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Editorial	ii
Guidelines for Authors.....	v
Contents	vi
Sayyid Qutb's Exposition on Qur'an 17:33 and its Relevance to the Nigerian Shari'ah Penal Codes	
Oniye, Olayinka Ibrahim and Abdulwahab Danladi Shittu, Ph.D.	1
Christian-Muslim Inter-pathic Relationship in Northern Nigeria: An Empirical Study	
Oholiabs D. Tuduks.....	18
Sufism as Conceptualized in Forty <i>Ḥadīth</i> of Imam an-Nawawī with Reference to <i>Ḥadīth</i> Two (2) and Thirty-one (31) <i>Part One</i>	
Yusuph, Dauda Gambari, PhD.....	37
A Discourse on the Experiences of Selected Prophets in <i>Sūratu Hūd</i>: Lessons for the Contemporary Society	
Yahya, Shaykh Ahmad	56
Islamic Solution to the Menace of Drug Abuse among the Muslim Youth of Northern Nigeria	
Muhammad, Babayo Uba	75
Comparative Analysis of Paul's Teaching on Resurrection in Corinthians 15 and the Concept of Afterlife in Yoruba Traditional Religion	
Olowoyeye Emmanuel Olurokan- PhD.	91
The Role of Religion in Human Societies	
Anas Mohammed Abdullahi, Karimatu Muhammad Abubakar and Usman Isa Ya'u..	108
Islamic Ethics Adoption in Islamic Finance Institutions as tool for Corporate Survival	

A Discourse on the Experiences of Selected Prophets in *Sūratu Hūd*: Lessons for the Contemporary Society

Yahya, Shaykh Ahmad¹

Abstract

Sūratu Hūd is one of the chapters of the Qur'ān that discuss the missions of prophets sent by Allah to the past nations. The sūrah unveils the messengers' attitudes to the polytheism, hostility, ridicule, oppression, threats and fraudulent business dealings because of their duty of calling people to the right path. Prophets Nūh, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ, Shu'ayb, Mūsā, Ibrāhīm and many other prophets were sent purposely to enlighten people on the oneness of Allah and to proffer solution, through divine guidance, to the corrupt practices that prevailed in their respective societies. The stories were narrated in the Qur'ān for onward transmission to the subsequent generations to serve as a means of imparting moral rectitude in the people; dissuading them from acts of disbelief, disobedience, tyranny and other negative tendencies. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to study the experiences of Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb, due to replication of the acts of their people in the contemporary society, with a view to highlighting the essence of building Shari'ah-compliant society. In order to achieve this, the paper examined the concept of Prophet-hood, historical antecedent of Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb with their people, in relation to the prevalence of gay and fraud in the contemporary society, and ended with recommendations. The findings of this paper show that the missions of Allah's prophets, irrespective of their diversity, focussed on monotheism. Historical method of research was used in this paper with the library as main source of data. The paper concluded that it is necessary for the members of the modern period to ponder, reflect and illuminate on the teachings of the Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb in order to provide catholicon to the predominance of depraved practices.

Keywords: Experience, Prophet, *Sūratu Hūd*, Contemporary, Society.

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Introduction

The Qur'ān is neither a book of history nor biography or anthology, but it is more than all that. As a divine revelation, the Qur'ān is undoubtedly guidance for mankind. It narrates events from the lives of the earlier prophets and the fate of the heedless people to their warnings. These accounts are related to show the purpose of the Qur'ān by letting people draw lessons from the past history (Oladimeji 1). Such is the situation in the narrations of Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb.

In order to appeal to human's hearts and minds; the Qur'ān has used a number of approaches. Storytelling is one of the styles of dialogue the Qur'ān has adopted. The narration is not intended to give an account of history per se but entwined with the main guidelines of the Book. Thus, it seeks to deliver man from the darkness of dishonesty to the light that is emanating from the message.

Sūratu Hūd, which is a *Makkan sūrah*, is one of the chapters of the Qur'ān whose precious lessons are as relevant today as they were in the time the Qur'ān was revealed and even further in the history of humanity. In other words, the Book relates a number of stories that took place in the past though, with everlasting lessons for all times.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to study the ordeals of Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb with a view to sensitize people about the dangers of false beliefs and corrupt practices in the contemporary society and infer lessons from their experiences. This is very essential because of the reoccurrence of the atrocities committed by their people that led to their destruction in this period.

