

## The Prophet Muhammad's 'AdĀlah: A Catholicon For Injustice In Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*Injustice is a serious problem militating against good governance in any given society where it prevails. It contributes in no small way, to the failure recorded in political system. It would permeate the social, economic, political and judicial aspects. Thus, it would yield negative impacts in the life of the populace. However, the indirect resistance of the modern society against it is not alien to Muslims. This is because one of the duties of the Prophets was to neutralize the corrupt practices that prevailed in their various localities. It is against this background that this paper intends to unveil the concept of justice as taught by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a catholicon for injustice in Nigeria. Through the use of historical and analytical methods, this paper provides a locus for understanding the theory of justice as exemplified both in theory and practice by the Prophet. The paper reveals that the Prophet did not only preach justice but also manifested it throughout his life. The paper concludes that, unless Nigeria adheres to the teachings of the Prophet who was a watershed in human history, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to put things in order.*

**Keywords:** Principle, Practice, 'Adālah, Injustice and Catholicon.

### INTRODUCTION

Administration of justice is a serious task in most African countries particularly in Nigeria. The inability of the country to have good governance that considers fairness as a watchword has made the country to face enormous challenges socially and politically. Despite its transition to democracy in 1999 with the aim of ensuring fair and just treatment of people, Nigerians continue to witness unparalleled oppression and injustice in all its ramifications. In other words, gross injustice has dominated the religious, social economic, political, judicial and cultural aspects of Nigeria.

Underscoring the importance of administration of justice as one of the key components needed by government, it is written in Madinah charter that the document will not protect anyone who is unjust or commit crime.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, all are equal and no distinction is entertained from the lowest to the highest and vice versa.<sup>4</sup> This implies that the concept of justice in Islam transcends considerations of race, religion, color, and creed, as Muslims are enjoined to be just to their friends and foes alike, and to be just at all levels.

Hence, the thrust of this paper is the concept of justice as taught by Prophet Muhammad, who could be described as an exemplary model to the entire gamut, with a view to unveiling the potency of his teachings as a panacea to good governance. In order to achieve this, anatomy of the

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<sup>3</sup> Ahmad G. , *Muhammad and His Charter*, (New Delhi: Adam Publisher, n. d.), p.320

<sup>4</sup> Azeez Olamilekan Rasheed and Yahya Shaykh Ahmad, "Principles of Leadership in Islam", *Al-Hikmah Journal of History and International Relations*, (vol. 3, No.1, 2016) 155.

conditions of Arabs before and after the mission of the Prophet (SAW) was performed. Also examined is the understanding of justice according to the Qur'ān, social justice in the epoch of the Prophet and the administration of justice in Nigeria.

### **Arabs before and After the Mission of the Prophet (SAW)**

Prior to the emergence of the Prophet as the last Messenger of Allah with the universal message to the jinn and mankind, the disintegration and lawlessness in the religious, social and political life of the Arabs was the order of the day. This assertion does not imply that the Arabian Peninsula lacked intellectual awakening activities. Indeed, they demonstrated intellectual breakthrough in some fields like literature.<sup>5</sup> In spite of this, the days of ignorance (*Ayyāmu'l-Jāhiliyyah*) which lasted for many years witnessed prevalence of injustice, tribalism, anarchy and absence of divine guidance.

In terms of religion, many Arabs believed in the existence of many gods, few were atheists while others reckoned with Christianity and Judaism. Although a myriad number of them believed in Allah while idols worshipped by them were considered as intermediaries that could ease direct communion with Him.<sup>6</sup>

The social life of the Arabs was characterised by luxury and non-humanitarian activities. They used to engage in drinking of alcohol, gambling, usury, hoarding, infanticide in fear of poverty and unfair treatment of the masters over the slaves, which went to the extent of exposing them to the heated sand of the desert.<sup>7</sup>

More so, the status of women was disregarded as they were treated as mere chattels and with contempt. In the same vein, they were considered as inferior citizens who had no right to enjoy. The Qur'ān reveals:

And when the news of (the birth) of a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark and he is filled with inner grief. He hides himself from the people because of the bad news he has had!. Shall he retain it on contempt, or bury it in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision. (Q16:58)

