

# ROLES OF MUSLIM YOUTH IN NATION BUILDING

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## INTRODUCTION

As salam alaikum, wa rahamatullahi, wa baharakatuhu.

It is my pleasure to be here this day to give this lecture. While it gladdens me in one respect to address this august gathering, it actually disturbs me on the other hand realising that I cannot pretend to be an Islamic scholar but I am being saddled with a responsibility that I believe would demand more than cursory knowledge of Islam. However, I appreciate the fact that to be a good Muslim, one must be able to differentiate between what is good and what is bad according to the criterion of Almighty Allah which I believe would enable me to discuss the topic of today within the limits of my ability. May Allah accept it as an act of *ibadah* and reward our late sheik appropriately.

### Conceptual Clarifications

It is often necessary to define technical terms as may be contained in any topic being treated. Efforts at definition are often met by difficulties that may not yield to easy answers. However, an effort at description of what a subject is has always been quite beneficial. This would make us consider what we mean by 'youth' and who is a 'Muslim'? We shall also consider what is meant by 'nation' and 'nation building. Thus, what is youth or who is a youth?

If considered from the perspective of the time of human dependency on parents, it seems the age of youth in Nigeria might be longer than other climes as an average Nigerian youth above the age of thirty might still be dependent on parental support due to failure or inability to be

gainfully employed while in advanced economies, such person would be considered to be weaned from parental control at a far less age. This is the debacle of Nigerian situation. However, from whatever perspective one looks at it, we are fundamentally concerned with what role(s) an average youth is required to play in nation building and not necessarily when he must stop being considered as qualified for adulthood.

Youth, according to the Wikipedia, is the time of life when one is young, but often means the time between childhood and adulthood, i.e , the converse of adulthood. It is also defined as "the appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit, etc., characteristic of one who is young". Its definitions of a specific age range varies, as youth is not defined chronologically as a stage that can be tied to specific age ranges; nor can its end point be linked to specific activities, such as taking unpaid work or having sexual relations."

According to Abdullah Musa Abdul, youth is

“[T]he quality of freshness, vitality or vigor and the condition of being young...”<sup>1</sup>

While this may not summarise what or who qualifies to be called a youth, it definitely gives a glimpse as to what qualifies someone to be called a youth. From this perspective, you are assuming the energetic period of a being. However, the condition of being young “*which forms the cardinal descriptive characteristics of youths is definitely an asset or liability depending on how the young people get programmed.*”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullah Musa Abdul-www.penabdul.blogspot.com @amraabdul – sourced at <http://penabdul.blogspot.com.ng/2012/05/role-of-muslim-youths-in-nation.html> on 24/10/2015.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

With respect to Nigeria as a country in particular, Wikipedia<sup>3</sup> supplied information with respect to the demographical composition of the country as regards the youth constituency. According to the online publication, youth in Nigeria includes citizens of the Federal Republic of [Nigeria](#) aged 18-35 years relying on *Nigeria 2009 National Youth Policy*. “Nigeria, with a total population of about 177,155,754 people is the most populous country in [Africa](#) with one of the largest populations of youth in the world, comprising 33,652,424 members with the median age being 17.9.”

The approach of the Holy Quran as regards who may be called a youth largely differs as it is not tied to economic consideration but is rather clearly stipulated based on age. According to the Holy Quran,

“And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months. [He grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, “My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favour which you have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me and my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims.”<sup>4</sup>

For the purpose of this discussion, I shall adopt the age of forty for the termination of the period called youth in the life of man.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_in_Nigeria). Sourced on 24/10/2015.

<sup>4</sup> Quran Chapter 46 verse 15.

## **Who is a Muslim?**

It is fundamental to understand who can be referred to as a Muslim. According to the Islamic Social Services Association,

“Muslim is an Arabic word that literally means ‘One who submits’. People who follow the religion of Islam are called Muslims. A Muslim is one who believes and declares that “there is no god except one God and prophet Muhammad is the last and final messenger of God”. This is known as Shahada (Declaration of Faith).”<sup>5</sup>

Inherent in the above is total submission to the will of Almighty Allah. The concept above connotes a lot of things and encompasses the totality of human existence which is the only panacea to lasting peace and progress in life and attainment of Godly pleasure in the hereafter. It embodies striving towards establishment of a society whose foundation will be based on God’s consciousness, equity, justice, sanity, honesty, sincerity, modesty and moderation.

