

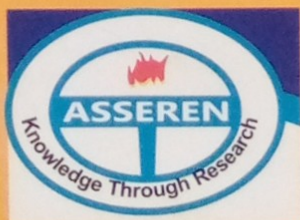


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RELIGION AND EDUCATIONAL STRUGGLE

Musibau Adebayo Lawal

Musa AbdurRahman Laaro

Abstract

The word religion is a term that is very difficult to define. What is taken as religion by a certain set of people may be regarded as something else; For instance an Indian man says that religion is to worship a cow while to a Nigerian, cow is for consumption. This makes it very difficult for a set of people to claim one definition of the term as the most correct one. As a result, scholars modified the definition of religion to covers all the religion of the universe: "Religion is any system of faith, worship, code of conduct, and ritual. Education on the other hand is the process by which knowledge is cultivated from one generation to another. It is the acquisition of knowledge that develops the totality of human being. Religion emphasised on education of one kind and another, for instance, Islam in every aspect of its study is to make the learners see the truth of divine message, manifestation of Allah's attribute and their reality in the universe. In this respect, social, natural sciences and humanities are of the same purpose for when properly thought, will make the learner's heart feels the greatness of Allah. This paper therefore examined the Religion and educational struggle as it was revealed through Prophet Muhammad" (P.B.O.H). Religious bodies such as the Muslims and the Christians participate actively in the development of education generally and specifically. The Christians own mission schools which include the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The Muslims own the Quranic c schools founded by many Muslim organizations, such as the Ahmadiya, the Izala group, the Islamic Trust of Nigeria, the Jamaatu nasru islam islam, the Ansarudeen society of Nigerian, the Nawairudeen society, and Nasrullahi li fathi society of Nigeria among others. Conclusions are

drawn that: Learning makes everything meaningful alsoit should be noted that education plays a crucial role in all societies and recommendations were made that:Government should intensify efforts to employ qualified and competent religious teachers at all levels of education, most especially at our tertiary institutions andshould give recognition and incentive to teachers handling the subjects like their counterpart in the sciences because of the direct moral linkage and high expectation from them.

Key words:

Religion; Education; Religious Education and Struggle.

Introduction

The essence of religious education in any society is to make an individual to be morally upright and live as a useful, peaceful and acceptable member of the society (Laaro, 2013). Religious education could therefore be said to be the cultivation of forms of behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and practices of religious into the individual. Lawal (2016) described religious education as those processes designed to induct each new generation into the attitudes and beliefs as well as the practices of a religious or faith in order to promote the religious and at the same time provide an individual with a unifying centre of his life. The importance of education is stressed in the Glorious Qur'an where worshippers were enjoined to seek the knowledge of knowing and

understanding God (Allah) so as to understand how to worship Him well. Seeking knowledge distinguishes man from animal. Little wonder is it then that the first Qur'anic revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was on education. According to the word of God in the Glorious Qur'an 96:1-5 which read thus:

"Read in the Name of Allah who has created (all that exist), He created man From a cloth; Read! And your Lord is Most Generous: Who has taught (the writing) by the pen; He has taught man that which he knew not" (Q96:1-5).

This shows that one of the most important aspects of religion is that religion itself cherishes education. These verses not only lay stress on both reading and writing but also speak of the word of honour in this connection, showing that man can attain to honour only through knowledge. The prophet (Muhammad) was directed by Allah in the Glorious Qur'an to seek more and more knowledge. It is in fact full of praise for knowledge: the word *Ya 'lamuun* (they ponder), *Ya ta fakkaruun* (they reflect), *Ya tadhakkaruun* (they mediate) and other similar expressions occur on almost every page of the Holy Qur'an. The Holy prophet made it mandatory for those who came to seek knowledge to impart same on others (Bukhari) and desired even those who were considered to be the lowest strata of the society to be uplifted to the highest level through education (Bukhari).