The maltreatment was deplorable as they could neither inherit from their biological fathers nor from their husbands. Rather, they were considered as objects of inheritance. Women were also used to offer in marriage without seeking their consent and various types of marriage which are inhuman were practised. Also, the tribal principles led to the exclusion of the weaker relatives from inheritance.<sup>8</sup>

Politically, Arabs had no organised structure. Thus, they used to resort to war irrationally. During this chaotic period, the Prophet was sent to put an order to all the aspects of Arabs life featured by dishevelment. He was able to achieve this, through restoration of justice in the nook and cranny of the Arabian Peninsula. Even before he was chosen as a Messenger by Allah, he was known as a trustworthy (*'Amīn*) because he never behaved treacherously or cheated people. This is evident in his judgement when Quraysh were conflicting on which clan to position the black stone in its spot while renovating Ka'bah. The Prophet administered justice in this matter by asking each clan, fighting on it, to hold firmly the edge of the garment brought to him by them.

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<sup>5</sup> Abdur Rahim A, *Islamic History*, (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureaus, 1981) 5.

<sup>6</sup> Rāghib as-Sarjānī, "Al-Arab Qabla'l-'Islām". <http://www.islamstory.com/ar/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85>. Accessed May 12, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Rāghib as-Sarjānī, "Al-Arab Qabla'l-'Islām".

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Qadri, *Islamic Jurisprudence in the Modern World* (Lahore: Ashraf press, 1981) 9.

The fact that the Prophet was an epitome of the Qur'ān paved way for him to revamp the society. As a result of this, the steps he took to discourage polytheism, usury, hoarding, slavery and infanticide were for their future prohibition. He laid down strict rules on how women should be treated and advocated justice in all aspects of life.

### **Conceptualisation of *Al-‘Adālah***

The word *‘adl*, the antonym of *al-Jawr* (injustice), is taken from the root *‘adala* meaning to establish justice. Lexically, the term refers to whatever enshrined to be upright in the minds.<sup>9</sup> Ibn Manzūr postulates that the term in respect of one of the Names of Allah implies that He is one who cannot be overridden by self-centeredness in applying fairness in enunciation of law.<sup>10</sup>

*Al-‘adālah* also means uprightness in the religion, utterances and actions.<sup>11</sup> Al-Jawzī equally defined it as a state of staying away from suspicion and implementation of lawful act.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, a man can be said to be just when he accustoms himself to religious rites, adhering to what is being enjoined, averting from what is being interdicted and inquiring the truth. Justice can also be viewed as a process of rendering the right of individual to him without any deprivation. Accentuating this, Al-Ghazālī viewed justice as a situation where a person receives no less or no more than his/her due.<sup>13</sup> In his *A-Maqṣad*, he contended that placing things and matters (*‘umūr*) to their proper places as specified by Islamic law is the meaning of justice.<sup>14</sup>

Another term often used interchangeably with *‘adālah* is *al-Qisṭ*. However, Al-‘Askarī maintains that *al-Qisṭ* refers to apparent justice.<sup>15</sup> This explains why scale and weight are referred to as *Al-Qisṭ* because they are devices used to depict justice for people. Also, *Al-‘Adl* is different from *Al-‘Inṣāf* because the latter connotes equal distribution of a material.

It could be deduced from the above definitions that, despite different expressions used by renowned scholars, *al-‘adālah* has to do with relating with people on the basis of piety and chivalry. In other words, the conception of justice in Islamic worldview implies placing thing in its rightful place. In relationship with living thing, justice denotes giving equal treatment to all without prejudice.

### **The Concept of Justice in the Qur’ān**

One of the central themes discussed in the Qur’ān is the concept of justice as a reaction against the disorderliness, anarchy and decadence in pre-Islamic era which paid a little attention to justice. This is paramount because Islam aims at building a society with high moral standard that will create a balance in the dealings of human beings. Consequently, Qur’ān is profuse with numerous injunctions, commanding Muslims to allow justice to reign in their social, economic, judicial and political affairs without allowing influence of friendship, hatred or blood ties. Relating this, the Qur’ān unequivocally states that the Prophets and Messengers were raised purposely to establish justice. It declares:

We sent our messengers with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the balance (of right and wrong), that men may stand forth in justice. (Q57:25)

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad bn Manzūr, *Lisānu ‘l-‘Arab*, Vol.11. (Beirut: Dāru’ṣ-Ṣādir, n.d) 430.

