One's ability to respond to any stimulus in doing good and abstaining from all evil and selfish desires is best achieved and promoted by the amount of fear of Allah one has. Of all the determinants mentioned above, fear of Allah is the most significant determinant of morality.

Objectives of Islamic Morality:

Islamic morality is as important as the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an to the Muslims. This is because it (Qur'an) laid down solid moral foundation in the teaching of Islam for it contains verses dealing with and encouraging moral development and at the same time discouraging moral decadence. The Glorious Qur'an referred to those who uphold its teachings as 'prosperous' for being attached to moral qualities of keeping away from all acts, Islam frowns at but also fulfilling their promises, keeping trust and establishing their prayers at their specified time. The Prophet (SAW) always invoked Allah to better his character, advising his Companions to practice good morality. He taught the believers that morality attracts huge rewards than ritual devotions such as *salat*, *zakat*, *sawm* e.t.c. It was said of the Prophet (SAW) that he was merciful and charitable, humble yet just, giving to each his/her due yet full of compassion and sympathy for the weak, for the orphan, the deprived and the oppressed.

It should also be noted that morality is the heaviest deed on the day of requital as it brings a believer closer to the Prophet (SAW) on that day. Morality can also be seen as an integral part of Islam with perfects *iman* (faith). Immorality on the other hand destroys good deeds of a Muslim as all Islamic devotional acts are aimed at promoting morality among Muslims. The aim of Islamic morality is thus to safeguard humanity from social, economic, biological and physical mischief and direct them towards the attainment of spiritual uplift.

Sources of Moral Rectitude/Integrity:

In the Glorious Qur'an, there are three sources of moral conduct, and all the three are embedded in human nature. They are:

1. **The Commanding Self** (*Nafs al-Ammaara*) is the self, which incites human being towards evil. This is evident in the Glorious Qur'an as indicated in the following verse:

Yet I do not hold myself to be free from weakness, for the Commanding Self (-the animal self) is surely prone to enjoin evil, except on whom my Lord has mercy²⁴.

The Glorious Qur'an clearly states that, the state arising from human beings, animal self, *Nafs al- Ammaara* (the Commanding Self) is the first source of morality if the weapon of reason is applied. The reasoning faculty in human being is sufficiently well developed to analyze his behavior critically and to perceive the immediate and remote consequences of his actions. It is the result of the critical exercise of reason that comes into play on inappropriate occasions and animal like actions, functioning as a control. This

exercise of reason and control take then the hue of moral states. The foundation of good morals lies in our natural emotions and instincts, and good morals are nothing more than appropriate and controlled exercise of these naturally endowed powers and instincts.

Hunger and sexuality are the basic commanding needs of humans and animals. Now if these basic commanding forces are brought under control through fasting and marriage, they become virtues.

2. The Self-Accusing Spirit (*Nafs al- Lawwaama*) is the second source of morality, the one judging the excellence of morals. It is the voice of the conscience which becomes loud when an act of indecency is being done. Every human being is endowed with this voice. This is elaborated in the following verse:

And I swear by (and bring to witness) the Self-accusing Soul (*Nafs al-Lawwaama* - the innate self reproaching spirit, at the doing of an evil deed as an evidence)²⁴.

Nafs al-Lawwaama is thus what we call the living perception of one's psychological condition or the call of the inner voice. One aspect of getting a ruling from the voice of the conscience and from one's heart is that when we are about to commit any action we should first imagine to apply such an action to ourselves. If we are not adversely affected by this action and if it proves to be good and effective for us, such an action would also be beneficial and good for others. And if we cannot accept it for ourselves, then it must be assumed that it is not appropriate for others. All those who act unfairly towards others, should put their own persons in place of others and see how they would like such an act to be perpetrated against them. The Noble Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said:

When wanting to decide whether something is good or bad, ask your heart and inner souls, and take it that the deed, the commission of which gives you a feeling of satisfaction to the heart and inner souls, is a virtuous deed and the deed which rankles in the heart and produces perturbation and hesitancy in the mind is a sinful deed, even though the people may tell you that it is a lawful deed²⁶.

The question that arises at this juncture is that if this *Nafs al-Lawwaamah*, the self accusing spirit is present in every person, and every person is endowed with a voice of the conscience, why is it that a lot of persons still commit immoral acts? The answer to this is simple. Though our conscience does raise its voice of protest and the commission of such an act people mostly do not heed to it. Secondly, immorality is a poison. Repeated doses of this poison blunt or destroy the conscience.