Education from the Islamic point of View

Islam, in fact, lays the basis of mass education, education of men as well as women, of youths as well as adults. The Holy prophet himself made arrangement for education of the women (Bukhari), writing was encouraged (Bukhari) and acquisition of knowledge was made the standard of excellence (Muslim) it is spoken of in the highest terms of praise (Bukhari), and

this explains the suitable thirst for knowledge of Muslims of earlier days. Hadith of Prophet Muhammad related by Bukhari makes it as a point of duty upon every Muslim, man or woman, old or young, that they should acquire knowledge, and thereby introduces the principle of compulsory education. An admonition is given that when a nation gives up the acquisition of knowledge, its downfall is sure (Bukhari).

Ozigi and Canham (1980) declared that Islamic education grew and developed from the same root in the ancient Greece. They asserted that during the Dark Age, the height of civilization was held by Islam, and that during the fourteenth century (i.e renaissance period), Europe had to turn the Arabic translations of Greek history, philosophy, medicine and science to get most of her Greek heritage.

There is need to struggle for education for the fact that education struggle is very important in change of behaviour to better. The term "Education" in the widest sense can be interpreted to include the whole process of development through which a man passes from infancy to maturity and consequently adopting himself to both his physical and social environment. That is why the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is reported to have said:

"The knowledge is from cradle to grave" (Muslim). The expected role of education in a society can only be appreciated if one considers the fact that education is a major mover of change in any given society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was highly opposed to illiteracy and wished to eradicate it from the Muslim community. Hence, he stressed on the search for knowledge. The prophet is reported to have said: "seeking (for) knowledge is compulsory on every Muslim (both male and female)" (Muslim).

In another tradition, he is also reported to have advised the followers to seek for knowledge by saying:

"Search for knowledge even if it is in China" (Muslim).

Some people commented that the knowledge to which reference is made here is merely Islamic studies, this is not true. As far as Islam is concerned, there is no division between what we know as religious and secular knowledge. From this very Hadith, we understand that we Muslim can acquire any type of knowledge from anybody at any place. It must be pointed out also that by that time there was not a single Muslim in China. Consequently, it would have been pointless to go to China to pursue Islamic knowledge. Thus, in this Hadith, it refers to all form of knowledge. Another tradition of prophet which supports this one says:

"the word of wisdom is the lost property of the believers, so wherever he/she finds it he/she has a right to it" (Muslim).

Knowledge cannot by itself be harmful or dangerous. It is the extraneous values and assumptions which man cultivate into it which cause it to produce spiritually harmful fallout. A scholar is expected to note his knowledge for distinction; it must be utilized for the benefit, progress and advancement of the humanity. In the history of early Muslims, after the war of Badri, the prophet is said to have always released prisoners of war who could read and write, provided that each of them could teach ten members of the Muslim who were illiterates to be literates (Khalil, 1971).

Laaro (2004) described religious education to be a process by which the belief, ritual, sacrifice, code of conduct, faith, worship and practice of religious of a particular society is being passed from one generation to another. Herman (1970) also sees religious education as a process by which any religious body or other social unit, such as the family indoctrinates and trains its members, especially the young, in its beliefs and practices. Religious education according to the encyclopaedia of religion, means approaching the many religion of the

world with an attitude of a child with an attempt to cultivate or inculcate (Encyclopaedia of religion vol. 12, 319).

Islamic system of education says that education is a means to an end. The end of education is good moral and virtuous life. An educated person according to Islamic teaching lives a useful institutional life in the society. The goal of education, most especially is to do good to ones fellow being and the society. Education should help us in differentiating between good and bad, right and wrong. It should cultivate in our wealth the love for the good things. It should emphasize the importance of relationship between the belief and the action. It should also create in the heart of a believer the fear of God and the sense of responsibility for his/her own life (Lawal, 2016).

According to Azeez and Adeshina (2013), the philosophy of Islamic education is to inculcate moral values that constitute a wide range of virtues such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, truthfulness, self-discipline, humility, patience and so on. Hence, morality should be the basis of every education given by a country to her citizen in order to record success. This is exactly what Islamic studies set out to achieve. Furthermore, the acquisition of the knowledge of Islamic moral values transform life of a child to a meaningful one as he would be able to relate politely with his fellow human beings which also make him to achieve Allah's pleasure in the hereafter. Consequently, Islam makes acquisition of knowledge compulsory for all Muslims irrespective of gender, age, tribe or nation. However, Nigeria being a secular nation has not realized the importance of religious education. It relegates religious education to the background. It makes Islamic studies an elective subject and provides no adequate teachers in secondary schools.