## **The Ideal Muslim Youth**

Approaching our topic from the above, it becomes pertinent to consider who could be referred to as an ideal Muslim Youth that could meet the obligation of nation building that we are going to discuss. According to Wikipedia<sup>6</sup>,

“One may define the ideal Muslim youth as a balanced individual exhibiting a highly spiritual life informed by absolute moral values and whose behaviour demonstrates qualities such as righteousness,

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.issaservices.com/islam/whoisamuslim.html>.

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honesty, humility and conscientiousness in everything he/she does. He/she does not do things just because it is what the vogue was, but they do things because they are the right things to do. They fear no blame from anyone, as far as they are on the right track of attaining the pleasure of Allah. This is because they are well acquainted with the fact that "A man receives but only that for which he strives; that his endeavors will be judged, and only then will he receive his recompense in full." (Quran, 53:39-41)

It is certain that the period of youth is the most crucial stage of human existence. This is a period when the mind is so impressionable and a lot of ideas, both valid and invalid, prejudices and emotions influence human life. It is a time when man passes through lots of changes and experiences. This is when an average youth begins to nurse the impression that he has control over the whole world, and his scope of human liberties is limitless. It is a period of vaulting ambition borne out of extreme self-consciousness. He lounges for the opposite sex while he satisfies his careless mind lustfully gazing and flirting with girls and indulges in amoral activities of drinking alcohol and partaking in forbidden companies and societies.

It is important to realise that this period of human life is not only crucial for fun as it is certain that an ideal Muslim youth would not be involved in forbidden activities which today dominate our institutions of higher learning and places of work. An ideal Muslim youth would definitely avoid activities and practices which Almighty Allah and His Prophet have declared haram. An ideal Muslim youth "spends this period of his life in an Islamic environment, visiting the Masjid for the five daily prayers, associating with the pious people and the true scholars of Islam, sitting

in their gatherings.” It is only an ideal Muslim youth that can effectively participate in the enterprise of nation building.

Commented [001]: DON'T BE SAD

## Nation

It is may be necessary to briefly define a nation at least in the context of today’s paper. The word ‘nation’ has been defined as “a large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory.”<sup>7</sup> While the above definition may apply to some societies, it may not really fit into that of Nigeria as we have several ethnic differences with many having distinct histories, languages, cultures and descents which are quite dissimilar to one another. Thus, we may rather adopt the definition offered by Dictionary.com<sup>8</sup> which states nation to be “a large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own.”

This may be more consistent with Nigeria which from time was a mere “geographical expression” but may be regarded as aspiring to be one single nation.

## Nation Building

The term “Nation-Building” always has been described as “a highly complex term, encompassing the description of historical experiences, a set of assumptions about “development” of Third World societies, and the policies of Governments North and South that were driven, among

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.google.com/search?q=youth+in+nigeria&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8#q=meaning+of+nation>. Sourced on 24/10/2015.

<sup>8</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nation>. Sourced on 24/10/2015.

other considerations, by the desire to control and expand their own power.”<sup>9</sup>

The above definition of nation building involves a lot of conceptual clarifications which would be of little value to the topic at hand and the audience of this address as a lot of complexities attend what determines the nature and content of nation building. However, our approach is to focus on empirical study which regards nation building as an on-going process in numerous societies which “can take decades, or even centuries to be completed, and the process may be relatively peaceful or dramatically violent.”<sup>10</sup>

Commented [OO2]: Nation definition

While nation building may involve creation of an integrating ideology or creation of an integrated society, it may also be aimed at creation of a functioning state apparatus. The last, which is creation of a functioning state apparatus, must correspond to the two processes mentioned above as “it must fit the corresponding processes of identity building and societal integration.” According to Jochen Hippler,

“State building in this context has two interconnected aspects: it means that the respective society has constituted itself (or has been constituted by a dominant actor, including the state itself) as a political entity, or even as the key political entity. And the state is the main form, the main organization to express some form of political unity. Secondly, this implies many very practical and often organizational needs: the state has not just to be

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<sup>9</sup> Jochen Hippler, “Ethnicity, State, and Nation-Building - Experiences, Policies and Conceptualization” published at <http://www.jochenhippler.de/html/ethnicity-state-and-nation-building.html> and accessed on 23/10/2015.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

proclaimed, but it has to be functional. This means that it needs a functioning financial base (tax collection), it needs personnel which is loyal to it, and not primarily to some group or subgroup in society, it needs a monopoly of force (at least to some degree), a functioning legal system of some kind, and it needs to be functioning not just in parts of the country (e.g. the capital city) but in its whole territory. And, last but not least, it needs acceptance by the population.”

