OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE IS MAKING OUR UNITY TO SAFEGUARD OUR DIVISIONS OF INDIVIDUALITY, GROUPINGS AND LOCATIONS

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First Published: May, 2026

Published by
SADAQATU TAYYIBATUN FOUNDATION
Post Office Box 2630,
Minna, Nigeria.
nigerians.sadtayyfoundation.org
jimada.sadtayyfoundation.org
sadtayyfoundation.org

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There is no gain in saying that unity is better and stronger than division. It is an absolute truth and reality.

A couple is better than a single, which does not mean the destruction of privacy. A group is better than a couple, which does not amount to disrespect, non-recognition or cancellation of couples and singles in the composition of the group. Accordingly, like a State Leadership is superior to that of Local Government, our Federal unity is the most sacred that must not be disrespected, in anyway.

This is why any offense against the State is statutorily defined along with commendable sanction. In Nigeria, insurgency, secession, revolution, military coup are clear examples.

The real challenge of ensuring the growth and development of any related parties, rests in the LIMITS which when exceeded, the key identity of the part will be disabled, in terms of capacity, to enhance the identity of the collective. This is because the parties are the elements that motorize the collective. The superiority of the collective lies in ITS BETTER CAPACITY, BECAUSE OF PARTIES INPUTS, FOR THE SAFETY AND PROSPERITY OF EACH AND ALL PARTIES.

In Islam, these limits are elaborately defined, with guidance example best lived by the Prophet (SAW). There are prohibitions, that are absolutely the reserves of Allah. For example, associating anything or anyone with Allah, telling lies, betrayal of trust, arrogance, adultery, fornication, murder, theft, eating of pork, etc. The protection for these limits includes rewards; for keeping away whenever, wherever and however a Muslim is confronted by the choice of committing any, recorded sin

for such commission and prescribed sanction for such commission. Accordingly, reserving worship for Allah, not being hypocritical, humility, marriage, eating and drinking permissible things are rewarded and draw a believer closer to Allah for blessings, guidance and protection. The efforts of a believer in this course yield safety and prosperity. This non-negotiable standard can be raised for bonuses by topping compliance with the traditional teachings and practices exemplified by Rasul (SAW). Those who are able to do these are the best.

The specific definitions of the scope LEAVES all other aspects FREE for individual or group choices. For example, pork as carnivores is prohibited. Muslims will not eat dog. But lots and variety of other animals, birds and fishes are available. Those who choose to be vegetarian will be fine, provided it is NOT made a law. Marriage is commendable. You are not out of Islam if you are unable to or choose to close the window of half of your worship. The permissible relationship is explicitly defined, the terms and the scope. Indeed, divorce must be on honourable terms. Thus, Allah rules that obedience is reserved for Him, His Rasul (SAW) and the Leader. The Leader is every caretaker of responsibility or duty. A husband, a wife, a teacher, a student, a professional, a client, a political leader, a scholar, etc. However, the TIE is obedience to Allah by every one and all. This is what will make the individuals, the parties and *Ummah* godly.

The principal nature of the relationship between the two, lies in the leadership, superiority and non-negotiable status of the collective. And the only intelligent form of this status and role of a unity point or platform, that protects the couple, the group, the state or country, is the ideas or non-tangible concepts that stand above the component parties. And the quality of this can differ, based on knowledge and experience.

For example, with a couple, a court marriage, a certificate, a ring, and wedding may all be meant to symbolize a unity. However, if the couple are Christians and are ignorant or careless about the knowledge of discipline or having the Lord as the head of the unit Himself, disorientation can creep in. The husband can blame the wife for not giving a male child. The wife can recommend having a child by a surrogate, adopting one, just like either of them can secretly help out with a partner outside, until it is discovered. Furthermore, pregnancy before marriage can be clothed with marriage. In the case of a Muslim, any of the above can similarly happen, in addition to creepy traditional conventions, like Christians. It has therefore been extremely experienced to have siblings getting married with children. The price of a simple protocol to do a background check. This is because the Qur'an and Sunnah are abandoned or ignored or adjusted, for serving convenience.