Concept of Prophet-hood in Islam

The Arabic term for prophet-hood is *nubuwwah* and it is derived from the word *naba'* meaning information or news (Ibn Manẓūr 162). This meaning is conveyed in Q15:49 where Allah says: نَبِّئْ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ "Inform my servants

that I am indeed the oft-forgiving, Most Merciful".

Other chapters where Allah uses the word *naba'* to imply news and information include: Q: 15:51 "وَنَبِّئُهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ", Q: 66:3 "فَلَمَّا نَبَأَتْ ..."

... and Q: 78:2 "عَنِ النَّبِإِ الْعَظِيمِ". A *Nabiy* (Prophet) is therefore a mortal who receives information from Allah and disseminates it to human beings (Ibn Manzūr 162). Al-Farā' viewed that the word *nubuwwah* is derived from the words *nabwah* and *nabāwah*, denoting a raised portion of the land (Ibn Manzūr 163). This semantic denotation behooves the word *nabiy*, because a prophet occupies a lofty position over all the creatures. In other words, the prophets are the most noble of creation and the signposts by whom people are guided and reformed in this world.

It is apposite to mention here that another term which has been often used with *nabiy* (prophet) is *rasūl* (messenger). Even in the Qur'ān, the same person is sometimes called *nabiy* and other times called *rasūl* (Q: 19:51). Thus, Islamic scholars have, therefore, expressed divergent views on the difference between *nabiy-cum-rasūl*.

Some scholars like Imām Abū Ḥanīfah opined that the two terms are synonymous i.e. both are sent to convey the message of Allah. These scholars submit that there is no difference between *nabiy* and *rasūl* (Al-'Ashqar 37). Therefore, every *nabiy* is *rasūl* and every *rasūl* is *nabiy*. Others opine that, there is difference between the two and believe that the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah cannot hold water (Al-'Ashqar 37). The inappropriateness of the view of the former, as stated by the later scholars, is indicated by the reports that mention the number of the prophets and the messenger. The example of the reports is the *ḥadīth* of 'Abū Dharr that relates that the number of Prophets is 124,000 while the number of Messengers is 313 (Ibn Ḥibān 361).

The preponderant view of the scholars is that a messenger is the one to whom laws are revealed and he is commanded to convey it while the prophet is not charged to deliver it (Ṭanṭāwī 22). To them, every messenger is a prophet, but every prophet is not a messenger. Nevertheless, Al-'Ashqar said that this

definition is unlikely to be correct for several reasons: not conveying the message means concealing the revelation of Allah. This however, contradicts the essence of revelation because Allah did not send down divine message to be buried in the heart of the recipient of the message (37).

It is on this background that Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah postulated that the messenger is the one sent to the nation of infidel people who belie (Islamic monotheism) with a divine message, while the Prophet is sent to the nation of believers and charged to utilize the law of the messenger he succeeded (Ibn Taymiyyah 281). The prophet teaches them divine message and judges among them as stated by Allah in Q5:44. The conclusion of Ibn Taymiyyah is drawn from studying the missions of Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Zakariyā' and Yahya who were all Prophets of the children of Israel and judged according to Tawrah. This definition, in our view, does not negate the adherence of the messenger to the message of the prophet he also succeeded. This opinion is considered to be the best in our view because it is based on the premise that both prophet and messenger could be given message to deliver.

Belief in the prophets is one of the cardinal and fundamental principles of faith in Islam. The Qur'ān enjoins thus:

قُلْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ
وَمَا أَوْحِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Say: "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets, from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam) (Q: 3:84).

Chapter 2:136 warns against discrimination between the prophets. Also, chapter 4:136 declares that whosoever does not believe in the messengers has gone astray and is a loser. Similarly, Qur'ān 4:150-151 establishes that whosoever

disbelieves in the messengers while claiming to believe in Allah is an infidel and his belief will not be advantageous to him. More so, it is believed in Islam that Allah has provided guidance to humanity over the ages through the institution of prophet-hood. Hence, their duties included: disseminating the message of Allah (Q: 5:67), calling people to Allah (Q: 16:36), purifying people's souls from vices (Q: 62:2), establishing divine justice and bearing glad tidings and warning (Q: 18:56).