The above process cannot be done in the absence of virile, conscious and God-fearing youth ready to assist in the business of nation building. This is where the Muslim youth comes in.

#### **ROLE OF A MUSLIM YOUTH IN NATION BUILDING**

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (SAW), in a Hadith, said that the feet of the son of Adam will not be able to move until he is questioned regarding four things. Out of these four questions, is that he would be asked how he spent his time as a youth. In another Hadith, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) has said that on the Day of Judgement, there are seven types of people to whom Allah will give shade and amongst these groups, one group will be those youth who spent their youth in the worship of Allah.

Fear of Allah

Thus, **the first criterion is the fear of Allah**; obedience to His commands. It may be said that there is constant struggle between the good and the bad in the mind of an average man. While the good requires us to embrace halal, the bad pushes us to reject it and swim in haram.



The period of youth has many desires, *“so whosoever goes against his desires and controls them in this delicate period of youth, and obeys the command of Allah, and tries his best to follow the Islamic Shariah, in such a time of his life when his desires are at their peak, then Allah will give him a great reward.”*

It is the fear of Allah that prevents one from indulging in forbidden practices of alcoholism, back-biting, fornication, adultery, cultism, giving and taking of bribes, corruption in all its different shades etc. today, our society has become completely messed by the evils of corruption. An average young man goes into politics in order to loot public treasury forgetting that the commonwealth is required to bring sustainable development and not to fuel the sense of personal aggrandisement and greed of an individual.

Our society has lost its sense of shame that an average youth prefers nudity to being clothed and engages in illicit sex without compunction. He does not see why he should not enjoy ill-gotten wealth at the expense of his fellow countrymen and women. His sense of responsibility does not extend to promoting the welfare of the generality but rather to grease his ego and fan the embers of his selfish desires. Employed as a clerk in a small office he wants to become an instant millionaire. This has given birth to all manners of society evils and kidnapping, armed robbery, ritual killing etc. have taken the centrestage of his consciousness. He has no regard for human blood and sees the next person as mere totems for ritual money.

It is historically indisputable that at the youth of Islam while Prophet Muhammad was making the call to the religion, a huge portion of his followers was made of youth who comprised the social segment that was

receptive to revolutionary tendencies and adored change in quantum beyond the control of the status quo. A huge population of those who were first to accept Islam were below the age of 30. Even in all the Revolutions witnessed all over the world, it is usually the youths that constitutes the bulk of the participants, for example, the Arab spring.

For example, the ages of the following persons who accepted Islam at an early age were: Ali 10, Abdullah b. Umar 13, Uqba b. Amir 14, Jabir b. Abdullah and Zayd b. Harith 15, Abdullah b. Mes'ud, Habbab b. Aret and Zubayr b. Awwam 16, Talha b. Ubaydullah, Abdurrahman b. Awf, Arkam b. Abi'l-Arkam, Sa'd b. Abi Wakkas and Asma bint Abu Bakr 17, Muaz b. Jabel and Mus'ab b. Umayr 18, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari 19, Jafer b. Abu Talip 22, Osman b. Huwayris, Osman b. Affan, Abu Ubayda, Abu Hurayra and Umar 25-31.

Vast majority of those involved in armed robbery in Lagos State today are youth below the age of 20. Aside from societal frustration, which many have blamed as the cause of the activities of these delinquents, it is certain that lack of fear of God is one central factor that makes many of youths to descend below animal depravity in promoting selfish agenda to the detriment of their fellow man.