The simple indicator for the continuous contradictions, confusions and crisis in the marriage and family institution of believers IS THE GRADUAL ADMISSION OF IDEAS AND PRACTICES OF THOSE WHO ARE EITHER NOT RULED BY THE SCRIPTURE OR HAVE ADJUSTED IT FOR OTHER GUIDANCE. Today, we have to be ready for gays or lesbians as believers and even getting married with recognition. A Muslim country can make monogamy the rule of marriage. How can we match these developments with getting the pleasure and blessings of Allah? A couple can go to war because there is disagreement over a party engaging in employment or particular type of job. It is even more complicated where individuals of different faiths get married.

The new garbage continues to build up along with the formalities of marriage available in the guidance that we claim to give us identity. For instance, a pregnant woman or one who has put to bed by mistake or design, will be officially joined

together by priests and prayers. The products of this kind of joining are increasingly the making of the believers.

This severance of the knowledge and discipline of our guidance scriptures and the inevitable make ups with conveniences finds itself further challenged, when the scope of family relationships expands. Like the couple, the in-laws may not sacrifice their ambitions for the conveniences of the couple. This is because the rules of LIMITS have become a matter of either choice, smartness, tolerations, etc. BUT NOT BY SUPERIOR RULES BINDING ALL PARTIES THAT REQUIRE ONLY SUBMISSION. This thickens the unnecessary stresses in marriage. A typical phase is the relationship between the couple and their respective siblings or parents. In fact, the friends of both parties may feature prominently in the marriage. Because no party knows and respects or keeps to a commonly binding limits, it is always a struggle. The marriage can experience a crack or even collapse, because of the unchecked role of a friend, sibling, parent, etc.

But because our superior reality lies in the truth of our unity, we have neither conscious nor unconscious option of doing without it. The rule of ignorance leads us to most inferior, weak and temporary things. They are akin to idolatry even though; they appear to be non-material and may even take the form of ideas. But they are as a result of three characteristics. The first is that they are creations like our whole-self or part of us. Like a carved idol with our hands. They are subject to destruction or change, with the intervention of time or interaction. And they can become non-existent. Tribalism, racism and location driven unity are shameful examples among mankind. Any concept and livelihood of unity that is woven around tribe, fails to survive with integrity, when met with another, with time. This is evident in the various cross stupidities in praising or derogatory definitions between Hausas, Yorubas or Igbos. With racism, intermarriage pulls it down. Not even the racialism

of the Jews is surviving history. And the histories of locations in the face of interactions gave birth to Nigeria, the present United States and the State of Israel. Thus, nothing is more backward than tribalism, racism, racialism or regionalism. Those who hang on any of these cannot be keepers of the knowledge and discipline of the revealed scriptures. It is impossible to mix water and fuel for hydration. The Nigerians who pursue any of these forms of unity are undeveloped and really degenerating creatures, by constantly corrupting their identity knowledge and discipline.

And the peculiarity of the difference between being a Muslim and Christian is the superiority of the wisdom of Allah who provided both guidance and enjoined sharing. These had taken the form of PHYSICAL jihad or crusade. But the standard is invitation, preaching, evangelism. It is because, LISTENING WITH AN OPEN MIND IS SUFFICIENT TO STEP INTO FAITH. It is then not degenerative like the others because the unity concept is absolute and beyond superior.

The concept and reality of Allah is OUTSIDE SPACE, LOCATION AND TIME BECAUSE HE CREATED THEM. Nothing and no one is comparable to Him. This is far superior to a man fashioning a pigeons' accommodation and farming them, because like the pigeons, with time, he ages, falls sick and dies. Consequently, no attribute of Allah is like that of man. The knowledge and guidance of Allah is absolutely the best. And any unity concept other than this is really inferior. Those who claim this identity and are in confusion or disarray, are the most foolish. This is because the individuality of self will be saved and honoured. Suicide, murder, rape and oppression are prohibited. By implication, the individuality of others. Marriage and business relationships are based on consent. Abdication, kidnapping, theft and corruption are prohibited. Cooperation or unity to protect these as well as self

defence are enjoined, the abuse of which are sins and can be sanctioned. In Islam, nothing is UNRELATED TO SUBMISSION TO ALLAH.