3. *Nafs al- Mutma'innah* - the Soul at Peace. Is the third and the ultimate source of morals. Once a Muslim scholar was asked, how can we free ourselves from unlawful prohibited things and from

afflictions and find peace and tranquility? He replied, through a firm faith in Allah, for one gets free of all weaknesses and calamities through such a faith. It is through this channel the human soul finds its ultimate peace and tranquility.

(As for the person who has been blessed with a contented and peaceful mind He will say to him,) ‘O you soul at peace, come back to your Lord well-pleased with Him and He well-pleased with you. Enter the fold of My chosen servants, and enter the Garden made by Me²⁷.

It is wrong to say that disbelief in Allah does not produce any defect or diminishing effect on one's morals, and confirmation of His existence does not strengthen one's moral powers. Among the principles proposed by the Qur'an for faith in Allah is the principles of Retribution and Recompense for one's deeds and this is an important principle in the laws of nature. A person who is merely adhering to a moral code only uses his own person or the society at his personal discretion and by doing so, he thinks that he is becoming better civilized and serving the society. He has no motivation of getting any reward. But when the Qur'an motivates us towards higher morals, it simultaneously tells us that by adopting higher morals we not only improve and reform society, but we are also making our next life better.

Almighty Allah states in the Qur'an:

Verily, those who say, "Allah is our Lord," and then remain steadfast (and follow the straight path), the angels will descend upon them (saying), "Have no fear nor grieve rather rejoice at the glad tidings of receiving the Gardens (of Paradise) which you have been promised²⁸.

The existence of moral forces within human personality emanates from and is subservient to the inborn faculties of a human being and there exists a natural impulse towards morality in the human makeup. The human faculties which are inherent in human nature in its inner aspect as opposed to the outer and physical aspect are denoted by the word ***Khulq***. ***Khulq*** is the term which describes that habitual and firm disposition in a human by virtue from which moral actions flow spontaneously and effortlessly.

All the moral principles that exist are nothing else but a manifestation of natural human emotions and nature is the source of them all. A person becomes laudable only when his natural faculties and personal disposition take on a moral hue through training. If such actions are good and laudable when judged by common sense and the Law, such a disposition is called a virtuous disposition, and if such actions are bad and condemnable, such a disposition is called an evil disposition. Thus, the source of all morals is within the nature of a human being - his disposition and his various natural states. Thus, the evil in the human beings is something which evolves later as

a consequence of their training. Similarly, the Noble Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said:

No infant is born except with an inborn sense of natural goodness, and then his parents make him into a Jew, Christian or a Muslim²⁹

In other words, a human being is born innocent and unblemished in his nature and he does not enter this world carrying a load of original sin. Those who think that a human being is sinful by birth have erred. Similarly, it is a wrong assumption that a human being is the product of some earlier life and his present birth is an outcome of some previous birth, and that he is caught up in the ramifications of his actions in some previous existence, as is believed by some. That is why in the Qur'an there is no mention of "original sin", "atonement" or "transmigration of soul" as this is the products of human fantasy with no evidence at all for their support.

Importance of Islamic Morality:

Islamic morality is as important as the teachings of the Qur'an to a Muslim. This is because the Qur'an has laid down a solid moral foundation. It contains verses that encourage moral development and discourage moral lowliness. In fact, those who uphold the teachings of the Qur'an are referred to as 'prosperous' because of their moral qualities³⁰. Similarly, numerous Qur'anic verses contain discourse on moral qualities of a believer such as justice, kindness, patience, fairness, firmness, thankfulness to Allah among others. The Qur'an discourages immorality in its entirety. These include, but not limited to injustice, corruption, envy, malice, pride and excessive love of worldly materials to mention a few. Prophet (S.A.W.) had clearly demonstrated the importance of morality in his various traditions³¹. He always invokes Allah to better his character and advises his Companions to practice good morality. He taught believers that morality attracts higher rewards than ritual devotions such as *salat*, *zakat*, *siyam*.

It is the heaviest deed on the scale (*mizan*) on the Day of Judgment as it also brings a believer closer to the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (S.A.W) regarded morality as an integral part of Islam and saw it as something that perfects *iman* (faith). Adversely, immorality destroys good deeds of a Muslim as all Islamic devotional activities are aimed at promoting morality among Muslims and Allah has described Himself and the Prophet (S.A.W.) with good moral qualities.

Challenges Facing Nigerian Educational System:

One of the challenges facing Nigerian educational system is the politicization of education. This has seriously affected the advancement of education in this country. The crux of the matter is the fact that various educational institutions are being opened and run in almost every state in Nigeria on political ground. This is apparently more cogent that admissions in universities, colleges,

polytechnics etc are often guided by other things than academic performance. Most parents today use their political offices for the education of their children. An issue that cripples the development of education is the manner in which politicians influence recruitment exercise of teachers. Many people today are after securing job for their children just to have meal ticket not bothering whether their wards are qualified or not. This has led to recruitment of unqualified teachers in our institutions.