Central to nation building is fear of Allah which is steeped in conscious worship of Allah. We were taught to realise that "*On the day when there is no shade except in the shadow of Allah's throne, seven classes of people will find shade in Allah's shadow.*" The first group in this hadith is "*those who rule justly,*" and the second group is "*the youth who are raised worshipping Allah.*"

According to the Holy Quran 3 vs. 104,

*“Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma’ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidden Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful.” Q :3 v104.*

In summary, for us to worship Allah the way He is supposed to be worshipped, first, Muslim youths must be well knowledgeable by consciously seeking and imbibing knowledge. According to the Holy Quran, Allah says we must know Him before we can worship Him as he who does not know Him cannot adequately worship. The Messenger of Allah (s.w.t.) has also said: *“The person who seeks knowledge while in his youth is similar to the act of inscribing something upon a rock; while the person who seeks knowledge while he is old is similar to the act of writing something upon the water.”*

### **Justice, Equity and Fairness**

An average Muslim youth must be ready to stand for justice, equity and fairness. According to the Holy Qur’an,

*“We sent aforetime our apostles with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of right and wrong), that men may stand forth in justice.”- Surah Al Hadid (57), Aayah 25.*

In the analysis of Dr. Mohammad Shafi<sup>11</sup>,

*“The major themes of the Qur’an include God-consciousness, fairness, equity, justice, equality and balance in all our dealings.*

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. Mohammed Shafi, Justice and Equity in the Qur’an, published at <http://www.daralislam.org/portals/0/Publications/JusticeandEquityintheQuran.pdf>. Sourced on 24/10/2015.

It stresses the doing of what is right because it is the truth and The Truth represents one of the ninety-nine “beautiful names” of God. As a reflection of His attributes of Al-'Adl (The Just One) and Al-Muqsit (The Upholder of Equity), we are urged to establish justice and deal with all in a manner that assures equity, fairness and balance and safeguards the rights, property, honor and dignity of all people. God assures us that even though He is All-Powerful and none can challenge His Authority, He deals with all with truth, kindness, justice, and the rights of none will be transgressed on the Day of Judgment.

The Holy Qur'an further enjoins us to observe justice and fairness when it prescribes:

“O you who believe! Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just; that is next to piety; and fear God. For God is well acquainted with all that ye do.”<sup>12</sup>

Also, Allah says in Surah Al Nisa' (4), Aayah 135:

“O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor; for God can best protect both. Follow not the lust (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well acquainted with all that ye do.”

### **Morality, Virtues and Values**

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<sup>12</sup> Surah Al Ma'idah (5), Aayah 9.

Traditionally, every society nurses morality, virtues and values. It is unfortunate that we have lost ours. It is essential to note that a society where morality has lost meanings has lost its essence of existence. First, as Muslims, there must be sincerity in all our dealings. We must maintain absolute sincerity to our fellow human beings. We must not limit our sincerity to our Muslim brothers and sisters alone as sincerity to all persons is commanded by Allah and enjoined by His Prophet as an act rewarding and blissful. There is thus need for Muslims to be sincere in their dealings and constantly have to remind themselves that for everything they do there's a record kept with Allah for accountability.

To this end, no Muslim is expected to engage in illegal and sinful activities. No Muslim is expected to be rapacious in his dealings with fellow human beings. You must not covet another's property. Our relationship with people of other religions should be premised on honesty, transparency and accountability.

In the olden days, articles of trade were displayed along roads and footpaths without the sellers having to keep perpetual vigil. Passers-by who wished to buy would select their choices and place the price, already indicated in certain number of stones, on the market wares. Nobody would steal such items notwithstanding that the owners were not there. That was a high level of morality as they were conscious that while they might escape human observation, the ever-vigilant creator was watching.

According to Khalid Latif, while discussing morality in Islam,

“Given its importance in a healthy society, Islam supports morality and matters that lead to it, and stands in the way of corruption and matters that lead to it. The guiding principle for the behavior

of a Muslim is “Virtuous Deeds”. This term covers all deeds, not only acts of worship. The Guardian and Judge of all deeds is God Himself.”<sup>13</sup>

A very important injunction of morality to every Muslim is observation of piety and humility. It is prescribed in strict terms that a Muslim must not be arrogant and must be humble before God and his fellow man. The Holy Qur’an, (31:18-19) says:

“And turn not your face away from people (with pride), nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, God likes not each arrogant boaster. And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the ass.”