Prophet Lūṭ (A.S.) and the Obstinate People of Sodom

Lūṭ was a prophet of Allah sent to the people of Sodom and a nephew to Prophet Ibrāhīm (A.S.) (An- Najār 161). According to the Glorious Qur'ān, Lūṭ believed in prophet-hood of Ibrāhīm, and travelled with him to teaching the oneness of Allah before he separated from him after their escape from the assault of the idol worshippers of their town (Aliagan and Adedimeji 43). Lūṭ left Egypt and traversed towards the eastern part of Urdun Jordan, a place called Sadum or Sodom. The purpose of his migration was to propagate the teachings of Prophet Ibrāhīm (A.S.), after he was commissioned as a prophet by Allah. He was sent to the inhabitants of Sodom, a village situated in the area where the Dead Sea is presently located (Dead Sea).

Historically, the people of Sodom are regarded as the most depraved creature (AbdulHakīm 61). Their acts are pictured in the book titled *Zawjātul-Ambiya'i wa'r-Rusul* as follows:

وقال أهل العلم: إنهم كانوا يقطعون على المسافرين طريقة ويفعلون المنكر في ناديتهم ويتسامرون فيه وقالوا عن هذا المنكر هو إيذاء المار بالطريق وكذلك يفعلون الفاحشة من إتيان الذكران علانية

(AbdulHakīm 61)

The scholars said (about Lūṭ's people): They used to waylay the traveller on the highway, used to engage in the detestable act and

confabulate at night in their club by speaking ill of the passer-by. Similarly, they used to engross on lewdness where men would have sex with men in public.

It was on the basis of the perpetuation of the people of Sodom of the afore-quoted mischievous acts and atrocities that Allah sent Lūṭ (A.S.) to correct. Prophet Lūṭ (A.S.) enjoined his people to give up their indecent behaviour, but they were deeply immersed in their immorality. Prophet Lūṭ (A.S.) felt distressed because of his people's transgression of the limits set by Allah. Like all other prophets, Lūṭ called his people who were disobedient in all senses to desist from all acts of moral decadence and be people of moral excellence. The Qur'ān says:

The people of Lūṭ rejected the apostles. Behold, their brother Lūṭ said to them: "Will ye not fear (Allah)? I am to you an apostle worthy of all trust. So, fear Allah and obey me. No reward do I ask of you for it: My reward is only from the Lord of the worlds. Of all the creatures in the world, will ye approach males. And leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your mates? Nay, ye are a people transgressing (all limits) (Q: 26:160-166).

However, the response of the people of Sodom was very disheartening because they obstinately insisted on disobedience and they did not abdicate from their wicked deeds. These impudent people mocked Prophet Lūṭ and his disciples, laughed at them, abused them and even went to the extent of threatening them with expulsion from their land (Q7:82). Lūṭ's people failed to obey their prophet and tried to detract him from the true path by casting aspersions on him. Despite their menace, persistence and excessiveness in violating the rules enunciated by Allah, Prophet Lūṭ (A.S) continued to show his displeasure. He said, as recorded in Qur'ān 26:168, *"I dislike your doings."*

Subsequently, when the obstinate people of Sodom persisted in their disbelief, Allah sent angels to acquaint Prophet Lūṭ (A.S) about the news of their doom. According to the Qur'ān, the people who took the angels for men because

of their appearance in the human form ran to Lūṭ (A.S), and he conversed with them as contained in Q: 11:77-79 thus:

When our Messengers came to Lūṭ, he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect) them. He said: "This is a distressful day." And his people came rushing towards him, and they had been long in the habit of practising abominations. He said: "O my people! Here are my daughters: They are purer for you (If ye marry)! Now fear Allah, and cover me not with shame about my guests! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?" They said: "Well dost thou know we have no need of thy daughters: indeed, thou knowest quite well what we want."

Commenting on the above quoted verses, Sayyid Quṭb remarks: "*He (Lūṭ) knows the (scandal) that awaits them (guests) from his people in front of his guests and he is aware of the disgrace that will be received by his guests, (he was troubled on their account) and exclaimed: 'This is a woeful day'. And the woeful day started.*"

وهو يعلم ما ينتظرهم من قومه، ويدرك الفضيحة التي ستناله في أضيافه: { وقال : هذا يوم عصيب
{ ! وبدأ اليوم العصيب (280).