<sup>10</sup> Muḥammad bn Manzūr, *Lisānu ‘l-‘Arab*..., 430.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Alā’u’d-dīn Al-Mardāwī, *Al-Inṣāf fi ma ‘rifati ‘r-Rajih mina ‘l-Ikhtilāf*, Vol.7,(Al-Maktabtu’sh-Shāmilah software), 323.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Alā’u’d-dīn Al-Mardāwī, *Al-Inṣāf fi ma ‘rifati ‘r-Rajih mina ‘l-Ikhtilāf*,...323.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Ghazālī Abū Hāmid, *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūmi ‘d-Dīn*, Vol. III. (Beirut: Dāru’l-Ma‘rifah, n.d)181

<sup>14</sup> Al-Jābī B.A, ed., *Al-Maqṣadu ‘l-Athnā fi Sharhi Asmā ‘illāhi ‘l- Husnā* (Cyprus Limasol: Al-Jaffān wa’l-Jābī, 1987), 100.

<sup>15</sup> Abu Hilāl al-‘Askarī, *Al-Furūqu ‘l-Lughawiyah*, (Al-Maktabtu’sh-Shāmilah software), 428

More so, the Prophet (SAW) was specifically enjoined to dispense justice among people as contained "... And stand steadfast as you are commanded..." Q42:15. Expounding the message of the verse, Al-Alūsī upheld that Allah instructed the Prophet in the verse to discharge equality in the passage of judgement among people without nepotism or favourism.<sup>16</sup>

In the economic life of the people, the Qur'ān stipulates that the secretary who documents transaction to be just (Q2:282). In the judicial aspect, judges are required to pass judgement in consonance with the *sharī'ah* while justice is required to be the cornerstone (Q4:58). The reconciliation between conflicting parties is to be done with justice (Q49:9). Also, the utterances and actions of men are to be based on justice (Q46:152).

Considering justice as an essential component expected to regulate all affairs of life, Qur'ān calls for its application as the bedrock of polity as follows:

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and giving to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion. He admonishes you, that ye may receive admonition. (Q 16:90)

It should be mentioned that the order in the verse is absolute and not confined to the Muslims alone but also to be extended to the people of other religions. In fulfilling this obligation, they are instructed not to allow selves to be influenced by personal feelings, emotions or temporary circumstances. The Qur'an says:

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, 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 and that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. Q5:8

The above gesture of Islam prompted Sayyid Qutb to write:

ما من عقيدة أو نظام في الأرض يكفل العدل المطلق للأعداء المشنوقين، كما يكفله لهم هذا الدين، حين ينادي المؤمنون به أن يقوموا لله في هذا الأمر، وأن يتعاملوا معه

There is no creed or system on the earth which guarantees absolute justice to the staunch foes as secures to them by this religion when it calls the believers to stand by Allah in this affairs and relate (with others) on it.<sup>17</sup>

As those who uphold justice receive eulogy from Allah, the oppressors are totally condemned because Allah exonerates Himself from being unjust. The Qur'ān four verse forty contains:

إن الله لا يظلم مثقال ذرة وإن تك حسنة يضاعفها ويؤت من لدنه أجرا عظيما

Surely! Allah wrongs not even of the weight of an atom, but if there is any good (done), He doubles it and gives from Him a great reward

### **Justice in the Epoch of the Prophet (S.A.W)**

The administration of law conforming to the natural law, which requires that everybody must be treated fairly, formed the basis of the Prophet's governance in Madinah. He laid down principles of justice and implemented it in order to serve as rules governing the affairs of the community. Hence, he made it a requisite for shading the leader on the Day of Judgment.