If you are ignorant of this or careless by abandonment, you will NEITHER UNDERSTAND NOR VALUE THAT BELIEVERS ARE BRICKS OF A FORTRESS THAT STRENGTHEN EACH OTHER, AND THE DUTIES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WILL NEVER FRUIT. This cover both believers and non-believers. Do we not believe that we must neither abuse the parents of others or gods of others, to save ours? What of the superiority of building a mosque, teaching true and right knowledge, caring for the sick or orphan, congressional prayer, attending the prayer over the dead and accompanying him to the grave?

To this end, it is easy and safe for a Muslim, to himself, to others, by simply sticking to the Guidance of Allah and the example of Rasul (SAW). But this is impossible without the right knowledge and discipline. And the acquisition of knowledge and discipline covers the foundation of the canonical rules, the tradition of Rasul (SAW) OVER WHICH EVERY OTHER KNOWLEDGE AND DISCIPLINE IS TO BE BUILT. This has two related implications. Islamic Scholars in clear knowledge and discipline will be the Light of the Ummah. However, this has two qualifications, making up the second part. The first is that the individual must be a LIVING learner. The Qur'an and Hadith are not untouchable or the sacred reserves of any scholar. It is therefore dumb to simply follow without personal efforts to learn the same thing. Only the foolish will not possess the books of knowledge for self learning or improvement. And this continues for life. The second part is that specialist knowledge of skills and professions are not the obligatory guidance of Islamic scholars who are not knowledgeable in those fields. However, the same principles of guidance must not be compromised by those in the fields, which necessitates the religious knowledge. For instance, the skills of surgery will be admitted for

application, to help deliver a baby, where the life of the mother can be at risk, but not for abortion on straight request.

It is this universal symbolism or embodiment of a Muslim that will necessarily make him both attractive to fellow creatures and the pleasure of Allah. This is because Allah has not set believers AGAINST any creatures but as a mercy. And this singular attribute is what distinguishes them as the best among creations.

Thus, it is extreme and undesirable to have the individuality of a Muslim to destroy any of the other levels of identities. And this is irrespective of the facet of life. For example, it is share madness to misappropriate commonwealth for self and family. The keeping of the same from public view by entrusting others with them is not wise. You will spend your life monitoring the keepers and possibly in threat, because they can equally dispossess you of it, if opportune. If they keep faith or oppressed, as you approach your death, you begin to create covenants or agreements to involve your child, with the keepers. You forget that just as they are ceasing to serve you, the same will apply to the child. Moreover, the child can die or be killed after you, as recompense for the oppression of the keepers. Where is the gain? The only thing that is certain is that the commitments to keep the stolen resources builds up sins and establishment of Haram foundation for the continuous livelihood of the child or family. The exception will be if the child immediately or after the death of the father decides DIFFERENTLY, TO FREE THE KEEPERS FROM THE BONDAGE BY A NEW RESPONSIBLE AGREEMENT OR TOTAL CANCELLATION.

On the contrary, if the misappropriation was saved and the collective of the citizens that own the commonwealth was made BETTER, he would continue to reap the abundant rewards and Allah as well as conscious responsible parties will support the descent and honourable development of the child or family.

This is because the child is only a trust for responsible care to maturity. Then the child qualifies for independent rewards and sins. The parent can possibly benefit from a good deed of the child but not evil deed, except if it is succeeded from the parent. The value of obsessive possession and seeming protection of a child is not paying, because of NO GUARANTEE. This is why right orphans have a special place in Islam. Those born in wedlock.

But in our state of pervasive ignorance and indiscipline of our identity, it APPEARS RISKY AND FOOLISH. However, our smartness is both stressful, lacking honour and definitely UNRELIABLE. How many of our rich in immediate neighbourhood have we failed to witness the collapse of their estate? This is because acquisition of wealth is not enough in Islam, the *barakah* it keeps, determined by HOW AND WHY IT WAS ACQUIRED AS WELL AS HOW AND WHY IT WAS MANAGED, INCLUDING USAGE, ARE CONCURRENTLY CRITICAL. Consequently, gestures to the extended family members, neighbours and community are INCONSEQUENTIAL, IF THEY FALL OUT OF THE RECOGNIZED PROCEDURE TO SERVE THEM. You are not a fairer Muslim by being a philanthropist with stolen money or diversion of a non-priority project to your locality.