Prophet Lūṭ, who was acquainted with their nature, directed them to the opposite sex with whom healthy people find satisfaction. Also, he was ready to offer his daughters in marriage to those frenzied people to satisfy their desires as contained in the above quoted Qur'ānic verses. Ibn Kathīr, however, glosses over it as follows: "*Actually, they were not his daughters, but they were from among his people. A prophet is the father of his nation as stated by Allah, the exalted in Q33:6: The prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their (believers') mothers....*" (337).

لم يكن بناته، ولكن كن من أمته، وكل نبي أبو أمته كما قال تعالى: النبي أولى بالمؤمنين من أنفسهم
وأزواجه أمهاتهم (337).

The people of Sodom got infuriated and furious at him believing that his daughters are useless to them. Lūṭ was seized by phobia since he was a stranger whose position was weak. He, therefore, expressed his grievances in words that were full of sorrow to his guests: "...*Would that I had power to suppress you or that I could betake myself to some powerful support*" (Q: 11:80).

Having said this, the angels disclosed their identity and their divine support. They informed him that he will be saved along with the members of his family with the exemption of his wife who was among the evil perpetrators. This is contained in Q: 11:81 where Allah says:

(The Messengers) said: "O Lūṭ! We are Messengers from thy Lord! By no means shall they reach thee! Now travel with thy family while yet a part of the night remains, and let not any of you look back: but thy wife (will remain behind): To her will happen what happens to the people. Morning is their time appointed: is not the morning nigh?"

The Qur'ān hinted that the wife of Lūṭ was also a betrayal to him. Her treachery was in such a way of being insolent to the command of Lūṭ and even slipped out the house to disclose the news of his guests to the people. Consequently, Allah instructed Prophet Lūṭ and those who believed in his message to embark on night journey without any delay or look back because those who remained in the town would be perished in the morning, the question of whether the wife of Lūṭ accompanied them or not generated heated debate among the exegetes. The exegetes, whose view to the best of our knowledge is the best, said that the verse means that Allah enjoined Prophet Lūṭ to travel at night with his allies without his treacherous wife while other exegetes especially Baṣriyyūn opined that she travelled with them but she flouted the injunction that forbade them from looking back during the journey and she was perished (Ibn Kathīr 339).

The final scene, which manifests in *Sūratu Hūd*, is the result of their avarice, robbery, homosexuality and humiliation of strangers by maltreatment and

ages. Their end is a total destruction which tore the cities into shreds. Allah says: *"When our commandment came, we turned (the cities) upside down, and rained on them stones of baked clay, piled up"* (Q 11:82).

Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S.) and the Locality of Madyan

Shu'ayb, otherwise known as *amir al-nabiyyin* (*Khatib al-Anbiya*), was sent to the people of Madyan, the city situated at the north-west of Hijaz and the south of Palestine in the eastern side of the Red Sea and the gulf of Aqabah and extended to a part of the Sinai peninsula (Barhan). The people of Madyan were in the part of a commercial highway of Asia, between two opulent and highly organized nations of Egypt and the Mesopotamian group comprising Assyria and Babylonia. This made it easy for them to trade with travellers from Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia. Thus, their trading was extensive and they made a lot of money from their business (Barhan).

Out of greediness in a short time, they began to engage in bad deeds. The people of this land were notorious and dishonest in dealings and in the association of partners with Allah. In other words, their besetting sins included: polytheism, giving a short measure or weight, depriving people of rightful dues, producing mischief and disorder and taking to highway robbery (Barhan). However, Allah was not pleased with the situation in Madyan. He therefore, decided to send a prophet to them from among them. The prophet's name was Shu'ayb and he was from the noblest lineage. His mission was to lead his people to the right path which they had forsaken.

Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S.) commenced his preaching with faith in God as the source of all virtues. Speaking with compassion and wisdom, he attempted to loosen the knot of love of worldly increase in their souls and asked them to start being diligent in their daily activities. This is confirmed in the Qur'an where Allah says:

To the Madyan people (We sent) Shu'ayb, one of their own brethren
He said: "O my people! Worship Allah, ye have no other god but Him

and give not short measure or weight: I see you in prosperity, but I fear for you the penalty of a Day that will compass (you) all round. And o my people! Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: Commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief. That which is left you by Allah is best for you, if ye (but) believed! But I am not set over you to keep watch (Q: 11:83-86).