<sup>16</sup> Shihābud-Dīn Maḥmūd Al-Alusi, *Ruḥu'l-Ma'ānī fī Tafsīri'l-Qur'āni'l-Āzīm wa-s-Sab' il-Mathānī*, Vol. 18. (n.p.n.d) 252.

<sup>17</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Fī zilāli'l-Qur'ān*, Vol. 2. (Al-Maktabatu'sh-Shāmilah software) 325.

عن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: سبعة يظلهم الله في ظله يوم لا ظل إلا ظله، إمام عادل...<sup>18</sup>

On the authority of 'Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Seven (categories of people) will be shaded by Allah in His shade when there will be no shade but His, a just leader..."<sup>18</sup>

In judicial aspect, the Prophet gave the following instruction:

عن علي قال قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا تقاضى إليك رجلان فلا تقض للأول حتى تسمع كلام الآخر

Ali reported that the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) told him: If two people litigate to you, judge not in favour of the first until you heard from the second.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear from the above *'ahadith* that the Prophet frowned at unfairness. He did not only condemn it in judicial matter through mere assertion, a clear manifestation of the rule of law and dispensation of justice can also be inferred in his reaction to the intercession demanded from him as a result of a woman from the tribe of Makhzūm who committed theft. The Prophet stood up and declared:

إنما أهلك الذين من قبلكم أنهم كانوا إذا سرق فيهم الشريف تركوه وإذا سرق فيهم الضعيف أقاموا عليه الحد وأيم الله، لو أن فاطمة بنت محمد سرقت لقطعت يدها

Indeed, the generation before you were destroyed because when the noble among them stole, they pardoned him and when the feeble among them stole, law would be held against him. I swear by Allah, if it were to be Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad that stole, I would amputate her hand.<sup>20</sup>

The Prophet did not only take up law against those who breached the rule; He also allowed people to take revenge if he harmed them. 'Usayd bn Ḥuḍayr reported:

The Prophet (S.A.W) passed by an Anṣār, who was cracking jokes with people and making them laugh and poked his side lightly with a stick. The man sought for retaliation from the Prophet. The Prophet (S.A.W) asked him to go ahead. The man said to him: You are wearing a garment, and I was not wearing it when you poked me. The Messenger of God (S.A.W) raised his garment and the Anṣār began to kiss his side. Then, he (Anṣār) said: This is what I wanted, Messenger of Allah!<sup>21</sup>

The message in the *hadith* exhibits the execution of Q4:135 that enjoins Muslims to reckon with justice in all matters even if they are found guilty. The Madinah charter is evident that the justice administered by the Prophet in social and judicial aspects of life is of no equal because it extends cardinal principle of Islam in terms of justice to the people of other religions. For instance, the charter stated that help will be rendered to the oppressed.<sup>22</sup> A great Roman Orientalist, George observes:

<sup>18</sup> Imām Al-Bukhārī, *Sahīḥu'l-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Darul'l-Fajr, 2004) ḥadīth 422

<sup>19</sup> At-Tirmidhī Muāmmad bn 'Īsā, *Sunan At-Tirmidhī* (Al Maktabu'sh-Shāmilah Software) ḥadīth 1252

<sup>20</sup> Imām Al-Bukhari, *Sahīḥu'l-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Darul'l-Fajr, 2004) ḥadīth 6788.

<sup>21</sup> Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān, *Sunan 'Abī Dāwūd* (Al Maktabu'sh-Shāmilah Software) ḥadīth 5224.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Sayyidin-Nas, *'Uyūnu'l'Asha*, (Bayrut: Dar Ibn Kathir, n.d.) 15

وقد دون هذا الدستور بشكل يسمح لأصحاب الأديان الأخرى بالعيش مع المسلمين وهم أن يقيموا شعائرهم حسب رغبتهم، ومن غير أن يتضايق أحد الفرقاء

Verily, this charter has been prepared in a modality that accorded freedom of living for the people of other religions with Muslims. They could display their emblems as they wish without constraint from any of the parties (involved).<sup>23</sup>