Every Muslim, as a strict prescription of morality, must control his passions and desires for “*[T]he Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, but only he (will prosper) that brings to God a sound heart.*” (Quran: 26:88-89).

We realize the above and aspire to be counted among people of approved faith. States that have failed today began by losing their values. We must rise up to ensure that as Muslim youths, our shield is the protection offered by Islamic values. Any act engaged in contrary to the injunctions of the Holy Quran and the sayings and practices of His Apostle destroy our fabric as a nation and weakens our existence as a people. We must regenerate our values which have never been found

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<sup>13</sup> Morality and Ethics in Islam, published at <http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1943/morality-and-ethics-in-islam/> sourced on 24/10/2015.

wanting in the Quran as no Holy Book prescribes greater obedience to the will of our creator more than the Quran.

### **Charity**

Allah appreciates the cheerful giver. He has prescribed generosity in clear and unambiguous terms. Allah says in verse 177 of Surat Al Baqarah:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness (the quality of) the one who believes in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; who spends of his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, to the needy, to the wayfarer, to those who ask and for the freeing of slaves; and who is steadfast in prayers, and gives Zakah (Alms); and those who fulfil their covenants which they made; and who are patient and perseverant in poverty and ailment and throughout all periods of fighting. Such are the people of truth, the pious.”

The above is a summary of all you can call morality in Islam which embeds in charity the quality of piety. The best way to preach Islam is by your conduct. Help the aged and lift the burden of the weak. Give unto the needy once you can afford to spare. Be courteous to both the high and low so that your humility is not measured by the status of the addressee of your message. Do not trample on the land with arrogance as your Lord has forbidden such.

Commented [003]: CHARITY

### **Contentment**

As Muslim youths, there is need to affirm that Allah has written sustenance even before He created us. As Yoruba people would say: *Olohun ti o da enu, o ti da ohun ti yoo je* that is, Allah that created the

mouth has created what it shall feed on. If youth can achieve that in their hearts, then blind love for inordinate wealth, primordial material acquisition will naturally relieve us of an unnecessary burden we have created for ourselves. Allah sustains. *“Ibukun olohun lo n mu eda la laise laalaa”*.

You must have contentment in your heart otherwise you’ll discover that you are always striving to acquire. A man without means would now be better than you are since all you have would not satisfy you.

Youths ought to imbibe and inculcate within their bosoms, the spirit of positive change and project to the entire humanity the way forward towards achieving positive change which they must represent at all times.

People talk glibly about nation building but easily lend hands to corrupt practices and prejudices. If the youth can stop admiring the lunatics who have turned public offices to open sesame to riches or private individuals who indulge in satanic ingurgitations, it is certain that nobody will involve himself or herself in corrupt practices to impress others. An average youth must realise that it is better to be a wise man that knows the limits of his wisdom and not claim to be a strong man that knows not the limit of his strength. Most of the property we lust after do not benefit us and those acquired by greed shall definitely not profit us. A situation where a minister embezzled billions of dollars from the public treasury is nothing but sheer madness when she cannot ride in two cars at the same time and cannot feed beyond her tummy no matter how sweet the food is or how greedily her mouth treasures food. You can’t sleep in two rooms at the same time.



Those youths that engaged in the stealing of 450,000 barrels of national oil per day for a period not less than three years depriving several States the ability to pay salaries have their workers have lost their souls to the devil. Of what benefit would it be to them if the nation fails and they prosper personally devouring the national wealth? This can never be an aspect of nation building as the trillions of naira stolen through this destructive gusto can conveniently provide world-class hospitals for several States, revamp our moribund educational institutions, create millions of jobs and supply electricity to many States of the federation.

We create status for ourselves which we do not measure up to in terms of financial wherewithal. An average graduate that sees himself to be above any vocational engagement but is looking for white collar jobs is living in fantasy. A man prides himself above his means and claims that his status has advanced beyond certain public utilities like public transport forgetting that status is nothing but spending money that you don't have to acquire luxury you cannot afford in order to impress people you don't know and you may never meet. It is this inordinate ambition to create non-existence status for ourselves that has created crisis in our society and plunged our sense of moderation into the abyss. In turn, we dip hands into public treasury with impunity and extort from the less privileged what they cannot afford to part with.