Like all other prophets, Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S) spoke to them on many occasions and gave them exhortation as does by caring father and wise teacher. He consistently preached against the wicked, telling them of punishment that had befallen the sinful people before them. He also reminded them of Allah's favour on them and pleaded them to turn away from sins. Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S.) also advised them to indulge not in vile practices to add to their riches and repeated it times without number (Q11:84-85). Nevertheless, the preaching of Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S) fell on their deaf ears and they were hardened in their corrupt practices. Their response was contemptuous because of their ill-conceived idea of the link between worship and business transaction (Sayyid Qutb 290). They enquired from Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S.), in mockery: *"They said: O Shu'aib! Does thy (religion of) prayer command thee that we leave off the worship which our fathers practised, or that we leave off doing what we like with our property? Truly, thou art the one that forbeareth with faults and is right-minded!"* (Q: 11:87).

Thus, Shu'ayb employed all methods of admonishment hoping that his people will embrace his message after having responded to their foolish question with mild words. They, however, stiffed in their erring ways while the arrogant people among them threatened Shu'ayb and his followers of intimidation and banishment from their city. They rudely told Shu'ayb: *"...O Shu'ayb! Much of what thou say we do not understand! In fact, among us we see that you have no strength! Were it not for thy family, we should certainly have stoned you! For you have among us no great position"* (Q: 11:91).

Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S.) got infuriated with his people for their arrogance towards Allah. He responded to their ill-will saying: *"O my people! Is then my family of more consideration with you than Allah..."* (Q: 11:92). According to Sayyid Qutb, Shu'ayb's anger and disavowal of any protection given him by anyone other than God prompted him to challenge his people and then dissociate himself totally (297). He says: *"And O my people! Do whatever ye can: I will do (my part): soon will ye know who it is on whom descends the penalty of ignominy; and who is a liar! And watch ye! For I too am watching with you"* (Q: 11:93). Having told Shu'ayb that they were fed up with him and with his message and they did not want to know anything about the truth he was presenting, Allah reacted negatively to their corrupt acts.

Consequently, Allah delivered Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S.) and the believers to safety, and completely destroyed the territory of Madyan with a devastating earth quake *"فَأَخَذْتُمُ الرِّجْفَ فَأُصْبِحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِمِينَ"* (Q7:91), a might blast *"...وَأَخَذَتِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ..."* (Q: 11:94) as well as fragment of sky that fell on them *"وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَسَاءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ"* (Q: 26:173).

Gay and Fraudulent Practices in the Modern Society

A. Gay

Originally, the term gay was used to mean carefree, cheerful or bright and showy. The term is primarily used to refer to a homosexual person or the trait of being homosexual. The word is now used to describe men and women attracted to the same sex, though lesbian is the more common term for women (Arche).

In Islām, the act of gay is forbidden (*muḥarram*) while its punishment is death (Sālim 42). In the same vein, the Bible in Leviticus 20:13 frowns at gay and also prescribes death as penalty for the parties involved. However, the Pew Research Centre survey conducted in 39 countries in 2013 disclosed stark

geographical differences when people were asked whether homosexuals should be accepted in the society (Morello). The wide acceptance was found in countries where religion is not a force like Canada. Yet, the poll also discovered high levels of tolerance toward gay people in the populated Catholic countries like Spain, Italy and many others (Morello). In contrast, there was massive rejection of homosexuality in predominantly Muslim countries as well as in Africa, Russia and parts of Asia (Morello).

In reaction to the rejection of homosexuality in Africa, former US President Barack Obama called on African governments to grant equal right to gay people by decriminalizing homosexual acts (Obama). The President was more specific when he announced that the fight against gay and lesbian discrimination would be a central point of the US government's foreign policy, and transgressing nations like Nigeria could be denied aid (Obama). The question here is that can U.S. sustain itself without divine intervention? The answer is no, because, it goes against the spirit of the Qur'ān that an ordinary human being should claim possession of sovereignty. The Qur'ān declares: "And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heaven and the earth and Allah has power over all things" (Q: 3:189).

The Nigerian senate, in spite of concerns expressed by US, UN and UK and threats to cut foreign aid, passed and signed a bill in 2013 that bans gay marriage and prescribed 14-year jail term for the culprit (Ebun). However, it is disheartening to note that some Nigerians took to the streets protesting what they termed "*Anti-gay practice and infringement of their fundamental human rights*" (Ebun). Looking at the harmful effects of gay to the society, it manifests that the protesters are indeed allies of Lūṭ's people who invited divine wrath for their nation; the gay people therefore, wish destruction for Nigeria.