In marital life, the Prophet served as the role model on how to deal with the wives fairly. Although, the exegetes do not feel shy to predicate that fairness may be outside human capability in affection to the polygynous husband but the required justice which gives no license to flagrantly abandon one's life was exemplified by the Prophet. In practice, he used to cast dice to decide the one to accompany him to the battle while he used to seek divine forgiveness in the justice that is not feasible to human being.<sup>24</sup>

It should be noted that the kindness to animals was also taught by the Prophet as a means of demonstrating justice to them. The following report is a cyclorama of his attitude to them:

عن عبد الله بن جعفر رضى الله عنه قال دخل رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم حائطاً لرجل من الأنصار، فإذا جمل، فلما رأى النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - حن وذرفت عيناه فأتاه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فمسح عليه فسكت: فقال: لمن هذا الجمل، فجاء فتى من الأنصار فقال: لي يارسول الله، فقال له: أفلا تتقي الله في هذه البهيمة التي ملكك الله إياها، فإنه شكى إلي أنك تجيعه وتدئب

On the authority of 'Abdullāh bn Ja'far (may Allah be pleased with him): The Messenger of Allah entered a garden housing a camel that belongs to a man from Ansar. The camel started grunting when he saw the Prophet (S.A.W). The Prophet moved close to him to pacify him and he kept silent. The Prophet enquired about the owner of the camel. A man of Anṣār came forward and claimed the ownership. The Prophet told him: Don't you fear Allah regarding this camel which Allah made you its owner. He complained to me that you do starve him and overburden him.<sup>25</sup>

The Prophet's economic administration also attracts commendation because it portrays the grim and the doom that await those who deal with others through fraudulence. The reason is that the main objective of the Qur'ān in prohibiting cheating is to secure the rights of the individuals and maintain the solidarity of society through dispensation of justice. Utilizing the message by the Prophet, 'Abū Hurayrah reported:

أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مر على صبرة طعام فأدخل يده فيها فنالت أصابعه بللاً فقال ما هذا يا صاحب الطعام قال أصابته السماء يارسول الله قال أفلا جعلته فوق الطعام كي يراه الناس. فقال من غش فليس منا

Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (May Allah be pleased with him) passed by a pile of food and put his fingers in it and felt dampness. He said: O owner of the

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Sayyidin-Nas, 'Uyūnu'l'Asha ...6.

<sup>24</sup> Imām Al-Bukhari, *Sahīhu'l-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Darul'l-Fajr, 2004) ḥadīth 2688.

<sup>25</sup> Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Al Maktabu'sh-Shāmilah Software) ḥadīth 2549

food! What is this? He said the rain damaged it O Messenger of Allah. He (S.A.W) said, why didn't you put it (the damaged food) on top of the food so that people can see it? Whosoever cheats is not among us.<sup>26</sup>

This *hadith* is an indication of the application of Q17:35 which advocates giving full measurement and weight. The message of the *hadith* is not restricted only to the circumstance with which it was said. It needs to be applied in the course of courtship, marital life, by not concealing defects for each other, etc. It also excludes cheaters, exploiters, monopolizers and dishonest business men from the band of the Muslims.

The Prophet (S.A.W) also took an enviable step to bridge a gap between affluent and down trodden masses with the sole objective of promoting justice through eradication of capitalism with disbursement of *zakah* as contained in Q 9:60. He also calls upon the strong to render aid to the feeble. This explains why he protected their right in many occasions by admonishing their masters. For instance, he strongly advised 'Abu Dharr as follows:

إخوانكم خولكم جعلهم الله تحت أيديكم فمن كان أخوه تحت يده فليطعمه مما يأكل، ويلبسه مما يلبس، ولا تكلفوهم ما يغلبهم، فإن كلفتموهم فأعينوهم

Your slaves are your brethren put under your control by Allah. He who has his brother under his control should feed him from what he eats and clothe him from what he wears. Do not overburden them and render assistance to them if you overburden them.<sup>27</sup>

It is gratifying to note that the Prophet used to draw attention of people to the importance of fair leader because the good governance can only be achieved through installation of a just leader. Exploring the nations which face enormous challenges politically and economically reveals that the brain behind the failure is its inability to select or elect just president or prime minister.