It is not different with political office. To manipulate it for self or family or associate, even after leaving, is corruption and not Islamic. The blessings of Allah are blocked. And Muslims in such circumstance, whether by self or for another, never fail to suffer difficulties and more failures than success. It does not matter whether it is by rigging, bribery, elections or coup, in modern institutions or traditional leadership. Those who find themselves definable in such despicable positions will be doing themselves best, by giving the position up, for the right thing to be done. It does not matter if you did it by yourself or it was done for you.

The decadence that is prevalent at our sociological level is only INEVITABLY CONSEQUENTIAL since; we have abandoned the knowledge and discipline of our collective identity. Tribal conflicts are unnecessary. Religious conflicts are uncalled for. Regional divisions are irresponsible. They are not and can never survive replacing the superiority of our collective identity. The champions are really our frontline enemies of unity and togetherness.

It is almost impossible for the individual to really safely prosper meaningfully in isolation of sociology. And only a political tie will enable them to make history. And the best vehicle for this is ideas of unity and the discipline of the same. For Muslims, Allah and Rasul (SAW) are sufficient. This is why Islam is the counsel of Allah, His Rasul (SAW) and the believer who knows what is true and right.

Therefore, believing and knowing are only good but not enough, until it drives to act or live accordingly.

A test run of the majority of us will reveal our real nature for constant failure even though we have the claimed identity on our lips.

You can have a husband eating well outside while feeding his family less. You can have brilliant children falling out of school for inability to pay further, while many non-performing children are provided with special amenities that enable them to even fund birthday parties for their teachers. You will find increasing number of citizens giving up on public power and water supply and reverting to generators, solar power and boreholes. You will find tribal groups supporting members while needy non-members in neighbourhoods are ignored or abandoned. You can have a Chief Executive using a fronting company to appropriate entrusted funds fraudulently. You can have tips effective for fraud. You can have plain verses or hadith manipulated to serve personal purpose. And all of these persons will be

wailing against corruption, injustice, tribalism, oppression, etc. They will form committees to deal with the challenges and pray for the intervention of Allah. How laughable?

In the leadership of Nigeria, if the federal government stands on: more funds have been given to the states and local governments receive allocations directly, they should therefore be held accountable, that is LESS THAN THE MANDATE. The mandate that was asked for and secured is for TOUCHING THE COLLECTIVE LIVELIHOOD OF THE CITIZENS PROGRESSIVELY. It is not for just spending. The same applies to the relationship between the state government and local governments. Thus, the seeming positive step in making local governments independent of the states is a big misfire. Disjointed leadership arrangement is most irresponsible. The real challenge is with the bankruptcy of identity discipline by the leaderships, and not the structures or organization. This is akin to the rascality that RESTRUCTURING of powers between the government levels is the solution to our unity and corruption challenges. It the lack of or poor concept and discipline of the unity that will drive a strong federal relationship with strong states and local governments support that is missing. At each level, it is NOT THE MEMBERS OR CITIZENS THAT ARE THE COLLECTIVE FOCUS. Governments approach leadership responsibility as selective favours to do to the electorate. Thus, federal and state government relationship can even be difficult, simply because the ruling parties differ.

For Muslims and Christians, the guidance of our scriptures remains the best source of identity knowledge and discipline that will serve us, serve all Nigerians and will bail us out against eternal damnation. While it may be possible to develop unity concept and discipline for our Nationhood WITHOUT ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY, we are absolutely the most unsuitable now, because of our

checkered livelihood with elements of these identities. Our present corruptive status is easier and better to get CLEANSED UP than throwing away. This is because it will take some uncomfortable time on the present course to throw it away.

Any Muslim or Christian who thinks our division by more states, tribalism, regionalism or state religion is the solution to our corruption, frustration, crisis, is a stone and needs to be crushed or thrown out.

Any leader or scholar can test this by proposing that the beginning of our solutions is by stopping to pray or make it a private hobby and make industries and schools out of our Mosques and Churches.

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