However, homosexuality has become increasingly prevalent among young Nigerians and despite the laudable efforts of Nigerian legislators to nip this in the bud; it has continued to grow like untameable virus. Dozens of people were arrested in Bauchi in 2014 for their involvement in the act (Dozens arrest). In

addition, more than forty men were arrested in Nigeria over a weekend in Nigeria in 2017.

B. Fraud

Fraud means intentional deception made for personal gain or damage another person (Fraud). This implies that it is one of the examples of social injustice which have attracted criticism among individuals, national and international organizations. Just like the prevalence of social injustice among the people of Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S) which accounted for their total destruction, the scarcity of justice in Nigeria has increased the threat and danger of crime as well as violence in the country.

The prevalent fraudulent activities include: embezzlement, theft, defalcation, forgeries impersonation, manipulation of voucher, falsification of status report, laundering, robberies and internet fraud have been identified as features of some Nigerian banking industry, business men and political figures (Owolabi 245). For instance, analysis in 2005 revealed that the presentation of forged cheques ranked first in the fraudulent practices in Nigeria (Owolabi 245). It is on the basis of dishonesty in business dealings of some Nigerians that the country is rated as one of the most fraudulent countries in Africa (Priscilla).

Also, pension fraud has become force to be reckoned with and has been unravelled recently in various sectors of the nation. Its level has assumed an epidemic dimension and has eaten deep into the aspect of Nigerians' life, except few. For instance, a pension official who stole about N24b was sentenced to two years with option of N750,000 fine before the judgement was quashed by Court of Appeal in Abuja. He was therefore sentenced to six years imprisonment with an addition of N22.9bn fine (Adesomoju). Online gaming, lottery, gambling etc are regarded as entertainment or leisure. This, in no doubt, shows that the disease of the past nations has crept in to the contemporary society of ours.

Lessons for the Contemporary Society

The following are some of the lessons that can be inferred from the above discourse:

Reflection on the History: The Qur'ān gives a comprehensive history of the age-old to people in order to provide landmarks for the advocates of Islam across generations. These landmarks are not only relevant to the first addressees of the Qur'ān, but also to every Muslim that dislikes ignorance anywhere in the world, anytime. From the above narrations, one could deduce that, most of the past nations rejected the appeal of their prophets to dissociate partners from Allah and ask for forgiveness and this eventually led to their destruction. What then makes us feel secure from the punishment of Allah when we are engulfed in the sins? It is only when we reflect on the history of the past nations that we can be able to make choice between guidance (*hidāyah*) and aberrance (*ḍalālah*).

Uniformity in the Mission of the Prophets: Exploration of the messages of Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb makes it clear that all messages brought by them were based on the same fundamental principles: total submission to Allah alone without associating partners with Him and following the guidance provided by God's Messengers in both submission and worship. These are coupled with the belief that this present life is only a test, while the reward is given in the hereafter. Freedom of choice between truth and falsehood, given to man by God, is the basis of the test. This truth manifests in the Bible where it says: "*Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one*" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This was by no means an unparalleled message and it was the same as preached by Nūh, Hūd, Shu'ayb, Ibrāhīm and Mūsā.

Patience and Perseverance: An ideal preacher must be ready to endure what an ordinary man may not bear and see as an insult to his status and personality in the course of Allah. In other words, like Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb who bore patience while promoting Allah's course despite the terribleness of their experiences and ordeals with their people; a preacher also has to be patient and exercise caution in

reacting to issues. Allah assures those who bear patience of His Divine support when He says: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ" (Q: 2:153).

Hospitality: One of the lessons that could also be derived from the above narrations is that, the believers should be hospitable. When the angels, who appeared in handsome attraction of travellers; arrived, Lūṭ did not know that his guests were angels sent for a purpose by Allah. Yet, he gave preference to their safety than his. Thus, he was assisted to get rid of his shameless people.