The Prophet-led administration was also remarkable for its effort in putting an end to gender discrimination. The Prophet taught this and also put it in practice. The women, who were treated like chattel during *jāhiliyyah* period, were honoured in Islamic civilization. They are allowed to live, inherit, acquire, use and dispose property in the shade of Islam. During the final sermon, the Prophet called on Muslims in these words:

There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor white over the black and not for the black over the white except by the virtue piety. Verily the noblest among you is he who is the most pious.<sup>28</sup>

With all these manifestations of justice in the Prophet (SAW), one could argue safely, as held by Wolfgang, that the Prophet was a paradigm of justice. Asserting this, Wolfgang says: "I looked into history for a human paradigm and found it to be in Muhammad".<sup>29</sup>

### **Administration of Justice in Nigeria in the context of Al-'Adālah**

Nigeria is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of human and mineral resources that are viable for generating humongous income for the country. In spite of this, several commentaries have been made over dispensation of justice in the country under the control of leaders who are religiously inclined.

<sup>26</sup> Muslim bn Al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Al Maktabu'sh-Shāmilah Software) ḥadīth 101

<sup>27</sup> Imām Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥu'l-Bukhārī*, (Cairo: Darul'l-Fajr, 2004) ḥadīth 2542.

<sup>28</sup> Abū Ḥayyān, *Al-Baḥru'l-Muḥīṭ*, Vol.2.(Al-Maktabtu'sh-Shāmilah software) 482.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Sheha and Murād, "Muhammad Rasullullah". *Muhammad: The Messenger of Allah*. Trans (Riyadh: Islamic Publication, 2005)63.

Several individuals, national and international organizations have passed commentaries about the causes of crime in Nigeria but none seems as strong as social injustice as the major cause.<sup>30</sup> Unlike the administration of the Prophet (S.A.W) which provided fairness for all and sundry through compliance with the rule of law, injustice in Nigeria has abundantly increased the threat of crime and violence. The democratic system, expected to represent good governance, has failed to promote the rule of law, actualize independent of judiciary and provide economic and social opportunities to the citizens.

Contrary to the discharge of equality in waging war against injustice in Nigeria as seen in Prophet Muhammad's scenario with the Anṣār who sought for retaliation on civil matter between him and the Prophet, the President, the Vice-President, the Governors and the Vice-Governors enjoy the so-called immunity. The immunity clause, as contained in Section 308(1) (a)-(c): (2) and (3) of the 1999, holds that they are exempted from both criminal and civil persecution while in office. Hence, the presence of the immunity clause has been an albatross in the war against corruption and abuse of power against corruption.<sup>31</sup> However, 225 out of the 360 federal constituencies endorsed the amendment of the section to make the immunity provision to cover only civil proceedings while they are in office. Interestingly, Yaradua's administration proved worthwhile in denying executives immunity against criminal persecution. However, the justice propagated by Prophet Muhammad considers every human being equal before the law including friends and folks. Therefore, the idea of immunity clause is condemned and it is unequivocally addressed by Allah in Q5:8 when He invites human beings to apply justice in all their dealings. The question that might beg for answer is the place of justice when a President or Governor is excluded from being prosecuted when involved in civil cases.

Also, the judges who are trained to manage judiciary are also maneuvering it. The former President of the Court of Appeal, Ayo Salam states that the problem with the Nigerian judiciary is that "some dishonourable people not fit to be judges get into the system".<sup>32</sup> This statement implies that the judiciary system harbours corruption. The case of Walter Onnoghen, the former Chief Justice of Nigeria who later resigned after he was suspended for two months over \$700,000.00 that was found in his account, vindicated Ayo Salam's remark. There was no case filed against him by the Federal Government and this might not be unconnected to the interventions of his allies. However, the justice preached by Prophet Muhammad made it a requisite for the judges to be above the board in their dispositions. They must allow fairness to be their watchword and never allow intimacy to pervert the course of justice. If they are also found wanton, they must also face the wrath of law.