Commented [004]: Societal creation and pressure

### **Civic Obligation/Patriotism**

Fundamental in Islam is that we must love our country. A country without patriotic citizenry is bound to fail and disintegrate. Islam enjoins us to love our country. It is when we love our country that we find it easy to do our civic obligations to the country. The Holy Prophet Mohammed was reported as having said:

‘Love of your country (patriotism) is a part of your faith’.<sup>14</sup>

Civic responsibility has been described to be *comprised of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation, civic responsibility can include participation in government, church, mosque, volunteers and memberships of voluntary associations. The importance of civic responsibility is paramount to the success of democracy and philanthropy. By engaging in civic responsibility, citizens ensure and uphold certain democratic values written in the founding documents.*<sup>15</sup>

Thus, payment of taxes, preserving and nurturing environmental protection, voting during elections, mobilising people toward volunteerism in protecting the populace against all manners of hazards and campaigning for protection of human rights are all part of civic responsibilities or obligations. You must also be ready to stand for elections otherwise if you abandon the affairs of the State to less qualified people because politics is too dirty for you, you run the risks of being governed by the fools.

Patriotism requires that we must be ready to defend our nation against violation by transgressors. That is when external forces invade our territory by force of arms. An average youth must be ready to participate in the defence of his country when the situation arises.

There is need to distinguish between patriotism and nationalism. While the Holy Prophet prescribes the love of one’s country, it is incumbent

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<sup>14</sup> The Call of Islam, published on <http://dawatislam.blogspot.com.ng/2012/03/patriotism-in-islam.html> and accessed on 25/10/2015.

<sup>15</sup> See *Learning to Give* in an article published at <http://www.learningtogive.org/resources/civic-responsibility> and accessed on 24/10/2015.

on us to realise as Muslims that extreme patriotism, which generates nationalism, is forbidden. By nationalism, people tend to believe that their own country is better than others and are ready to subjugate peoples of other nations.<sup>16</sup> This is not recognised in Islam and a Muslim should not promote such as Allah says:

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Qur’an), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allah’s favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) clear to you, that you may be guided.” (Surah Al- Imran:103)

However, in a state of war it is incumbent on the youths to defend their nation. The women, children and the old must be protected by the agile youth who are capable of fighting in defence of fatherland. This is an aspect of the responsibilities of youths under Islam.

### **Defence of Truth**

According to Uthman dan Fodio, conscience is an open wound, only truth can heal it. The Youth must be outspoken against evil and canvass support for all that is good. Speaking truth to power does not amount to arrogance or rudeness but it is an emphasis on the status of our principle. Are we a principled set of people or lacklustre individuals who

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<sup>16</sup> See “Nationalism, An Erroneous Concept” published at <http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/Nationalism.htm> and accessed on 24/10/15.

treasures personal interest that collective development? This would be defined by our approach to truth and advancement of what is good.

We are enjoined to speak the truth even if it affects our parents. What level of injunction can be higher than acting contrary to the inordinate wishes of your parents when it comes to truth and justice? Allah says:

*“Behold! Fear from people should not prevent one from saying the truth if he knows it”*

There is always a role for the youth to play in order to make the desired difference possible. Several individuals having access to the internet have turned the technological contraption as a means of destroying other people and criticize simply because they have not had the opportunity of occupying the same positions which their objects of criticisms occupy and they so much covet. This is a negative blot and a huge barrier to nation **building**. Equally, the attitude of hero-worship is negative and antithetical to Islam which is what an average youth in Nigeria does today by worshipping ungodly individuals whose sense of nationhood is synonymous with their own personal interest and nothing more. We must not desecrate our religion by worshipping conscienceless powers that have turned the land to their personal fiefdom and have attained power only by purloining public wealth.

#### **God-fearing Homestead.**

It is incumbent on you to build a good and God-fearing home. A good home is a desideratum to a successful nation building and a beautiful society. You must realise that you must get married to spouses who are not just beautiful, but God fearing and righteous. It is sacrosanct truth as encapsulated in Islamic teachings and the fact of life that beauty will

**Commented [005]:** Undue recognition and worship of ungodly people

surely fade off. Do not marry simply because he is handsome or she is beautiful. Do not marry for **money** alone as all these are temporary things that Allah gives whom He wishes and take from whom He wishes as He is the only One who elevates. Money is never taken to heaven and was not in your pocket when you were born as you even had no pocket in the first place. Money must not, therefore, become your God that you worship to the neglect of your creator. Build a home with foundation on righteousness **and** your children shall grow to be God-fearing and unique. Where we all pay attention to this, then the future of our nation is guaranteed.