Perversion brings Doom: Another lesson derived is that, the people of Sodom who immersed in the act of homosexuality witnessed severe torment and the wrath of Allah. And in a jiffy, the people of Sodom including the innocent animals and objects that surrounded them were perished. Under *Sharī'ah*, both the sodomizer and the sodomized are guilty of death (Sālim 45). This is in conformity with the ḥadīth reported by Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet SAW) says: "*Kill the one that is doing it and also kill the one with who is done*" (At Tirmidhī ḥadīth 1376). This shows the extent to which Islam frowns at it. It is however painful that we still find some people plunging in it till date. In Nigeria here, those who engage in it now have the effrontery to call a press conference to tell the world that they have a right or better still to present themselves as victims of prejudice and discrimination on the legislation against the act (Balogun). Do they have a right? However, the number of homosexuals in Nigeria is on the rise, which explains why the National Assembly passed the bill prohibiting the act and sentencing the defaulters to a 14-year jail term (Nigerian Law).

Destruction of Cities for Prevalent Crimes: We live in a world where perpetration of murder is common and the sale of hard drugs is lucrative. Sinful acts are considered fun, streets are unsafe even in the middle of the day and degenerate life styles are accepted as a way of life. The people of Lūṭ lived in a society very similar to ours in terms of commitment of grave sins like gay, heedless to the divine injunctions and etc. This implies that the sins that caused destruction of people of Lūṭ are decriminalized in the modern society by the

advocates of gay. The lesson derivable from this is that, a sin considered to be minor could lead to severe punishment and annihilation of the world.

Eradication of Frauds in all its Ramifications: From the above narration, we could see that the people of Madyan were dishonest business men who used to rob people on the highways. In addition, they did not give full measure and caused losses to others by fraud before they were destroyed. However, financial frauds are now a heavy burden on the society where all sectors get affected. Like people of Shu'ayb who robbed people, the capitalists also rob masses with the promulgation of laws. The people of Shu'ayb robbed on highway; also, the capitalists rob in every sector. This explains why Yusuf while commenting on ways to check social injustice said that the society should have a group of people supported by law to enforce rule of law; people should be made to imbibe Islamic virtues and reflect same in their dealings with fellow members of the society (158).

Inseparability of Religion and Financial Dealings: The people of Madyan neither realized nor wanted to realize that prayers are required by faith, as a manifestation of true submission to God. Yet, faith cannot be established unless God's legislation in all matters of trade and finance are implemented. However, we find among people today some who question the validity of any link between faith and morality, especially on financial dealings. For instance, some Nigerians including Christian Association of Nigeria unhesitatingly condemned introduction of Islamic form of banking, claiming that the move was an attempt to turn the country into an Islamic state (Akpokona). However, faith in oneness of God cannot be firmly established when God's laws, which regulate individual behaviour, social and financial dealings, are abandoned in favour of man-made laws (Qutb 292).

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing discourse, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Justice should be established in the corporate and public affairs at a parastatal. This is because social injustice, which was one of the causes of the destruction of Shu'ayb's people, has been identified by many people as the major cause of the rise of crime, violence and threat in Nigeria.
- ii. Government should make religious studies especially Islamic studies as a relatively compulsory subject at all levels of education so that evil thoughts can be dispelled and learners can be exposed to reflect on the purpose of their existence.
- iii. The perpetrators of gay and other social ills should desist from the heinous crimes in order to salvage the community from the evil consequence.
- iv. Leaders at all levels should lead by example as exemplified by Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb.
- v. Government is urged to be responsive while discharging its activities so that the evil perpetrators could be brought to face the wrath of law.

Conclusion

So far, this paper has discussed the experiences of Prophets Lut and Shu'ayb with their people after having elucidated the concept of prophet-hood in Islam. Their duties explain why Prophets Lūṭ and Shu'ayb discharged their tasks efficiently without weariness despite the severity in their experiences with the inextinguishable people of Sodom and Madyan. It should be noted that in spite of their salient qualities of being patient, perseverant, wise and hospitable, their people, except a few of them, refused to welcome their messages. As a result, they suffered mighty blows. Sūratu Hūd and many other chapters in the Qur'ān portray the distress which overwhelmed them: some perished in a devastating pain while others by an awful cry. Indeed, the outcome of their polytheism, arrogance, slandering, robbery, gay, atrocities in all its ramifications, fraudulence in business dealings, dishonesty and injustice calls for reflection and rumination.

However, there is no doubt that all the mischievous acts of the past nations, which accounted for their doom, are perpetrated by present-day generation. But the general reform of society which brings benefit to every

individual and establishes the cooperation of its members can only be built when people adhere to moral values, implement the divine law and reflect on the missions of the prophets with a view to infer lessons for day to day implementation.

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