Another critical area that hinders development of education is moral decay. This is noticeable in examination malpractices, cultism and corruption to mention a few. Crises in our higher institutions of learning have led to “brain-drain”. Students are no longer captivated in academic excellence. Lacks of care, protection and guidance have also been identified as major setback in the development of our educational system.

In fact, most parents encourage their wards to engage in examination malpractices just to qualify for higher institutions of learning. An investigation conducted revealed that some examination centers exist in this country where parents pay huge amount of money to make their wards pass SSCE –WAEC /NECO/JAMB. This and many more are identified as some of the factors militating against educational advancement in Nigeria. Comparatively speaking, Nigeria’s educational system is rather quantitative than qualitative-oriented. What we find as screaming headlines on Newspapers is cult war, rape case in our campuses, violent initiation of unsuspecting students into various cult groups; bribery and corruption allegations against teachers; campus prostitution allegedly patronized by public office holders who are supposed to uphold the thrust of integrity and cultural value orientation³².

It is obvious that all these immoral acts have fuelled the educational challenges we are witnessing today. Various instructors alongside some students were identified to be the brain behind all these problems that hinder the progress of education in our various institutions. We should equally have a look at the causes of these problems with a view to minimizing or flushing them out from our educational system.

Causes of Immoral Acts that Hinder the Advancement of our Educational System:

Vices on the other hand, come out of the four pillars put together thus; (a) ignorance (*jahl*) which reflects bad as good and reflects perfection as imperfection and vice-versa, (b) injustice (*dhulm*) which makes one to place things not in their appropriate positions. This no doubt, makes one to blame when he/she is supposed to praise, disagrees when supposed to agree, (c) desire (*shahwa*) which leads one to greediness, humiliation and all sorts of imperfection, (d) anger (*ghadab*) which leads one to pride, rancor, envy, transgression to mention but a few. Imam Ghazali says that it is against human nature and disposition to be attracted towards evil and blamable

actions. The fact of the matter is that all the faculties found in a human personality, if used properly, are good morals in themselves. If at any time we see a defect in these or a slip is noticed, it is due to our misuse of these faculties. The capability of good morals has been endowed in our nature and this capability can safeguard against slip-ups through will, power and training. Lack of knowledge is another cause of evil. That is why a great emphasis is laid by the Qur'an and by the Noble Prophet on acquiring knowledge and wisdom. Almighty says in the following verse:

Verily, Allah undertakes to accept the repentance of only those who do evil through lack of knowledge, then repent soon after. Such are the person towards whom Allah turns with mercy. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise³³.

Everything in this universe exerts an influence on its environment and also accepts influence from its environment. Every action is followed by a reaction. We know how a person's health is influenced by changes in weather, by his food, his dress, and his home. This influence affects even the morals of a person. Thus the commandments about the material world, such as laws about food, dress, the principles of government, the economic order etc. are not only meant to keep the physical, social and economic sides in order, but also to uplift our moral conditions. It is for sure that the use of unclean and unlawful food (pork, alcohol) will badly affect our moral conditions.

The wisdom underlying the prohibition of certain foods by the Qur'an is that by using them, one is deprived of certain high moral qualities, such as foods, produce bad moral qualities. Commenting on the effect of food on morals, Imam Ghazali conceives that:

The child's wet-nurse should be very religious, pious and used to eating lawful things, for a milk that comes out of unlawful food would not have any good or blessing in it³⁴.

What can simply be extrapolated here is that if the wet-nurse involved in the upbringing of the child from the very beginning, the unwholesome milk would permeate the child's every fiber and in the long run he would be naturally assented towards the unlawful and unclean things. Another source of evil is the bad companies with persons of low moral standards. That is why we are told in the following verse to be with the truthful ones:

O You who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and be with the truthful³⁵

This companionship with the truthful can be in many ways. This is by developing friendship with the pious, attending gatherings with them and studying their writings and biographies. This will eventually boost and develop one's morals. Mental and physical illness can also cause of certain

immoral deeds. Islam has drawn our attention to many aspects of physical and mental hygiene as shown in this verse:

And purify your clothes (and the thoughts). And idol-worship, (spare no pains to) exterminate it and shun all uncleanliness³⁶

The pollution of the environment can be another source of evil. To rectify this kind of un-cleanliness the Qur'an has taught us that:

And guard against an affliction which surely will afflict not only those of you in particular who have acted unjustly (but it will involve others also who are inclined towards them); and know that Allah is Severe in requiting³⁷.