**Commented [006]:** INORDINATE AMBITION. CAP 3, 26

**Commented [007]:** CONTENTMENT

It was said that the great Imam Abu Hanifah was giving advice to his student Imam Abu Yusuf. He said that in your youth you should spend your time in seeking Islamic knowledge, and thereafter seek a job, and when you get enough money then you should get married.

### **Political Participation**

An average Muslim youth must realise that the politics of his society is as much a duty for him as his neighbourhood. But when you go into politics, attend with sense of altruism characteristic of the government of the 'saaba'. Do not enter into politics for lack of job as politics is not a profession. If you choose politics as your profession without any independent means of livelihood, you make yourself a dependant on public treasury which can never be your lawful means of sustenance at all times as you will not occupy political office at all times. It is lack of independent means of sustenance that makes many people engage in stealing from public coffers.

At the same time, our people do not help the leaders. An average leader is expected to go into public office to steal in order to share us his ill-gotten wealth. In fact, it is our people that will “call him to order” by senseless and disparaging remarks when he attempts to be honest. You must resist such temptation to become a rogue in a holy temple by listening to people who are out to fan their own interests at the expense of the masses. That is an only way you can project an image of a Muslim youth who is an agent of positive change in the enterprise of nation building.

### **Good Society**

The Prophet (SAW) said: “Character is contagious”. You must carefully choose your friends. You must determine ahead the people in whose company Allah would be pleased with you and not people Suratul Fathia says have been misled and are doomed to perish. You must protect your lower selves from ruling over your higher selves. You must not allow wishy-washy sentiments, gutter desires and toilet pleasures to debase your humanity. That is what makes you to be a higher animal and above mere beasts of burden or lower animals.

Commented [008]: ENTHRONEMENT OF JUSTICE

You must respect your elders and leaders. You must realise that the positions they occupy is a test onto them just as your own position is a test onto you. Respect for elders and leaders is not a substitute for timidity in the face of injustice. You must rise up to the occasion to make fair criticisms whenever same is required.

Commented [009]: ATIU LLAI.....

Can you remember that Islam came to rescue man from the perils of jahiliyah? Do you remember that Prophet Muhammad was sent to humanity by Allah with the Quran to guide to us salvation? Yet, it is

hardly disagreeable to say that the youths of today have not allowed their minds to escape the evils of pre-Islamic era which Islam came to erase. If you disagree with me, read the testimony of Jafar, the son of the Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib who led the early Muslims to Najashee when they migrated to Abyssinia due to persecution from the Meccans. On arrival before King Negus, Jafar said:

"O King! We were an ignorant society that worshipped idols, ate dead meat, made every kind of prostitution, cut off ties with our relatives, and treated our neighbors badly. The strong among us oppressed the weak. We were like this until Allah sent us a Messenger from among us whose genealogy, truthfulness, trustworthiness and chastity we know. The Prophet sent to us called us to believe in the unity of God, to serve Him, and to abandon the rocks and idols our fathers worshipped. He called us to be truthful, to fulfill trusts, to continue relations with relatives, to be a good neighbor, to desist from what is haram and from spilling blood, and he forbid us to make prostitution, lying as a witness, violating the property of orphans, and slandering respectable women. He only commanded us to serve Allah and not to take partners with Him, and to pray, give alms and fast." After naming Islam's other commands, he continued, "We immediately affirmed him, believed in him and conformed to what he brought from God. We only served Allah and we did not attribute any partners to Him. We accepted as haram what He made haram and halal what He made halal."