Ajidagba (2002); asserted that the rationale for the inclusion of religious subjects in the school curriculum can best be appreciated, within the

general policy statement on the Nigeria educational system and the virtue it seeks to inculcate in the learners. Referring to the submission of Orebanjo (1974), Ajidagba (2002) offered that morality is so inter connected to religious such that it is difficult to separate them. That is to say, morality cannot be easily inculcated in students without religious teachings. Oyelade (1991) also opined that religious education must be seen as processes which include the various forms of scientific mode that are applied in other empirical fields. Oyelade further said that religion is both temporal and spiritual. They are both interwoven, the formal being non rational while the latter rational faith brings about the spiritual and moral development of man. Knowledge brings absence his intellectual growth.

From societal experience on morals, religion is meant to reinforce or contribute to good citizenship. For example, religion if well practiced may minimize to the barest minimum, negative behaviours such as examination malpractices, bribery and corruption, selfishness, cultism, sexual infidelity, moral decadence, alcoholism, thuggery, hooliganism, indecent dressing, indolence and dishonesty. Islamic religion specifically preaches honesty, truth and worthiness among its adherents. For instance in Qur'an 22:30 Allah says: "shun every word that is untrue" (Q22:30).

In addition, in the Glorious Qur'an chapter 2:42, Allah says: "And do not overlay the truth with falsehood, and do not knowingly suppress the truth" (Q2:42). In a similar vein, in a hadith of Ibn Mas'ud, the prophet is reported to have said: "verily, truth is goodness, goodness leads to paradise, and verily, lying is wickedness and wickedness leads to hell fire" (Muslim).

From the foregoing, all the aforementioned negatives attitudinal behaviours are preached against in all modesty by religion. Religious education has the potential to reduce or curb them. On the other hand, religious education has the

potential to inculcate in the learner honesty, patience, love, faith, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, simplicity, justice, respect, humility, truthfulness, kindness, cooperation, patriotism, dignity of labour, modesty in dressing etc if well implemented. Furthermore, religion provides a set of moral codes, creates means for perfect control of human minds, for desired purposes of piety and primarily directs the cause of human on the difference between appearance and reality (Olotu, 2008). To explain this, Idowu (1983) puts it that 'religion is the recognition of man's duties as a divine command', while Adefarasin (2004) sees religion as "the recognition of all duties as divine command". Adefarasin further states that 'a religionist is earnestly devoted and attached to religion'

Religion and Educational Struggle from Islamic and Christian Point of view

Religion can be defined as an essential factor in any human society; it is a coercive force behind any society. Consequently, it cannot be ignored or relegated to the background. This is because the history of human life is inextricably linked with religion. Ayegboyin (2013) emphasises that the shared symbol, virtue and norms of religion unite people. This makes it to remain the source of spiritual, moral, educational and desirable patterns of the society. On what religion gives to the society, Olotu (2008) is of the opinion that religion is a vanguard for propagating morals and peaceful co-existence of people in any given society. Olotu explains further that religion gives people a sense of purpose for their effort and standard by which to assess the value of their achievement and the quality of their behaviour. Consequently, religion helps to promote both the spiritual and moral values of any nation. Furthermore, according to Biblical quotation, it was said that:

'the fear of lord is the beginning of knowledge but fools despise wisdom and instruction' (Proverb, 26)

In fact, education is the most direct method which a society can use in order to change its people and equip them with the necessary requisites for appreciative functioning. No knowledge is wasted, as intensified by Allah intensify in the Glorious Qur'an on the issue of struggle for knowledge, and reference were made to five prophets and a saint who were endowed with different knowledge; for instance:

- I. Prophet Adam (A.S) was endowed with the knowledge of all nature. Allah says: "Then, He taught Adam the names of everything....." (Q2:31).
- II. Prophet Isa (A.S) was taught the knowledge of sacred Books. Allah says: "And He will teach him the book and the wisdom and the Tawrah and Injil" (Q3: 48).
- III. Prophet Dawud (A.S) was endowed with knowledge of metal works. According to the word of God in the Glorious Qur'an chapter 21:80, Allah says: "And We taught him the making of garments for you, to fortify you in your wars, so will you then be thankful?" (Q21:80).
- IV. Prophet Yusuf (A.S) was endowed with interpretation of dreams. According to the word of God in the Glorious Qur'an chapter 12:101, Allah says: "My Lord, You have indeed bestowed upon me an authority and taught me of the interpretation of dreams. You are the originator of the heaven and earth; you are my protector in this life and in the hereafter. Let me die as a Muslim and unite me with the righteous" (Q12: 101).
- V. Prophet Sulaiman (A.S) was endowed with explanation on the speech of birds. According to the word of God in the Glorious Qur'an chapter 27:16 Allah says: "And Solomon was David's heir,

and said, "O people, we have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been given from everything, indeed this is a manifest bounty" (Q27:16).

- VI. Khidr (A.S) was endowed with the knowledge of Tasawwuf (the esoteric meanings). According to the word of God in the Glorious Qur'an chapter 18:65, Allah says: "then they found one of our servant upon whom We had given mercy from Us, and We had taught him knowledge from Us." (Q18:65).

The voluntary agencies with which charitable organizations started male education in Nigeria. They were totally in charge of administration, control and funding of education until the first grant-in-aid was given to them. They owned more than 90% of school in Nigeria before 1970 when the government decided to take over all schools. These voluntary agencies contributed greatly to education in term of skills, knowledge, manpower development and moral upbringing of the youths. In terms of knowledge, the mission and Muslim schools taught many subjects in their schools. Such subject included arts (Languages) science and religious subjects. These were combined with physical education, Arts and Crafts as well as Music. Many Nigerian scholars of today graduated from these schools.

Ozigi(1980) assert that the voluntary agencies built schools, churches and mosques and provided for recreational activities. They brought civilization to Nigeria. Their schools and churches serves as village meeting places in many parts of Nigeria. Moral upbringing is one of the most important roles of the voluntary agencies. Children were trained to prepared themselves and treat others as they would want to be treated. They emphasised discipline. These agencies also were very charitable. They played specific roles in Education. The Christian mission schools were more in the

North. The Christians were the first to start formal schooling in Nigeria, with the CMS establishing a boarding school in 1842 at Abeokuta. Later, other Christian group opened different schools. Some of the well-known schools are St. Gregory' college, Lagos; Christ the king's college, (CKC) Onitsha; CMS, Girls Grammar School, Lagos, they ran primary, secondary and teacher training institution. In 1970, the government took over the administration of these schools from them but left the responsibility of pre-primary education to private proprietors (Ozigi, 1980, Mussazi, 1982 & Nwakwo, 1982.) They still operate pre-primary. Primary, secondary, even colleges of education and universities.

CONCLUSION

Learning makes everything meaningful. In Nigeria today, education has become a very serious issue that needs to be acculturated in the students at all level of education, especially, the moral aspects of it. Despite, the presence of those who do not take education to be anything and by that do not struggle for it. It should be noted that education plays a crucial role in all societies. It is no longer news that the government, parents, teachers and the general public have been looking for ways of putting an end to manner of immoralities and illiteracy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the discussion has revealed, the importance of religious and the struggle for education, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Government should allow only trained religious teachers that are objectively minded to handle the subject. Somebody who is not just a mere believer but a devotee or an enthusiastic religious fellow.

2. Government should intensify efforts to employ qualified and competent religious teachers at all levels of education, most especially at our tertiary institutions. On the other hand, other teachers from other discipline should also play their own roles too in support of the religious teachers in addressing all the maladaptive behaviours, because the religious teachers cannot do it alone.
3. Government should give recognition and incentive to teachers handling the subjects like their counterpart in the sciences because of the direct moral linkage and high expectation from them.
4. Government should organize seminars for the religious teachers on how to inculcate and cultivate morals and religious education that will make the students shun habit that can jeopardize their future ambitions, most especially illiteracy, truancy, sex trade, and the like.
5. The public preachers should always preach against the destroying of other people's property during any crisis or misunderstanding. They should go on preaching through emphasizing the relevance of high moral standard in the society.

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