Prospects of Challenges facing our Educational System in Nigeria:

The educational challenges in Nigeria are numerous and hinder the progress of the sector. With the current trend in education, it is feared that the universally accepted target will hardly be achieved. In fact, just as the physical and social development of the average child is beset with many problems, so also the development of education in any given society is hampered by a myriad of problems. Some of these problems are associated with the responsibility for and control of the society's education and the diversification of the educational system. All these and many others are retarding the pace of educational development in Nigeria today³⁸.

However, like many other researchers as well as stakeholders in education, I strongly, have the belief that all hands must be on deck with a view to facing the realities. Our non-challant attitude, in almost every aspect of life, causes most of our problems. A comprehensive structured system in line with values, norms and attitudinal orientation should be put in place with a view to bringing the desired behavioral change³⁹.

The Adaptability of Moral Principles in our Life:

The adaptation of moral principles among Muslim teachers in various institutions of learning becomes desirable. This is in view of the fact that such morals can influence their lives and enable them to imbibe the positive ones. Some scholars have categorized such principles into two as can be seen below.

- (1) *Positive Moral Principles:* These are moral principles which spell out specifically the good actions binding on us by the moral law. In this way, we are under obligation to be kind, generous, honest, just, and hospitable, respect human life, perform our duties, be faithful to our promises, show altruism or love to one's neighbors etc.
- (2) *Negative Moral Principles:* They spell out the evil to be avoided. They also tell us not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to tell lies, not to steal, not to embezzle public funds; neither takes nor gives bribe, not to be cruel and callous as well as not to commit rape.

The function of these moral principles is to guide human conduct thereby protecting values. Moral principles therefore protect and foster certain values namely, the fundamental human values such as the value of human life as the highest value on earth, the value of justice, the value of honesty and the value of human freedom. They also prevent their destruction and to encourage their growth and development. For example, the principle which prohibits stealing is meant to protect the right of every man to the ownership of his property.

The principle which prohibits telling lies is meant to protect the value of honesty and so on and so forth. Violation of any of the moral principles consequently means destruction of a value which ought to be protected. We must therefore live a moral life because Almighty Allah has directed us to do so; we must also live a moral life as we are social beings and members of society. We must also live a moral life because it is the way of nature. Ethically, it is better to be poor and morally clean than to be rich and morally filthy. For, moral integrity is a higher value than money and material wealth. Those who throw morality to the wind as soon as they see money and sell their moral integrity in exchange for money are short-sighted and foolish.

After the violation and the enjoyment resulting from it the punishment will surely follow in a manner and at a time one may not expect. Nigeria is one of the most corrupt and immoral in the world. Those who corruptly enriched themselves through immoral means are generally Christians and Muslims who throw their religion and morality to the wind as soon as they see money. They are therefore short-sighted, narrow-minded, and foolish.

Conclusively, these moral qualities that ought to be imbibed by all and sundry have sadly diminished or nonexistent at all, in the minds of Muslim youth who are adjudged as veritable feels in the progress of any given society. This attitude helps greatly in social disorders and other vices that cause moral degeneration among the generality of Muslim youth. Educational progress in any country depends largely on its ability to curtail illiteracy and other problems bedeviling the sector. The practice of any religion without commitment to moral way of life is an abomination before Almighty Allah.

In Nigeria today, the poor condition of teaching staff has sharply crippled the system. That is why many of them find it difficult to stay in the profession as such looking always for alternative. We however thank Almighty Allah that some of these problems are being tackled. The massive recruitment of teachers, provisions of infrastructure, teaching aids and good condition of service to teachers are being attended to by Federal and some state governments. This encouraging effort should be emulated by all states of the federation. More importantly, we should initiate programs that can salvage our collective dilemma, instead of fruitless lamentation.

Recommendations:

Going by the assessment of educational system in Nigeria, I want to recommend that:

- (1) State and federal institutions should work out modalities that will assist them by giving aptitude test to applicants who wish to join teaching service as a way of minimizing the number of unqualified ones.
- (2) The government should take strict measures against unscrupulous staff and flush them out, if necessary. This is because the government and parents need only the services of people with proven integrity and sense of maturity.
- (3) Parents as well as stakeholders in education should assist Government in its effort to raise the standard of nation's education to a greater height. If all these are done, then qualitative and competitive education would be ensured making it thus in line with modern advancement⁴⁰.
- (4) Moral uprightness should be one of the requirements for appointment into any institutions of learning throughout the Federation.
- (5) Moral education should also be made compulsory in all Nigerian institutions of learning. Competent and religious moralists have to be identified and assigned to screen students wishing to get admissions into various institutions of learning.

Endnotes

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