Another instance of injustice in Nigeria is the inadequate salary paid to the civil servants while huge amount of money is paid to those who hold political appointments. According to the report of Daily Trust, the Nigerian lawmakers are the highest paid in Africa and one of the highest paid in the world.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that four out of ten in Nigerians

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<sup>30</sup> Rotimi Ogunbola. "Crime, violence and Social injustice in Nigeria: An Interplay". <http://www.latestnigeriannews.com/news/404475/crime-violence-and-social-injustice-in-nigeria-an-interplay-by-rotimi-ogunbola.html>. Accessed on April 6, 2013,

<sup>31</sup> Nzeshi O, "Nigerians reject Executive Immunity: Rotational Presidency", *This Day*, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/Nigerians-reject-executive-immunity-rotational-presidency/145377/>

<sup>32</sup> Ezcamlu B., "Nigeria's Judiciary harbours corrupt elements-Justice- Salami", *Premium*, [www.premiuntimesng.com](http://www.premiuntimesng.com), accessed on January 15, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Habeeb .I. Pindiga, " Nigerian Lawmakers Top Salaries Chart", *Daily Trust*, <https://dailytrust.com/nigerian-lawmakers-top-salaries-chart> . Accessed on December 16, 2023.



wallow in abject poverty.<sup>34</sup> The wide gap in the salary structure and allowance of political office holders and civil servants has exposed some civil servants to corruption just like some of their counterparts in political offices. The situation has made some Nigerians lose hope in the economic recovery of Nigeria because the corruption has eaten deep. However, it can be inferred from the Prophet (SAW)'s instruction to Abū Dharr, in the *ḥadīth* quoted earlier, that he advocated for living wages for the labourers. The prevailing situation of corruption among some civil servants can be rescued if Federal Government revisited its steps and keyed into the structure designed by the Prophet by considering civil servants as their brothers who live in the same country where they also inhabit. As stated earlier, the Prophet's justice cut across all aspects of life to the extent that it was gender sensitive. Thus, there should be no unjustifiable disparity in the salary of the political appointees and the civil servants since the Prophet was reported to have demonstrated equality in his dealings with all human beings.

More so, mass unemployment is a common phenomenon that contributes to social injustice. It has been estimated that about 3 million unemployed people join the labour market in annually. Thus, failure to bearing this responsibility optimally by government also accounts for the high rate of crime in the country. However, Islam views that it is a duty bound on government to work towards improvement of standard of living of citizens and this can be achieved through provision of job. The justice of the Prophet necessitated him to advocate the economic system that allows people to engage in all forms of lawful contracts like sale (*bay'*), payment in advance (*salam*), mortgage (*rahn*), transfer of debt (*ḥawālah*), partnership (*sharikah*), sharing of produce of agriculture with another person in return of his irrigation service (*musāqāt*) and crop sharing (*muzārah*) to curb poverty and unemployment.

## CONCLUSION

In the foregoing discourse, attempt has been made to examine the principles of justice as taught by the Prophet through browsing the Qur'anic concept of justice. The paper revealed that the Prophet was a paradigm of social virtues and he rejuvenated the life of the Arabs featured with injustice in all ramifications in *jāhiliyyah* via principles of justice. He urged people to administer justice in all facets of life and manifested it throughout his period. Thus, his teachings in all aspects attract commendation from pro and anti of the Divine call. In contrast to his style of administration that gave no room for partiality, the Nigerian democracy has taken injustice as part of the elements of the system. The act has reached its climax and threatened the structure of human civilization with perdition. The paper discovered that the lack of justice has indeed contributed essentially to the backwardness of the nation. The immunity clause, offered by Nigerian constitution, threatens equality before the law. In our view, if the clause is not removed along with other impediments of justice in the governance, it will be difficult to witness progressive changes in the society. To get rid of this, there is need for every leader to accustom self with the teachings of the Prophet which gave no room for any act of injustice that is inimical to the progress.

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<sup>34</sup> Fiyinfoluwa Taiwo, " Social Inequality in Nigeria: Drivers and Economic Perspectives", The Cable, [www.thecable.ng/social-inequality-in-nigeria-drivers-and-economic-perspectives/amp](http://www.thecable.ng/social-inequality-in-nigeria-drivers-and-economic-perspectives/amp). Accessed December 16, 2023.

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