The questions are: have our girls stopped engaging in prostitution when on many streets in Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja you see our girls half-

naked hawking their bodies? Have our youths repented from lying when brazenly they state the untruths and tell false family histories in order to take over other people's lands? Have our youths desisted from treating their neighbours badly when they engage in depriving others of lawful rights and deny wage earners their due wages? Have the youths of today desisted from unlawful blood-letting when they kill one another in senseless wars? Is there is any reason to justify the boko haram carnage in the north-eastern States of Nigeria? Is there any justification for the naked fact that the most war-ravaged parts of the world today are those areas occupied by the Muslims? Is there any justification for the shameful fact that Muslims that were formerly leading in education, scientific development and artistry today occupied ignominious positions in the comity of nations when poverty and ignorance are being discussed?

Commented [0010]: DEFENCE OF THE NATION, PATRIOTISM,

The youths must realise that they are the only ones who can effect a rescue when society is on the edge of a precipice; they are the ones who salvage the nation when its morals and societal norms are on the decline. It would be shameful if we copy western education and allow its false notions of human rights to destroy the fabrics of our society. Take for instance the pattern of dressing of our young boys today. They say they are 'sagging' their trousers by exposing the dirty cleavages of their buttocks even while going to the mosque. The women have cast shame into the dustbin as they expose the most treasured parts of their bodies for the public to view with reckless abandon and animalistic urge for sex. How on earth are we going to call this civilisation? A Muslim youth has a duty to uphold morals in the context of nation building.



Unfortunately, the generation that got the better part of the sound Nigerian education of the past has failed to bequeath this lofty legacy put in place by people like Chief Obafemi Awolowo to the youth of today. It is men and women of the said generation that today occupy offices as captains of industry and employers of labour today. Now we promote dancing, singing competition more than we pay attention to education. The following joke sent to me by a friend further illustrate the malady that has afflicted us as a people whose sense of nation building is questionable. It goes thus:

“Fellow Nigerians, ponder over the facts below:

MTN Project Fame: N7.5m + SUV

Etisalat Nigerian Idol: N5m

Glo Naija sings: N5m + SUV

Gulder Ultimate Search: N10m + SUV

Multina Dance All: N10m + SUV

Cowbell Maths Competition: N100,000

Lagos State Spelling Bee: N50,000

Schools’ Scrabble: N25,000

Cool FM Spelling Game: A goodie bag filled with amila drink

What are we telling the kids?”

The consequence is very scary. Grammatical blunders we read on social media platforms from our degree, OND and HND holders could make my

illiterate grandmother puke. It is disheartening. Please, as a Muslim youth, you must effectively equip yourselves academically in order to play a position of pivotal interest in this enterprise of nation building. Where your role is to create emergency wealth by depriving others of their just entitlements, you must remember that *ile ti a ba fi ito mo, iri ni yoo wo* meaning “an edifice constructed with spittle, would yield to the light weight of the morning dew”.

### Conclusion

The period of youth is a very delicate and important period in a Muslim's life. The way you spend your youth would determine the distance your adulthood would cover. As Yoruba would say:

*E je ki a wo ehin wo,  
ki a ma fi ewe owu nu'di,  
toripe ti a ba ku tan,  
aso ni won fi n gbe ni sin*

meaning

“if you realise that your corpse would one day need the shroud, you will restrain from defecating with the cotton leaves.”

The Prophet, SAW, has given us a beautiful summary of the conduct of a Muslim when he stated as follows:

“My Sustainer has given me nine commands: to remain conscious of God, whether in private or in public; to speak justly, whether angry or pleased; to show moderation both when poor and when rich; to reunite friendship with those who have broken off with me; to give to him who refuses me; that my silence should be

occupied with thought; that my looking should be an admonition; and that I should command what is right.”<sup>17</sup>

Your youth must be a period of preparation for your adulthood. It is a period when you dedicate to the worship of your Creator in prostration and conduct. It is a period when you preach your religion to others not by compulsion but by your persuasive and pleasing manners. It is a period when you acquire knowledge to become a better citizen, impress your assessors and improve the state of humanity. Your conduct defines whether you are qualified to be a worthy member of the *ummah* or not. The whole future lies ahead of you. Determine if you are a worthy inheritor of this world and a qualified partaker of the hereafter.

Ma salam.

Dr. Muiz Adeyemi Banire, SAN.

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<sup>17</sup> See Khalid Latif, Morality and Ethics in Islam, <http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1943/morality-and-ethics-in-islam/> accessed on 24/10/2015.